



CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD

Strategic Plan 2008-09





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State of Indiana
Department of Consumer Affairs
Contractors State License Board

Contractors
State License Board



CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD 2008-09 STRATEGIC PLAN

OVERVIEW

The California Contractors State License Board (CSLB) is the consumer protection board charged with licensing construction contractors who work in the state, resolving consumer complaints, educating consumers, and enforcing state laws that pertain to contractors. CSLB licenses or certifies contractors in 43 classifications and registers home improvement sales people.

Created in 1929, and now an independent board within the California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), CSLB is governed by a 15-member Board consisting of licensed contractors, a building official, members of the public, and a labor representative. The Registrar of Contractors, appointed by the Board, directs administrative policy.

CSLB activities include administering examinations to test prospective licensees, issuing licenses, investigating complaints against licensed and unlicensed contractors, issuing citations and suspending or revoking licenses, and seeking administrative, criminal, and civil sanctions against violators.

The construction industry in California is distinct from other states in terms of its breadth, magnitude, and complexity. California is one of the top 10 world economies, and construction is the state's number one industry. California's physical size, large and diverse population, varied landscape and climate, frequent seismic activity, distinctive legal framework, and massive economy create an unusually demanding context for contractor licensing.

REVIEW OF 2007-2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In developing this plan, Board members reflected on CSLB accomplishments over the previous year. Overall themes included expanded awareness of CSLB, improved internal processes, improved enforcement levels, and expanded partnerships:

Licensing

- Improved testing practices and standards
- Reduced wait time for applicants and callers

Enforcement

- Continued to improve and expand partnerships with other agencies, such as District Attorneys, for more effective and proactive operations
- Built new levels of credibility for CSLB among stakeholders
- Improved investigative procedures
- Created new Memoranda of Understanding with partner agencies
- Emphasized education as part of sting operations
- Used outside input from stakeholders to improve operations, including audits

Public Affairs

- Expanded public affairs activities statewide and increased CSLB visibility
- Built new levels of appreciation for the importance of licensure among the public, media, agency partners and contractors
- Conducted timely, effective emergency response operations, particularly for the Lake Tahoe and San Diego area wildfires
- Broadened multi-lingual services and materials
- Created more integrated and accessible online Web tools
- Enhanced the CSLB brand

Legislation

- Increased legislators' awareness of CSLB
- Partnered with more building officials, including expanded awareness of the need for more focus on owner-builder contractor issues

Administration

- Improved internal reporting procedures
- Identified partnership needs and expanded partnerships
- Began advanced succession and hiring procedures and planning
- Continued to maintain effective operations and high staff performance
- Elevated organizational development practices in the CSLB operational structure



PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Board has established the following priorities that direct program activities:

1. Focus on early intervention and on serious (health and safety) complaints.
2. Keep licensees in business and maintain the collection of revenue by keeping renewals and license maintenance current.
3. License applicants by reviewing qualifications and criminal background, and administer legal and effective exams.
4. Educate consumers about their rights and responsibilities, and stress ways that consumers can protect themselves.
5. Stress early intervention and resolution of reactive complaints, and refer minor complaints to small claims court.
6. Provide services through the Licensing Information Center and the front counter.
7. Ensure that Administrative Services and Information Technology units provide the support necessary to maintain programs.

MISSION

The Contractors State License Board protects consumers by regulating the construction industry through policies that promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the public in matters relating to construction.

The Contractors State License Board will accomplish this by:

- Requiring licensure for any person practicing or offering to practice construction contracting;
- Ensuring that construction is performed in a safe, competent, and professional manner;
- Licensing contractors and enforcing licensing laws;
- Enforcing laws, regulations, and standards governing construction contracting in a fair and uniform manner;
- Providing resolution to disputes that arise from construction activities; and
- Educating consumers so they make informed choices.

VISION

California consumers and contractors will have a safe, fair, and competitive marketplace.

- Contractors possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to provide clients and the general public with professional services and products.
- Consumers have access to adequate redress if they are harmed by incompetent or dishonest contractors.
- Consumers have information they need to make informed choices.
- Contractors have access to information they need to practice competently and honestly.

VALUES

The Contractors State License Board will strive for the highest possible quality throughout all of its programs. To that end:

- CSLB believes in treating all consumers and contractors fairly.
- CSLB supports its staff and their professional dedication.
- CSLB focuses on prevention, providing information to consumers and contractors.
- CSLB is progressive, utilizing the most advanced means for providing services.

