

# **Study on the Utilization of the Expedited Licensing Process for Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses**

House Bill 1162/Chapter 619, 2023

**Maryland Department of Labor**

January 6, 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore  
Governor  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Aruna Miller  
Lieutenant Governor  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson  
President  
Senate of Maryland  
State House, H-107  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones  
Speaker  
Maryland House of Delegates  
State House, H-101  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

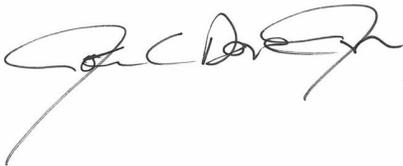
**Re: HB 1162/Ch. 619, 2023 - Report on the Utilization of Expedited Licensing**

Dear Governor Moore, Lt. Governor Miller, President Ferguson and Speaker Jones:

In accordance with House Bill 1162 (CH619) of 2023 the Division of Occupational and Professional Licencing within the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) conducted a review of the utilization of the expedited licensing processes for service members, veterans, and military spouses for licenses within our agency.

The required report is attached for your review and consideration. Should you have questions or comments regarding the report, please contact Andrew Fulginiti at [andrew.fulginiti@maryland.gov](mailto:andrew.fulginiti@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,



John Dove  
Commissioner

## **Background**

During the 2023 Legislative Session the Maryland General Assembly passed House Bill 1162 (CH619) and the legislation was signed into law by Governor Moore on May 12, 2023. This bill required the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL), in consultation with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), to conduct a study on the utilization of the expedited licensing process for service members, veterans, and military spouses for licenses. MDL, in consultation with MDVA, must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. Currently when an applicant informs our office of their eligible status, their completed application is internally designated as a priority for processing and is sent to be processed as immediately as possible. Barring unusual circumstances, licensees are processed well within the sixty-day time window many as quickly as one week. Information about both veteran expedited licensing and active duty license recognition services are featured with buttons prominently displayed on the licensing homepage of the Maryland Department of Labor website.

## **Findings**

The Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing remains committed to addressing the needs of all of our licensed professionals who have served in the military and their spouses. The Division is pleased to report that we have successfully implemented the new provisions of Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) for active duty military service members, as well as expedited licensing for veterans and military spouses. We are aiming to provide license recognition to eligible active duty service members and their spouses relocating to Maryland with an effortless process and no cost to the consumer.

Due to limitations in our technological capabilities for license data tracking, we cannot provide precise data of how many licensees meet this criteria. The Division is using an outdated legacy system and is in the process of implementing an electronic modernization effort that will greatly expand our licensing capabilities and our data analysis capabilities. However, in order to be responsive to this request the Division conducted a voluntary licensing survey to all of our licensees.

The following insights were gathered from the collected responses:

- The survey received a total of 557 responses and they represent a diverse set of experiences across all of our respective industries.
- A substantial majority of respondents (70.6%) indicated veteran status at the time they received their Maryland occupational license, Military spouses and active duty service members represent 15.3% and 10.4% of the respondents respectively.
- The five most common occupations are:
  - 22.8% - Professional Engineers
  - 21.4% - Real Estate Professionals
  - 9.7% - Certified Public Accountants
  - 7.2% - HVACR Contractors
  - 5.9% - Cosmetologists
- 13.8% of respondents reported using their military training and education toward their license requirements including education from military academies, along with many skills and trades learned directly in the line of duty
- The vast majority (92.7%) of respondents reported that their licenses were issued within the 60-day time window
  - Of those that reported a time estimate, most reported that they received their license in less than 30 days
- Though most of respondents reported that they were not aware of the expedited licensing program, those that did learned of it through the website

The Division has also begun crafting a strategy regarding outreach to military and veterans organizations to increase the visibility of these options for those eligible for them.

- In collaboration with the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families, we have begun the process of drafting a reference sheet on important licensing terms and programs.
- In the survey, we also asked respondents to provide their recommendations of organizations that they believe would benefit from outreach materials about these options. They identified that these were places that they found information about military benefits for prospective licensees in other states:
  - Department of Veterans Affairs

- The American Legion
  - Naval Facilities Engineering Command
  - United Services Automobile Association (USAA)
  - Military OneSource
  - Military family readiness centers
  - Department of Defense Credential Opportunities Online (COOL) and Transitioning Assistance Program (TAP)
  - VFW halls
  - AMVETS
  - Military Transition Assistance Program
- We hope to collaborate with these organizations in disseminating the reference sheet and other information about all of our licensing options for veterans through channels such as monthly newsletters and website placement, as well as physical avenues.
  - We also plan to create a hub on our website for military service members, veterans, and their spouses to help them easily access resources to navigate the licensing process, learn what benefits are available to them, and become successful working professionals in Maryland.

### **Recommendations**

As noted previously, MDL is in the process of pursuing an electronic licensing modernization effort. While we are currently limited in our data capabilities, this modernization effort presents a welcome opportunity to ensure we explore functions and enhancement that will best serve Marylanders seeking licensure and better equip our agencies with the information they need to continually improve their service delivery. MDL will continue to collaborate with the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families, as well as new stakeholders, to ensure the modernized licensing system serves the needs of all those who wish to work, live and stay in Maryland, including the active duty military, veterans, and their families.