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2026 STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING INDEX

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INTRODUCTION

Occupational licensing affects more than 20% of workers in the United States.[1] The extent of occupational licensing greatly differs across states. From both a research and public pol-icy standpoint, it is important to have a comprehensive measure of occupational licensure across states and occupations.

The State Occupational Licensing Index (SOLI) strives to provide an additional state-level index that will be useful to both researchers and the public policy community. With our goal of publishing and updating yearly, we are excited to share updates and some small changes in this 2026 edition of the State Occupational Licensing Index.

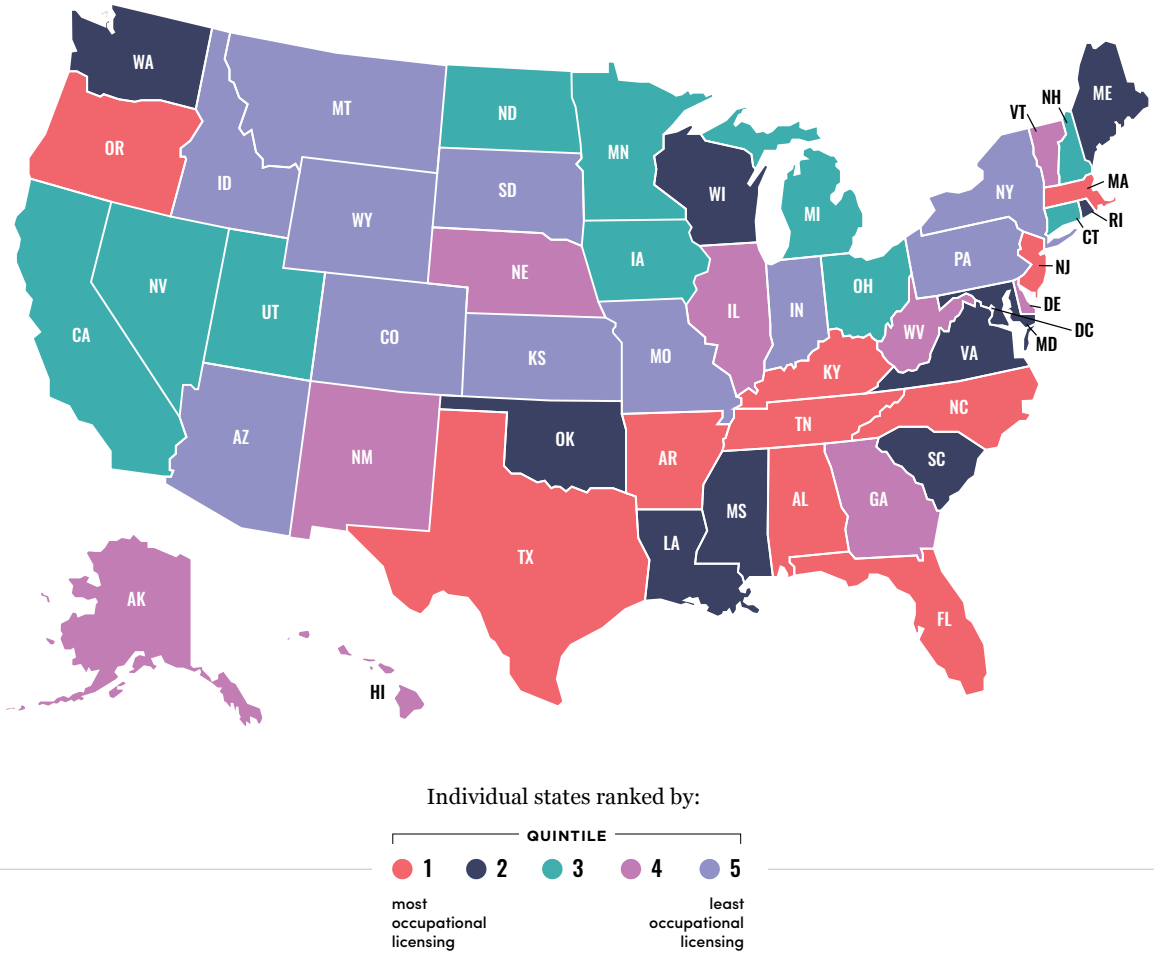
For the 2026 release, readers will note a few changes from previous editions. Once again, the index contains fewer overall occupations, 246 compared to 254 in 2025 and 284 in 2024. This decrease is due to the removal of potentially duplicate licenses, combinations of occupation titles on our part, and the overall removal of some regulations that we believe should not be classified as licenses.

Jason Sorens, a Distinguished Fellow in Political Economy at the American Institute for Economic Research, also reviewed the 2025 index and made several suggestions for improvement. This edition reflects Jason's suggestion to consider additional occupations—we added seven new occupations: emergency dispatcher/public safety telecommunicator, farm labor contractor, landscaping contractor, security guard, tree trimmer/arborist, well driller, and recreational therapist.

As we continue to update the State Occupational Licensing Index, it becomes more clear what tasks are included under the various licenses created by each state, which occupations are different in title alone, and which occupation titles should be kept separate. We strive to provide a panel of data that represents the change in occupational licensing over time, but due to ongoing improvements to the methodology, we urge readers not to assume that any changes in ranking are exclusively caused by changes in the occupational licensing landscape.

A detailed summary of occupational licensing changes from 2025 to 2026 is available in the appendix. For the purposes of comparability, we also provide a table showing the effect of licensing changes on states' rankings.

MAP | 2026 STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING INDEX QUINTILES MAP



METHODOLOGY

The methodology for producing SOLI has changed significantly since our first edition in 2023. The first edition exclusively utilized the Occupational Regulation Database hosted by the Knee Regulatory Research Center.[2] We found that this approach resulted in too many duplications and misclassifications of occupations for the purposes of measuring the burden of occupational licensing across U.S. states. As a result, we no longer utilize this database or its updates.

The release of data from Nick Carollo provides us with an additional source of information to inform our classification.[3] As noted, we also acknowledge Jason Sorens as a source of information for this latest iteration. We have also conducted our own legislative research to confirm licensing status for each of the 246 occupations in this edition.

These final 246 occupations are considered licenses according to the formal economics definition of licensing.[4] Using this basic framework, licensing is defined as making it illegal to perform a job without meeting minimum entry requirements set by the state. As a rule of thumb, if an occupation requires education, experience, or examination, it is generally considered a license. Certification protects titles, and registration creates a list of professionals. Certification and registration are much less burdensome to individuals practicing a profession. For this reason, certification and registration are not included in our index. There is no requirement or standard that states must follow when licensing an occupation title, so we continue to check that an occupation title may be barred by another name. For the 2026 edition, we also searched each state's legislative records for any newly imposed licenses or removal of licenses. These are highlighted in the appendix.

As an example of a barrier versus a license, in the state of Alabama, all acupuncturists are required to be licensed physicians; thus while the occupational title of "acupuncturist" is not licensed, that occupation is barred by a license in some way. Another example is "shampooer." In several states, shampooers must obtain cosmetology licenses to work. Other states exempt the profession while others issue separate shampooer licenses. ***Table 1*** lists the occupations included in the 2026 State Occupational Licensing Index and their total barriers and total licenses.

In our index, we define a barrier to mean that the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license. A license is an explicit license for that occupational title. For the state of Alabama, "acupuncturist" has a barrier, a physician license, but no explicit "acupuncturist" license. If the SOLI index were calculated with physicians and acupuncturists only, Alabama would have a barriers count of two and a licenses count of one. A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, re-quired experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education requirements.

These barrier and license totals were then tallied by state regulation and normalized on a 0 to 10 scale according to the formulas:

$$Barrier\ Score = \frac{Total\ Barriers_s - Minimum\ Barriers}{Maximum\ Barriers - Minimum\ Barriers} * 10$$

$$License\ Score = \frac{Total\ Licenses_s - Minimum\ Licenses}{Maximum\ Licenses - Minimum\ Licenses} * 10$$

Thus, a Barrier Score or License Score of 10 indicates that a state has the highest total barriers or highest total licenses in the index. Similarly, a score of 0 would indicate having the lowest total barriers or licenses in the index. Scores are rounded to the second decimal place.

We now provide more details on our scoring process. First, we determine the maximum barriers, maximum licenses, minimum barriers, and minimum licenses. These maximums and minimums are as follows: maximum barriers 180 (Oregon), minimum barriers 123 (Missouri), maximum licenses 148 (Oregon), minimum licenses 100 (Wyoming). Then, for each state, we use its total barriers count and total licenses count. For Alabama, total barriers are 171 and total licenses are 134. Thus, Alabama's scores are calculated as:

$$Alabama's\ Barrier\ Score = \frac{171 - 123}{180 - 123} * 10 = 8.42$$

$$Alabama's\ License\ Score = \frac{134 - 100}{148 - 100} * 10 = 7.08$$

States' overall ranks are determined by both the barrier and license scores. First, states are ranked according to the barrier score. We then resolve any ties in barrier scores using the rank for license score. If two states have the same barrier scores but differing license scores, the state with a higher license score is ranked higher on the index. Having a higher barrier score is unambiguously worse in terms of access to the labor market. More licenses, or a higher license score, has both pros and cons. Coming back to the example of acupuncturists, the fact that South Carolina licenses the profession means that there is an alternative pathway to do the job besides the more onerous pathway of becoming a physician. At the same time, a new license represents a new burden and will create costs and additional bureaucracy for aspiring acupuncturists in the state.

Using this methodology for ranking leads to two instances of a tie in our overall ranking. California and North Dakota are tied at 23rd overall, and Michigan and Nevada are tied at 29th overall. As a result of these equal ranks, there is no 24th place or 30th place in our overall U.S. ranking. ***Table 2*** contains the list of states by overall ranking.

Additionally, we compute the national average and regional averages for the nine Census divisions. The national average number of barriers per state according to our data set is 156, and the national average number of licenses per state is 122.6. These, as well as the regional averages, are summarized in ***Table 3***.

The State Occupational Licensing Index also includes the metric "Most Uniquely Licensed Occupation." This metric is determined by finding the occupation with the least barriers across all states that the state of analysis does have a barrier for. Some occupational titles are only barred in one state. This metric shows occupations that are generally not licensed but are licensed in the state being analyzed.

At the end of this report, we include individual profiles for each state.

TABLE 1 | ALL OCCUPATIONS WITH BARRIERS AND LICENSES

OCCUPATION	TOTAL BARRIERS	TOTAL LICENSES
Addictions/Chemical Dependency Counselor	51	51
Architect	51	51
Attorney	51	51
Audiologist	51	51
Barber	51	51
Broker (Standard Real Estate)	51	51
Certified Nurse Aide/Assistant	51	51
Certified Nurse Midwife	51	51
Certified Public Accountant	51	51
Chiropractor	51	51
Clinical Nurse Specialist	51	51
Cosmetologist	51	51
Court Interpreter	51	51
Dental Hygienist	51	51
Dentist	51	51
EMT	51	51
Esthetician	51	51
Esthetician Instructor	51	51
Family-Marriage Therapist/Counselor	51	51
Insurance Producer	51	51
Investment Advisor	51	51
Landscape Architect	51	51
Level Class II Wastewater Operator	51	51
Level Class III Wastewater Operator	51	51
Licensed Practical Nurse	51	51
Manicurist	51	51
MD Physician/Surgeon	51	51
Mortgage Loan Originator	51	51
Nail Technician	51	51
Nurse Anesthetist	51	51
Nurse Practitioner	51	51
Nursing Home Administrator	51	51
Occupational Therapist	51	51
Occupational Therapist Assistant	51	51
Optometrist	51	51
Pharmacist	51	51

OCCUPATION	TOTAL BARRIERS	TOTAL LICENSES
Physical Therapist	51	51
Physical Therapist Assistant	51	51
Physician Assistant	51	51
Podiatrist	51	51
Professional Counselor/Professional Clinical Counselor	51	51
Professional Engineer	51	51
Professional Land Surveyor	51	51
Psychologist	51	51
Public School Teacher	51	51
Real Estate Appraiser	51	51
Real Estate Salesperson	51	51
Registered Nurse	51	51
Speech Language Pathologist	51	51
Veterinarian	51	51
Acupuncturist	51	50
Social Worker	51	50
Wastewater Operator	51	50
Level Class IV Wastewater Operator	51	49
Medication Technician/Aide/Assistant	51	47
General Insurance Agent Manager or Exclusive	51	40
Psychological Assistant/Associate/ Technician	51	17
Clinical Mental Health Counselor/ Mental Health Counselor	51	14
Dental Therapist	51	9
Naprapathic Physician/Doctor	51	2
HIV – AIDS Counselor	51	1
Athletic Trainer/Sports Trainer	50	50
Funeral Director/Mortician	50	50
Hearing Aid Dealer/Hearing Aid Dispensers/Hearing Instrument Specialist	50	50
Respiratory Therapist/Respiratory Care Practitioner	50	50
Asbestos Contractor/Supervisor	50	49
Asbestos Abatement Worker	50	47
Embalmer	50	34

OCCUPATION	TOTAL BARRIERS	TOTAL LICENSES
Funeral Supervisor	50	7
Well Driller	49	49
Gas Fitter	48	5
Cosmetology Teacher	47	46
Massage Therapist	46	46
Private Investigator	46	46
Real Estate Instructor	46	45
Eyelash Technician	46	2
Electrical Contractor	45	24
Residential Wireman (Electrician)	45	9
Limited Electrical Technician	45	8
Maintenance Electrician	45	7
Residential Master Electrician	45	6
Air Conditioning Electrician	45	5
Electrician	45	4
Low-Voltage Contractor Low Voltage Electrical Contractor	45	4
Limited Renewable Energy Technician	45	3
Limited Energy Technician, Class A	45	2
Limited Energy Technician, Class B	45	1
Pharmacy Technician	44	44
Public School Administrator	44	43
Public School Principal	44	37
Journeyman Plumber	44	30
Master Electrician	44	25
Piping Contractor	44	17
Associate Broker (Standard Real Estate)	44	11
Journeyman Gas Fitter	44	11
Master Gas Fitter	44	11
Journeyman Sign Electrician	44	10
Plumber	44	7
Master Sign Electrician	44	4
Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist	43	43
Parole /Probation Officer	43	42
Asbestos Inspector	43	41
Limited X-ray Machine Operator	43	33
Tradesman Plumber	43	3
Asbestos Management Planner	42	41

OCCUPATION	TOTAL BARRIERS	TOTAL LICENSES
Title Insurance Agent (Individual)	42	26
Dietitian–Nutritionist (LDN)	42	15
Medical Gas Fitter	42	8
Special Electrician/Specialist Electrician/ Specialty Electrician	42	5
Non-residential Lighting Technician	42	1
Asbestos Project Designer	41	37
Journeyman Electrician	41	28
Residential Journeyman Electrician	41	8
Plumbing Technician	41	3
Certified Clinical Supervisor (CCS)	40	40
Lead Inspector	40	40
Lead Inspector Risk Assessor	40	40
Veterinarian Technician	40	40
Lead Abatement Supervisor/Contractor	40	37
Lead Planner Project Designer	40	37
Dietitian	40	24
Master Plumber	40	23
Low Voltage Technician	40	1
Behavior Analyst/Specialist	39	38
Radiologic Technologist	38	38
Nutritionist	38	17
Medical Health Physicist	37	36
Genetic Counselor	36	36
Pyrotechnic Operator	36	35
Geologist/Geoscientist	36	33
Psychotherapy Hypnotherapist/Hypnotist	36	7
Professional Geophysicist	36	1
Speech Language Pathologist Assistant	35	35
Athlete Agent/Manager	35	34
Emergency Dispatcher/Public Safety Telecommunicator	34	34
Dental Radiographer	33	33
Nuclear Medicine Technicican	33	33
Electrologist	33	32
HVAC Installer	33	29
Septic System Servicer/Pumper/Cleaner	33	28
Funeral Resident Intern	32	22
Funeral Trainee	32	16