GOALS

The Contractors State License Board has established five goals, which provide the framework of its mission:

1. **Licensing** - Ensure that all applicants and licensees are qualified to provide construction services.
2. **Enforcement** - Reduce, eliminate, or prevent unlicensed activity and unprofessional conduct that pose a threat to public health, safety, and welfare.
3. **Public Affairs** - Educate consumers to make informed choices about construction services, and ensure that licensed contractors strengthen their technical management and service skills.
4. **Legislation** - Ensure that statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures strengthen and support Board operations.
5. **Administration** - Enhance organizational effectiveness, and improve the quality of customer service in all programs.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Board identified challenges it faces in the near and long terms, and ways to address each challenge with a specific opportunity for change. The following table presents these challenge-opportunity pairings.

| CHALLENGE | OPPORTUNITY |
|---|--|
| Engaging and working with partners | Explore new partnerships with other state agencies |
| Expanding legislators' awareness of CSLB | Highlight CSLB success, particularly with the "Senior Scam Stoppers" program |
| Facilitating an efficient licensure application process | Identify and remove obstacles throughout the process and increase the use of technology |
| Addressing disparate pay levels within CSLB in comparison to similar agencies | Conduct compensation package analysis |
| Preventing fraudulent testing by surrogates | Improve candidate identification system |
| Addressing the impact of unlicensed operators | Expand education for licensed contractors and consumers on the consequences of using unlicensed operators |
| Providing state-of-the-art Web-based tools | Create more consumer-friendly Web tools and identify new partners and tools to streamline management of Web-based data |
| Losing critical staff through turn-over and attrition | Identify critical skills and establish training and career development for current and future staff |
| Using the industry expert pool in a more effective manner | Develop a highly trained pool of industry experts that can supplant staff resources |
| Declining contractor workforce in the face of long-term trends of declining skill bases | Assess Board's role in workforce development |
| Maintaining contractor qualification levels | Expand contractor education programs |

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Board has identified the following priorities and strategic actions in order to advance CSLB, meet its challenges, and capitalize on opportunities:

- Educate consumer base by equipping consumers with informational tools and increased awareness of risks and benefits inherent in construction and home improvement
- Improve awareness of CSLB with consumers, contractors, agencies and legislators
- Advance licensing program through technology, staffing and accessibility
- Support and strengthen the skilled contractor force through education
- Prepare for future CSLB workforce through recruitment and staff development
- Expand enforcement partnerships



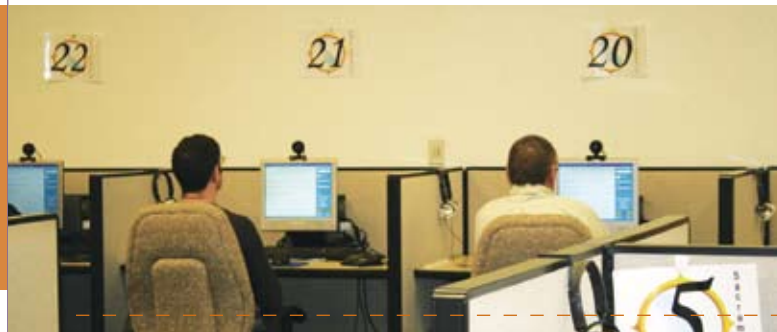
LICENSING

Goal 1—Ensure that all applicants and licensees are qualified to provide construction services.

The Licensing Committee meets this goal by:

- Ensuring that exams are current and relevant;
- Ensuring that all licensed contractors meet experience and education requirements and exhibit basic business competency skills;
- Ensuring accuracy of information submitted by the applicant and applicant integrity; and
- Ensuring that all processes in Licensing are current and efficient.

| OBJECTIVES | LEAD RESPONSIBILITY | TARGET DATE |
|---|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Add a photo ID to the Home Improvement Salesperson pocket license | Staff | July 2009 |
| 2. Reestablish e-mail unit in the Licensing Division | Licensing Committee | July 2009 |
| 3. Create new dedicated bilingual positions in Licensing Information Center | Licensing Committee | July 2009 |
| 4. Revise pocket license and wall certificates | Licensing Committee | July 2009 |
| 5. Increase exam seating by expanding Fresno and San Diego testing sites | Staff | October 2009 |
| 6. Improve candidate identification at testing centers | Staff | October 2009 |
| 7. Implement the DCA on-line licensure tool for credit card payment | Licensing Committee/DCA | July 2012 |
| 8. Implement on-line license exam scheduling tool after DCA iLicensing is implemented | Staff | July 2013 |





ENFORCEMENT

Goal 2—Reduce, eliminate, or prevent unlicensed activity and unprofessional conduct that pose a threat to public health, safety, and welfare.

