

Report to the Joint Committee on Veterans & Military Affairs  
and the Washington State Military Transition Council

# Streamlining Military and Military- Affiliated Licensing

DECEMBER 2018

RCW 18.34.151 & 18.340

Office of Health Professions  
Health Systems Quality Assurance



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# Executive Summary

Senate Bill (SB) 5359 (Chapter 184, Laws of 2017)<sup>1</sup> requires the Department of Health (department) to provide regular reports to the Washington State Legislature (legislature) on implementation of laws to streamline licensing processes for military service members and their spouses. These laws are:

- Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5969 (Chapter 5, Laws of 2011)<sup>2</sup> requiring expedited licensing of military spouses; and
- ESSB 5307 (Chapter 32, Laws of 2011)<sup>3</sup> requiring military training or experience to satisfy licensing requirements if substantially equivalent.

The department is required to submit reports to the legislature biennially and to the Washington State Military Transition Council annually beginning in 2018, and to appear before the Joint Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs annually.

The department's progress to date includes:

- **Expediting military personnel licensing**
  - In 2012, the department implemented processes to identify health care credential applicants who are current or past military personnel to receive expedited review of their application. A total of 292 current or former military personnel have been issued an expedited credential with 79 of those credentialed in 2018. (See Appendix 1)
  - The department developed a military-to-civilian “crosswalk” to easily identify which military health care training and educational requirements are substantially equivalent to state-licensed professions, and adopted military equivalency rules for a number of health care professions.
- **Expediting military spouses licensing**
  - Administrative rules requiring expedited licensing for spouses or state-registered domestic partners of military personnel subject to a military transfer have been completed for 15 of 17 board, commission, or committee-regulated health professions. To date, 3,073 military spouses or domestic partners have received expedited issuance of a health care provider credential since the law was enacted in 2011, with 968 of those credentials issued in 2018. (See Appendix 2)
- **Creating a military projects manager in the department**
  - In 2013, the department hired a military projects manager (military liaison) to help facilitate military health care personnel transitioning to civilian professions. This

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<sup>1</sup> Codified as [RCW 73.04.150](#).

<sup>2</sup> Codified as [RCW 18.340](#)

<sup>3</sup> <http://lawfilesexxt.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2011-12/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5307-S.SL.pdf>

position addresses barriers for qualified military personnel, their spouses, and state-registered domestic partners to receive health profession licenses; educates military facilities about health care provider licensing and recruitment opportunities; and serves as a liaison representing the department on external workgroups with other state and federal partners and interested parties.



## Introduction

According to the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, 552,291 veterans, 60,972 active duty personnel, 18,228 Guard or Reserve personnel, and 2 million of their family members reside in Washington<sup>4</sup>. According to the U.S. Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for veterans continues to improve, with unemployment at 3.2 percent as of December 2018, down from 3.8 percent in 2017<sup>5</sup>. Spouses and registered domestic partners often face credentialing and employment challenges when relocating from one state to another. Helping veterans find and sustain meaningful employment in Washington remains a high priority for the Washington State Legislature and Department of Health (department). The department is committed to creating and sustaining processes to streamline credentialing of military personnel, veterans, and their spouses.

## Implementing Military Legislation in Washington

In 2011, the legislature passed two laws addressing military and military-affiliated licensing and credentialing:

- ESSB [5307](#) (Chapter 32, Laws of 2011) requires the department to evaluate military education, training, and experience, and allow it to meet state licensing requirements unless it is not substantially equivalent.
- ESSB [5969](#) (Chapter 5, Laws of 2011) requires all board, commission, or committee-regulated professions to establish expedited licensing procedures for military spouses or registered domestic partners.

### Department's progress to date

- In 2012, the department implemented processes to identify health care credential applicants who are current or past military to receive expedited review of their applications. A total of 292 current or former military personnel have been issued an expedited credential, including 79 in 2018.<sup>6</sup>
- The department developed a military-to-civilian “crosswalk” to easily identify which military health care training and educational requirements are substantially equivalent to state-licensed professions, and adopted military equivalency rules for a number of health care professions. The crosswalk targets entry-level and semi-advanced professions, which have the most barriers to entry.

