



Columns

*The Newsletter of the Board of Architecture and
Registered Interior Designers
August 2026*

President's Message



Cathy Morrison, FAIA

It is my honor to serve another year as your President of the North

Carolina Board of Architecture and Registered Interior Designers. I am also pleased to announce the reappointment of architect Timothy A. Hillhouse of Durham to a second five-year term on the Board.

Tim joined the Board in 2021, bringing extensive professional experience and a strong commitment to the profession and to public service. His knowledge, perspective, and thoughtful consideration of the regulatory issues that come before us have been a tremendous asset to the Board. I look forward to continuing to work with him in the years ahead.

There are several issues the Board has been working on that I would like to bring to your attention, including fraudulent use of professional seals and NCARB's Pathways to Practice initiative.

Protecting Your Professional Seal

Board Members

Cathy Morrison, FAIA	President/Architect
Timothy Hillhouse	Vice President/Architect
Walt R. Teague, FAIA	Secretary
Ilesha Patel	Treasurer/Registered Interior Designer
Cora Cole-McFadden	Public Member
Fred Dodson	Public Member
Dia Holman	Registered Interior Designer
Eric Lindstrom	Architect
Elizabeth Pyle	Registered Interior Designer
Walter Sawyer	Architect

Board Staff

Cathe M. MonteCarlo	Executive Director
Julie L. Piatek	Director of Administration
Tyler Barrick	Firm/CE Compliance Director

Board Office Location

434 Fayetteville St
Suite 2005
Raleigh, NC 27601
NEW PHONE NUMBER
919-268-7293

ncba@ncbarch.org www.ncbarch.org
All Board meetings are open to the public.

The Board has seen an increase in cases involving the fraudulent use of architectural seals. In many instances, the architects involved had no idea their seals were being used by online freelancers through platforms such as Upwork, Fiverr, Freelance and others.

It quickly became clear that this is not an isolated issue. We appreciate Attorney General Jeff Jackson's leadership in bringing attention to the broader concerns surrounding online freelance services. This summer, the North Carolina Department of Justice issued a consumer alert encouraging the public to verify the licensure credentials of design professionals before hiring them.

The Board is also coordinating with other state licensing boards across the country to share information and best practices for addressing this growing concern and, most importantly, protecting the public.

Please take this as a reminder to protect your professional seal and to be mindful of where your seal and other professional credentials may be posted online. If your seal is available on a website or digital platform, take steps to ensure it cannot be easily copied or misused.

We also encourage consumers, contractors, and permitting officials to **verify credentials rather than simply relying on what appears on a drawing or an online profile**. The Board's staff is available to assist with verification when there is any question regarding an architect's or registered interior designer's credentials. The Board's website also provides information regarding professional seals and their proper use.

[Read the Consumer Alert on Seal Fraud](#)

Pathways to Practice

Another significant conversation taking place nationally is the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards' (NCARB) Pathways to Practice initiative, which the Board has voted to endorse.

NCARB launched Pathways to Practice as a multi-year effort to reimagine the path to architectural licensure. The initiative recognizes that, while the traditional path, earning a degree from a NAAB-accredited program, completing the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®), and passing the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®), has served the profession well, there may be other ways for qualified candidates to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for competent practice.

This is not entirely new territory. More than 17 jurisdictions have historically allowed alternative pathways to initial licensure, demonstrating that there is already experience within the profession with approaches beyond the traditional model.

As North Carolina's regulatory board for architects and registered interior designers, we will continue to follow this work closely. I encourage those interested in learning more to review

NCARB's information about [Pathways to Practice](#) and follow its development as NCARB and its member boards continue this important conversation.

As we look ahead, initiatives such as Pathways to Practice remind us that professional regulation is never static. The profession continues to evolve, and our regulatory framework must be willing to consider those changes while remaining firmly grounded in our responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

That responsibility is at the center of everything we do.

I am confident that, with the continued commitment of our Board members, staff, licensees, and professional partners, we will continue to meet that responsibility and serve the citizens of North Carolina well.

