

The Beginner's Guide to **Travel Therapy**

Whether you're a student, new grad, or seasoned therapy professional who has ever considered travel. This document library is for you.

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About Ardor Aspire

Ardor Aspire is a dedicated program designed to educate, mentor, and guide therapy graduates & professionals who are curious about travel careers.

We help therapists launch successful, fulfilling careers while embracing the flexibility and adventure of travel therapy.

01 What is travel therapy?



02 Pros and Need to Knows



03 The Compact License



04 Getting the Job



05 Traveler Housing



SECTION 01

What is Travel Therapy?



What is Travel Therapy?

THE FIRST STEP TO TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR CAREER: KNOWING WHAT MATTERS TO YOU.

You've taken the time to gain an education in a specialized and in-demand field. One that has endless options for how you can apply your skills.

Considering travel therapy early in your profession can optimize the first chapters of your career in many areas.

Making an informed decision on whether travel is right for you can seem like a question with no starting line. We hope this guide + tools inside can give you the info you need to feel confident in taking the leap or not.

Increase your income + pay off loans fast



Create a schedule & lifestyle that fits you



Enrich your life both on + off shift in new areas



Explore areas you can envision planting roots

STAFF VS TRAVEL THERAPY: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



STAFF POSITIONS

- FULL-TIME, LONG-TERM ROLES
- CONSISTENT SCHEDULE & ROUTINE
- BENEFITS THROUGH EMPLOYER
- GREAT FOR STABILITY AND GROWTH IN ONE SETTING

TRAVEL POSITIONS

- SHORT-TERM CONTRACTS (TYPICALLY 13 WEEKS)
- HIGHER TAKE-HOME POTENTIAL
- EXPLORE NEW LOCATIONS WHILE YOU WORK



LICENSING



AS A STAFF POSITION: YOU ONLY NEED TO WORRY ABOUT 1 STATE LICENSE, WHICH IS THE STATE YOU WORK IN.

FOR TRAVEL: YOU'LL WANT TO USE THE LICENSURE COMPACT (OT AND PT COMPACT HAVE DIFFERENT STATES) OR PLAN AHEAD FOR MULTIPLE STATE LICENSES IF THEY'RE NOT IN THE COMPACT YET.

PAY & BENEFITS

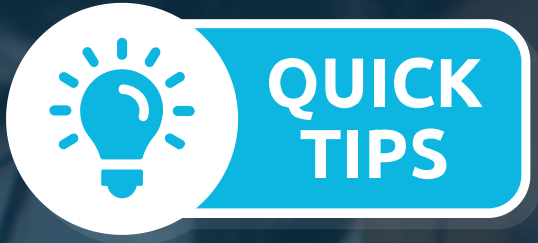
STAFF:

- STEADY SALARY
- TRADITIONAL BENEFITS



TRAVEL:

- WEEKLY PAY PACKAGES
- TAX-FREE STIPENDS (WHEN ELIGIBLE)
- FLEXIBILITY IN BENEFITS (DAY 1 WITH ARDOR)



Make a **checklist**
about **what's**
important to you
for the first **2 years**
of your career.

Top 5

Travel Tips For Physical Therapists



1 - Network

Take this opportunity to **put yourself out there!** Travel can easily start to feel like a solo sport. Join online groups of other travel therapists, & take time to get to know your new colleagues. Soon you'll have your own social network!

2 - Pack Smart

Focus on the essentials. Opt for versatile and comfortable above all else. Don't forget comfy shoes!



3 - Stay Organized

Physical Therapy licensing requirements **vary from state to state.** Reduce stress when onboarding by keeping digital & physical copies of important docs together in a folder.



4 - Consider Flexibility

Travel therapy professionals are needed all over the country. Consider less popular areas or regions in their off-season to travel to. This gives a higher chance of negotiating **pay increases & additional benefits.**



5 - Research

Travel Therapy is **unique.** Make sure you've done your research to educate yourself on the right agency, recruiter, and any areas you're interested in traveling to.



SECTION 02

The Pros and The Need to Knows

4 MYTHS ABOUT YOUR TRAVEL CAREER (debunked)

learn the truth!

