



NCARB BY THE NUMBERS

2026 EDITION



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Welcome to the 2026 edition of *NCARB by the Numbers*!

Each year, *NCARB by the Numbers* provides exclusive insights into key data shaping architectural regulation. Now in its 15th edition, *NCARB by the Numbers* continues to offer a thoughtful look at trends on the path to licensure and beyond thanks to clear, reliable data from our members, Record holders, and the architecture community.

We are constantly evolving this report to explore new facets of our programs and the profession, and this year's report is no different. For the past several years, NCARB has explored opportunities to expand access to licensure through our Pathways to Practice initiative—with an end goal of creating a competency-based approach to licensure that provides more options for candidates while maintaining the level of rigor needed to protect the public. As Pathways to Practice nears its culmination, NCARB has implemented several adjustments to our programs designed to align with a more accessible licensure process: the 2025 replacement of the reporting policy for the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®), the 2023 retirement of the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) rolling clock policy, the 2022 launch of free ARE practice exams, and more.

In this year's edition, you'll see the impact of those changes, as well as an entirely new section dedicated to exploring insights related to Pathways to Practice. When NCARB revised the AXP's reporting policy in November 2025, over 20,000 candidates received additional AXP credit, and nearly 800 became AXP complete. The average time to complete the AXP fell by 6 months in 2025, and the average time to complete the ARE fell by 4 months. The overall time to licensure fell to 12.3 years—the lowest median time NCARB has seen in many years.

The licensure candidate pipeline held steady following its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, with just over 39,000 candidates actively working to become architects. The architect population has recovered from last year's dip, with over 123,000 individuals licensed across the United States.

For NCARB and our member licensing boards, the information contained in *NCARB by the Numbers* shines a light on the overall health, trajectory, and makeup of the licensure pipeline. By closely monitoring data coming out of our community of members, customers, and volunteers, we have been able to drive strategic decisions that are shaping the future of regulation and the architecture profession. We look forward to sharing how the information gathered in *NCARB by the Numbers*, as well as insight from our members, customers, volunteers, and the public, continues to shape the regulatory landscape in architecture and beyond.



Michael J. Armstrong
Chief Executive Officer
National Council of Architectural Registration Boards

State of Licensure

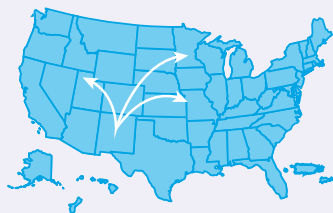
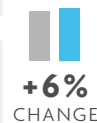
The number of licensed architects grew in 2025—but the pool of candidates pursuing licensure fell slightly. Despite the 1% decrease in candidates working toward licensure, NCARB has still seen high levels of active candidates over the past several years. Meanwhile, the total number of U.S. architects recovered from last year's drop and the number of reciprocal licenses dipped slightly, in keeping with the pattern NCARB has seen historically in license distribution.

The number of newly licensed architects dropped by 6% (just over 200 individuals), but still aligned with the typical 9 – 10% of the active candidate pool. Those new architects completed the path to licensure faster than the previous year: On average, it took candidates 12.3 years to earn a license in 2025, approximately 4 months less than in 2024.

Recently, NCARB has implemented several programmatic changes that could impact the state of licensure—including the retirement of the licensing exam's 5-year expiration date on passed divisions and adjusting the experience program's reporting policy to allow credit for experience older than 5 years. These changes have led to current decreases in the average time to earn a license but could result in longer licensure timelines in the future.

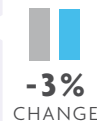
Typically, 36 – 38% of candidates stop pursuing licensure over the average licensure period (12 – 13 years). As NCARB reduces unnecessary impediments and improves accessibility on the path to licensure, we hope to see these changes reflected in attrition rates and licensure statistics in the years to come.

123,398 U.S. ARCHITECTS

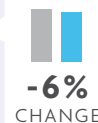


Hold over

146,000
reciprocal licenses

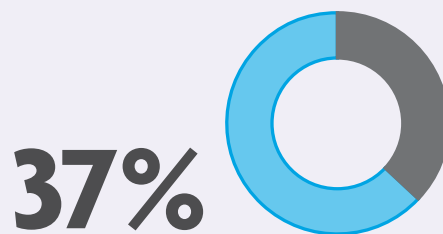


3,488 NEW ARCHITECTS



AVERAGE TIME TO
EARN A LICENSE

39,090
CANDIDATES
PURSUING LICENSURE



37%

of candidates who started
the licensure path 13 years
ago had stopped pursuing
a license in 2025

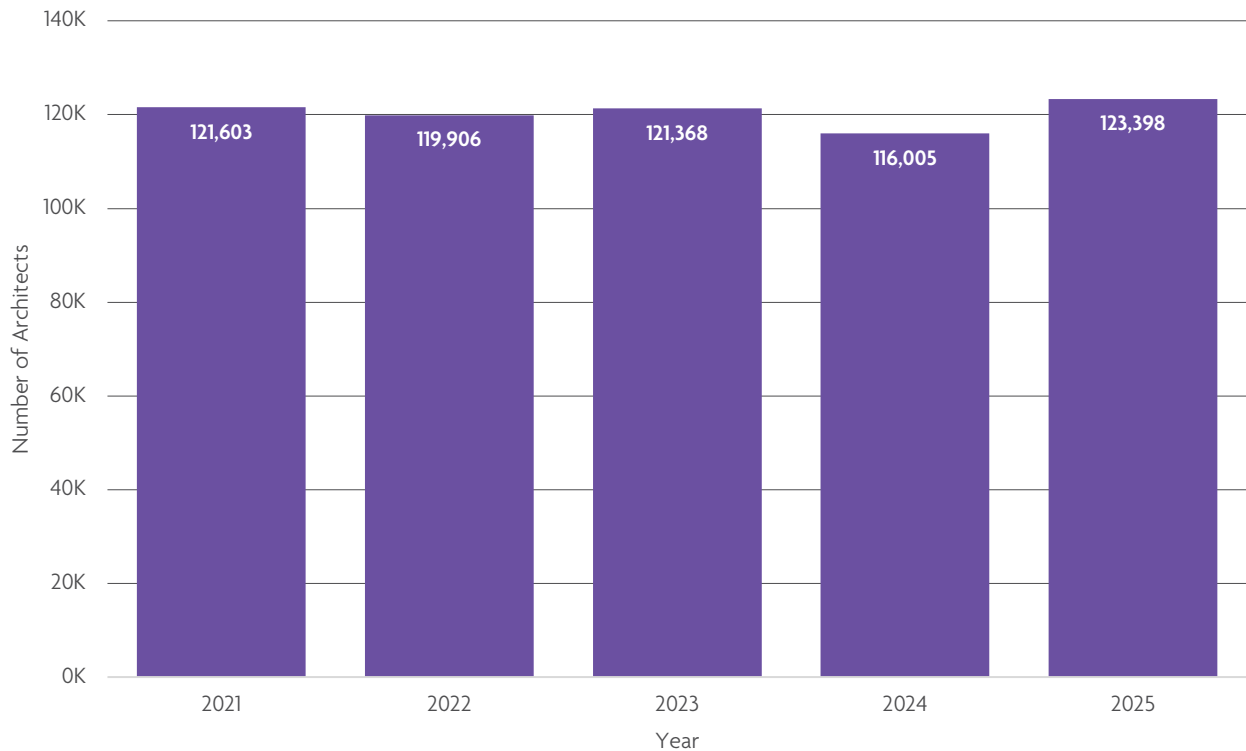
The number of U.S. architects rose by 6%.

The number of U.S. architects rose by 6% in 2025, according to NCARB's annual Survey of Architectural Registration Boards. This recovery from last year's decline could be the result of changes in the way state licensing boards report residential versus reciprocal licenses; in addition, individuals who became inactive in 2024 may have returned to renew their license in 2025.

DID YOU KNOW?

Traditionally, many older architects have held on to a single license long past their "official" retirement.

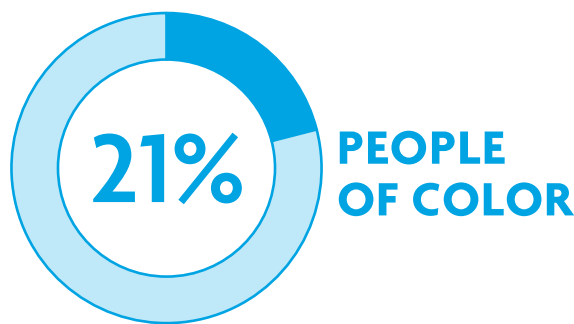
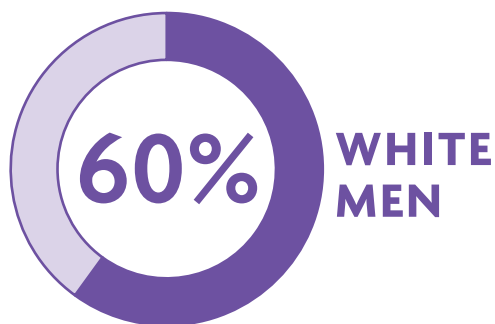
However, NCARB continues to anticipate a decline in the number of U.S. architects in the coming years as baby boomers begin to filter out of the pool of architects. **Architects who are over the age of 65 made up 14% of the total architect pool in 2025.** As the oldest baby boomers begin to reach their 80s, the number of architects might fall over the next several years before evening out at a "new normal."



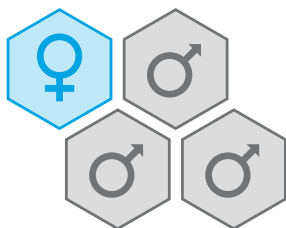
123,398 U.S. ARCHITECTS

—A 6% INCREASE

The architect population is slowly becoming more diverse:



1 IN 4
ARE WOMEN



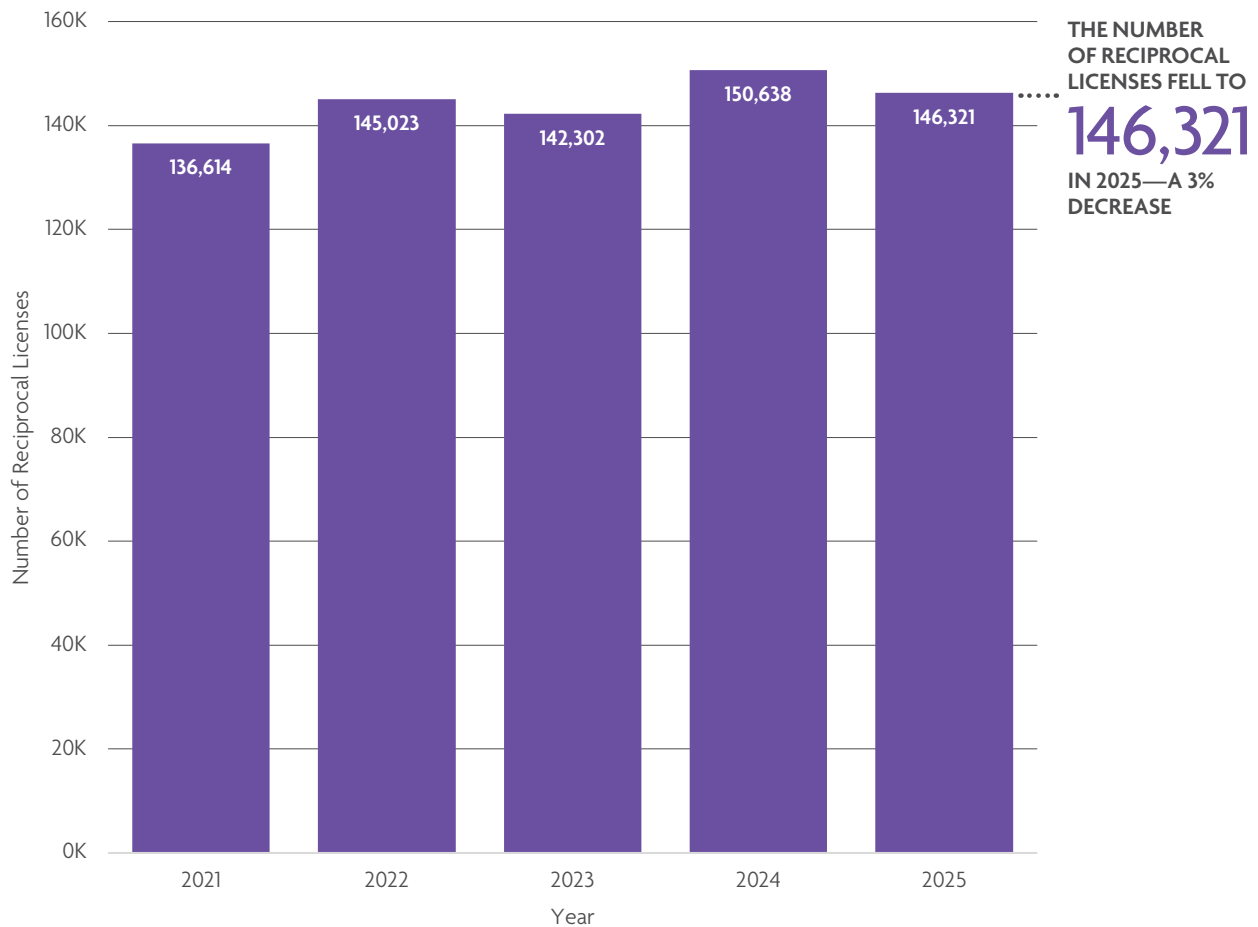
14%
of architects are
over the age of 65

3%
of architects are
under the age of 30

The number of reciprocal licenses fell by 3%.

Many architects are licensed in more than one state, which allows them to meet existing clients' needs and expand their potential client base. **In 2025, the number of out-of-state (or reciprocal) licenses fell to 146,321, according to NCARB's annual Survey of Architectural Registration Boards.**

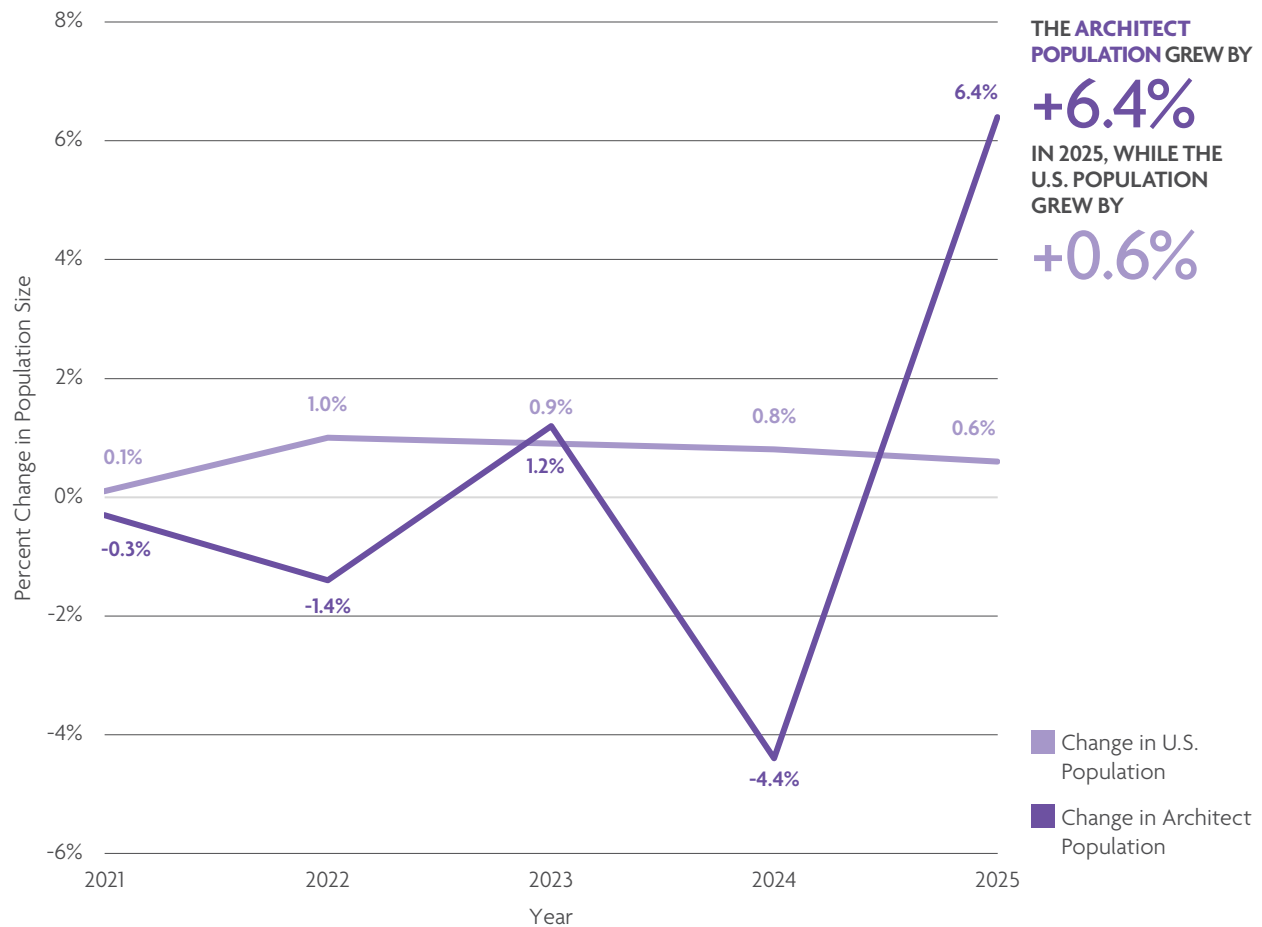
While the overall number of reciprocal licenses has generally been trending upward, NCARB has historically seen a pattern of alternating increases and decreases from year to year. In this context, 2025's decline is likely a part of this pattern as architects respond to ebbs and flows in client demand.



The number of architects per capita increased in 2025.

