

2021

Military Service Member and Military Spouse Licensing Report

DECEMBER 2021

Report Requirement

Senate Bill 5359, adopted during the 2017 regular legislative session, charged the Department of Licensing (the Department) and the Department of Health to file a biennial report to the legislature. The Washington State Military Transition Council, beginning January 1, 2018, annually reports updates on progress in our efforts to implement the requirements of chapter 18.340 RCW, chapter 23, Laws of 2011, and chapter 351, Laws of 2011.

This report contains background information and updates on progress efforts.

Background Information

The Department issues professional and business licenses for 39 non-health related programs.

There are approximately 226,000 active professional licensees and about 27,000 active business licensees.

For professional licenses, the Department ensures individuals meet or exceed the minimum qualifications before being licensed. The Department reviews education and experience, administers examinations, reviews background checks, and ensures continuing education requirements are met.

Professional licenses regulated by the Department are as follows:

- Architects
- Auctioneers
- Bail Bond Agents and Bail Recovery Agents
- Tattooing, Body Art & Body Piercing
- Camping Resort Sales
- Combative Sports
- Cosmetologists
- Court Reporters
- Driver Training School Instructors
- Funeral Directors and Embalmers
- Geologists
- Home Inspectors
- Landscape Architects
- Notaries Public
- Private Investigators
- Real Estate Brokers
- Real Estate Appraisers
- Security Guards
- Timeshare Sales

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After license issuance, the Department's regulatory functions include conducting audits and inspections, and resolving complaints with or without administrative action. When warranted, the Department may take appropriate administrative action that includes fines, license denials, suspensions, and revocations.

The Department also provides information, engages in education of licensees or the public, and conducts outreach efforts.

Many of the Department's licensee programs have comity with other jurisdictions (reciprocity). This makes it easier for individuals from other states to transfer their licenses into Washington, to include military spouses. See the table below for a list of professions with reciprocity and the requirements applicants are subject to:

Program Type	Applicant Requirements
<i>Architects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • Have passed applicable national exams • Hold a current license in another jurisdiction • Submit a written summary of RCW's 18.08 and 18.235, and WAC 308-12 per the requirements in WAC 308-12-028(2)(g) • Complete an oral exam (may be requested by the board)
<i>Cosmetologists</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • Have passed applicable national written and practical exams • Hold a current license in another jurisdiction
<i>Court Reporters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • Have passed applicable exams • Hold a current license in another jurisdiction
<i>Embalmers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • Have passed applicable national exams • Pass the Washington State law exam • Hold a current license in another jurisdiction • For internships, provide verification of time served in another state per the requirements in RCW 18.39
<i>Funeral Directors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • Have passed applicable national exams • Pass the Washington State law exam

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a current license in another jurisdiction • For internships, provide verification of time served in another state per the requirements in RCW 18.39
<i>Geologists</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • Have passed applicable national exams • Hold a current license in another jurisdiction
<i>Home Inspectors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • Pass the Washington portion of the exam • Hold a current license in another jurisdiction with requirements that meet or exceed Washington State's
<i>Landscape Architects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • Have passed applicable national exams • Hold a current license in another jurisdiction • Complete a Washington State law analysis
<i>Real Estate Appraisers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • There is no exam required and we have this agreement with 27 states*
<i>Real Estate Salespersons and Brokers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply and pay fee • Depending on their out-of-state license history, the general portion of their exam can be waived, or education substituted

*Typically, DOL requires all professional license applicants to meet standards equivalent to Washington State's and each application is evaluated individually. The Real Estate appraisers' program is able to offer agreements with other states without exam requirements as they have federal oversight and regular audits to ensure compliance with federal guidelines.

Most Department of Licensing professions are regulated under authority of the Director. The following have regulatory boards:

- Architect Board
- Collection Agency Board
- Funeral and Cemetery Board
- Geologist Board
- Landscape Architects Board

Progress and future steps

Time to License:

Since the launch of DOL's new POLARIS licensing management system, the agency has been able to obtain a more accurate assessment of the time it takes for military service members and their spouses to receive licenses in each profession DOL regulates. Below is a reference table that displays information on the time to license from January 1, 2021, to August 12, 2021.