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<sup>4</sup> “Veterans Statistics Spreadsheet,” Washington State Department of Veterans’ Affairs, <http://www.dva.wa.gov/veterans-statistics-spreadsheet>, accessed January 20, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> “Unemployment Situation of Veterans,” United States Department of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Labor Statistics as of November 2, 2018, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t05.htm>

<sup>6</sup> As of December 1, 2018.

- The following health care professions have adopted military-to-civilian equivalency rules.<sup>7</sup>
  - Expanded functions dental auxiliary (U.S. Navy program only)
  - Veterinary technician
  - Pharmacy technician
  - Occupational therapy assistant
  - Nursing assistant – certified (NA-C)
  - Licensed practical nurse
  - Home care aide (If already credentialed as an NA-C)
  - Emergency medical technician, EMT-advanced, and EMT-paramedic via reciprocity if passed National Registry of Emergency Technicians exam within one year of applying
  - All radiological professions, including cardiovascular invasive specialists and respiratory care practitioners.
- Fifteen of 17 health professions regulated by a board, commission or advisory committee have adopted rules to implement the military spouse state-registered domestic partner law. The Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery and the Board of Nursing Home Administrators are undergoing rulemaking and anticipate rules going into effect in 2019.
- Since June 2012, the department has expedited credential application processing for military-affiliated applicants when applicants identify themselves to the department as military at the initial application stage.
- In 2012, the department adopted rules ([WAC 246-12-051](#)) to issue temporary practice permits (TPP) to spouses or registered domestic partners for all secretary-regulated health professions. A TPP allows a spouse or domestic partner to practice up to six months (180 days) while awaiting final application processing.
- The department’s military projects manager continued to provide technical assistance to military-affiliated personnel interested in applying for a health care credential, and to conduct outreach at job fairs, roundtables, and other events.

## Other Related Activities and Accomplishments

The department:

- Took part in all Joint Base Lewis-McChord American Job Center, Navy-Kitsap Bremerton, U.S. Coast Guard 13<sup>th</sup> District, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce/Hiring Our Heroes career-sponsored expositions. In addition, the department participated in Washington state’s Veterans Employment Resource Group, the Office of Financial Management’s

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<sup>7</sup> These are all registration professions (i.e., Medical and Nursing Assistant-Registered, Surgical Technologist, Dental and Pharmacy Assistant-Registered, and Agency-Affiliated Counselors) that require no formal education.

(OFM)( Veterans Recruitment Plan ([SB 5849 \(2017\)](#)) workgroup, and the Washington State Military Transition Council.

- Partnered year-round with the Office of Financial Management, Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, educational service districts, Workforce Training Board, Department of Licensing, Department of Labor and Industries, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Washington Student Achievement Council, and other state agencies to support hiring veterans and military spouses, education (pathways and apprenticeships), and general information-sharing events.

