



CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD

Strategic Plan 2009-10





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State of California
Department of Consumer Affairs
Contractors State License Board

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License
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CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD 2009-10 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, informing licensees of new and changing laws, guidelines, and opportunities, 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 has been one of the state's largest industries. 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.

SIGNIFICANT 2008-2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In developing this plan, Board members reflected on CSLB accomplishments from 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
- Improved application processing times
- Updated application forms
- Implemented employee orientation training

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 value added recognition of the importance of contractor licensure among the public, media, agency partners and contractors
- Conducted timely, effective emergency response operations, for both northern and southern California wildfire regions
- Broadened multi-lingual educational materials
- Created more integrated and accessible online Web tools
- Strengthened 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
- Developed mechanic’s lien process improvement

Administration

- Streamlined personnel functions through “delegated authority” granted by the Department of Consumer Affairs
- Completed lease negotiations and office configurations throughout California
- Updated Web site





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PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Board established the following priorities to 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 public counter.
7. Ensure that Administrative Services and Information Technology units provide the support necessary to maintain programs.

CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS

Construction has consistently been one of California's top industries. Considering that California is one of the world's largest economies, the importance of efficient and effective regulation of the construction industry by the California Contractors State License Board (CSLB) extends beyond the state's borders and affects the economic vitality of the country and the world. Given the current global economic struggles, the federal government and California have identified infrastructure funding as a key step in economic recovery. CSLB is preparing its licensing, enforcement, and public affairs programs to deal with the influx of billions of dollars in funding for state infrastructure projects. Every aspect of CSLB's operations must be at peak performance to ensure that operational policies or procedures do not adversely affect any part of that recovery. The construction industry has been particularly hard hit by the recession and the industry needs

CSLB to help protect the public and licensees from unlicensed operators, and for CSLB to license applicants as quickly and efficiently as possible.

CHALLENGE	ACTION
Revenue and budget unpredictability	Develop budget priorities and options, and long-term plan
Proper contracting for federal stimulus infrastructure funds	Ensure licensing and enforcement programs prepared for influx of work
Non-compliance by public agencies	Create education program
Development of "green" and energy-conservation construction	Update classification and enforcement programs
Underground economy	Strengthen Public Affairs and Enforcement efforts
"One-size-fits-all" state policies	Provide input to maximize CSLB program benefits
Staff turn-over and attrition	Improve recruitment and training efforts
Multi-generational work force	Introduce new communication and training methods

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

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

- Develop a communication plan to have licensees provide consumers with information regarding the risks of hiring unlicensed contractors
- Develop educational tools to inform local public awarding agencies about legal requirements for construction bids and contracts
- Utilize new media tools to educate consumers about benefits of hiring only licensed contractors and steps to protect themselves
- Increase Web-based tools (e.g., online renewal and credit cards)
- Educate contractors and local agencies about CSLB and other agencies' enforcement processes



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 accomplishes this by:

- Requiring licensure for any person practicing or offering to practice construction contracting;
- Ensuring that contractors have skills to perform 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, attempting to utilize the most advanced means for providing services.

GOALS

The Contractors State License Board has established goals based upon its five main divisions, to provide the framework of its operational 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 CSLB operations.
5. **Administration** - Enhance organizational effectiveness, and improve the quality of customer service in all programs.

ONGOING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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.

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; and
- Developing policies and procedures to improve the quality of legal actions.

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 consumers about the dangers of hiring unlicensed contractors;
- Educating contractors about building codes, construction methods, and business practices; and
- Ensuring that contractors understand their professional obligations and responsibilities.

LEGISLATION

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

The **Legislative Committee** meets this goal by:

- Providing legislative and regulatory 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.

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

The Board has identified the following objectives meant to help meet its goals:

OBJECTIVES	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE
1. Implement an expanded public information campaign focused on the risks of hiring unlicensed operators	Public Affairs Committee	3rd quarter 2009
2. Create a business practice kit for licensees to help educate consumers	Public Affairs Committee	3rd quarter 2009
3. Establish a new Investigative Center in the Santa Clarita Valley	Enforcement Staff	1st quarter 2010
4. Develop a multi-agency template for complaint reporting, relating to workers' compensation and tax withholding violations	Enforcement Committee	1st quarter 2010
5. Develop Web-based tools and pre-qualifying criteria for agencies that award public contractors to use to hire qualified contractors and/or report violators	Enforcement Committee	1st quarter 2010
6. Develop an informational packet on legal requirements for public content awarding agencies	Enforcement/ Public Affairs Committee	3rd quarter 2010
7. Review and update licensing laws	Licensing Committee	3rd quarter 2010
8. Add a photo ID to the Home Improvement Salesperson pocket license	Staff	3rd quarter 2010
9. Revise pocket license and wall certificates	Licensing Committee	3rd quarter 2010
10. Create a Web site support unit	Staff	3rd quarter 2010
11. Improve the Licensing Information Center IVR system	Staff	3rd quarter 2010
12. Increase exam seating by obtaining new Fresno and San Diego testing sites and staff	Staff	4th quarter 2010
13. Research and evaluate available forms of biometric identification for exam candidates	Licensing	1st quarter 2011
14. Implement the DCA online licensure tool for credit card payment	Licensing Committee/DCA	3rd quarter 2012
15. Implement online license exam scheduling tool after DCA iLicensing is implemented	Staff	3rd quarter 2013



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