OCCUPATION	TOTAL BARRIERS	TOTAL LICENSES
Barber Apprentice	30	30
Shampoo Assistant	30	30
Wildlife Rehabilitator	30	30
Preschool Teacher, except Special Education	30	29
Backflow Prevention Tester	28	28
Professional Fundraising Counsel	28	28
Radiologist Assistant	28	28
Taxidermist	28	28
Sanitarian/Environmental Health Sanitarian	28	27
Security Guard	28	25
Home Inspector	27	27
Professional Solicitor (Charities)	27	27
Provisional Psychologist	27	26
Behavior Analyst Assistant	25	25
Cosmetologist Apprentice	25	25
Fuel Piping Contractor	25	25
Certified Prevention Specialist, CPP, or CPPA	24	24
Polygraph Examiner	24	24
Maritime Pilot	24	23
Sign Language Interpreter/Translator	24	20
Specialty Residential Contractor	24	3
Soil Scientist	23	16
Home Improvement Contractor	23	7
Auctioneer	22	22
Optician	22	22
Tattoo Artist	22	22
Nail Technician Apprentice	22	15
Hearing Aid Dispenser Trainee/Apprentice	21	21
Landscaping Contractor	21	21
Septic Tank Installer	21	18
Home Health Aide	19	11
Body Piercing Artist	18	18
Perfusionist	18	18
Certified Sewage/Septic Inspector/Evaluator	18	17
Geologist in Training	17	17
Fire/Life/Safety Technician	17	16

OCCUPATION	TOTAL BARRIERS	TOTAL LICENSES
Art Therapist	17	12
Motor Vehicle Physical Damage Appraiser	16	16
Paraprofessional Certification/Teacher Aide	16	16
Polysomnographic Technologist	16	16
Anesthesiologist Aide/Assistant	16	15
Insurance Administrator (Individual)	16	14
Music Therapist	15	15
Surgical Technologist	15	14
Plumbing Inspector	15	12
Soil Tester/Soil Classifier	15	11
Prosthetist-Orthotist	15	5
Orthotist	14	14
Prosthetist	14	14
Forester	13	13
Pedorthist	13	13
Cemetery Salesperson	13	12
Natural Hair Braider	13	12
Auctioneer Apprentice	12	12
Chiropractor Assistant	12	12
Irrigation Contractor	12	12
Medical Clinical Laboratory Technician	12	12
Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioner	12	12
Gas Fitter Trainee/Apprentice	12	8
Animal Control Officer	11	11
Crane Operator	11	11
Dialysis Technician	11	11
Tree Trimmer/Arborist	11	11
Animal Breeder	11	10
Apprentice Electrician	10	10
Dental Assistant	10	10
Medical Assistant	10	10
Orthotic Assistant	10	10
Manager of Record (Standard, Real Estate)	10	7
Landscape Architect In-Training/ Trainee/Intern	9	9
Lineman	9	9
Polygraph Examiner Intern/Trainee	9	9

OCCUPATION	TOTAL BARRIERS	TOTAL LICENSES
Cemetery Broker	8	7
Abstractor	7	7
Optician Apprentice/Trainee	7	7
Denturist	6	6
Mold Assessor Inspector	5	5
Mold Remediation Contractor	5	5
Orthotic Fitter	5	5
Prosthetic Assistant	5	5
Recreational Therapist	5	5
Vehicle Salesperson	5	5
Dance/Movement Therapist	4	4
Diagnostic Medical Sonographer	4	4
Electrical Sign Contractor	4	4
Orthotic Fitter Assistant	4	4
Psychiatric Technician	4	4
Public Accountant/Accountant Practitioner	4	4
Apprentice Gas Fitter	3	3

OCCUPATION	TOTAL BARRIERS	TOTAL LICENSES
Elevator Apprentice	3	3
Farm Labor Contractor	3	3
Interior Designer	3	3
Dietetic Technician/Nutrition Associate	3	2
Electrical Sign Installer	3	2
Home Improvement Salesperson	2	2
Home Inspector Associate/Trainee/Intern	2	2
Lactation Consultant	2	2
Drama Therapist	1	1
Forester In Training	1	1
Lightning-Protection Contractor/Installer	1	1
Mechanical Adminisrator	1	1
Mold Assessment Consultant	1	1
Mold Remediation Worker	1	1
Ocularist	1	1

TABLE 2 | OVERALL RANKINGS

OVERALL RANK	STATE	BARRIERS SCORE	BARRIERS TOTAL	LICENSES SCORE	LICENSES TOTAL
1	Oregon	10.00	180	10.00	148
2	Texas	9.12	175	9.58	146
3	Tennessee	9.12	175	7.50	136
4	Arkansas	8.95	174	7.71	137
5	New Jersey	8.42	171	7.29	135
6	Alabama	8.42	171	7.08	134
7	North Carolina	8.25	170	7.71	137
8	Florida	8.25	170	5.42	126
9	Kentucky	8.07	169	6.67	132
10	Massachusetts	7.89	168	6.46	131
11	Washington	7.72	167	8.13	139
12	Maryland	7.72	167	6.88	133
13	Louisiana	7.54	166	6.25	130
14	Oklahoma	7.37	165	6.46	131
15	Mississippi	7.37	165	4.58	122
16	South Carolina	7.37	165	4.38	121
17	Rhode Island	7.02	163	6.04	129
18	Virginia	7.02	163	5.83	128
19	Maine	7.02	163	5.42	126
20	Wisconsin	6.84	162	7.29	135
21	Utah	6.84	162	5.63	127
22	New Hampshire	6.84	162	5.00	124
TIED 23	California	6.67	161	4.79	123
TIED 23	North Dakota	6.67	161	4.79	123
25	Iowa	6.49	160	5.62	127
26	Minnesota	6.49	160	5.42	126
27	Connecticut	6.49	160	5.00	124
28	Ohio	6.49	160	3.54	117
TIED 29	Michigan	6.14	158	3.96	119
TIED 29	Nevada	6.14	158	3.96	119
31	Georgia	6.14	158	3.54	117
32	Delaware	5.96	157	5.62	127
33	New Mexico	5.79	156	5.21	125
34	West Virginia	5.44	154	5.63	127
35	Nebraska	5.26	153	5.00	124
36	Hawaii	4.91	151	2.92	114
37	Illinois	4.21	147	5.00	124
38	Alaska	4.04	146	0.83	104
39	Vermont	3.86	145	2.29	111
40	District of Columbia	3.86	145	1.88	109
41	Idaho	3.68	144	2.08	110
42	Montana	3.68	144	1.67	108
43	South Dakota	3.16	141	1.04	105
44	Pennsylvania	2.46	137	4.79	123
45	Arizona	2.46	137	1.25	106
46	Wyoming	1.75	133	0.00	100
47	Colorado	1.58	132	0.42	102
48	Indiana	1.40	131	1.46	107
49	New York	0.53	126	2.71	113
50	Kansas	0.18	124	0.83	104
51	Missouri	0.00	123	1.88	109

TABLE 3 | NATIONAL AND REGIONAL AVERAGES FOR TOTAL BARRIERS AND TOTAL LICENSES

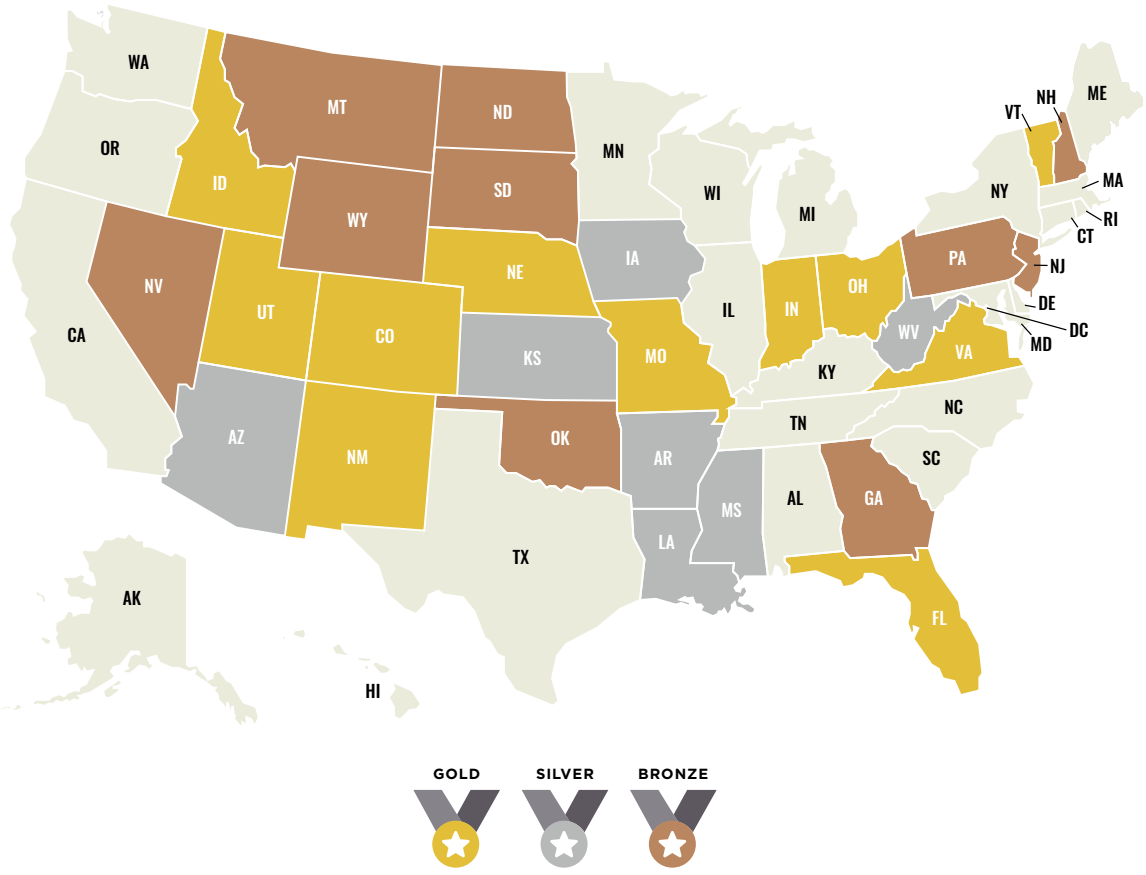
	BARRIERS	LICENSES
★ United States	156.0	122.6
REGION East North Central	151.6	120.4
East South Central	170.0	131.0
Middle Atlantic	144.7	123.7
Mountain	145.8	112.1
New England	160.2	124.2
REGION Pacific	161.0	125.6
South Atlantic	161.0	125.0
West North Central	146.0	116.9
West South Central	170.0	136.0

UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION

As of 2026, 28 states have adopted some form of universal licensing recognition—the same as last year. It is important to note that the potential effectiveness of the reform varies depending upon two key provisions. First, some states have "substantially equivalent" or "substantially similar" clauses, thus limiting the number of workers that can utilize the reform. Second, some states have residency requirements that can also limit the ability of workers to utilize the reform.

We use a medal system to rank each state by the potential effectiveness of its reform. States with gold medals do not have substantially similar or residency requirements. States with silver medals do not have substantially similar requirements but do require residency. States with bronze medals have substantially similar requirements and may require residency. States with no designation have not yet enacted universal recognition.

MAP | 2026 STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING INDEX UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION



UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION RANKING

- Gold: State has universal recognition without "substantially similar" or residency restrictions
- Silver: State has universal recognition with residency requirements but no "substantially similar" restrictions
- Bronze: State has universal recognition with "substantially similar" restrictions
- None: State does not have universal recognition

HOW OUR DATABASE DIFFERS FROM EXISTING MEASURES

In developing this index, there are key differences between our occupation list and the occupation lists used by License to Work publication and the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) National Occupational Licensing Database. License to Work 1, 2, and 3 focus on a list of 102 low- to medium-income occupations, specifically with License to Work 2 and 3 focusing on the same list, which differs slightly from License to Work 1. NCSL, on the other hand, focuses on 48 occupations across states with the specific requirement that the occupations be licensed in 30 or more states, not require more than a four-year degree, and have positive projected growth over the next decade. Our occupation list in some cases matches these two databases, but in other cases it does not.

Overall, 22 of the 102 occupations covered by License to Work 2 and 3 are included in this index. For some occupations, such as various contractors, the attainment of licensing is lower than coverage. While a license may exist for a specific occupation, it could be that an individual can do that occupation as long as they are working directly for a licensed individual. As a specific example, in License to Work 2 there is a note for "carpenter/cabinet maker contractor": "Typically, only contractors require licenses, not the carpenters who work for them." Thus, it is not illegal for an individual to work as a cabinet maker or carpenter. But all of the workers need to be supervised by a "contractor" who is licensed. This differs from an occupation such as electricians where each individual electrician is required to have a license. In constructing a house, a building company may only have one licensed carpenter/cabinet maker contractor on staff who participates and supervises multiple people doing carpentry, but every electrician on staff would be required to have their own individual license.

Turning to the NCSL National Occupational Licensing database, the SOLI index matches 38 of the 48 occupations by title. Once more, there are some discrepancies with respect to the coverage of the two databases. ***Table 4*** contains the 50 occupations that are matched between the data for this index and the License to Work and NCSL National Occupational Licensing database.

TABLE 4 | OCCUPATIONS MATCHED BETWEEN IJ LICENSE TO WORK AND NCSL NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING DATABASE

	STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING INDEX	LICENSE TO WORK	NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING DATABASE
A	Animal Breeder	Animal Breeder	–
	Animal Control Officer	Animal Control Officer	–
	Athletic Trainer/Sports Trainer	Athletic Trainer	Athletic Trainer
	Auctioneer	Auctioneer	Auctioneer
B	Barber	Barber, Shampooer	Barber
	Broker (Standard Real Estate)	–	Real Estate Broker
C	Certified Nurse Aide/Assistant	–	Certified Nursing Assistant
	Cosmetologist	Cosmetologist, Makeup Artist, Shampooer	Cosmetologist
	Crane Operator	Crane Operator	–
D	Dental Assistant	Dental Assistant	–
	Dental Hygienist	–	Dental Hygienist
	Dietetic Technician/Nutrition Associate	Dietetic Technician	–
	Dietitian	–	Dietician
E	Electrician	–	Electrician
	EMT	Emergency Medical Technician	Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
	Esthetician	–	Skin Care Specialist (Esthetician)

	STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING INDEX	LICENSE TO WORK	NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING DATABASE
F	Fire/Life/Safety Technician	Fire Alarm Installer	–
	Forester in Training	Forest Worker	–
	Funeral Director/Mortician	–	Funeral Service Director
	Funeral Trainee	Funeral Attendant	–
G	Gas Fitter	–	Pipe Fitter
	General Insurance Agent Manager or Exclusive	–	Insurance Sales Agent
H	Home Inspector	–	Home Inspectors
	HVAC Installer	HVAC Contractor (Commercial)	HVAC Contractor
I	Interior Designer	Interior Designer	–
J	Journeyman Plumber	–	Plumber (Journeyman)
L	Landscape Architect	Landscape Contractor (Commercial) (Residential)	Landscape Architect
	Licensed Practical Nurse	–	Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)
	Low-Voltage Contractor/ Low-Voltage Electrical Contractor	Security Alarm Installer	Security Alarm Technician (Low-Voltage System Installer)
M	Manicurist	Manicurist	Manicurist/Pedicurist
	Massage Therapist	Massage Therapist	Massage Therapist
	Milk Weigher Sampler	–	Milk Sampler
N	Nursing Home Administrator	–	Nursing Home Administrator
O	Occupational Therapist Assistant	–	Occupational Therapy Assistant
P	Pharmacy Technician	–	Pharmacy Technician
	Physical Therapist Assistant	–	Physical Therapy Assistant
	Piping Contractor	Pipelayer Contractor	–
	Preschool Teacher, except Special Education	–	Preschool Teacher
	Private Investigator	–	Private Detective
	Professional Land Surveyor	–	Land Surveyor
R	Radiologic Technologist	–	Radiologic Technologist
	Real Estate Appraiser	–	Real Estate Appraiser
	Real Estate Salesperson	–	Real Estate Agent
	Registered Nurse	–	Registered Nurse
	Respiratory Therapist/ Respiratory Care Practitioner	–	Respiratory Therapist
S	Sign Language Interpreter/Translator	Interpreter, Sign Language	–
	Social Worker	–	Child, Family, and School Social Worker (Bachelor's level)
T	Taxidermist	Taxidermist	–
V	Veterinarian Technician	–	Veterinary Technician

Missouri has the lowest occupational licensing burden in the US.

Oregon has the highest occupational licensing burden in the US.

Universal recognition laws have been adopted by 28 states.

Seven occupations are uniquely licensed by only one state.

Sixteen occupations are licensed in three states or fewer.

