

NCSL SUMMIT RECAP

The National Conference of State Legislators held its annual Summit in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 13-15, 2023. During the Summit, there were several work sessions regarding labor and workforce development. This paper summarizes a few of the work sessions.

NEW STRATEGIES FOR AN EVOLVING WORKFORCE

Presented by: Economic Policy Institute & Maximus

Key Takeaways:

- National economy has gained ~4 million jobs since February 2020
- 24 states have unemployment rates at or below 3% - National unemployment rate is 3.5%
- Civilian labor force participation rate fell from 66.8% (2001) to 61.7% (2021)
- Federal fiscal relief at the scale of the problem led to faster recovery from the pandemic recession
 - States that haven't used federal relief have higher public sector job losses

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, 10 lowest-spending and highest-spending states

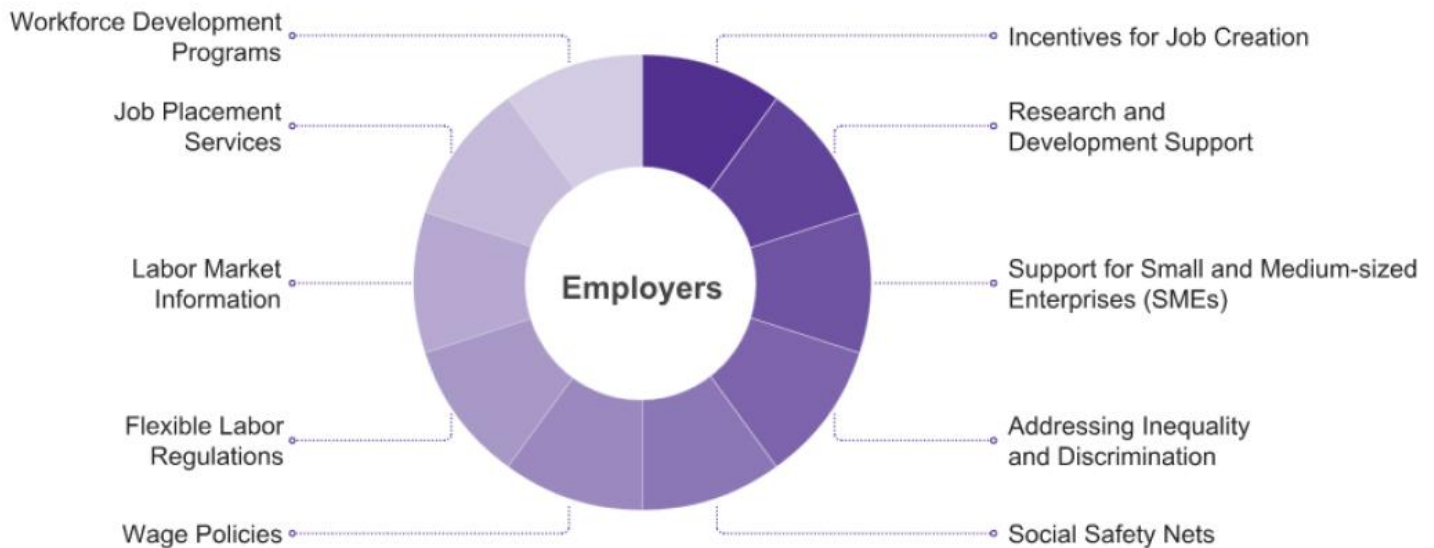
| | States | Average share of SLFRF spent | Change in state government employment, Feb 2020–May 2023 |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Lowest-spending states | Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, Mississippi, South Dakota, Florida, Nebraska, Montana , Alabama | 8.4% | -3.6% |
| Highest-spending states | Minnesota, Alaska, Maryland, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, Washington, Oregon, Texas | 74.5% | -1.8% |

Source: EPI analysis of U.S. Treasury Department SLFRF spending data, Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Current Employment Statistics, Establishment Survey (CES) public data series.