Myth 01

MY JOB IS GONNA CHANGE EVERY 13 WEEKS

Truth 01

NOT IF YOU DON'T WANT IT TO!

Many contracts are open to, or will even offer the ability to extend your assignment for longer.

Be sure to let your recruiter know if you want them to arrange extending!

Myth 02

I CANNOT TAKE TIME OFF DURING A TRAVEL ASSIGNMENT

Truth 02

YOU CAN! BUT:

Remember, assignments aim to fill staffing gaps, so extensive time-off requests may impact a decision between you & other travelers.

We know s**t happens. So we will always try to meet your needs while getting you the job you deserve. Our best advice for a win-win is to plan some epic time off between contracts instead.

Myth 03

THE LAVISH AGENCY IS THE BETTER AGENCY TO WORK FOR

Truth 03

THAT \$ COMES FROM SOMEWHERE, RIGHT?

Nobody likes their own money spent for them. Oftentimes, the cost of those expensive gifts come out of your take home pay. Plus, what if they got the wrong color?

Myth 04

TRAVEL IS SUPER LONELY

Truth 04

BESTIES FROM COAST TO COAST

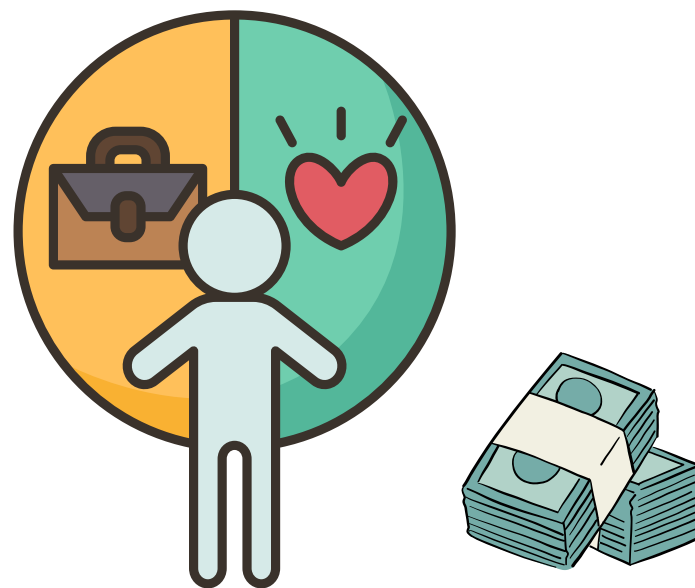
It's all what you make of it, but travel is anything but lonely! You'll usually end up befriendng other travelers on your contract, and anyone you meet along your journey is a fabulous bonus!

WHY TRAVEL?

Discover the benefits of travel as a therapist & how it elevates your career!

2

Top Pay & Benefits



Discover competitive compensation, unlock tax-free stipends, and still receive the same health, dental & vision benefits you know & love in traditional staff roles!

4

Adventure & Exploration



Travel therapy provides adventure on your terms. See areas you've always wanted to and even some you never expected to explore! The work-life balance of travel nursing allows adventure to happen whenever you're ready!

1

Flexibility & Freedom



Choose assignments in exciting locations across the USA! The short-term nature of travel therapy allows wiggle room to experiment with job preferences. You can also earn more, faster, by opting to take on extra overtime hours during assignments to cash out and take a well-deserved vacay after those 13 weeks!

3



New Experiences

Explore what's outside your comfort zone. Introduce yourself to new healthcare settings and treatment methods and unlock brand new skillsets!

5

Grow As A Pro



The valuable & broad experiences travel therapy provides can help broaden career prospects.

WHAT SCHOOL DIDN'T TELL YOU ABOUT BEING A THERAPIST...

ONE

01



YOU'LL WEAR MORE THAN ONE HAT.

BESIDES BEING A CLINICIAN YOU'LL ALSO BE AN ADVOCATE AND EDUCATOR TO YOUR PATIENTS WHO'LL LOOK UP TO YOU.

TWO

02



NO TWO JOBS LOOK THE SAME EVEN WITH THE SAME LICENSE.