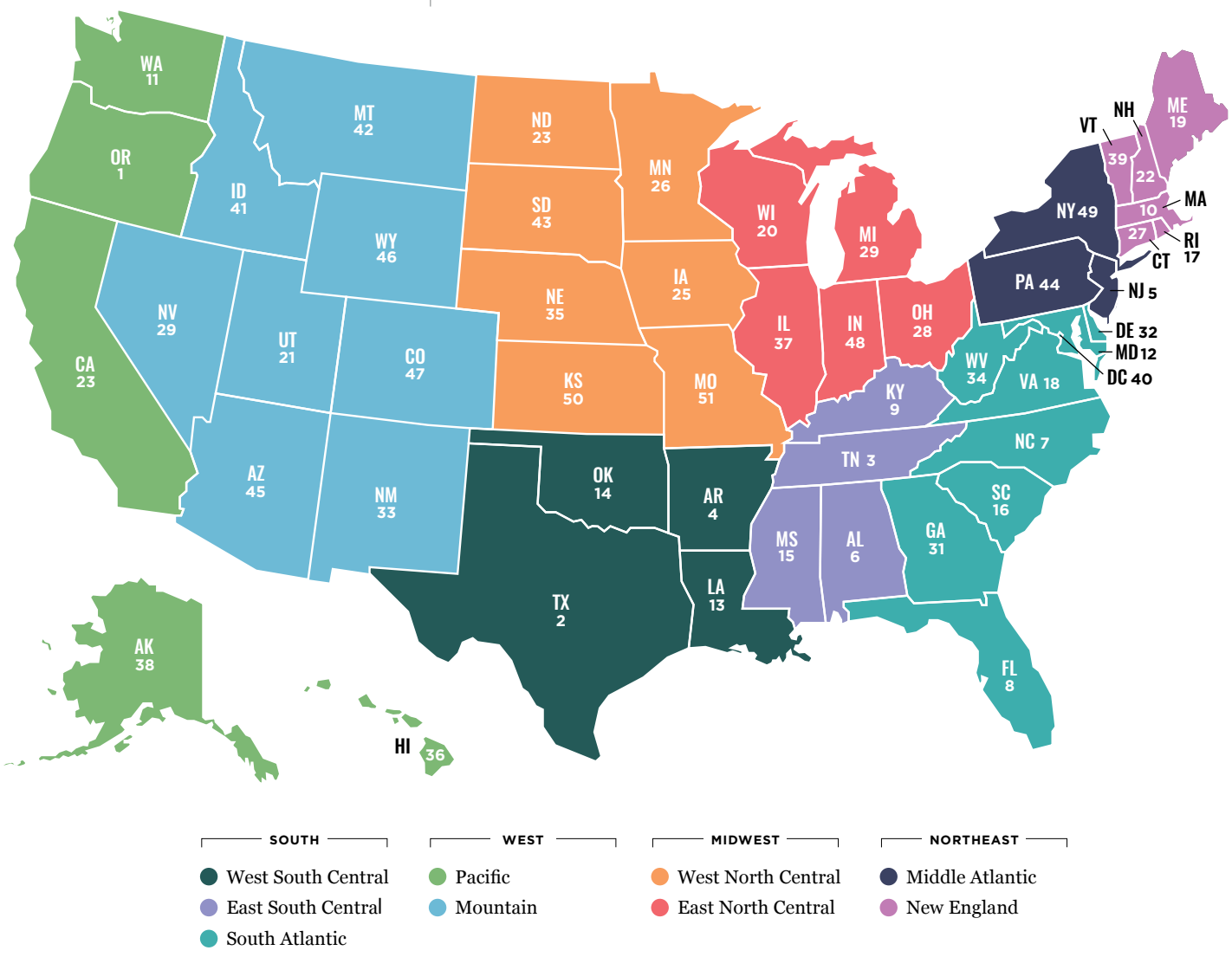
NEW LICENSES

Mississippi added two | Five states added one

ELIMINATED LICENSES

Ohio eliminated two | Four states eliminated one

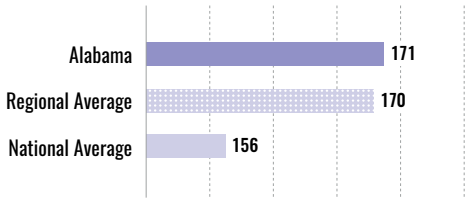
MAP | 2026 STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING INDEX REGIONAL MAP



The states that follow are presented in alphabetical order.

ALABAMA

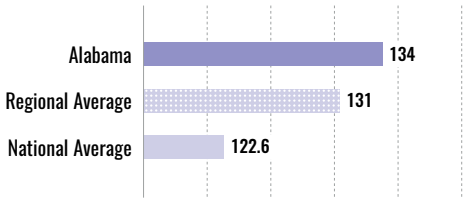
U.S. RANK 6TH



BARRIER SCORE 8.42

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



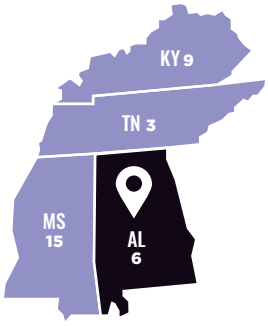
LICENSE SCORE 7.08

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

EAST SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Alabama ranks 2nd in the region. (1=worst; 4=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Alabama ranks 6th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

4. Arkansas
5. New Jersey
6. Alabama
7. North Carolina
8. Florida

KEY FINDINGS

Alabama has the 6th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 2nd of four states in the East South Central Region.

Alabama's total barriers (171) and licenses (134) are higher than the national average and similar to the regional average.

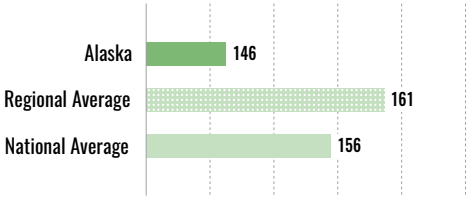
As of 2026, Alabama has not enacted universal recognition.

Alabama's most uniquely licensed occupation is orthotic fitter assistant, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

ALASKA

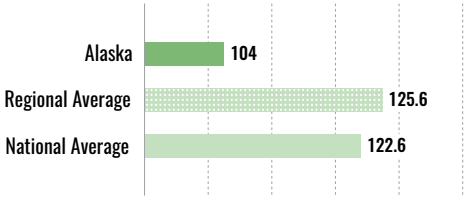
U.S. RANK 38TH



BARRIER SCORE 4.04

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



LICENSE SCORE 0.83

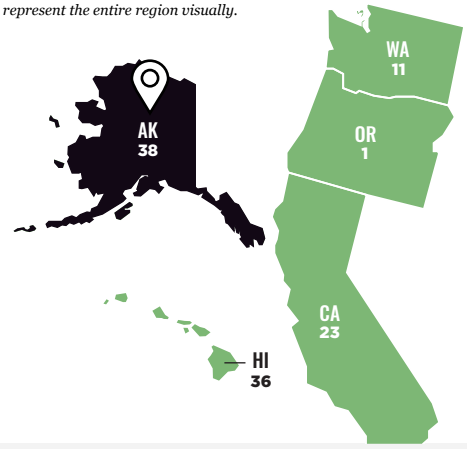
(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

PACIFIC REGION

Alaska ranks 5th in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)

AK + HI have been moved to represent the entire region visually.



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Alaska ranks 38th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

36 Hawaii
37 Illinois
38 Alaska
39 Vermont
40 District of Columbia

KEY FINDINGS

Alaska has the 38th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 5th of five states in the Pacific Region.

Alaska's total barriers (146) and licenses (104) are lower than the national and regional averages.

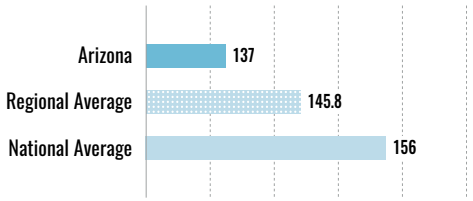
As of 2026, Alaska has not enacted universal recognition.

Alaska's most uniquely licensed occupation is mechanical administrator, which no other state licenses.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

ARIZONA

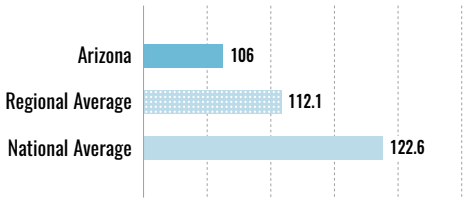
U.S. RANK 45TH



BARRIER SCORE 2.46

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



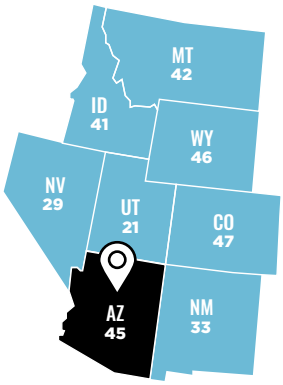
LICENSE SCORE 1.25

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MOUNTAIN REGION

Arizona ranks 6th in the region. (1=worst; 8=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Arizona ranks 45th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

- 43 South Dakota
- 44 Pennsylvania
- **45 Arizona**
- 46 Wyoming
- 47 Colorado

KEY FINDINGS

Arizona has the 45th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 6th of eight states in the Mountain Region.

Arizona's total barriers (137) and licenses (106) are lower than the national and regional averages.

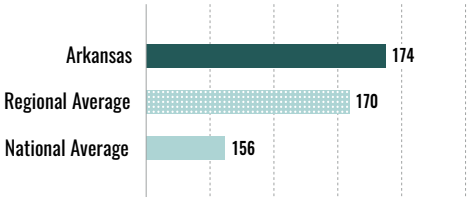
In 2019, Arizona was the first state to enact universal recognition without a substantially similar requirement. However, it requires residency and excludes several occupations. We rated its reform as silver.

Arizona's most uniquely licensed occupation is denturist, which is licensed in six states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

ARKANSAS

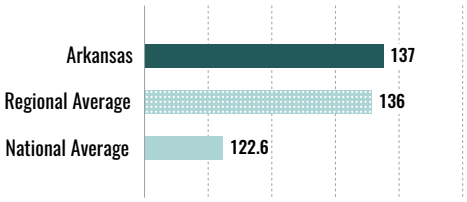
U.S. RANK 4TH



BARRIER SCORE 8.95

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



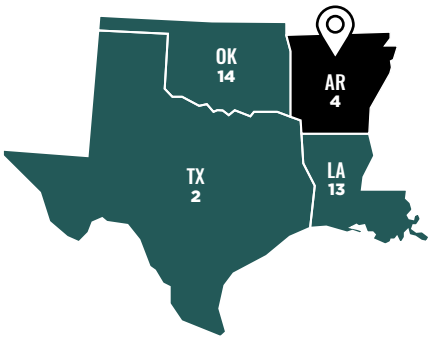
LICENSE SCORE 7.71

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Arkansas ranks 2nd in the region. (1=worst; 4=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Arkansas ranks 4th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

2. Texas
3. Tennessee
4. Arkansas
5. New Jersey
6. Alabama

KEY FINDINGS

Arkansas has the 4th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 2nd of four states in the West South Central Region.

Arkansas's total barriers (174) and licenses (137) are higher than the national average and similar to the regional average.

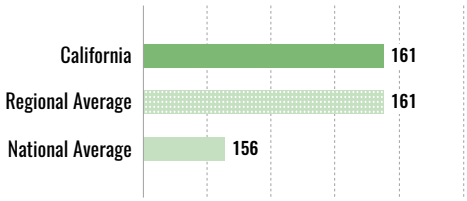
Arkansas enacted universal recognition in 2023. Its reform does not include a substantially similar requirement, but it does require residency. We rated its reform as silver.

Arkansas's most uniquely licensed occupation is psychiatric technician, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

CALIFORNIA

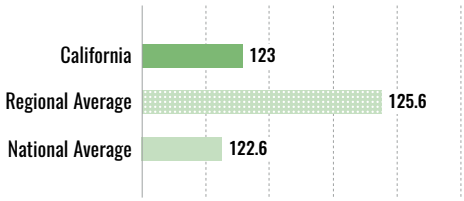
U.S. RANK 23RD



BARRIER SCORE 6.67

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



LICENSE SCORE 4.79

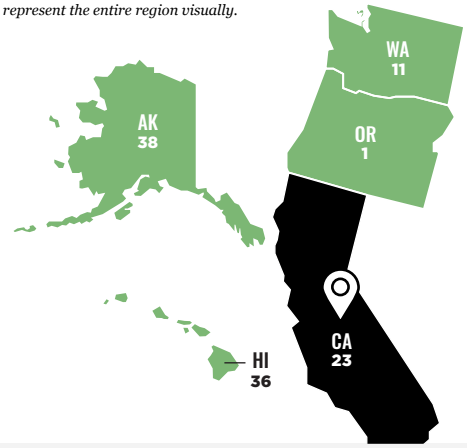
(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

PACIFIC REGION

California ranks 3rd in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)

AK + HI have been moved to represent the entire region visually.



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

California ranks 23rd overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

21	Utah
22	New Hampshire
23	California/North Dakota
25	Iowa
26	Minnesota

KEY FINDINGS

California has the 23rd highest licensing burden in the US (tied with North Dakota) and ranks 3rd of five states in the Pacific Region.

California's total barriers (161) are higher than the national average and the same as the regional average. California's total licenses (123) are similar to the national and regional averages.

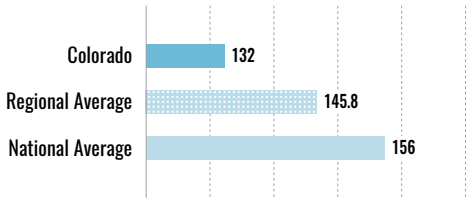
As of 2026, California has not enacted universal recognition.

California's most uniquely licensed occupation is farm labor contractor, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

COLORADO

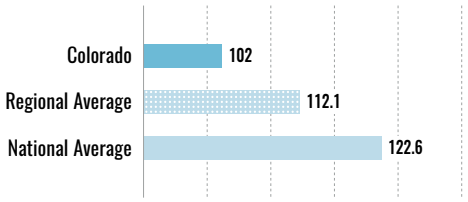
U.S. RANK 47TH



BARRIER SCORE 1.58

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



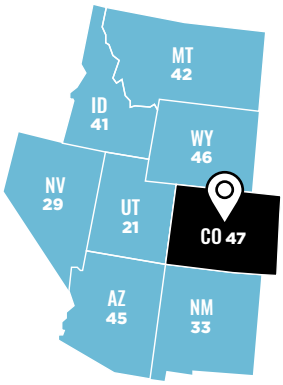
LICENSE SCORE 0.42

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MOUNTAIN REGION

Colorado ranks 8th in the region. (1=worst; 8=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Colorado ranks 47th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

- 45 Arizona
- 46 Wyoming
- 47 Colorado
- 48 Indiana
- 49 New York

KEY FINDINGS

Colorado has the 47th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 8th of eight states in the Mountain Region.

Colorado's total barriers (132) and licenses (102) are lower than the national and regional averages.

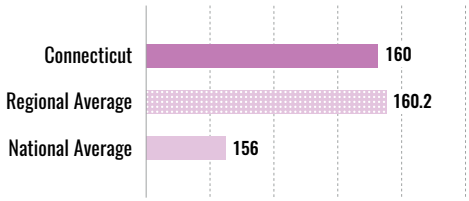
Colorado enacted universal recognition in 2020 without a residency requirement, but including a substantially similar requirement. In 2022, it expanded its reform and removed the substantially similar requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

Colorado's most uniquely licensed occupation is psychiatric technician, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

CONNECTICUT

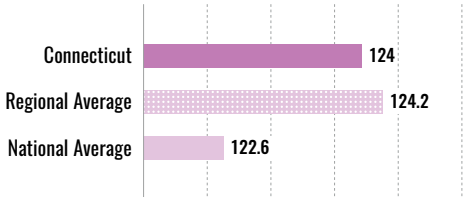
U.S. RANK 27TH



BARRIER SCORE 6.49

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



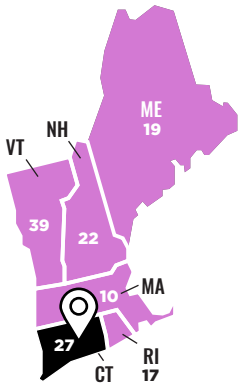
LICENSE SCORE 5.00

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

NEW ENGLAND REGION

Connecticut ranks 5th in the region. (1=worst; 6=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Connecticut ranks 27th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

25 Iowa
26 Minnesota
27 Connecticut
28 Ohio
29 Michigan/Nevada

KEY FINDINGS

Connecticut has the 27th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 5th of six states in the New England Region.

