**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Supporting Military Spouses in Licensed Occupations**

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GRACE MCCALL: So without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Pam Frugoli. Pam?

PAM FRUGOLI: Thank you, Grace. I'm Pam Frugoli with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. And I work on our career information tools such as O\*NET and CareerOneStop and also on credentials including occupational licenses. ETA has known its third year of providing grants to support states to review their occupational licensing requirements to increase license portability across state lines and to remove barriers to entry particularly for effective groups such as military spouses, veterans, and transitioning service members, as well as others.

Joe will review the particular impacts of occupational licensing on military spouses later. We want to acknowledge that states have accomplished a lot in recent years with regard to passing legislation to offer greater select-ability and more options to military spouses in licensed occupations who move into their state, things that can help them obtain permission to work more quickly and with less burden.

However, after a state passes legislation, it is up to the regulatory agencies and individual licensing boards to implement these practices and make sure that the staff know and understand the options and that military spouses can readily learn about the options available to them. And that's who we will learn from today.

We will learn from some of the states that are doing a great job in this area. So I want to introduce our webinar presenters. And first, our goal is that we will highlight the importance and benefits of improving military spouse license recognition practices, showcase real world promising practice examples from across the country, and provide an opportunity to share your experiences and ask questions of our speakers. So we do have five experienced experts in military spouse policy and state occupational licensing practices.

Joe Quick is a consultant with Maher & Maher who has a background in workforce development and economic development strategy, training, work-based learning solutions, and talent pipeline strategy –and is working with us at the Department of Labor on this project. Then we have Nathan Batchelder.

He's the director of external affairs for Colorado's Division of Professions and Occupations, which under the state's department of regulatory agencies, licenses more than 50 professions and occupations in Colorado. He works closely with external partners and other stakeholders as it relates to the division's programs offered to veterans and other members of the larger military community seeking professional licensure.

Laura Bravo is a policy analyst with the Division of Professions and Occupations. And she acts as the division's liaison to the veteran and military communities. This includes helping veterans, members of the military, and military spouses seeking to obtain license recognition in Colorado and working with licensing board streamline licensing policies.

Mike Arismendez comes to us from the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation where he serves as the deputy executive director. He has been involved in public service for approximately 30 years.

And Jennifer Schultz is a program principal with the National Conference of State Legislatures, covering a wide range of policy areas from the environment to military and veterans affairs. She also contributes to occupational licensing and workforce development projects. I'm looking forward to hearing from all of you. And I will now turn it over to Joe Quick to set the stage for our promising practices work.

JOE QUICK: Thanks, Pam. And thanks, again, to all of our other speakers for joining us today and to all of you for joining us on this webinar. I'm going to start out by providing some context for why this issue is so important in getting into a little bit more detail. As of October 2018, there were more than 630,000 active duty military spouses in the United States. Due to relocation of their active duty spouses, military spouses are 10 times more likely to have moved to a new state in the last year.

So with those frequent moves making it easier for military spouses in licensed occupations to work as they move from state to state is not only vital to their financial stability and to the financial stability of military families, but also to reducing stress and supporting military spouse health and wellbeing and to the military readiness of our service members. So that's why we think that this effort is so important. So we love this quote and we'd like to use this as a brief introduction to the topic. This quote comes from the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, who we have on the call with us today.

And we feel like it really makes the point that military families have served our country. And so it's our duty and commitment to serve military spouses by making it easy to get to work in their licensed occupation. So I'd also like to take this opportunity to also thank any of you on the call today who may be active duty service members, spouses, or veterans. So military spouses are also typically a highly educated and skilled source of talent more so than the general population. And so it's very important that we help them to obtain their licenses as they move across state lines.

About 35 percent of military spouses work in a licensed occupation. So making it easier for military spouses in these licensed occupations to maintain their license amid the multiple challenges associated with relocation to a new state is really important to avoiding gaps in employment.

Some of the challenges that often arise from frequent relocation with an occupational license include differences in state laws and requirements, multiple application fees as they continue to move, and inconsistent processes and timelines from state to state. Our promising practice scan focus primarily on the top 10 states for military spouses in the U.S., which are indicated on this map.