While the number of architects licensed in the United States has risen 6% since 2024, the total U.S. population has risen just 0.6%, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

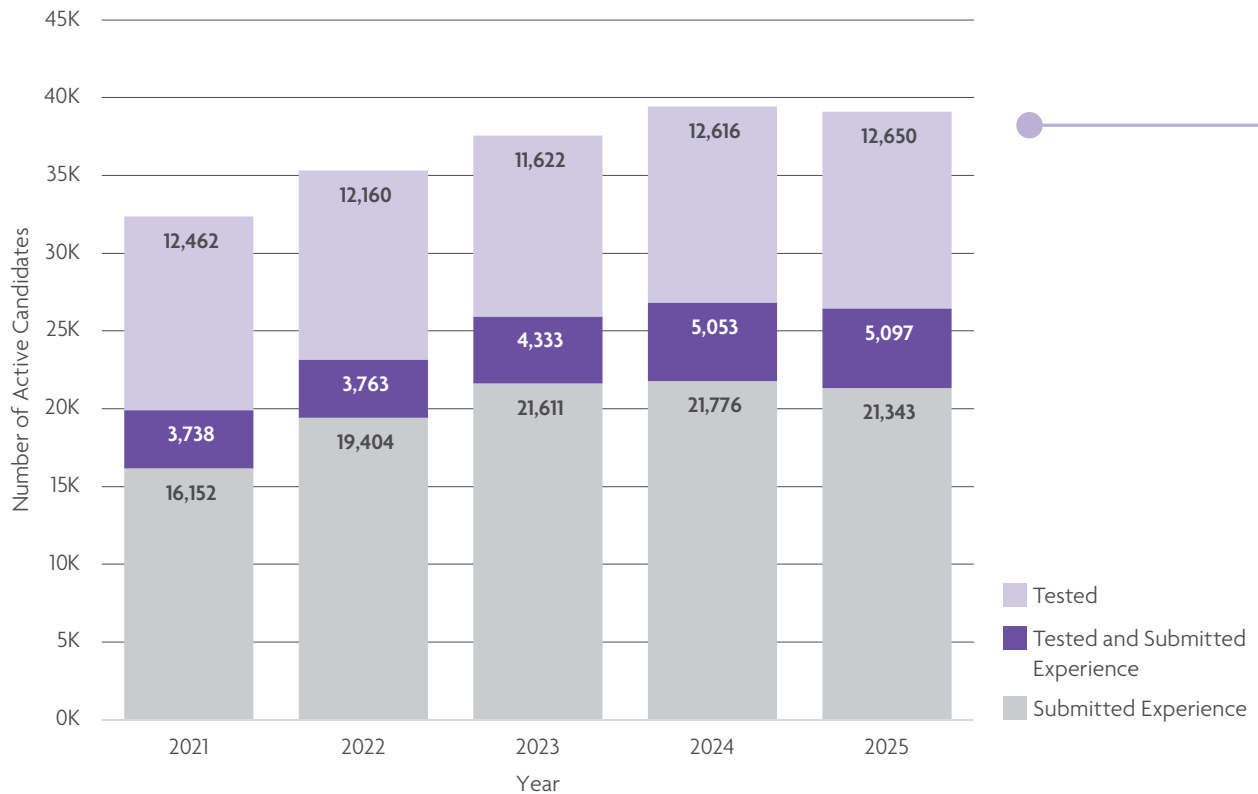
There are now slightly more architects per capita (roughly 1 architect to every 2,940 people) than there were in 2024 (roughly 1 architect to every 2,779 people).



The number of active licensure candidates fell by 1%.

The number of candidates actively pursuing licensure fell by 1% (roughly 400 individuals) in 2025. Throughout the year, just over 39,000 candidates reported experience, took a division of the exam, or both. **Despite this year's slight decrease, NCARB has seen consistently high numbers of active licensure candidates in 2023 – 2025**, a sign that the pipeline of new architects is healthy and growing.

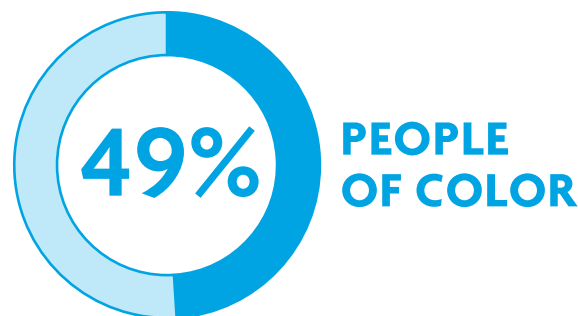
Since most active candidates eventually become licensed architects, the elevated numbers seen in the candidate pool in recent years suggests that the number of new architects may increase in the next decade. These individuals could offset any potential decline in the number of architects as baby boomers retire in the future.



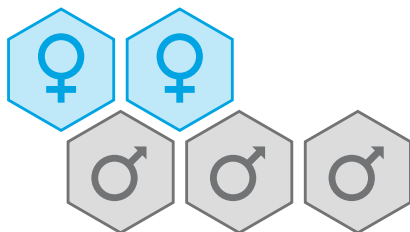
39,090 ACTIVE CANDIDATES

—A 1% DECREASE

The licensure candidate population is slowly becoming more diverse:



2 IN 5
ARE WOMEN



1%
of candidates are
over the age of 65

41%
of candidates are
under the age of 30

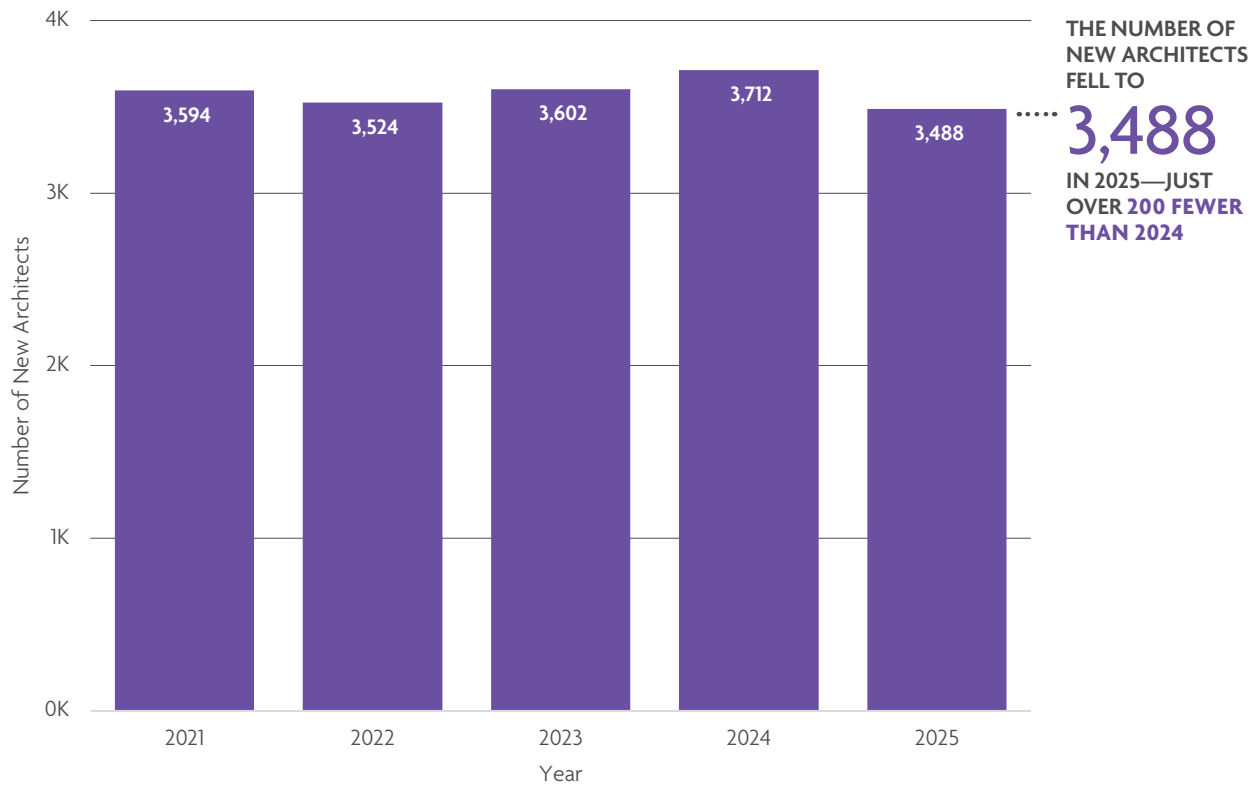
The number of new architects fell by 6%.

Nearly 3,500 licensure candidates finished the path to licensure and became architects in 2025, a 6% decrease compared to 2024.

The 6% decrease (224 individuals) aligns with the slight decline seen in the overall candidate population in 2025. Typically, 9 – 10% of the total candidate pool completes the path to licensure each year, which remains true for 2025.

WHO'S CONSIDERED A "NEW ARCHITECT?"

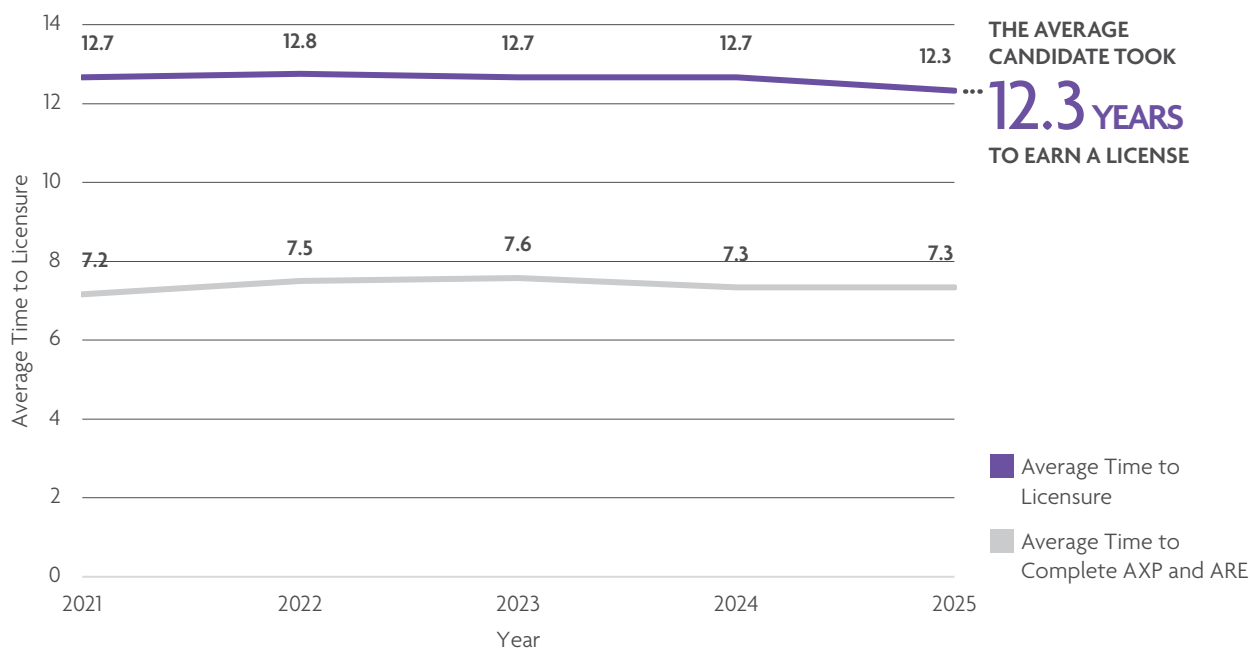
"New architects" refers to individuals who completed their final requirement for licensure in a given year. The last requirement for most candidates is the exam, which is why the number of new architects closely aligns with the number of exam completions.



Candidates got licensed 4 months faster in 2025.

The average individual who earned a license in 2025 took 12.3 years to do so. The total time to complete the path to licensure—including earning a degree, completing the experience program, and passing the exam—fell by 3% or approximately 4 months. Candidates completed both the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) and Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) faster in 2025, although the combined time to complete both programs held steady at 7.3 years. The drop in individual program completion time but stability in combined program completion time could be due to candidates taking a break between completing one program and starting another.

Over the past several years, NCARB has been working to implement programmatic changes designed to make licensure more accessible, such as retiring the exam's 5-year rolling clock policy and adjusting the experience program's reporting policy. While these changes have seen short-term decreases in time to complete NCARB's programs, it's possible that removing artificial time constraints on the path to licensure could *increase* the average time it takes to become an architect in the future. That's why we're shifting our focus from *time to licensure* to *accessibility of licensure*: NCARB believes it's critical that all candidates can choose a pathway to practice that aligns with their goals, timeline, and experiences.

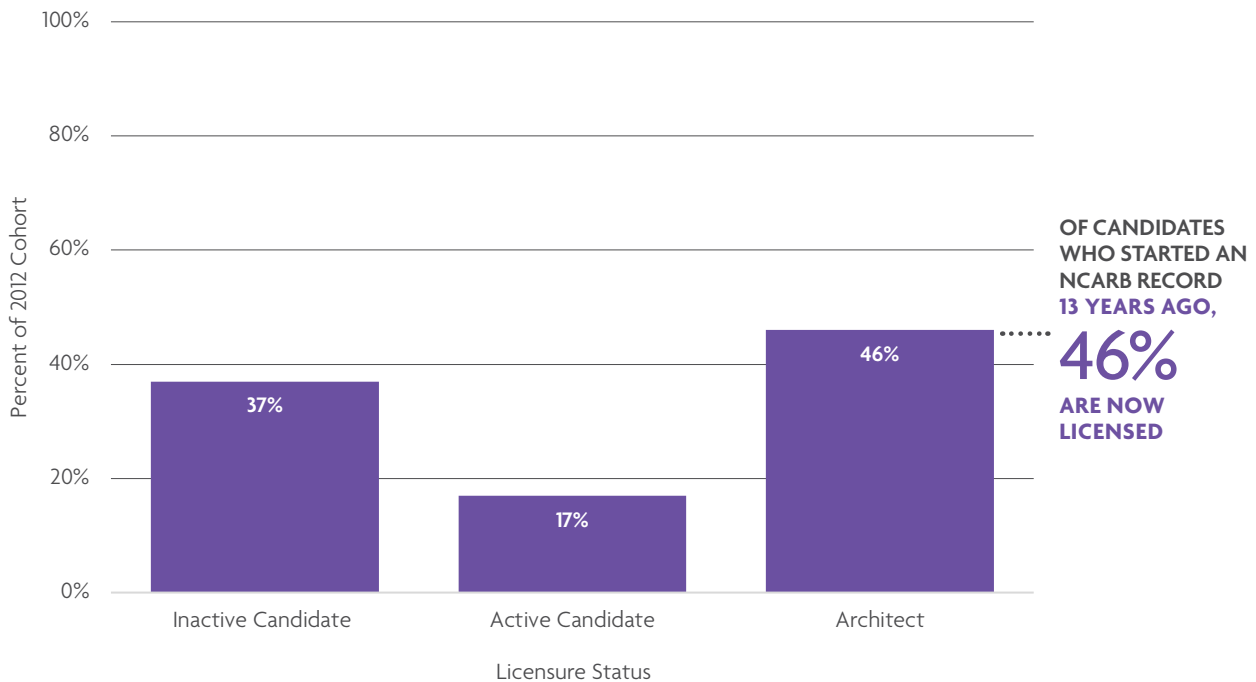


37% of this year's cohort of candidates stopped pursuing a license.

The typical candidate takes between 12 – 13 years to complete the path to licensure; as a result, individuals licensed in 2025 likely started the path to licensure in 2012. To better understand potential impediments that might be preventing candidates from becoming architects, we track candidates' activity on the licensure path over this 13-year period.

Of individuals who started an NCARB Record in 2012, 46% have since become licensed. An additional 17% were still actively working to become licensed in 2025, and 37% had fallen off the path to licensure.

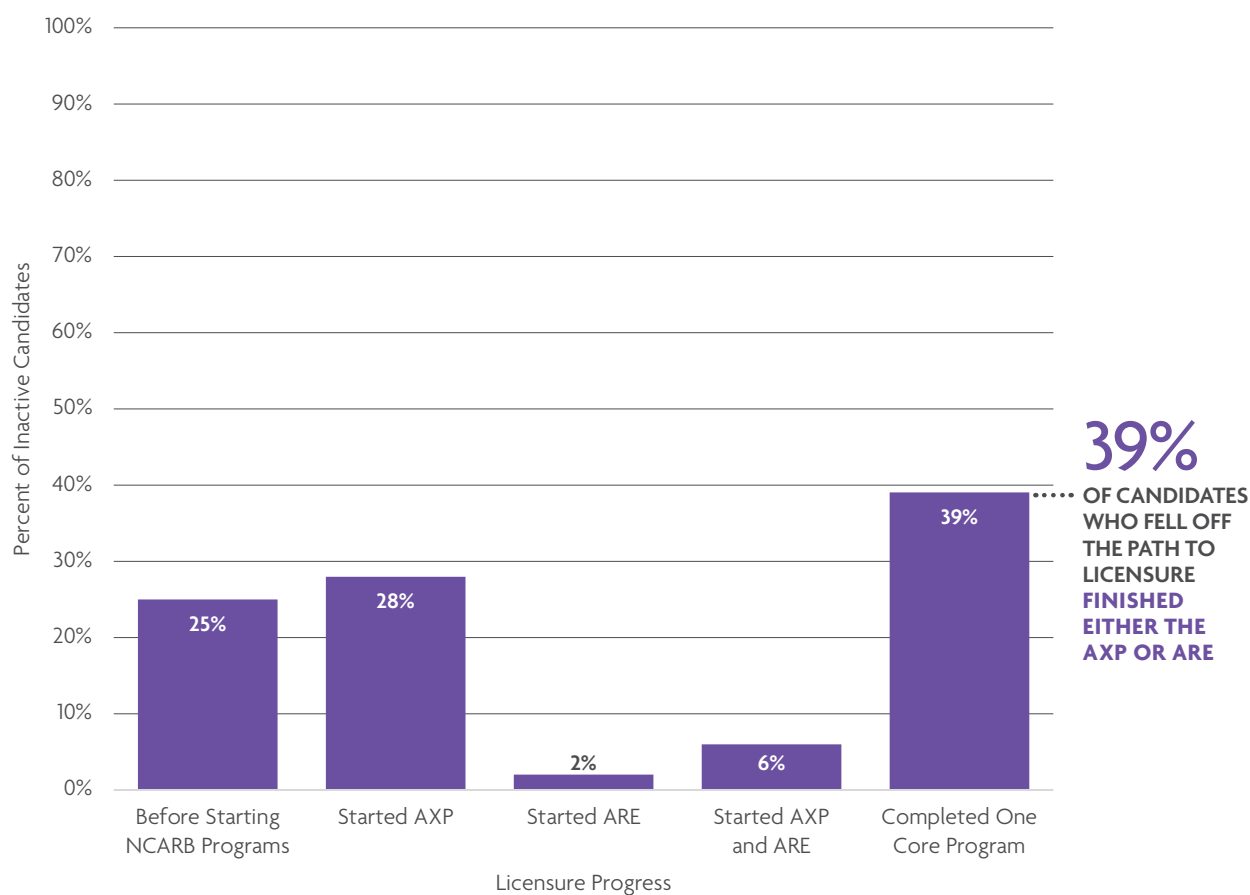
This level of attrition is similar to what NCARB has seen in recent years; average attrition on the path to licensure typically ranges between 36 – 38% for any individual cohort. As with any other profession, it's not unusual to see individuals change their career plans or profession over time—especially for those early in their careers.



Candidates are most likely to fall off the path to licensure after completing one core program.