YOU CAN WORK IN THE SAME CITY BUT A DIFFERENT SETTING AND IT CAN COMPLETELY SHIFT YOUR OPINION! DON'T LET A BAD EXPERIENCE STOP YOU FROM TRYING A NEW SETTING IN A FAMILIAR PLACE.

THREE

03



TIME MANAGEMENT BECOMES ONE OF YOUR BIGGEST SKILLS.

THE TRANSITION FROM STUDENT TO FULL-TIME CLINICIAN REQUIRES ADAPTING TO YOUR FASTER-PACED ENVIRONMENT AND ORGANIZATION BUT DON'T WORRY, IT DOES GET EASIER WITH EXPERIENCE.

FOUR

04



BOOK SMART? OR STREET SMART?

WHILE GAINING MORE HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN YOUR CAREER, YOU'LL LEARN THERE ARE SKILLS SCHOOL CAN'T TEACH YOU, LIKE MANAGING EXPECTATIONS OR LEARNING PROPER COMMUNICATION STYLES FOR EVERY PATIENT DEMOGRAPHIC.

FIVE

05



THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO BUILD A CAREER THAT FITS YOUR LIFE

TRAVEL CONTRACTS OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE TO "ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL", TRADITIONAL ROLES. YOU CAN TRY DIFFERENT SETTINGS, SCHEDULES, AND STATES TO FIND WHAT BEST WORKS FOR YOU!



6

RED FLAGS FOR THERAPISTS

ONE

LACK OF ADVOCACY FOR PATIENT NEEDS

- Pushing unnecessary treatments for billing, ignoring patient goals, or pressuring OTs to discharge patients prematurely.
- Why it's bad: Violates ethical principles and harms therapeutic relationships.

TWO

NATALIE SAYS: NEGATIVE WORK CULTURE

- You won't always get to meet the team ahead of time, but vague answers during an interview call about culture is a warning sign that something's off.
- It's hard to gauge work culture from a phone call, but if your gut says "something's off", listen. Trust those subtle red flags.

THREE

HIGH TURNOVER RATES AMONG STAFF

- Frequent quitting or complaints from former/current employees about management or workload.
- Why it's bad: Indicates systemic issues (e.g., poor leadership, unsustainable demands).

FOUR

NATALIE SAYS: NO ORIENTATION OR ONBOARDING PLAN

- If your "training" is a quick hallway tour and a login
- If there's no structure to help you settle in, it's usually a sign they're not set up to support you.

FIVE

UNCLEAR ROLE EXPECTATIONS OR SCOPE CREEP

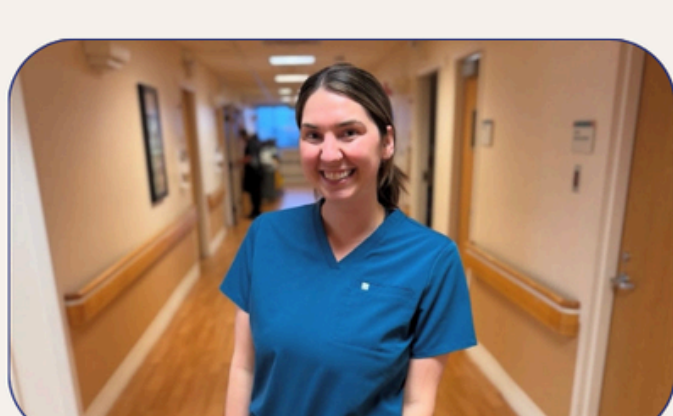
- Vague job descriptions, frequent last-minute changes, or being asked to perform non-OT tasks (e.g., excessive paperwork, cleaning, administrative duties).
- Why it's bad: Leads to frustration, role confusion, and potential licensure concerns.

