



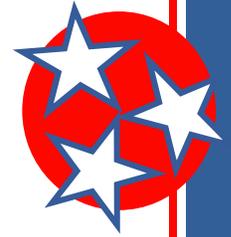
# State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) Workshop

July 14, 2016

Presented by: The Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
Division of Postsecondary State Authorization



# General Reciprocity History



## History of State Authorization

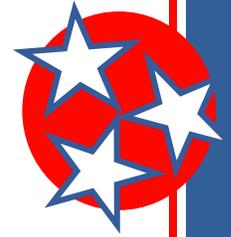
- State Authorization Pre-2010 to date
- What happened in 2010?
- What is happening now? See the *Final Push for State Authorization Rule*, Inside Higher Education, June 6, 2016 (<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/06/06/education-department-make-final-push-state-authorization-rule>).

## History of Reciprocity

- State Regulators meet starting in 2009
- Presidents' Forum
- Council for State Governments (CSG)
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
- Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)
- Lumina Foundation
- National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA)
- Bill and Melinda Foundation



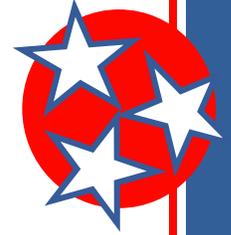
# SREB's Electronic Campus Regional Reciprocity Agreement (SECRRA)



- SREB's Electronic Regional Reciprocity Agreement (SECRRA) allows institutions, which offer courses and programs that have been reviewed and approved by the institution's home state, to be recognized and to deliver online offerings in other SREB states.
- In order to maintain reciprocity for SREB students attending out-of-state institutions in the region, when a SREB state joins SARA, they continue to participate in SECRRA.
- However, SECRRA will be dissolved on June 30, 2017.
- Courses and programs that students begin **after July 1, 2017, will not be covered** by SECRRA. Institutions in SREB states **that are not SARA members by June 30, 2017, must seek authorization from all states including those in the SREB region.**
- It is anticipated, the Electronic Campus website will transition to a nationwide site – SARA EC and continue to be an active location for students of all ages to find quality distance learning programs and related academic information.



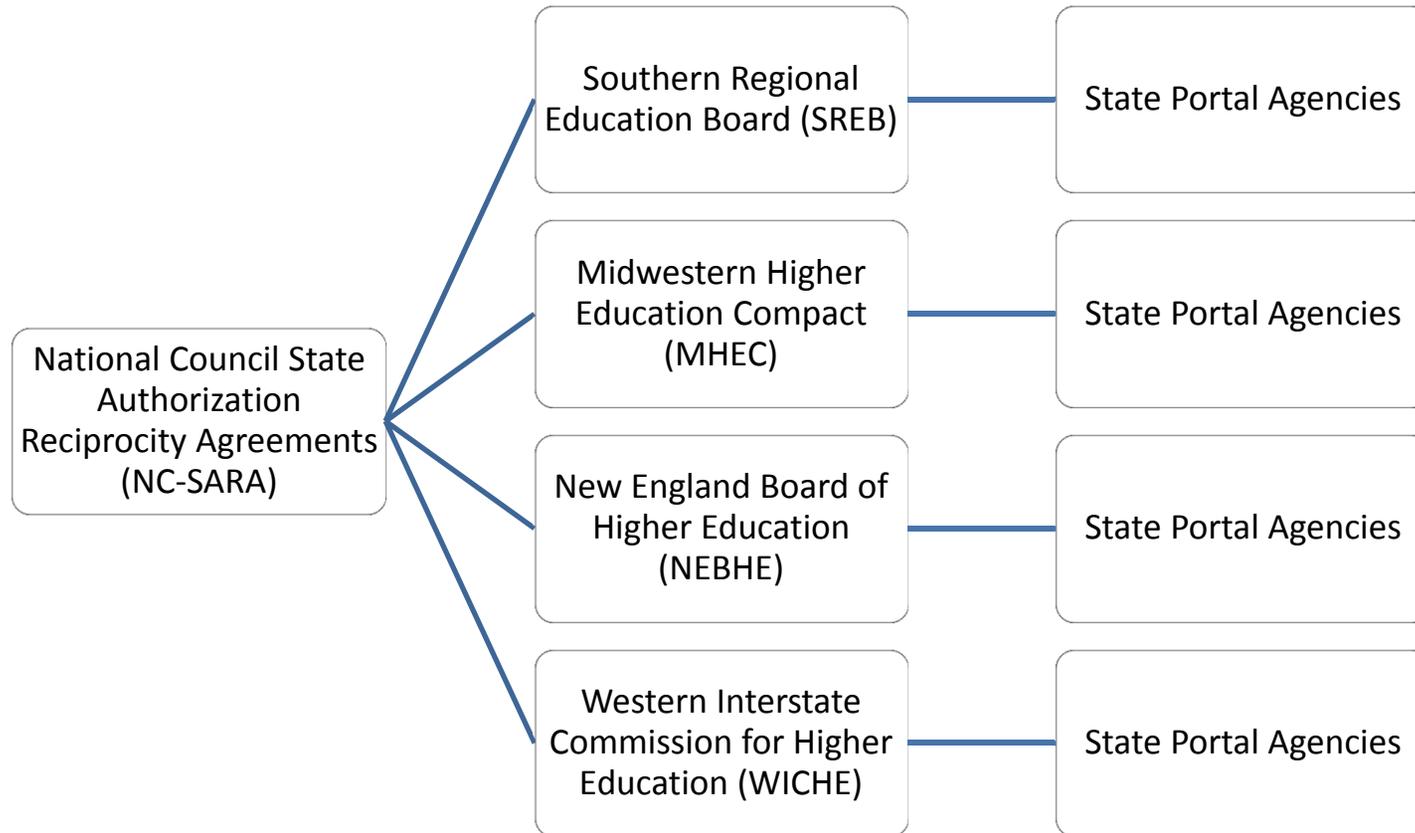
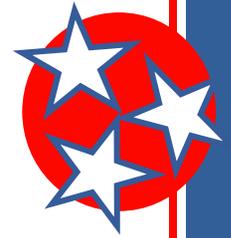
# Tennessee SARA History



