



# **Occupational Licensing Reform Initiative in Arkansas**

**October 12, 2022**

# Process for Reform in Arkansas



## Core Team

- 11-member team of legislative and executive branch officials. Later expanded to 14 members to include more representation from licensing governing boards.
- Developed goals and strategies at Consortium-sponsored planning retreat.
- Coordinated reform initiatives.

# Process for Reform in Arkansas



## Home Team

- 24-member team of stakeholders -- directors, staff, and board members of licensing entities along with private citizens.
- Became known as the Occupational Licensing Advisory Group, or OLAG.
- Research arm of the initiative.

# Process for Reform in Arkansas



## Home Team

- Surveyed licensing entities
- Developed self-assessment tool for use by entities

# Process for Reform in Arkansas



## **Red Tape Reduction Group**

- Appointed by the Governor.
- 17-member group of legislators, executive-branch officials, and private citizens.
- Took research and recommendations from the advisory group and shaped specific recommendations for legislative action.

# Outcomes of Reform Initiative in Arkansas



## **Recommendations that became law**

- Overcame burdensome or vague criminal background restrictions.
- Improved processes for licensing military veterans and military spouses.
- Streamlined rule-making approaches.
- Improved portability of licenses from other states.

# Sustaining and Furthering Reforms



- Advisory group reorganized and continued studies to continue occupational licensing reform.
- Governor established a new working group focusing on sustaining reforms.
- Many of its recommendations were adopted by the General Assembly last year. New laws continued removing barriers resulting from criminal records and clarifying licensing procedures for uniformed services.

# Outcomes of Reform Initiative in Arkansas



## **Act 600 of 2019**

- Creates sunrise and sunset review for licensing
- Establishes the Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council to carry out these reviews.
- Defines “occupational authorization” as a license, government-required certificate, registration, permit or other form of authorization.



# Outcomes of Reform Initiative in Arkansas



## **Act 600 of 2019**

- Directs a systematic approach of considering new licensing proposals and to review existing ones on a regular, cyclical basis of review once every six years.
- Provides for reviews out of order if formally requested by any legislator and if such a review is approved by co-chairs of Legislative Council.

# Outcomes of Reform Initiative in Arkansas



## **Act 600 of 2019**

- Charges subcommittee to determine whether occupational authorization employs “the least restrictive form” to protect consumers from significant and substantiated harm to public health and safety.

# Outcomes of Reform Initiative in Arkansas



## Work of Occupational Licensing Subcommittee

- Newly formed subcommittee held its first meeting on June 20, 2019, and held six monthly meetings prior to onset of Covid-19 pandemic.
- In November 2020 subcommittee reviewed and adopted a final report with five specific recommendations for legislation ranging from eliminating certain licenses to restructuring fees for others.

# Outcomes of Reform Initiative in Arkansas



## Work of Occupational Licensing Subcommittee

- In its first meeting this year, the subcommittee adopted a questionnaire for licensing entities to complete and submit to the subcommittee prior to its appearance for review.