Economic Policy Institute

- Public sector job growth is lagging behind private sector job growth – most of this is in education
 - In Montana, teachers are paid 17% less than other comparable college-educated workers
- Employer Issues:
 - Talent Shortages
 - Increasing Labor Costs
 - Changing Workforce Demographics
 - Automation and Artificial Intelligence

How Government Can Support Employers



Possible Framework Topics for Discussions

- How to increase labor force participation
- Trends – industry, population, technology
- The difference between public and private sector labor market issues
- Reskilling strategies
- Earn and learn strategies
- Public/private partnerships
- Supports that make it easier for employers to hire and retain employees
- Economic data – mixed signals
- Women in the workforce; staff ratio policies; paid family medical leave policies
- Family budget calculator
- Policies that empower workers
- Apprenticeships or pre-apprenticeships; expand models beyond the norm (e.g., healthcare, financial services, truck driving)
- Career pathways for evolving industries (healthcare, childcare)

MENTAL HEALTH AND THE WORKFORCE

*Presented by: Mental Health Matters Task Force; U.S. Department of Labor
[Policy Framework on Workforce Mental Health](#)*

Key Takeaways:

- According to Mental Health America, there is one mental health provider for every 350 people in the U.S., and as of June 2022, “over 152 million people lived in a mental health workforce shortage area.”
- Before the pandemic, more than 50% of health professionals were feeling burnout and exhaustion. The pandemic has driven the number even higher. Specifically, three-quarters of surveyed psychiatrists reported burnout; 1 in 6 screened for depression; and over 90% of college counseling center practitioners reported burnout.
- Shortages are also tied to clinical training & preceptor issues, licensing & mobility regulation, inequities in rural and underserved areas
- States should consider ways to address the mental health of current health care workers, focus on recruiting more workers in the mental health sector, and incentivize current providers to remain.

Possible Topics for Discussion:

- Improve the quality, transparency, and availability of workforce data by breaking down silos between agencies; developing resources and tools to ensure consistent data collection; and identifying trusted entities to house data collected.
- Strengthen and diversify high-quality behavioral health care education and training pathways by providing students with early exposure to behavioral and mental health careers; developing apprenticeship pathways as viable alternatives to traditional credentialing pathways; and permitting credit transfers between community colleges and universities.
- Remove barriers to entry into the mental and behavioral health workforce by identifying and addressing licensing challenges; examining certification standards related to immigration status; developing other financial support systems.
- Increase retention by designing peer support models and programs; offering trauma-informed education; considering job-quality factors to avoid burnout; supporting workforce satisfaction, well-being, and resilience.

OTHER STATES' APPROACHES TO ADDRESS HEALTHCARE WORKER SHORTAGE

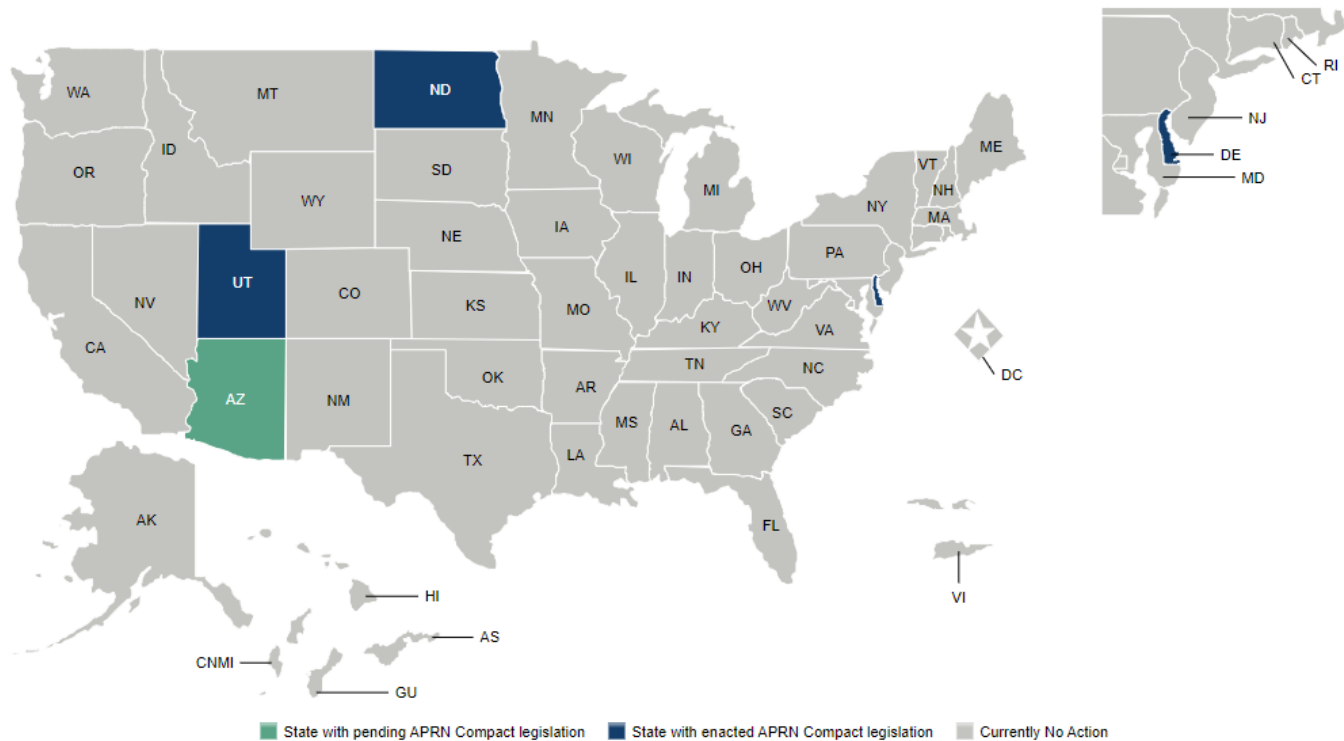
- **Hawaii:** Significant state investment for loan repayment assistance & preceptor credits; increased Medicaid match; increased authority for paraprofessionals (e.g., dental hygienists)
- **Utah:** Created a council to study healthcare workforce shortage data; use the data to come up with solutions
- **New Mexico:** Focus on “homegrown programs” – how to keep healthcare workers in the state; focus on rural communities; prohibit non-competes; expand scope of practice with certain professions; enacted dual credit program (high school students get college credit); career pathways; health professional loan repayment programs & opportunity scholarships; raised provider rates

