

SUPPORT OF MILITARY FAMILIES

Military members report education opportunities for their children, and the ability for their spouse to maintain a career influence their decision to continue serving in the military.

The Department of the Air Force collaborated with policy professionals and subject matter experts to develop quantitative criteria and a framework to assess the quality of pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade public education offered by school districts that service Department of the Air Force installations and states' licensure portability.

WHY

This framework and criteria were developed to provide communities with information so they can determine how they can better support Airmen and Space Professionals and their families. The results of the assessment will now be one of several factors considered in future basing decisions and should incentivize community efforts to reduce educational and spousal employment challenges for military families. In turn, these efforts will strengthen member retention, improve quality of life and ease transitions for our Airmen and Space professionals.

We recognize improving schools and licensure portability will take time, but by evaluating them and making the findings available, we are providing information for communities to make appropriate changes where needed.

HOW

The attached categorizes support of military families for your installation in 2019. As you will see, the document is divided into two categories—public education and licensure portability. Each category received an overall assessment— green (highly supportive), yellow (moderately supportive) or red (least supportive).

The chart for public education displays how your installation ranks in comparison to all 154 Department of the Air Force Installations. For licensure portability, it shows how supportive the state statues are regarding military spouses' ability to transfer their license.

WHAT NOW

Department of the Air Force installation commanders should be prepared to support meetings with local government and civic leaders, as well as local school district representatives, to discuss the results of this assessment, and potential actions for improvement. Commanders should invite their school liaison who have established relationships with these officials and a deeper insight into the district structure, challenges, and opportunities.

Through School Liaison Community Partnerships such as STEM, Air Force installations can aid the improvement of education support programs by leveraging the installation resources at local

schools. For instance, MacDill Air Force Base offers a “flying classroom” experience to nearby STEM students.

Civic leaders near Air Force installations may work with state government officials to draft legislation to improve education policy and licensure reciprocity for military spouses. For example, civic leaders at Fairchild Air Force Base used a grassroots initiative to reach state senators.

Sharing proposed language and best practices amongst civic leader groups associated with the Air Force has also resulted in positive momentum and increased legislation passage in recent years. During Air Mobility Command’s 2019 Spring Rally, a panel of civic leaders spoke to commanders about the actions they had taken to help advance license reciprocity at their respective bases.

Commanders should also ensure incoming military families are informed of educational opportunities and license portability statutes in their respective states. Dyess Air Force Base uses sponsor outreach, newcomers’ orientation programs, and its Airman and Family Readiness Center and Child and Youth Education Services to increase awareness of Texas laws.

WHAT’S NEXT

These results will be updated annually. The approach was designed to be responsive and can evolve in response to feedback and availability of new data.

Attachments: Informational Material

Installation Results
Framework Overview
Assessment Overview

For more information about how the data was calculated, contact
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(for internal Air and Space Force use only, please do not provide contact information externally)



SUPPORT OF MILITARY FAMILIES

Professional Licensure Portability Impacts on Military Families



OBJECTIVE

Local support for military members and families who reside on and around our installations is an important factor in total force readiness. The strategic importance of this initiative is to ensure locations where we place our military members and their families provide the capabilities necessary to enhance our military family readiness and improves member retention. The Department of the Air Force is dedicated to bringing awareness to, and mitigating, factors that negatively affect readiness and retention for military members and their families as they transition from one duty location to the next.

BACKGROUND

Military families report that the decision to continue military service is influenced by the ability of their spouses to sustain careers. To address this issue, the Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force informed the National Governor’s Association that...

“Eliminating or mitigating these barriers will improve quality of life for our military families, and ease the stress of transferring duty stations with consideration for long-term career implications. We realize... changing laws or regulations regarding professional licensure will take time. Over the long term, however, leaders who want to make a difference for the military and our missions will make the most impact if we focus on what matters”

— February 23, 2018

In partnership with policy and industry experts, and key stakeholders, the Department of the Air Force developed an analytic framework using quantitative criteria. This methodology evaluates current state policies and programs intended to eliminate barriers to license portability for military spouses.