Connecticut's total barriers (160) and licenses (124) are similar to the national and regional averages.

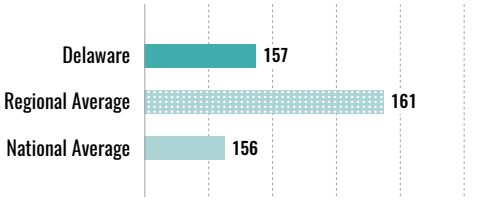
As of 2026, Connecticut has not enacted universal recognition.

Connecticut's most uniquely licensed occupation is home inspector associate/trainee/intern, which is licensed in two states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

DELAWARE

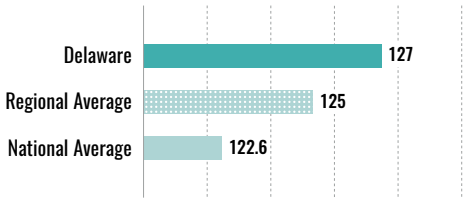
U.S. RANK 32ND



BARRIER SCORE 5.96

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



LICENSE SCORE 5.62

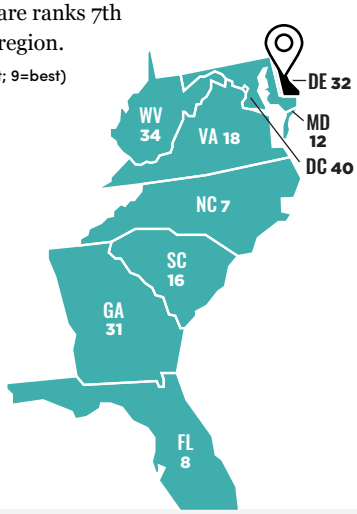
(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

Delaware ranks 7th in the region.

(1=worst; 9=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Delaware ranks 32nd overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

29 Michigan/Nevada
31 Georgia
32 Delaware
33 New Mexico
34 West Virginia

KEY FINDINGS

Delaware has the 32nd highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 7th of nine states in the South Atlantic Region.

Delaware's total barriers (157) and licenses (127) are similar to the national and regional averages.

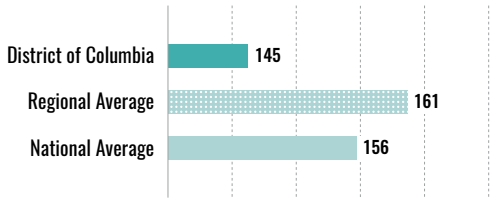
As of 2026, Delaware has not enacted universal recognition.

Delaware's most uniquely licensed occupation is apprentice gas fitter, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

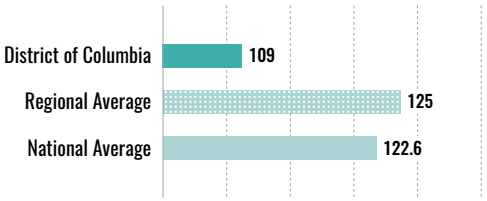
U.S. RANK 40TH



BARRIER SCORE 3.86

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



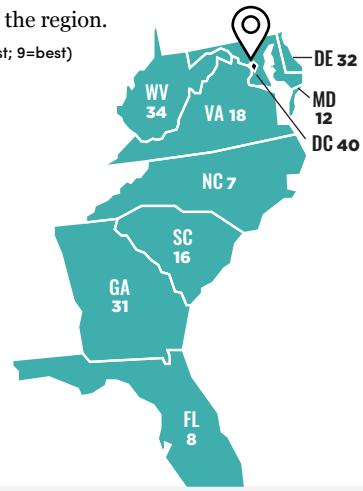
LICENSE SCORE 1.88

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

District of Columbia ranks 9th in the region.
(1=worst; 9=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

District of Columbia ranks 40th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

38 Alaska
39 Vermont
40 District of Columbia
41 Idaho
42 Montana

KEY FINDINGS

The District of Columbia has the 40th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 9th of nine states in the South Atlantic Region.

The District of Columbia's total barriers (145) and licenses (109) are lower than the national and regional averages.

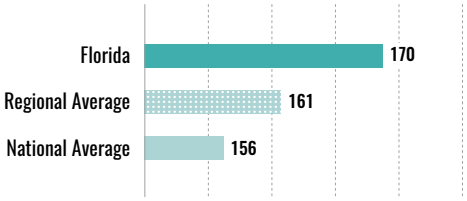
As of 2026, the District of Columbia has not enacted universal recognition.

The District of Columbia's most uniquely licensed occupation is interior designer, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

FLORIDA

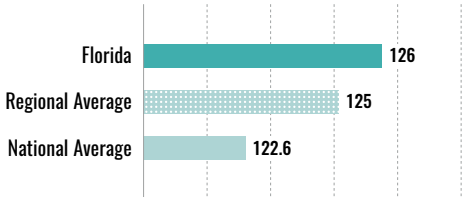
U.S. RANK 8TH



BARRIER SCORE 8.25

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



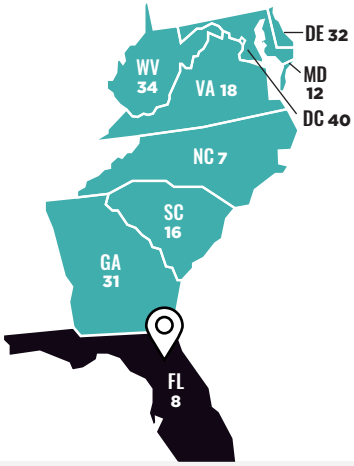
LICENSE SCORE 5.42

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

Florida ranks 2nd in the region. (1=worst; 9=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Florida ranks 8th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

6	Alabama
7	North Carolina
8	Florida
9	Kentucky
10	Massachusetts

KEY FINDINGS

Florida has the 8th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 2nd of nine states in the South Atlantic Region.

Florida's total barriers (170) are higher than the national and regional averages. Florida's total licenses (126) are similar to the national and regional averages.

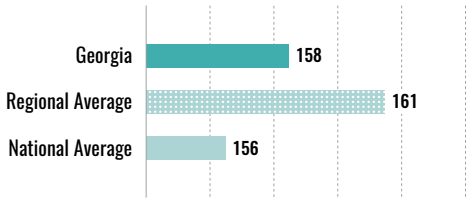
Florida enacted universal recognition in 2024. Its reform does not include a substantially similar or residency requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

Florida's most uniquely licensed occupation is farm labor contractor, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

GEORGIA

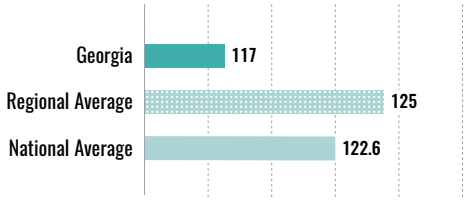
U.S. RANK 31ST



BARRIER SCORE 6.14

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



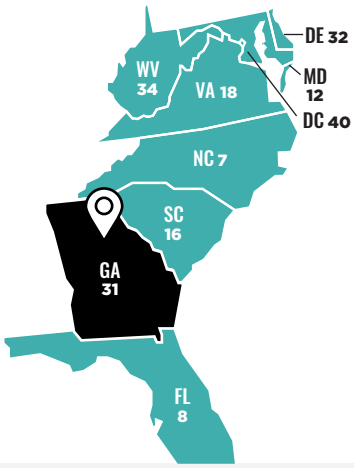
LICENSE SCORE 3.54

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

Georgia ranks 6th in the region. (1=worst; 9=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Georgia ranks 31st overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

- 28 Ohio
- 29 Michigan/Nevada
- 31 Georgia
- 32 Delaware
- 33 New Mexico

KEY FINDINGS

Georgia has the 31st highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 6th of nine states in the South Atlantic Region.

Georgia's total barriers (158) are similar to the national and regional averages. Georgia's total licenses (117) are lower than the national and regional averages.

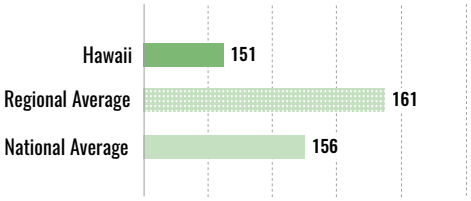
Georgia enacted universal recognition in 2023. Its reform includes both substantially similar and residency requirements. We rated its reform as bronze.

Georgia's most uniquely licensed occupation is medical clinical laboratory technician, which is licensed in 12 states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

HAWAII

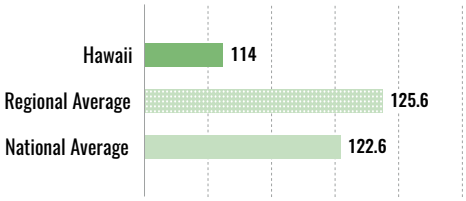
U.S. RANK 36TH



BARRIER SCORE 4.91

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



LICENSE SCORE 2.92

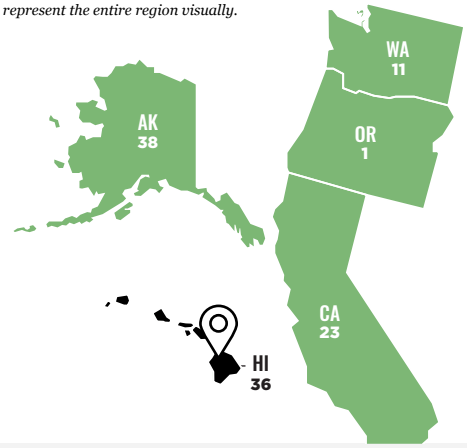
(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

PACIFIC REGION

Hawaii ranks 4th in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)

AK + HI have been moved to represent the entire region visually.



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Hawaii ranks 36th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

34 West Virginia
35 Nebraska
36 Hawaii
37 Illinois
38 Alaska

KEY FINDINGS

Hawaii has the 36th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 4th of five states in the Pacific Region.

Hawaii's total barriers (151) and licenses (114) are lower than the national and regional averages.

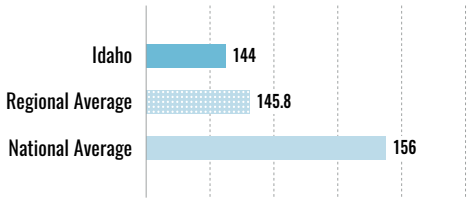
As of 2026, Hawaii has not enacted universal recognition.

Hawaii's most uniquely licensed occupation is elevator apprentice, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

IDAHO

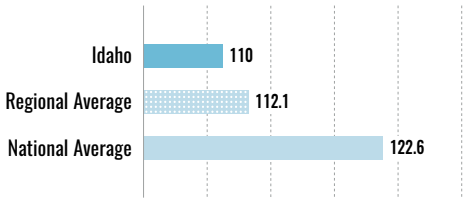
U.S. RANK 41ST



BARRIER SCORE 3.68

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



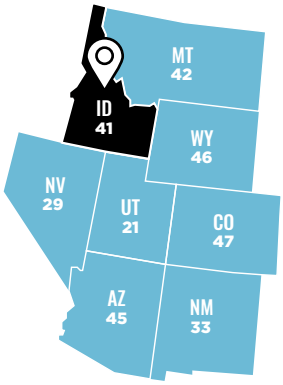
LICENSE SCORE 2.08

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MOUNTAIN REGION

Idaho ranks 4th in the region. (1=worst; 8=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Idaho ranks 41st overal. (1=worst; 51=best)

39	Vermont
40	District of Columbia
41	Idaho
42	Montana
43	South Dakota

KEY FINDINGS

Idaho has the 41st highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 4th of eight states in the Mountain Region.

Idaho's total barriers (144) and licenses (110) are lower than the national average and similar to the regional average.

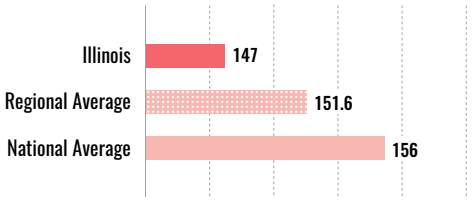
Idaho enacted universal recognition in 2020. Its reform does not include a substantially similar or residency requirement. The reform also prevents boards from requiring jurisprudence exams and forbids additional fees. We rated its reform as gold.

Idaho's most uniquely licensed occupation is electrical sign installer, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

ILLINOIS

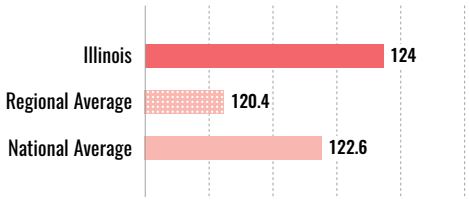
U.S. RANK 37TH



BARRIER SCORE 4.21

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



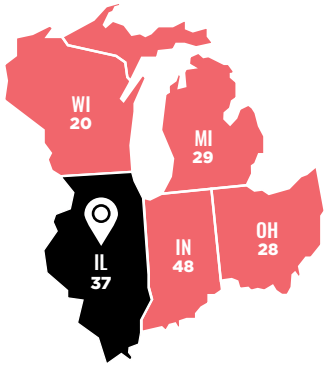
LICENSE SCORE 5.00

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Illinois ranks 4th in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Illinois ranks 37th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

35 Nebraska
36 Hawaii
37 Illinois
38 Alaska
39 Vermont

KEY FINDINGS

Illinois has the 37th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 4th of five states in the East North Central Region.

Illinois's total barriers (147) are lower than the national and regional averages. Illinois's total licenses (124) are similar to the national and regional averages.

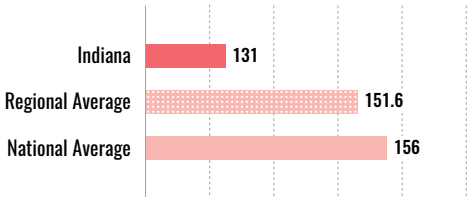
As of 2026, Illinois has not enacted universal recognition.

Illinois's most uniquely licensed occupation is elevator apprentice, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

INDIANA

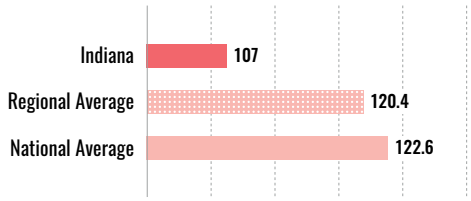
U.S. RANK 48TH



BARRIER SCORE 1.40

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



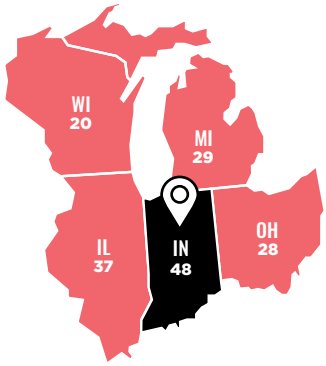
LICENSE SCORE 1.46

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Indiana ranks 5th in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Indiana ranks 48th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

- 46 Wyoming
- 47 Colorado
- 48 Indiana
- 49 New York
- 50 Kansas

KEY FINDINGS

Indiana has the 48th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 5th of five states in the East North Central Region.

Indiana's total barriers (131) and licenses (107) are lower than the national and regional averages.

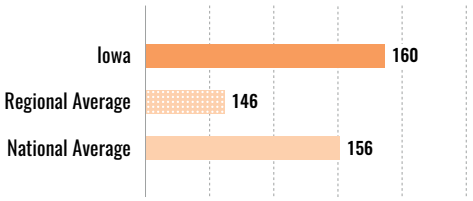
Indiana enacted universal recognition in 2022. Its reform does not include a substantially similar or residency requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

Indiana's most uniquely licensed occupations are anesthesiologist aid/assistant and paraprofessional certification/teacher aide, which are licensed in 16 states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

IOWA

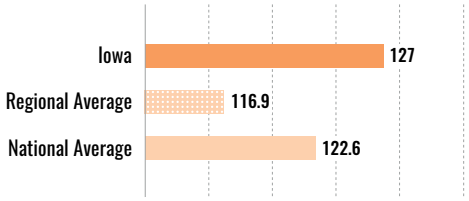
U.S. RANK 25TH



BARRIER SCORE 6.49

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



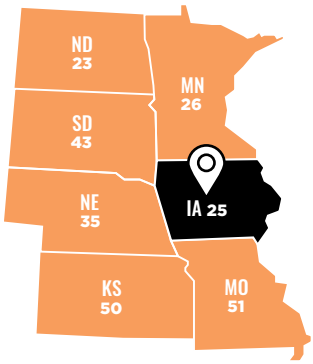
LICENSE SCORE 5.62

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Iowa ranks 2nd in the region. (1=worst; 7=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Iowa ranks 25th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

- 22 New Hampshire
- 23 California/North Dakota
- **25 Iowa**
- 26 Minnesota
- 27 Connecticut

KEY FINDINGS

Iowa has the 25th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 2nd of seven states in the West North Central Region.

