

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

**SESSION LAW 2019-91
HOUSE BILL 770**

AN ACT TO CLARIFY AND SIMPLIFY A LICENSEE'S QUALIFICATIONS FOR
LICENSURE AND TO REQUIRE RECOGNITION BY LICENSING BOARDS OF
CERTAIN APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING EXPERIENCES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 15A-173.2(d) reads as rewritten:

"(d) Unless modified or revoked, a Certificate of Relief relieves all collateral sanctions, except those listed in G.S. 15A-173.3, those sanctions imposed by the North Carolina Constitution or federal law, and any others specifically excluded in the certificate. A Certificate of Relief does not automatically relieve a disqualification; however, an administrative agency, governmental official, or court in a civil proceeding ~~may~~ shall consider a Certificate of Relief favorably in determining whether a conviction should result in disqualification."

SECTION 2. G.S. 93B-1 reads as rewritten:

§ 93B-1. Definitions.

As used in this ~~Chapter~~ Chapter, the following definitions apply:

~~"License" means any~~

- (1) License. – Any license (other than a privilege license), certificate, or other evidence of qualification which an individual is required to obtain before he may engage in or represent himself to be a member of a particular profession or occupation.

~~"Occupational licensing board" means any~~

- (2) Occupational licensing board. – Any board, committee, commission, or other agency in North Carolina which is established for the primary purpose of regulating the entry of persons into, ~~and/or~~ and the conduct of persons within, a particular profession or occupation, and which is authorized to issue ~~licenses;~~ licenses. The phrase "occupational licensing board" does not include State agencies, staffed by full-time State employees, which as a part of their regular functions may issue licenses.

- (3) State agency licensing board. – Any State agency staffed by full-time State employees, which as part of their regular functions issue licenses. This section does not apply to the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission and the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission. The following is a nonexclusive list of State agency licensing boards and the profession or occupation for which the board, agency, or officer may issue licenses:

a. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

1. Commissioner of Agriculture.

I. Scale Technician. Article 6 of Chapter 81A of the General Statutes.

II. Seed Dealer. Article 31 of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes.



1. Boiler Safety Bureau.
 - I. Boiler Inspector. Article 7A of Chapter 95 of the General Statutes.
- g. The Department of Public Instruction.
 1. State Board of Education.
 - I. Teacher, Principal, Superintendent. Article 71E of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes.
- h. The Department of Public Safety.
 1. Alcohol Law Enforcement Branch.
 - I. Boxer, Kickboxer, Mixed Martial Arts, Promoter. Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.
 2. The Alcohol Beverage Control Board.
 - I. Alcoholic Beverage Distributor. Article 9 of Chapter 18B.
 3. Private Protective Services Board.
 - I. Counter Intelligence Licensee, Guard Dog Service Operator, Polygraph Examiner, Private Investigator, Psychological Stress Evaluator, Security Guard, and Patrol Licensee. Article 1 of Chapter 74C of the General Statutes.
- i. The Department of the Secretary of State.
 1. The Secretary of State.
 - I. Athletic Agent. Article 9 of Chapter 78C of the General Statutes.
 - II. Investment Advisor. Article 3 of Chapter 78C of the General Statutes.
 - III. Securities Broker, Securities Dealer, Security Salesman. Article 5 of Chapter 78A of the General Statutes.
 - IV. Professional Solicitor. Article 3 of Chapter 131F of the General Statutes.
- j. The Department of Transportation.
 1. Division of Motor Vehicles.
 - I. New and Used Motor Vehicle Dealer, Motor Vehicle Sales Representative, Distributor, Distributor Branch, Distributor Representative, Wholesaler. Article 12 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes.
 - II. Commercial Driver, Truck Driver. Article 2 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes.
 - III. Safety Inspection Mechanic. Article 3A of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes."

SECTION 3. G.S. 93B-2 reads as rewritten:

"(a) No later than October 31 of each year, each occupational licensing board shall file electronically with the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee an annual report containing all of the following information:

...

- (9a) The number of applicants for a license and, of that number, the number granted a license.

- (9b) The number of applicants with a conviction record and, of that number, the number granted a license, denied a license for any reason, and denied a license because of a conviction.

...

