

## The Importance of Licensure in Landscape Architecture

### What landscape architects do

Landscape architecture encompasses analysis, planning, design, management and stewardship of the natural and built environment through science and design. Landscape architects create well-planned, livable communities, leading the way by creating neighborhood master plans, designing green streets, managing stormwater runoff and planning high-utility transportation corridors.

Landscape architecture includes iconic and neighborhood places, local parks, residential communities, commercial developments and downtown streetscapes. Larger well-known examples include Central Park and the Highline in New York City, the U.S. Capitol grounds in Washington, D.C., the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Chicago's Millennium Park.

### Why landscape architects must be licensed

The practice of landscape architecture includes keeping the public safe from hazards, protecting natural resources and sustainably managing the natural and built environment surrounding our homes and communities. It requires a breadth of knowledge and training in many substantive areas of science, engineering and aesthetics earning STEM designation for the profession by the Department of Homeland Security.

The adverse risks and consequences of negligent, unqualified, unethical or incompetent persons engaging in landscape architectural design services without the requisite education and training are significant—sometimes irreparable—economically, environmentally and in terms of public safety, health and welfare.

At stake are hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure and site improvements every year, and the safety of persons and property these improvements affect. Licensure of landscape architects permits consumers to manage these risks and reduces exposure to liability from hazardous and defective design.

To properly serve and protect the public, these risks and consequences—and the potential for harm—must be minimized and prevented. The public interest is best served when qualified, licensed professionals carry out these responsibilities safely following rigorous and essential professional standards, and when other non-qualified individuals are prevented from providing such services to the public. Moreover, licensing is necessary and appropriate given landscape architecture's technical nature—and consumer/public inability to accurately and reliably assess the competence of such providers.

Without regulatory standards, consumers have no mechanism to ensure they can rely on a professional to produce design and technical documentation meeting minimum standards of competence.

***To learn more about the importance of licensure in landscape architecture, please contact CLARB's manager of government affairs and advocacy [Zach Druga](#) or visit [clarb.org](http://clarb.org).***

*The [Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards \(CLARB\)](#) is a non-profit organization that has worked to protect the world's people, places and environment through landscape architecture for over 50 years. CLARB designs, promotes and defends landscape architectural standards with its 56 member licensure boards across Canada, the United States, Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands. CLARB also works to strengthen the future of the landscape architecture profession worldwide through international partnerships, collaboration, advocacy and research that protect the health, safety and welfare of the global community.*