The Enforcement Committee meets this goal by:

- Adopting policies and procedures that encourage voluntary compliance;
- Providing appropriate information to the public on the status of enforcement activities;
- Developing policies and procedures to work with other governmental and law enforcement agencies;
- Developing policies and procedures to improve the quality of legal actions; and
- Maintaining standards and goals.

| OBJECTIVES | LEAD RESPONSIBILITY | TARGET DATE |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. Develop criteria for reactive complaint enforcement to maximize effectiveness with current resources | Enforcement Committee | March 2009 |
| 2. Perform an Enforcement and Case Management program analysis | Outside Consultant | June 2009 |
| 3. Establish a new Investigative Center in the Santa Clarita Valley | Enforcement Committee | June 2009 |
| 4. Develop a new electronic mechanism for the public to report violators | Enforcement Committee | June 2009 |
| 5. Develop a multi-agency template for complaint reporting and feedback | Enforcement Committee | October 2009 |
| 6. Develop Web-based tools for agencies that award public contracts, to help hire qualified contractors and report violators | Enforcement Committee | January 2010 |

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Goal 3—Educate consumers to make informed choices about construction services and ensure that licensed contractors strengthen their technical management and service skills.

The Public Affairs Committee meets this goal by:

- Informing the public about the role and function of CSLB;
- Educating the public about their rights and responsibilities in the contracting process;
- Educating contractors about building codes, construction methods, and business practices; and
- Ensuring that contractors understand their professional obligations and responsibilities

| OBJECTIVES | LEAD RESPONSIBILITY | TARGET DATE |
|--|--------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Update and implement Public Affairs plan through 2009, based on Board-approved priorities, input from advertising contractor, and available resources | Public Affairs Committee | January 2009 |
| 2. Conduct statewide consumer and contractor research | Public Affairs Committee | January 2009 |
| 3. Identify new goals for Web site | Public Affairs Committee | January 2009 |
| 4. Develop partnerships to expand educational outreach | Public Affairs Committee | January 2009 |
| 5. Create a business practice kit for licensees to help educate consumers | Public Affairs Committee | June 2009 |
| 6. Implement an expanded public information campaign focused on the risks of hiring unlicensed operators | Public Affairs Committee | July 2009 |



LEGISLATION

GOAL 4—Ensure that statutes, regulations, policies and procedures strengthen and support Board operations.

The Legislative Committee meets this goal by:

- Providing mechanisms for consumers to remedy problems and resolve disputes;
- Creating and maintaining a legal and regulatory framework that ensures an appropriate level of consumer protection; and
- Monitoring legislation that impacts the construction industry as it relates to public health, safety and welfare.

| OBJECTIVES | LEAD RESPONSIBILITY | TARGET DATE |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. Engage industry to support CSLB efforts to obtain resources for CSLB | Legislative Committee | October 2008 |
| 2. Develop plan to recognize and partner with legislators | Legislative Committee | June 2009 |
| 3. Enact changes to mechanic’s lien procedures and requirements | Legislative Committee | January 2010 |



ADMINISTRATION

GOAL 5—Enhance organizational effectiveness, and improve the quality of customer service in all programs.

The Executive Committee meets this goal by:

- Ensuring that CSLB has the resources it needs to achieve its mission and goals;
- Monitoring implementation of the CSLB Strategic Plan; and
- Monitoring and improving organizational effectiveness.

| OBJECTIVES | LEAD RESPONSIBILITY | TARGET DATE |
|--|---------------------|--------------|
| 1. Develop long-term budget plan | Executive Committee | March 2009 |
| 2. Develop an advanced organizational development plan for all divisions | Staff | June 2009 |
| 3. Develop a succession plan for divisions | Staff | June 2009 |
| 4. Create a Web site support unit | Staff | July 2009 |
| 5. Improve the Licensing Information Center IVR system | Staff | January 2010 |





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