On November 28-30, the states a part of the occupational licensing policy learning consortium convened for the second annual meeting in Clearwater, Florida. The state teams had the opportunity to focus on four population groups who are disproportionately affected by licensure—individuals with criminal records, veterans and military spouses, dislocated workers and immigrants with work authorization. License portability, reciprocity, and interstate compacts were also major topics. States had the opportunity to connect with and learn from fellow consortium states, as well as hear from states outside of the consortium that have taken action on occupational licensure including Nebraska and Michigan.

New funding allowed for four new states to participate in this year’s consortium meeting. Idaho, New Hampshire, North Dakota, and Vermont formed state teams made up of legislators, regulatory agencies, and governor’s staff and joined the original 11 states in Clearwater to begin action planning their licensure reform. These states who recently came aboard the project will be part of the consortium going forward.

CSG was also able to expand existing state teams to include more regulatory board members. Licensure reform is a challenging policy area with many competing interests. Bringing together all stakeholders is something CSG wanted to accomplish as a part of this effort. Pursuing licensure reform without input from the licensure boards is not something states have had much success with. In order to engage more regulatory agencies, CSG used additional funding to expand state teams to include these key stakeholders.

The focus on particular reforms from the consortium states as discussed at the meeting ranges widely from sunrise/sunset review, interstate compacts, communications/marketing plans, board consolidation, data collection/standardization, and laws for military families.

One additional point of discussion for the state teams was developing a transition plan for states with outgoing governors and legislators. With state teams being made up heavily of legislators and governor staff, some teams are needing to come up with a plan maintain momentum once these new state leaders take office. The partners at CSG, NCSL, and NGA have committed to developing a transitional memo that states can request which will explain the project and ask for support from the newly elected official.

The consortium will formally meet one more time in the summer of 2019, but the project partners...
hope this is just the beginning of state occupational licensing reform.

Vermont Deputy Secretary of State Chris Winters said, “This was the best conference I’ve ever been a part of. I was so glad to be able to contribute, and was also really proud of my Vermont team and their focus. This conference has energized them.”

Each consortium state has accomplished things throughout this project, but the latest consortium meeting in Clearwater was a great time for states to reset focus, refine vision, and energize to pursue common sense licensure reform.