## Department Goals for 2019 and Beyond

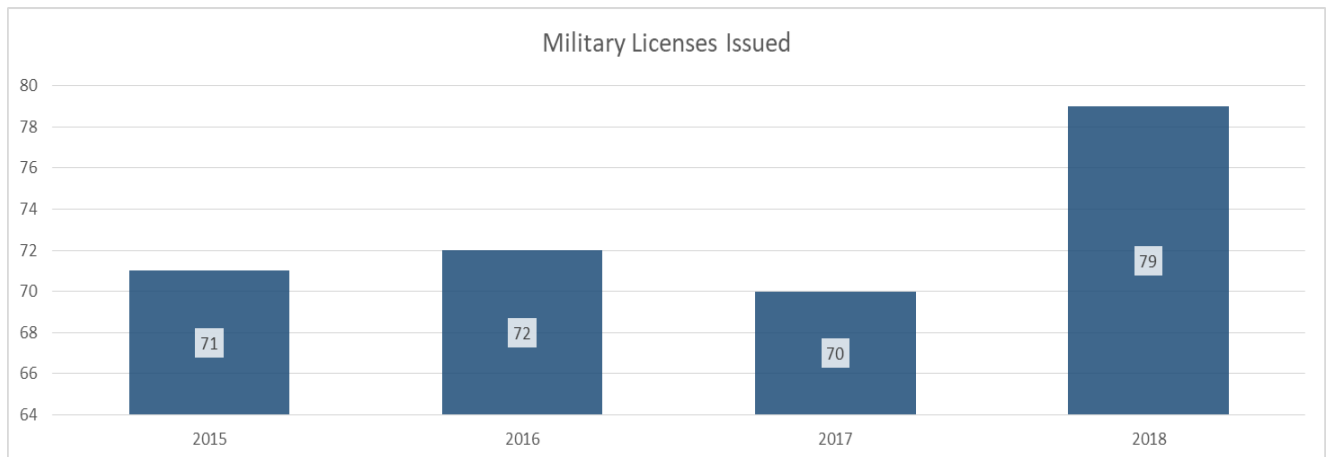
The department's goals for ensuring military equivalency and integration of military personnel and their families into Washington are to:

- Continue to work with regulatory authorities to develop formal rules in support of substantial equivalency for military education, training, and experience.
- Update the department's external [military resources webpage](#) in support of military veterans and eligible beneficiaries.
- Review and update the department's health professions crosswalk that will allow military personnel and spouses to compare their education and training skills with current health profession requirements.
- Continuously streamline processes for military veterans, spouses, and registered domestic partners through quarterly review of data as well as customer service, public feedback, and opinions.

## Appendix 1

Table 1: Military Personnel Licenses Issued by Calendar Year<sup>8</sup>

Group	Profession	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Secretary	Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist	0	0	0	1	1
	Chemical Dependency Professional Trainee	1	6	4	3	14
	Counselor- Agency Affiliated	5	15	22	8	50
	Dental Hygiene	0	0	0	1	1
	Health Care Assistant	0	0	0	0	0
	Hypnotherapist	0	0	0	0	0
	Medical Assistant Certification	7	1	1	26	35
	Medical Assistant Registration	0	5	2	3	10
	Nursing Assistant Certification	0	0	0	7	7
	Nursing Assistant Registration	22	23	17	8	70
	Radiologic Technologist	0	0	0	2	2
	Respiratory Care Practitioner	1	0	0	0	1
	Surgical Technologist	20	9	10	5	44
	X-Ray Technician	1	1	2	0	4
	<b>Secretary Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>239</b>
Board	Occupational Therapy Assistant	0	0	0	3	3
	Physical Therapist Assistant	0	0	0	1	1
Commission	Dentist	0	0	0	1	1
	Dental Assistant	10	9	9	1	29
	Pharmacy Assistant	4	2	0	0	6
	Pharmacy Technician	0	1	3	8	12
	Physician Assistant	0	0	0	1	1
	<b>Board/ Commissions Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>All Professions</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>292</b>



<sup>8</sup> Please note that this list only includes entry-level and semi-advanced professions, which have the most barriers to entry. Advanced level professions like physicians enter the military after graduating from medical school.

Table 2: Timeliness of Military Credential Issuance - Routine Applications

<b>Routine Measures</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Percent of military credentials issued within 14 calendar days after receiving all required documents	100%	99%	96%	87% <sup>9</sup>
Average days to issue military credential	5.2	6.0	5.9	8.1

