

# Arizona's First-In-The-Nation Universal Licensing Recognition Law Takes Effect

Among all the things you have to do when you move to a new state, jumping through hoops to obtain a new license in order to work in your chosen field shouldn't be one of them. Thanks to a new law that goes into effect this week, you won't have to if you're moving to Arizona.

Under a bill signed into law by Gov. Doug Ducey following bipartisan legislative support, Arizona is now the first state in the country with universal licensing recognition. From barbers to bakers, engineers to embalmers, all are welcome to Arizona to continue working in their field.

The new law removes a significant hurdle for those looking to make Arizona their new home, which is great news for employers and employees alike. Those who have invested hours and money to gain a professional license in their current state can move to Arizona and immediately get to work in their chosen profession without the delays and costs that result from redundant state requirements.

A government-issued occupational license is required to gain entry into a wide variety of professions. Laws governing these licenses have been under scrutiny around the country. Although intended to protect consumer health and safety, many times the laws and regulating institutions create unnecessary burdens that hinder workers, squelch competition, and slow down or restrict access to a needed labor force. Not to mention they lessen worker mobility when an employee new to the state must retest or duplicate training in order to obtain a license for the same job.

The Institute for Justice, which has looked at licensing laws around the country, has called Arizona's the 4<sup>th</sup> most burdensome in the nation. According to their research, occupational licenses in Arizona require an average of \$612 in fees, more than two years of education and experience, and approximately two exams.

Arizona has worked hard to reduce bureaucracy for those licensed professionals.

In 2017, lawmakers made it possible for out-of-state teachers with a good record to move to Arizona and start teaching on day one. Across the country, there are states that make it nearly impossible for a teacher with years of experience to receive a license without paying for additional college classes and certification tests. This was hurting Arizona schools and teaching professionals.

No longer is that the case in Arizona. We are a full reciprocity state.

This session lawmakers eliminated the roadblock for already-licensed professionals in other industries. In signing the bill, the Governor's Office made clear that licensed professions must still obtain an Arizona license, but will not be required to duplicate training or other requirements in order to receive it.

To receive a license, applicants must have been licensed in their profession for at least a year, be in good standing, and complete any necessary background checks.

**Professionals don't lose their skills simply because they cross state lines.**

And, it goes a long way to expediting the process of bringing together trained workers who want a job with employers who have jobs.

Arizona's economy is booming, with new opportunities available to individuals from all sorts of professions. Avoiding the hassle of re-licensing can be a very real reason for someone to stay put rather than move to a new state, even for a great opportunity or better quality of life. In Arizona we've done a great job of removing any barriers to those looking to come here and bring their skills. Universal licensing recognition is one more way Arizona is making itself the most attractive place in the country to live, work, learn, and play.