Of candidates who started their Record in 2012 and have since become inactive, 39% fell off the licensure path after completing either the AXP or ARE (typically the AXP). **An additional 25% of licensure candidates fall off the path to licensure at some point after graduation but before starting the experience program or the exam.**

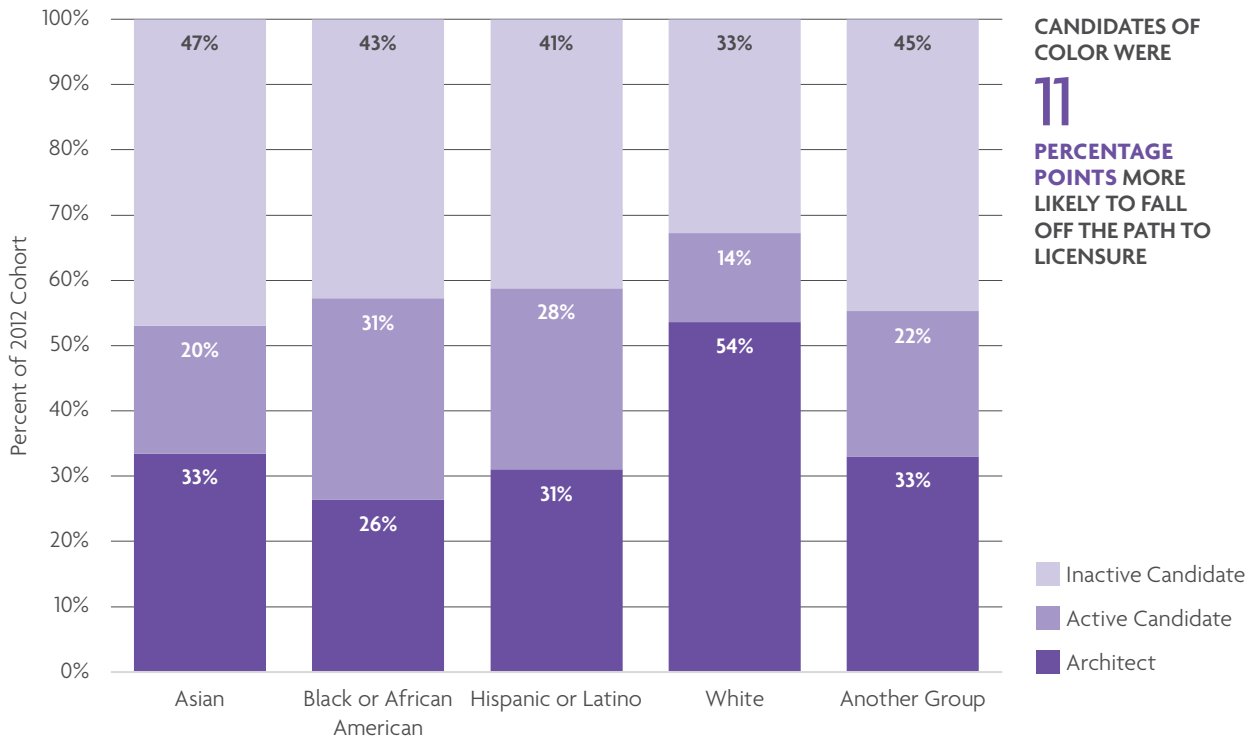
These individuals may still be working in the architecture industry but have decided not to pursue a license, or they may return to the licensure path in the years ahead.



Candidates of color are more likely to fall off path to licensure.

When viewed by race and ethnicity, there was a significant difference in attrition rates for white candidates compared to their non-white peers. **Compared to candidates of color, white candidates who started an NCARB Record in 2012 were far more likely to be licensed in 2025:** 54% of white candidates were licensed, compared to 32% of candidates of color.

People of color who started an NCARB Record in 2012 were also more likely than their white peers to have stopped pursuing licensure: 44% of candidates of color fell off the path to licensure, compared to 33% of white candidates.



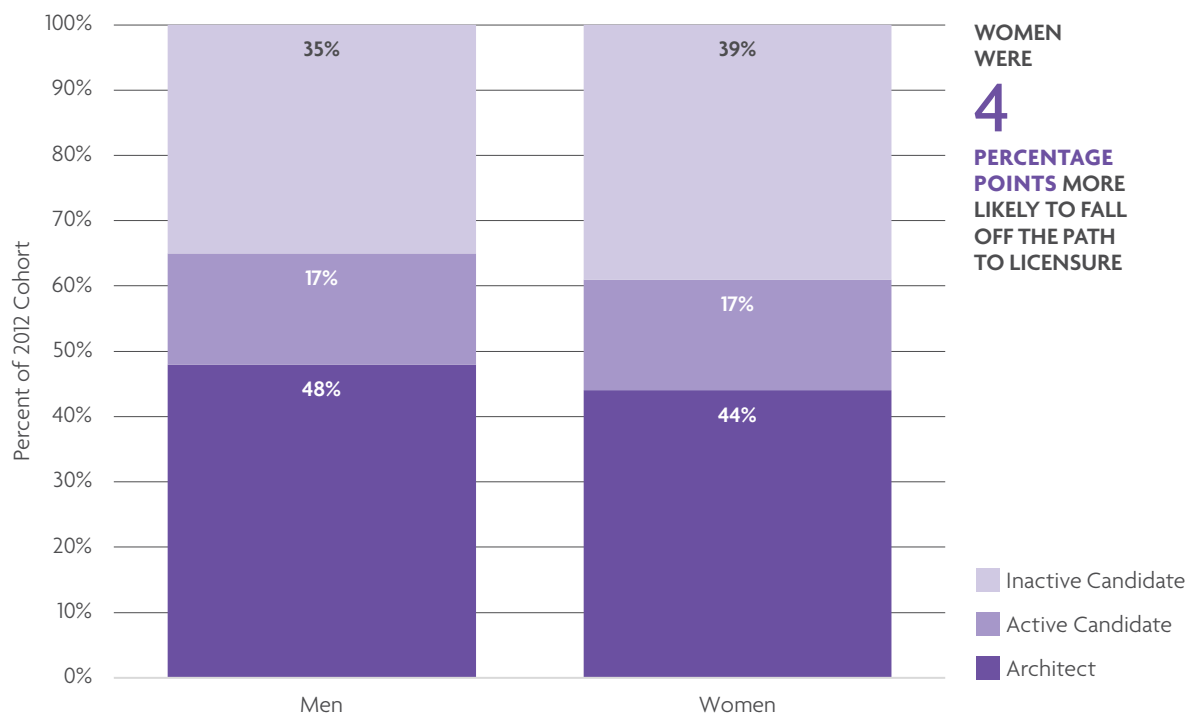
Men were more likely to stay on the path to licensure than women.

When viewed by gender, the disparities between men and women were present but less significant than they were across racial and ethnic groups. **Women who started an NCARB Record in 2012 were 4 percentage points more likely to have fallen off the path to licensure in 2025:** 35% of men had stopped pursuing a license, compared to 39% of women.

By contrast, men were more likely to have earned their license (48% of men compared to 44% of women).

WHERE ARE NONBINARY CANDIDATES?

Currently, the number of licensure candidates who started an NCARB Record in 2012 and have identified as nonbinary does not meet NCARB's standard sample size, which is 30.



Pathways to Practice

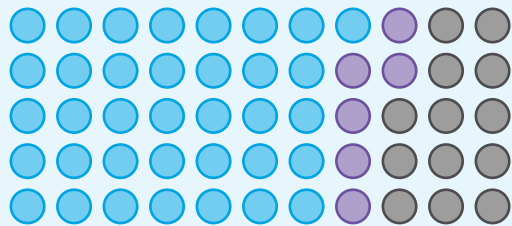
Currently, most candidates go through the same licensure path: earning a degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), documenting experience through the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®), and passing the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®). But the practice of architecture is evolving, and the licensure path must evolve as well.

Through Pathways to Practice, NCARB is working to ensure qualified applicants can enter the profession by creating an accessible yet equally rigorous licensure process. NCARB's data shows that the current "single path" approach to the licensure process creates a variety of pinch points that can impact candidates based on a range of factors, including their career, education, and socio-economic background.

For example, candidates without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program take over 7 years longer to earn a license, while those with a NAAB-accredited degree accrue higher levels of debt. Over a third of candidates who fall off the path to licensure do so during the experience program, when factors like project availability and supervisor relationships have a significant impact on AXP progress. When it comes to the exam, nearly a third of candidates pass all 6 ARE divisions on the first try—but those who fail experience diminishing pass rates with each subsequent division attempt.

By offering more flexibility in how candidates demonstrate their competency, NCARB can reduce the impact of these impediments and ensure that individuals of all educational and career backgrounds have a pathway to architectural practice, while still maintaining the level of rigor needed to protect the public.

THROUGH PATHWAYS TO PRACTICE, NCARB SEEKS TO REIMAGINE THE PROCESS OF EARNING AN ARCHITECTURE LICENSE

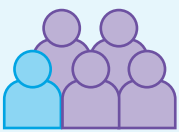


36 JURISDICTIONS

require a degree from a NAAB-accredited program for initial licensure

But **only 6** require it for reciprocal licensure

In jurisdictions that allow multiple licensure pathways,

1 IN 5 
ARCHITECTS

doesn't hold a degree from a NAAB-accredited program, taking:

18.8
YEARS

on average
to get licensed
—6.5 years
above average



18% of M.Arch. graduates and



14% of B.Arch. graduates

OWE OVER \$100K IN STUDENT DEBT

55%



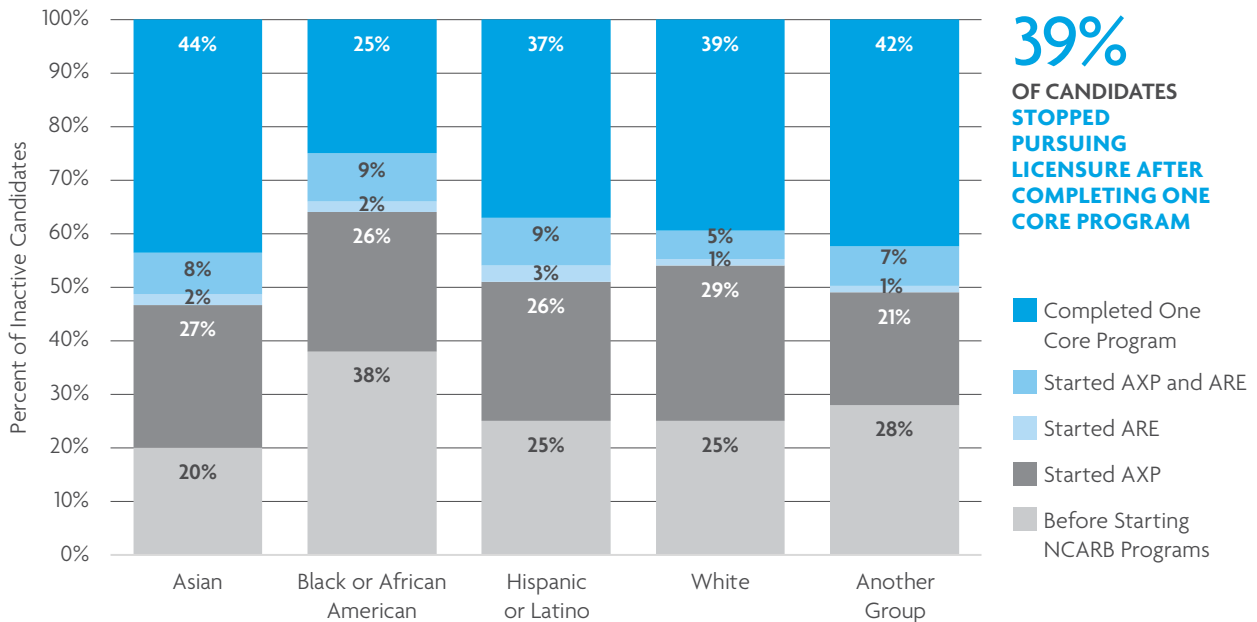
of M.Arch. graduates would **not pursue an M.Arch degree** if it wasn't required for licensure

Black candidates were more likely to stop pursuing licensure before starting a core program.

Understanding where licensure candidates typically fall off the path to licensure helps NCARB better assess pinch points on the path to licensure, as well as opportunities to create greater flexibility.

Because the average time to licensure in 2025 was 12.3 years, the average architect who earned their license in 2025 started the path to licensure in 2012. Of individuals who started their NCARB Record in 2012, approximately 37% have since stopped pursuing licensure.

For most racial and ethnic groups, inactive candidates were most likely to fall off the path to licensure after completing one of NCARB's core programs (typically the AXP). **But NCARB's data shows that Black or African American candidates were most likely to stop pursuing licensure before making any progress on the AXP or ARE.** This disparity could be a result of factors such as not being encouraged to pursue licensure or difficulty finding a supportive firm—barriers that NCARB and the National Organization of Minority Architects' (NOMA) joint *Baseline on Belonging* study shows are more likely to impact Black candidates.



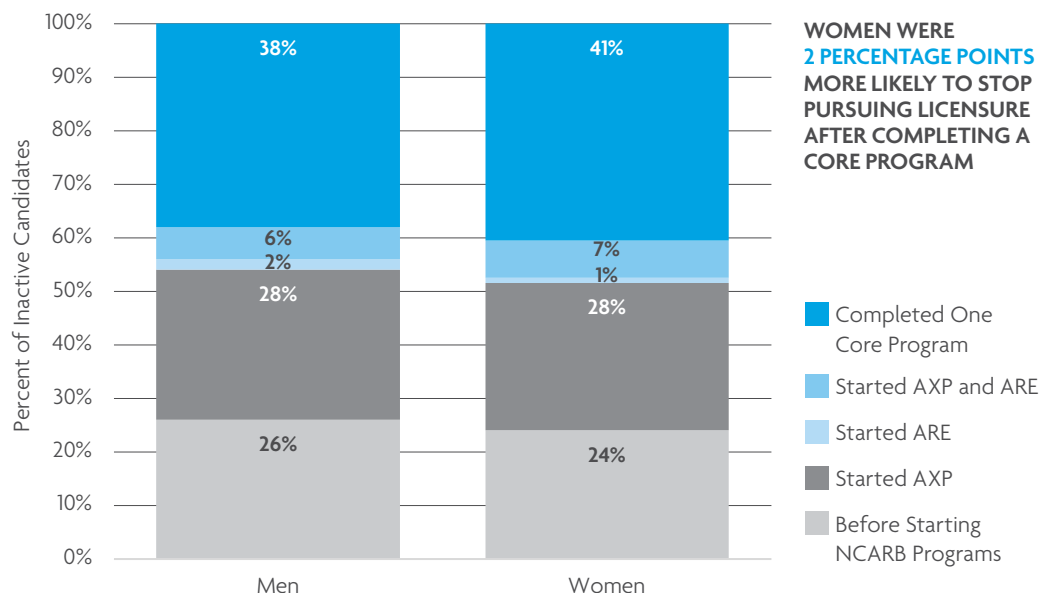
Women were slightly more likely to stop pursuing licensure after completing a core program.

Men and women who started their path to licensure in 2012 and have since stopped pursuing licensure displayed relatively similar levels of licensure progress. **Women were slightly more likely than men to stop pursuing licensure after completing a core program**, while men were slightly more likely than women to stop pursuing licensure before making any AXP or ARE progress.

WHAT'S A CORE PROGRAM?

The core programs required for licensure across the 55 U.S. jurisdiction are the **AXP and ARE**.

Because women demonstrate lower ARE pass rates than men, this disparity could be a result of female candidates facing greater challenges completing the ARE. NCARB's Pathways to Practice effort can help ensure that candidates have the opportunity to navigate potential barriers throughout the licensure path by demonstrating an equal level of competency through an alternative assessment method.

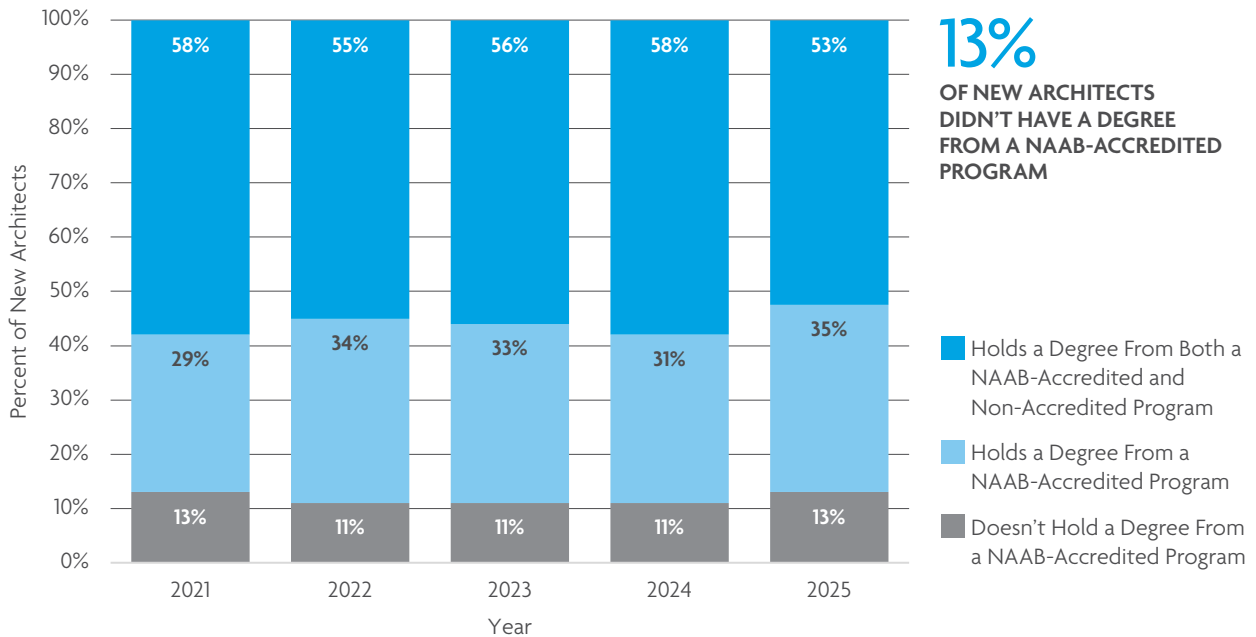


Most new architects held a degree from a NAAB-accredited program.

Because the 36 out of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions required licensure candidates to have a degree from a NAAB-accredited program for initial licensure in 2025, it's not surprising that 88% of new architects hold a professional degree. Despite this common requirement, **the proportion of new architects without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program rose to 13% in 2025, up 2 percentage points from 2024.**

Earning a degree from an accredited program typically takes 5 – 7 years. Often, candidates graduate from a non-accredited, 4-year program and then return to school for a Master of Architecture degree, an investment of time and resources that can create a significant burden on early career professionals. Through Pathways to Practice, NCARB seeks to offer a modular, competency-based approach to licensure that removes the burden of a single education pathway—while still maintaining the level of rigor needed to protect the public.

Note: This chart is also found on [page 65](#) in the [Building Toward Competency](#) section of this report.

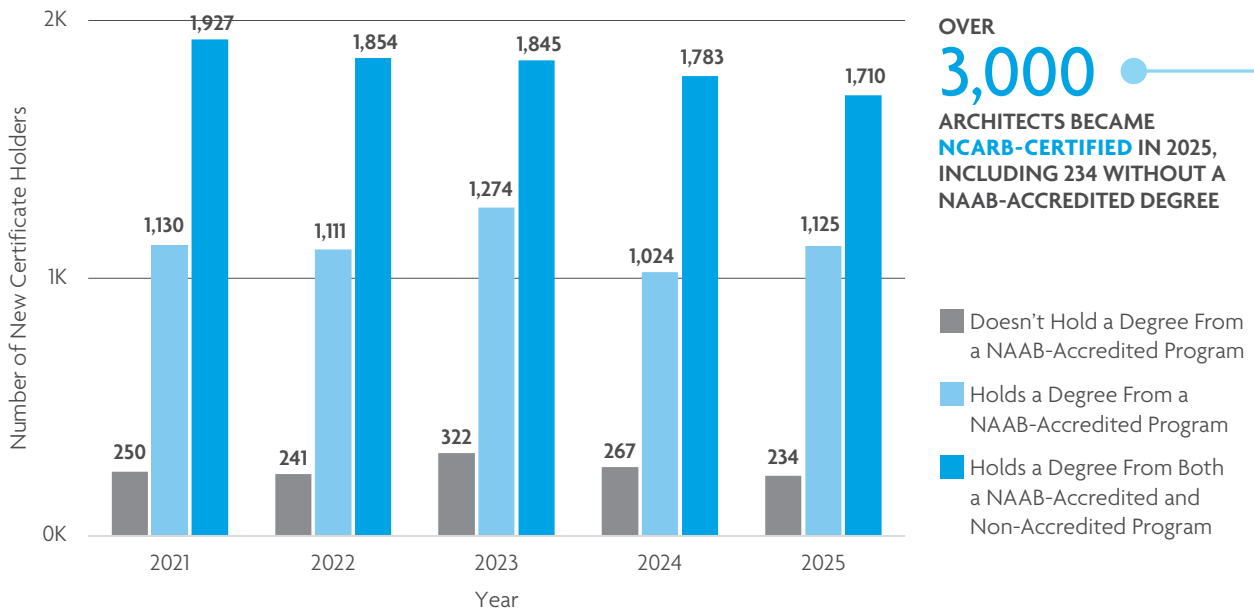


In 2025, 8% of new NCARB Certificate holders didn't have a degree from a NAAB-accredited program.