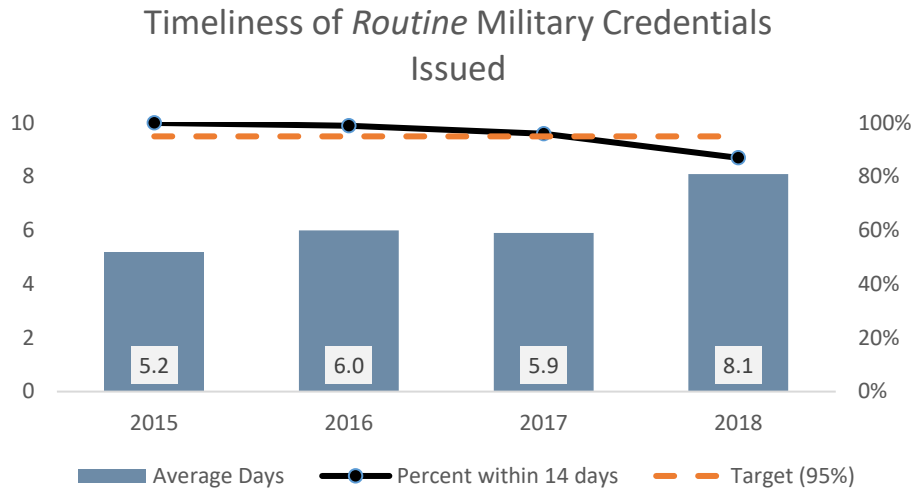


Table 3: Timeliness of Military Credential Issuance – Exception/ Non-Routine

<b>Exception/ Non-Routine Measures</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Percent of military credentials issued within 14 calendar days after receiving all required documents	100%	100%	67%	100%
Average days to issue military credential	1	10	10.3	5.5
Number of applications	1	1	3	4

<sup>9</sup> The department received an increased number of health care credential applications early in 2018. At the time, the health profession credentialing unit was understaffed because of a low fund balance in the Health Professions Account, causing delays in processing credential applications. In the 2018 supplemental budget, the legislature provided additional spending authority for this account, which allowed the department to hire additional staff members to improve credentialing wait times.

## Appendix 2

Table 1: Military Spouse Licenses Issued by Calendar Year

Group	Profession	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Secretary	Advanced EMT	0	0	1	1	2
	Animal Massage Practitioner	0	1	0	0	1
	Athletic Trainer	2	0	1	2	5
	Assistant Behavior Analyst	0	0	2	4	6
	Behavior Analyst	0	0	10	6	16
	Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist	1	1	1	1	4
	Certified Behavior Technician	0	0	50	52	102
	Chemical Dependency Professional	0	2	2	1	5
	Chemical Dependency Professional Trainee	9	6	14	9	38
	Counselor, Agency Affiliated	34	71	62	48	215
	Dental Hygienist	3	5	17	11	36
	Dietitian/Nutritionist	1	6	6	6	19
	Dispensing Optician Apprentice	0	4	2	1	7
	Emergency Medical Responder	0	2	0	1	3
	Emergency Medical Technician	3	21	28	16	68
	Genetic Counselor	0	1	2	0	3
	Home Care Aide	1	13	45	46	105
	Hypnotherapist	0	1	1	0	2
	Marriage and Family Therapist	0	3	2	0	5
	Marriage and Family Therapist Associate	0	5	4	6	15
	Medical Assistant	34	185	181	159	559
	Medical Marijuana Consultant	0	8	3	0	11
	Medication Assistant Endorsement	0	2	0	1	3
	Mental Health Counselor	1	12	7	12	32
	Mental Health Counselor Associate	4	14	16	22	56
	Midwife	0	0	1	3	4
	Nursing Assistant	68	195	223	237	723
	Orthotics/ Prosthetics	0	1	0	0	1
	Paramedic	0	1	3	4	8
	Radiological Technologist	9	15	15	16	55
	Recreational Therapist	0	0	0	2	2
	Respiratory Care Practitioner	7	7	8	10	32
	Social Worker Advanced	0	0	3	0	3
Social Worker Associate Advanced	2	2	2	5	11	
Social Worker Associate Independent Clinical	4	12	14	21	51	
Social Worker Independent Clinical	2	6	4	7	19	
Surgical Technologist	6	11	16	15	48	
X-Ray Technician	0	3	3	8	14	
	<b>Secretary Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>2,289</b>