Iowa's total barriers (160) and licenses (127) are similar to the national average and higher than the regional average.

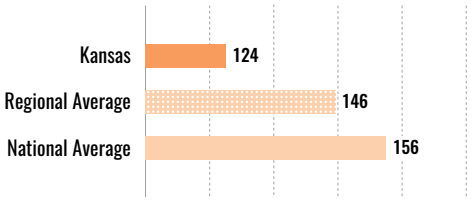
Iowa enacted universal recognition in 2020. Its reform does not include a substantially similar requirement, but it does require residency. We rated its reform as silver.

Iowa's most uniquely licensed occupation is electrical sign installer, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

KANSAS

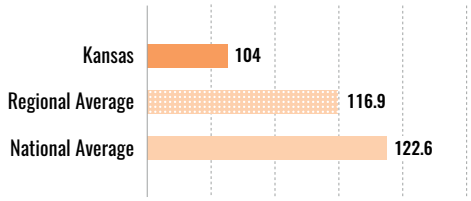
U.S. RANK 50TH



BARRIER SCORE 0.18

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



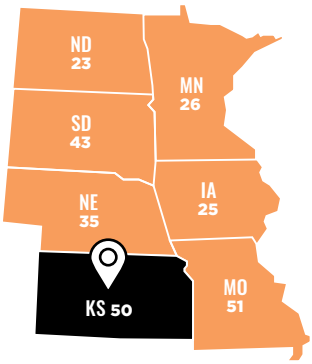
LICENSE SCORE 0.83

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Kansas ranks 6th in the region. (1=worst; 7=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Kansas ranks 50th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

47 Colorado
48 Indiana
49 New York
50 Kansas
51 Missouri

KEY FINDINGS

Kansas has the 50th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 6th of seven states in the West North Central Region.

Kansas's total barriers (124) and licenses (104) are among the lowest in the nation.

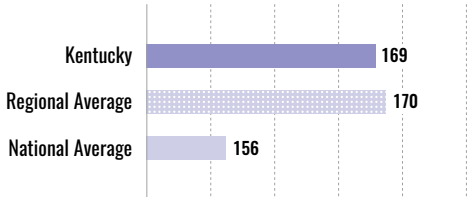
Kansas enacted universal recognition in 2021. Its reform does not include a substantially similar requirement, but it does require residency. We rated its reform as silver.

Kansas's most uniquely licensed occupation is psychiatric technician, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

KENTUCKY

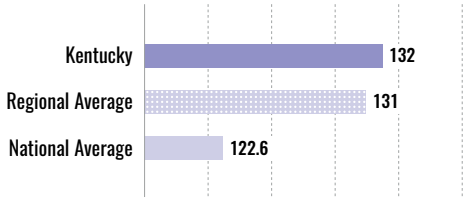
U.S. RANK 9TH



BARRIER SCORE 8.07

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



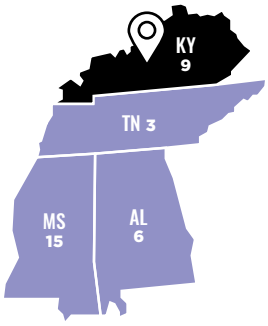
LICENSE SCORE 6.67

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

EAST SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Kentucky ranks 3rd in the region. (1=worst; 4=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Kentucky ranks 9th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

7 North Carolina
8 Florida
9 Kentucky
10 Massachusetts
11 Washington

KEY FINDINGS

Kentucky has the 9th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 3rd of four states in the East South Central Region.

Kentucky's total barriers (169) and licenses (132) are higher than the national average and similar to the regional average.

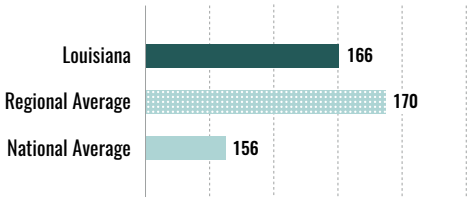
As of 2026, Kentucky has not enacted universal recognition.

Kentucky's most uniquely licensed occupation is orthotic fitter assistant, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

LOUISIANA

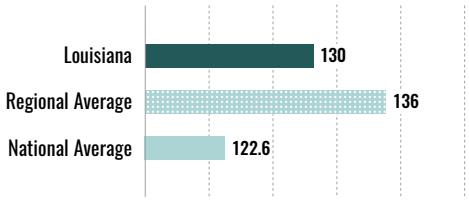
U.S. RANK 13TH



BARRIER SCORE 7.54

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



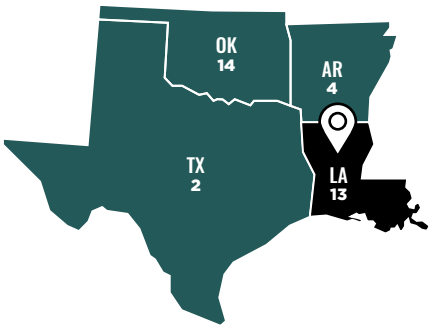
LICENSE SCORE 6.25

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Louisiana ranks 3rd in the region. (1=worst; 4=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Louisiana ranks 13th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

11 Washington
12 Maryland
13 Louisiana
14 Oklahoma
15 Mississippi

KEY FINDINGS

Louisiana has the 13th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 3rd of four states in the West South Central Region.

Louisiana's total barriers (166) and licenses (130) are higher than the national average and lower than the regional average.

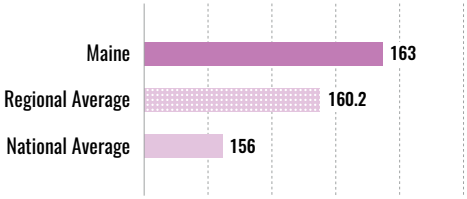
Louisiana enacted universal recognition in 2024. Its reform does not include a substantially similar requirement, but it does require residency. We rated its reform as silver.

Louisiana's most uniquely licensed occupation is interior designer, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

MAINE

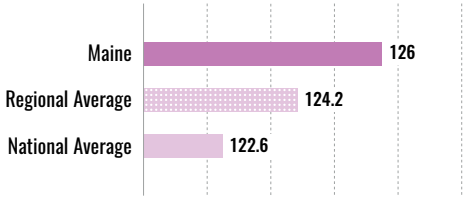
U.S. RANK 19TH



BARRIER SCORE 7.02

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



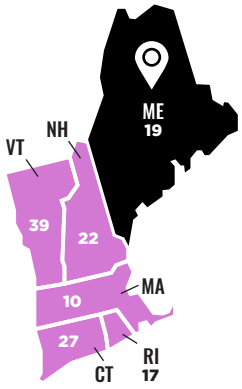
LICENSE SCORE 5.42

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

NEW ENGLAND REGION

Maine ranks 3rd in the region. (1=worst; 6=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Maine ranks 19th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

17 Rhode Island
18 Virginia
19 Maine
20 Wisconsin
21 Utah

KEY FINDINGS

Maine has the 19th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 3rd of six states in the New England Region.

Maine's total barriers (163) are higher than the national average and similar to the regional average. Maine's total licenses (126) are similar to the national and regional averages.

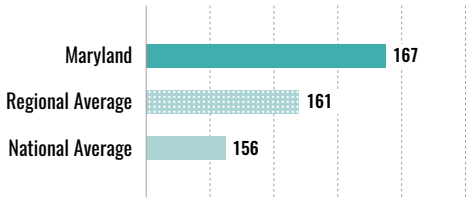
As of 2026, Maine has not enacted universal recognition.

Maine's most uniquely licensed occupation is forester in training, which no other state licenses.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

MARYLAND

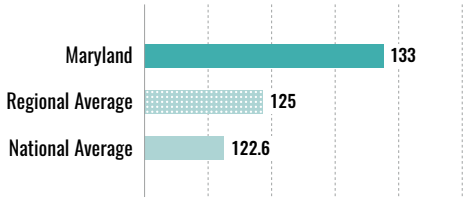
U.S. RANK 12TH



BARRIER SCORE 7.72

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



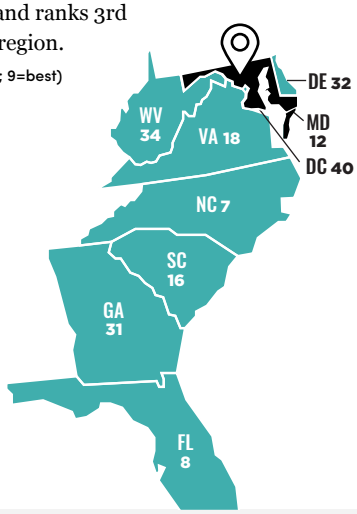
LICENSE SCORE 6.88

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

Maryland ranks 3rd in the region.
(1=worst; 9=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Maryland ranks 12th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

10 Massachusetts
11 Washington
12 Maryland
13 Louisiana
14 Oklahoma

KEY FINDINGS

Maryland has the 12th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 3rd of nine states in the South Atlantic Region.

Maryland's total barriers (167) and licenses (133) are higher than the national and regional averages.

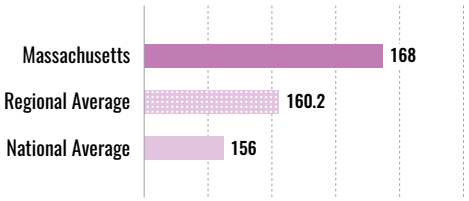
As of 2026, Maryland has not enacted universal recognition.

Maryland's most uniquely licensed occupation is home improvement salesperson, which is licensed in two states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

MASSACHUSETTS

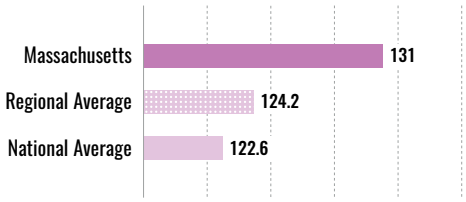
U.S. RANK 10TH



BARRIER SCORE 7.89

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



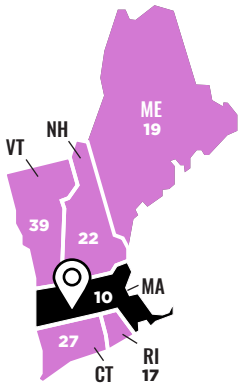
LICENSE SCORE 6.46

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

NEW ENGLAND REGION

Massachusetts ranks 1st in the region. (1=worst; 6=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Massachusetts ranks 10th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

8 Florida
9 Kentucky
10 Massachusetts
11 Washington
12 Maryland

KEY FINDINGS

Massachusetts has the 10th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 1st of six states in the New England Region.

Massachusetts's total barriers (168) and licenses (131) are higher than the national and regional averages.

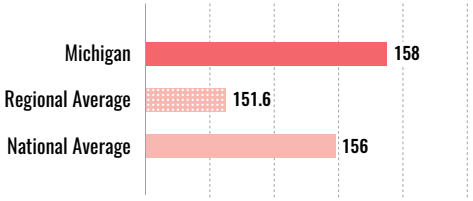
As of 2026, Massachusetts has not enacted universal recognition.

Massachusetts's most uniquely licensed occupation is home inspector associate/trainee/intern, which is licensed in two states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

MICHIGAN

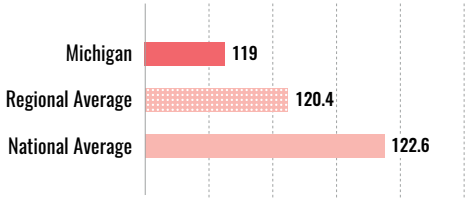
U.S. RANK 29TH



BARRIER SCORE 6.14

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



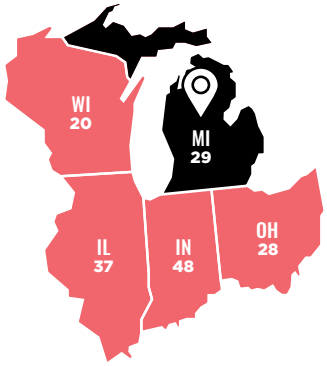
LICENSE SCORE 3.96

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Michigan ranks 3rd in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Michigan ranks 29th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

27 Connecticut
28 Ohio
29 Michigan/Nevada
31 Georgia
32 Delaware

KEY FINDINGS

Michigan has the 29th highest licensing burden in the US (tied with Nevada) and ranks 3rd of five states in the East North Central Region.

Michigan's total barriers (158) are similar to the national average and higher than the regional average. Michigan's total licenses (119) are similar to the national and regional averages.

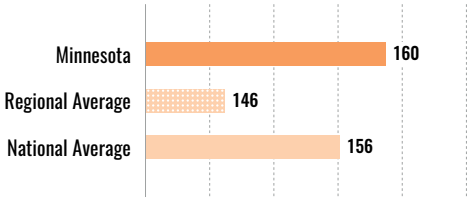
As of 2026, Michigan has not enacted universal recognition.

Michigan's most uniquely licensed occupation is home improvement salesperson, which is licensed in two states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

MINNESOTA

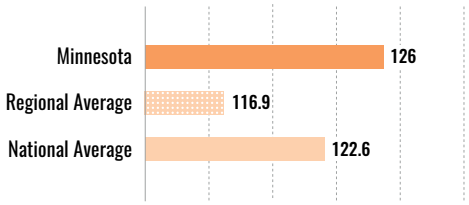
U.S. RANK 26TH



BARRIER SCORE 6.49

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



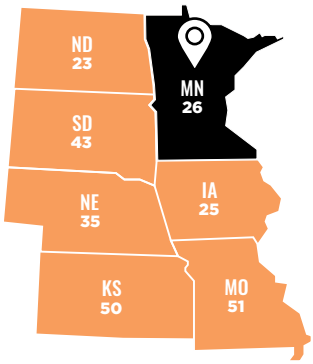
LICENSE SCORE 5.42

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Minnesota ranks 3rd in the region. (1=worst; 7=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Minnesota ranks 26th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

23 California/North Dakota
25 Iowa
26 Minnesota
27 Connecticut
28 Ohio

KEY FINDINGS

Minnesota has the 26th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 3rd of seven states in the West North Central Region.

Minnesota's total barriers (160) and licenses (126) are similar to the national average and higher than the regional average.

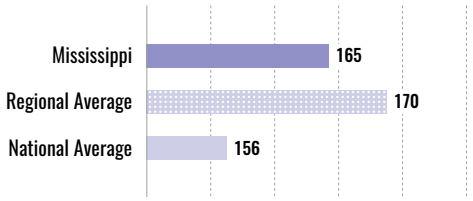
As of 2026, Minnesota has not enacted universal recognition.

Minnesota's most uniquely licensed occupation is orthotic fitter assistant, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

MISSISSIPPI

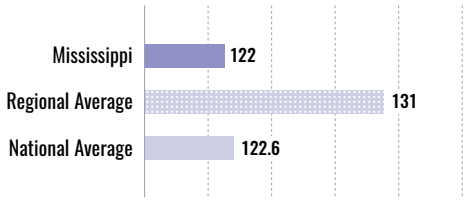
U.S. RANK 15TH



BARRIER SCORE 7.37

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



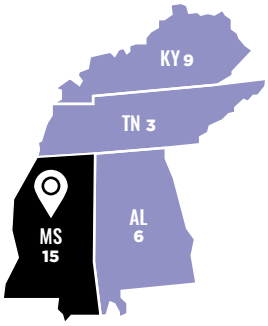
LICENSE SCORE 4.58

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

EAST SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Mississippi ranks 4th in the region. (1=worst; 4=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Mississippi ranks 15th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

13 Louisiana
14 Oklahoma
15 Mississippi
16 South Carolina
17 Rhode Island

KEY FINDINGS

Mississippi has the 15th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 4th of four states in the East South Central Region.

