



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Q1: I live in a noncompact state. How do I get a compact multistate license?

Only nurses who declare a compact state as their primary state of residence may be eligible for multistate license. As a resident of a noncompact state, you may apply for a license by endorsement in a compact state. Your eligibility will be limited to a single state license that is valid in that state only. As a resident of a noncompact state, you can have as many single-state licenses as you wish, but are not eligible for a multistate license.

## Q2: Where is the compact application and what is the application fee?

Use the state board of nursing (BON) application for licensure by exam or by endorsement, as found on your BON's website. Licensure fees vary by state. If your legal residence is in a state that joined the compact as of Jan. 19, 2018 (Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, West Virginia and Wyoming), and you hold a single state license in that state, then you should complete the application for a multistate license on your BON website.

## Q3: I live in a compact state and have a license. How do I know if my license is multistate? How do I get a compact license?

If your legal residence is in a state that joined the compact as of Jan. 19, 2018 (Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, West Virginia and Wyoming), and you hold a single state license in that state, then you should complete the application for a multistate license on your board of nursing website.

If your legal residence is in one of the original compact states and you held a multistate license on July 20, 2017, you may already have a compact license due to being grandfathered. If you're unsure of your licensure status, use the Nursys® QuickConfirm tool at [www.nursys.com](http://www.nursys.com). This report will indicate "multistate" or "single state" in the status column. When you click on "Where can the nurse practice?" you will see a map (or a list) of all states where you hold the authority to practice.

## Q4: I have a compact license. How long can I work in another compact state?

There is no time limit. As long as you maintain legal residency in the state that issued your multistate license and you remain in good standing, you may practice in other compact states.

If you were to take an action (while practicing in another NLC state or otherwise) which would change your legal residency

status (see example below), then you have given up legal residency in that home state and you must now apply for license by endorsement in the new state of residence. The new license issued will replace the former license.

For example, a nurse has legal residency in Arizona and practices temporarily in Colorado for six months under the Arizona multistate license. While the nurse is practicing in Colorado, her Arizona driver's license expires. Rather than renewing the Arizona driver's license, the nurse obtains a Colorado driver's license. Because a Colorado driver's license is only issued to a Colorado resident, the nurse has now become a Colorado resident unintentionally. Nurses must be careful not to take actions that would change their state of legal residency, when practicing in another state where they temporarily reside.

## Q5: What if I move to another compact state?

When permanently relocating to another compact state, apply for licensure by endorsement and complete the Declaration of Primary State of Residence form within the application, which can be found on your board of nursing's website.

You may start the application process prior to or after the move. You should not delay applying once you have moved. There is no grace period.

- If you are moving from a compact state, you may not wait until your former multistate license expires before applying in your new state of legal residency. You can only practice on your former home state license until the multistate license in the new NLC home state is issued.
- If you are moving from a noncompact state applying to a compact state in advance of the move, you may be issued a single state license or your application may be held until you move and have proof of legal residency at which time you may be issued a multistate license.

## Q6: My primary state of residence is a noncompact state; it is also where I am licensed. I am applying for licensure in a compact state. Do I have to give up my current license?

No, you may choose to keep and renew your current noncompact state license.

## Q7: I live in a compact state where I am licensed. How do I get a license in a noncompact state?

Apply for licensure by endorsement to the board of nursing in the state where you seek a license. You may be issued a single

state license valid only in the state of issuance. Applications can be found on that board of nursing's website. Visit [ncsbn.org](http://ncsbn.org) for board of nursing contact information.

**Q8: I am graduating from a nursing program. Can I take the NCLEX® in a different state?**

The NCLEX® is a national exam and can be taken in any state convenient to you. It is not a state exam. The results will be directed to the board of nursing where you applied for your authorization to test (ATT) and licensure.

- If you are applying to a compact state for a multistate license, you should apply in the state where you intend to legally reside.
- If you are applying for a license in a noncompact state, you should apply for a license in the state where you intend to practice.