They include California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. You'll hear shortly from Jennifer Schultz from the National Conference of State Legislatures about some overall national trends. But in examining the best practices of these 10 states, we surface several promising practices that state occupational licensing boards and agencies might consider when implementing military spouse friendly options for license recognition.

In recent years, many states have recognized the challenges military spouses face during frequent relocation and have responded with legislation to create less burdensome license recognition options. U.S. DOL has worked with several other partners to research promising practices in the military spouse license recognition field and is in the process of creating resources for three different audiences. First, military spouses themselves. Also, workforce development professionals in American Job Centers across the country. And our audience today, state licensing boards and agencies.

In addition, our team also includes two military spouses with whom we can validate our work and approaches and make connections to important military spouse serving organizations, many of which are represented on the call today as attendees as well. So now I would like to invite Jennifer Schultz to talk a little bit about the National Conference of State Legislatures' focus on this issue and why this is important to spouses based on her experience. Jennifer, I will turn it over to you.

JENNIFER SCHULTZ: OK. Thank you, Joe. Hi, everyone. Thank you for having me today. I will be speaking about NCSL and the work we've been doing to engage state legislators and legislative staff on issues surrounding occupational licensing for military spouses.

I will also share an overview of legislative activity in 2019 across the states. But first, you might be wondering what is NCSL? We were founded in 1975. We are a bipartisan policy research organization that serves state legislators and legislative staff in all 50 states and territories. That's almost 8,000 legislators and 30,000 staff.

In many ways, we are an extension of the state legislature, providing support, connections, ideas, and a strong voice in DC on behalf of states. I've included our website at the bottom of this slide. I'd encourage you all to check it out. We have information on almost every policy area imaginable including military and veterans affairs. In 2007, our executive committee created a task force on military and veterans affairs to examine issues affecting military community relations and the health and wellbeing of service members, veterans, and their families. We currently have 44 members from 22 states and DC.

Occupational licensing has been a recurring topic of discussion among task force members since at least 2011, when we began having briefings from Department of Defense officials and other offices at our meetings. Initially, the focus was more on returning veterans given the high unemployment rate at the time. But there's been a clear shift in the past couple years to military spouses. I think there are several reasons for this. Many of the legislators on our task force have military installations in their districts, so they're hearing firsthand about the difficulty of transferring licenses between states.

The legislators that I've worked with also understand the importance of the military presence to their state and local economy and are hearing from DOD how quality of life for military families –whether that's employment, schools, housing –affect basing decisions and the readiness of the military force as a whole, because when a spouse can't find work, the service member is less likely to stay in the military. Well, I think we lost a photo. I will tell you about the first photo on the slide you can see. That was from a site visit to joint base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska in 2013.

I had another photo, as well, from our most recent meeting at the Pentagon in December. We met Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson at that time, who has also been active on occupational licensing issues.

Aside from our military task force, we are also engaged in a multiyear project titled "Occupational Licensing: Assessing State Policy and Practice." This is a partnership between NCSL, the Council of State Governments, and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. We are currently in year three of a six-year project that's funded by two consecutive grants from the U.S. Department of Labor.

The partnership has two primary objectives, which are listed on the slide. In addition, there is also an emphasis on four population groups that are disproportionately affected by occupational licensing regulations, one of which is veterans and military spouses, which is how I became involved.

Last summer, the partners published separate reports for each population in a barriers to work series that's available at NCSL.org. There's also a link on my final slide to that report. The partners provide personalized assistance to 16 states, which are shown on the map. These consortium states benefit from multistate team meetings, in-state meetings, targeted state specific technology assistance, and support for state action plan development and implementation.

Along with the technical assistance provided to states, the project maintains a variety of resources and expert contacts related to occupational licensing. These resources include a database of licensing requirements for 34 –soon to be 50, I'm told –occupations that are licensed in 30 or more states and require a four-year degree or less. We also publish regular reports on trends and best practices related to licensing generally, as well as licensing's effect on the four populations I mentioned earlier including military spouses.

