



FACT SHEET: PRACTITIONERS AND THE COUNSELING COMPACT

The **Counseling Compact** will allow professional counselors in good standing to practice in *all states that join the compact*. This will remove the hurdle of getting an individual license in each state where they want to practice. The broad goal is to eliminate barriers to practice for counselors and barriers to treatment for clients, by ensuring cooperation among member states in regulating the counseling profession.

THE BASICS

- The Counseling Compact is an *interstate compact*, which is a constitutionally authorized contract between states.
- The Counseling Compact is the same in form and function as other occupational licensure compacts like the Nurse Licensure Compact, the Physical Therapy Compact, and the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact.
- The Counseling Compact authorizes in-person practice and telepractice in other compact member states based on a valid, unrestricted home state license.
- The practice of professional counseling takes place in the state in which the client is located at the time of the counselor-client encounter. Counselors must observe the laws and rules of the state in which they are practicing.
- The Counseling Compact will take effect when 10 states have enacted authorizing legislation.
- The National Center for Interstate Compacts at the Council of State Governments facilitated the development of the Compact and is providing technical assistance.

BENEFITS

- Preserves and strengthens state licensure systems
- Enhances public safety through a shared interstate database of licensure and disciplinary information, allowing for rapid verification of license status
- Improves access to professional counseling services
- Increases market opportunities for professional counselors by authorizing practice in all member states (including via telehealth)
- Enhances mobility for professional counselors
- Supports relocating military spouses
- Improves continuity of care when counselors or clients travel or relocate
- Ensures cooperation among compact member states in regulating the practice of professional counseling

DISPELLING THE MYTHS

- The compact will have no impact on scope of practice; state counseling practice acts will not be affected.
- Professional counselors are licensed in all 50 states, with consistency in licensure requirements.
- The compact will not affect the authority of states to protect public health and safety or to regulate the counseling profession as they do currently.
- There is no financial beneficiary of the Counseling Compact, and it is not intended to generate profits. Any fees collected will offset basic administrative costs.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Interstate compacts require a great deal of time to develop and implement.
- Each state must enact the Counseling Compact model legislation into its statutes in order to join the Compact.
- The goal is for this legislation to be introduced in several states during the 2021 legislative sessions, following a months-long stakeholder review and revision process (during fall 2020) of the draft legislation.
- The Counseling Compact will take effect when 10 states have enacted legislation. The goal is to begin state participation by 2024.

