



License Reciprocity FAQs

In 2004, legislation authorized the State Real Estate Commission to enter into reciprocal licensing agreements with other states. In states with reciprocity, licensees will generally be able to obtain a reciprocal license without additional education or testing, and are not subject to additional continuing education requirements.

A list of reciprocal states can be found on the [Commission's web site](#).

Q. What is reciprocity?

- A.** Reciprocity is a licensing system under which a licensee in one state (the “home state”) is able to obtain a license in another state (the “reciprocal state”) without going through the full licensing process in the reciprocal state. It is based on the recognition that the various states have similar licensing requirements and that it is appropriate for a reciprocal state to rely on the home state to exercise primary authority over a licensee who does business primarily in the home state.

Of course, persons who obtain reciprocal licenses will have to abide by the laws in every state in which they practice (e.g., a Maryland licensee would observe Pennsylvania laws when practicing in Pennsylvania and a Pennsylvania licensee would observe Maryland laws when practicing in that state).

Q. Why is reciprocity important?

- A.** Because market boundaries don't always match up with state boundaries, Realtors® believe that reciprocity can make real estate markets more efficient. If Realtors® can more easily get and maintain licenses in multiple states, a consumer who might be willing to search for real estate in more than one state isn't forced to work with multiple brokerages at once. This is true both for commercial brokers that might have clients with business in multiple states, as well as residential brokers who might have clients looking for properties across state lines.

Realtors® also support reciprocity because it avoids unnecessary duplication of regulation, with its attendant complications and costs.

Q. Does this mean that Pennsylvania licensees can do business in every other state?

- A.** No. The State Real Estate Commission may enter into reciprocal agreements with other states that have similar rules and allow reciprocity for Pennsylvania licensees. But nothing in PA law can force other states to open their doors, and not all have.

Remember as well that even with full reciprocity you're still going to have to go through the steps of getting a license in the reciprocal state. That is, if State X offers reciprocity you can't just practice there on your PA license. You'll still need to obtain a license in State X, but it will be easier to get (and keep) that license.

Q. What states currently have reciprocity with Pennsylvania?

A. The list of reciprocal states changes from time to time. An up-to-date list can be found on the [Commission's web site](#)

Q. Are reciprocal requirements the same in all states?

A. Not necessarily. The ultimate goal is that reciprocal states allow licensees to obtain licenses with little more than the application requirements – no additional education, testing, etc. But the law allows for 'partial' reciprocity with states that still maintain certain restrictions on their own reciprocal licenses. For example, Pennsylvania generally does not require an applicant for a reciprocal license to take a licensing exam. But if State X doesn't waive their own exam requirement for Pennsylvania applicants, we would maintain an exam requirement for their applicants.

Q. What are the requirements to obtain a reciprocal license in Pennsylvania?

A. A person who desires a reciprocal license will need to submit an application that includes:

1. A duly certified copy of a current license issued to the applicant by another state. It is this license that provides the basis for Pennsylvania to grant a reciprocal license.
2. A verified statement that the applicant is not the subject of discipline or criminal charges in Pennsylvania or another state.
3. A verified statement that the applicant is familiar with the Pennsylvania real estate licensing law. This is an important part of the protection for Pennsylvania consumers discussed further below.
4. Payment of the required licensing fee.
5. A consent to service of process.

In the usual case, there will be no other requirements for obtaining a reciprocal license such as taking an exam or demonstrating prior experience or education. Pennsylvania will be relying instead on the home state to have already dealt with those types of issues.

Q. Will Pennsylvania consumers be injured by reciprocity?

A. No. In fact, license reciprocity should ease the burden for consumers of dealing with more than one licensee when searching for a home and for tenants searching for locations. In order to protect consumers even further, there are several safeguards included in the law.

Applicants for a reciprocal license will be required to submit verified statements that they are familiar with Pennsylvania licensing law and that they are not the subject of discipline or criminal charges in Pennsylvania or another state. They will also be required to submit a consent to service of process which will give the Pennsylvania courts and the Pennsylvania State Real Estate Commission jurisdiction over any acts they commit in Pennsylvania.

Although the jurisdiction of the Commission is generally limited to acts that occur in Pennsylvania or relate to transactions in Pennsylvania, the Commission will also have the authority to discipline a reciprocal licensee if the licensee is disciplined in another state. If another state, for example, suspends the license of a person, Pennsylvania will not need to wait for the person to commit an act in Pennsylvania and will be able to suspend the person's reciprocal license just on the basis of the discipline imposed in the other state.

Q. Is a reciprocal license the same as a standard license?

A. In most respects, a reciprocal license is the same as a standard license. A person with a reciprocal license can perform the same acts as a person with a regular license. To avoid duplicate regulation, however, there are a few provisions of Pennsylvania law that will not apply to reciprocal licensees because they overlap requirements in the home state. A reciprocal licensee, for example, will not be subject to the Pennsylvania requirement for continuing education and that subject will be left to the laws of the home state.

Q: Do the rules apply to both commercial and residential practitioners?

A: Yes.

Q. Will reciprocal licensees have to pay into the Real Estate Recovery Fund?

A. Yes. All reciprocal licensees will have to abide by the Real Estate Licensing and Registration Act (RELRA) and the rules and regulations set forth by the Commission. This includes paying into the Real Estate Recovery Fund.

Q: What is the fee to obtain a reciprocal license?

A: The fees for reciprocal licenses will be equal to those of standard licenses.