In 2018 and 2019 legislative sessions, state lawmakers introduced more than 100 bills related to occupational licensing for military spouses. I've attempted to separate these bills into categories, which I've listed on the slide. The examples in parentheses are all bills that were enacted. As you can see, Nebraska and Oklahoma waived licensing fees.

Many states entered an interstate licensure compact for physical therapy. New Mexico and North Dakota expedited teacher licensure. Mississippi expedited licenses for all military spouses by setting a time limit for boards to issue or deny a license. And then finally, we've seen some states take things a step further by exempting military spouses from their requirements of licensure.

In 2018, Utah passed Senate Bill 227, which allows military spouses to practice a number of occupations in the state without requiring a distinct license in Utah as long as they hold a current license in another state which is in good standing and pay all applicable fees. Arizona, Arkansas, and South Dakota enacted similar legislation this year. And that is all I have for now. I'm happy to take questions at the end.

MR. QUICK: Great. Thank you, Jennifer. And to that point, if you have any questions for our speakers today or as we move through the material, we will have a Q&A portion later on in the webinar.

You are also welcome to type questions into the chat window on the left there. We will capture them as we move through. So thanks, again, Jennifer. We appreciate all the great work that NCSL is doing around this issue and the perspective from a national focus that you brought to us today. Obviously, a priority around the country is a lot of the work going on.

So speaking of, I would now like to introduce Nathan Batchelder and Laura Bravo and give them a chance to talk about the efforts and commitment of the State of Colorado surrounding military spouse license recognition and what's been working well for them. So I will kick it over to Laura.

LAURA BRAVO: Thanks. So I'm Laura Bravo with the Colorado Division of Professions and Occupations. And I'm going to kick it off here and then turn it over to Nathan in a minute. So basically, here in Colorado we had a state law that was enacted in 2012, that allows military spouses in most professions licensed by the Division of Professions and Occupations who have been relocated to Colorado by military orders with a license in good standing from other states to practice for up to one year from the date they move before obtaining a Colorado license.

After that end of the first year residency from the date that they've been moved to Colorado, they still will have to then get a Colorado license. But they have that one year exemption from licensure for most professions. We don't quite have numbers on the number of military spouses working under this exemption since they actually aren't required to notify us or register in any way.

We do know that once the year is up, we often have military spouses apply for licensure in nursing, barber and cosmetology, and dental professions. We also have applicants in massage therapy, occupational therapy, and respiratory therapy, as well as various other professions that we regulate here.

And so again, this one-year exemption from licensure is for military spouses adaptable to most of the professions licensed by us, the Division of Professions and Occupations. That's over 50 professions. There are a few exemptions, so people that wouldn't be able to use this one year special status basically.

And so professions that wouldn't be able to use this would be engineers, land surveyors, architects, optometrists, physicians, physician assistants, and anesthesiologist assistants. Everybody else licensed by us here at DPO, the Division of Professions and Occupations, are able to take advantage of that.

So the other thing we have here in Colorado is that we're a member of multiple multistate compacts, such as the enhanced nurse licensure compact and the interstate medical licensure compact. So that would obviously be available to military spouses as well. So the other thing we wanted to talk about here was that military spouses with questions can contact the staff at the relevant program or the board. Or they can actually contact me directly since I act as the division's liaison to the military communities, which would include military spouses. And this really also would assist military members and veterans who have licensure questions as well.

NATHAN BATCHELDER: And thanks, Laura. My name is Nathan Batchelder. I'm the director of external affairs here for the Division of Professions and Occupations. And following up on the overview that Laura gave you, we also wanted to touch quickly on the actual larger veterans programs that we offer for veterans and members of the military community.

One of those programs is the Veterans Occupational Credentialing and Licensing program, or VOCAL. And the VOCAL program actually stems from a House bill that was passed in 2016, that actually mandates all state agencies in Colorado to implement a way to streamline licensure requirements for members of the military and veterans.