Board	Audiologist	0	3	1	3	7
	Massage Practitioner	6	20	19	16	61
	Nursing Home Administrator	0	0	1	0	1
	Occupational Therapist	4	6	7	6	23
	Occupational Therapy Assistant	1	3	7	8	19
	Optometrist	2	2	2	1	7
	Osteopathic Physician	1	4	5	7	17
	Physical Therapist	4	13	12	22	51
	Physical Therapist Assistant	4	3	6	9	22
	Podiatric Physician	0	0	1	0	1
	Psychologist	0	2	2	6	10
	Speech Language Pathologist	6	5	11	12	34
	Speech Language Pathology Assistant	0	1	1	1	3
	Veterinarian	1	3	6	2	12
	Veterinary Medication Clerk	0	12	15	8	35
	Veterinary Technician	3	1	5	5	14
	Commission	Chiropractic X-Ray Technician	0	2	2	0
Chiropractor		0	2	1	0	3
Dental Anesthesia Assistant		0	0	1	1	2
Dental Assistant		27	65	57	62	211
Dentist		4	4	7	12	27
Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary		0	0	0	1	1
Pharmacist		3	0	10	5	18
Pharmacist Intern		1	2	9	4	16
Pharmacy Assistant		16	57	32	34	139
Pharmacy Technician		5	14	17	10	46
		<b>Board/ Commissions Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>All Professions</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>3,073</b>

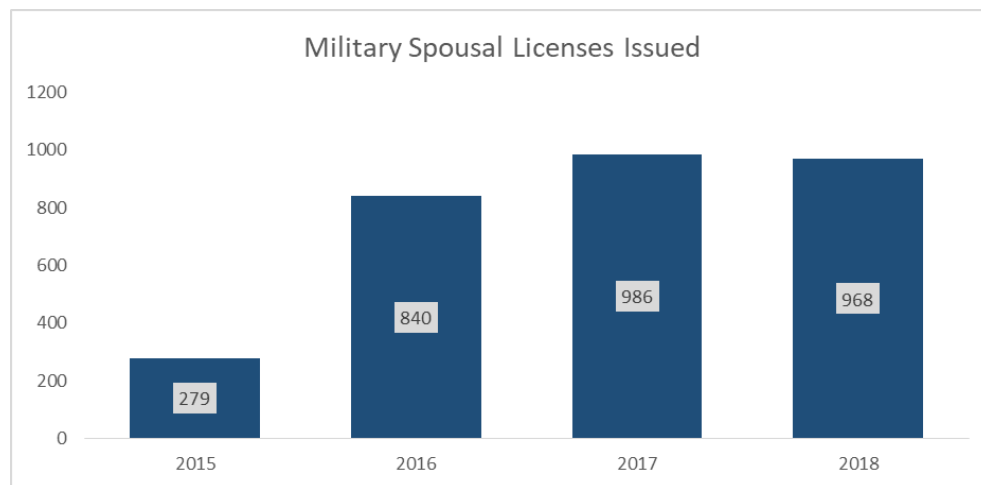


Table 2: Timeliness of Military Spouse Credential Issuance - Routine Application Types

<b>Routine Measures</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Percent of military spousal credentials issued within 14 calendar days after receiving all documents	98%	94%	91%	88% <sup>10</sup>
Average days to issue military credential	4.5	7.1	8.4	9.2