The NCARB Certificate is a valuable credential that demonstrates architects have met national standards for licensure. Through the Certificate, architects gain access to streamlined mobility, both in the United States and in several international locations.

Over 3,000 architects earned an NCARB Certificate in 2025. **Of new Certificate holders, 234 individuals (8% of all new Certificate holders) did not have a degree from a NAAB-accredited program.**

While NCARB provides pathways to certification for architects of all backgrounds, the Education Alternative pathway for architects without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program has historically included a delay between receiving initial licensure and applying for an NCARB Certificate. This waiting period was retired in January 2026. Since its removal, NCARB has seen significantly higher numbers of architects without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program pursuing NCARB certification—data that will be reflected in next year's edition of *NCARB by the Numbers*.

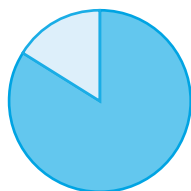


In 2025, NCARB certified

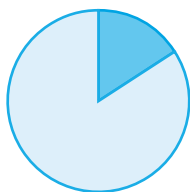
3,069
ARCHITECTS,
INCLUDING:



through the
194 **EDUCATION**
ALTERNATIVE

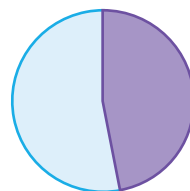


84%
THROUGH
THE 2 TIMES AXP
PATHWAY

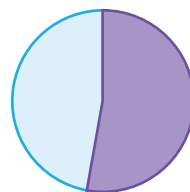


16%
THROUGH THE
NCARB CERTIFICATE
PORTFOLIO PATHWAY

104 **INTERNATIONAL**
ARCHITECTS



47%
THROUGH THE
INTERNATIONAL
ARCHITECT
PATHWAY



53%
THROUGH A
MUTUAL
RECOGNITION
AGREEMENT

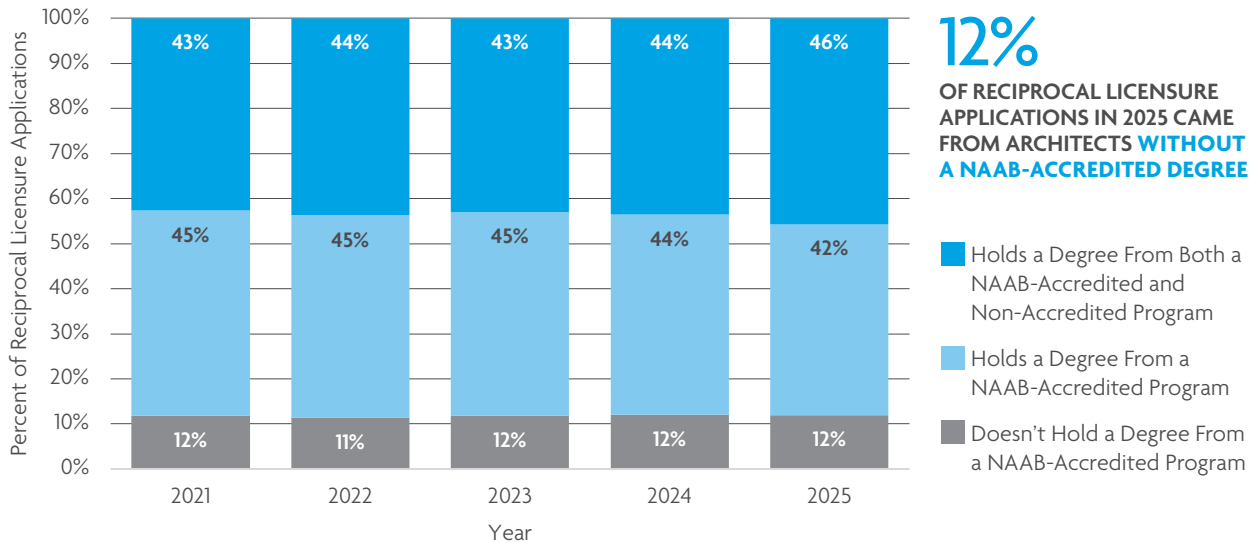
Architects with a degree from a NAAB-accredited program submitted most reciprocal licensure applications.

In 2025, NCARB processed over 13,000 requests to transmit an architect's Record in support of a reciprocal licensure application. Of those transmittal requests, **88% were from individuals who hold a degree from a NAAB-accredited program, and the remaining 12% were from individuals without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program.** In 2025, individuals without a NAAB-accredited degree made up 13% of the new architect population, and an estimated 15% of the total architect population.

Earning licenses in additional jurisdictions is essential for architects to expand their professional reach, allowing them to continue work for existing clients across jurisdictional lines or pursue new clients. By expanding Pathways to Practice, NCARB can ensure that architects of all backgrounds have access to important professional opportunities.

WHAT'S A TRANSMITTAL?

To process a licensure application, most jurisdictions require the applicant to have NCARB "transmit" a copy of their NCARB Record to the licensing board, allowing the board to review their education, experience, examination, and licensure history.

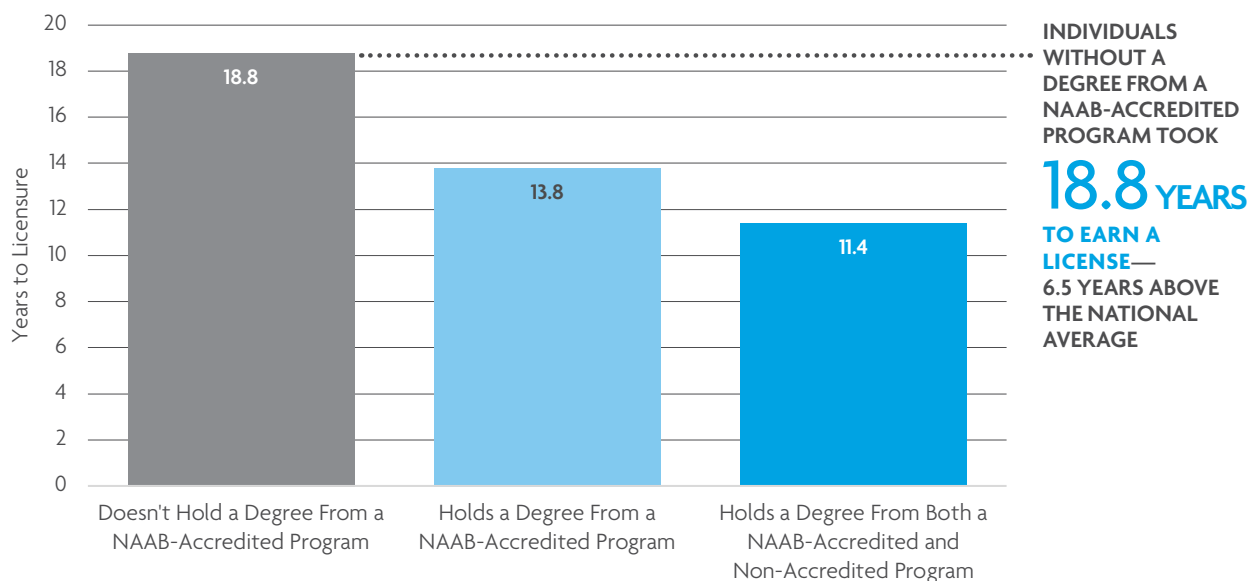


Individuals without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program take nearly 20 years to become licensed.

Typically, individuals without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program must demonstrate additional years of experience to qualify for initial licensure. The number of years of experience varies depending on the jurisdiction and the individual's educational background, but can range anywhere from 1 – 8 years of additional experience.

As a result, individuals without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program typically take significantly longer to earn a license than their peers. **In 2025, new architects without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program took 18.8 years, on average, to earn a license**—6 and a half years above the national average.

While NCARB maintains that ensuring individuals of all backgrounds have a path to licensure that suits their personal and professional needs is more essential than ensuring candidates complete the path to licensure quickly, we also believe that reducing the disparity in time to licensure between NAAB- and non-NAAB degree holders is critical to expanding access and improving equity.



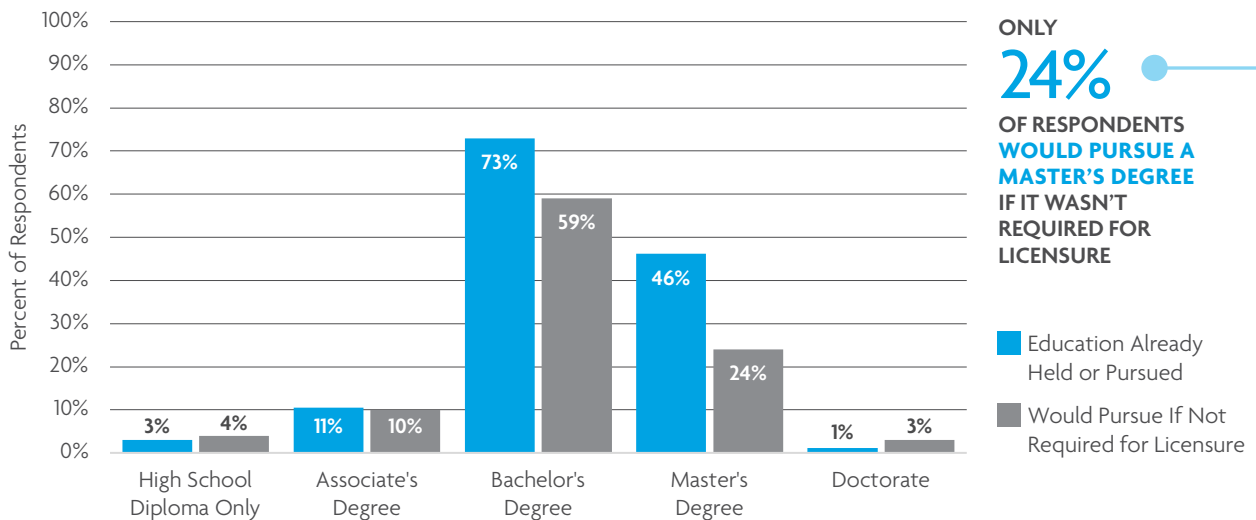
Many candidates wouldn't choose to pursue a master's degree if they didn't need it for licensure.

To better understand how Pathways to Practice might impact current and future licensure candidates, NCARB launched a *Future of Architectural Licensure* study in February 2026. As part of the study, candidates reported what level of education they already held or were in the process of pursuing. Nearly half (46%) of respondents held or were pursuing a master's degree.

Then, NCARB asked candidates to indicate the highest level of education they would be interested in pursuing if it was not required for licensure. Only 24% of respondents indicated they would pursue a master's degree if it wasn't required for licensure, including just 41% of respondents who indicated they already held a master's degree.

Together, these data points highlight that most licensure candidates who hold a master's degree do so out of necessity, not interest—likely because they graduated from a non-accredited 4-year degree in architecture and then returned to complete a NAAB-accredited master's program.

Note: This data is taken from NCARB's 2026 *Future of Architectural Licensure* study. For more information about the study, please see the [“About”](#) section of this report.



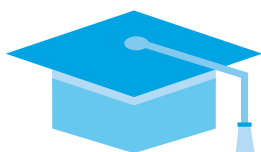
According to NCARB's *Future of Architectural Licensure* survey, many candidates would take advantage of greater flexibility in degree requirements for licensure.

If not required for licensure:



3 IN 4 CANDIDATES

**WOULD PURSUE A BACHELOR'S
DEGREE OR LOWER**



50% OF CANDIDATES

would consider degrees outside
of architecture, including:

40%

would pursue an
architecture-related
degree, like urban
planning or interior design

10%

would pursue a
degree in any
topic that
interested them

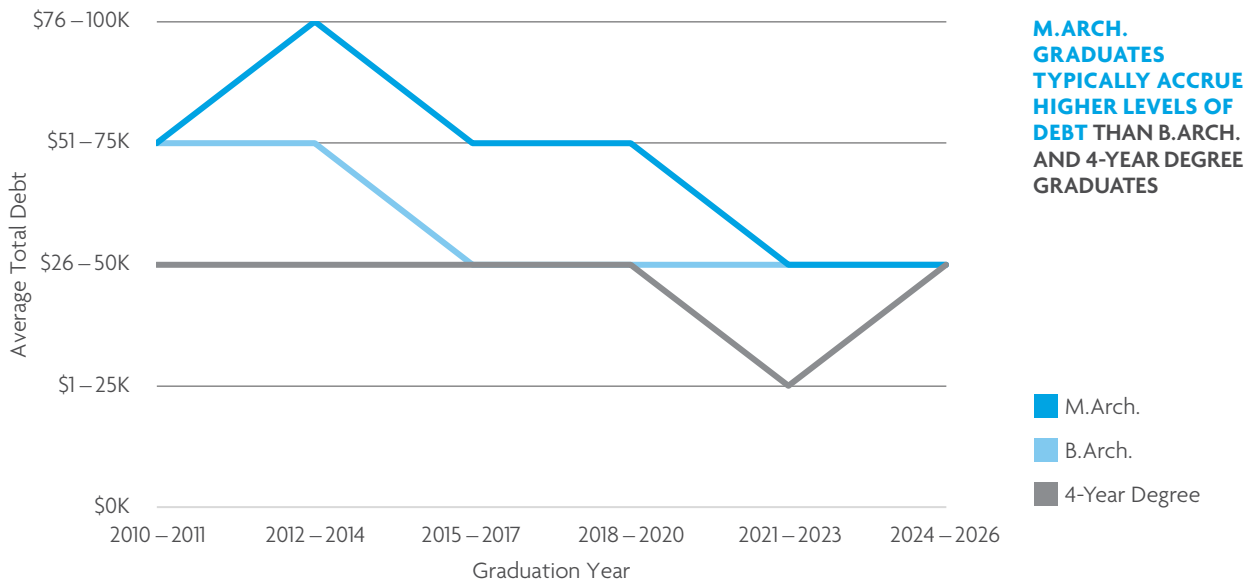
M.Arch. graduates typically accrue higher levels of debt than B.Arch. and 4-year program graduates.

To better understand the impact of potential federal lending caps on future architects, NCARB also conducted a survey on student debt in early 2026. Through that study, NCARB saw that **graduates with a Master of Architecture (M.Arch.) degree typically accrued a higher level of debt in pursuit of their M.Arch. degree than B.Arch. or 4-year degree students.**

Broken down by graduation year, the average level of reported total debt for M.Arch. and B.Arch. graduates has been trending downward over the past several years. The median debt for M.Arch. and B.Arch. graduates in 2010 – 2011 was \$51,000 – \$75,000, compared to \$26,000 – \$50,000 for 2024 – 2026 graduates. Meanwhile, the median total debt for four-year architecture-related degree graduates has largely held steady at \$26,000 – \$50,000 since 2010.

These debt levels are reported per individual degree (i.e., debt accrued specifically pursuing an M.Arch. degree, not total debt across all degrees earned by an individual).

Note: This data is taken from NCARB's 2026 student debt survey. For more information about the study, please see the [“About”](#) section of this report.



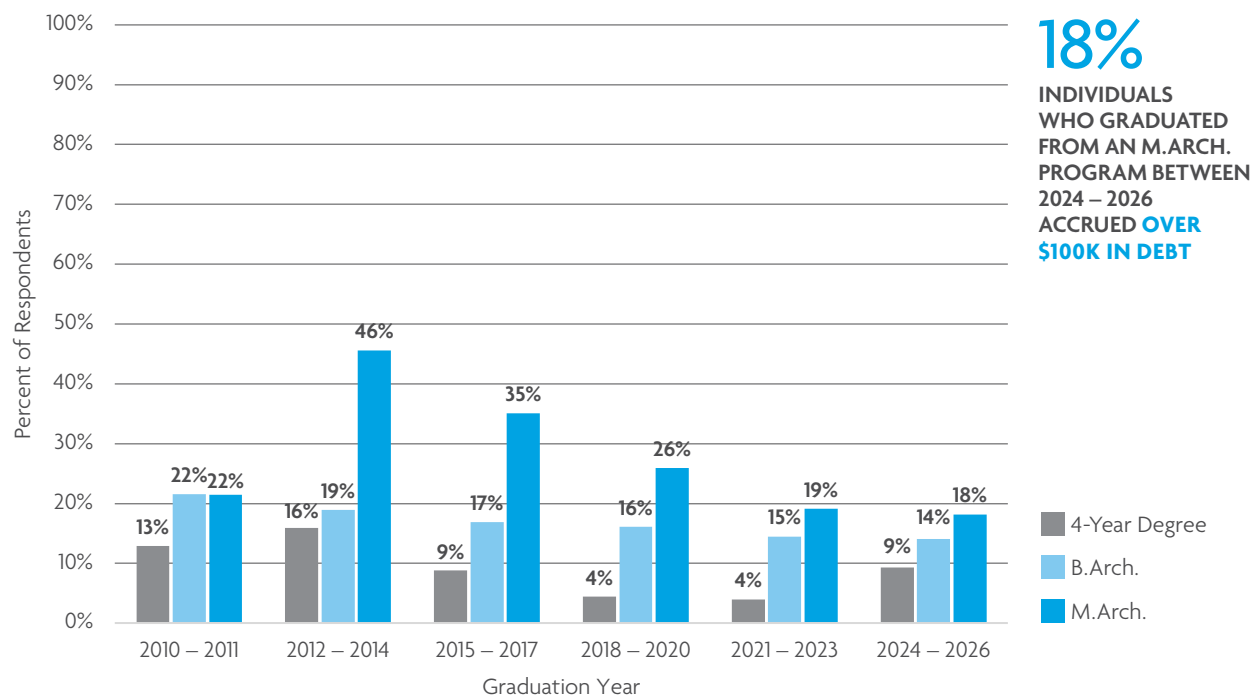
18% of 2024 – 2026 M.Arch. graduates accrued over \$100K in debt.

Of individuals who graduated from an M.Arch. program in 2024 – 2026, 18% accrued over \$100,000 in debt to pay for their master's degree—compared to 9% of 4-year degree holders.

While the reported levels of debt for M.Arch. graduates showed a steady decline following a spike in 2012 – 2014, this data shows that master's degrees continue to place a challenging debt burden on many students.

