

California Board of Architectural Examiners

2021 Leadership Accountability Report

Lourdes M. Castro Ramirez, Secretary
California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency
915 Capitol Mall, Suite 350-A
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Lourdes M. Castro Ramirez,

In accordance with the State Leadership Accountability Act (Leadership Accountability), the California Board of Architectural Examiners submits this report on the review of our internal control and monitoring systems for the biennial period ending December 31, 2021.

Should you have any questions please contact Laura Zuniga, Executive Officer, at (916) 575-7232, Laura.zuniga@dca.ca.gov.

GOVERNANCE

Mission and Strategic Plan

The Board protects the public health, safety, and welfare by establishing standards for professional qualifications, ensuring competence through examinations, setting practice standards, and enforcing the Architects Practice Act.

Strategic Goals

1 Professional Qualifications

Ensure the professional qualifications of those practicing architecture by setting requirements for education, experience, and examinations.

2 Regulation and Enforcement

Establish regulatory standards of practice for California architects and protect consumers by preventing violations and effectively enforcing laws, codes, and standards when violations occur.

3 Communications

Increase public and professional awareness of the Board's mission, activities, and services.

4 Organizational Relationships

Improve effectiveness of relationships with related organizations in order to further the Board's mission and goals.

5 Organizational Effectiveness and Customer Service

Enhance organizational effectiveness and improve the quality of customer service in all programs.

Control Environment

The Board is composed of ten appointed members, who set policy for the program. Board staff administer and carry out the day to day work. The Board members meet quarterly to review Board operations. The Board also appoints committees to assist in developing and carrying out objectives from the strategic plan,

Board management ensures staff are updated on all Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) policies and submit acknowledgements as required.

Information and Communication

The Board meets quarterly and staff prepares a comprehensive report on Board operations and budget information for their review and discussion. These meetings are open to the public and provide an opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions and present information or concerns to the Board. Board management holds all staff meetings to update staff on current operations, and provides a forum for questions. Staff are also encouraged to discuss any concerns with their direct supervisor at any time.

The Board regularly undergoes a sunset review process before the Legislature. As part of that process, the Board prepares a comprehensive report on its operations over the prior four year period, including information on all aspects of the program. The Board reviews the draft version of this report at a public meeting, and provides input on the content.

MONITORING

The information included here discusses the entity-wide, continuous process to ensure internal control systems are working as intended. The role of the executive monitoring sponsor includes facilitating and verifying that the California Board of Architectural Examiners monitoring practices are implemented and functioning. The responsibilities as the executive monitoring sponsor(s) have been given to: Laura Zuniga, Executive Officer.

Key performance indicators for the Board's licensing and enforcement functions are reported to the Board on a quarterly basis. At each board meeting, members review and discuss the results. Issues requiring further review and discussion are referred to the Board's appointed committee for further deliberation, with a recommendation from the Committee coming back to the Board.

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The following personnel were involved in the California Board of Architectural Examiners risk assessment process: executive management, front line management, and staff.

The following methods were used to identify risks: ongoing monitoring activities, external stakeholders, and questionnaires.

The following criteria were used to rank risks: likelihood of occurrence, potential impact to mission/goals/objectives, timing of potential event, and potential impact of remediation efforts.

RISKS AND CONTROLS

Risk: Business Modernization

The California Architects Board is in the process of transitioning to a new licensing and enforcement platform. Working under the guidance of DCA, the Board expects a new system to come online in early 2023. It is anticipated that while a new system will bring benefits for consumers and licensees, there will be a potential impact on workload as the Board transitions throughout the project.

Control: Regular Monitoring of Progress and Workload

The Executive Officer will regularly review processing times and communicate with the Licensing and Enforcement Unit managers to identify any potential impact on workload

Risk: Fund Condition

While the Board has had a relatively healthy fund condition, increased costs, including for business modernization, are placing increasing pressure on the Fund.

Control: Budget Monitoring

Staff has begun meeting more regularly with our assigned Budget analyst and continue to review and monitor our monthly budget reports. Staff will identify potential areas of cost savings, and continue to be conservative in spending resources.

Risk: Office Closures

The California Architects Board does not offer many online services for licensees, and a lot of its workload is paper based, particularly in Licensing. In the event of future office closures Board staff could experience increased workload and delayed response time to consumers and licensees, as not all functions can be performed exclusively through telework.

Control: Implementation of New Software Solution

As mentioned previously in this report, the Board is transitioning to a new licensing and enforcement system. Staff expects that this system it will be much less reliant on paper and will have more ability to perform additional duties remotely, as needed. Licensees will also have increased ability to communicate electronically with the Board.

CONCLUSION

The California Board of Architectural Examiners strives to reduce the risks inherent in our work and accepts the responsibility to continuously improve by addressing newly recognized risks and revising risk mitigation strategies as appropriate. I certify our internal control and monitoring systems are adequate to identify and address current and potential risks facing the organization.

Laura Zuniga, Executive Officer

CC: California Legislature [Senate (2), Assembly (1)]
California State Auditor
California State Library
California State Controller
Director of California Department of Finance
Secretary of California Government Operations Agency

Check List (will not appear in the submitted report)

Governance

- Management establishes and demonstrates integrity and ethical values
- Oversight is provided by a board, outside entity, or top executive
- The entity ensures appropriate levels of responsibility and authority, and documentation of internal control systems
- Management recruits, develops, and maintains a competent workforce
- Management evaluates performance and enforces accountability
- Information requirements are established and met with reliable and relevant sources
- Quality information is communicated to internal parties within the entity
- Quality information is communicated to external parties

Risk Assessment

- Management establishes clearly defined objectives to enable identification of risks and definition of risk tolerances.
- Management identifies, analyzes, and responds to risks.
- Potential for fraud is considered when identifying, analyzing, and responding to risks.
- Significant changes are considered when identifying, analyzing, and responding to risks.

Risks and Controls

- Management designs control activities to achieve objectives and respond to risks.
- Information systems and control activities are designed to achieve objectives and respond to risks (Checking this box indicates management considered information systems risks during the risk assessment process).
- Control activities are implemented and documented in policies, procedures, or other similar documentation

Monitoring

- Monitoring activities are performed, documented, and measured against a baseline.
- Management evaluates results and ensures appropriate corrective actions are implemented and documented.