Mississippi's total barriers (165) are higher than the national average and lower than the regional average. Mississippi's total licenses (122) are similar to the national average and lower than the regional average.

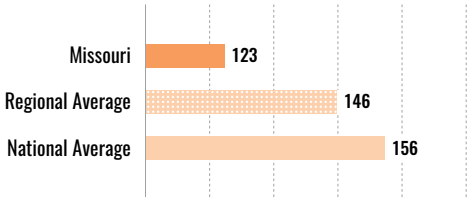
Mississippi enacted universal recognition in 2021. Its reform does not include a substantially similar requirement, but it does require residency. We rated its reform as silver.

Mississippi's most uniquely licensed occupation is polygraph examiner intern/trainee, which is licensed in nine states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

MISSOURI

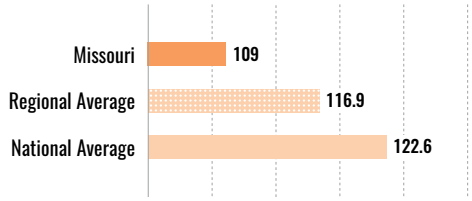
U.S. RANK 51ST



BARRIER SCORE 0.00

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



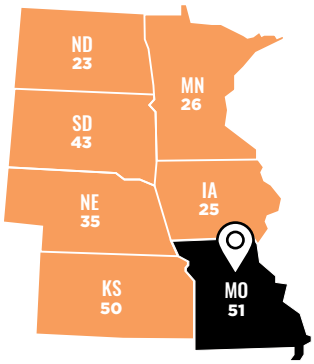
LICENSE SCORE 1.88

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Missouri ranks 7th in the region. (1=worst; 7=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Missouri ranks 51st overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

47	Colorado
48	Indiana
49	New York
50	Kansas
51	Missouri

KEY FINDINGS

Missouri has the lowest licensing burden in the US and ranks 7th of seven states in the West North Central Region.

Missouri has the fewest barriers in the nation, and its total licenses are below the national and regional averages.

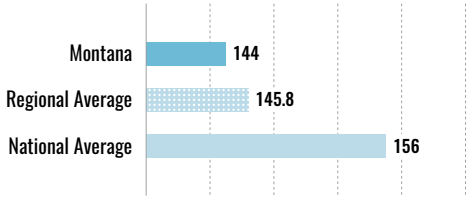
Missouri enacted universal recognition in 2018. Its reform does not include a substantially similar or residency requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

Missouri's most uniquely licensed occupation is animal breeder, which is licensed in 10 states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

MONTANA

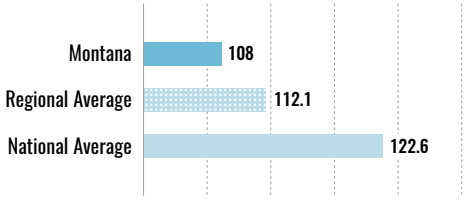
U.S. RANK 42ND



BARRIER SCORE 3.68

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



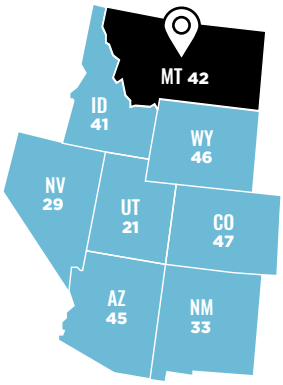
LICENSE SCORE 1.67

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MOUNTAIN REGION

Montana ranks 5th in the region. (1=worst; 8=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Montana ranks 42nd overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

40 District of Columbia
41 Idaho
42 Montana
43 South Dakota
44 Pennsylvania

KEY FINDINGS

Montana has the 42nd highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 5th of eight states in the Mountain Region.

Montana's total barriers (144) and licenses (108) are lower than the national average and similar to the regional average.

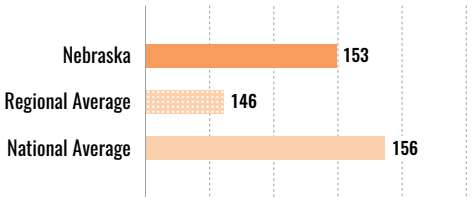
Montana enacted universal recognition in 2019. Its reform includes a substantially similar requirement, but it does not require residency. We rated its reform as bronze.

Montana's most uniquely licensed occupation is apprentice gas fitter, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

NEBRASKA

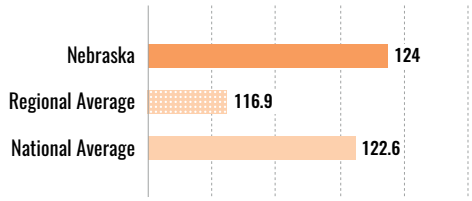
U.S. RANK 35TH



BARRIER SCORE 5.26

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



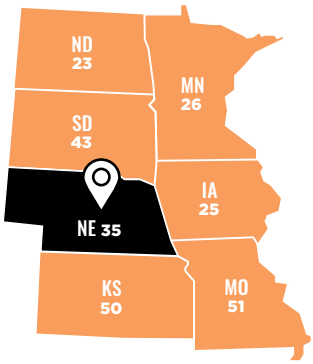
LICENSE SCORE 5.00

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Nebraska ranks 4th in the region. (1=worst; 7=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Nebraska ranks 35th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

33 New Mexico
34 West Virginia
35 Nebraska
36 Hawaii
37 Illinois

KEY FINDINGS

Nebraska has the 35th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 4th of seven states in the West North Central Region.

Nebraska's total barriers (153) and licenses (124) are similar to the national average and higher than the regional average.

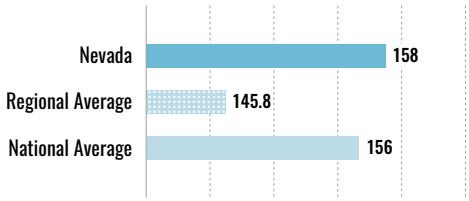
Nebraska enacted universal recognition in 2024. Its reform does not include a substantially similar or residency requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

Nebraska's most uniquely licensed occupation is abstractor, which is licensed in seven states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

NEVADA

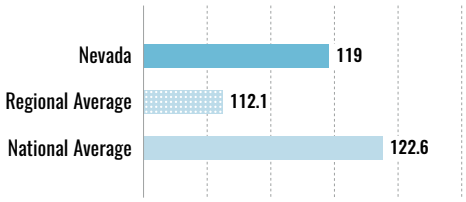
U.S. RANK 29TH



BARRIER SCORE 6.14

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



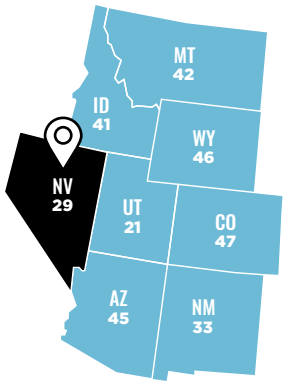
LICENSE SCORE 3.96

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MOUNTAIN REGION

Nevada ranks 2nd in the region. (1=worst; 8=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Nevada ranks 29th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

27 Connecticut
28 Ohio
29 Nevada/Michigan
31 Georgia
32 Delaware

KEY FINDINGS

Nevada has the 29th highest licensing burden in the US (tied with Michigan) and ranks 2nd of eight states in the Mountain Region.

Nevada's total barriers (158) and licenses (119) are similar to the national average and higher than the regional average.

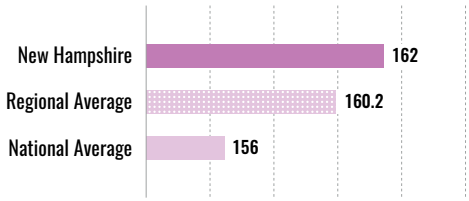
Nevada enacted universal recognition in 2015. Its reform includes a substantially similar requirement, but it does not require residency. We rated its reform as bronze.

Nevada's most uniquely licensed occupation is interior designer, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

NEW HAMPSHIRE

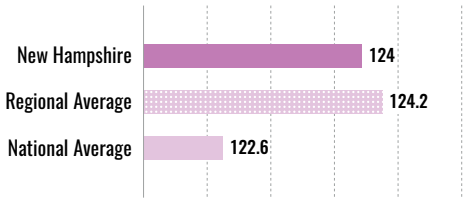
U.S. RANK 22ND



BARRIER SCORE 6.84

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



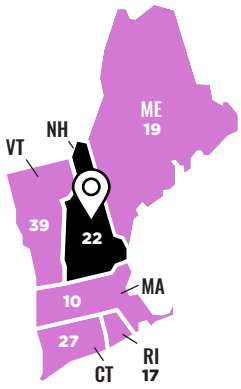
LICENSE SCORE 5.00

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

NEW ENGLAND REGION

New Hampshire ranks 4th in the region. (1=worst; 6=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

New Hampshire ranks 22nd overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

20 Wisconsin
21 Utah
22 New Hampshire
23 California/North Dakota
25 Iowa

KEY FINDINGS

New Hampshire has the 22nd highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 4th of six states in the New England Region.

New Hampshire's total barriers (162) are higher than the national average and similar to the regional average. New Hampshire's total licenses (124) are similar to the national and regional averages.

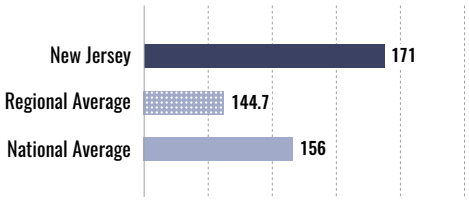
New Hampshire enacted universal recognition in 2018. Its reform includes a substantially similar requirement, but it does not require residency. We rated its reform as bronze.

New Hampshire's most uniquely licensed occupation is apprentice gas fitter, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

NEW JERSEY

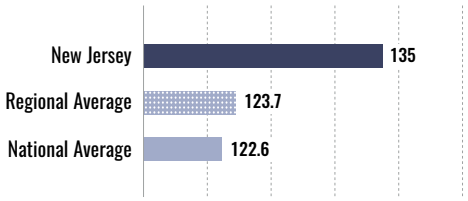
U.S. RANK 5TH



BARRIER SCORE 8.42

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



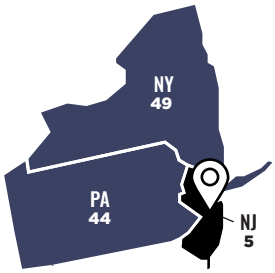
LICENSE SCORE 7.29

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION

New Jersey ranks 1st in the region. (1=worst; 3=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

New Jersey ranks 5th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

3. Tennessee
4. Arkansas
5. New Jersey
6. Alabama
7. North Carolina

KEY FINDINGS

New Jersey has the 5th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 1st of three states in the Middle Atlantic Region.

New Jersey's total barriers (171) and licenses (135) are higher than the national and regional averages.

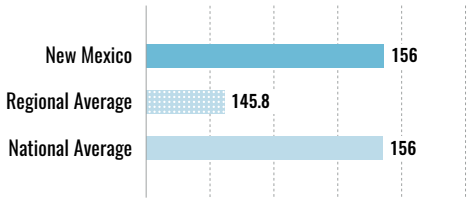
New Jersey was the first state in the country to enact universal recognition in 2013. Its reform includes a substantially similar requirement, but it does not require residency. We rated its reform as bronze.

New Jersey's most uniquely licensed occupation is dance/movement therapist, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

NEW MEXICO

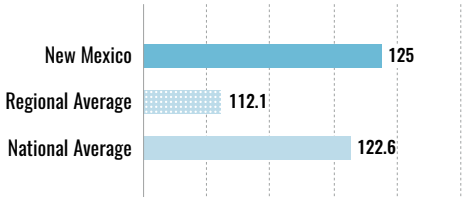
U.S. RANK 33RD



BARRIER SCORE 5.79

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



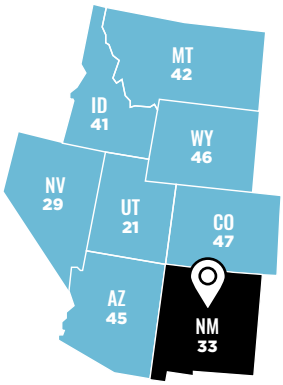
LICENSE SCORE 5.21

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MOUNTAIN REGION

New Mexico ranks 3rd in the region. (1=worst; 8=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

New Mexico ranks 33rd overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

31 Georgia
32 Delaware
33 New Mexico
34 West Virginia
35 Nebraska

KEY FINDINGS

New Mexico has the 33rd highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 3rd of eight states in the Mountain Region.

New Mexico's total barriers (156) and licenses (125) are similar to the national average and higher than the regional average.

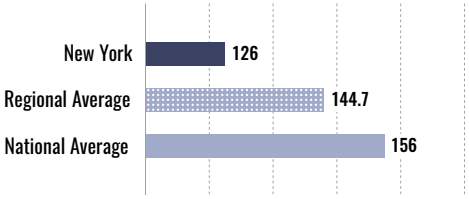
New Mexico enacted universal recognition in 2015 without a residency requirement, but including a substantially similar requirement. In 2022, it expanded its reform and removed the substantially similar requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

New Mexico's most uniquely licensed occupation is dietetic technician/ nutrition associate, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

NEW YORK

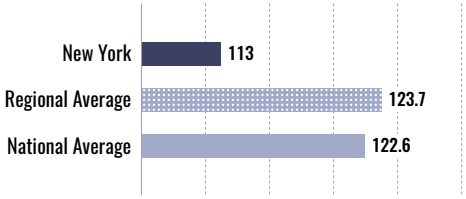
U.S. RANK 49TH



BARRIER SCORE 0.53

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



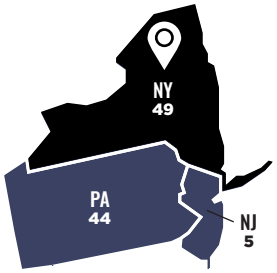
LICENSE SCORE 2.71

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION

New York ranks 3rd in the region. (1=worst; 3=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

New York ranks 49th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

47 Colorado
48 Indiana
49 New York
50 Kansas
51 Missouri

KEY FINDINGS

New York has the 49th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 3rd of three states in the Middle Atlantic Region.

New York's total barriers (126) and licenses (113) are lower than the national and regional averages.

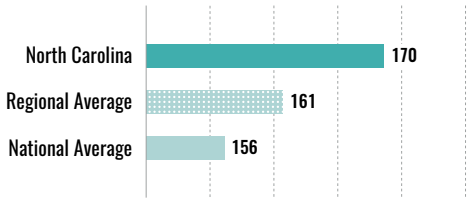
As of 2026, New York has not enacted universal recognition.

New York's most uniquely licensed occupation is drama therapist, which no other state licenses.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

NORTH CAROLINA

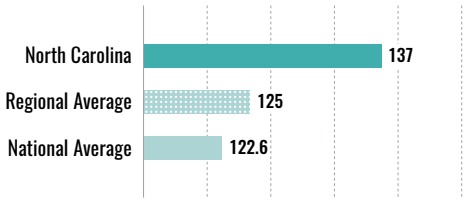
U.S. RANK 7TH



BARRIER SCORE 8.25

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



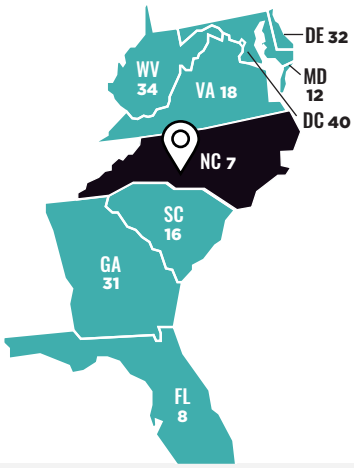
LICENSE SCORE 7.71

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

North Carolina ranks 1st in the region. (1=worst; 9=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

North Carolina ranks 7th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

5 New Jersey
6 Alabama
7 North Carolina
8 Florida
9 Kentucky

KEY FINDINGS

North Carolina has the 7th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 1st of nine states in the South Atlantic Region.

North Carolina's total barriers (170) and licenses (137) are higher than the national and regional averages.

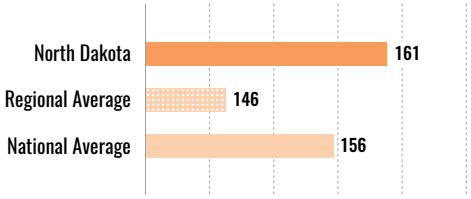
As of 2026, North Carolina has not enacted universal recognition.