Sincerely,

Cathy Morrison, FAIA



*Cathe M. Monte Carlo,
Executive Director*

Executive Director Message

As we move through another busy year at the North Carolina Board of Architecture and Registered Interior Designers, I am reminded that the work of professional regulation is often most visible through licenses, registrations, enforcement actions, and rules. Behind all those activities, however, are people—our licensees and registrants, our Board members, and an exceptionally dedicated staff working every day to support the Board's mission of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of North Carolina.

A Few Numbers Tell Part of the Story

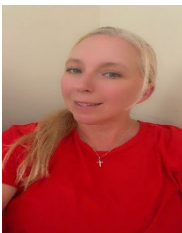
The architecture and registered interior design professions continue to remain active in North Carolina. Our current licensing and registration statistics provide a snapshot of the professionals and firms we serve, as of August 28, 2026:

- **North Carolina Licensed Architects:** 7266
- **North Carolina Registered Interior Designers:** 391
- **Licensed Architectural Firms:** 2194
- **Registered Interior Design Firms:** 84

While statistics are useful, each of these numbers represents a professional or firm that interacts with the Board—and each interaction requires the attention of our staff. From processing applications and renewals to answering questions about continuing education, firm compliance, examinations, rules, and professional practice, the day-to-day work of the Board is substantial.

A Special Thank You to Our Staff

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the Board staff and express my sincere appreciation for the work they do:



Julie Piatek

Julie Piatek, Director of Administration. Ms. Piatek has been with the Board for 25 years.

Tyler Barrick, Director of Firm and CE Compliance. Mr. Barrick has been with the Board for 20 years.



Tyler Barrick

A small regulatory agency requires its staff members to wear many hats. In addition to licensing and registration, our staff manages firm compliance, continuing education, complaints and investigations, Board and committee meetings, financial and administrative responsibilities, public records, communications, rulemaking, and the countless questions that arrive by telephone and email every day.

Much of this work happens quietly and behind the scenes. Julie and Tyler regularly go the extra mile to help applicants navigate the licensing process, assist licensees and registrants with compliance questions, help members of the public verify professional credentials, and support the Board in carrying out its statutory responsibilities.

I am fortunate to work with people who understand that our responsibility extends beyond processing paperwork. **Public protection is at the center of what we do.** I am grateful for their professionalism, institutional knowledge, flexibility, and commitment to serving both the Board and the citizens of North Carolina.

Continuing Our Mission

The profession continues to change, and technology is changing how professional services are marketed, delivered, and documented. Those changes bring tremendous opportunities, but they also create new regulatory challenges. Seal fraud is one example of why the Board must continue to adapt while remaining focused on the fundamental purpose of professional regulation.

Through licensing, registration, education, compliance, enforcement, and outreach, our responsibility remains the same: **to safeguard the life, health, property, and welfare of the people of North Carolina and to ensure that those practicing architecture and using the title Registered Interior Designer are properly qualified.**

Thank you to our Board members for their leadership, to our licensees and registrants for their professionalism, and especially to our staff for the work they do every day to advance that mission.

We would also like to thank **NC NOMA President Aysa Shine, NCARB CEO Mike Armstrong, and AIA North Carolina President Richard Alsop, FAIA**, for attending the Board's July 2026 meeting.



The Board was pleased to welcome these distinguished leaders in the profession and engage in a thoughtful discussion centered on our shared commitment to **protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public**. The conversation provided valuable perspectives on several important issues facing the profession, including public safety, NCARB's **Pathways to Practice** initiative, the current state and future of the profession, and efforts to expand access to architectural practice while maintaining the standards necessary to protect the public.

We greatly appreciate their time, insight, and willingness to engage with the Board on these important topics. Conversations such as these strengthen collaboration among regulatory and professional organizations and help ensure that, even as the profession evolves, public protection remains at the forefront.

Expired License and Registration Reports

Individual Architect licenses that expired on June 30, 2026, can be found [here](#).

Individual Interior Designer registrations that expired on June 30, 2026, can be found [here](#).

Architecture Firm Licenses that expired on December 31, 2025, can be found here

Interior Design Firm Registrations that expired on December 31, 2025 can be found here.