As with the median debt levels shown on the previous page, these debt levels are reported per individual degree (i.e., debt accrued specifically pursuing an M.Arch. degree, not total debt across all degrees earned by an individual).

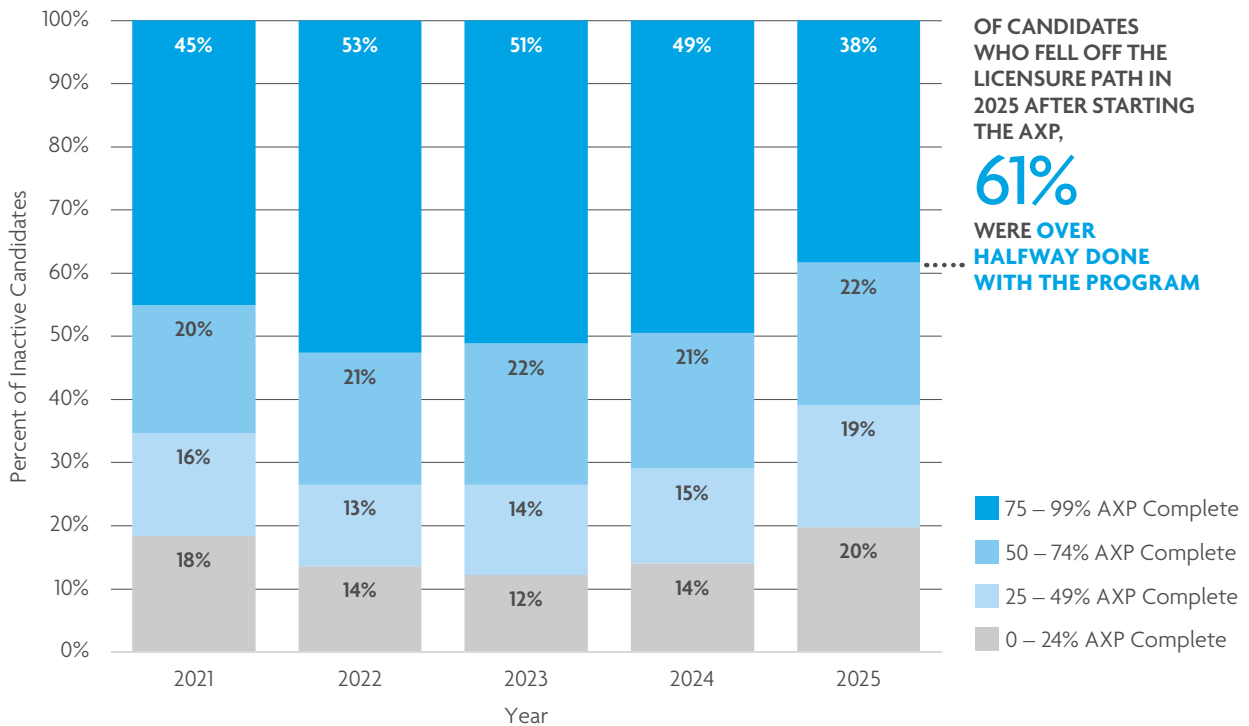
Note: This data is taken from NCARB's 2026 student debt survey. For more information about the study, please see the ["About"](#) section of this report.



Most candidates who stopped pursuing licensure during the AXP were over halfway done reporting hours.

NCARB's data shows that candidates who fall off the path to licensure tend to do so either prior to starting the AXP and ARE, or while reporting experience hours. **In 2025, 61% of candidates who became inactive while navigating the AXP were over halfway done with the program at the point they fell off the path.**

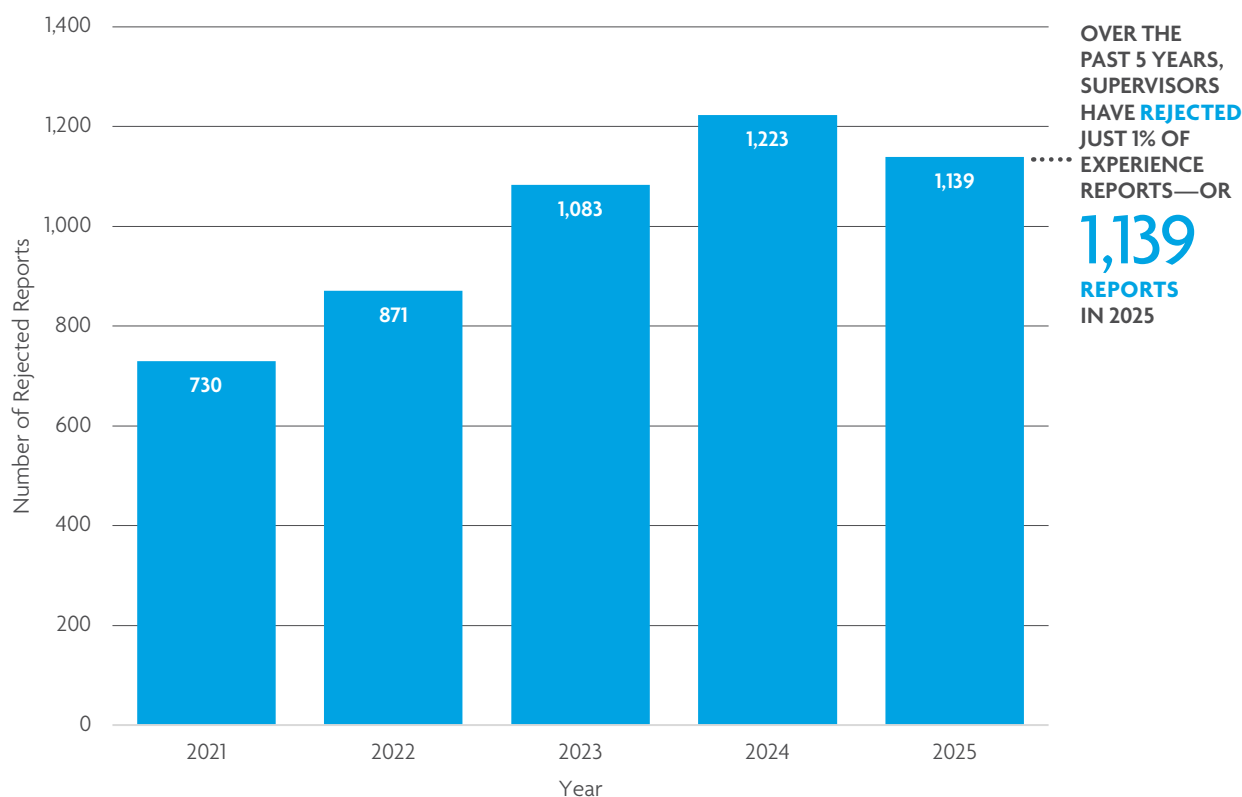
The average candidate who fell off the path to licensure during the AXP was 58% complete—this is equivalent to reporting over 2,000 hours toward the program's requirements. These individuals might still resume the program at some point in the future and may need access to additional experience opportunities within their firm to progress on the path to licensure.



Supervisors approved 99% of experience reports in 2025.

A candidate's relationship with their AXP supervisor can have a significant impact on their ability to progress through the experience program. NCARB's data shows that most supervisors support their candidates' progress through the AXP: **Supervisors ultimately approved 99% of AXP reports submitted in 2025, taking an average of 2 days to do so.** Just over 1,100 experience reports were rejected in 2025, amounting to 1% of all reports submitted in the year.

For candidates who don't have access to an AXP supervisor who is willing or able to review their reports in a timely manner or ensure they have access to work opportunities across all areas of the AXP, navigating the experience program can present a barrier on the path to licensure.



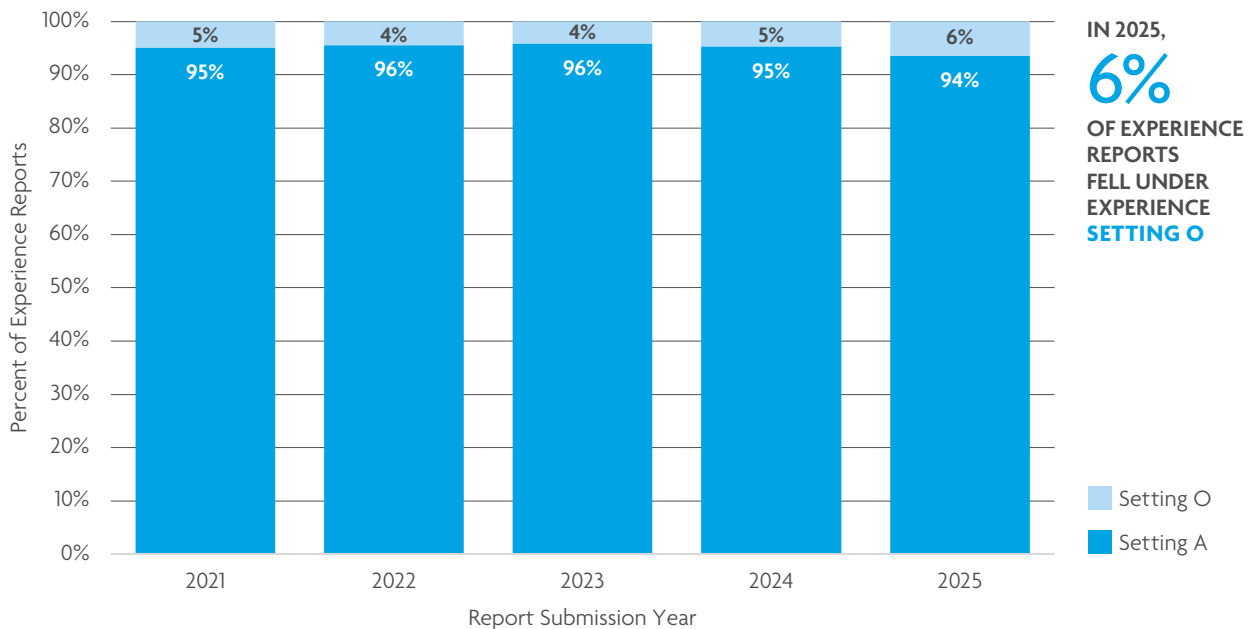
Most experience reports represented work performed in a traditional architecture setting.

At least half of a candidate's AXP experience must be completed while working under the supervision of a U.S. or Canadian architect, while employed by a firm that is a lawfully practicing architecture—this is experience setting A. Under experience setting O, candidates can earn up to 1,860 hours of experience through a variety of other opportunities, including volunteer work, work performed under other licensed professionals, and construction work. These opportunities are designed to recognize the variety of career paths licensure candidates can pursue, ensuring that relevant experience gained outside an architecture firm still counts toward licensure.

However, NCARB's data shows that few licensure candidates take advantage of these opportunities:

Of all experience reports submitted in 2025, 94% were under experience setting A and just 6% fell under experience setting O.

Some candidates may be unaware of setting O opportunities, or face difficulty engaging non-architect supervisors in the AXP process.

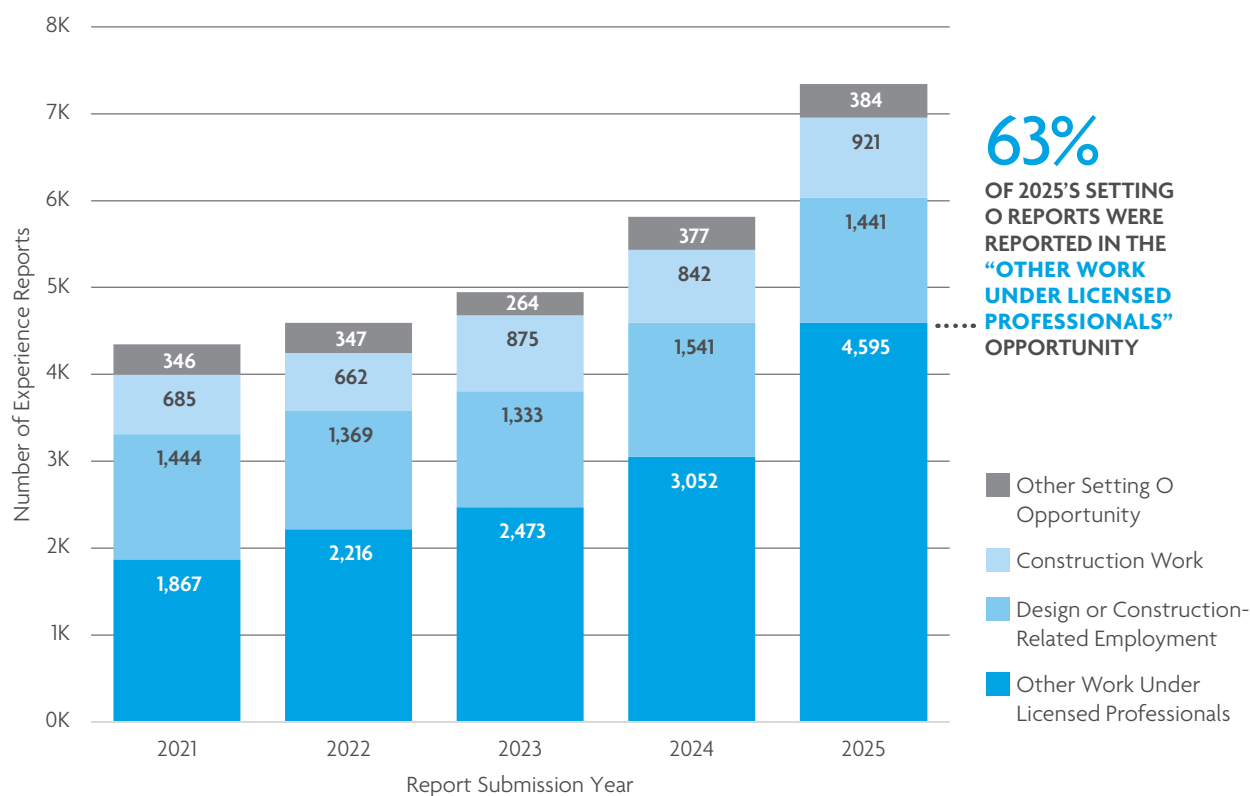


Most setting O reports fell under “Other Work Under Licensed Professionals.”

The most commonly used experience opportunity under AXP's setting O was “Other Work Under Licensed Professionals,” an opportunity that includes both work performed for architects licensed internationally and work performed for other professionals such as engineers or landscape architects.

Work under other licensed professionals represented 63% of setting O reports submitted in 2025.

Note: The uptick in experience report submissions seen in 2025 is likely a result of the update to the program's experience reporting policy, which allows candidates to gain additional experience for work over 8 months old. Many candidates submitted experience reports for older work to take advantage of the policy's implementation in November 2025.



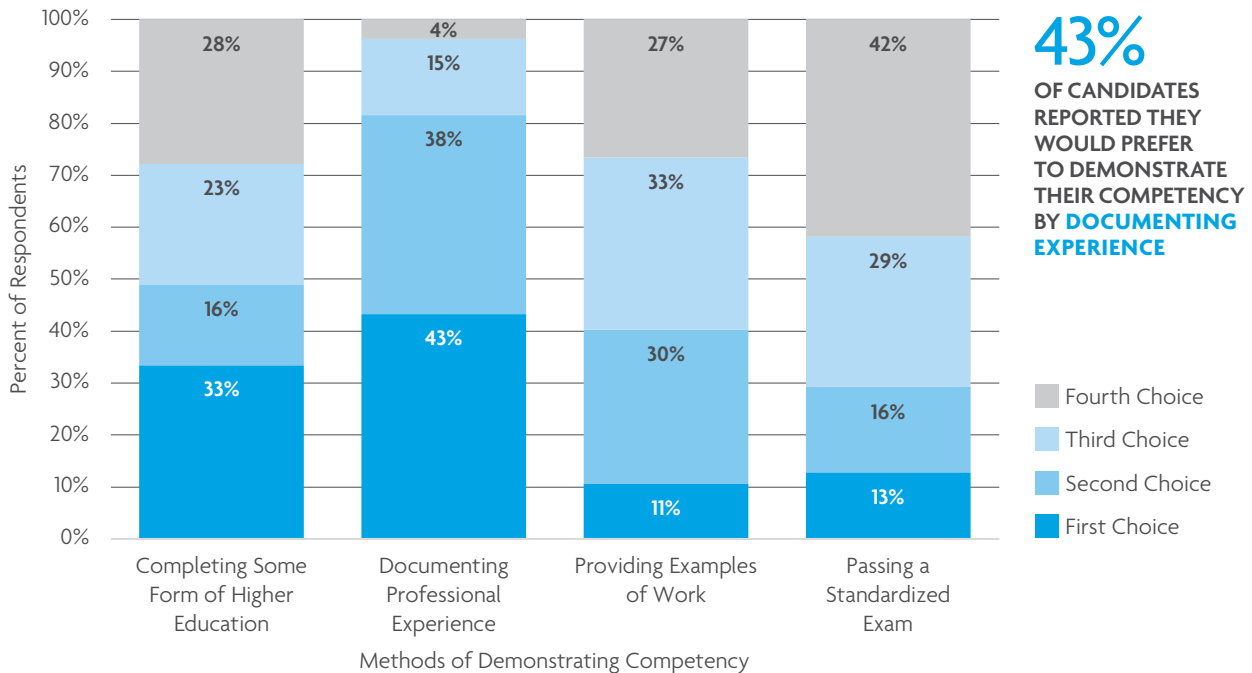
Most candidates would prefer to demonstrate their competency through experience.

As part of NCARB's *Future of Architectural Licensure* study, NCARB asked candidates to rank how they would prefer to demonstrate their competency for licensure. **Over 40% of candidates ranked “documenting professional experience” as their top choice, and an additional 38% ranked it in second place**—the strongest alignment across assessment methods.

While candidates were more split when ranking other methods of demonstrating competency—especially education, which saw 33% of respondents rank it in first place and but 28% rank it in last place—nearly two-thirds (63%) of candidates ranked “providing examples of work” in either second or third place.

A future licensure framework that allows candidates to choose which methods they use to demonstrate competency in a particular area could see candidates lean in to an experience- or work sample-based process.

Note: This data is taken from NCARB's 2026 *Future of Architectural Licensure* study. For more information about the survey, please see the [“About”](#) section of this report.