LICENSING COMPACTS

ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE (APRN) COMPACT

Allows APRNs to have one multistate license with the ability to practice in all compact states.

The APRN Compact will come into effect once seven states have enacted the legislation:



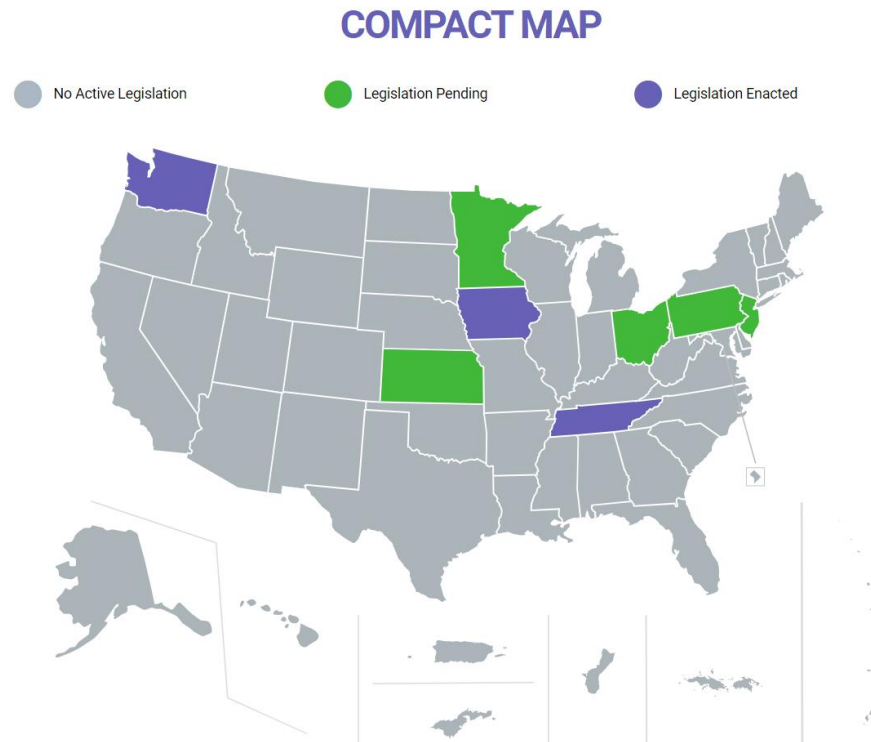
Benefits of the APRN Compact:

- **Access to care:** Increases access to APRN services across the country quickly and efficiently, which is essential for the health of many underserved communities.
- **Telehealth:** Enables APRNs to practice in person or provide telehealth services to patients located across the country seamlessly and efficiently.
- **More Choice:** Provides more choice for patients and APRNs.
- **Disaster/Pandemic Relief:** Allows APRNs to immediately cross state borders and provide vital services in the event of an emergency.
- **Military Families:** Allows military spouse APRNs to seamlessly continue working upon relocation and change of employment.
- **Online Education:** Facilitates online nursing education.
- **Cost Effective:** APRNs do not have to obtain additional nursing licenses, making practicing across state borders affordable and convenient.
- **Flexible Licensure:** Allows APRNs to obtain or maintain a single state license if preferred.