Our program does this by identifying military equivalency and looking at ways to streamline policies and rules for members of the military and veterans to actually leverage their prior military experience for professional licensure. For this we've also created an advisory committee that includes both representatives of other state agencies, federal partners, and other military partners around Colorado. One the shining examples of our VOCAL program is actually the rules and policies that have been adopted by the board of nursing.

For example, the Board of Nursing has rules and policies that allow a veteran to submit their documentation of their training, experience, or other service within the military that they had prior to seeking licensure in Colorado. Board staff and division staff will actually assist them in demonstrating the experience to their boards for taking advantage of their prior military experience. This includes analyzing their training, their education, and other experience that they may have had in the military that, again, they can leverage for a streamlined pathway to licensure for them.

To date, we've actually had 10 applicants that were veterans that have used these rules and policies to actually bypass some or all of the nursing education requirements that are required for licensure. And we think this is a specific example, a specific pathway of actually streamlining licensure requirements and reducing the red tape, per se, for members of the military. And with that, that wraps up Colorado's portion.

MR. QUICK: Thank you, Nathan and Laura. I think a lot of great effort's happening there in Colorado. And as we move through our scan of what states we're doing, Colorado's a really great example of specific legislation. And we'll see in some examples, some great ways that they're implementing those policies with regard not only to military spouses, but to the overall military community.

So I appreciate you talking a little bit about how your military spouse efforts fit in with the rest of what Colorado is doing for that military community. So now I would like to turn it over to Mike Arismendez to discuss the efforts, commitment, and approach that Texas has in serving military spouses. Mike, the floor is yours.

MIKE ARISMENDEZ: Thanks, Joe. And I appreciate everybody being on the line. And thank you for allowing me to participate in this, what we consider to be a very important webinar, and also to be able to provide information about what the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation has done historically and what we hope to continue to accomplish and provide for military spouses when they come to Texas to be able to provide those opportunities for them.

As mentioned earlier, my name is Mike Arismendez. I am the deputy executive director for the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation; and of course, we affectionately refer to it as TDLR because it's much easier to do that than to actually say the entire name.

But at TDLR, what we have done is we've worked to establish a process by which military spouses can come into the state and be able to apply and receive expedited consideration for their license that they would previously have held in a previous state. What we do is we go through and we identify states that would have a substantially equivalent license requirement as we do here in Texas and to be able to get the license holder to begin to start working in Texas and hold a Texas license.

Our website has some great information, if you're interested in doing that, on how to apply for a license, which I'm sure they'll probably show, but it's at TDLR.Texas.gov. And what we have done in order to expedite and help out is that we've created an application that is specific for military veterans and military spouses to be able to identify to our staff what the application is and the process by which they should be able to use to expedite the review of that application.

We waive and issue application fees when the applications have been submitted. What we did historically is we worked extensively to gather the various MOS codes and relate those to codes that would relate to our various license types in Texas that's regulated by TDLR.

We have just completed our legislative session. I can tell you that we're very active in the legislative process to ensure that anything that's being applied and being related to military service members or also military spouses that we work extensively with the legislator to ensure that we are able to open up those avenues by which they're able to obtain their license.

I can talk about one particular bill that came through that we wanted to make sure that it was not a detrimental impact on military spouses. The bill that was going through the legislature essentially related to the authority of certain military spouses to engage in a business or occupation in Texas.

We worked with the bill author to substitute language that would allow for agencies within Texas to develop rules that would not only authorize the military spouses to be engaged in business or the occupation in which they're applying for, but to also receive a license to do that with. The issue was the bill simply allowed for them to be able to work in Texas without actually holding a license. While that on the face of it seemed like it was a great idea, there were some issues in that we have other statutory requirements that require that anyone employing an individual in that occupation has to have a license.

So we worked to be able to ensure that there was a change in the bill that would allow for them to be able to develop rules, or allow us to be able to develop rules that would allow the individuals applying – military spouses coming into Texas to also to be able to obtain a license when they do that.

The other issue that we saw with the bill on the face of it was that once that military spouse left Texas, then they would not have a license to be able to provide to the next state which they moved to. So we're always working with the legislature to ensure that we provide and remove any barriers of entry for military spouses, service members, and veterans as they come into the state of Texas.