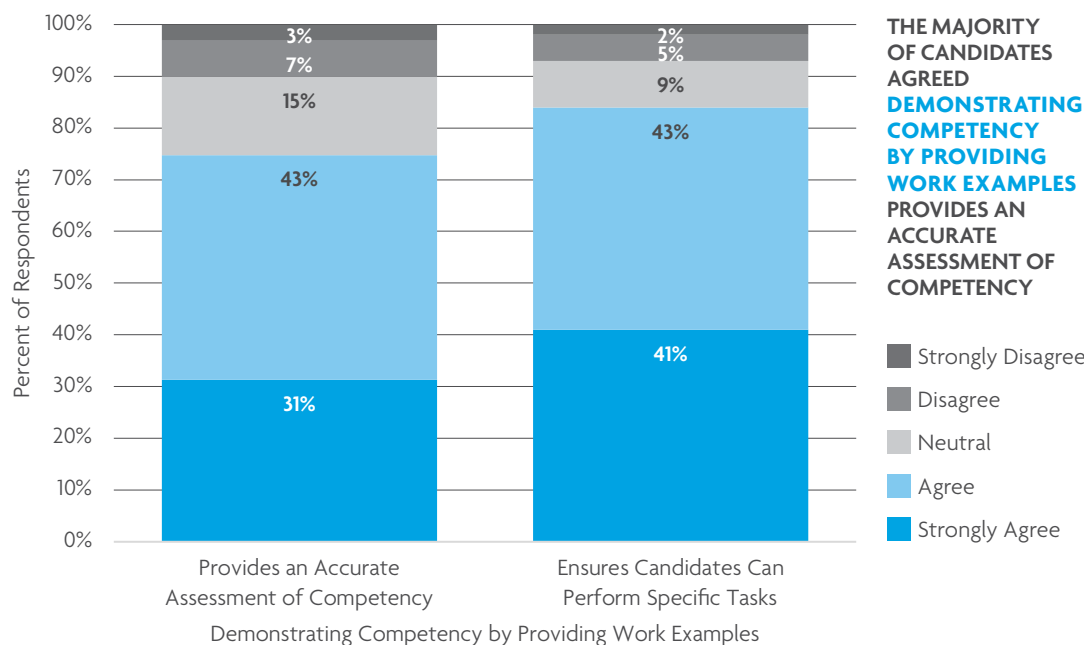
Candidates were confident in the accuracy of a work sample-based experience assessment.

The *Future of Architectural Licensure* study also asked candidates to rate their agreement with several statements, including that “demonstrating competency by providing work examples would provide an accurate assessment” and that “demonstrating competency by providing work examples would ensure candidates can perform specific tasks.” Nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) agreed or strongly agreed that demonstrating competency through work examples would provide an accurate assessment of their competency.

Candidates were even more enthusiastic in agreeing that a work example-based assessment would ensure that they could perform specific tasks, with 84% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Together, these data points highlight that a work example-based assessment method could help ensure that candidates have fully developed their knowledge and skills in particular areas before becoming licensed.

Note: This data is taken from NCARB’s 2026 *Future of Architectural Licensure* study. For more information about the survey, please see the [“About”](#) section of this report.



On average, candidates who completed the ARE in 2025 failed between 3 – 4 ARE divisions.

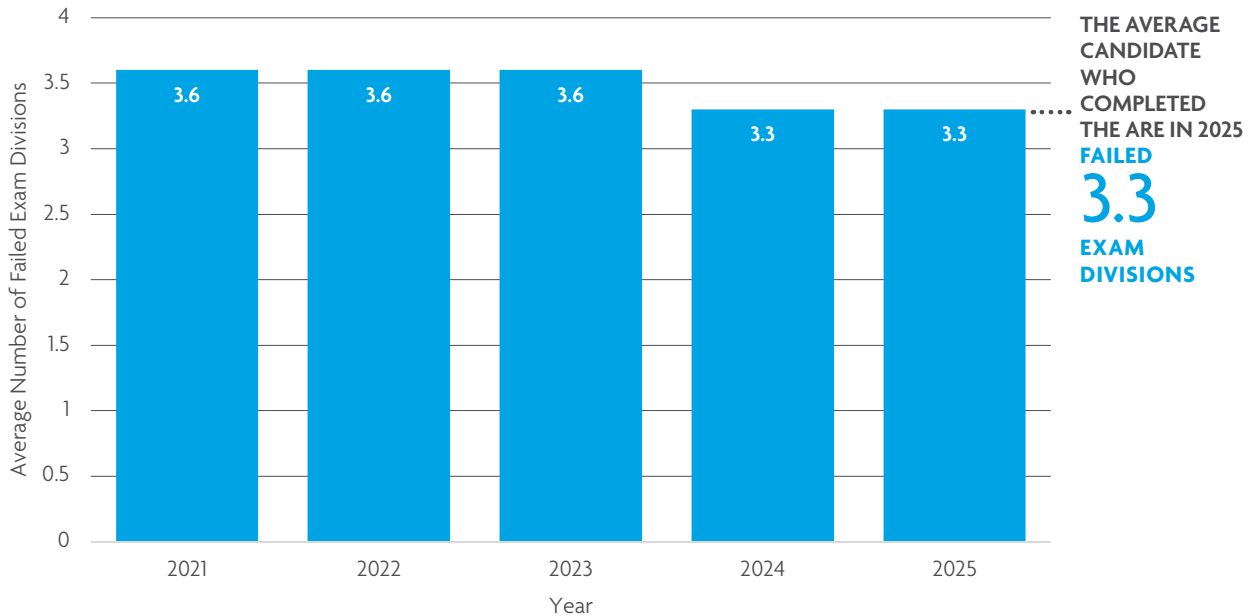
The average candidate who completed the ARE in 2025 did so in 9 total division attempts, including an average 3.3 failed division attempts. The average number of failed division attempts has held relatively steady between 3 – 4 attempts since 2021.

NCARB's data shows that candidates don't typically fall off the path to licensure during the exam—most candidates who have reached this point tend to complete the licensure path. However, high levels of failed division attempts can create additional financial and time constraints for licensure candidates.

DID YOU KNOW?

Averages can be measured in several ways. NCARB often uses **median** to measure averages throughout NBTN, which allows us to avoid skewing the average with outlier data points.

However, for this particular data point, a **mean** is more appropriate. When we refer to the average number of exam attempts, we're referring to the **arithmetic average**, or mean.

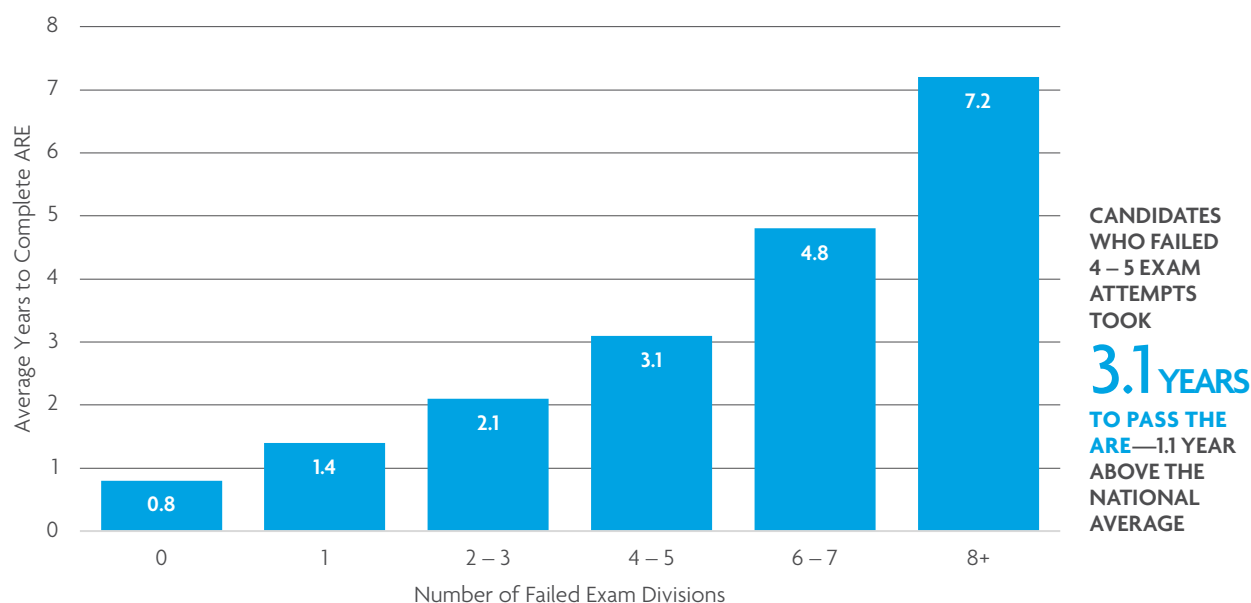


Time to complete the ARE increased with additional exam division attempts.

While 69% of candidates who finished the ARE in 2025 failed 3 or fewer divisional attempts before completing the ARE, those who saw above-average numbers of failed division attempts took significantly longer to complete the ARE. The average time to ARE completion in 2025 was 2 years, but candidates who failed divisions 4 – 5 times took an average of 3.1 years.

The average ARE completion time scaled upward with additional failed attempts, rising to 7.2 years for those who failed upwards of 8 division attempts. This added time is, in part, due to NCARB's retake policy: Candidates must wait 60 days before retaking an exam division and can take a single exam division no more than 3 times in a rolling 12-month period. However, the retake policy is not the only factor driving increased exam completion times, as candidates also reassess and strengthen their exam preparation approach, rest between exams, and sometimes lose motivation.

Through Pathways to Practice, NCARB hopes to provide candidates with the opportunity to choose the competency assessment method that best suits their career path and preferences, allowing those who struggle with standardized assessments to pursue a different—but equally rigorous—assessment method.



Demographics

Over the past several years, NCARB has introduced several changes to improve accessibility within our programs, with the goal of ensuring that individuals of all backgrounds have a Pathway to Practice. Our data shows that these changes are having an impact. Greater diversity in the candidate population is beginning to make its way to the pool of licensed architects: In 2025, more than 1 in 5 architects identified as a person of color.

NCARB has seen sustained growth in gender equity and racial diversity across licensure candidate stages—from creating an NCARB Record to completing the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®). In 2025, nearly half of all licensure candidates (49%) identified as a person of color. Women now represent 47% of licensure candidates, including 53% of new Record holders, and these increases are becoming more visible in the profession as candidates advance toward licensure.

Women account for 49% of the testing population and typically earn their licenses faster than men, completing requirements more than a year sooner on average. In 2025, 47% of candidates completing the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) and 36% of candidates completing the ARE identified as a person of color.

NCARB'S COMMUNITY OF RECORD HOLDERS IS INCREASINGLY DIVERSE

Of licensure candidates:

49%  **+1%
CHANGE**

PEOPLE OF COLOR



47% of candidates
completing the AXP are
people of color

+4 percentage point change since 2021

47%  **+1%
CHANGE**

WOMEN



Of new architects:

1 IN 3
PEOPLE OF COLOR



Women
are ready for licensure
1+ year faster
than men on average

2 IN 5
WOMEN



21% of architects identify as a person of color.

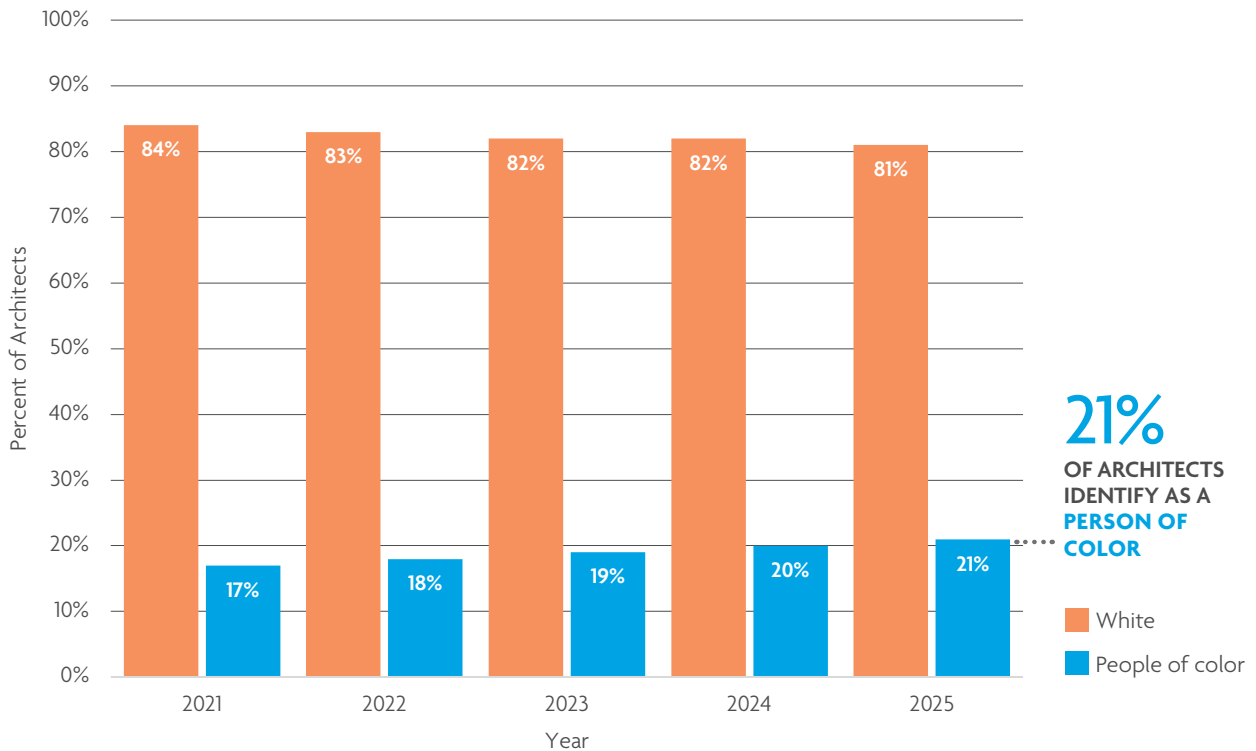
NCARB has seen steady growth in representation within the architect population over the past decade.

The proportion of architects who identify as a person of color has risen by 1 percentage point each year over the past 5 years.

People of color now make up 21% of the total architect population, 4 percentage points higher than the proportion seen 5 years ago. While white architects still make up a majority of the population, increased diversity in the candidate pool is slowly filtering into the pool of licensed practitioners.

DID YOU KNOW?

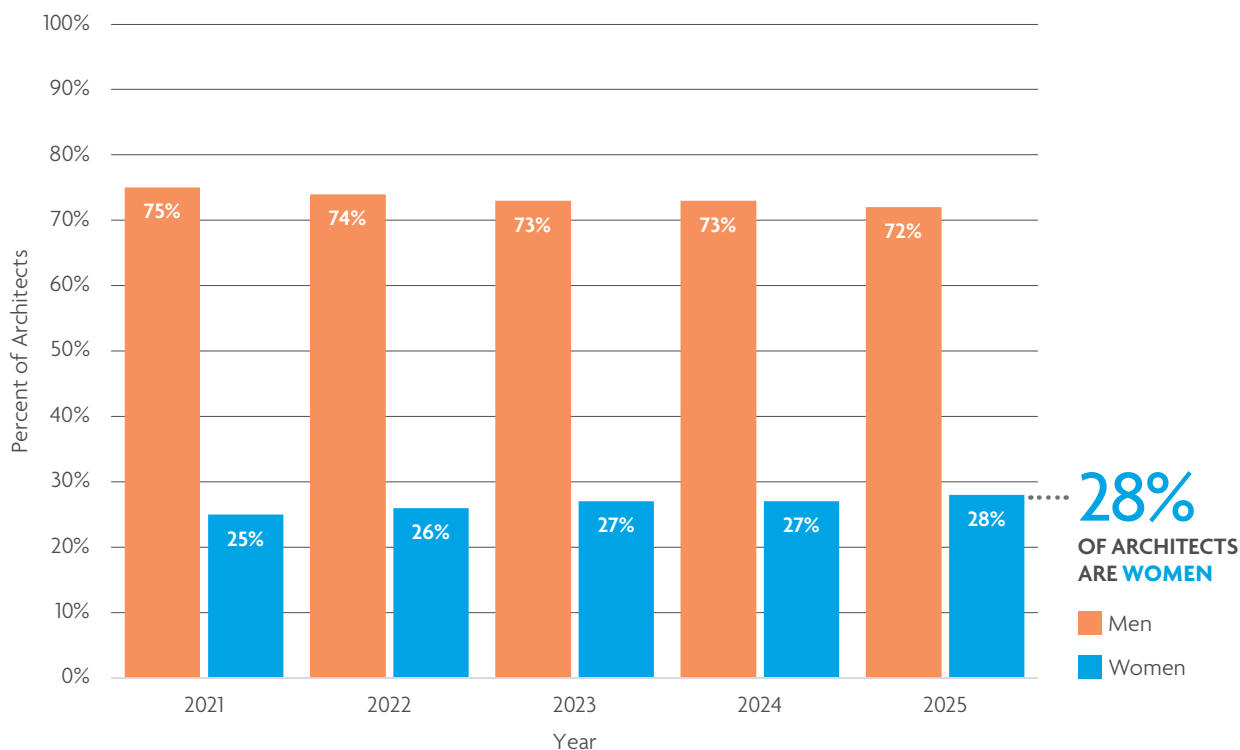
“People of color” includes anyone who identifies as a race or ethnicity other than white. Because individuals can identify as part of more than one racial or ethnic group, these percentages can add to more than 100%.



More than a quarter of architects are women.

In 2025, 28% of the architect population identified as a woman, 1 percentage point higher than in 2024. Like racial and ethnic representation, gender representation has shown a slow-but-steady increase over the past several years: Women now make up 3 percentage points more of the architect population than they did in 2021.

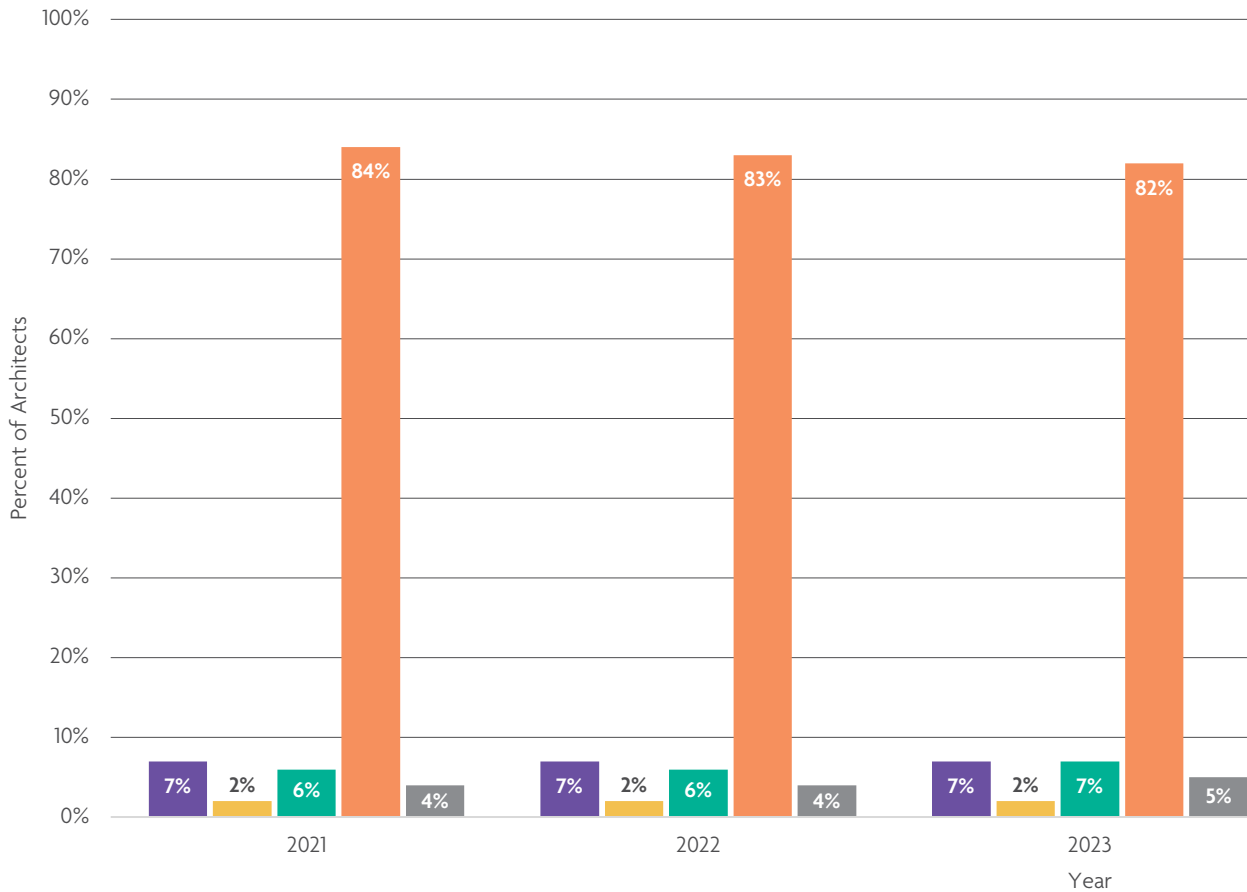
According to NCARB's Record holder data, less than .02% of the architect population identifies as nonbinary, approximately 10 individuals. NCARB's threshold for minimum sample size is 30 individuals. NCARB began offering nonbinary gender options within customer Records in 2023, so this proportion could shift upward over time as more Record holders make use of the demographic field.



