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## OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING: ASSESSING STATE POLICY AND PRACTICE

### ***REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS OVERVIEW AND CRITERIA***

*Occupational Licensing Policy Learning Consortium*

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#### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To help states improve their understanding of occupational licensure issues and best practices; identify current policies that create unnecessary barriers to labor market entry; and create an action plan that focuses on removing barriers to labor market entry and improves portability and reciprocity for select occupations.
<b>Applications Due:</b>	Monday, August 21, 2017
<b>Selection Announcement:</b>	Friday, September 29, 2017
<b>Funding Available:</b>	No direct funding available, but a variety of significant technical assistance resources will be provided.
<b>Period of Performance:</b>	October 2017 – December 2019
<b>First Consortium Meeting:</b>	December 4-6, 2017 in Tucson, AZ
<b>Eligibility:</b>	All states, commonwealths and territories

#### **REQUIRED STATE ACTIVITIES**

Each participating state will be required to undertake a set of activities throughout the Consortium that will help them achieve the project objectives, led by the Partners. The Consortium requires active participation from states and a strong long-term commitment to implementing the action plans produced through the process. States will be expected to actively participate in the Consortium's activities in the manner outlined below:

1. **National and state-specific research.** Participating states will review and study the research conducted by this project before the first multi-state meeting, including the "Enhanced Occupational Licensing Policy Reports for Consortium States," which will assist each state in understanding the current regulatory arena in their states and help them to identify barriers and challenges.

2. **In-person, multi-state team meetings.** Participating states will participate in three multi-state seminars for teams of eight key decision makers from the Consortium states. **The first multi-state seminar will take place from December 4-6, 2017 in Tucson, Arizona.**
3. **In-state learning consortium meetings.** In addition to participating in three multi-state meetings, each participating state will participate in up to three in-state learning consortium meetings within their state. These in-state meetings will involve other key stakeholders concerned with occupational licensing issues in each state and will be planned and executed with the intent of implementing the state team action plans.
4. **Targeted, state-specific technical assistance.** Partners will provide technical assistance (TA), as requested, to each of the participating states to assist them in implementing their state action plans.
5. **Consortium webinar series.** Participating states will have staff participate in a total nine informational webinars delivered by the Partners. These webinars will provide educational programming to consortium members and a broader audience, including interested decision makers in other states.
6. **Intra-state and interstate communication through ongoing conference calls.** Participating states will participate in scheduled conference calls, as needed. These conference calls may involve individual state teams and their identified stakeholders to provide state-specific information, or they may involve multiple state teams to provide additional educational opportunities and foster information exchange among them.
7. **One-stop project clearinghouse.** Participating states will contribute to a one-stop project clearinghouse developed and maintained by the Partners; and commit to sharing relevant information to facilitate peer learning.
8. **State action plan development and implementation.** Participating states will create an action plan that will drive the technical assistance and other activities in the Consortium. Each state will identify the categories of occupations, the specific occupations or the aspects of licensure regulation that they will address in their action plan.
9. **Interstate licensure compact resources and guidance.** Compacts can aid states in the eradication of barriers to license reciprocity and license portability. Up to three states participating in the Consortium will have the opportunity to request assistance from CSG's National Center for Interstate Compacts (CSG NCIC) to begin work on the creation of a licensure compact related to a specific occupation selected by the state team in years two and three.

## **EXPECTED BENEFITS FOR STATES PARTICIPATING IN THE CONSORTIUM**

Selected states should realize several benefits from participating in the Consortium, including:

- Access to Partner staff experts and other national subject matter experts, including through the Consortium's Panel of Experts;
- Access to other states and organizations to identify best practices and share lessons learned;
- Opportunity to strengthen relationships among key policymakers across the state; and
- Formation and implementation of a state action plan that focuses on removing barriers to labor market entry and improves portability and reciprocity for select occupations.

## **REQUIRED APPLICATION CONTENT AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

Each state's application must contain the following items:

1. Cover sheet for the state or territory's application packet.
2. Letters of support on agency letterhead from each of the following: the governor, the leader of the state's workforce agency, and legislative leadership (Senate President, Speaker of the House or chair of a relevant committee). States should also consider providing letters of support from administrative agencies or boards involved in occupational licensing, where such support is relevant to a state's reform plan. **Only one application can be submitted per state, which necessitates that each of the entities above must elect to support a single application.**
3. The application narrative that outlines why and how participation in the Consortium will help the state achieve its goals to reform occupational licensing; a summary of the current occupational licensing framework in the state; the vision for changing the state's occupational licensing framework; goals and preliminary outcomes for the state's participation in the Consortium; a description of the state's proposed strategies and activities to reform its occupational licensing approach; the sustainability strategy to maintain momentum through the entire period of performance and through any in-state leadership transitions; a list of the proposed members of the core and home teams; and a commitment to carry out the required state activities outlined above.

### *APPLICATION NARRATIVE*

Following is a summary of required content for the application narrative and scoring values assigned to each category for the selection process. Each application can receive up to 100 points in the selection process. The narrative portion of the application cannot exceed the **15-page limit**. Use the following guidelines when preparing the application narrative: one-inch margins, single spaced text, and 11-point font or larger. If applicable, the application narrative should directly address the possibility of political transition and strategies for sustaining the state's participation under new administration or legislative leadership.

#### **1. Summary of Current Occupational Licensing Framework (10 points)**

Provide a brief description of the current occupational licensing framework in the state. For example, states may provide context related to the range of occupations that require licensure in their state, the governance structures in place related to occupational licensing, the status of interstate compacts, and recent activity related to assessing occupational requirements and updating relevant state policies.

