



PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

(1964, R1994, R2000, R2001, R2002, R2018, R2023)

Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects endorses, supports, and promotes state regulation of the practice of landscape architecture in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories ASLA also supports and encourages qualified individuals to pursue professional licensure as a means to protect public health, safety, and welfare in the delivery of landscape architectural services.

ASLA believes:

- the enactment of a uniform state licensure framework—in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories—is essential to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.
- licensure through a statutory practice act is the most appropriate form of regulation of the profession, which allows the licensing jurisdiction to define a necessary level of minimum professional competency by setting legal prerequisites in education, experience, and examination for obtaining licensure and setting continuing education requirements.
- continuing education is necessary for professionals to expand upon and grow current knowledge and best practices in public health, safety, and welfare.
- licensure assures public and private consumers that the licensed landscape architect has met a minimum set of professional standards and is qualified to provide services within the profession's regulated scope of practice.
- the practice of landscape architecture should only be performed by—and the titles “landscape architect” and landscape architectural” should only be used by—individuals as defined, titled, and governed by statutes, regulations, and licensing boards.

Justification

Landscape architects are subject to professional regulation in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories due to the significant and substantial risks of physical injury, harm to property, and potential for economic damage when landscape architectural services are poorly performed. Licensing of the profession provides a broad base of protection to public health, safety, and welfare. State professional licensing is a cost-effective measure to ensure a minimum level of competency and to discourage or prohibit the practice of landscape architecture by unqualified individuals.

Issue

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories have recognized that professional licensing of landscape architecture is necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

Landscape architects often play a lead role in large public and private projects. They make critical recommendations and decisions affecting the sufficiency of these projects to meet public health and safety standards. For example, poorly specified paving surfaces and pedestrian amenities can expose public and private property owners to litigation and civil liability claims when injuries occur, and documented cases of injury and property



damage have been linked to design flaws made by licensed and non-licensed individuals practicing landscape architecture.

Therefore, protecting public health, safety, and welfare requires the direct regulation of the profession. Landscape architects routinely generate and check plans that control pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic, stabilize disturbed ground, avoid wasteful applications of water in the landscape, mitigate criminal activity, preserve land values, provide accessibility as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, specify playground equipment, manage stormwater, and create safe places for public and private needs in recreational, civic, industrial, commercial and spaces.

The profession of landscape architecture shares with the other design professions of architecture and engineering a significant impact on public health, safety, and welfare. In projects designed for both public and private clients, architecture, landscape architecture, and engineering involve large construction investments and heavy use by the public. Due to overlapping scopes of practice, licensure lifts restraints on competition that are often created when some but not all design professions are licensed. Therefore, maintaining licensure of landscape architects provides enhanced market competition for regulated design services.

Note

This policy serves as the preamble to a group of policies on professional licensure that includes the definition of landscape architectural practice, qualifications for licensure, reciprocity, enforcement, and post-nominal letters.