

# Steps to Becoming a Licensed Contractor

Any construction project in California priced at \$1,000 or more in labor and materials combined must be performed by a contractor with a Contractors State License Board (CSLB) issued license. Any project needing a permit or workers requires a contractor's license.



## Step 1: Determine if Eligible

Each license requires a *qualifying individual* who directly supervises and controls the construction operations conducted under the license. This person must be at least 18 years old and have at least 4 years of journeyman level work experience in a specific classification (specialty work area) in the last 10 years. This also is the person who will take, and need to pass, the required exam(s) before a license can be issued.

If you don't meet these minimum qualifications, apply for a contractor's license once you do. In the meantime, to work legally you must either choose someone else that meets the minimum experience requirements to act as the *qualifying individual* or work for a licensed contractor until you meet the minimum requirements.

## Step 2: Complete Application

There are different applications for different business types, each of which requires the submission of various information and documents. All applications require a Social Security number or an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN). Applications and instructions can be obtained from the CSLB website: [cslb.ca.gov](http://cslb.ca.gov) or by calling 800-321-CSLB (2752).

## Step 3: Submit Application and Required Fees

A \$450 fee must accompany each application.

## Step 4: Fingerprinting Requirement after CSLB Review of Application

Each new applicant must submit fingerprints as part of a mandatory criminal background check, for which there is a cost that varies depending on the Live Scan location. CSLB will send notification to applicants about how to meet this requirement once your application has been accepted and the examination(s) scheduled.

## Step 5: Verifying Work Experience

After meeting the basic eligibility requirements, the *qualifying individual* could be randomly selected to provide documentation to confirm they meet the minimum work experience requirements.

 See the [Summary of Acceptable Documentation](#).

## Step 6: Schedule an Exam

The *qualifying individual* is required to pass written law and trade examinations, unless they meet the requirements for a waiver (for information on waivers, please visit: [cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Applicants/Contractors\\_License](http://cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Applicants/Contractors_License)). Help with language translation for the exam(s) is available.

## Step 7: License Issued

Congratulations! Each application has specific license issuance requirements related to entity type and personnel, including an initial licensing fee, necessary bonds, and proof of workers' compensation and/or liability insurance.