Program Type	Average Time to License (days)	Number of Military Members	Number of Military Spouses	Total Military Applicants
<i>Appraisers</i>	25.3	10	0	10
<i>Architects</i>	11.25	4	0	4
<i>Auctioneers</i>	66	1	0	1
<i>Bail Bonds</i>	48	4	0	4
<i>Body Art and Piercing</i>	5.9	32	12	42
<i>Camping Resorts</i>	20	1	0	1
<i>Combative Sports</i>	9.4	5	0	5
<i>Commercial Drivers License</i>	2.3	33	5	35*
<i>Cosmetology</i>	7.9	54	72	121*
<i>Driver Training School</i>	8.8	17	2	18*
<i>Funerals</i>	3.3	2	1	3
<i>Home Inspector</i>	4.3	28	0	28
<i>Motorcycle Safety</i>	9.7	3	0	3
<i>Notary Public</i>	13.6	262	95	351*

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Program Type	Average Time to License (days)	Number of Military Members	Number of Military Spouses	Total Military Applicants
<i>Private Investigator</i>	32.6	14	0	14
<i>Real Estate</i>	0.8	221	24	236*
<i>Security Guards</i>	19.8	394	28	411*
<i>Timeshares</i>	2	1	1	2
Total	12.2 days (average)	1,086	240	1,289*

*These rows show a discrepancy in their total columns because applicants identified as both military and a spouse/partner of military, while our system only counts this as 1 record.

As shown in the table above, some professions took longer than 30 days to license. This is due to the fact that some applications within the Auctioneers, Bail Bonds and Private Investigators professions required additional information and DOL's RFI (request for information), took longer to be completed. In this data set, DOL is using a rolling average to determine the average time to license, which means that if one or two applicants have an RFI, it skews the overall average depending on how fast applicants respond to the agency's request.

Rulemaking:

The Department conducted several emergency and permanent rulemaking efforts to assist DOL customers and licensees, to include military members and spouses, with licensing challenges, including:

- Waiving all license late fees until September 2020 (was effective May 6, 2020);
- Allowing cosmetology student hours that expired between March 18, 2020, and September 30, 2020, to expire on the latter date (emergency rulemaking was filed on July 31, 2020);
- Allowing cosmetology training to be completed 50% online (permanent rules effective as of November 8, 2020); and
- Expediting implementation of passed notary legislation (permanent rules effective as of March 13, 2021).

As shown in the time to licensing table, these emergency rules were particularly helpful for military members and spouses, as they apply to several highly utilized professions.

Technology Updates:

At the end of June 2020, the Department launched the final phase of its business and professional licensing technology modernization effort, POLARIS. The system was configured to incorporate the military rules and allows the agency to track the number of current/former military members, and military spouses, applying for and receiving DOL licenses more closely. Other benefits of the POLARIS system include online application, online complaint intake, online payments, and integrated licensing, compliance, and financial management into one system.

Additional Activities

Other activities DOL is engaged in regarding serving military members and their spouses include:

- Since 2013, DOL assisted with the establishment, and continued participation with, the Washington State Veteran Employee Resource Group (VERG). Since 2014, DOL established and maintained its own internal VERG. Both groups have assisted, coached, and mentored hundreds of transitioning service members and their spouses with state employment and further career progress. Washington State Employment Security Department awarded DOL the YesVets designation in connection with involvement in hiring events and employment workshops.
- DOL Representatives attend career fairs – many specifically related to career opportunities for military members and spouses. (Note: these efforts stalled in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions).
- DOL co-chairs a Washington State Military Transition Council (WSMTC) workgroup regarding license portability for military spouses and veterans. We also participate on the WSMTC work group regarding military spouse employment and professional development.
 - Workgroup is focusing on improving access to web-based license and certificate information for veterans and military spouses and creating an inventory of licenses and certificates in Washington. The workgroup will also identify which licenses are priorities for veterans and military spouses.
 - The workgroup will continue to discuss best practices amongst the agencies; especially around getting information to military spouses about the services offered by the state.