

## Georgia Secretary of State

### Professional Licensing Boards Streamlined and Reorganized Operations

#### Overview

The Secretary of State's Professional Licensing Boards Division (PLB) provides administrative support services to 43 boards which issue 200 types of licenses to approximately 460,000 Georgians and businesses. These administrative support services include processing new license applications and renewals; conducting inspections and investigations; and staffing a call center to assist professional license holders.

Half of all the active professional licenses are issued by the Georgia Board of Nursing, the Georgia State Board of Examiners of Licensed Practical Nurses and the Georgia State Board of Cosmetology.

One of the most consistent issues I hear from Georgians, whether they own or manage small businesses or utilize the services of a licensed individual or business, concerns their interaction with PLB and the need for increased efficiency throughout the entire licensing process.

For example, license applicants and licensees seeking renewal often question the lengthy process currently required to approve or renew some license types. They may have obtained specialized education and training to start a new career, or additional education and training to advance in their current profession, only to endure bureaucratic delays of a month or more which impedes their ability to work.

Other Georgians become ensnared in red tape due to delays caused by review processes for new license applications, license renewals and determining sanctions. Review of deficient applications and the hearing process to deliberate and issue sanctions are key components to upholding Georgia law and ensuring consumer safety. However, the review and hearing process itself can present additional obstacles to maintaining a streamlined and efficient agency, putting Georgians to work quickly, allowing them to start their businesses as soon as possible and sometimes undermining consumer safety.

#### **Georgia Secretary of State's Professional Licensing Boards Division: Streamlined and Reorganized Operations**

It is clear that we must streamline the operations of the PLB. Our streamlined plan will reorganize the current Board model to greatly accelerate the license review and renewal process so qualified Georgians can get to work or start a new business in a week, rather than months.

Further, the reorganized model will decrease the amount of time required to review deficient applications and conduct hearings to sanction those who violate state law or Board rules. Under this reorganized model, professional licensing and rule making will become more efficient and accountable to license applicants, license holders and consumers.

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**Director of  
Professional Licensing**

**Professional Licensing  
and Enforcement Staff**

- The Director of Professional Licensing (DPL) and licensing staff will receive applications and issue licenses for appropriately qualified applicants.
- DPL and enforcement staff will perform investigations and inspections.
- DPL will work with staff to determine fines and other penalties when appropriate and draft an administrative order.
- If the DPL and licensee agree to the administrative order, the case is closed.
- If the DPL and the licensee do not agree to the administrative order, the case is transferred to the Georgia Board of Licensing and Regulation for an administrative hearing.

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**Georgia Board of  
Licensing and Regulation (GBLR)**

- The GBLR will be a seven member body whose members are appointed by the governor, and will be composed of consumer members only.
- The GBLR will conduct hearings to approve certain professional licenses, hear appeals of rulings made by the DLP, and review for approval rules recommended by the Professional Licensing Policy Boards (formerly known as the Professional Licensing Boards).

**Professional Licensing  
Policy Boards**

- The Professional Licensing Policy Boards (PLPBs) will be composed of licensees and professional association members, and will continue to be appointed by the governor.
- The PLPBs will recommend new rules or rule amendments and offer their professional and expert opinions to the GBLR.
- Additionally, this streamlined process will allow PLPB members to spend more time providing their professional and expert opinions to the DLP and staff to aid with licensing and investigations.