- Tennessee has been involved in reciprocity discussions and meeting since as early as 2009.
- SARA legislation was adopted in Tennessee and became effective on May 18, 2015.
- The legislation named the Tennessee Higher Education Commission as the State Portal Agency for Tennessee.
- NC-SARA approved Tennessee as a SARA member state on June 29, 2015.
- The Tennessee Higher Education Commission began receiving SARA applications in July 2015.
- As of July 13, 2016, Tennessee has:
  - 22 Approved Public Institutions;
  - 23 Approved Not-for-Profit Exempt Institutions;
  - 5 Approved Regulated Institutions; and
  - 1 Pending Public Institution



# NC-SARA Structure

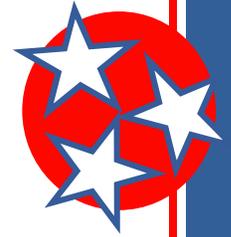


State Portal Contacts: <http://nc-sara.org/content/state-portal-entity-contacts>

NC-SARA and Regional Compact Contacts: <http://nc-sara.org/sara-staff>



# Helpful Documents



<http://nc-sara.org/>

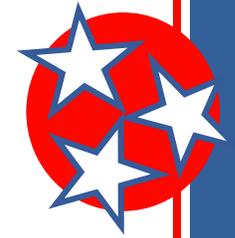
SARA Policies and Standards (May 5, 2016)

FAQs About SARA (February 29, 2016)

NC-SARA Data Reporting Guide (Spring 2016)

Unified State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (December 1, 2015)





# Helpful Documents

<http://nc-sara.org/content/sara-applications>

The screenshot shows the NC-SARA website with the following content:

