



## AMHCA-ACES-NBCC Portability Standards for Counselors

In the United States, state regulatory bodies are responsible for the licensing and regulation of health care professionals, including counselors. This state-based system requires counselors to be licensed in the states where they practice. Counselors who move between or practice in more than one state must obtain a license in each state where they want to offer services. Licensure portability is the facilitation of movement between states by licensees and is a priority for many health care professions.

A congressional report states: “Licensure portability is seen as one element in the panoply of strategies needed to improve access to quality health care services . . . Overcoming unnecessary licensure barriers to cross-state practice is seen as part of a general strategy to expedite the mobility of health professionals in order to address workforce needs and improve access to health care services, particularly in light of increasing shortages of healthcare professionals. It is also seen as a way of improving the efficiency of the licensing system in this country so that scarce resources can be better used in the disciplinary and enforcement activities of state boards, rather than in duplicative licensing processes.”\*

To reduce the barriers that restrict movement between states, counselor licensure laws must possess a high level of uniformity. A key impediment to portability is the variability in the counselor licensure degree requirements. There are a number of licensure elements that vary by state, including degree hour requirements, coursework, clinical training hours and professional identity. To address these factors and facilitate cross-state practice and movement, professional counseling organizations must establish a uniform educational and training requirement for portability.

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The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, the American Mental Health Counselors Association, and the National Board for Certified Counselors endorse the following portability standards for licensed counselors seeking licensure in another state:

### EITHER

- *A degree from a clinically focused counselor preparation program accredited by CACREP;*

### OR

- *Certification as a National Certified Counselor;*

### OR

- *Fulfillment of standards adopted by a state counseling licensure board;*

### AND

- *Possession of a counselor license for independent practice for at least two years.*



\*Wakefield, M. (2013). “Health licensing board report to Congress.” Retrieved from [www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/about/telehealth/licenserpt10.pdf](http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/about/telehealth/licenserpt10.pdf).