



What Southern states offer medical marijuana license reciprocity?

Medical marijuana license reciprocity is a policy that allows individuals with valid medical cannabis cards issued in one state to access medical marijuana in another state that also practices reciprocity. This policy recognizes the legitimacy of medical marijuana use across state lines and facilitates access for patients who rely on cannabis for medical purposes. One of the key advantages of medical marijuana reciprocity is that it provides legal protection for cardholders traveling to other participating states. If stopped for possession of marijuana in a reciprocity state, showing a valid medical marijuana card typically allows individuals to avoid legal consequences. However, it's important to note that individuals must still adhere to the specific laws and regulations governing medical marijuana in the state they are visiting.

Overall, medical marijuana reciprocity streamlines access to medical cannabis for patients who need it, promotes consistency and recognition of medical marijuana use across state lines, and provides legal protections for cardholders traveling to other participating states. The widespread implementation of medical cannabis laws in the United States indicates a notable acceptance of its therapeutic benefits, with 38 states (nine located in the CSG South region) permitting its use.¹ The need to safeguard patients who travel between states with medical cannabis programs is recognized, paralleling the protection afforded to individuals carrying traditional prescriptions across state lines. Of the 38 states that have enacted medical cannabis laws, at least 17 have instituted measures to ensure nonresident patients

1. <https://www.ncsl.org/health/state-medical-cannabis-laws#anchor8842>

maintain access to cannabis while traveling, including six CSG South states. This may signal a growing acknowledgment of the necessity for continuity of care in such scenarios.

Though reciprocity may exist for medical marijuana licenses between states, federal law prohibits the transportation of cannabis products outside the state of purchase. Crossing state lines with any amount of cannabis is a federal offense. Although federal prosecutions for possession are uncommon, transporting cannabis across state lines could lead to drug trafficking charges. These charges carry severe penalties, including up to five years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000 for a first offense or double for subsequent offenses.²

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) recently announced plans to shift marijuana from Schedule I to Schedule III under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), following a recommendation from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in August 2023.³ This proposed change is subject to review by the White House Office of Management and Budget and public comment. Marijuana is currently classified as Schedule I, indicating no accepted medical use and strict controls. State laws permitting medical or recreational marijuana conflict with federal law, leading to legal complexities. Congress has limited the Department of Justice’s ability to prosecute medical marijuana activities since 2014.⁴

2. <https://www.safeaccessnow.org/travel>

3. Congressional Research Service: [Department of Health and Human Services Recommendation to Reschedule Marijuana: Implications for Federal Policy](#)

4. Congressional Research Service: [Legal Consequences of Rescheduling Marijuana](#)

State Legislation Addressing Medical Cannabis		
State	Measure/ FAQ	Type of protection
Arkansas	Senate Bill 46 (2021)	Patients who are protected under other states’ medical cannabis laws and have a condition that qualifies in Arkansas may possess cannabis in the state and obtain it from dispensaries. Patients must have a visiting registry ID card to buy cannabis for 90 days. It has a \$50 fee.
Kentucky	Senate Bill 47 (2023)	Visiting patients may possess and purchase up to a 10-day supply if they are allowed to use medical cannabis in their home jurisdiction and have a qualifying condition. Sales will likely not begin until 2025.
Louisiana	House Bill 438 (2022)	Verified patients who can legally use cannabis in their home jurisdiction have legal protections in Louisiana and may purchase cannabis in the state.
Mississippi	FAQ	Visiting patients who are certified in other states, and whose practitioners certify their condition would qualify in Mississippi, may apply for legal protections. They may only register for two 15-day periods per year, and each registration costs \$75.
Missouri	FAQ	All adults 21 and up may use, possess, and purchase cannabis. Also, patients in possession of a valid medical cannabis registration card from another state are protected from criminal liability for possession of up to one ounce.
Oklahoma	FAQ	Patients who are registered in another medical cannabis state may apply for and be issued a 30-day medical cannabis license. They cost \$100.