**Q9: I live in a noncompact state, but I will be changing my primary state of residence to a compact state in a few months for a job. Can I apply for a license in that state now so I can work immediately after moving?**

Yes. You may start the application process prior to the move. A new compact license will not be issued until you provide a Declaration of Primary State of Residence (PSOR) form and any proof of residence that may be required by the board of nursing (BON). Some states offer a temporary license; this may enable you to practice before your permanent license is issued. Check with your BON to see if they offer one.

**Q10: I live in a noncompact state, but own property in a compact state. Can I get a compact license?**

In order to be eligible for a compact license, your declared primary state of residence must be a compact state. Primary state of residence does not pertain to owning property but rather it refers to your legal residency status. Proof of residence includes obtaining a driver's license, voting/registering to vote or filing federal taxes with an address in that state. These legal documents should be issued by the same state.

**Q11: I have a compact license and have accepted a temporary assignment in another compact state. My employer is telling me that I need to get that state's license. Is this true?**

When hired in a remote state for a temporary position or commuting to a remote state from the primary state of residence (PSOR) (usually an adjacent state), employers should not require you to apply for licensure in the remote state when you have lawfully declared another state as your PSOR. PSOR is based on where you pay federal income tax, vote and/or hold a driver's license. The remote state board of nursing cannot issue a license to a nurse who has declared another compact state as the PSOR, since the multistate license from the home state applies to both states. You have the privilege to practice in any remote compact state with your multistate license issued by your home state.

**Q12: How does the compact work for military or military spouses?**

See military fact sheet on our Toolkit webpage at [www.ncsbn.org/6183.htm](http://www.ncsbn.org/6183.htm) for additional information.

**Q13: How does the NLC pertain to advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs)?**

The NLC pertains to registered nurses and licensed practical/vocational nurses licenses only. An APRN must hold an individual state license in each state of APRN practice. Visit [ncsbn.org](http://ncsbn.org) for BON contact information. Visit [aprncompact.com](http://aprncompact.com) for information on that compact.

**Q14: Which nurses are grandfathered into the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (eNLC) and what does that mean?**

Nurses in eNLC states that were members of the original NLC may be grandfathered into the eNLC. Nurses who held a multistate license on the eNLC effective date of July 20, 2017, in original NLC states, may be grandfathered. You can check if you hold a multistate license and the states in which you have the "authority to practice" by following the steps below.

- a. Go to [nursys.com](http://nursys.com) and click on [nursys quick confirm](#)
- b. Search by your name, license number or NCSBN ID
- c. Click "View Report."
- d. On the report page, click "Where can the nurse practice as an RN and/or PN?"

If you do not have a multistate license and you need to change your single state license to a multistate, contact the board of nursing. They may require proof of residence such as a driver's license prior to issuing you a multistate license.

**Q15: Why would a nurse need a multistate license?**

Nurses are required to be licensed in the state where the recipient of nursing practice is located at the time service is provided. A multistate license allows the nurse to practice in the home state and all compact states with one license issued by the home state. This eliminates the burdensome, costly, and time consuming process of obtaining single state licenses in each state of practice.

**Q16: What is the difference between a compact license and a multistate license?**

There is no difference between a compact license and a multistate license. This terminology is used interchangeably to reference the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) license that allows a nurse to have one license, with the ability to practice in all NLC compact states.

**Q17: What do I need to do before I move to another state?**

See moving scenarios fact sheet on our Toolkit webpage at [www.ncsbn.org/nlc-toolkit.htm](http://www.ncsbn.org/nlc-toolkit.htm).

**Q18: What does Primary State of Residence (PSOR) mean?**

For compact purposes, PSOR is not related to property ownership in a given state. It is about your legal residency status. Everyone has legal documents such as a driver's license, voter's card, federal income tax return, military form no. 2058, or W2 form from the PSOR. If a nurse's PSOR is a compact state, that nurse may be eligible for a multistate (compact) license. If a nurse cannot declare a compact state as his/her PSOR, that nurse is not eligible for a compact license. They may apply for a single state license in any state where they wish to practice.