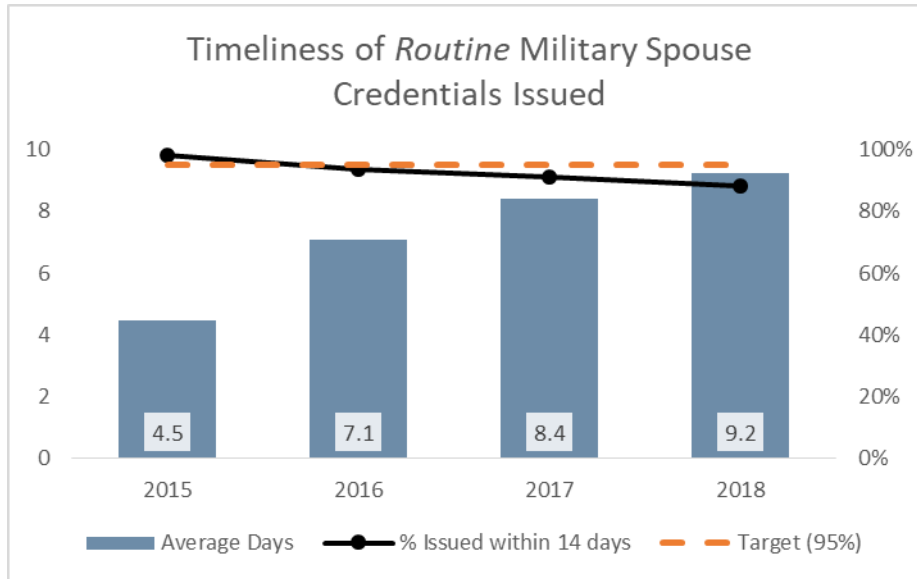


Table 3: Timeliness of Military Spouse Credential Issuance- Exception/Non-Routine Application Types

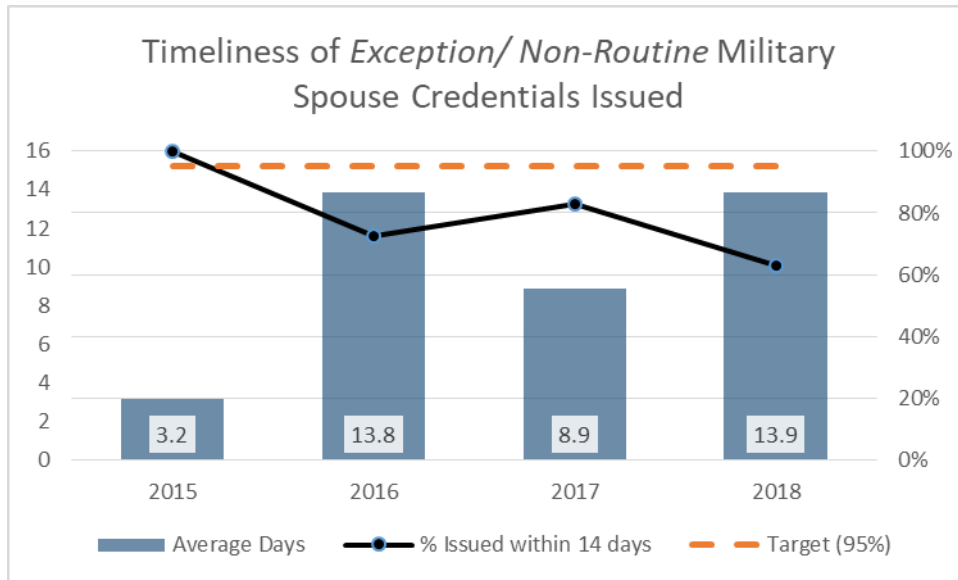
<b>Exception/ Non-Routine Measures</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Percent of military spousal credentials issued within 14 calendar days after receiving all documents	100%	72% <sup>11</sup>	83%	63% <sup>12</sup>
Average days to issue military credential	3.2	13.8	8.9	13.9

<sup>10</sup> See Footnote 9.

<sup>11</sup> In 2016, the department processed 34 out of 47 Exception/ Non-Routine Applications within timelines. Several of the remaining 13 applications were delayed by circumstances such as slow mail processing, pending review of court documents, and rescheduling of case management meetings.

<sup>12</sup> See Footnote 9.





**Legend:** Explanation of each Application Designation by Type

**Routine Applications:** Are applications that have been thoroughly reviewed and vetted by the appropriate regulatory authority, and can be approved by credentialing staff.

**Non-Routine Applications:** Applications are considered non-routine because of responses to personal data questions or questionable supporting documentation; in some instances, these may be required to go through the “exception” application process.

**Exception Applications:** Credential applications where the applicant has a criminal background, open case or enforcement action on another credential, databank disciplinary history, any “yes” response to personal data questions or where the applicant does not meet credentialing requirements. “Exception” application designation may also apply to an applicant who has not sufficiently responded to questions regarding the omission of a Social Security number on the application.