I can tell you that since 2011, TDLR has worked to provide language to the military in helping to assist the military community. In the last three years, we have provided over 1,200 licenses in the 39 different programs that TDLR regulates to military spouses. And in that, we've provided over 500 licenses as an example to the applicants in the massage therapy industry, over 300 licenses in the speech-language pathologist industry.

So we're always looking to see how we can assist military spouses coming into Texas and allow them to be able to – (inaudible) – either the occupation or actually any type of business opportunity they would want to be able to pursue.

We work with the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans here in Texas. This council was created so that there was any state agencies to provide information to show how they assist veterans and service members and their families. There's various work groups that we also serve on. But we take the information, we provide it to the Texas Legislature to see how we can improve the statutes that are currently in place, and legislation can be submitted to assist in providing that avenue by which they can obtain their license.

I can tell you that, on an internal note, we're very focused on the veterans and the military spouses. We actually have developed and created and established a veterans employee assistance organization within TDLR. And this veterans group that is within our agency is a valuable asset to provide insight on the needs of veterans, service members, their families as they come into the state of Texas. So we're actively seeking avenues by which we can assist military spouses in seeking employment and/or a business opportunity in Texas.

So again, I would suggest that you review our website, which is TDLR.Texas.gov/military.HTM, to be able to get the information that you need there on how you can obtain the license, the application process by which we seek, and what we have done in Texas to be able to provide the ease of military spouse or the other service members and veterans in Texas. So that's what we're doing in Texas, a short synopsis. I thank you. And I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

MR. QUICK: Thank you, Mike. So lots of great work happening both in Texas and Colorado. And thank you both for sharing those efforts both on the legislative side, then also in talking a little bit about how once laws that are focused on military spouse occupational licensure are in place, how do we make sure that they are being implemented well and that people know about them and that military spouses are supported throughout the process? So with that, we're going to dive a little bit further into the promising practices that we've captured.

The following practices cover both adoption of prominent licensing recognition options and promising approaches to clearly explaining and presenting those options to military spouses on websites, applications, and other resources.

OK. So first off, the first promising practice is adopting license recognition options for military spouses starting with legislation. So Jennifer talked a little bit about the great work that's happening around the country. And we've heard references to interstate licensing compacts and agreements as well. What you see on this slide here are a hue of the key occupations like nursing, physical therapy, EMS, teaching, and lawyers, all of which have licensing compacts or agreements.

And that's another great approach for making sure that license recognition options are available not only to military spouses, but to others as well. So as laws and policies are established in each state, the impact really depends, however, on the extent to which they're consistently implemented, promoted, and operationalized by state agencies and licensing bodies.

What you see here are three major options in license recognition, the first being licensing by endorsement, also often referred to as recognition. And this is when a licensing board issues a permanent license to applicants. You hold a valid license in another jurisdiction with similar standards and without requiring further examination.

The next is temporary licensing, which allows an individual to practice their profession for a designated period of time while fulfilling the requirements to qualify for a permanent license in their new state.

The third is expedited application review, which allows military spouses to begin work in their field quickly upon relocation to a state by speeding up the application process. Our promising practice state scan revealed several states that exhibit many of the best practices and has made a strong commitment to accommodating military spouses as they move to their new states. We are going to talk about a few more of them now. In order for licensing recognition options to help military families, spouses must be able to learn about and use those options easily.

The following approaches that many states are taking to ensure that spouses can easily find and quickly understand the options available to them include: prominently displaying info about the options for military spouses, making sure that it's easy to find on websites, that their websites are easy to navigate, and find information for military spouses; using the phrase "military spouse" in menu items and links, making sure that military spouses get a clear call-out and they understand and identify with the labels being used on a website or on a resource so that it resonates with them; providing clear links to applications and the application process making them easy to find and easy to understand how to get to the next steps; and using plain language to describe the process overall.