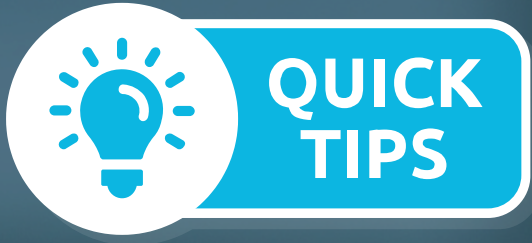
SIX

NATALIE SAYS: HIGH PRODUCTIVITY STANDARDS (ESPECIALLY WITHOUT TRAINING)

- Being expected to hit numbers before you're confident in your role is a recipe for burnout.
- You should have realistic goals and time to grow

WITH ASPIRE MENTOR,
NATALIE OT, OTR/L





Keep track of **names of recruiters, hiring managers, facilities etc.** you speak with during your job search.

5 Types Of Self Care

Because Therapists deserve care too!

1. Emotional

Emotional self-care helps you get in touch with what triggers a certain emotion, and explore ways to experience positive emotions regularly.



2. Spiritual

Spiritual care is different for everyone, but looking after yourself can be accomplished by simply doing things that make your heart & soul flourish.



3. Physical

Your body is what will carry you through your whole life. Treat it accordingly by doing what you need to stay healthy.



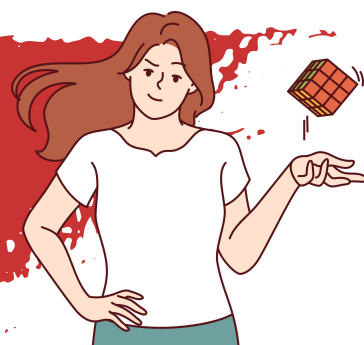
4. Social

Surrounding yourself with those you love is a form of social recharge. Whether it's a fun outing with friends & family, or just a casual night in.



5. Intellectual

Stimulating your mind, working towards your goals, and learning new things is an incredible way to grow and care for your brain.





SECTION 03

The Compact License

4 Steps to Determine PT/PTA Compact License Eligibility

1

Visit PT Compact Website

Head to the official PT Compact Website for the best eligibility info.

2

Confirm Your Home State (*aka your tax home*)

Locate your tax home on the participating state list. Compact eligibility starts there.

3

Ensure You Meet Compact License Requirements

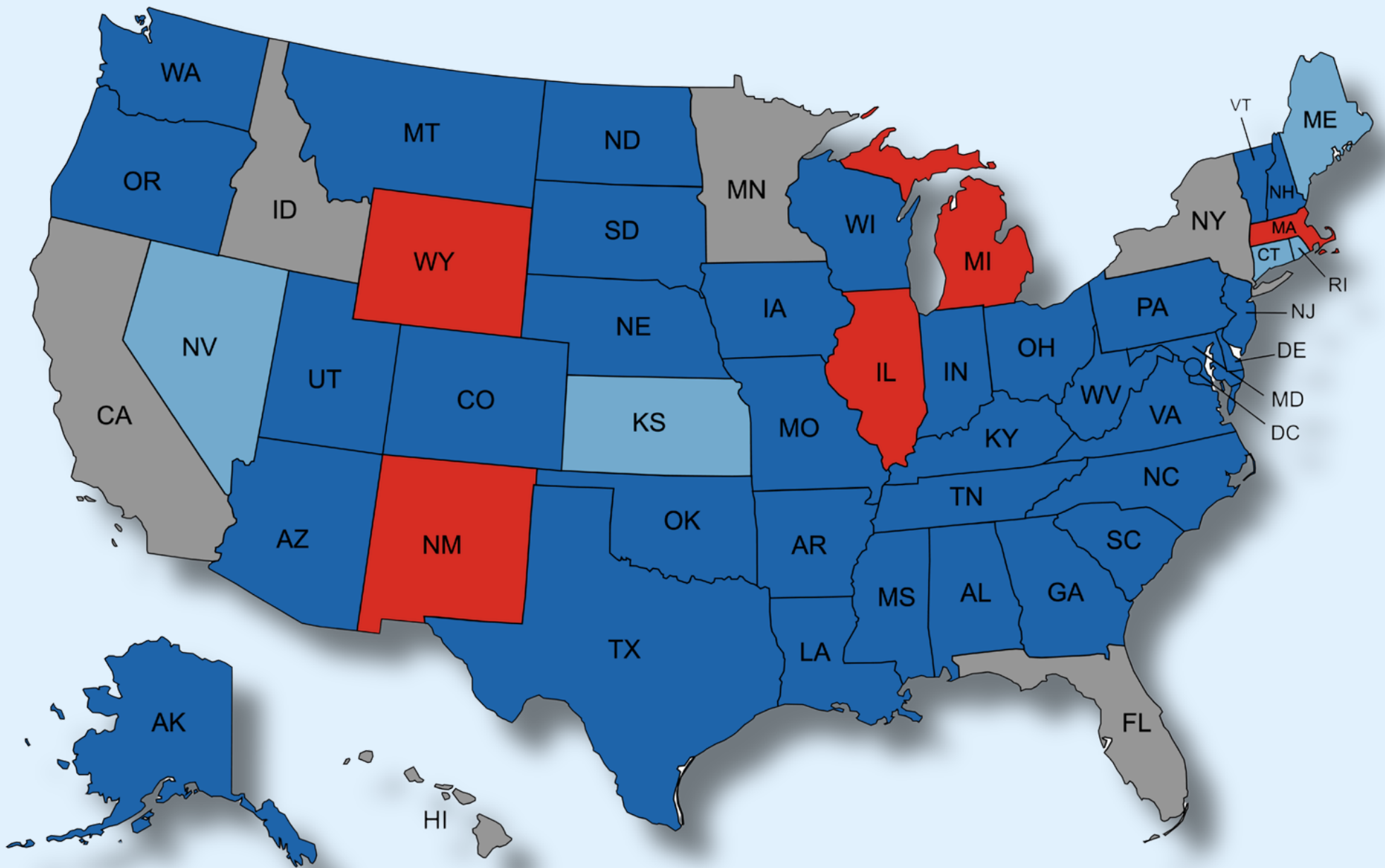
Typically valid license, jurisprudence, and background check.