#### **2. Vision, Goals and Preliminary Outcomes (20 points)**

Provide a statement explaining why and how participation in the Consortium will help the state achieve its goals related to occupational licensing, including: the vision for assessing the state's occupational licensing framework; and goals and preliminary outcomes for the state's participation in the Consortium. Descriptions should include responses to the following questions:

- How will participation in the Consortium help your state increase the portability of licenses and reduce unnecessary barriers to labor market entry?
- What are your state's considerations in balancing possible beneficial aspects of existing occupational licensing frameworks, such as protecting the health and safety of consumers and adequate training of practitioners, with possible negative aspects of current frameworks such as barriers to labor market entry and worker relocation? How will your state balance these sometimes-competing considerations? How will your state consider and evaluate possible alternatives to the current licensing framework, as well as other regulatory alternatives to licensing such as certification, inspections, insurance/bonding and the like?
- What would success look like for the state in one year, three years, and five years?

**3. Proposed Strategies and Activities (40 points)**

Provide a narrative description of the state's proposed strategies and activities to reform its occupational licensing approach. Descriptions should include responses to the following questions:

- What are the occupations and/or categories of occupations that your state will focus on for this project and what is the rationale for these selections? As noted above, states are required to focus on at least four target occupations, a majority of which must be included among the target occupations referenced in the Learning Consortium Description above. States are welcome to include one or more other occupations that are particularly relevant to their state's occupational licensing landscape and unique needs in their proposed project work. Are there specific occupations where your state is interested in exploring reducing licensing barriers or exploring alternatives to licensing? Are there specific occupations that your state is interested in exploring interstate licensing compacts for, and if so, why?
- States are encouraged to focus on the needs and barriers to labor market entry of the following target populations for this project: veterans and military spouses and families, immigrants with work authorization, people with criminal records, and unemployed and dislocated workers. How will your state address labor market barriers for these populations, and what strategies will be employed to meet these populations' unique needs?
- What are the key aspects of licensure policy that your state will address in your action plan, and what do you hope to learn from peers and subject matter experts to inform these items?

**4. Core and Home Team Membership (20 points)**

Each state must form a leadership structure and process to direct the state's efforts to improve occupational licensing. Achieving reform in licensure requires a collaborative approach across state government, including the governor, state legislature, and diverse agencies and oversight bodies. To reflect this reality, applicants will need to assemble diverse teams of staff that reflect these executive, legislative, and other organizational entities that play a key role in occupational licensing policy considerations.

- The **core team** should be a group of 6-10 individuals who take the lead in driving the state's work and will serve as the main group in contact with Partners. The state's attendees at the Consortium multi-state meetings will be drawn from the state's core team. Each member of the core team should be a senior-level official with sufficient authority to commit their organization to action. Each state's core team will be required to include a representative from each of the relevant stakeholders:
  - The governor's office;
  - The state workforce agency; and
  - At least two state legislators who are chairs or serve on relevant committees.

States will have the option to include additional core team members from other agencies or systems that can help the state achieve reform in occupational licensing. For example, states should consider including core team members from administrative agencies or boards involved in occupational licensing, where such support is relevant to a state's reform plan. The state will be given the option of identifying the state legislators or working with NCSL to recruit legislative participation.

- The **home team** should be a larger group of stakeholder organizations and individuals the state plans to engage to support and advance its efforts to improve occupational licensing. The size of the home team can be what the state deems best to involve all relevant stakeholders. The representation of the home team will be determined by each state in the Consortium, but possible members may include educational institutions, licensing entities, postsecondary education institutions, local scholars, policy research institutes, and industry, business, or professional associations. In general, home team members will not

travel to the Consortium multi-state meetings but rather will support the state's work within the state.

This section of the application should outline the state's core team membership:

- Identify each senior staff person selected to serve on the Consortium core team. Provide each person's name, title, organization, and contact information, along with a brief bio outlining the expertise each person brings to the cross-agency leadership team. Note that bios and related organizational information may be included in appendices that will not be counted against the application narrative's 15-page limit.
- Identify: 1) who has been designated to direct the core team's overall activities; and 2) the key person(s) responsible for managing the day to day activities of the state's participation in the Consortium.
- Demonstrate that there will be sufficient staff capacity to support the proposed Consortium activities.

In its application, the state should also identify planned members of its Consortium home team; including names and/or organizations of potential home team members. The state should describe how it plans to engage with its home team of broader stakeholders on an ongoing basis, including keeping the home team apprised of the state's activities and engaging the home team in specific components of the state's work.

**5. Sustainability Strategy (10 points)**

Describe the state's plan for maintaining momentum throughout the entire period of the Consortium and commitment from the cross-agency leadership team during the entire period of performance. Include transition planning activities that are required due to elections or anticipated changes in key leadership positions.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

The Partners will name a panel of external subject matter experts and Partner staff to review and score the applications based on the criteria outlined above. The panel will make recommendations to the Partners on the states to be invited to participate in the Consortium, and Partners will make the final selection of states. The Partners will put a priority on selecting a diverse group of states for the Consortium, including large and small states, geographic and demographic diversity, diversity of political leadership, and other factors. This diversity will allow for a robust exchange of ideas between Consortium states and will help the Partners thoroughly explore and understand which strategies are effective in reforming occupational licensing policy and practice. **States will be notified by September 29, 2017.**