So here are a couple of great examples from our friends in Colorado and Texas. These images you saw as they were speaking as well. This first one is from the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies. And they have a clear landing spot for relocated spouse licensure and a lot of great resources available. So you see here there's a clear call-out to spouses and an easily navigable website to figure out where to find information and where to get to the next step in the process. The next is from the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. And you heard from Mike about their easy-to-find information about their military supplemental application.

They also have dedicated areas on their website for military service members, veterans, and spouses clearly calling out spouses as a separate audience. The next promising practice is creating a simple application process. So states are also working hard to make sure spouses can access license recognition options through straightforward application processes. The following are promising approaches states are using to be sure spouses know how to get through the application process as they move to their new state.

That includes modifying existing applications. So many states put information on their current applications that allows military spouses to self-identify and then indicate any benefit or any accommodations they may have in the licensing process as they are seeking license recognition in that state. The second is using supplemental application forms. So as Mike mentioned in Texas, they use a supplemental application form that is very easy to find and targeted specifically toward the military and military spouse audience to capture information and describe the process that is required of them.

And then a third promising practice is including easily located and comprehensive frequently asked questions, documents, fact sheets, and scenarios. So many states provide a detailed FAQ to help military spouses figure out the license recognition process and also provide some scenarios of spouses in moving across state lines so that they understand that there may be benefits that fit with their own scenario based on the scenarios presented. A couple of examples –the first is from the Texas Board of Nursing.

So simple application process, simple way to find the application process –you'll see there on the right side of the slide that it's very easy to find information for military spouses. Also from Texas, this is a form that Mike mentioned earlier in the webinar. This is the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation Military Spouse Supplemental Application. So not only does the application carry spouses make it clear that this is the form they should be using and attaching with their other license applications, but also gives very explicit instructions about how to take advantage of their accommodations for military spouses.

Another promising practice we identified and was discussed in Jennifer's presentation is that many states waive application fees. So to alleviate the financial burden of application fees on military spouses who might move as often as every two years, many states also provide fee waivers to military spouses and make this information easy to find on their website as Florida has done here.

You'll see that the application requirements highlighted in this slide include information about waiving of application fees. So full implementation of military spouse license recognition options also includes training for licensing board staff so that these critical partners are aware of the options available to military spouses and how they should access them.

So in Texas, as you heard, particularly during initial rollout of new law, they provided frequent training to licensing board staff and a detailed FAQ document to help staff answer questions and provide superior customer service to military spouses looking to have their licenses recognized. So training of staff and making sure that people are aware of the options that are available and that they understand how you help military spouses access information and those accommodations is really important.

Next promising practice is providing a knowledgeable point of contact. So many states have established a point of contact and subject matter experts in military veteran and military spouse license recognition options. Colorado, as you heard, has taken this approach through Laura's role. And the support really focuses not only on military spouses directly in having someone point of contact for them, but also to licensing boards and agency staff to create consistency across the state with the information that's being shared in making sure that there's really someone knowledgeable that everyone can go to, to get that information.

So that wraps up the promising practices for license recognition for military spouses list that we created. And we have selected some great practices from around the country that highlight those fixed promising practices. What we'd like to do now is open up the line after having reviewed some of those promising practices in case you have any questions for our speakers or if you have examples of how your state is implementing and promoting military spouse occupational license recognition options. So feel free if you have any questions. It looks like we've had a couple come through so far. If you have any questions, feel free to address them or pose them in the main chat window by typing them in there.

Or if you'd like to share with us vocally either a question or something that your state is doing to implement military spouse license recognition options, feel free to \*6 and unmute your phone to ask the question or provide us with some perspective on what you're doing. We'll give it a few moments to see questions come in. And again, if you'd like to speak up, \*6 to unmute your phone.

MS. FRUGOLI: This is Pam Frugoli. I just wanted to acknowledge that some of the questions that are coming in are really like legal questions that we are not prepared or qualified to address whether or not there have been constitutional challenges. And also there's a question about nurses accepting waived fees. I guess that's an issue that the states have to work out. They will often waive fees to make it less burdensome because military spouses can often move every two years. Now if nurses can't accept that, then certainly they would want to pay the fees.

