



SUMMARY OF KEY PROVISIONS

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this compact is to facilitate interstate practice of licensed professional counseling with the goal of improving public access to professional counseling services.

The compact preserves the regulatory authority of states to protect public health and safety through the current system of state licensure.

The compact is designed to:

- Provide for the mutual recognition of other member state licenses.
- Enhance states' abilities to protect the public's health and safety.
- Encourage the cooperation of member states in regulating multistate practice for licensed professional counselors.
- Support active duty military personnel and their spouses.
- Enhance the exchange of licensure, investigative, and disciplinary information among member states.
- Allow for the use of telehealth technology to increase access to counseling services.
- Support the uniformity of professional counseling licensure requirements throughout the states.
- Eliminate the necessity for licenses in multiple states.
- Facilitate interstate practice by licensed professional counselors who meet uniform requirements.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

Establishes the definitions of key terms as used throughout the compact, to alleviate confusion on the part of practitioners and jurisdictions. Defined terms are capitalized throughout the document.

SECTION 3: STATE PARTICIPATION IN THE COMPACT

This section establishes the duties of the compact's member states.

A member state must:

- License and regulate licensed professional counselors.
- Require licensees to pass a nationally recognized exam.
- Require licensees to have a 60-hour master's degree in counseling or 60 hours of graduate coursework in relevant areas.
- Require licensees to complete a supervised postgraduate professional experience.

- Have a mechanism in place for receiving and investigating complaints about licensees.
- Participate fully in the compact commission's licensure data system.
- Notify the commission of any adverse action against or current significant investigative information regarding a licensee.
- Conduct criminal background checks of candidates for an initial privilege to practice.
- Comply with the rules of the commission, the governing body of the compact.
- Grant the privilege to practice professional counseling to a licensee holding a valid, unencumbered license in another member state.
- Provide for the state's commissioner to attend the meetings of the commission.

Member states may charge a fee for granting the privilege to practice.

A licensed professional counselor may only utilize the compact if their *home state* joins the compact.

SECTION 4: PRIVILEGE TO PRACTICE

To exercise the privilege to practice professional counseling in a remote state, a licensee must:

- Hold a license in their home state, which must be a member of the compact.
- Have had no encumbrance or restriction against on any license or privilege to practice within the previous two years.
- Meet any jurisprudence requirements of the remote state and pay all applicable fees.
- Report to the commission any adverse action, encumbrance, or restriction imposed on the licensee by a non-member state within 30 days from the date of the action.

A privilege to practice is valid until the expiration date of the practitioner's home state license.

If a licensee's home state license is revoked, the licensee loses the privilege to practice in *all* member states for the next two years.

If a licensee' privilege to practice is revoked by a member state, the licensee *may* lose the privilege to practice in other member states for the next two years.

SECTION 5: OBTAINING A NEW HOME STATE LICENSE BASED ON A PRIVILEGE TO PRACTICE

This section creates an alternative pathway to licensure for privilege holders who change their primary state of residence between compact member states.

A licensee who moves from one member state to another member state may obtain a new, expedited home state license in the new state of residence if they hold a privilege to practice in the new state.

The licensee will be required to complete a new FBI fingerprint based criminal background check, any required state-level background check, and any jurisprudence requirements of the new home state.

If a practitioner moves from a non-member state to a member state, or from a member state to a non-member state, the practitioner must apply for a single-state license in the new state, under the new state's licensure requirements.

A licensee may hold more than one single-state license concurrently, but only the license tied to the individual's primary state of residence may serve as the individual's "home state license" for the purposes of the compact.

Nothing in the compact affects a member state's requirements for issuance of a single-state license.

SECTION 6: ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL OR THEIR SPOUSES

This section allows an active duty servicemember, or their spouse, to designate a home state where the individual has a current license in good standing. This state then serves as the individual's home state for the duration of the servicemember's active duty.

SECTION 7: COMPACT PRIVILEGE TO PRACTICE TELEHEALTH

This section establishes that privilege to practice under the compact shall include provision of telehealth services to patients in remote states. Licensees providing telehealth services in a remote state must adhere to the laws and regulations, including scope of practice, of the remote state.

SECTION 8: ADVERSE ACTIONS

This section clarifies that *only* a practitioner's home state may take adverse action against a *home state* license.

