

# Badger Institute, WILL: Release roadmap for licensing reform

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The Badger Institute and the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) today released a joint publication, "[Occupational Licensing in Wisconsin: A Roadmap for Reform](#)," that calls on the Wisconsin Legislature to adopt specific occupational licensing reforms, including sunrise and sunset reviews, universal license recognition, Right to Earn a Living legislation and other changes to the current licensing process and requirements.

"For the sake of workers, consumers, economic growth and basic fairness, it's time for Wisconsin policymakers to adopt reforms that have been sweeping across other states," co-authors Julie Grace, Badger Institute policy analyst, and Kyle Koenen, WILL policy director, wrote in the introduction.

The primer details the proposed policies, how they would benefit workers and consumers, which states already have passed them and why Wisconsin should do the same.

According to research conducted by both organizations, removing regulatory barriers to work would allow aspirants to pursue their desired professions, provide consumers with more competition, spur statewide economic growth and ensure that licenses are used only when necessary.

"One lesson we've learned this year is that we should be making it easier — not harder — for Wisconsinites to work in their desired fields," says Grace. "These common-sense recommendations would eliminate barriers that fence people out of professions and favor current market participants. Licensing reform has become a bipartisan issue as more and more people recognize the challenges imposed by these state-mandated permission slips to work."

“The pandemic revealed two important things: People are more willing to move to areas they hadn’t previously considered, and we can suspend regulations without the sky falling,” says Koenen. “As businesses around the state struggle to find people to work, excessive and often arbitrary occupational regulations serve as barriers for people moving to Wisconsin and entering the workforce.

“Legislators should capitalize on what we’ve learned and remove these obvious barriers to both workforce and economic growth. These proposals will not only improve Wisconsin in the short term but provide a systematic way to review occupational regulations moving forward.”

Specific reforms analyzed by the authors include:

- **Universal license recognition:** A law that would make it easier for qualified licensed workers from other states to get their license in Wisconsin by “recognizing” other states’ licenses.
- **Sunrise review:** Whenever a bill is introduced to license a new occupation, a sunrise review would require the Legislative Audit Bureau or other independent agency to determine whether a license is necessary or whether a less restrictive form of regulation is appropriate.
- **Sunset review:** This process is used to determine if existing licenses are justified and are the best option for protecting public health and safety. A sunset review would require an independent agency to review existing licenses on a set schedule to determine whether they are effective and necessary.
- **Right to Earn a Living:** This measure would allow the judiciary to serve as a check on policymakers and regulators who create and uphold overly burdensome regulations. If individuals believe certain restrictions are infringing on their right to earn a living, they may challenge the regulations in court.
- **Other recommendations:** Expanding certain temporary COVID-19 measures, streamlining the licensing process, establishing lookback periods and requiring greater licensing board transparency.

Read the full publication [here](#).