But for other occupations, like for – (inaudible) – perhaps or cosmetologists, it can be with salaries that are not a tie, it can be a barrier. So certainly that would be something that we would expect the Department of Defense to address and that we would not get involved in. I see someone is saying that the nursing industry is from the Army and the Air Force, not from the States. And if anyone else has information on this that they can share, feel free to speak up. And we can do some research into this.

MR. QUICK: This is Joe. There's a question that came in about any jurisdictions having due process or constitutional challenges when military spouses are granted license with lower standards for entry than others. As Pam, mentioned, obviously, a lot of the legal and constitutional efforts are things that states have to tackle on their own. But I will mention that part of the effort of providing license recognition options to military spouses is to easy the process and recognize some of the critical and unique challenges that military spouses have in frequently relocating.

Those efforts are not meant to lower the standards for their occupational license or to weaken the occupational license itself or the standards and requirements that go along with them, but to loosen the process a bit or provide some specific accommodation for quickly moving military spouses through that process. So I just wanted to mention that in response to that question. It looks like we've got a few others coming through, so we'll take a look at those and field them.

And just as a reminder, if you'd like to speak up, you'll need to \*6 to unmute your phone if you've got anything you'd like to share with us about what your state is doing.

MS. FRUGOLI: Also, if people would like to share practices that they do in their states, we'd be happy to hear those too. It doesn't have to be questions. It can be offerings.

MR. QUICK: So I have a question that I'd love to ask of Laura as we're waiting for other questions to come through, Laura and Nathan from Colorado. Laura, can you talk a little bit about how your role impacts communication across multiple boards about the benefits that might be available to military spouses? A great practice that you've established in Colorado to have a point of contact, do you have frequent contact with multiple boards? And how do they really utilize you as a resource to know what the benefits to military spouses are?

MS. BRAVO: Thanks for that question. So I'd say generally speaking here in Colorado, the main contacts that I have, all the boards are within our division that are being everyone is aware of my role and I'll get periodic questions.

And besides that, though, my main contact is with the Board of Nursing because we have a much higher number of military spouses and members of the military and veterans who are coming to get the nursing licensure processes. And besides that, we have a specific licensure staff that staffs all of the boards' licensure applications and responds to them and processes them. And so I'll work closely with the supervisors of that unit.

And usually, it's just kind of day-to-day questions of, is this person –would this be a military spouse or not? They moved. They're on their way here. They haven't quite got here yet. Or what profession would this be applicable to, because we do have some of those exclusions from our one-year exemptions.

So I'd say generally speaking, because we're a consolidated umbrella agency, it's a pretty easy point of contact for members of the boards in the programs and then also our centralized licensing staff who serve all of those various boards and programs. And besides that, though, I do also just answer some calls from numerous military spouses and members of the military and veterans who also have those questions.

And for them it seems like it's just been really helpful because trying to get ahold of somebody at our boards, they're very busy. Sometimes things fall through the cracks –they're waiting on approvals and we're not updating them maybe as timely as we could be. So I'm able to just help keep them informed of the process.

Our processes can take a while. For example, one year exemption from licensure, it could take a little while to process an application. So letting them know, here's where you are on the time line. Here is the next meeting date when your application will be reviewed or heard or something along those lines. I'm not sure if that answers your question, if that helps.

MR. : That was great. A little bit more detail and perspective on the role that you provide. Thank you.

MS. BRAVO: Sure.

MR. QUICK: So I guess I have a question. As other questions are coming through, I have a question for both Colorado and Texas being on the line here and anyone who might be on the phone to represent their states and what they are doing. Is there anything on the horizon regarding additional accommodations in the licensing process for military spouses for your state?

Are there any things that you are currently looking into or interested in with regard to additional practices or anything that's going on with states that might be on the call but didn't present today to let us know what you're doing in your state. I'll pose that question to take a look and see what other questions are coming in.

MR. ARISMENDEZ: Well, this is Mike from Texas. And as I mentioned, we just came off a legislative session, so we have pretty much taken the extent of the recommendations made by the various state agencies in the Texas Veterans Commission to the legislature.