Occupations Reviewed:	
»» Accounting	»» Nursing
»» Cosmetology	»» Physical Therapy
»» Emergency Medical Service	»» Psychology
»» Engineering	»» Teaching
»» Law	»» Plus all other professions*

* This category included to measure any restrictions on other occupations not explicitly listed

FRAMEWORK

An assessment methodology for all 50 states and the District of Columbia that evaluates community support for military spouses in terms of licensure portability.

Professional Licensure Framework Criteria		
Category	Criteria	Source
Legislative Based Criteria (All Occupations Except Law)		
Compacts	Level of participation	State laws, compact organizations
	Level of accommodation afforded by compacts (ability to work)	
Military-Specific Rules	Temporary Licensing	State laws, executive orders
	Expedited Licensing	
	Endorsement of Licenses	
Other Barriers to License Accommodation	“Substantial equivalent requirements” language	State laws, executive orders
	“May accept” vs “shall accept”	
	Requirements beyond proof of home license (e.g., background materials, additional educational requirements)	
Law Criteria (Only Law)		
Military-Specific Rules	Temporary Licensing	State Supreme Court and Bar Association rules
	Length of time temporary licenses are valid	
Other Barriers to License Accommodation	Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination Score	State Supreme Court and Bar Association rules
	Has not failed new state’s bar exam previously	
	Additional educational and training requirements	
	Supervisory requirements	

Current as of July 2020



SUPPORT OF MILITARY FAMILIES

Public Education Impacts on Military Families



OBJECTIVE

Local support for military members and families who reside on and around our installations is an important factor in total force readiness. The strategic importance of this initiative is to ensure locations where we place our military members and their families provide the capabilities necessary to enhance our military family readiness and improves member retention. The Department of the Air Force is dedicated to bringing awareness to, and mitigating, factors that negatively affect readiness and retention for military members and their families as they transition from one duty location to the next.

BACKGROUND

Military families report that the decision to continue military service is influenced by public education opportunities for their children. To address this issue, the Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force informed the National Governor’s Association that...

“Eliminating or mitigating these barriers will improve quality of life for our military families, and ease the stress of transferring duty stations with consideration for long-term career implications. We realize improving schools... will take time. Over the long term, however, leaders who want to make a difference for the military and our missions will make the most impact if we focus on what matters.”

— February 23, 2018

In partnership with policy and industry experts, and key stakeholders, the Department of the Air Force developed an analytic framework using quantitative criteria to assess public education. This methodology assesses the school districts’ support for the unique needs of military children within military housing areas surrounding an installation.

FRAMEWORK

Careful consideration used to reduce the impact of socioeconomic factors while selecting criteria, and all data was obtained from publicly available and reputable sources.

- **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:** The most important area, this measures student learning and successful program completion.

- **SCHOOL CLIMATE:** Captures whether the schools provide an environment supportive of academic learning
- **SERVICE OFFERINGS:** Includes programs and staff designed to ease transitions and provide emotional and academic support to students.

Public Education Framework Criteria		
Category	Aggregated & Normalized Criteria on District Level	Source Data
Academic Performance	Graduation Rates	■
	Students’ Average Annual Learning Rate	●
School Climate	Chronic Absenteeism Rate	◆
	Suspension Rate	◆
Service Offering	Availability of free and/or universal Pre-Kindergarten	◆
	Student to Counselor Ratio	◆
	Student to Mental Health Support Ratio	◆
	Student to Nurse Ratio	◆
	Student to Teacher Ratio (Certified and Not Certified)	◆

Note: The shapes in the source data columns above correspond to the sources below.