(e) No later than October 31 of each year, each State agency licensing board shall file electronically with the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee an annual report containing all of the following information:

- (1) The number of applicants for a license and, of that number, the number granted a license.
- (2) The number of applicants with a conviction record and, of that number, the number granted a license, denied a license for any reason, and denied a license because of a conviction."

SECTION 4. G.S. 93B-8.1 reads as rewritten:

"§ 93B-8.1. Use of criminal history records.

(a) The following definitions apply in this section:

- (1) Applicant. – A person who makes application for licensure from an occupational licensing board.
- (2) Board. – An occupational licensing board or a State agency licensing board as defined in G.S. 93B-1.
- (3) Criminal history record. – A State or federal history of conviction of a crime, whether a misdemeanor or felony, that bears upon an applicant's or a licensee's fitness to be licensed or disciplined.
- (4) Licensee. – A person who has obtained a license to engage in or represent himself or herself to be a member of a particular profession or occupation.

(b) ~~Unless the law governing a particular occupational licensing board provides otherwise, a board shall not automatically deny licensure on the basis of an applicant's criminal history. If the board is authorized to deny a license to an applicant on the basis of conviction of any crime or for commission of a crime involving fraud or moral turpitude, and the applicant's verified criminal history record reveals one or more convictions of any crime, the board may deny the license if it finds that denial is warranted after consideration of the~~ Unless federal law governing a particular board provides otherwise, a board may deny an applicant on the basis of a conviction of a crime only if the board finds that the applicant's criminal conviction history is directly related to the duties and responsibilities for the licensed occupation or the conviction is for a crime that is violent or sexual in nature. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a board shall not automatically deny licensure on the basis of an applicant's criminal history, and no board may deny an applicant a license based on a determination that a conviction is for a crime of moral turpitude. The board shall make its determination based on the factors specified in subsection (b1).

(b1) Before a board may deny an applicant a license due to a criminal conviction under subsection (b) of this section, the board must specifically consider all of the following factors:

- (1) The level and seriousness of the crime.
 - (2) The date of the crime.
 - (3) The age of the person at the time of the crime.
 - (4) The circumstances surrounding the commission of the crime, if known.
 - (5) The nexus between the criminal conduct and the prospective duties of the applicant as a licensee.
 - (6) The prison, jail, probation, parole, rehabilitation, and employment records of the applicant since the date the crime was committed.
- (6a) The completion of, or active participation in, rehabilitative drug or alcohol treatment.

- (6b) A Certificate of Relief granted pursuant to G.S. 15A-173.2.
- (7) The subsequent commission of a crime by the applicant.
- (8) Any affidavits or other written documents, including character references.
- (b2) If the board denies an applicant a license under this section, the board shall:
 - (1) Make written findings specifying the factors in subsection (b1) of this section the board deemed relevant to the applicant and explaining the reason for the denial. The board's presiding officer must sign the findings.
 - (2) Provide or serve a signed copy of the written findings to the applicant within 60 days of the denial.
 - (3) Retain a signed copy of the written findings for no less than five years.
- (b3) Each board shall include in its application for licensure and on its public Web site all of the following information:
 - (1) Whether the board requires applicants to consent to a criminal history record check.
 - (2) The factors under subsection (b1) of this section which the board shall consider when making a determination of licensure.
 - (3) The appeals process pursuant to Chapter 150B of the General Statutes if the board denies an applicant licensure in whole or in part because of a criminal conviction.
- (b4) If a board requires an applicant to submit a criminal history record, the board shall require the provider of the criminal history record to provide the applicant with access to the applicant's criminal history record or otherwise deliver a copy of the criminal history record to the applicant. If an applicant's criminal history includes matters that will or may prevent the board from issuing a license to the applicant, the board shall notify the applicant in writing of the specific issues in sufficient time for the applicant to provide additional documentation supporting the application for consideration by the board prior to any final decision to deny the application. After being notified of any potential issue with licensure due to criminal conviction(s), an applicant shall have 30 days to respond by either correcting any inaccuracy in the criminal history record or submitting evidence of mitigation or rehabilitation for consideration by the board.
- (b5) If, following a hearing, a board denies an application for licensure, the board's written order shall include specific reference to any criminal conviction(s) considered as part or all of any basis for the denial and the rationale for the denial, as well as a reference to the appeal process and the applicant's ability to reapply. No applicant shall be restricted from reapplying for licensure for more than two years from the date of the most recent application.
- (b6) Notwithstanding any other provisions in the law, an individual with a criminal history may petition a board at any time, including before an individual starts or completes any mandatory education or training requirements, for a predetermination of whether the individual's criminal history will likely disqualify the individual from obtaining a license. This petition shall include a criminal history record report obtained by the individual from a reporting service designated by the board, the cost of which shall be borne by the applicant. Criminal history records relating to a predetermination petition shall not be considered public records under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. A board may predetermine that the petitioner's criminal history is likely grounds for denial of a license only after the board has applied the requirements of subsection (b) of this section. Each board shall delegate authority for such a predetermination to its Executive Director or their equivalent, or a committee of the board, so that the predeterminations can be made in a timely manner. No board member having served on a predetermination committee for an individual shall be required to recuse in any later determinations or hearings involving the same applicant. The board shall inform the individual of the board's determination within 45 days of receiving the petition from the individual. The board may charge a fee to recoup its costs not to exceed forty-five dollars (\$45.00) for each