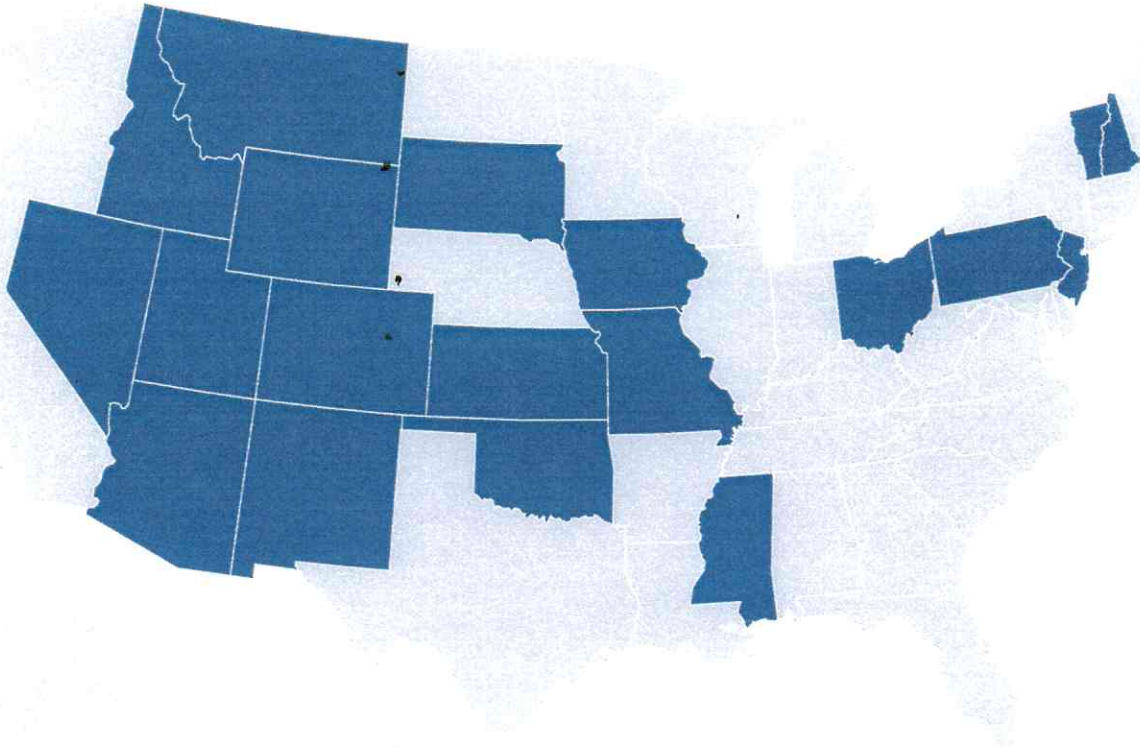
Read more about occupational licensing in this [Arizona Chamber Foundation FAQ](#). [A for Arizona](#) has more details on teacher certification here and [Chamber Business News](#) has the story on this session's occupational licensing laws.

# State Reforms for Universal License Recognition

Occupational licensing affects nearly 1 in 5 American workers and can be a substantial barrier to interstate mobility. In order to foster a more open and prosperous economy, states are enacting universal recognition for out-of-state licensees. Under universal license recognition, eligible applicants must hold a license in good standing in their home state. Applicants also cannot have any pending disciplinary action from the relevant board or a criminal record that would disqualify them from obtaining the license in the recognizing state. Applicants may still be required to pay fees or take exams administered by the board in the recognizing state. Universal recognition does not affect interstate compacts.

## Universal Recognition for Occupational Licensing

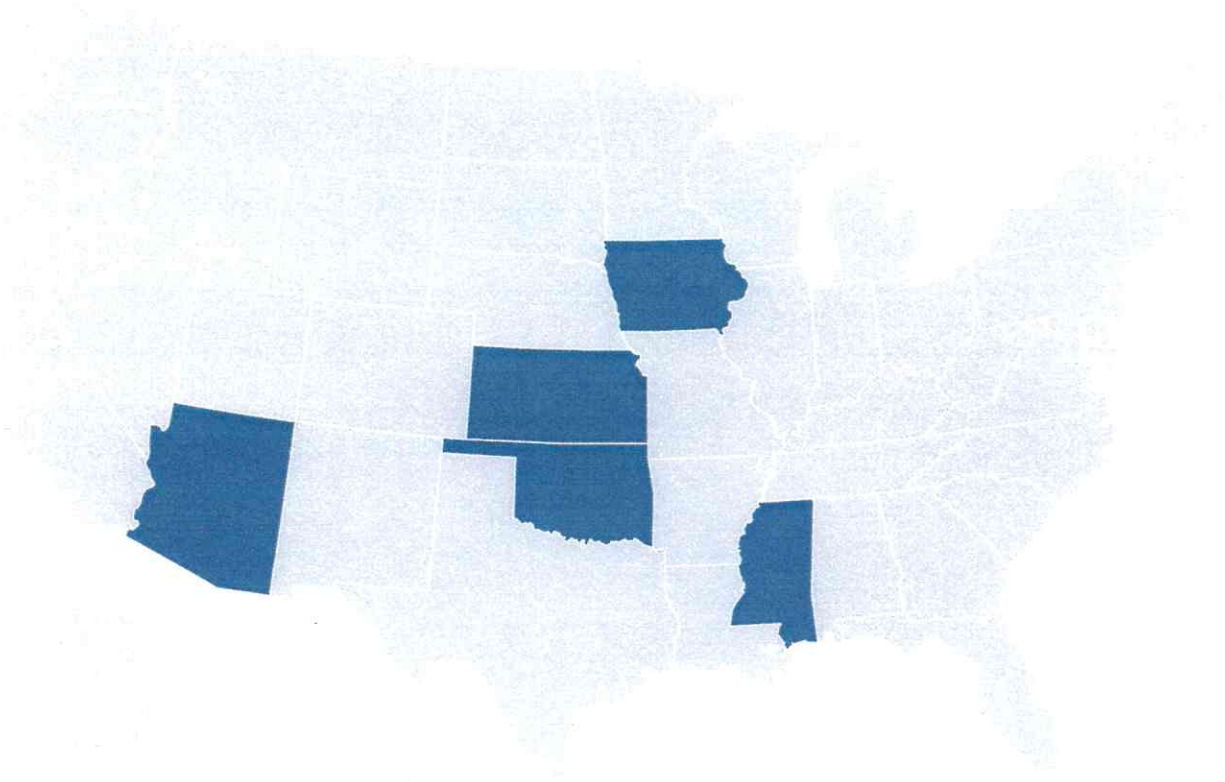
Today, 19 states have enacted universal license recognition.