- NC-SARA** National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements
- Navigation menu: Home, About, FAQs, Documents, News, Events, Links, Contacts, Blog, States, Reports
- SARA Applications**
- Application for STATE membership in SARA**  
A state that wants to apply for membership in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) must submit to its [Regional education compact's SARA office](#) a SARA State Application form.  
[Application for state membership in SARA \(save file for fillable pdf option\)](#)
- Application for STATE renewal membership in SARA**  
A state seeking approval to renew membership participation in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) must submit the below state renewal form to its [Regional education compact's SARA office](#).  
[Application for state RENEWAL membership in SARA \(save file for fillable pdf option\)](#)
- Application for INSTITUTIONAL approval to participate in SARA**  
An institution seeking approval to operate under the terms and standards of the State Authorization Reciprocity Network (SARA) must meet the requirements in the application below. **Once completed, please submit your application to your [local state portal agency](#).**  
[Application for institutional approval to participate in SARA \(save file for fillable pdf option\)](#)
- Application for INSTITUTIONAL renewal to participate in SARA**  
An institution seeking approval to renew under the terms and standards of the State Authorization Reciprocity Network (SARA) must meet the requirements in the application below. **Once completed, please submit your application to your [local state portal agency](#).**  
[Application for institutional renewal to participate in SARA \(save file for fillable pdf option\)](#)

On the left side of the page, there are three blue boxes with white text:

- What does my state need to do to join SARA?
- What does my institution need to do?
- What are my benefits as a student?

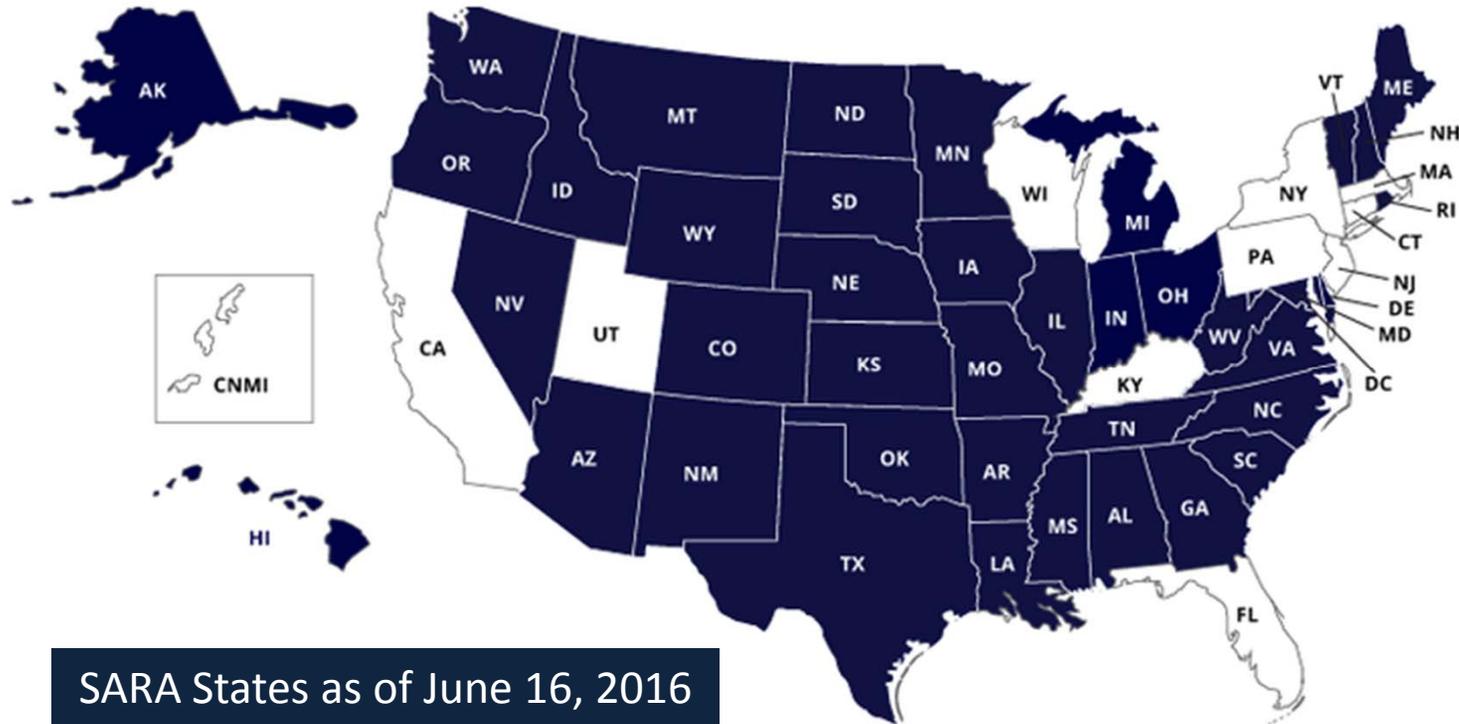
Application for Institutional Approval to Participate in SARA

