

2023

# Military Service Member and Military Spouse Licensing Report

DECEMBER 2023

## Report Requirement

Senate Bill 5359, adopted during the 2017 regular legislative session, and Second Substitute House Bill (2SHB)1009, adopted during the 2023 regular legislative session, directed the Department of Licensing (DOL) and the Department of Health to file a biennial report to the legislature. The Washington State Military Transition Council, which began on 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 to implement modified professional licensing procedures for military service members and their spouses.

## Background Information

The Department issues professional and business licenses for 40 non-health related programs.

There are approximately 233,647 active professional licensees and about 30,307 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:

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

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

\*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 can 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 July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

<b>Program Type</b>	<b>Average Time to License (days)</b>	<b>Number of Military Members</b>	<b>Number of Military Spouses</b>	<b>Total Military Applicants</b>
<i>Appraisers</i>	15	8	1	9
<i>Architects</i>	29	7	0	7
<i>Bail Bonds</i>	51	7	0	7
<i>Body Art and Piercing</i>	13	39	12	51
<i>Camping Resorts</i>	5	1	0	1
<i>Combative Sports</i>	10	16	0	16
<i>Commercial Drivers License</i>	26	43	1	44
<i>Cosmetology</i>	12	102	86	188
<i>Court Reporters</i>	3	2	3	5
<i>Driver Training School</i>	8	27	3	30
<i>Funerals</i>	14	8	1	9
<i>Home Inspector</i>	9	17	0	17
<i>Motorcycle Safety</i>	6	4	0	4

Program Type	Average Time to License (days)	Number of Military Members	Number of Military Spouses	Total Military Applicants
Private Investigator	73	54	0	54
Real Estate	4	234	17	251
Security Guards	48	854	48	902
Timeshares	12	4	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 days (average)</b>	<b>1,839</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>2,157</b>

As shown in the table above, some professions took longer than 30 days to license. This is because these applications require additional information and DOL's request for information (RFI), took longer to complete. 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 a Request for Information (RFI), it skews the overall average depending on how fast applicants respond to the agency's request.

As of October 31, 2023, there are approximately 6,317 self-identified active military member or spouse/partner licenses. The largest professions include:

- Real estate – 1,440 members, 111 spouses (1,551 total)
- Cosmetology – 993 members, 159 spouses (1,152 total)
- Notary publics – 1,727 members, 550 spouses (2,277 total)
- Security guards – 830 members, 41 spouses (871 total)

Additionally, through POLARIS, DOL offers several additional licensing features for military members and spouses, including:

- *Expedited Processing* – military members and spouses who are applying for initial or renewed licenses receive priority attention.
- *Status Options* – while not in WA, licensed military members have the option to place their license in 'military status', while spouses may place theirs in 'inactive status'.

Program Implementation

We have completed the following requirements in accordance with 2SHB 1009 legislation:

- Filled the role of Military Spouse Liaison by hiring Jason Lenn as a Program Specialist.
- Trained all board and commission members on Military Spouse Cultural Competency.
- Updated the website to reflect new procedures and processes for expedited professional licensure.

For more information on this, please visit our website at: <https://www.dol.wa.gov/military-personnel-and-veterans/business-and-professional-licenses-military-personnel-spouses-and-domestic-partners>