



Occupational Licensing Dashboard: About the Data

State and Federal Regulations

The documentation below is applicable to the policy data shown in the State Policies and Federal Policies sections of the dashboard.

Data sources

The data used for all of the regulatory policy calculations are from Nick Carollo of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and can be obtained on his [licensing-data repository page](#). As described in the [codebook](#), these data were hand-collected “based on a comprehensive review of state statutes, regulatory codes, and session laws, then cross-validated against numerous secondary sources.” See Carollo ([2025](#)) for more details and for research using these data.

Notably, data do not extend beyond 2020. Subsequent changes in regulatory status are not reflected in the dashboard.

Methodology

The dashboard only reflects regulations that are enacted by a state or federal government, notably excluding municipal licensure. Regulations shown in the dashboard are also limited to “primary” regulations, which [describe](#) “distinct occupations with stand-alone credentials,” accounting for “the vast majority of the data.”

Throughout the dashboard, dates for new regulations are the effective date of implementation rather than the date of enactment. An exception is the tooltip text, which describes relevant session laws using the year of enactment. In every case, the dashboard shows the date when the type of regulation was first introduced rather than any subsequent modifications that left the type of regulation unchanged.

The Federal Policies section of the dashboard provides information about occupations that are exclusively regulated by the federal government. In cases where both a state government and the federal government regulate an occupation, applicable federal regulations will be described in the State Policies section.

Occupations featured in the dashboard are standardized job titles, as described by [Carollo](#). The descriptive text in the dashboard is obtained from the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) after using a [crosswalk](#) provided by Carollo.

Terms and definitions

The following types of regulation are shown in the dashboard. Formal descriptions of each regulation type are quoted from the Carollo codebook.

Licensure. “A government credential is legally required to perform certain tasks or to use the general, unmodified, job titles that identify the occupation (ex. practicing or advertising the practice of psychology). To obtain a license, workers must meet predetermined educational, training, or examination requirements.”

State certification. “A government credential is required to legally use certain title modifiers that attest to an individual’s qualifications (ex. “state certified”). To obtain certification, workers must meet predetermined educational, training, or examination requirements. For the purpose of this project, certification refers exclusively to certification by a government, as opposed to private, entity.”

Private certification. “The government does not issue a credential for this occupation, but state or federal law recognizes or requires certification or examination by a private entity for the purpose of practice and/or title protection.”

Registration. “A government credential is required to practice or use certain job titles, but no specific competency evaluation is required to register. Workers may be required to post a surety bond, undergo a background check, or provide proof of insurance as a condition of registration.”

Workers

The documentation below is applicable to the survey-based estimates in the Workers section of the dashboard.

Data sources

The data used for the Workers tab is sourced from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, accessed via IPUMS CPS* at the University of Minnesota. We use the basic monthly sample from January 2016 through December 2024.

Methodology

The available occupations are defined based on the IPUMS occ2010 variable, which is a harmonized occupation variable based on the Census Bureau’s 2010 occupation codes.

* Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, J. Robert Warren, Daniel Backman, Etienne Breton, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, David Van Riper, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS CPS: Version 13.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V13.0>

An occupation is included if 25 states or more have 100 observations or more for the most recently available five-year range (2020–2024). Each data point is a five-year pooled average, meaning that the 2024 data point uses observations from 2020–2024, the 2023 data point uses observations from 2019–2023, and so on. This is done to increase the sample size for a data point and increase its reliability.

Terms and definitions

- *Licensed*. Someone is considered licensed if:
 - they have a professional certification or state or industry license; AND
 - their professional, state, or industry license was issued by the federal, state, or local government
- *Licensure rate*. The share of all workers in a selected state and occupation that meet our definition of being licensed.
- *Number licensed*. The population of individuals in a selected state and occupation that meet our definition of being licensed.
- *Share of licensed employment*. The share of a selected state’s licensed employment that is made up by the licensed workers in the selected occupation.
- *Median weekly earnings*. The median amount that workers in a selected state and occupation report usually earning in a week before deductions.
- *Sex*. The share of all workers in a selected state and occupation that report being male or female.
- *Race and ethnicity*. The share of all workers in a selected state and occupation that reported being a particular race. Our categorization of “Latino” includes workers of any race, while our categorizations of “American Indian/Alaska Native,” “Asian,” “Black,” and “White” only include non-Latino individuals.
- *Educational attainment*. The share of all workers in a selected state and occupation that report their highest level of education being a particular level. Our categorizations are “Less than high school,” “High school,” “Some college/associate’s,” “Bachelor’s,” and “More than bachelor’s.”
- *Foreign-born*. The share of all workers in a selected state and occupation that report being born outside of the United States.