However, remote states may take adverse action against a counselor's privilege to practice and may issue enforceable subpoenas for witnesses and evidence from other member states.

Home states must take reported adverse action from any member state into account, in accordance with the home state's laws.

Member states may initiate joint investigations of licensees and are required to share investigative materials in furtherance of any joint or single-state investigation of a licensee. Member states must report any adverse action to the compact data system, which then promptly alerts the home state of this adverse action. Any member state may take adverse action based on the factual findings of a remote state.

If a licensee changes their home state during an active investigation by their former home state, the former home state completes the investigation, takes appropriate action under its laws, and then reports its findings to the compact commission's data system.

Member states retain the right to require a licensee to participate in an alternative program for mental health-related concerns in lieu of adverse action.

SECTION 9: ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNSELING COMPACT COMMISSION

This section outlines the composition and powers of the compact commission and executive committee. The compact is not a waiver of sovereign immunity.

- Each member state is entitled to exactly one delegate selected by that state's licensing board from among the board's members and/or employees.
- Each delegate has one (1) vote on commission affairs.
- The commission is directed to establish a term of office for delegates and may establish term limits.
- The commission may establish and maintain a code of ethics, bylaws, rules, a budget and financial records in order to carry out the compact.
- The commission shall elect an executive committee composed of up to eleven members: seven members of the commission and up to four ex-officio, nonvoting members from four recognized national professional counselor organizations.
- All commission meetings shall be open to the public unless confidential or privileged information must be discussed.
- Commission members and employees are immune from liability related to their positions except in cases of wanton misconduct.

SECTION 10: DATA SYSTEM

This section requires the sharing of licensure information by all compact states. A member state shall submit a uniform dataset to the data system on all counselors to whom this compact is applicable as required by the rules of the commission. This database will allow for the expedited sharing of adverse action or significant investigative information against professional counselors utilizing the compact.

Adverse action information pertaining to a licensee in any member state will be available to any other member state, except that any submitted information that subsequently must be expunged from the submitting state's records will also be removed from the data system.

Member states may designate information submitted to the data system that may not be shared with the public without the express permission of the state in question.

Investigative information pertaining to a licensee in a member state shall not be available to non-member states.

SECTION 11: RULEMAKING

- Rules carry the force of law in all member states.
- A simple majority of member state legislatures may veto a rule of the commission.
- Changes to the rules require a 30-day notice of proposed rulemaking, with an opportunity for a public hearing if one is requested by 25 people or by a government agency.
- If the commission issues a rule that exceeds its authority under the compact, such a rule shall be void and have no force or effect.

SECTION 12: OVERSIGHT, DISPUTE RESOLUTION, AND ENFORCEMENT

Ensures compliance with the compact by member states. The procedures to be followed in the event of a failure by a member state to comply with the compact include:

- A period of technical assistance in remedying the situation
- Dispute resolution processes; and
- Termination from the compact in the event no other means of compliance has been successful.

The commission shall attempt to resolve any compact-related disputes that may arise between states.

SECTION 13: DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION, WITHDRAWAL, AND AMENDMENT

The compact takes effect on the date of enactment by the tenth state.

States that join after this date are subject to the rules of the commission as they exist on the date when the compact becomes law in that state.

Member states may enact a law to repeal their membership in the compact. A state's withdrawal takes effect 6 months after enactment of such a law.

The member states may amend the compact, but changes do not take effect until enacted into the laws of all member states.

SECTION 14: CONSTRUCTION AND SEVERABILITY

The compact is to be liberally construed so as to effectuate its purposes.

The compact's provisions are severable, meaning that:

- If a provision of the compact is declared to conflict with the United States Constitution, all other provisions remain valid for all member states, and
- If a provision is held contrary to a member state's constitution, the compact retains its full force in all other states, and all other provisions remain valid in the affected state.

SECTION 15: BINDING EFFECT OF COMPACT AND OTHER LAWS

Reiterates that licensees must adhere to the laws and regulations, including scope of practice, of the state in which they are practicing.

Reiterates that all rules and bylaws of the commission are binding on member states.

According to legal precedent, in the event of a conflict between a law of a member state and the compact, the state law is superseded to the extent of the conflict.