



State of Vermont

Office of the Secretary of State

128 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-1101

[phone] 802-828-2363

[fax] 802-828-2496

www.sec.state.vt.us

James C. Condos, Secretary of State

Christopher D. Winters, Deputy Secretary

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Contact: Eric Covey, 802-828-2148

**Secretary of State Jim Condos Announces Federal Award
To Fund Professional Occupational Licensing Reform**

Montpelier, VT – Secretary of State Jim Condos announced today that the United States Department of Labor has awarded the Vermont Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) \$450,000 to support occupational licensing reform. OPR, a Division of the Secretary of State's Office, protects the public by regulating 50 professions and approximately 60,000 licensees.

Secretary Condos stated, "Vermont has been at the forefront of national efforts to modernize and streamline occupational licensing. With bipartisan support from the Legislature and Administration, we have undertaken ambitious efforts to cut red tape, making it more convenient and less expensive for qualified professionals—from the beauty professions to the medical sciences—to live and work in Vermont. Federal funding for these efforts will be a huge help."

Among the funded projects are top-to-bottom reforms in the licensure of barbers, cosmetologists, estheticians, and salons; more efficient, simplified licensure for private investigators and security guards; assessment of participation in the Interstate Nurse Licensure Compact; reforms enabling funeral service professionals to earn licensure at lower cost, without having to leave the State as they now do; and a complete regulatory review of the way the State regulates real estate professionals.

Chris Winters, former Director of OPR and current Deputy Secretary of State, has long advocated these reforms in Vermont and has been asked to serve as an expert resource for multiple states, helping shape national policy with the Council of State Governments, the National Council of State Legislatures, and the National Governors' Association.

"Smart, efficient occupational licensing is critical to making Vermont attractive to professionals, firms, and young Vermonters looking to build careers where they call home - and we can do it without sacrificing public protection. This federal recognition and support is well-deserved," Winters said.

Vermont is one of only 9 states chosen to receive the grant and will be awarded the maximum amount of any state. <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20180625>. For more information about the regulation of licensed professionals, please contact the Secretary of State's Office of Professional Regulation at 802-828-1505 or on the web at www.sec.state.vt.us.

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