



Frequently Asked Questions

What is an interstate compact?

An interstate compact is a contract among two or more states creating an agreement on a particular policy issue, adopting a certain standard or cooperating on regional or national matters. Compacts are powerful, durable and adaptive tools for ensuring cooperative action among states. In recent years, professions have been using interstate compacts to facilitate occupational licensing reciprocity among states.

How many professions use interstate compacts for occupational licensing mobility?

Occupational licensure compacts exist for the following professions:

- Advanced Practice Nursing.
- Audiology and Speech Language Pathology.
- Counseling.
- Emergency Medical Services.
- Medicine.
- Nursing.
- Occupational Therapy.
- Physical Therapy.
- Psychology.

Licensure compacts for teaching, social work, cosmetology, dentistry, school psychology and dietetics are under development.

Are all occupational licensure compacts the same?

Not exactly, but all are similar in form and function. Most licensure compacts utilize a mutual recognition model, whereby a practitioner's valid, unrestricted home state license is "mutually recognized" by other compact member states. Mutual recognition compacts allow a professional to practice in the compact member states without having to go through each individual state's licensure process.

How does the Interstate Massage Compact work?

IMpact allows massage therapists who maintain an active, unencumbered license in the compact member state where they reside to apply for a multistate license. After verifying eligibility, the massage therapist is granted a multistate license which authorizes practice in all other compact member states. The massage therapist must maintain their “home state” license in good standing.

What is a multistate license?

A massage therapist who wishes to practice in multiple states under the compact will apply for a multistate license. To be eligible, a massage therapist must hold an active license in their primary state of residence (which must be a member of the compact) and meet other eligibility criteria. When eligibility is verified and all fees are paid, the therapist receives the multistate license and may begin legally working in any compact member state.

How can a massage therapist apply for a multistate license?

To apply for a multistate license, a massage therapist must reside and hold a license in a compact member home state. After the licensed massage therapist’s home state has joined the compact, the massage therapist can apply for a multistate license through the state’s massage therapy licensing authority.

Do massage therapists need to continue to apply for licenses in each state where they want to provide massage therapy services?

No. The multistate license allows massage therapists to practice in all compact member states. Massage therapists need only apply for one multistate license rather than continuing to apply to each individual state. However, if a state is not a member of the compact, the licensed massage therapist will still need to apply for that individual state’s license.

What are the eligibility requirements for a multistate license?

A licensed professional message therapist must:

- Hold an active, unencumbered license in their home state.
- Have completed at least 625 clock hours of massage therapy education.
- Have passed a national licensing examination.
- Submit to a background check.
- Have not been convicted or found guilty, or have entered into an agreed disposition, of a felony offense under applicable state or federal criminal law, within five years prior to the date of their application.
- Have not been convicted or found guilty, or have entered into an agreed disposition, of a misdemeanor offense related to the practice of massage therapy under applicable state or federal criminal law, within two years prior to the date of their application.

- Have not previously held a massage therapy license that was revoked by, or surrendered to, an applicable regulatory authority.
- Have no history of any adverse action taken by the applicable body responsible for the regulation of the massage therapy profession in the applicant's home state within two years prior to the date of their application.
- Have not been convicted or found guilty, or have entered into an agreed disposition, of any offense, whether a misdemeanor or a felony, under state or federal law, at any time, relating to any of the following:
 - Kidnapping.
 - Human trafficking.
 - Human smuggling.
 - Sexual battery, sexual assault, or any related offenses.
 - Any other category of offense which the commission may by rule designate.
- Pay all required fees.

Why does IMpact require 625 clock hours?

The Coalition of National Massage Therapy Organizations published Entry-Level Massage Education Blueprint identified 625 hours of instruction as the minimum required to acquire core massage therapy skills. Additionally, the project team assembled by CSG to draft IMpact recommended the inclusion of a 625-hour requirement based on massage school data and prevailing licensing requirements in states.

Do continuing education hours count toward the 625-hour requirement?

Yes. The compact only specifies "clock hours" with no mention of a massage therapy education program. Continuing education hours will count towards an applicant meeting the 625-hour requirement.

My state only requires 500 hours. Can it still join the compact?

Yes. Your state can still join the compact as long as it requires some level of massage therapy education. It is the practitioner that must obtain 625 hours of massage therapy education, including continuing education.

Do massage therapists have to complete continuing education requirements in states where they are practicing via authorization to practice?

No. Massage therapists using the compact are only responsible for completing continuing education requirements for their home state license.

What are the advantages of the Interstate Massage Compact?

IMpact allows eligible massage therapists to practice in all states that join the compact. The goal of IMpact, like all licensure compacts, is to eliminate barriers to practice and to client care along with ensuring public protection. IMpact will also enhance a state's ability to protect public safety.

Other benefits include:

- Enhancing the mobility of professional message therapists.
- Improving access to professional massage therapy services.
- Improving continuity of care when clients travel or relocate.
- Encouraging cooperation among compact member states in regulating the practice of message therapy.
- Supporting relocating military spouses.
- Enhancing public safety.
- Creating a data system of information about licensees including license status, investigative information and adverse actions.

How can a state/jurisdiction become a member of the Interstate Massage Compact?

In order to be eligible to join, a state must meet the following criteria:

- License and regulate Massage Therapists.
- Have a mechanism to receive and investigate complaints about licensees practicing in that state.
- Accept passage of a national licensing examination as a criterion for licensure.
- Require licensees satisfy educational requirements.
- Implement procedures for requiring the background check of applicants for a multistate license.
- Have continuing competence requirements.
- Participate in the data system.
- Comply with the rules of the commission, which is the compact's governing body.
- Accept licensees from other member states as established by the compact.

If a state meets this threshold, the state legislature must pass the Interstate Massage Compact model legislation and the governor must sign it into law for that state to become a member of the compact.

Is the Interstate Massage Compact available to U.S. territories?

Yes, all 50 states, Washington D.C. and all U.S. territories can become a member of the Massage Compact as long as they meet the state requirements outlined in the compact.

Why is IMpact important to consumers?

Through IMpact, consumers have greater access to care. IMpact allows licensed massage therapists to ensure continuity of care when clients relocate.

Additionally, states gain a supplementary layer of oversight of massage therapists who may enter their state to practice. The IMpact data system will allow member states to verify instantaneously that massage therapists based in other states have met defined standards and competencies and are in good standing with other states' regulatory boards. The IMpact data system will help states better protect the public.

How can I get involved?

Massage therapists can contact the state chapter or national office of their professional membership association and state legislature to advocate for the interstate compact. To learn more about advocating for the interstate compact, please visit massagecompact.org.