Application for Institutional Renewal to Participate in SARA





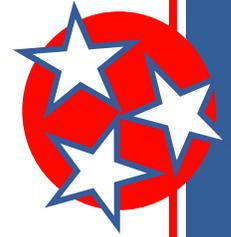
# NC-SARA States



To learn more about what is happening in a non-SARA state see:  
<http://nc-sara.org/state-actions/state-actions-regarding-sara>.



# NC-SARA States



State Actions Regarding SARA | ... x +

nc-sara.org/state-actions/state-actions-regarding-sara

NC-SARA  
National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

Search  Go

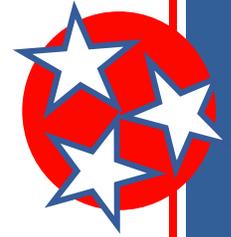
Home About ▾ FAQs ▾ Documents ▾ News ▾ Events ▾ Links ▾ Contacts ▾ Blog States ▾ Reports ▾

## State Actions Regarding SARA

United States and Territories (regional compact)	Legislation Introduced	Legislation Passed	Application to Regional Compact	Approved as SARA State	State Renewal Date
American Samoa	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Alabama (SREB)	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1/2016	
Alaska (WICHE)	Yes	Yes	Yes	05/13/2014	05/13/2016
Arizona (WICHE)	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11/2014	
Arkansas (SREB)	N/A	N/A	Yes	06/29/2015	
California (WICHE)	Yes				
Colorado (WICHE)	Yes	Yes	Yes	05/13/2014	05/13/2016
Connecticut (NEBHE)	Yes	Yes			
Delaware (SREB)	N/A	N/A	Yes	09/01/2016	
District of Columbia	Yes	Yes	Yes	07/01/2016	
Florida (SREB)					
Georgia (SREB)	N/A	N/A	Yes	12/1/2015	
Guam					
Hawaii (WICHE)	Yes	Yes	Yes	5/17/2016	
Idaho (WICHE)	N/A	N/A	Yes	05/13/2014	
Illinois (MHEC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	07/31/2015	
Indiana (MHEC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	02/21/2014	02/21/2016
Iowa (MHEC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	06/01/15	
Kansas (MHEC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/16/2014	
Kentucky (SREB)	Yes	Yes			
Louisiana (SREB)	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/17/2014	
Maine (NEBHE)	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/09/2015	
Maryland (SREB)	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1/2016	
Massachusetts (NEBHE)					
Michigan (MHEC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	08/31/2015	
Minnesota (MHEC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	01/26/2015	
Mississippi (SREB)	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1/2016	
Missouri (MHEC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/16/2014	
Montana (WICHE)	N/A	N/A	Yes	08/13/2014	



# Application Renewal Process



NC-SARA membership **must** be renewed each year. The institution's membership period begins when the fee is paid to NC-SARA and ends one year later.

**Ninety days** before the membership expiration date, NC-SARA notifies the institution and THEC via email that it is time to begin the renewal process. THEC then emails the institution the Tennessee State Supplemental Information Sheet.

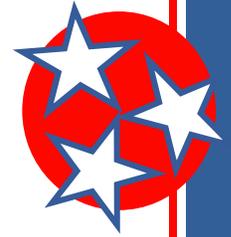
**Within 30 days** of the receipt of the NC-SARA notice, the institution should submit **3 items to THEC**: (1) the NC-SARA Application for Institutional Renewal to Participate in SARA, (2) the Tennessee State Supplemental Information Sheet, and (3) the Tennessee fee.

Once **everything** is submitted to THEC, THEC will review the application, and within **30 days** of receipt, either request additional information or render a decision and notify the institution and NC-SARA of the decision.

Assuming THEC grants renewal to the institution, the institution will receive an email from NC-SARA with information on how to pay the fee to NC-SARA. The institution shall submit payment to NC-SARA with in **30 days**.