North Carolina's most uniquely licensed occupation is electrical sign contractor, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

NORTH DAKOTA

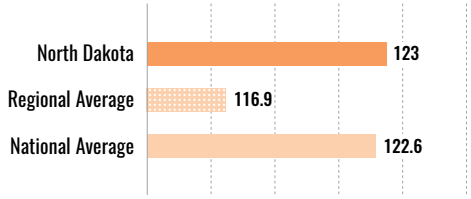
U.S. RANK 23RD



BARRIER SCORE 6.67

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



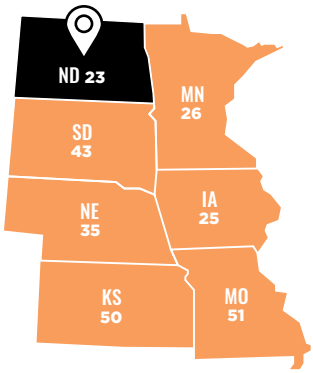
LICENSE SCORE 4.79

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

North Dakota ranks 1st in the region. (1=worst; 7=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

North Dakota ranks 23rd overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

21 Utah
22 New Hampshire
23 North Dakota/California
25 Iowa
26 Minnesota

KEY FINDINGS

North Dakota has the 23rd highest licensing burden in the US (tied with California) and ranks 1st of seven states in the West North Central Region.

North Dakota's total barriers (161) and licenses (123) are similar to the national average and higher than the regional average.

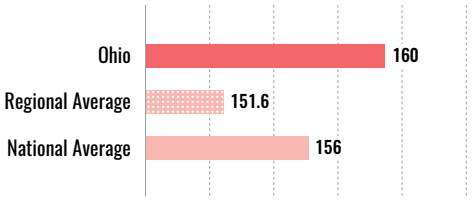
North Dakota enacted universal recognition in 2025. Its reform includes a substantially similar requirement, but it does not require residency. We rated its reform as bronze.

North Dakota's most uniquely licensed occupation is diagnostic medical sonographer, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

OHIO

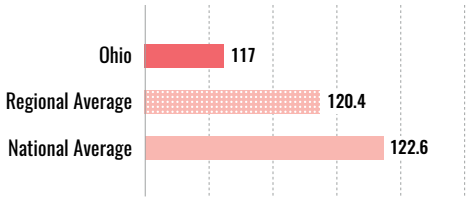
U.S. RANK 28TH



BARRIER SCORE 6.49

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



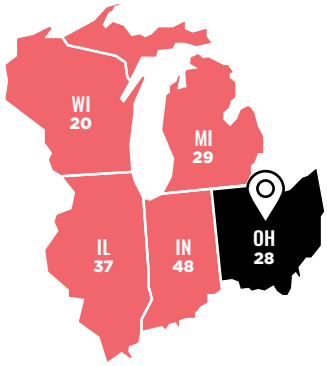
LICENSE SCORE 3.54

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Ohio ranks 2nd in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Ohio ranks 28th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

- 26 Minnesota
- 27 Connecticut
- **28 Ohio**
- 29 Michigan/Nevada
- 31 Georgia

KEY FINDINGS

Ohio has the 28th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 2nd of five states in the East North Central Region.

Ohio's total barriers (160) are similar to the national average and higher than the regional average. Ohio's total licenses (117) are similar to the national and regional averages.

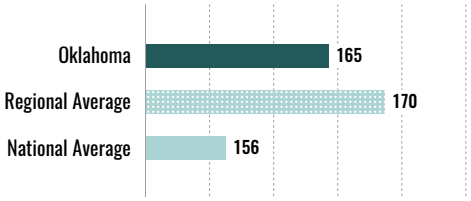
Ohio enacted universal recognition in 2023. Its reform does not include a substantially similar or residency requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

Ohio's most uniquely licensed occupation is dialysis technician, which is licensed in 11 states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

OKLAHOMA

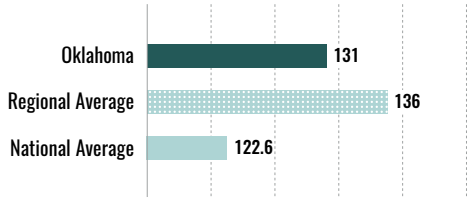
U.S. RANK 14TH



BARRIER SCORE 7.37

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



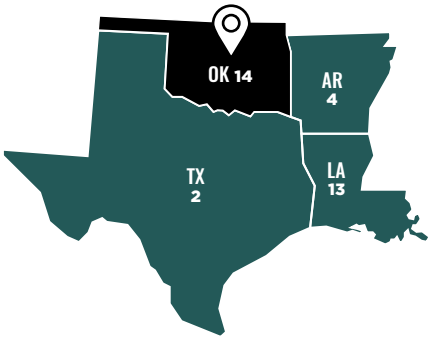
LICENSE SCORE 6.46

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Oklahoma ranks 4th in the region. (1=worst; 4=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Oklahoma ranks 14th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

12 Maryland
13 Louisiana
14 Oklahoma
15 Mississippi
16 South Carolina

KEY FINDINGS

Oklahoma has the 14th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 4th of four states in the West South Central Region.

Oklahoma's total barriers (165) and licenses (131) are higher than the national average and similar to the regional average.

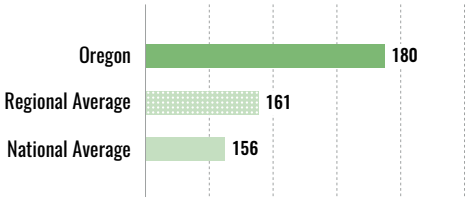
Oklahoma enacted universal recognition in 2021. Its reform has both substantially similar and residency requirements. We rated its reform as bronze; it is the most restrictive universal recognition law in the US.

Oklahoma's most uniquely licensed occupation is abstractor, which is licensed in seven states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

OREGON

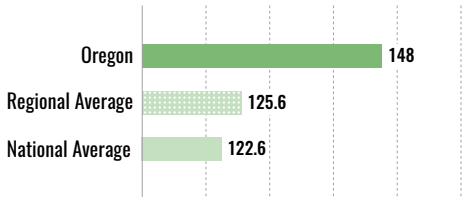
U.S. RANK 1ST



BARRIER SCORE 10.00

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



LICENSE SCORE 10.00

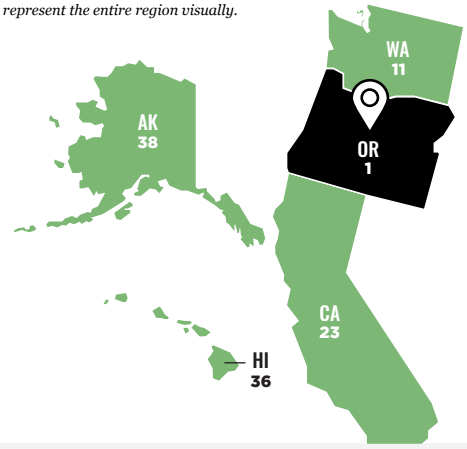
(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

PACIFIC REGION

Oregon ranks 1st in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)

AK + HI have been moved to represent the entire region visually.



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Oregon ranks 1st overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

1. Oregon
2. Texas
3. Tennessee
4. Arkansas
5. New Jersey

KEY FINDINGS

Oregon has the highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 1st of five states in the Pacific Region.

Oregon's total barriers (180) and licenses (148) are the highest in the nation.

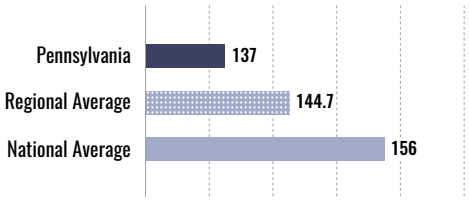
As of 2026, Oregon has not enacted universal recognition.

Oregon's most uniquely licensed occupation is lactation consultant, which is licensed in two states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

PENNSYLVANIA

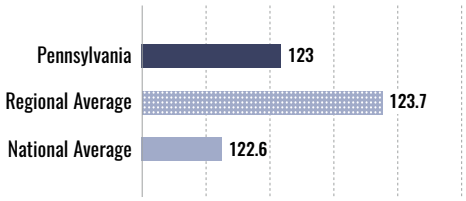
U.S. RANK 44TH



BARRIER SCORE 2.46

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



LICENSE SCORE 4.79

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION

Pennsylvania ranks 2nd in the region. (1=worst; 3=best)

OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Pennsylvania ranks 44th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

42 Montana
43 South Dakota
44 Pennsylvania
45 Arizona
46 Wyoming

KEY FINDINGS

Pennsylvania has the 44th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 2nd of three states in the Middle Atlantic Region.

Pennsylvania's total barriers (137) are lower than the national and regional averages. Pennsylvania's total licenses (123) are similar to the national and regional averages.

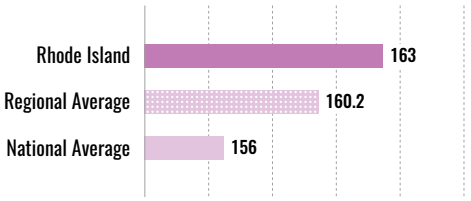
Pennsylvania enacted universal recognition in 2019. Its reform includes a substantially similar requirement, but it does not require residency. We rated its reform as bronze.

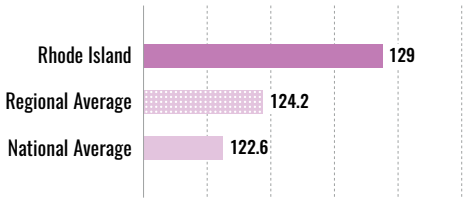
Pennsylvania's most uniquely licensed occupation is orthotic fitter, which is licensed in five states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

RHODE ISLAND

U.S. RANK 17TH





BARRIER SCORE 7.02

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.

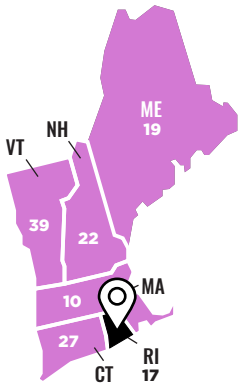
LICENSE SCORE 6.04

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

NEW ENGLAND REGION

Rhode Island ranks 2nd in the region. (1=worst; 6=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Rhode Island ranks 17th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

15 Mississippi
16 South Carolina
17 Rhode Island
18 Virginia
19 Maine

KEY FINDINGS

Rhode Island has the 17th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 2nd of six states in the New England Region.

Rhode Island's total barriers (163) are higher than the national average and similar to the regional average. Rhode Island's total licenses (129) are higher than the national and regional averages.

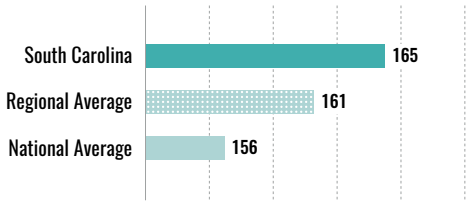
As of 2026, Rhode Island has not enacted universal recognition.

Rhode Island's most uniquely licensed occupation is lightning-protection contractor/installer, which no other state licenses.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

SOUTH CAROLINA

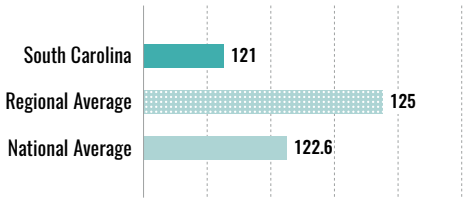
U.S. RANK 16TH



BARRIER SCORE 7.37

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



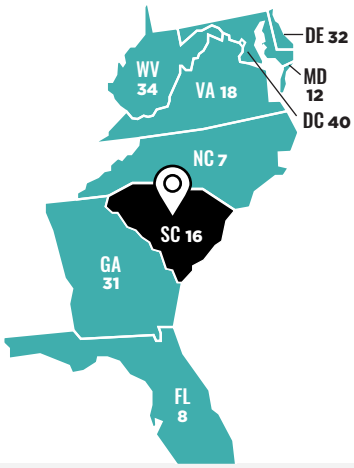
LICENSE SCORE 4.38

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

South Carolina ranks 4th in the region. (1=worst; 9=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

South Carolina ranks 16th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

14 Oklahoma
15 Mississippi
16 South Carolina
17 Rhode Island
18 Virginia

KEY FINDINGS

South Carolina has the 16th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 4th of nine states in the South Atlantic Region.

South Carolina's total barriers (165) are higher than the national and regional averages. South Carolina's licenses (121) are similar to the national average and lower than the regional average.

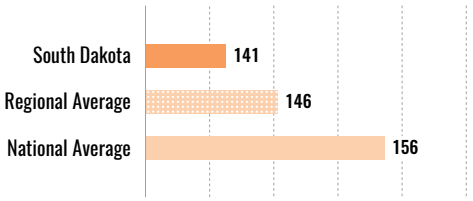
As of 2026, South Carolina has not enacted universal recognition.

South Carolina's most uniquely licensed occupation is public accountant/accountant practitioner, which is licensed in four states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

SOUTH DAKOTA

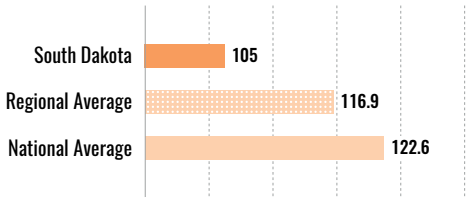
U.S. RANK 43RD



BARRIER SCORE 3.16

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



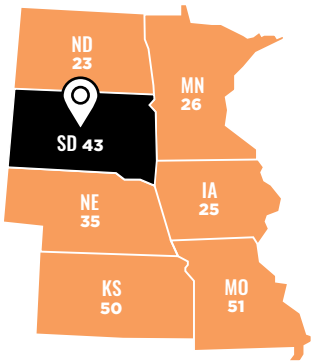
LICENSE SCORE 1.04

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

South Dakota ranks 5th in the region. (1=worst; 7=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

South Dakota ranks 43rd overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

41 Idaho
42 Montana
43 South Dakota
44 Pennsylvania
45 Arizona

KEY FINDINGS

South Dakota has the 43rd highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 5th of seven states in the West North Central Region.

South Dakota's total barriers (141) and licenses (105) are lower than the national and regional averages.

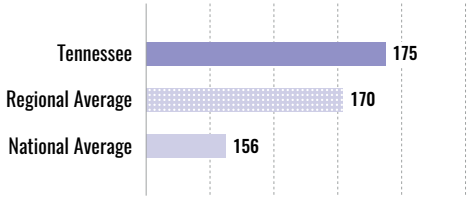
South Dakota enacted universal recognition in 2021. Its reform includes a substantially similar requirement, but it does not require residency. We rated its reform as bronze.

South Dakota's most uniquely licensed occupation is abstractor, which is licensed in seven states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

TENNESSEE

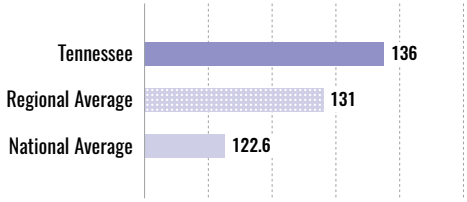
U.S. RANK 3RD



BARRIER SCORE 9.12

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



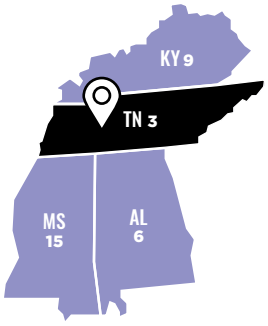
LICENSE SCORE 7.50

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

EAST SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Tennessee ranks 1st in the region. (1=worst; 4=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Tennessee ranks 3rd overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

1. Oregon
2. Texas
3. Tennessee
4. Arkansas
5. New Jersey

KEY FINDINGS

Tennessee has the 3rd highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 1st of four states in the East South Central Region.

Tennessee's total barriers (175) and licenses (136) are higher than the national and regional averages.

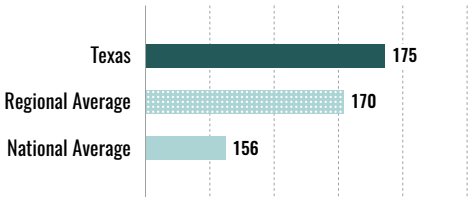
As of 2026, Tennessee has not enacted universal recognition.