However, universal recognition can differ quite drastically from state to state. Multiple states have imposed additional rules and requirements that thwart license portability and workforce mobility, undermining the main goals of universal license recognition.

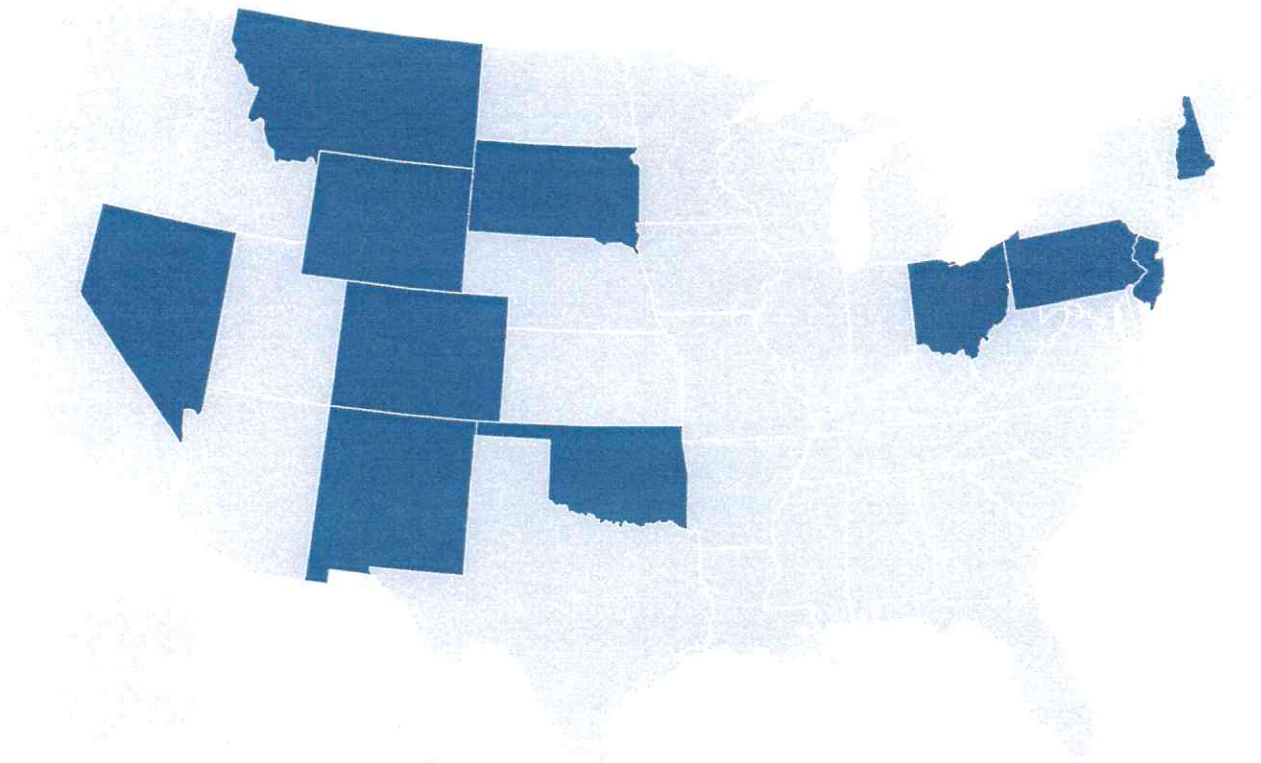
## Residency Requirements

Five states limit universal license recognition to residents.



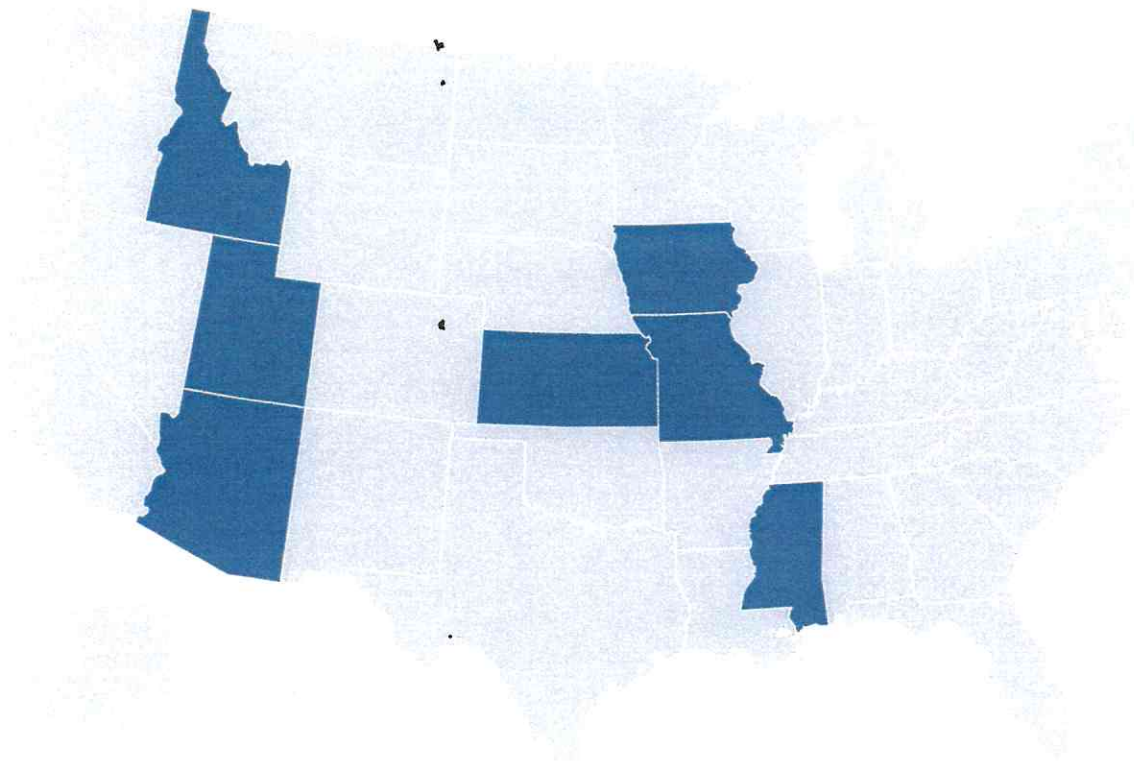
## **“Substantially Equivalent” Requirements**

In 11 states, boards only grant licensure if the home state license requires “substantially equivalent” education, experience, or training. That effectively penalizes states with less burdensome requirements.



## Similar “Scope of Practice”

In contrast, seven states allow universal recognition of a home state license if it has a similar “scope of practice” or “at the same practice level” to the recognizing state’s license. This means a board does not have to compare and contrast the license requirements between the two states:



## **Recognizing Experience in States Without Licensure**

In three states, applicants from states that didn't license the occupation can still obtain a license to work if they have at least three years of experience in that occupation.