

# MILITARY SPOUSE LICENSE RECOGNITION

## STATE PROFILE:



COLORADO



## Overview of Military Spouse License Recognition in Colorado

The state of Colorado has adopted a comprehensive approach to serving military spouses and easing the process for license recognition. The website of the [Department of Regulatory Agencies](#), or DORA, prominently features information about career transition and credential recognition efforts for active duty, reserves, national guard, military spouses, and veterans. “The assistance offered to active military personnel, veterans and their families in transitioning into civilian life include special programs and initiatives aimed at assisting with transporting existing credentials or acquiring professional Colorado credentials while meeting life needs during military service or during the transition to civilian life.”<sup>1</sup>

The promising practices detailed below highlight some of the key accommodations the state of Colorado provides to military spouses, along with effective practices the state exhibits in presenting this information to its target audience. These promising practices can be helpful to other states and licensing boards in improving license recognition for military spouses.

### Interstate Compacts and Agreements

- NASDTEC Interstate Agreement (Teaching)
- Nurse Licensure Compact
- Physical Therapy Licensure Compact

22,061

Number of  
Military Spouses<sup>2</sup>

9<sup>th</sup>

State Rank in # of  
Military Spouses<sup>2</sup>

## STATE LAW SUPPORTING MILITARY SPOUSE LICENSE RECOGNITION

Colorado Revised Statutes Title 12, Article 71, Section 101-103 authorizes relocated military spouses to practice professions regulated by DORA’s Division of Professions and Occupations in Colorado under out-of-state licenses for their first year of residency.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dora-military/summary-services>

<sup>2</sup> Active duty military spouses (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard), by Zip Code of residence, aggregated by State, Source: Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System, Data as of October 25, 2018.

“YOU’VE DONE YOUR DUTY FOR YOUR COUNTRY. NOW YOU’RE FOCUSED ON YOUR OWN CAREER. THE DEPARTMENT OF REGULATORY AGENCIES (DORA)... IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AND CUSTOMER SERVICE TO MILITARY PERSONNEL, INCLUDING ACTIVE DUTY, RESERVES, NATIONAL GUARD, MILITARY SPOUSES AND VETERANS.”<sup>3</sup>

## Overview of Military Spouse License Recognition in Colorado

### ADOPTING LICENSE RECOGNITION OPTIONS FOR MILITARY SPOUSES

Colorado’s Division of Professions and Occupations (DPO) within DORA has purview over more than 50 licensed professions and occupations, including many occupations that are prevalent among military spouses, such as nursing and dental occupations, accountancy, cosmetology, and physical therapy. This agency oversight allows for coordinated and consistent adoption of state-level policy across occupations and related licensing boards. The following language focused on military spouses is applied consistently to all occupations licensed through DPO:

“[DORA] has implemented a distinctive program to support the mobility and transportability of a military spouse’s professional license. A military spouse who has been relocated to Colorado by military orders, and has an active license in good standing from another state, can practice for up to one year from the date they move before obtaining a Colorado license... Before the end of your first year of residency in Colorado, you must obtain a Colorado license by completing the appropriate application along with the Military Spouse Exemption Form...”<sup>4</sup>

**NOTE:** The following occupations are specifically excluded from the above law: professional engineers and interns, professional land surveyors and interns, architects, optometrists, physicians, physician assistants, and anesthesia assistants. These occupations are licensed under different authority or are covered by different occupational licensing laws.

Military spouses in many other occupations can take advantage of accommodations in the licensing process. For example, the Educator Talent Licensing Office of the Colorado Department of Education issues a one-year initial/interim license to qualifying educators (teachers, special services providers, principals, administrators) moving to a new state due to military transfer.<sup>5</sup>

Compacts and interstate agreements—two efforts that streamline license recognition options for all individuals, including military spouses—are also in place for several occupations in the state, including the [National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification Interstate Agreement](#) for teachers and the [Nurse Licensure Compact](#) (NLC) for nursing occupations.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.colorado.gov/dora-military>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dora-military/relocated-spouse-licensure>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/licensure\\_militaryspouse](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/licensure_militaryspouse)

## Clearly Explaining the License Recognition Options Available to Military Spouse

DORA has a clear call-out to military spouse information on their [homepage](#), with a “Career Transition for Military, Spouses & Veterans” link featured in both the “Help Center” and “Links” menus. This link is also readily available on other pages of DORA’s website. This approach supports awareness of resources and accommodations for military spouses and makes information easy to locate.

Once “Career Transition for Military, Spouses & Veterans” is selected, [the dedicated page](#) includes information on career pathways, relocated military spouse licensing, license renewal fee waivers, and important consumer protection information. This approach helps state licensing bodies to promote accommodations to military spouses so that they are fully utilized.



In addition, DORA provides a specific “Relocated Spouse Licensure” page that clearly explains the one-year initial temporary license policy and refers military spouses to other relevant information and resources.

Military spouses seeking recognition of their out-of-state license can access everything they need from this page, which helps ensure that spouses are able to fully benefit from the options Colorado provides.

## Relocated Spouse Licensure



### Relocated Spouse Licensure - Easing the Path to Work

DORA has implemented a  
distinctive program to support

## Creating a Simple Application Process<sup>6</sup>

Colorado's application process for military spouses is straightforward and clear. The state requires that a [Military Spouse Exemption Form](#) is submitted along with the specific application issued by the relevant licensing board. The form is clear and easily accessible, with a deliberate call-out to military spouses.

## Providing a Knowledgeable Point of Contact

DORA's Division of Professions and Occupations (DPO) has a military liaison who fields questions from veterans, members of the military, or military spouses regarding licensing requirements for the professions DPO regulates. The liaison provides some consistency in approach to helping military spouses as they seek license recognition and serves as both a resource for licensing agency and board staff, and as a referral point to other resources for active duty military, veterans, and military spouses.

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<sup>6</sup> DORA's website provides a [list of all professions for which it regulates licensure](#), with clear links to application and license renewal documents, application process information, links to relevant licensing boards, and applicable laws. This one-stop approach provides a consistent path to information for all of its license procedures and documents and promotes coordination of information across each licensing board.