# Application Renewal Process

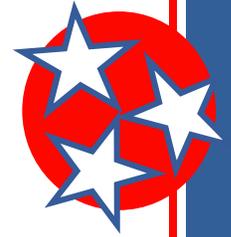


## Items to Keep in Mind

1. THEC **will not review** your renewal application unless you have filed both applications (NC-SARA application and Tennessee State Supplemental Sheet) and paid the Tennessee fee.
2. The renewal application **must be signed** by the chief executive officer or the chief academic officer of the institution.
3. If THEC requests additional information, please submit it as soon as possible as the 90-day timeline continues to run.
4. If payment is not made to NC-SARA within **30 days, a 30-day grace period** beyond the renewal date may be granted **upon request**; however, if renewal is not completed within the grace period, **a late fee of 25%** of the renewal fee is applied and SARA status is indicated as “Pending Renewal” on the NC-SARA website.
5. If payment is not made to NC-SARA within **5 business days** after the expiration of the 30-day grace period, **the institution will be removed from the NC-SARA list of participating institutions.**



# Application Renewal Process



## Items to Keep in Mind

6. If renewal is denied, THEC will provide the institution a written reason for denial and the institution may appeal the denial within **30 days to SREB**.
7. Institutions denied renewal or not complying with renewal policies may reapply to become SARA institutions **180 days after no longer participating in SARA**.
8. Be sure that the institution's SARA student complaint process is easily accessible on your website and that the **renewal application contains a link** to the web page where the complaint process is explained.
9. Be sure to **attach documentation** evidencing your accreditation status and financial responsibility index score, if applicable.



# The Basics



- If your institution is approved as a SARA state, you cannot indicate that you are “approved” in a host state only that the institution is operating in a host state under the terms of SARA. *SARA Policies and Standards, Section 3(14), p.11 (May 5, 2016)*
- Distance Education means instruction offered by any means where the student and faculty member are in separate physical locations. It includes, but is not limited to, online, interactive video or correspondence courses or programs. *SARA Policies and Standards, Section 1(11), p. 2 (May 5, 2016)*
- **Data Reporting** (*SARA Policies and Standards, Section 6, p. 16-17 (May 5, 2016)*)
  - NC-SARA does not collect individually identifiable student data and will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
  - This past reporting period over 100 institutions reported zero students across the board. Although it is possible for such reporting to be accurate, given that institutions report zero students when there are fewer than 10 in a state, NC-SARA thought it was unlikely that this reporting is accurate for more than 100 institutions. As a result, it has convened a working group.
  - Institutions should use the same data regarding the location of their distance education students that they used for enrollment information provided to IPEDS.
  - If you have questions, please consult the Data Reporting Guide.
  - Beginning in fall 2016, institutions participating in SARA will be required to further disaggregate the enrollment data by broad program of study.

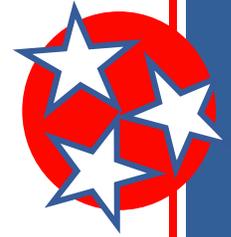


# The Basics



- **Professional Licensure** (*SARA Policies and Standards, Section 3(8), p. 10 (May 5, 2016)*)
  - SARA **does** require the institution to notify students regarding licensure requirements in related programs.
    - Institutions are adding the information to their websites in various places to ensure students know before they apply for admissions. Here are some examples provided to us by SREB.
      - <http://online.vcu.edu/resources/out-of-state/>
      - <http://online.missouri.edu/about/stateauthorization.aspx>
      - <http://online.missouri.edu/about/consumerdisclosures.aspx>
      - <http://uaonline.arizona.edu/eligibility>
    - An SREB example of a possible email is *“This program satisfies the requirements for licensure and/or advanced practice certification/endorsement in (insert name of state). Requirements for licensure and/or advanced practice certification/endorsement vary from one profession to another and from state to state. If you are interested in professional licensure, and/or advanced practice certification/endorsement, please check with the appropriate licensing body in the state where you intend to practice to verify that the desired program meets the eligibility criteria for the credentials you seek. [Insert hyperlink to contact information of state boards].”*





