
Wisconsin Legislative Council

ACT MEMO



Prepared by: Margit Kelley, Principal Attorney

December 19, 2023

2023 Wisconsin Act 56
[2023 Senate Bill 197]

**Audiology and Speech-Language
Pathology Interstate Compact**

2023 WISCONSIN ACT 56

2023 Wisconsin Act 56 ratifies and enters Wisconsin into the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Compact, which allows a licensed audiologist or speech-language pathologist in a compact member state to practice in another member state under a “compact privilege,” without obtaining a license to practice in the other state. A licensed audiologist or speech-language pathologist who holds a valid compact privilege may provide audiology or speech-language pathology services in the other state in person, or via telehealth. The act applies only to an applicant for a compact privilege, and does not affect requirements for Wisconsin licensure.

Licensure

To obtain a compact privilege, a licensed individual must apply to the state in which the person is seeking to provide audiology or speech-language pathology services. The applicant must be licensed in good standing in the person’s home state, and the home state’s licensure must meet certain minimum standards, as Wisconsin does. For an audiologist, this includes requiring a doctoral degree in audiology or an equivalent degree, passage of a nationally recognized examination, and completion of a supervised clinical practicum experience.¹ For a speech-language pathologist, this includes requiring a master’s degree from a speech-language pathology program, passage of a nationally recognized examination, completion of a supervised clinical practicum experience, and completion of supervised post-graduate professional experience.

Active duty military personnel and their spouses may designate a member state as a home state, if the individual has a current license in good standing in the member state.

Regulatory Oversight

While providing audiology or speech-language pathology services in person or via telehealth under a compact privilege, a licensed audiologist or speech-language pathologist must adhere to the laws and regulations of the member state in which the person is providing the services.² The person is also

¹ For an audiologist, the doctoral degree requirement applies to a person who has graduated on or after January 1, 2008. If a person graduated before that date, either a master’s degree or doctorate in audiology, or equivalent degree, will satisfy the degree requirement. Wisconsin has similarly required a doctoral degree to be licensed as an audiologist since January 1, 2010, and accepted a master’s degree in audiology before that date. [s. 459.24 (3), Stats.]

² Two particular aspects of a person’s professional scope of practice are impacted when providing services under a compact privilege in another member state: working in a school and dispensing a hearing aid. [ASLP-IC, [Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact \(ASLP-IC\): An Overview](#) (August 26, 2019).] First, if a member state requires an audiologist or speech-language pathologist to have a separate license or certification to work in a school, an audiologist or speech-language pathologist may only work in a school if the home state license also requires a separate credential to work in a school. Wisconsin requires a separate license for an audiologist or speech-language pathologist to work in a school. [s. 115.28 (7) (c), Stats.; and ch. PI 34, Wis. Adm. Code.] Second, if a member state requires an

subject to that state's regulatory authority, including disciplinary action against the person's compact privilege in any member state.

In addition, the act does all of the following:

- Allows member states' licensure boards to conduct joint investigations of licensed individuals and to issue subpoenas that are enforceable in other member states.
- Creates a coordinated database and reporting system containing licensure, adverse action, and investigative information on all licensed individuals in member states.
- Requires applicants for an initial license or compact privilege to be fingerprinted, and requires an applicant's fingerprint cards to be submitted to the state Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a criminal history background check.

Insurance Coverage

In addition to the compact's provisions for state regulatory oversight, the act also addresses an aspect of insurance coverage. Under current law, subject to certain exemptions, the state's health insurance mandates require a health insurance policy or governmental self-insured plan to provide coverage for hearing aids and cochlear implants, and related treatment, for a child who is certified as deaf or hearing impaired. The act specifies that an audiologist who holds a compact privilege may provide those covered services. However, preferred provider networks and other plan limitations may apply. [s. 632.895 (16), Stats.]

Governance of the Compact

For governance of the compact, the act enters Wisconsin into the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Compact Commission, which includes two members of the licensure boards of each member state. One member must be an audiologist and the other must be a speech-language pathologist. The commission has various powers and duties granted in the compact, including overseeing the administration of the compact, enforcing the compact, adopting bylaws, promulgating binding rules to coordinate implementation and administration of the compact, and establishing and electing an executive committee.

The act provides for dispute resolution among member states, and allows the commission to initiate legal action if a state defaults on its obligations under the compact. The act also permits a state to withdraw from the compact by repealing the statute authorizing the compact, to take effect six months after the effective date of the repeal.

The compact may be amended by the member states, effective after enacted into the laws of all member states.

Effective date: December 8, 2023

For a full history of the bill, visit the Legislature's [bill history page](#).

MSK;jal

audiologist or speech-language pathologist to have a separate license to dispense a hearing aid, an audiologist or speech-language pathologist may only dispense a hearing aid if the home state also requires a separate license. Wisconsin does not require an audiologist to have a separate license to dispense a hearing aid, but does require a speech-language pathologist to obtain a license as a hearing instrument specialist to dispense a hearing aid. [ss. 459.02, 459.20 (2) (b), and 459.22 (2) (b), Stats.]