4

Apply for Privileges in Desired State(s)

Once eligible, request privileges through the compact portal for your desired state.

2026 PHYSICAL THERAPY COMPACT GUIDE



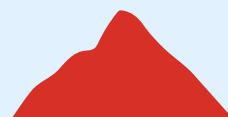
MAP KEY



Compact State



**Legislation Enacted -
Awaiting Privileges**



Legislation Introduced



Non-Compact

35 STATES

HAVE
ENACTED
THE PHYSICAL
THERAPY
COMPACT



COMPACT PRIVILEGES



are granted once all eligibility requirements are met, the Compact Privilege State Fee is paid, and you've successfully passed the state jurisprudence exam. This process can vary depending on the state; however, once all of these requirements have been met, privileges are usually issued within days!

IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE

Unlike the nursing compact, which acts as a multistate license in participating states, the PT Compact is **NOT** a multistate license. In addition to ensuring your therapy license from your primary state of residence is active and unencumbered, each new state within the PT Compact that you intend to practice in requires you to apply for and be granted Compact Privileges within that state.

'FAQs Compact Privileges 2023', PT Compact, 2024

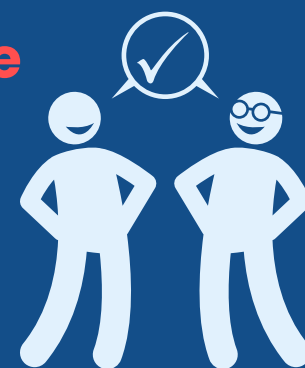
YOUR HOME STATE

Where your primary PT license & driver's license are registered, **MUST** be a state that has opted into the PT Compact in order to apply for Compact Privileges in other Compact States. If your home state has not enacted compact status, you are required to apply for whole licenses in all states outside your primary residence.

'FAQs Compact Privileges 2023', PT Compact, 2024

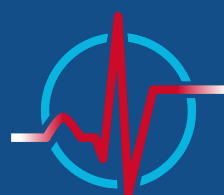
DID YOU KNOW

PTs AND PTAs are eligible to apply for & obtain Compact Privileges!