Tennessee's most uniquely licensed occupations are dental assistant and medical assistant, which are licensed in 10 states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

TEXAS

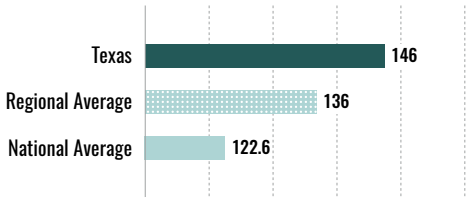
U.S. RANK 2ND



BARRIER SCORE 9.12

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



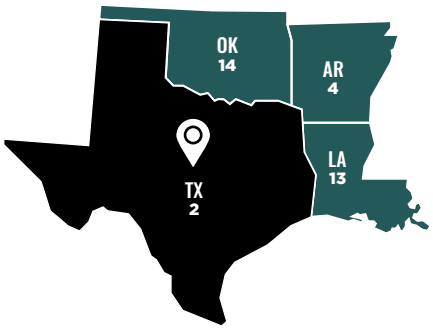
LICENSE SCORE 9.58

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

WEST SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Texas ranks 1st in the region. (1=worst; 4=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Texas ranks 2nd overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

1. Oregon
2. Texas
3. Tennessee
4. Arkansas
5. New Jersey

KEY FINDINGS

Texas has the 2nd highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 1st of four states in the West South Central Region.

Texas's total barriers (175) and licenses (146) are among the highest in the nation.

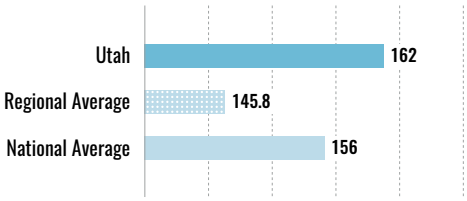
As of 2026, Texas has not enacted universal recognition.

Texas's most uniquely licensed occupations are mold assessment consultant and mold remediation worker, which no other state licenses.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

UTAH

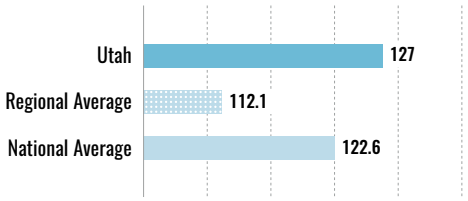
U.S. RANK 21ST



BARRIER SCORE 6.84

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



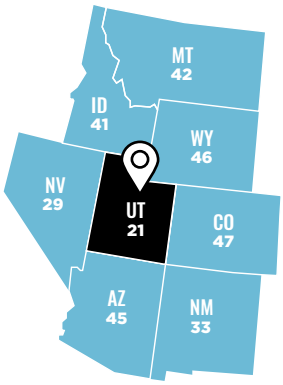
LICENSE SCORE 5.63

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MOUNTAIN REGION

Utah ranks 1st in the region. (1=worst; 8=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Utah ranks 21st overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

- 19 Maine
- 20 Wisconsin
- 21 Utah
- 22 New Hampshire
- 23 California/North Dakota

KEY FINDINGS

Utah has the 21st highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 1st of eight states in the Mountain Region.

Utah's total barriers (162) and licenses (127) are higher than the national and regional averages.

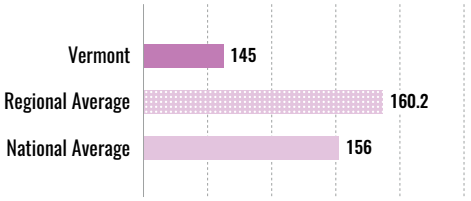
Utah enacted universal recognition in 2020. Its reform does not include a substantially similar or residency requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

Utah's most uniquely licensed occupation is recreational therapist, which is licensed in five states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

VERMONT

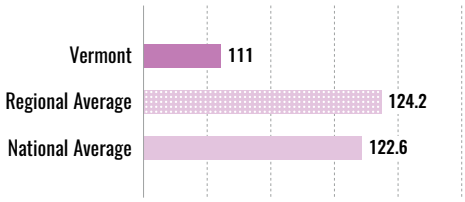
U.S. RANK 39TH



BARRIER SCORE 3.86

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



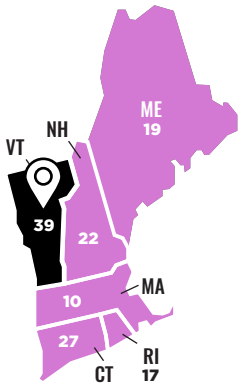
LICENSE SCORE 2.29

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

NEW ENGLAND REGION

Vermont ranks 6th in the region. (1=worst; 6=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Vermont ranks 39th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

37 Illinois
38 Alaska
39 Vermont
40 District of Columbia
41 Idaho

KEY FINDINGS

Vermont has the 39th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 6th of six states in the New England Region.

Vermont's total barriers (145) and licenses (111) are lower than the national and regional averages.

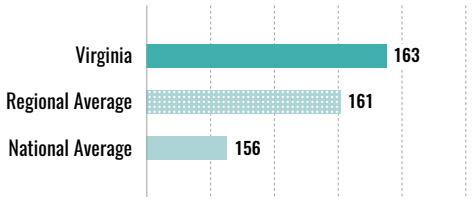
Vermont enacted universal recognition in 2020. Its reform does not include a substantially similar or residency requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

Vermont's most uniquely licensed occupation is auctioneer apprentice, which is licensed in 12 states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

VIRGINIA

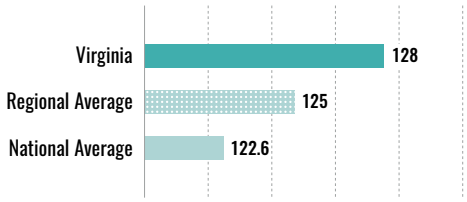
U.S. RANK 18TH



BARRIER SCORE 7.02

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



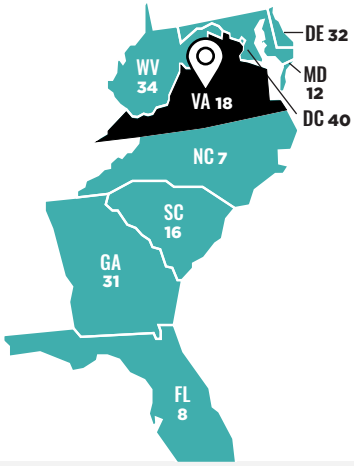
LICENSE SCORE 5.83

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

Virginia ranks 5th in the region. (1=worst; 9=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Virginia ranks 18th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

16 South Carolina
17 Rhode Island
18 Virginia
19 Maine
20 Wisconsin

KEY FINDINGS

Virginia has the 18th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 5th of nine states in the South Atlantic Region.

Virginia's total barriers (163) and licenses (128) are higher than the national average and similar to the regional average.

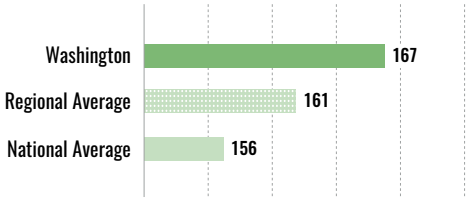
Virginia enacted universal recognition in 2023. Its reform does not include a substantially similar or residency requirement. We rated its reform as gold.

Virginia's most uniquely licensed occupation is vehicle salesperson, which is licensed in five states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

WASHINGTON

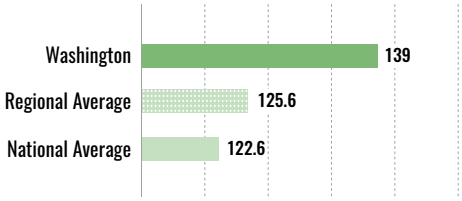
U.S. RANK 11TH



BARRIER SCORE 7.72

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



LICENSE SCORE 8.13

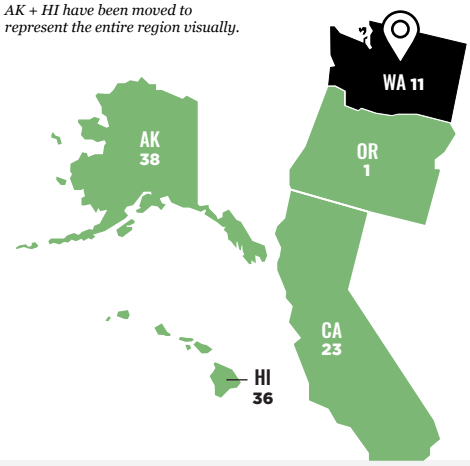
(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

PACIFIC REGION

Washington ranks 2nd in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)

AK + HI have been moved to represent the entire region visually.



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Washington ranks 11th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

9 Kentucky
10 Massachusetts
11 Washington
12 Maryland
13 Louisiana

KEY FINDINGS

Washington has the 11th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 2nd of five states in the Pacific Region.

Washington's total barriers (167) and licenses (139) are higher than the national and regional averages.

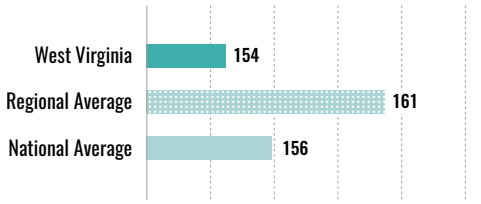
As of 2026, Washington has not enacted universal recognition.

Washington's most uniquely licensed occupation is ocularist, which no other state licenses.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

WEST VIRGINIA

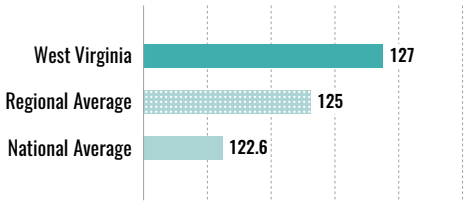
U.S. RANK 34TH



BARRIER SCORE 5.44

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



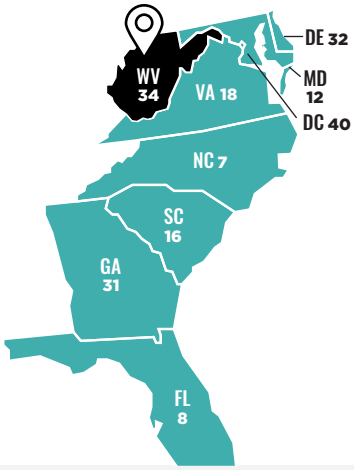
LICENSE SCORE 5.63

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

West Virginia ranks 8th in the region. (1=worst; 9=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

West Virginia ranks 34th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

- 32 Delaware
- 33 New Mexico
- **34 West Virginia**
- 35 Nebraska
- 36 Hawaii

KEY FINDINGS

West Virginia has the 34th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 8th of nine states in the South Atlantic Region.

West Virginia's total barriers (154) are similar to the national average and lower than the regional average. West Virginia's total licenses (127) are similar to the national and regional averages.

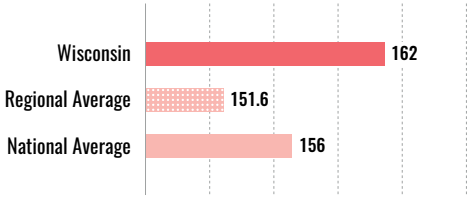
West Virginia enacted universal recognition in 2025. Its reform does not include a substantially similar requirement, but it does require residency. We rated its reform as silver.

West Virginia's most uniquely licensed occupation is vehicle salesperson, which is licensed in five states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

WISCONSIN

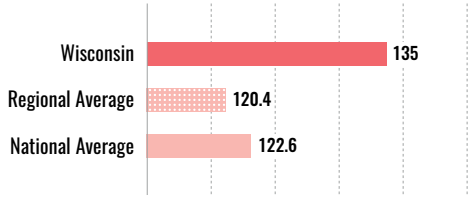
U.S. RANK 20TH



BARRIER SCORE 6.84

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



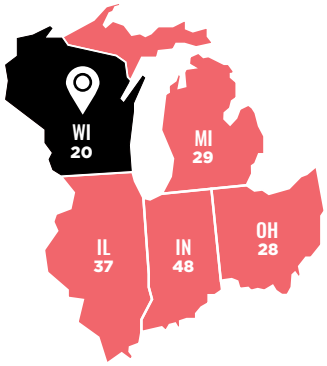
LICENSE SCORE 7.29

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Wisconsin ranks 1st in the region. (1=worst; 5=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Wisconsin ranks 20th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

18 Virginia
19 Maine
20 Wisconsin
21 Utah
22 New Hampshire

KEY FINDINGS

Wisconsin has the 20th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 1st of five states in the East North Central Region.

Wisconsin's total barriers (162) and licenses (135) are higher than the national and regional averages.

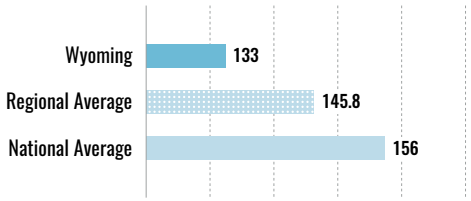
As of 2026, Wisconsin has not enacted universal recognition.

Wisconsin's most uniquely licensed occupation is elevator apprentice, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

WYOMING

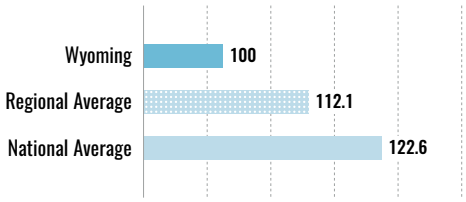
U.S. RANK 46TH



BARRIER SCORE 1.75

(0=fewest barriers; 10=most barriers)

A barrier exists when the tasks associated with an occupational title are restricted by an occupational license to perform those tasks. The occupation itself may not have a specific license, but it is a crime to perform the associated tasks without meeting entry requirements.



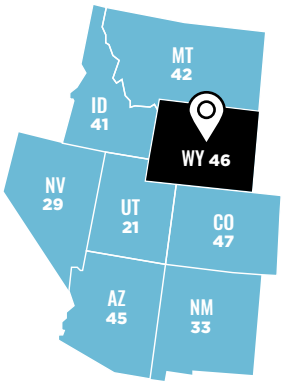
LICENSE SCORE 0.00

(0=fewest licenses; 10=most licenses)

A licensing requirement is anything beyond a registration fee that is not voluntary for an occupational title. Licensing requirements include required education or degrees, exams, apprenticeships, experience or on-the-job training, and continuing education.

MOUNTAIN REGION

Wyoming ranks 7th in the region. (1=worst; 8=best)



OVERALL U.S. RANKING

Wyoming ranks 46th overall. (1=worst; 51=best)

44 Pennsylvania
45 Arizona
46 Wyoming
47 Colorado
48 Indiana

KEY FINDINGS

Wyoming has the 46th highest licensing burden in the US and ranks 7th of eight states in the Mountain Region.

Wyoming's total barriers (133) and licenses (100) are lower than the national and regional averages.

Wyoming enacted universal recognition in 2021. Its reform includes a substantially similar requirement, but it does not require residency. We rated its reform as bronze.

Wyoming's most uniquely licensed occupation is dietetic technician/nutrition associate, which is licensed in three states.

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

APPENDIX

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING CHANGES FROM 2025 TO 2026

TABLE 5 | CHANGES IN STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSURE

STATE	NET CHANGE IN LICENSES	HOW RANKINGS ARE AFFECTED
Mississippi	+2	Fell four spots (19 to 15)
Nebraska	+1	No change
New Mexico	-1	No change
Nevada	+1	No change
Ohio	-2	Rose five spots (18 to 23)
South Carolina	+1	No change
Wyoming	-1	No change

NEWLY LICENSED OCCUPATIONS

OCCUPATION	STATE(S)
Genetic Counselor	Mississippi and Nevada
Music Therapist	Mississippi
Home Inspector	Iowa
Pharmacy Technician	Pennsylvania
Assistant Funeral Director	Nebraska
Medication Assistant	South Carolina*

**new training-based credential*

REMOVAL OF LICENSED OCCUPATIONS

OCCUPATION	STATE(S)
Dental Assistant	Iowa
Natural Hair Braider	New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wyoming
Ocularist	Ohio

ENDNOTES

1 https://bls.gov/cps/certifications-and-licenses.htm

2 https://knee.wvu.edu

3 https://github.com/ncarollo

4 We follow the basic framework recommended by Milton Friedman in *Capitalism and Freedom*.

5 See Deyo, Kleiner, and Timmons (2018), https://mercatus.org/research/policy-briefs/response-new-closed-shop-economic-and-structural-effects-occupational.

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