These lists are current as of August 28, 2026 at 10:25 a.m. Eastern. If you renewed after that date, you may check the status of your architecture firm or individual license by clicking here - [Architect Search – NC Board of Architecture \(ncbarch.org\)](https://ncbarch.org/ArchitectSearch) or to check the status of your interior designer or interior designer firm by clicking here - [Registered Interior Designer Forms/Information – NC Board of Architecture \(ncbarch.org\)](https://ncbarch.org/RegisteredInteriorDesigner)

The staff for the Board of Architecture and Registered Interior Designers is dedicated to assisting you in keeping your license or registration active and in good standing. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions whatsoever. The Board office main number is 919-268-7293.

For Firm Licensure or Registration, Continuing Education – Tyler Barrick, Director of Firm/CE Compliance. tyler@ncbarch.org

For Individual Licensure or Registration or status and general information – Julie Piatek, Director of Administration. juliap@ncbarch.org

For official complaints, rules or laws or inquiries from Code Officials – Cathe Monte Carlo, Executive Director. cathe@ncbarch.org

Sincerely,
Cathe M. Monte Carlo
Executive Director

PATHWAYS TO PRACTICE

At the heart of Pathways to Practice is a straightforward concept: many paths, one goal. NCARB is exploring a more flexible, modular, competency-based approach that would allow candidates to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors necessary to practice architecture safely and independently.

Providing additional pathways does not mean lowering the standard for licensure. The goal is to provide different ways for qualified candidates to demonstrate that they have met the same rigorous standard.

Since 2012, NCARB has been monitoring and analyzing trends on the path to licensure through [NCARB by the Numbers](#), (see article below for more information). Over time, the data has increasingly demonstrated that a single path to licensure can create [unintended social and financial barriers](#), including above-average student debt associated with architectural education.

Today, only 18 of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions allow an individual to pursue initial licensure without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program. While similar in concept, these alternative pathways

vary in their education and experience requirements. In contrast, 48 jurisdictions, including North Carolina, currently allow these individuals to pursue reciprocal licensure.

Pathways to Practice presents an opportunity to create more consistent and accessible pathways to initial licensure. By providing multiple ways to demonstrate competency, we can reduce some of the social and financial barriers associated with a single path while ensuring that individuals from a range of educational and professional backgrounds can pursue a career in architecture. Most importantly, the standard for initial licensure remains the same.

Multiple pathways can also provide greater flexibility within the licensure system, allowing NCARB and its member boards to adapt as the profession evolves and as the needs of the public change.

The foundation for this work is the [NCARB Competency Standard for Architects](#), developed with input and data from thousands of practicing architects. The standard establishes a common understanding of the competencies expected of an architect at the point of initial licensure and will guide both updates to existing NCARB programs and the development of future pathways.

Changes are already underway. NCARB updated the AXP in November 2025 and the ARE in April 2026, with additional pathways and assessment methods being explored for the years ahead. NCARB has emphasized that this is a deliberate, multi-year process undertaken in partnership with its 55 U.S. licensing jurisdictions.

Several members of our Board are actively engaged in committees at the national level and are helping inform these ongoing conversations. We recognize that any discussion about expanding access to licensure must be accompanied by an equally strong discussion about competency and public protection.

As this work continues, we will remain engaged, thoughtful, and focused on our responsibility to protect the public. We look forward to continuing the conversation and will keep you informed as Pathways to Practice develops.

NCARB NEWS

NCARB BY THE NUMBERS

Recently, NCARB has implemented several programmatic changes that could impact the state of licensure—including the retirement of the licensing exam’s 5-year expiration date on passed divisions and adjusting the experience program’s reporting policy to allow credit for experience older than 5 years. These changes have led to current decreases in the average time to earn a license but could result in longer licensure timelines in the future.

The 2026 edition also includes new insights into NCARB’s Pathways to Practice initiative. Our data shows that the current “single path” approach to the licensure process creates a variety of pinch points that can impact candidates based on a range of factors, including their career, education, and socio-economic background. However, the proportion of candidates pursuing licensure through alternative Pathways to Practice is growing. In 2025, 13% of new architects

chose to earn additional experience in lieu of earning a degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), up 2 percentage points from 2024.