Racial and ethnic diversity among architects holds steady.

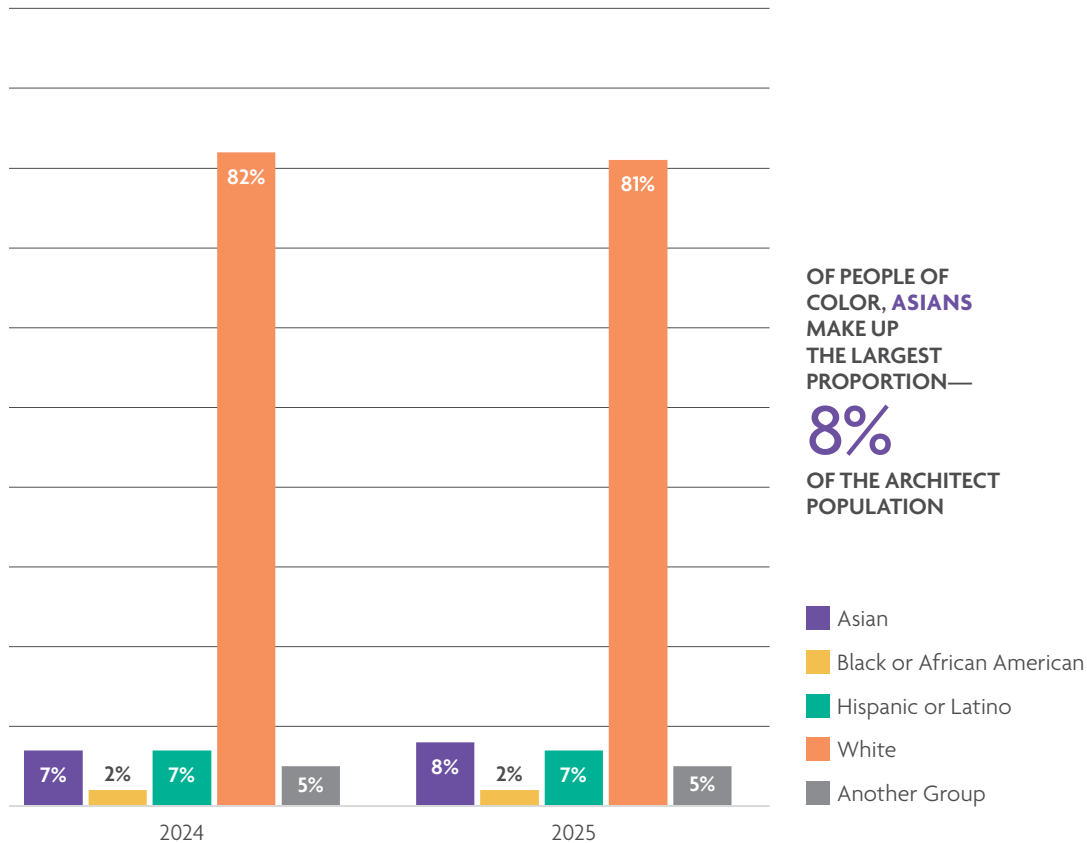
Racial and ethnic representation in the architect population shifted only slightly from 2024 to 2025: **The proportion of Asian architects rose, while the proportion of white architects fell—both by 1 percentage point.**

While most underrepresented demographic groups have seen slight increases over the past 5 years, Black or African American representation has remained unchanged.



WHAT IS “ANOTHER GROUP”?

“Another group” includes architects who identify as any group that is too small to include on its own, as well as those who self-describe.



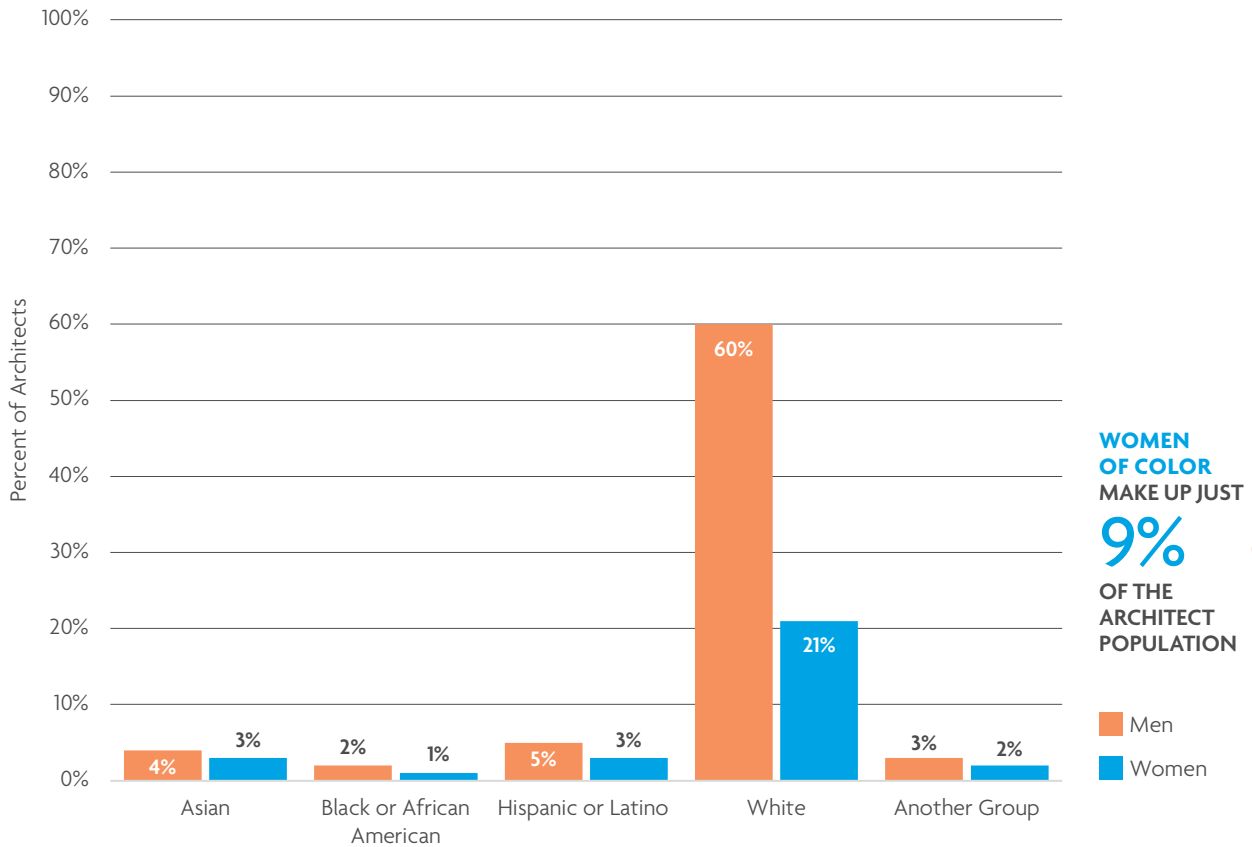
White men make up 3 out of every 5 architects.

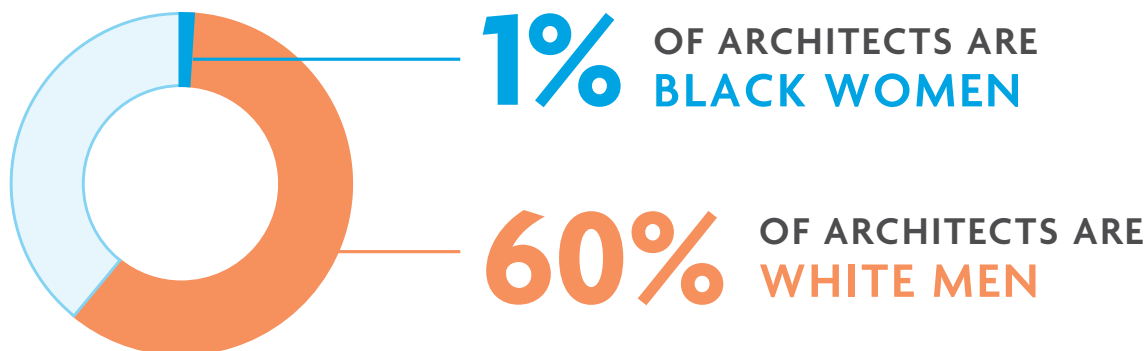
White men have historically been the most represented demographic within the architect population; in 2025, they made up 60% of all U.S. architects. **White women are the second-most represented group, making up 21% of the total architect population.**

Representation for most other demographic groups has slowly improved over the past several years. In 2025, women of color comprised 9% of the architect population, and men of color comprised 14%—each 2 percentage points more than in 2021.

DID YOU KNOW?

NCARB uses the NCARB Certificate holder population as an approximation for the architect population.





But diversity is slowly improving in the architect population:



1 IN 5
ARCHITECTS
IS A PERSON
OF COLOR



1 IN 4
ARCHITECTS
IS A
WOMAN

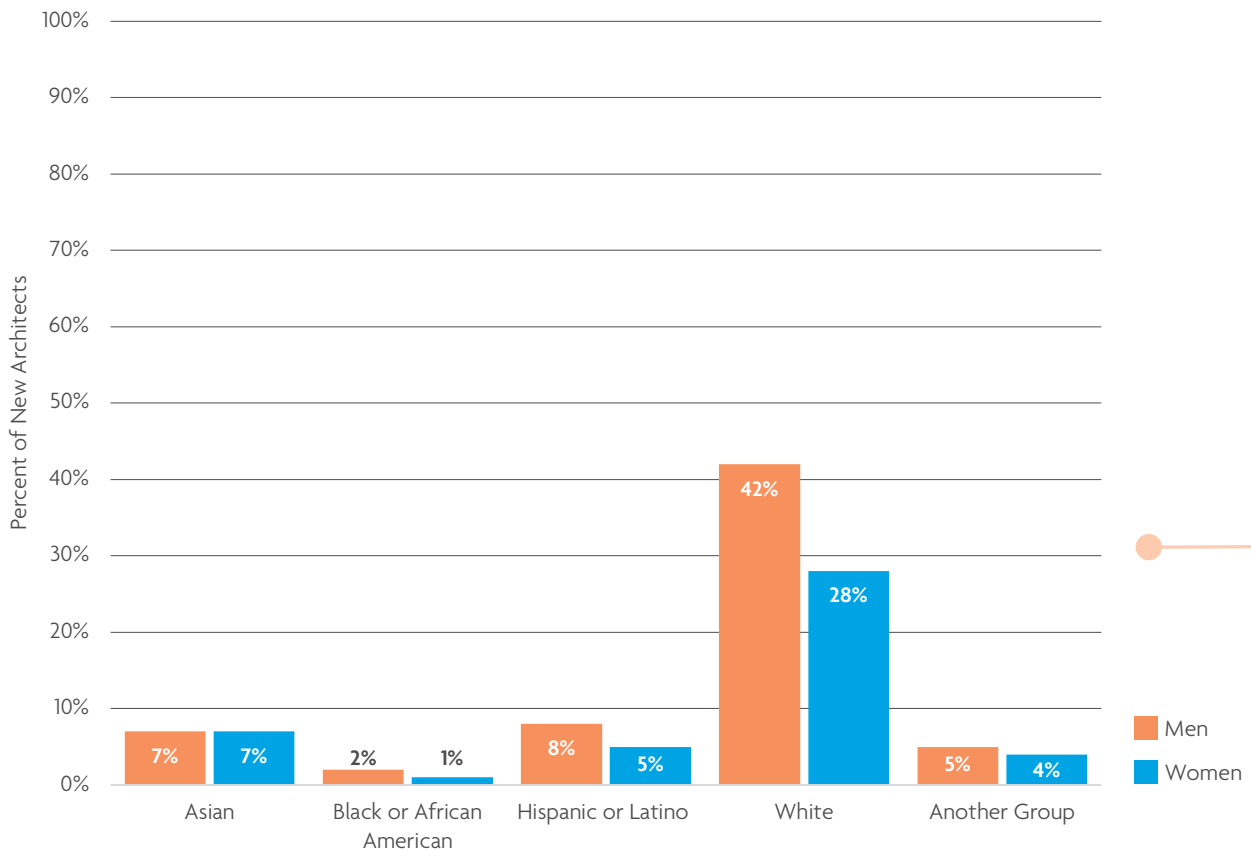


1 IN 4
ARCHITECTS
IS UNDER THE
AGE OF 40

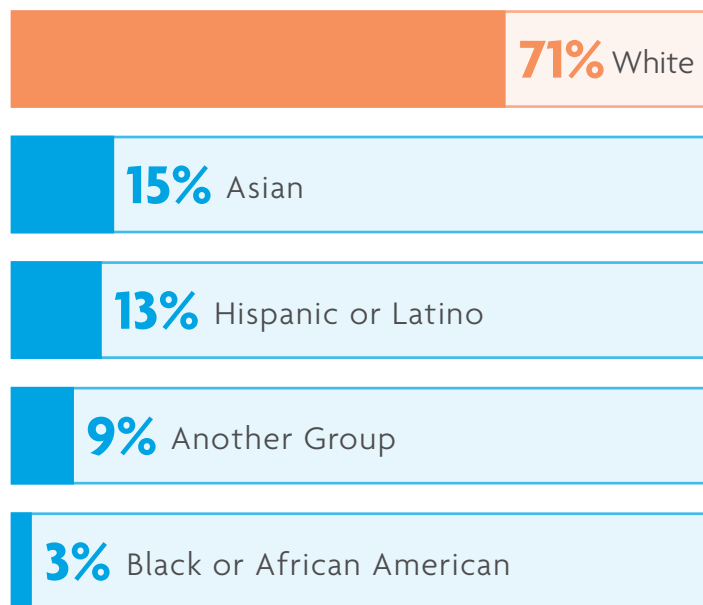
New architects are more diverse than the overall architect population.

While representation in the overall pool of licensed architects is slow to change, representation among new architects demonstrates the impact of recent programmatic changes. More than 2 in 5 new architects are women, and over a third are people of color—an increase of 2 and 3 percentage points, respectively, compared to 2021.

As the current cohort of candidates earn their licenses and become architects, NCARB expects representation in the new architect population to continue to increase.

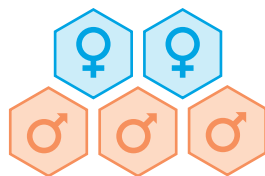


Over the past 5 years, representation among new architects has steadily increased.



1 IN 3

**NEW ARCHITECTS
IS A PERSON
OF COLOR**



**2 IN 5
ARE WOMEN**

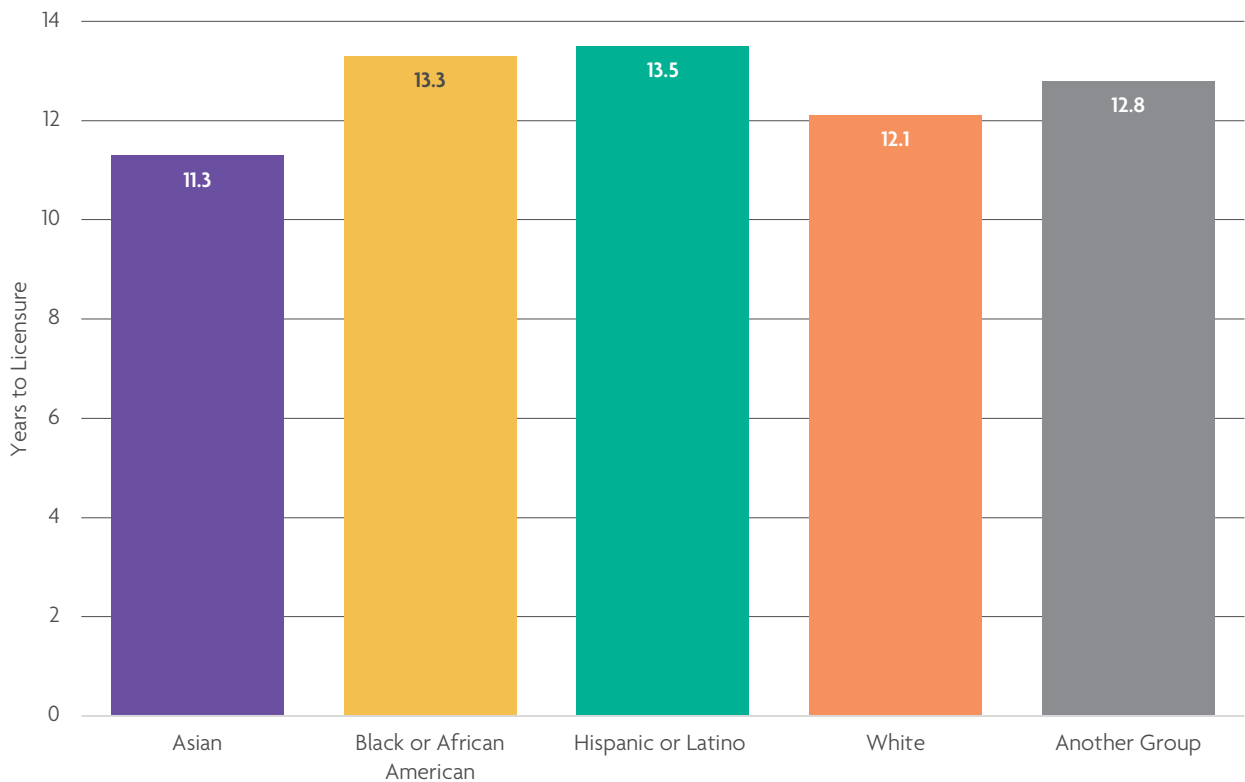
**78%
ARE UNDER
THE AGE OF 40**

Asian candidates consistently become licensed faster than their peers.

The average Asian candidate who completed the licensure path in 2025 took 11.3 years to do so.