CURIOUS TO LEARN MORE OR WANT TO SPEAK WITH
A RECRUITER? HEAD TO OUR WEBSITE BELOW!

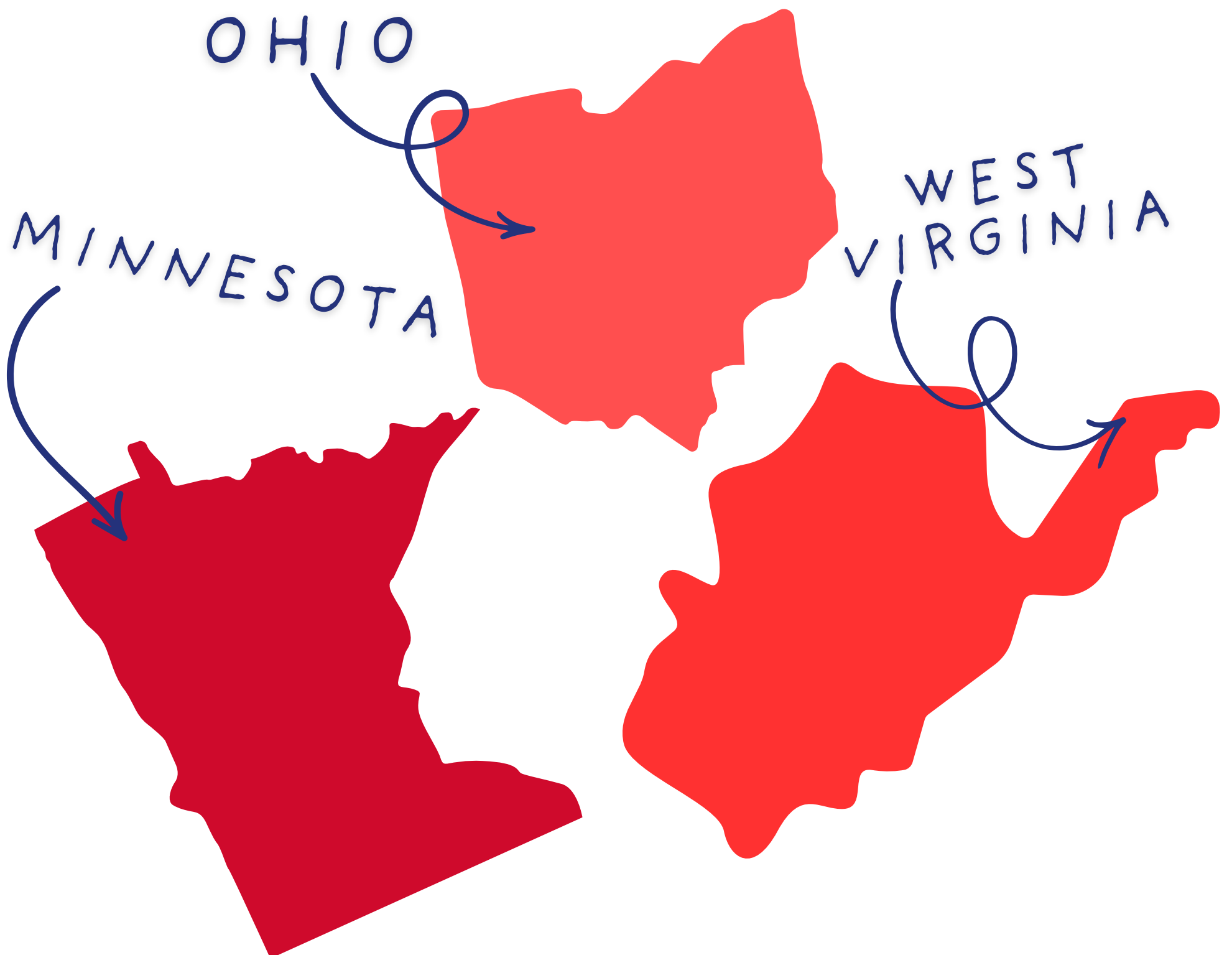
WWW.ARDORHEALTH.COM



ARDOR
HEALTH SOLUTIONS

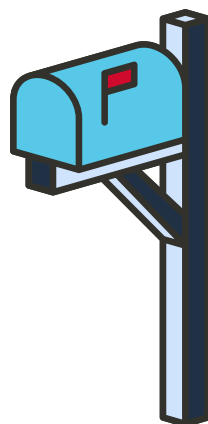


2026 OT COMPACT GUIDE



29
STATES

HAVE ENACTED
OT COMPACT
LEGISLATION,
BUT AREN'T
YET ISSUING
PRIVILEGES



YOUR STATE LICENSE

Your primary state of residence (home state) determines your eligibility for OT Licensure Compact privileges. If your home state enacts the compact and issues privileges, you may practice in other participating compact states. Currently, MN, OH + WV license holders can practice in any 3 participating states.

Sources: AOTA Advocacy News, 2026; Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact Commission

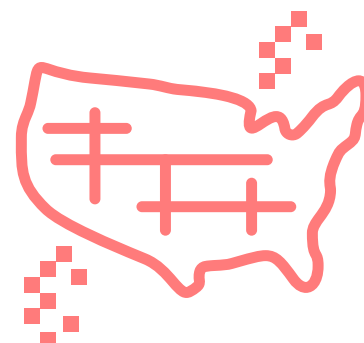


IT'S A START. HELP OT GO COMPACT!

The Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact has officially moved from legislation to action. In 2026, the Compact Commission began issuing compact privileges in Ohio, Minnesota, and West Virginia, a major milestone toward increasing mobility and access for OT practitioners nationwide.

While not all enacted states are issuing privileges yet, this first rollout represents progress. As additional states complete implementation steps, more OTs will gain abilities to practice across state lines with fewer barriers, supporting workforce flexibility and improved access to care. Advocacy + support for legislation in your home state signals to your lawmakers that they should prioritize joining the compact.

Sources: AOTA Advocacy News, 2026; Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact Commission



CURIOUS TO LEARN MORE OR WANT TO SPEAK WITH A
RECRUITER? HEAD TO OUR WEBSITE BELOW!

WWW.ARDORHEALTH.COM



A woman with dark hair, wearing a blue jumpsuit, is captured in a joyful jumping pose with her arms outstretched horizontally. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a clear blue sky. A large, light blue diamond shape is superimposed over the image, framing the woman. The text 'SECTION 04' is written in red, uppercase letters across the middle of the diamond.

