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# ARCHITECTS WITH THE CERTIFICATION EDGE

Architects who have an NCARB Certificate have paved their way for faster reciprocity and greater mobility. No longer confined to their own jurisdictions, they can more quickly obtain licenses in other states to strategically market their services and pursue opportunities on a national level.

With an active Certificate, an architect becomes eligible to apply for licensure in other jurisdictions, as well as Canadian provinces and territories, depending upon each registration board's requirements.

Nationwide, two out of three architects do not have this advantage. For them, pursuing work beyond their own jurisdictional boundaries could take several weeks—or even months—to update a Record, submit an application, transmit the Record, and gain licensure. This could impede one's ability to respond when existing clients want to develop projects in new locations, when unexpected opportunities sprout up, or where forecasts predict growth in certain regions.

NCARB certification actually streamlines the process and reduces that amount of time to receive a reciprocal license in most states. More than half of the jurisdictions

in the United States now require certification as the only way to attain reciprocal registration. What's more, two-thirds or more of all jurisdictions accept certification obtained by architects through either the Broadly Experienced Architect (BEA) program or the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect (BEFA) program<sup>1</sup>.

If an architect is already certified and requests to have an NCARB Record transmitted in support of an application for reciprocity in a new jurisdiction, he or she can expect NCARB to transmit the Record typically within five business days.

"In my practicing lifetime, we've moved from what used to be a standard of practicing in one individual state to practicing more regionally and nationally," said NCARB President Kenneth J. Naylor, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP. "Certainly with the speed of technology and advancements being made, we see the necessity of preserving the opportunity to practice in multiple jurisdictions and have it not take a great deal of time to facilitate getting licensed in other jurisdictions. Many times the opportunity is lost if we can't move quickly to achieve a license and take advantage of an opportunity when it arises."

<sup>1</sup> The BEA is an alternative that allows an architect to become certified if he or she did not earn an academic degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), by learning through experience. The BEFA allows a foreign architect to satisfy the certification requirement of professional examination by demonstrating competence to practice architecture independently while protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: JONATHAN PEIFFER, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP; FRANK CUNHA III, AIA, NCARB; ADAM ROHRBAUGH, AIA, NCARB

### TO BE FRANK

From his starting place in Newark, NJ, Frank Cunha III, AIA, NCARB, sees certification as a way to capitalize on the fact that he works in a region of the country where smaller states easily give him the ability to travel and work outside the borders of just one state. Starting with his initial certification in 2004, he has now gained licensure in the neighboring states of New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Connecticut, and is considering adding Massachusetts and even Florida.

"I separate myself from my competitors by being proactive," said Cunha, principal and CEO of FC3 Architecture+Design, LLC.

Another advantage for him is the ability to move swiftly to gain another state's license if a new or existing client has property or does business in another state. "Being certified and having a license in that state shows dedication to his or her best interest," he said.

### BEYOND TRADITIONAL PRACTICE

Jonathan Peiffer, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP is director of housing development for the Newtown Community Development Corporation in Tempe, AZ. Newtown is a private not-for-profit that uses public and private funding to help place income-eligible first-time home buyers into newly constructed or substantially rehabilitated homes, both single and multi-family.

As manager of the housing program, Peiffer draws on his 18 years of traditional practice. He conducts contract reviews, negotiations, and property assessments, working directly with clients prior to, during, and after their home purchases. As an architect, he brings knowledge related to programming, sustainability, historic preservation, and interfacing with municipal building departments and contractors. He also helps the organization refine policies and procedures and secure funding.

For Peiffer, having multiple licenses and certification—he is registered in Arizona, California, Colorado and Idaho—"provide

### ADVICE FROM AN EXPERT

Although now retired, Andrew Prescott, AIA, NCARB, has learned a thing or two about NCARB certification that is instructive for all strategically minded practitioners.

Prescott, the 2009-2010 NCARB-President, is NCARB certified and had been licensed to practice

in more than 40 states before his retirement. He is one of the founders and was the executive principal of Einhorn Yaffee Prescott, Albany, NY, a firm that grew to 700 employees working in nine offices to design projects in 45 states and numerous countries.

Here are Prescott's thoughts on certification:

**What advice would you give an architect wanting to be proactive in pursuing additional states' licenses through certification?**

1. Do it sooner than later and make sure you keep your NCARB Certificate up to date. It saves a lot of time and paperwork.
2. Do it when you prepare a preliminary marketing plan and the plan identifies a building type or reason that may take you into another jurisdiction.

value to the organization in many intangible ways when we compete for funding.” He notes that it is “beyond what is typical in this industry and is looked upon favorably.”

There is an additional reason Peiffer keeps his licensure and certification active. “The world of architecture is quickly evolving as we come through this recent depression in the industry,” he said. “I fully believe that active certification is, indeed, insurance for a future that is still not certain. Portability is key to basic survival in today’s corporate world should one suddenly find themselves under or unemployed at any given time. NCARB certification is a very valuable tool in marketing one’s skills ... and continued NCARB certification allows for the ability to choose one’s future over having it chosen for you.”

Peiffer described the certification process as efficient and uncomplicated. “With the right qualifications, certification is a relatively straight forward process and once completed is easy to maintain for a lifetime,” he said.

## CERTIFICATION AND DIVERSIFICATION

Adam Rohrbaugh, AIA, NCARB, sees certification as a clear marketing advantage because he is an architect providing niche services in addition to his traditional ar-

chitectural practice. As a forensic architectural consultant, he has broadened his client base to include insurance companies and attorneys who are involved in lawsuits and claims over failed buildings in different states.

“My secret to survival is diversification,” said Rohrbaugh, founder of Construction Science & Investigation Group, Inc. and A7 Architecture & Forensic Consulting in San Diego, CA. In his forensic line of work, certification helps him respond quickly to opportunities in any state, so he maintains his Certificate to market his

services nationally. Besides California, he is currently licensed in Nevada, Florida, New Mexico, and Colorado.

For others in traditional architectural practice, Rohrbaugh gives the same advice he gives himself: Build on your business and your credentials constantly, brainstorm ways to succeed in the marketplace, be persistent, and get certified.

“NCARB certification is key to marketing yourself; and selling yourself is critical to survival today,” he said. **DC**

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3. Do it before you respond to an RFP (request for proposal) or an RFQ (request for qualification) from a potential client located in a jurisdiction in which you are not licensed.

### Is it complicated to maintain multiple licenses?

One needs to take the attitude that it is simply a part of doing business these days. Be proactive—keep the licenses up to date and review them periodically.

### Could you have accomplished all that you have in your career without certification and the mobility it provides?

It would have been next to impossible without my NCARB Certificate ... not only by me but my partners and many of our staff. The broad expanse was due to our pursuit of work out of state

in order to meet marketing goals we established for the firm. The link with each state paid off as it allowed not only me, but also the firm, to pursue work in our specialties in ever-widening geographic areas and to maintain a constant—if not growing—practice.