

Ohio Architects Board
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Executive Director
FY 12 – 13 Budget Testimony
May 6, 2011
Senate Finance Committee

Overview

The Ohio Architects Board and the Ohio Board of Landscape Architect Examiners are two boards with one budget and one staff. Each Board has five members, who are paid by the hour. The Boards regulate nearly 9,000 individuals and firms.

The mission of the Boards is to protect the Health, Safety, and Welfare of the citizens of Ohio. The Boards uphold the national standards of the professions through licensure, regulation, and enforcement.

Staffing

The Board office operates with a staff of four. This year, one staff position was reclassified, and as a result, approximately \$30,000 will be saved biennial in payroll costs. There has been no increase in the number of staff since 1981. During that time, the number of active registrants has more than doubled to over 7,000 and the number of exam candidates has quadrupled to 700. The number of licensed firms has tripled, to over 1,200, since 2004.

The Boards strive to be efficient and customer-service oriented. We frequently receive compliments from applicants and the public on the thoroughness of our website, the kindness and support provided by our staff, and the speed at which applications are approved and emails answered. Applicants are also pleased that there is always staff available to take their phone calls.

We approve nearly every application the same day it is received in the office. In many states, this can take weeks or even months. Prompt approval is a very important part of our customer service, because projects cannot begin until the firms and individuals receive their licenses. We are doing our part to make it easy to do business in the state of Ohio.

Revenue and Expenses

The Boards are self-supporting via licensing and renewal fees. No General Revenue Funds are used to support the Board's activities.

In the coming biennium (FY 12 – 13), we project total revenues of approximately \$1.327 million, down from \$1.334 million in the last biennium. We believe revenues will not return to previous levels until the construction sector improves.

The Board is requesting a Fiscal Year 2012 appropriation of \$494,459 and \$478,147 in FY 13 (FY12 – 13 combined is \$972,606). The requested appropriation represents a decrease from the previous biennium of 10.2% in

FY 12 and an additional reduction of 3.3% in FY 13. We believe that we will be able to maintain services at the current level despite these reductions.

Agency Priorities

- The Boards have a longstanding and positive relationship with their collateral organizations:
 - The professional associations: the American Institute of Architects and the American Society of Landscape Architects
 - The schools of architecture and landscape architecture: Bowling Green, Kent, Miami, Ohio State and the University of Cincinnati
 - The national organizations: the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards.
- The Board works closely with the stakeholder organizations to ensure that Ohio's rules and laws are business friendly and aligned with current national standards. We regularly visit the schools to increase student awareness of the registration process.
- The Boards are widely regarded as a national leader for both professions. Several Board members volunteer on national committees, writing exam questions and developing policy on a national level.
- The Boards' two websites were combined into one website this year in order to make the website easier to maintain in-house and easier for the public and licensees to use. We have received many compliments on the user-friendly nature of the new website.
- The Board, as a result of HB 119, 127th General Assembly, created an Education Assistance Program which reimburses Ohio architecture students for the cost of the enrollment fee for the Intern Development Program (IDP). The cost to enroll in IDP is \$100. A national survey¹ indicated that 77% of students lack funds to pay this fee. Since the inception of Ohio's fund, over 200 students have received reimbursement. The Board hopes that by providing this support, more students will begin the path to licensure. We also see the program as a means to encourage these future professionals to remain residents of the state of Ohio.
- An Emeritus Architect license category was created by SB 225, 127th General Assembly. Over 130 individuals have taken advantage of the category, which exempts retirees from the continuing education requirement. The Landscape Architects Board would like to have similar statutory authority.

¹ 2005 Career and Internship Survey conducted by the American Institute of Architects, National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, and ArchVoices.