# The Basics

- **Complaints** (*SARA Policies and Standards, Section 4(2), p. 12-13 (May 5, 2016)*)
  - Only those complaints resulting from distance education courses offered by participating institutions to students **in other SARA states** come under the terms of the agreement.
  - SARA consumer protection provisions require the home state portal entity to investigate and resolve complaints of **dishonest or fraudulent activity** by a provider and of operating a course or program **contrary to practices set forth in the C-RAC Guidelines**. Complaints regarding **student grades or student conduct violations are not** covered by SARA.
  - An institution operating under SARA shall make its and SARA's complaint resolution policies and procedures readily available to students taking courses under SARA provisions. This information should be on an easily accessible web page and you must provide the link in the renewal application.
  - THEC will only accept a SARA complaint from a student if the student has exhausted the institution's complaint process.
  - State portal agencies must report the number and disposition of complaints that are not resolved at the institutional level. To date, THEC has not received any complaints against its home state institutions.



# The Basics



- **Physical Presence** (*SARA Policies and Standards, Section 5, pp. 14-16 (May 5, 2016)*)
  - This term is used by states and federal regulators to describe an activity that requires an institution to be authorized in a state.
  - **What activities are covered in a SARA member state? Examples:**
    - Offer courses to individuals via distance education in ways that do not require students to gather physically in groups, except:
      - The institution can require students to physically meet in a location for instructional purposes 1 or 2 times per full-term course for a total of 6 or fewer hours or
      - The institution can offer a short course that requires 20 or fewer contact hours in one six-month period.
    - Advertise to students regardless of medium;
    - Use faculty, mentors, tutors, or recruiters residing in a host state and working from their homes or another private, non-institutional site,
    - Hold proctored exams on behalf of the institution in the host state;
    - Operate supervised field experiences (discussed more later);
    - Use recruiters (this provision does include athletic recruiting); and
    - Arrange a field trip to a host state site or facility for academic purposes not involving the establishment of a residential or instructional facility.



# The Basics



- **Physical Presence**, continued
  - **What activities are not covered in a SARA member state? Examples:**
    - Establish a physical location for students to receive synchronous or asynchronous instruction;
    - Require students to physically meet in a location for instructional purposes more than twice per full-term course for a total of more than six hours;
    - Establish an administrative office;
    - Provide information to students for the purpose of enrolling students or providing student support services from a physical site operated by or on behalf of the institution;
    - Offers a “short course” that requires more than 20 contact hours in one six-month period;
    - Provides office space to instructional or non-instructional staff;
    - Maintain a mailing address or phone exchange in a state.
  - If you are engaging in any of the above activities, then your institution should contact the host state to determine whether authorization is required.



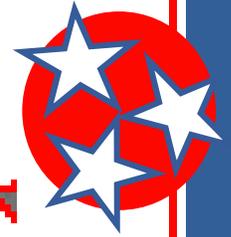
# The Basics



- **Supervised Field Experiences** (*SARA Policies and Standards, Section 5(3), pp. 15-16 (May 5, 2016)*)
  - If the host state requires approval of supervised field experiences by a board responsible for professional requirements in fields necessitating licensure or certification for practice, such professional approval requirements remain in effect.
  - To conduct supervised field experiences in a host state, the following must be true:
    - The institution cannot provide for the placement of more than 10 students:
      - from an individual academic program
      - placed simultaneously at one clinical or practicum site,
      - unless approval for a larger number is provided by the host state SARA portal agency.