In addition, NCARB has seen sustained growth in gender equity and racial diversity across licensure candidate stages. In 2025, nearly half of all licensure candidates (49%) identified as a person of color. Women now represent 47% of licensure candidates, including 53% of new Record holders, and these increases are becoming more visible in the profession as candidates advance toward licensure.

By offering more flexibility in how candidates demonstrate their competency, NCARB can reduce the impact of these impediments and ensure that individuals of all educational and career backgrounds have a pathway to architectural practice, while still maintaining the level of rigor needed to protect the public.

Learn more about trends on the path to licensure in the 2025 edition of *NCARB by the Numbers!*

CIDQ News

CIDQ offers two scholarship programs to support aspiring and emerging professionals pursuing NCIDQ Certification. Applications for both programs will be accepted **September 1 through October 31, 2026**, for the **2027 exam administrations**.

ACCESS Scholarship Program (SAP)

CIDQ is committed to fostering a more inclusive interior design profession that reflects a broad range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. The ACCESS Scholarship Program helps reduce barriers to certification and expand career opportunities for individuals from historically underrepresented and underserved communities. Applicants from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender identities, and sexual orientations, as well as individuals with disabilities, are encouraged to apply.

Emerging Interior Design Educator Program

This scholarship supports full-time emerging educators in obtaining NCIDQ Certification, helping advance their academic careers while ensuring students are mentored by certified faculty who champion the interior design profession and encourage professional engagement.

To learn more about each program and determine your eligibility, visit: <https://www.cidq.org/for-exam-candidates/scholarships/>.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES with CIDQ

CIDQ relies on the expertise and dedication of volunteers to continually strengthen and enhance the NCIDQ Examination. Each year, we recruit volunteers to serve on committees, task forces, and in sponsor roles. Explore available opportunities [here](#).

Interested in making an impact? We invite you to share your experience, expertise, and passion for the profession through the [Volunteer Interest Form](#). The application period **for 2027**

committee service is open through **August 31, 2026**.

Our volunteers bring diverse perspectives, valuable industry insights, and a shared commitment to advancing the interior design profession. To encourage new voices and fresh ideas, CIDQ reserves positions each year for first-time volunteers.

NCBA/RID Enforcement Report

The following Enforcement Report is for the period July 13, 2025 to July 10, 2026. The Board is not bound by precedence in matters of disciplinary action. It is the prerogative of the Board to be conservative in its review of cases and to enforce the rules and laws with sanctions and civil penalties as allowed by law. You may request a copy of the entire order by sending an email to cathe@ncbarch.org be sure to include the case number with your request. The Board of Architecture and Registered Interior Designers has jurisdiction pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §83A-15 and 21 NCAC 02 to receive and investigate complaints involving dishonest conduct, incompetence and unprofessional conduct and non-licensed practice. This Board does not have the statutory authority to discipline architects regarding complaints involving contract disagreements between a client and architect or allegations of ordinary negligence, nor can the Board mediate these situations. All civil penalties collected by the Board of Architecture and Registered Interior Designers are deposited with the Office of State Budget management where they are disbursed to school systems throughout the State.

The Board dismissed three cases without prejudice.

The Board issued three Letter of Caution to architects.

The Board issued four Letters of Warning to non-licensed individuals:

Case 1330 Gro Development, LLC

Case 1331 Eames, June

Case 1352 Wofford, Seth

Case 1323 J.S. Held, LLC

The Board issued Consent Orders to the following individuals:

Case 1311 King, Robert Arthur (Voluntary Surrender)

Case 1315 Seeley, Anne

Case 1325 Edgens, Sam

Case 1327 Venable, Brandon

Case 1336 Finn, Polly

Case 1337 Thomas, Robert W.

Case 1340 Webster, Cindy

Case 1347 Austin, J. Bernard

Case 1352 Verret, Troy/KCA Design Studio, Inc (firm revoked)

The following Orders for Injunction and Default Judgments were issued:

-WL3 Designs, LLC and William F. Leipart III

-S.R.Y. Design & Associates, Architect, P.C. d/b/a S.R.Y. Architects & Real Estate Planners and and Sylvester Yavana

-David Bryan Miles d/b/a DBM Architects and Associates

-Alternative Access Concepts, LLC and Harold James Jordan

-Reliabuilt Renovations and Darnell Lamar Syphrett