



Professional Licensure: Reducing Barriers to the Workforce

Jim Condos, Vermont Secretary of State



PUBLIC PROTECTION

Licensure protects the public by ensuring that professionals are competent and safe.

Licensure requires qualifications are met before the license is issued.

If a licensee commits unprofessional conduct, they can be quickly removed from the marketplace.



WORKFORCE AND ECONOMY

1 in 4 jobs in the US require a government license.

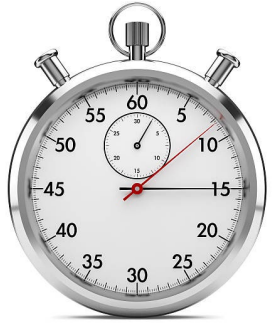
Licensure is a barrier to the workforce and increases the cost of doing business, restricts employment opportunities, restricts interstate services and disproportionately impacts certain populations (military, immigrants, criminal background).

Source: [Occupational Licensing: A Framework for Policymakers](#), US Department of the Treasury Office of Economic Policy, the Council of Economic Advisors, and the Department of Labor



Vermont is one of the less-regulated states when it comes to professional and occupational licensing. Our statutes and administrative rules are designed to promote the least restrictive method of regulation to maintain public protection.

Under the leadership of Secretary Jim Condos, with bipartisan cooperation from the Legislature and Governor, and with support of a Federal Department of Labor grant, OPR has crafted and implemented policies making Vermont a national leader in licensing reform.



Fast Track Endorsement

Individuals with an active license or certification in good standing and a minimum of three years of practice in another U.S. jurisdiction may join the licensed workforce in Vermont.

Foreign Credentials



Foreign-educated and trained refugees, immigrants and new Americans may expedite licensure in Vermont. Under OPR's rule for assessing professional credentials obtained outside the US, applicants with equivalent work experience, education, training, and/or examinations may join the licensed workforce.



Nurse Licensure Compact

Under the NLC, nurses can practice in other NLC states, without having to obtain additional licenses. The objective is to increase access to care by increasing the workforce while maintaining public protection at the state level.

Second Chance Determination

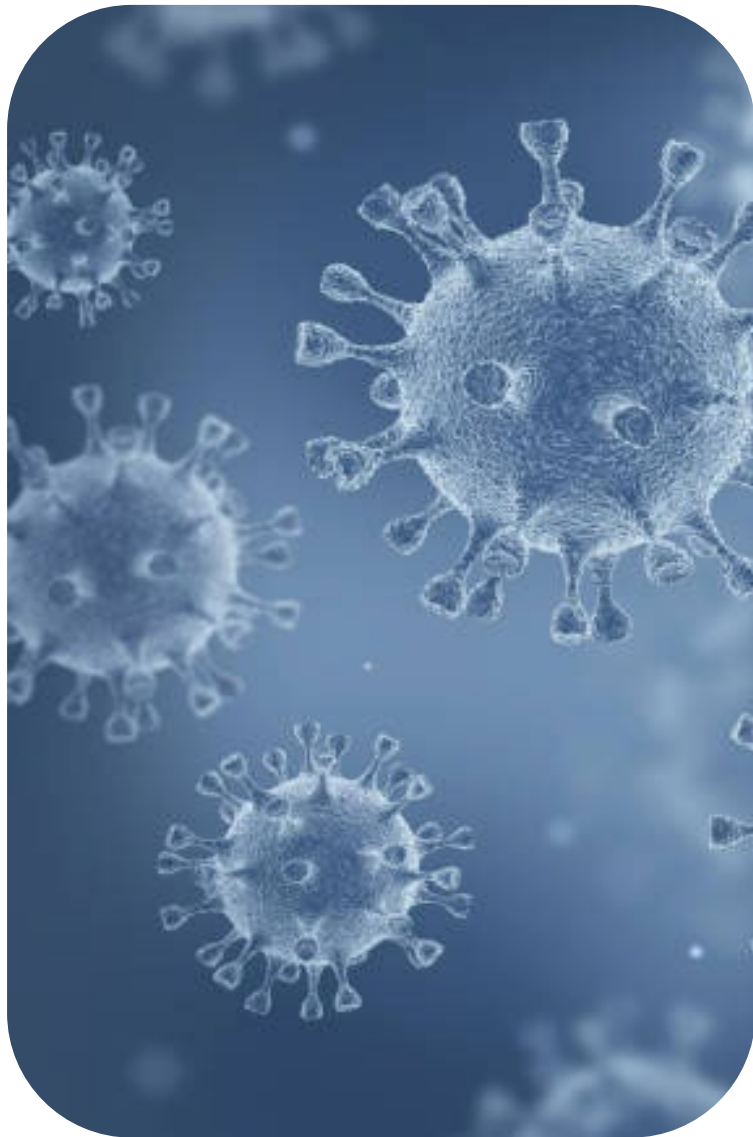


To an applicant, it is important to know if their criminal conviction is prohibitive before investing time or money in training and education. Through second chance determination, individuals with a criminal background may request a binding assessment regarding whether their criminal background would disqualify them from joining the licensed workforce in Vermont.

Military Experience

OPR works to use military experience and training towards qualifications for occupational licensure. For example, OPR currently licenses Military Medics as LPNs or LNAs and waives licensure fees for active military and veterans.





COVID-19

Vermont passed emergency legislation that enabled adequate health care workforce. In response to COVID-19, OPR was able to:

- Allow telehealth services without a license or registration
- Allow retired licensees to practice
- Establish emergency guidance for professionals
- Establish emergency licenses to applicants who could not test due to shutdowns

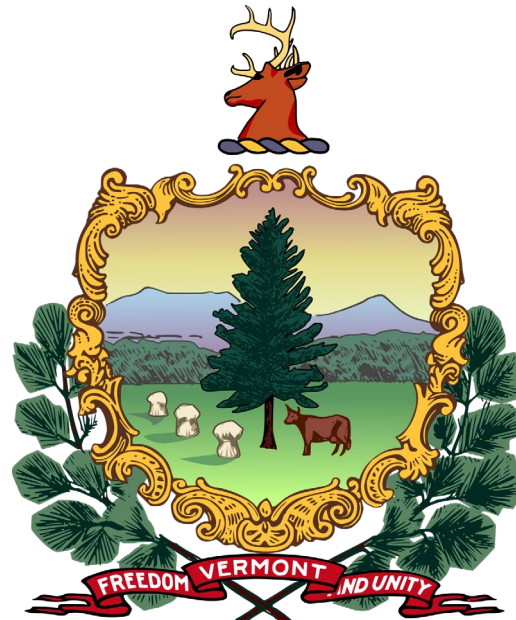
Telehealth

Reducing barriers to telehealth has gained substantial support in Vermont. OPR facilitated a working group in 2021 to provide recommendations to the Legislature regarding telehealth.

[H.655](#) is under consideration and is expected to pass. This bill sets up telehealth registration and licensure for out-of-state providers on a permanent basis.

While we work to reduce barriers, we maintain a focus on public protection, understanding that licensing and enforcement of licensing standards benefits both the profession regulated and the consumers they serve.

Licensing itself does not have to be complicated or difficult to protect the public. Regulation must only go as far as is absolutely necessary to achieve that goal. Sometimes that even means eliminating licensing requirements for certain professions where there is little to no risk of harm to the public.



Vermont Secretary of State, Jim Condos

<https://sos.vermont.gov/opr/>