petition. If the board determines an applicant would likely be denied licensure based on their criminal history, the board shall notify the individual in writing of the following:

- (1) The grounds and reasons for the predetermination.
- (2) That the petitioner has the right to complete any requirements for licensure and apply to the board and have their application considered by the board under its application process.
- (3) That further evidence of rehabilitation will be considered upon application.

(b7) A predetermination made under this section that a petitioner's criminal history would likely prevent them from licensure is not a final agency decision and shall not entitle the individual to any right to judicial review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

(b8) A predetermination made under subsection (b6) of this section that a petitioner is eligible for a license shall be binding if the petitioner applies for licensure and fulfills all other requirements for the occupational license and the applicant's submitted criminal history was correct and remains unchanged at the time of application for a license.

(c) The board may deny licensure to an applicant who refuses to consent to a criminal history record check or use of fingerprints or other identifying information required by the State or National Repositories of Criminal Histories.

(d) This section does not apply to The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission and the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission."

SECTION 5. Chapter 93B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 93B-8.6. Recognition of apprenticeships and training.

(a) The following definitions shall apply in this section:

- (1) Apprenticeship. – A program that meets the federal guidelines for registered apprenticeships set out in 29 C.F.R. Part 29 and 29 U.S.C. § 50. An apprenticeship can be completed under a State-licensed practitioner of that occupation or at a State-licensed school.
- (2) Career technical education. – Programs of study, clusters, and pathways approved by the North Carolina State Board of Education or the State Board of Community Colleges.
- (3) Licensing. – Any required training, education, or fee to work in a specific profession.

(b) Unless otherwise required by federal law, including requirements pertaining to eligibility for federal grant funding, an occupational licensing board shall grant a license to any applicant who meets the following criteria:

- (1) Completed an apprenticeship approved by the North Carolina State Approving Agency or federal Department of Labor, or otherwise permitted under State or federal law.
- (2) Passed an examination, if one is deemed to be necessary by the licensing authority.
- (3) With the exception of any prelicensing education requirements, has met any other requirements for licensure set forth in the law or rules related to the particular board.

(b1) This section shall not apply to occupational licensing boards governing professions requiring advanced knowledge acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual study, including those requiring a bachelor's or advanced degree.

(c) Each occupational licensing board shall establish a passing score for the board's examinations which shall not exceed the passing score that is required under the board's standard licensing processes. If the relevant law or rule does not require an examination for the standard licensing process, no examination may be required for applicants who complete an

apprenticeship in that occupation. Except as otherwise required by federal law, apprenticeships for an occupation shall not be required to exceed the number of hours required by the relevant licensing authority or statute for that occupation.

(d) Applicants for licensure shall be permitted to apply training hours earned through career technical education provided by North Carolina public schools and colleges towards the requirements for licensure in the same occupation in accordance with the standards and procedures authorized in accordance with this Chapter.

(e) The State Board of Community Colleges and occupational licensing boards shall adopt rules for the implementation of this section."

SECTION 6. This act becomes effective October 1, 2019, and applies to Certificates of Relief granted or applications for licensure submitted on or after that date.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 28th day of June, 2019.

s/ Philip E. Berger
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ Sarah Stevens
Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives

s/ Roy Cooper
Governor

Approved 11:49 a.m. this 8th day of July, 2019