SECTION 04

Getting the Job

Tips for the #BestInterviewEver

BEST FOOT FORWARD

Make sure you feel confident! Your education and experience are there to back you up. You know what you're doing!

PRACTICE WITH A PEEP

Ask someone you trust who is familiar with your experience to practice answering common questions, and prepare yourself.

SPEAK CLEARLY

Nothing beats face-to-face, so make the most of your digital encounter. Remember to enunciate your words, be easy to hear, and ideally a place with good internet/cell service.

KEEP SMILING!

Smile! Whether it's a video interview or a phone call, people can see *and hear* a smile! It's a small detail that creates positive association to you.

SELL YOURSELF

This interview is an opportunity to brag about all your hard work, plus gain an opportunity to explore new places and flex your new skills.

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

You're a therapy expert now. Time to shake off that last bit of imposter syndrome, and become what you were always meant to be: A Travel Therapist!

You're A Licensed PT Grad!... Now What?

TIP #1

GOOD JOBS REQUIRE GREAT RESUMES

Degree? Check. Exam passed? Check. License issued? Check. Next, devote some time to creating a resume that properly outlines your education & credentials. Quantify and highlight **your contributions** to any field-work or relevant opportunities/experiences you've had.

TIP #2

KEEP AN OPEN MIND AND A SHARP EYE

Inspiration and opportunity can strike anywhere. Network with people in your life to find unique opportunities to apply your skills & gain more experience. Cast a wide net to give yourself better odds of finding a job. Pay attention to environments in your life that would benefit from a PT perspective; you never know what'll become of it!



“In order to be seen, you must be willing to put yourself out there.”