Source Data
■ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: EDFacts Graduation Rates (District and School Level) (EDFacts is a U.S. Department of Education initiative to collect, analyze, and promote the use of high-quality, pre-kindergarten through grade 12 data.)
● STANFORD EDUCATION DATA ARCHIVE harnesses data from the U.S. Department of Education EDFacts data system and a number of other publicly available data files to aid scholars, policymakers, and educators. The information includes measures of academic opportunity and gaps based on socioeconomic status.
◆ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) (CRDC gathers information on student enrollment, education programs, and school services, broken down by race, sex, English proficiency, and disability. The data is collected biennially from every public school in the United States.)

Current as of July 2020

White Paper on Support of Military Families Initiative

Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment, and Energy

Introduction

Military families frequently relocate due to changing mission requirements or reassignments. These moves present challenges and stressors for military families. Additionally, career sustainment for military spouses and education for their children can significantly influence military members' decisions to continue service. To address this issue, the Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force informed the National Governors Association in their February 23, 2018, memorandum that "...we will encourage leadership to consider schools near bases and whether reciprocity of professional licenses is available for military families when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives." In response to this guidance, the Department of the Air Force launched the Support of Military Family initiative.

The Air Force collaborated with policy experts and key stakeholders (listed in Appendix A) to develop measures that provide a holistic analysis of occupational licensure portability and public education. These measures use analytic frameworks and quantitative criteria to evaluate data from reputable third party sources. The results inform military and civilian leadership of local family readiness factors across all Air Force installations in the United States and District of Columbia.

Licensure Background and Methodology

The occupational licensure portability measure evaluates challenges military spouses face in sustaining their professional careers when relocating to a new jurisdiction. Taking action to alleviate these challenges, the 2018 Secretaries of the Armed Forces memorandum targets efforts on six professional fields: medical, legal, engineering, education, accounting, and cosmetic arts. To better align with other Department of Defense efforts, the Air Force further defined the medical field to include physical therapy, emergency medical services, nursing, and psychology, and added an additional category to account for other occupations specifically listed in statutes. Additionally, the term "reciprocity" was interpreted to include all efforts that facilitate interstate licensure portability, and eliminate or mitigate barriers for military spouses. The goal is to collaborate with state leadership to eliminate licensing barriers without reducing a state's rights to address unique geographical concerns or additional requirements for public protection.

When developing the analytic framework, policy professionals determined that the preferred solution for accommodations is inter-state compacts. Compacts with broad state participation afford the most support to military spouses, as they provide the ability to work immediately. The experts also valued military specific rules that provide temporary licensing, endorse another states' license, or expedite the licensing process. Lastly, the Air Force evaluated state legislation, governor's executive orders, and state Supreme Court and bar association rules for language that eliminates other barriers to license accommodation.

The frameworks use quantitative criteria defined by distinct metrics. To account for varying requirements within professional occupations, the analysis focuses on areas where governors, state legislatures, and judicial organizations have the authority to take corrective action. Policy experts and stakeholders agree that this approach effectively addresses barriers to occupational licensure portability.

Licensure Framework and Criteria

The table below depicts how the analytic frameworks organize the criteria, and lists the authoritative information sources. Note that the legal profession requires a slightly differently framework that accommodates rules for admission to state bar associations, which are not subject to state legislative language nor a governor’s executive orders.

Licensure Framework for Occupations Except Law		
Category	Criteria	Source
Compacts	Level of participation	State laws, compact organizations
	Level of accommodation provided	
Military-Specific Rules	Endorsement of Licenses	State laws, executive orders
	Expedited Licensing	
	Temporary Licensing	
Other Barriers to Accommodation	“Substantial equivalent requirements” language	State laws, executive orders
	“May accept” vs “shall accept”	
	Requirements beyond proof of home license (e.g., background materials, additional educational requirements)	
Licensure for Law-Specific Occupations		
Category	Criteria	Source
Military-Specific Rules	Temporary Licensing	State Supreme Court, Bar
	Length of time temporary licenses are valid	Association rules
Other Barriers to Accommodation	Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination Score	State Supreme Court, Bar Association rules,
	Has not failed new state’s bar exam previously	
	Additional educational and training requirements	
	Supervisory requirements	

