NCSBN
Leading Regulatory Excellence

NLC
NURSE LICENSURE COMPACT

Information for Students and Recent Nurse Graduates



What is the NLC?

- The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) allows a registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical/vocational nurse (LPN/VN) to possess a multistate license, which permits practice in both the home state and other compact states, while maintaining a primary state of residence (PSOR).
- A multistate license permits practice (physically and virtually) across state lines in all NLC states. A nurse who does not meet the uniform licensure requirements is not eligible for a multistate license.

How to Obtain a Multistate License

- To be eligible for a multistate license, your primary state of residence (PSOR), also known as your home state, must be an NLC state. Evidence of PSOR may include a driver's license, voter registration card or other documents as accepted by the board of nursing.
- Apply to your home state board of nursing for your multistate license and authorization to test (ATT), pass the NCLEX, and meet all multistate licensure requirements..
- A nurse can practice in all compact states on an active multistate license in good standing, while maintaining their PSOR.

Residents of Noncompact States

- A nurse whose PSOR is a noncompact state is not eligible for a multistate license.
- When a resident of a noncompact state applies for licensure in a compact state, the nurse may be issued a single-state license (valid only in the state of issuance).
- Compact rules do not apply to a noncompact state resident.
- A nurse may hold as many licenses as needed from any state; all licenses will be single-state licenses.

Applying For Licensure

- You may only submit application for licensure by exam to one state. For more information regarding license by exam, view the licensure by exam flowchart.
- Some states also offer a temporary license. Temporary licenses are single state.
- A nurse may hold one multistate license, but may hold as many noncompact state licenses as needed.
- After receiving your initial license by exam, if additional licenses are needed in noncompact states, you can then apply for licensure by endorsement in another state. View the licensure by endorsement flowchart.

Help bring the NLC to your state

NurseCompact.com

Scan to learn more about applying for a multistate license

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Key Points

- You are not required to apply for your initial license by exam or test in the state where your nursing program is located, unless you plan to live and work in that state.
- The NCLEX is a national exam and not a state exam, so a candidate can take the exam at any Pearson VUE testing site in any state convenient to them. The results will be sent to the board of nursing where you applied.
- After receiving the first license, subsequent licenses in other states are obtained by completing an application for licensure by endorsement.

Other Important Information

- A nurse must comply with the practice act in each state of practice. To locate your state's practice act, visit ncsbn.org/npa.
- When practicing virtually, the state of practice is the state where the patient is located at the time practice occurs.

Licensure Scenarios

1. Mary went to school in New York (a noncompact state), but after graduation will move back to her home of Texas (a compact state), where she will work. Mary should apply for license by exam with the Texas Board of Nursing. She can take the NCLEX in New York or at any Pearson testing site convenient to her. She has no need for a New York license and would not apply for licensure in New York.
2. Jill is in a nursing program in Missouri (a compact state), but after graduation, she will relocate to and start a job in California (a noncompact state). She should apply for licensure by exam in California. She has no need for a Missouri license and would not apply for licensure in Missouri.
3. John attends school in Indiana (a compact state). Following graduation he will reside in California (a noncompact state), but will work in Maryland. Since he needs privileges to work in Maryland, that is the state where he will apply for licensure by exam. Although Maryland is a compact state, he will receive a single-state license rather than a multistate license because he is a resident of a noncompact state. Since he lives in California, but will not practice there, he has no need to apply for licensure in California.
4. Tom is completing a nursing program in Washington, D.C. After graduation, he'll go back home to Utah. His job involves providing virtual health education to patients in Utah, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico; he needs practice privileges in all of these states. Since his PSOR is Utah (a compact state) and Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico are all compact states, he only needs his Utah multistate license to practice. He will apply for licensure by exam with the Utah Board of Nursing.



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