TIP #3

INTERVIEWS: PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

You will always improve by practicing. Schedule informal interviews in settings that interest you to get comfortable with interviews. Take advantage of friends or even AI to gain more reps with interview scenarios. Be ready to talk about specific examples & interventions; and always have a few questions about the role prepared to ask at the end.

ARDOR HEALTH

Our Favorite Discounts

1 Tools & Tech

- Enjoy a clean floor after a long shift with 15% off an iRobot vacuum [here](#).
- Say goodbye to your aches and enjoy 20% off your Theragun purchase [here](#).

2 Food

- Take the guesswork out of finding healthy food options [here](#) with a free membership from Thrive Market.
- 15% off AWAKE Caffeine Chocolate [here](#)

3 Scrubs

- 20% off Dickies Scrubs [here](#)
- 20% off FIGS Scrubs [here](#)
- 15% off Jaanuu Scrubs [here](#)
- \$24 Scrub Sets for new Fabletics VIPs [here](#)

4 Shoes

- 15% off Crocs shoes [here](#)
- 20% off any pair of Rothy's shoes [here](#)
- 50% off your order at Reebok [here](#)

5 Travel

- Enjoy 25% off your car rental with Budget [here](#).
- Redeem a free Gold Membership [here](#) with Wyndham Resorts.

6 Clothes & Accessories

- 15% off everything at Lululemon [here](#)
- 20% off your purchase with Under Armor [here](#)
- 15% off all Levi's apparel [here](#)
- Claim a Comrad compression socks discount [here](#)

7 Entertainment

- Enjoy a 1 year Peacock Premium Membership for only \$1.99/mo [here](#)

8 Self Care

- 20% off your purchase of Tula Skincare [here](#)
- 25% off your E.l.f. purchase [here](#)
- 15% off your Hairstory purchase [here](#)



SECTION 05

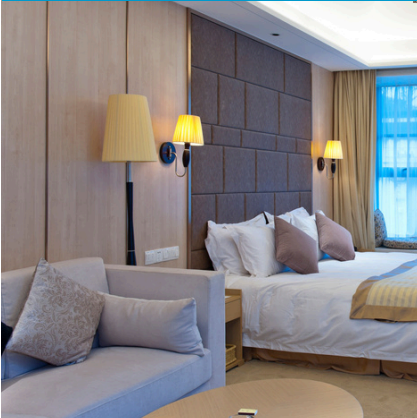
Traveler Housing

Travel Housing Options: Which One Is Right For You?

**RV or
Mobile
Home/Trailer**



**Extended
Stay Hotel**



**AirBnb
VRBO etc.**



**Commute
from home**



**Short term
leasing**

Have a unique housing situation or nuanced question?
Our team is happy to help with unique housing needs!

HOUSING TIPS EVERY TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW



START YOUR HOUSING SEARCH EARLY.

**GOOD PLACES GO FAST,
ESPECIALLY IN POPULAR
LOCATIONS.**



PLENTY OF OPTIONS

**PLATFORMS LIKE FURNISHED
FINDER, AIRBNB, AND LOCAL
FACEBOOK GROUPS
ARE GREAT STARTING
POINTS.**

BARE NECESSITIES



ALWAYS ASK ABOUT:

-  **LEASE FLEXIBILITY**
-  **UTILITIES**
-  **PARKING**
-  **LAUNDRY**
-  **WIFI**

PROTECTING YOUR MONEY + SAFETY



- ▶ **AVOID SCAMS BY REACHING OUT TO
HIGHER RATED SELLERS FIRST**
- ▶ **NEVER WIRE MONEY, ONLY GO THROUGH
OFFICIAL HOUSING PLATFORM CHANNELS**
- ▶ **ALWAYS GET YOUR AGREEMENT IN
WRITING.**
- ▶ **NEVER LET STRANGERS KNOW YOU'RE
NEW TO AN AREA, OR STAYING SOMEWHERE
TEMPORARY OR ALONE**

LEASE LENGTHS

**SHORTER CONTRACTS = MORE FLEXIBILITY.
MONTH-TO-MONTH OR 13-WEEK LEASES
CAN SAVE YOU STRESS.**