Interstate compacts can create more consistent rules that allow licensed professionals to work in all states that signed the compact charter. For over a decade, the Defense State Liaison Office has worked with state and national occupation boards and associations to create a consistent multi-state process that supports licensure portability through interstate compacts. This enables military spouse to more easily transfer their licenses to new states. Currently, the Defense State Liaison Office collaborates with state licensing boards and membership associations for eight of the nine occupations analyzed by the Department of the Air Force licensure portability measure.¹ These arrangements significantly impact military spouses by reducing the lost wages, time and effort required in transferring licenses.

Military-specific rules enable states to more quickly address the licensing needs of military spouses. The endorsement process allows state boards or regulators to recognize credentials in good standing from another state. The expedited licensure process allows state boards or regulators to process applications and license military spouses while continuing to validate documents from external states and institutions. Lastly, a temporary license allows a military spouse with a valid professional license from another state to secure employment while completing state licensing requirements or while awaiting primary source document verification.

There are many other barriers to accommodation. Legislative language regarding licensing for military spouses varies greatly from state-to-state and may prevent the military spouse from working immediately. While in theory temporary licensing should be easier for incoming military spouses, in

¹ Defense-State Liaison office. *Military Sate Policy Source*. <https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/>.

practice the legislative language often hinders the spouse's transition. The Defense State Liaison Office and the Department of Labor have shown that temporary licensing laws often contain phrases such as "substantially equivalent requirements" that create ambiguity regarding licensing eligibility for military spouses transferring from other states. Additionally, some state statutes specify that licensing boards "may accept" rather than "shall accept" a military spouse's professional license, allowing the board to have greater discretion in refusing temporary licensing. As a result, it becomes difficult to determine if these licensing laws actually help military spouses obtain a license in that state. This ambiguity can prevent military spouses from quickly assimilating into the workforce, resulting in lost wages and more stress on our military families.²

State court systems, not legislatures, create the rules regarding licensure for the legal profession. The Military Spouse Juris Doctor Network advocates for licensing considerations for military spouses in law occupations.³ With this advocacy, 34 states have developed rules to accommodate licensing for military spouses in these occupations. The results of these efforts are similar to those achieved by state legislation and compact participation for the other professions.

Public Education Background and Methodology

When relocating, military parents must go through the arduous process of researching schools, and often cite that their children find it difficult to assimilate into a new school environment.⁴ The stress associated with adjusting to a new school impacts the readiness and retention of military families. This issue was highlighted in the 2018 Secretaries of the Armed Forces memorandum, which stated in part "...incoming students face difficulties transferring credits between school systems, adjusting to varied curriculum, and joining sports teams or clubs after the start of the school year. Exclusion from extra-curricular activities is particularly challenging for our military children, as they are critical to social development and self-esteem." The Department of the Air Force is committed to collaborating with communities to ensure that excellent educational support factors are available at installations nationwide.

The Department of the Air Force used a full-spectrum approach to measure how schools could best support military children. The analytic framework includes academic performance, school climate, and service offerings. Careful consideration was given to incorporate quantitative criteria which would limit or mitigate the impact of socioeconomic factors. The methodology evaluates public school districts within the Military Housing Area zip codes surrounding an installation for all 50 states, and the District of Columbia, based on publicly available data from reputable sources. Policy experts and stakeholders agree that this approach effectively assesses school districts' support for the educational needs of military children.

Public Education Framework and Criteria

The table below depicts how the analytic framework organizes the assessed criteria. Academic performance measures a student's learning rate from third to eighth grade, as well as successful completion of high school. School climate captures whether the school provides an environment supportive of academic learning. Service offerings include personnel and programs intended to ease transitions and provide emotional and academic support to students.