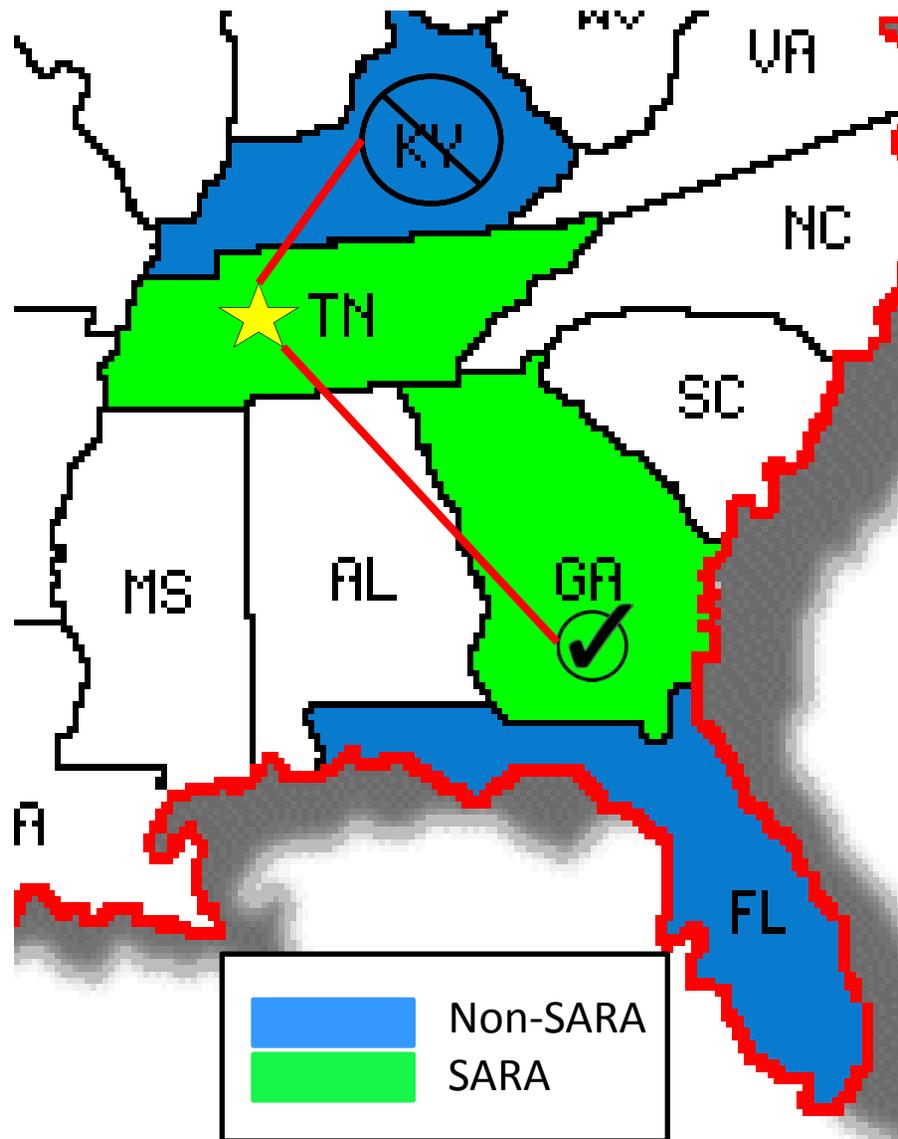
# The Basics



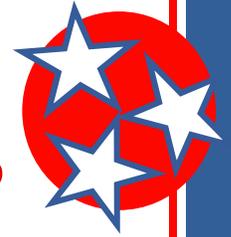
## Scenario:

A SARA Institution★ with all locations in Tennessee is approved as a Tennessee Home State SARA institution.

- The institution★ can act in GA✔ within the parameters of SARA “physical presence,” but should still check with subject matter expert agencies about licensure eligibility.
- The institution★ should not act, including recruiting, in Kentucky⊘ until the institution determines whether it needs authorization from Kentucky.



# State Authorization Resources



- National Association of State Administrators and Supervisors of Private Schools (NASASPS) - State Contact List - <http://www.nasasps.org/listing-of-regular-members>
- State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) – State Authorization Surveys - [http://sheeo.org/sheeo\\_surveys/](http://sheeo.org/sheeo_surveys/)
- WICHE Cooperative for Education Technologies (WCET) - State Authorization - <http://wcet.wiche.edu/focus-areas/policy-and-regulation/state-authorization>
- Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Division of Postsecondary State Authorization (DPSA)
  - Stephanie Bellard Chase, Associate Executive Director for DPSA, [stephanie.bellard@tn.gov](mailto:stephanie.bellard@tn.gov)
  - Julie Woodruff, Assistant Executive Director & Lead Attorney for DPSA, [julie.woodruff@tn.gov](mailto:julie.woodruff@tn.gov)

