The Importance of **Licensure and Certification**

Having a license or certification can open doors for you in today’s competitive workplace. Many professions require a license because they are needed for positions subject to state or other government regulations.

**Licensure**

Licensure is granted by individual states and allows an individual to practice a profession within a designated scope of practice. Under the licensure system, states define the tasks and scope of practicing a profession, and those tasks can only be legally performed by someone who is licensed, even if that individual has a certification from a private organization. Teaching and nursing, the top two occupations held by military spouses, require licensing. Other professions requiring a license to practice include law, engineering, social work and architecture.

See the [State Licensure Directory](https://mycaa.militaryonesource.mil/) for more information on specific requirements in individual states.
Certification

Professional certifications can increase your chances for advancement and promotion, enhance your reputation among colleagues and within your profession, as well as allow you to earn a higher salary than your noncertified counterparts. Some professions requiring certification include aviation, construction, technology, health care, business, real estate, teaching and finance.

Certification grants you the official professional or legal approval to do something. It can be earned from a professional society, educational institute or private certifier. Certification may only be valid for a specific time period. It must be renewed occasionally, most commonly through earning continuing education units, or CEUs, or by completing courses designed to provide updated professional or legal information about a profession.

For military spouses, certifications have the additional benefit of having a common national definition and are not state or government regulated.

Certification and licensure differ only in terms of legal status. They may be very similar or even have the same assessment processes. In some cases, the certification assessment process can be more comprehensive than the licensure process.

Find a Certification

Certification Finder can help you identify the specific certifications you need for your occupation.

Additional resources to help you research occupations, certification and education requirements include:

→ O*NET Online
→ Occupational Outlook Handbook
→ Installation education centers

For more information on selecting a school or program, or learning more about licensure or certification, speak with a Spouse Education and Career Opportunities career coach at 800-342-9647.