² Defense-State Liaison office. Military State Policy Source. <https://statepolicy.militaryonesource.mil/>

³ Military Spouse JD Network. <https://www.msjd.org/>.

⁴ *Memorandum for the National Governors Association*. 23 February 2018. Release No: NR-061-18. U.S. Department of Defense

Public Education Framework		
Category	Criteria	Source Data
Academic Performance	Graduation Rates	Department of Education - ED Facts Graduation Rates
	Student's Average Annual Learning Rate	Stanford Education Data Archive - data pulled from the Department of Education
School Climate	Chronic Absenteeism Rate	Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection
	Suspension Rate	
Service Offerings	Availability of free and/or universal Pre-Kindergarten	
	Student to Counselor Ratio	
	Student To Mental Health Support Ratio	
	Student to Nurse Ratio	
	Student to Teacher Ratio (Certified and Not Certified)	

Academic performance standards are set at the state level with no standardized national measures. The decentralization of educational requirements for pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade education has resulted in a variety of options and exceptions that vary between districts and states. Additionally, states use independently developed metrics to compare their districts. For these reasons, there is no single data repository that provides a complete record of school performance at the district level. The National Assessment of Educational Progress allows for comparisons of academic performance among states but does not report metrics at the district level. These differences are overcome and normalized by the work of Dr. Sean Reardon, a professor in Education and a Senior Fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Policy experts recommend that the Department of the Air Force use the Stanford study to objectively compare public schools across districts and states.⁵ Dr. Reardon's methodology incorporates third through eighth grade nationally mandated tests, and applies the National Assessment of Education Progress standard (transcending state testing differences) to determine a student cohort's annual learning rate. The resulting evaluation measures how much academic learning a student achieves per school year.

School climate measures environmental factors that affect academic learning and educational success. It captures chronic student absenteeism and rates of disciplinary actions that result in a student's suspension from school⁶. When developing these criteria, care was taken to ensure the tabulation of discrete events so as to avoid double counting. For this category, lower rates are preferred.

Service offerings are focused on transition support for military children. These include access to programs and qualified staff who can provide specialized transition support, which can help reduce stressors on military families. These services also contribute to institutional synergy through academic and emotional support programs.

Conclusion

Military families move frequently. Licensure portability for military spouses and education support for military children is strategically important to bolstering resiliency in the force. The factors and methods described in this white paper produce objective assessments of Support of Military Family factors. However, the Department of the Air Force recognizes that states and local communities continue to work on improving their support for our personnel and installations, so the factors described here will evolve in response to feedback and the availability of new data.

⁵ Reference to Dr. Reardon's Growth Measure. Study is from the Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis

⁶ Chronic absenteeism is found in all 50 Every States Succeed Act (ESSA) metrics

APPENDIX A – Policy Professionals

Licensure Portability	Council of State Governments
	Department of Labor
	Military Spouse Juris Doctor Network
	National Conference of State Legislatures
	National Society of Professional Engineers
	Office of the Second Lady (Mrs. Pence)
Public Education	American Association of School Administrators
	Association of Defense Communities
	Blue Star Families
	Collaborative for Student Success
	Council of Chief State School Officers
	Department of Education
	Education Commission of the States
	Lexington Institute
	Military Child Education Coalition
	Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission
	National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
	National Governors Association
	National Math and Science Initiative
	National Military Family Association
	Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis
The School Superintendents Association	
Federal Government	Air National Guard (NGB) States’ Adjutant Generals (TAGs)
	Deputy Secretary of Defense (DepSecDef)
	Executive Office of the President, Domestic Policy Council (EOP/WHO)
	Office of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)
	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD P-R)
	United States Air Force Office of the Assistant Secretary for Installations, Environment and Energy (SAF/IE)
	United States Air Force Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services (AF/A1)
	United States Air Force Office of the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserves (SAF/MR)
	United States Army Office of Manpower and Reserve Affairs (Army MR)
	United States Navy Office of Manpower and Reserve Affairs (Navy MR)