



TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM: Cliff Lippard
Executive Director

DATE: 30 January 2026

SUBJECT: Public Chapter 102, Acts of 2025 (Cosmetology and Barbering Professions)—Draft Report for Review and Comment

The attached draft commission report is submitted for your review and comment. It was prepared in response to Public Chapter 102, Acts of 2025, which directs the commission to study the economic effect of the cosmetology and barbering professions in Tennessee, including the revenue generated through the services provided and the number of jobs generated by the professions, as well as retail sales, training and education opportunities, and potential barriers to entry in the industry. The report identifies and focuses on two nationwide trends in the professions: overall growth and specialization.

The cosmetology and barber industry is growing both nationally and in Tennessee. The Professional Beauty Association, a national organization that tracks data for the salon industry, estimates that from 2018 to 2022, total salon industry revenue nationwide increased 31.9%, totaling \$81.8 billion in 2022, and in Tennessee, estimated total revenue was \$1.8 billion in 2022, a 38.5% increase from \$1.3 billion in 2019. According to the Tennessee Department of Revenue, business gross sales revenue and state and local tax revenue from beauty supply shops, barber shops, beauty and nail salons, and barber and cosmetology schools has increased since 2019. Individual, shop, and school license fees—collected by the state Board of Cosmetology and Barber Examiners, which regulates the barbering and cosmetology professions—have also been increasing. In addition to revenue, the number of barber shops, beauty salons, employees, and wages have all increased, along with the number of active licenses issued. Further, an increase in enrollment and graduates at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology barbering

and cosmetology programs reflects a growing interest and demand for the courses that are being offered.

Alongside growth, there has been increasing specialization of services within the industry, with the establishment of more specialty shops focusing on specific services, including nails, aesthetics, eyelashes, and natural hair styling. To work in any of the disciplines within the barbering and cosmetology industry, an individual is required to have a license issued by the Board of Cosmetology and Barber Examiners. Under Tennessee's current licensing structure, an individual can either complete the full 1,500-hour master barber or cosmetology curriculum or complete a separate focused curriculum and obtain a specialty license or certificate. Tennessee, like other states, has established separate licenses and schools for nails, aesthetics, natural hair styling, and eyelashes, and a certificate for hair braiding.

Hair styling, however, is a popular service for which the state has not established a separate license. Hair styling includes both natural and chemical hair-focused services such as cuts and coloring. In an industry that is already becoming more specialized, aligning state requirements with this specialization can be beneficial. Although specialized licenses may not be transferable to other states, they do allow individuals to focus on one interest rather than having to complete the full cosmetology licensure requirements, saving both time and money on education. Sixteen other states currently have separate hair styling, hair designing or hairdresser licenses, and representatives from other states said the license has provided another opportunity for students who only want to do hair styling, allowed them to keep up with growing demand and has not had negative effects on the industry or licensing in their states.

While Tennessee has adapted to the evolving specialization of barbering and cosmetology professions by establishing licenses for specific disciplines, it has not established a specialty license for hair styling. A hair-specific license would provide an option that would require less money and time for people who are interested in providing natural and chemical hair services but not the other services included in the barbering and cosmetology licenses. Therefore, **the draft report recommends the state establish a hair styling license focused only on hair-related services that requires fewer hours of education than the existing cosmetology and master barber licenses.**