DENTIST AND DENTAL HYGIENIST COMPACT

This compact enables licensed dentists and dental hygienists to practice in all states participating in the compact.

The *Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact* will come into effect once seven states have enacted the legislation:



Benefits for Practitioners

- Facilitates mobility for licensees
- Expands employment opportunities into new markets
- Eases the burden of applying and maintaining multiple licenses
- Supports relocating military spouses and families
- Improves continuity of care

Benefits for State Dentistry Licensing Authorities

- Reduces administrative burden
- Creates a compact information system that supports the facilitation of licensure and discipline information for dentists and dental hygienists
- Expands cooperation among state licensure boards on investigations and disputes
- Allows regulators to retain jurisdiction over licensees practicing in their state

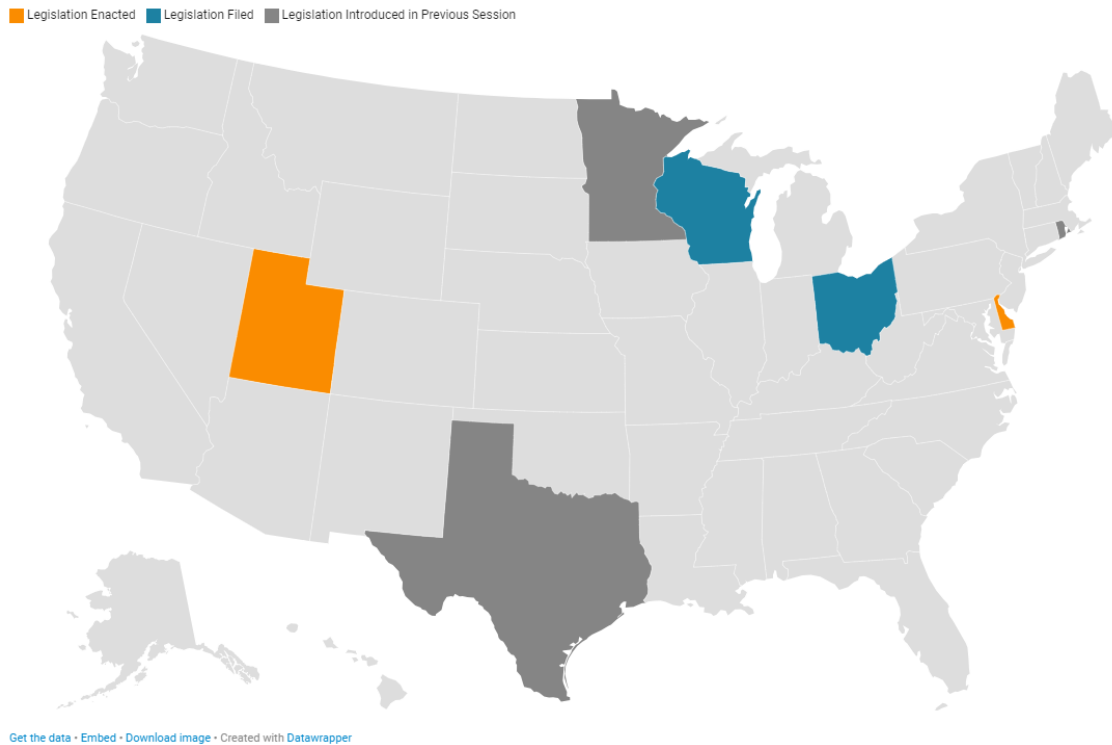
Benefits for the State

- Promotes workforce development and strengthens labor markets
- Expands consumer access to highly qualified practitioners
- Enhances public safety through a shared interstate data system of licensure
- Preserves state sovereignty

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LICENSURE COMPACT

States joining the compact agree to recognize a valid, unencumbered license issued by another compact member via a compact privilege.

The PA Compact will be activated after seven states have adopted the compact model legislation.



Compact Benefits:

- Facilitates multistate practice by reducing the burden of maintaining multiple licenses
- Improves access to PA services and the use of telehealth
- Improves continuity of care when patients or PAs relocate
- Supports relocating military spouses
- Expands employment opportunities for PAs into new markets
- Preserves and strengthens state licensure systems
- Enhances public safety and reduces application time through a shared data system
- Increases collaboration among compact member states