

The Endorsement and Development of a Professional Occupational Interstate Compact for Professional Counselors

October 2018

Whereas licensure portability—the ability to transfer a professional counseling license when a practitioner moves to a different state—is one of the foremost concerns of professional counselors; and

Whereas even the most experienced of counselors can be required to obtain additional supervision hours or meet other requirements before they can secure a new license after a move across state lines; and

Whereas, in some cases, counselors with decades of experience are told that they cannot transfer their license to their new home state under any condition; and

Whereas advocating for licensure portability that allows professional counselors licensed at the independent practice level in one state to have the mobility to use their education and training and to serve the public by becoming licensed at the independent practice level in another state, which supports the mission of the American Counseling Association; and

Whereas licensure portability for professional counselors can help the public by:

- Encouraging counselors to consider relocating to areas where more than 100 million Americans live with an officially recognized shortage of mental health care professionals. Rural areas, in particular, face a documented and dire shortage of counselors;
- Recognizing that there are approximately 7.6 million people who move to a different state each year and that this number includes professional counselors who are spouses of military personnel and other families of federal government employees;
- Helping licensing boards to better meet the needs of underserved populations such as older adults, people of color, and individuals living in poverty; and

Whereas the development of a professional occupational interstate compact for professional counselors would enhance and advance the ACA portability model that calls for professional counselors to be able to seamlessly transfer their license when they move to another state or jurisdiction; and

Whereas the development of a professional occupational interstate compact for professional counselors would address two critical aspects of licensure portability in addition to physical mobility:

- The ability to practice tele-counseling;
- The ability to practice in border states and;

Whereas the National Center for Interstate Compacts, an arm of the Council of State Governments, has submitted a proposal to the American Counseling Association for the

development of a professional occupational interstate compact for professional counselors; and

Whereas the National Center for Interstate Compacts has an established track record in assisting occupations with developing and implementing professional occupational interstate compacts;

Therefore, the American Counseling Association Governing Council:

1. Endorses the development of a professional occupational interstate compact for professional counselors;
2. Empowers the ACA President and the ACA CEO to negotiate and sign a contract with the National Center for Interstate Compacts to include three phases:
 - a. Project research, the development and convening of the advisory group, and the drafting of compact language;
 - b. The development and implementation of legislative strategy;
 - c. The development of the commission bylaws, structure, membership, budget and promotion strategies.
3. Allocates up to \$600,000 for the contract with the National Center for Interstate Compacts. These funds will be drawn from the long-term operating fund balance rather than from the operating budget.