

LICENSURE

OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify the difference between licensure and certification
2. Describe the process to license in multiple states
3. Describe reasons that a license may be suspended or revoked

RESOURCES:

Individuals entering a profession are responsible for understanding the local, regional, state or national regulations and processes for licensure or certification. Most often the licensure process will be covered in the course work that you complete to become eligible for licensure. Most professions that require licensure have a specific department who issues the license and enforces the regulations. Individuals interested in additional information on licensure should contact the appropriate department. For example the licensure and regulatory agency for nursing in Illinois is the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR). www.idfpr.com

PURPOSE:

Licensure provides permission to practice in a particular field. Careers which require licensing typically require a specialized skill, are deemed dangerous or affect the general public. Examples of careers requiring licensure are physicians, dentists, nurses, pilots, lawyers, accountants and psychologists. Licensing is granted through a regulatory agency or professional organization. Licensure requires specialized training or an academic degree followed by an examination which may be written, practical or both. In professions that require licensure, individuals are not legally allowed to practice in the job without the license. Licensure differs from certification in that licensure is a legal requirement and certification is often an employment qualification.

LICENSE RENEWAL:

Most licenses require periodic renewal. The renewal process includes payment of a renewal fee. The renewal cycle differs for all professions. For example the nursing license requires renewal every two years. Many professions also require proof of continuing professional development for each licensure period. This means that in order to renew the license the individual must provide the regulatory agency evidence of the required number of education hours pertaining to the field. Individuals are responsible for renewing the license according to the regulatory requirements to continue to work in the field. Failure to renew the license and continue working can result in criminal charges against you.

TRANSFER OF A LICENSE:

Individuals will typically become licensed in one state at a time. If the individual moves to a different state the license can be transferred by meeting the regulatory requirements of that particular state and paying the required fees. It is the responsibility of the individual to maintain current licensure in all locations of employment. Individuals may hold a license in multiple states but will be responsible for paying the appropriate fees and meeting the regulatory requirements of each state to maintain the license.

INACTIVE OR EXPIRED LICENSES

Failure to pay the fees or meet the regulatory requirements will deem the license inactive or expired. Individuals are then accountable to follow the required process to reactivate the license. Practicing in any job without the required active license is a violation of the law and could result in criminal charges being brought against you. The regulatory agency will determine what needs to be accomplished to reactivate an expired or inactive license.

SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF A LICENSE:

Professional licenses are legal bonds with specific requirements. Every professional license has an established set of practice standards. Any violation of the practice standards can result in suspension or revocation on the license. If a license is suspended or revoked there is the possibility that the regulatory agency may never reissue the license. If the license is reissued then the individual must meet all of the conditions set forth by the agency.

There are many reasons for a license to be suspended or revoked. One reason is if individual performs a task that is outside of the scope of practice. An example would be if a nurse who does not have the training and authority to do so writes a prescription for a family member or friend. This is a serious infraction and can lead to permanent revocation of a license in addition to criminal charges. Other legal infractions can also lead to suspension or revocation of a license. Some examples would include other felony criminal activity, drug abuse or repeated alcohol convictions.

Holding a license in a profession is a privilege and every individual must treat the opportunity as such. Individuals have worked hard to accomplish the requirements to become licensed and need to be responsible in maintaining the license.