They have then taken that information and been able to ramp up and modify some of the current statutes that would enable military veterans, military service members, and military spouses to be able to enter into the workforce or be able to start a business. So we will probably begin that process again in the next maybe six months or so once we've kind of ramped down in order to ramp back up.

But I think we're always seeking opportunities by which we can provide an entry into the workforce. And being able to obtain occupational licenses seems to be a very important part of what the legislature is seeking and be able to assist veterans and military spouses.

MR. QUICK: Thanks, Mike. I appreciate it.

MS. FRUGOLI: So this is Pam. I'm just going to say we have a question about what is the exact definition of a military spouse? Is it universal? And I think that that is often defined in the legislation, so it probably is not universal.

So many states, I think, require them to be married to someone who is on active duty and to have permanent change of station orders. But I think some other states have said they are also considered military spouses in getting special conditions for up to one year after their military member is separated from the military. So I think that it's usually the permanent change of station orders that are used, but could also be transition orders in that case.

And I think there's also a question about whether the Department of Defense has endorsed these best practices. And yes. We're working very closely with the Department of Defense-State Liaison Office. So they've actually worked with the state legislatures on passing legislation. But they identified that implementation was an issue in getting the word out about what the laws were to military spouses.

So we've been working with them. And that's what this outreach and technical assistance project is about, is to make everyone aware of what is provided by the law, critical to us. I see some people sharing practices. That's great.

MR. QUICK: Yeah. That's great. And just a reminder that this webinar is being recorded. So some of the practices that are being entered into the main chat are something that you'll be able to get back to as well. So there are a few other questions coming in.

And there will be some additional opportunity to answer some of these questions and to speak with us directly about promising practices for license recognition for military spouses. But we have a couple of other things to let you know about before we wrap up today. So thank you for your great questions. I am going to hand it over to Pam to talk a little bit about some other resources that we're creating within our team.

MS. FRUGOLI: Thank you, Joe. Yes. So we have a great overview document that looks at promising practices from a variety of states. And that's the main one that you see here. And then we also highlight three states –of course, Colorado and Texas, which were featured in this webinar, and also Florida.

So we go into more detail on those states. So there's actually four documents in the final stages of making them ready and approved. And we will be posting them with the webinar recording and also be sending it out to those who signed up for today's webinar. So you will receive those. Want to talk about consultation that's available?

MR. QUICK: Yes. Thanks, Pam. So in addition, our team also has the capacity to provide some one-on-one website and resource recommendations and some technical assistance to states interested in improving their practices, and connecting to other states who might have solved procedural challenges or implemented some of these promising practices. So our team, which I mentioned also includes a couple of military spouses who also provide their feedback from their perspectives on ways that you might be able to improve some of your practices.

So we are making available promising practice consultation calls and website and resource review to take a look at some of the great things you might be doing already and make some recommendations based on the promising practices we're seeing around the country of ways that you might be able to make your processes of license recognition even more friendly to military spouses.

So if you could bring that poll out, Grace, that would be great. We wanted to capture on this webinar, those of you who might be interested in that one-on-one technical assistance, if you type in your name, title, organization, and email address here, that will allow us to follow up with you directly. But I've also included on the slide my email address to request that.

So today if you know that your state could benefit or your licensing board could benefit from some technical assistance, go ahead and type your information into the polling box. It is a private poll box. So whatever you type in there will only be seen by our team to be able to follow up with you. So we'll leave that up there for a few minutes. But with that, I will turn things back over to Pam to close us out.

MS. FRUGOLI: Thank you, Joe. I just want to say as a reminder, this webinar is being recorded. And it's a great resource to pass along to colleagues and licensing partners who may not have been able to attend this afternoon. We often find that we get fivefold the number of use with subsequent recordings as we did on the original, even though we've had very good attendance today.

So I just want to thank everyone for joining us today and thank each of our speakers and presenters. And thank you for sharing your practices in the chat. And I'm really excited about all the good work that's going on in helping to stimulate even more work in other places by sharing these promising practices.

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