



# Portability of Professional Licenses and Certificates for Servicemembers and Their Spouses

The Department of Justice's Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative (SVI) is committed to protecting those who serve and their families. The Civil Rights Division enforces the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), which provides servicemembers and their dependents with certain civil protections related to military service.

## New SCRA Amendment

In January 2023, Congress added a new provision to the SCRA that allows servicemembers and their spouses to use their professional licenses and certificates when they relocate due to military orders, in certain circumstances.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
**SERVICEMEMBERS &  
VETERANS INITIATIVE**

### To Qualify for Professional License Portability under the SCRA, You Must:

1. Have moved to a location outside the jurisdiction of the licensing authority that issued the covered license or certificate because of orders for military service.
2. Provide a copy of the military orders to the licensing authority in the new jurisdiction.
3. Have actively used the license or certificate during the two years immediately preceding the move.
4. Remain in good standing with:
  - a. the licensing authority that issued the covered license or certificate; and
  - b. every other licensing authority that issued a license or certificate valid for a similar scope of practice and in the discipline applied for in the new jurisdiction.
5. Submit to the authority of the licensing authority in the new jurisdiction for the purposes of standards of practice, discipline, and fulfillment of any continuing education requirements.

If these five criteria are met, the servicemember's or spouse's covered license or certificate **shall be considered valid** at a similar scope of practice and in the discipline applied for in the new jurisdiction for the duration of the military orders.



## Frequently Asked Questions About Professional License Portability

- **What is license portability and why is it important?**

Military spouses have reported difficulty transferring their professional licenses from one jurisdiction to another, hindering their ability to find jobs when moving due to military orders. The new SCRA provision on license portability helps servicemembers and their spouses to use their licenses and certificates in certain circumstances when they relocate due to military orders.

- **Who and which licenses are eligible for license portability under the SCRA?**

Servicemembers and their spouses are eligible. Licenses to practice law are not eligible for portability under the new law.

- **When is the new law on license portability effective?**

The new part of the SCRA went into effect on January 5, 2023. Servicemembers and their spouses can now take advantage of this benefit under the SCRA.

- **What are interstate licensure compacts and how do I determine if my license is governed by one?**

Some states have contracts with other states—known as interstate licensure compacts—to allow licensed practitioners to work in other compact-member states without needing a new license.

If servicemembers or their spouses are uncertain as to whether their professional license is covered by an interstate licensure compact, they should contact their licensing authority. They can also refer to [Department of Defense's Fact Sheet on Occupational Licensure](#), as well as [CareerOneStop](#), a Department of Labor sponsored website with information on state licensing requirements, interstate compacts, and licensing authority contact information.

- **How does this new SCRA law affect interstate licensure compacts?**

The new law applies if: (1) your license is not covered by any interstate compacts; or (2) your license was issued by a state that is covered by an interstate compact, but is not covered by the same compact in the state to which you are relocating.

The new law does NOT apply if your license is covered by the same interstate compact for both the state that issued your license AND the state that to which you are relocating. In this situation, the interstate compact will control whether and how you can practice in the new location.

## Where should servicemembers and their spouses go for assistance?

- Servicemembers and their spouses who are covered by this new law are likely eligible for military legal assistance and can contact their local legal assistance office for help. Office locations can be found at <http://legalassistance.law.af.mil/>.
- Servicemembers and their spouses can learn more about license portability and find links to helpful resources at [servicemembers.gov](http://servicemembers.gov). If servicemembers or their spouses are not eligible for military legal assistance services, they may request that the Justice Department review their claim by submitting a complaint through <https://civilrights.justice.gov/link/4025A>.

**To report a violation of the SCRA's license portability provision to the Civil Rights Division, visit <https://civilrights.justice.gov/link/4025A>.**