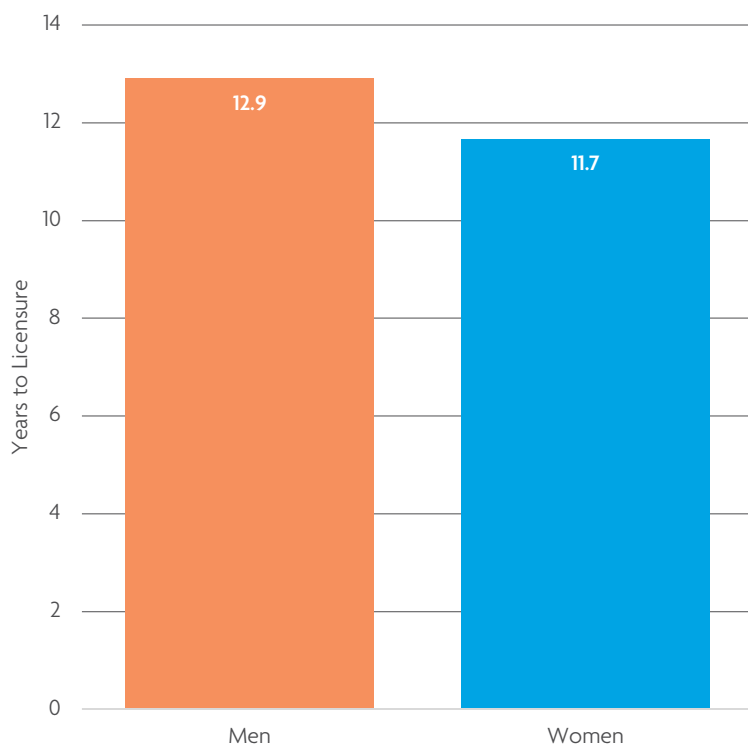
This is nearly 10 months faster than the average white candidate, who is typically the next fastest to complete the path to licensure. In comparison, Hispanic or Latino candidates took the longest at approximately 13.5 years.

Note: Because the sample size for underrepresented demographic groups is much smaller, the average time to licensure for these groups tends to fluctuate more significantly from year to year. Time to licensure data can also shift from previously reported numbers as candidates backdate experience or document additional information.



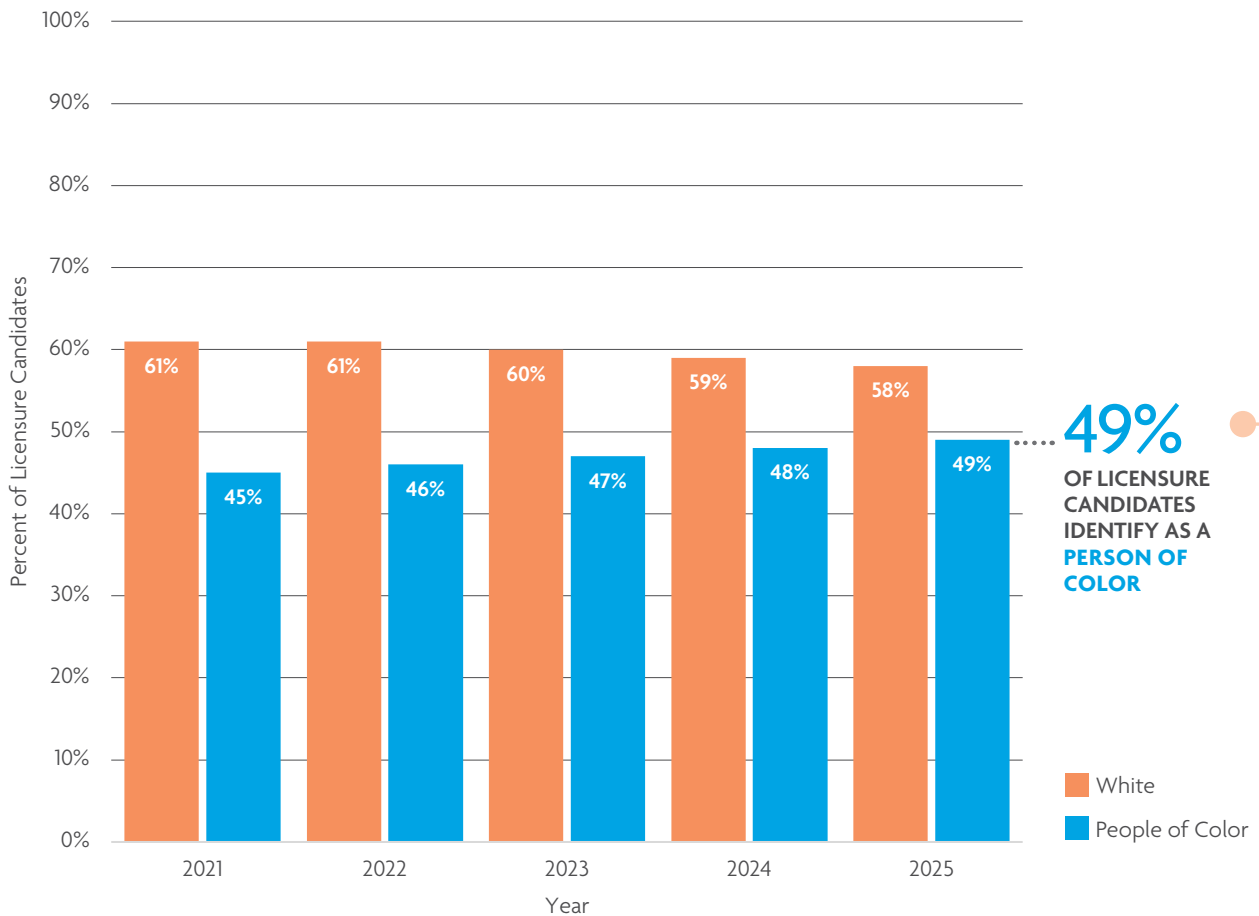
Women consistently earn their licenses faster than men.

Historically, women have completed the licensure process in less time than their male peers, a trend that continued in 2025. **The average woman who completed the path to licensure in 2025 took 11.7 years to do so**, over a year faster than the average man. Though the time to licensure for women remained steady from the previous year, the average time to licensure for men fell by approximately 2 months compared to 2024.



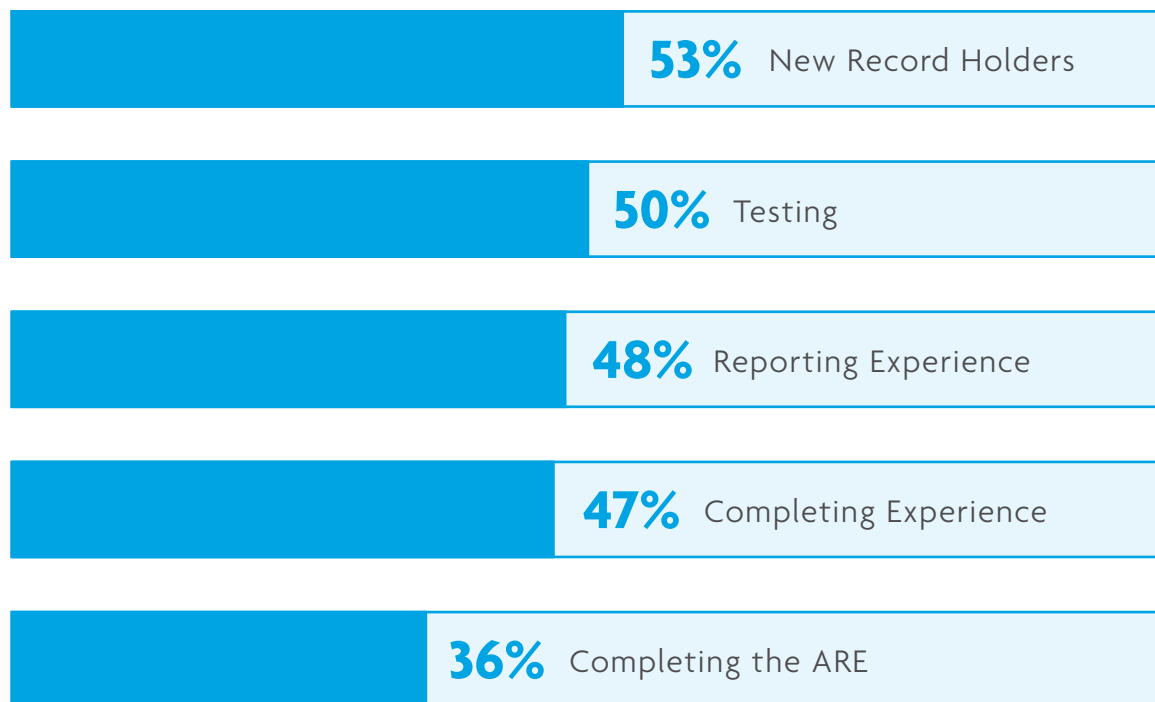
Nearly half of licensure candidates are people of color.

Over the past 5 years, diversity among candidates pursuing licensure has continued to increase. Just under half (49%) of licensure candidates in 2025 identified as a person of color—the highest level of racial and ethnic representation NCARB has seen in the candidate community. Representation in the community of licensed practitioners could increase in the years ahead as these candidates make their way into the architect population.



Licensure candidates are increasingly diverse.

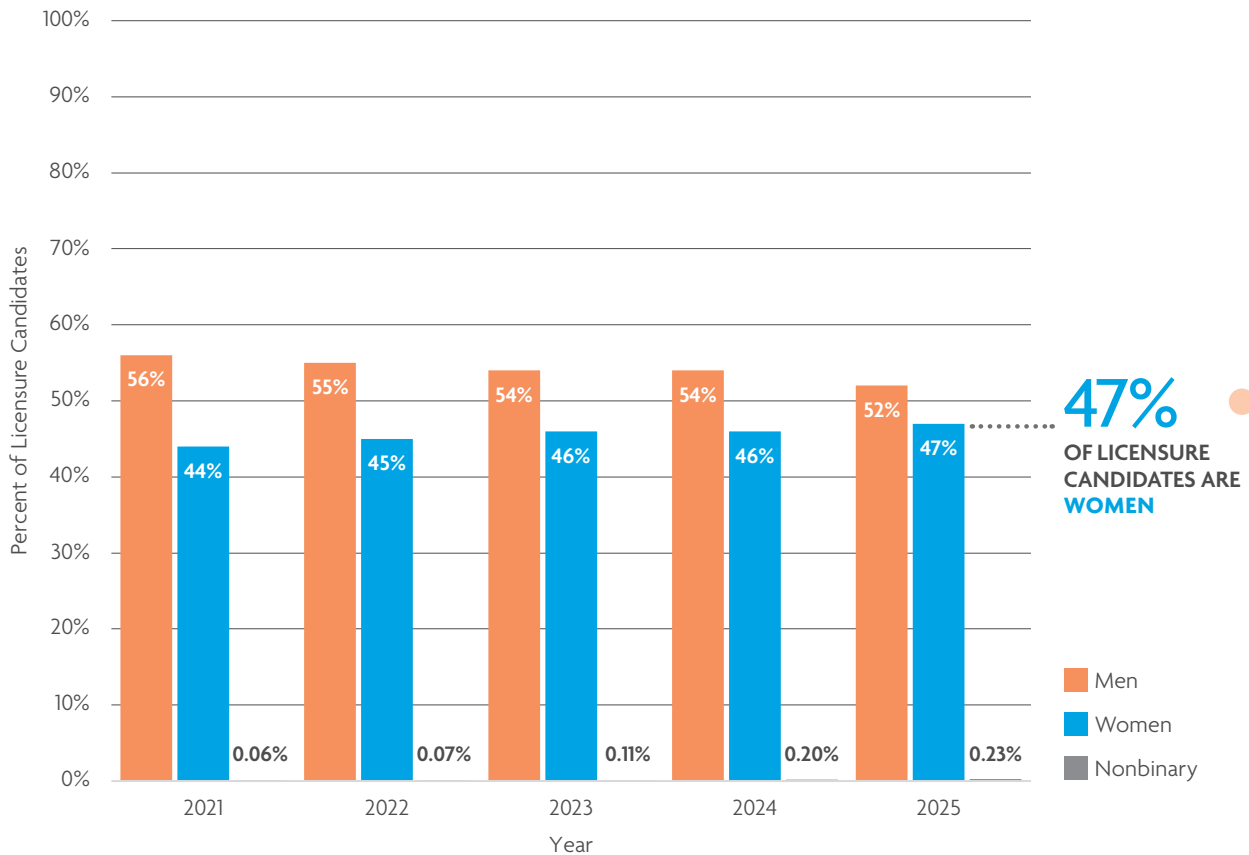
PEOPLE OF COLOR make up:



Gender representation inches closer to parity.

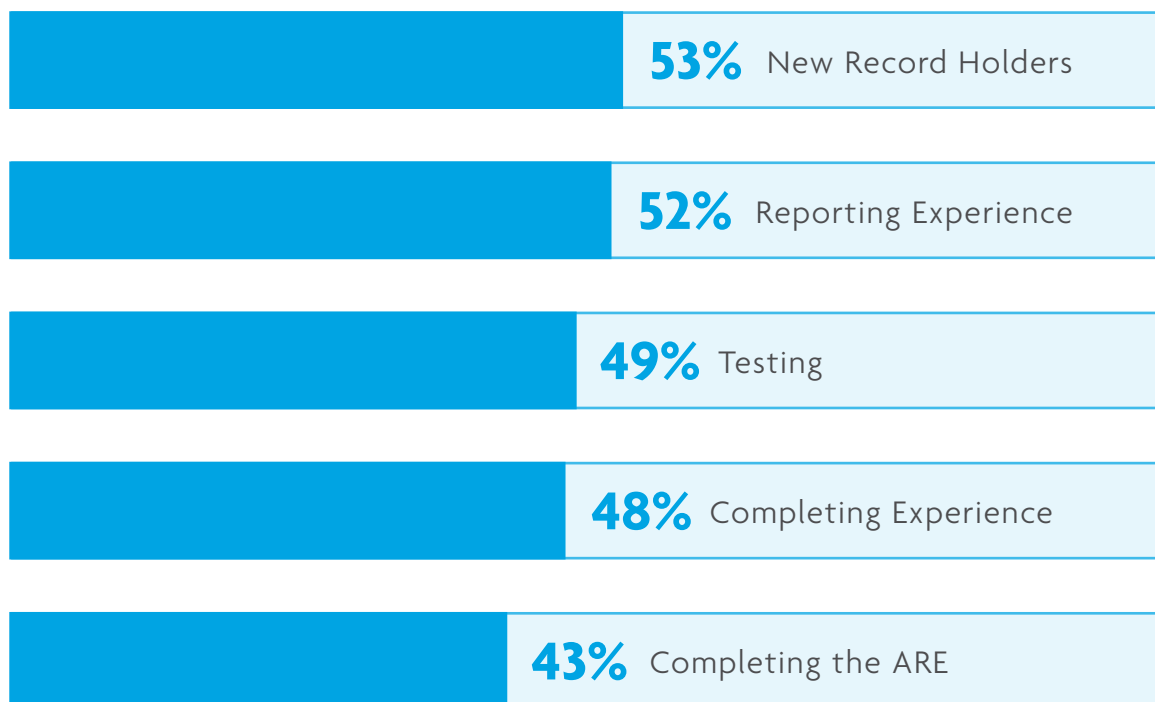
In 2025, 47% of the population of licensure candidates were women—a 3 percentage point increase since 2021. The licensure candidate population has been steadily approaching gender parity over the past decade. This trend reflects the increase in women pursuing careers in the architecture, engineering, and construction industry. It also highlights the impact of continuous work to promote greater equity and diversity within the architecture profession.

Currently, .23% of licensure candidates have self-identified as nonbinary. This is the second consecutive year that this demographic has crossed NCARB's minimum sample size threshold of at least 30 individuals.



Gender representation among licensure candidates continues to improve.

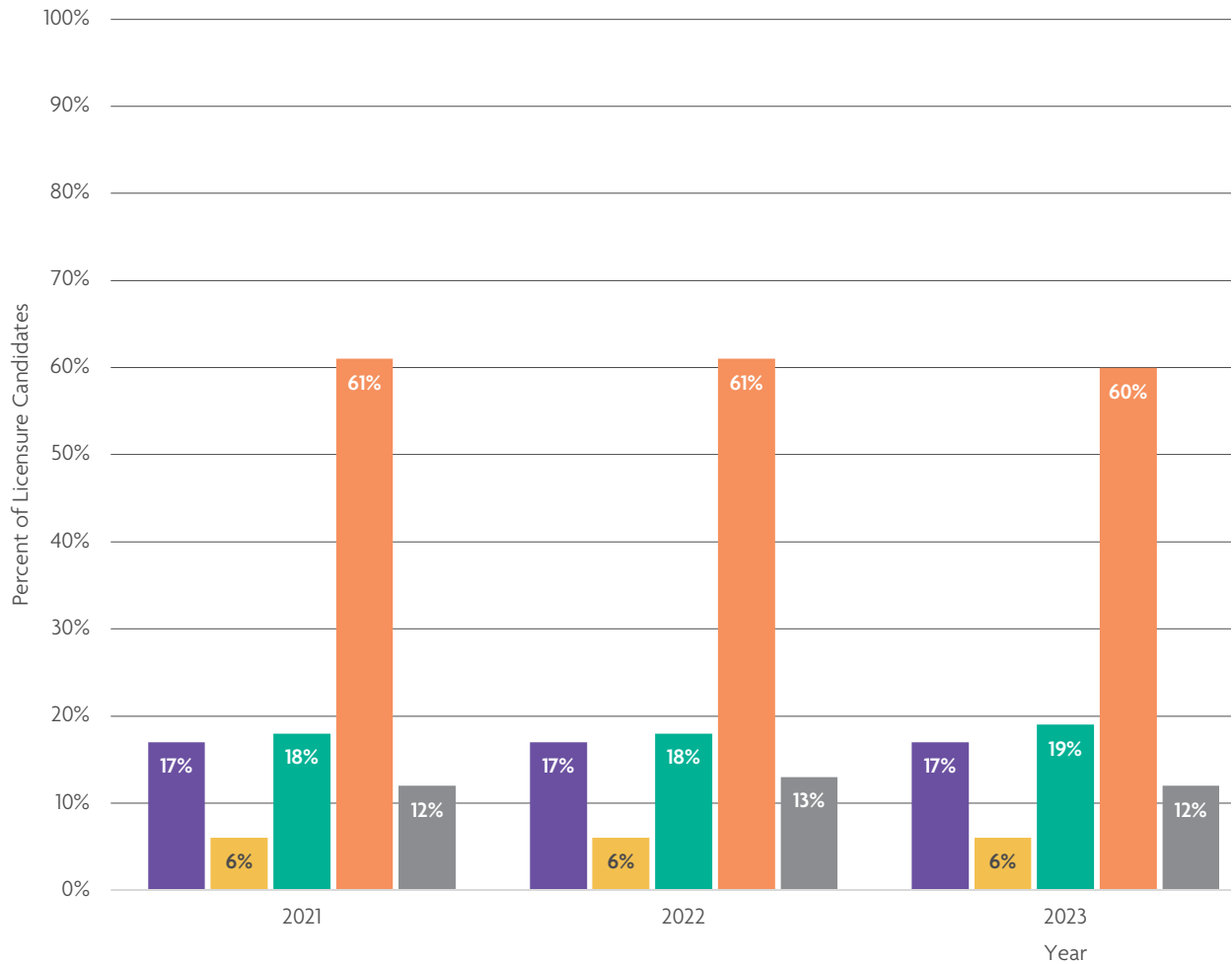
WOMEN make up:



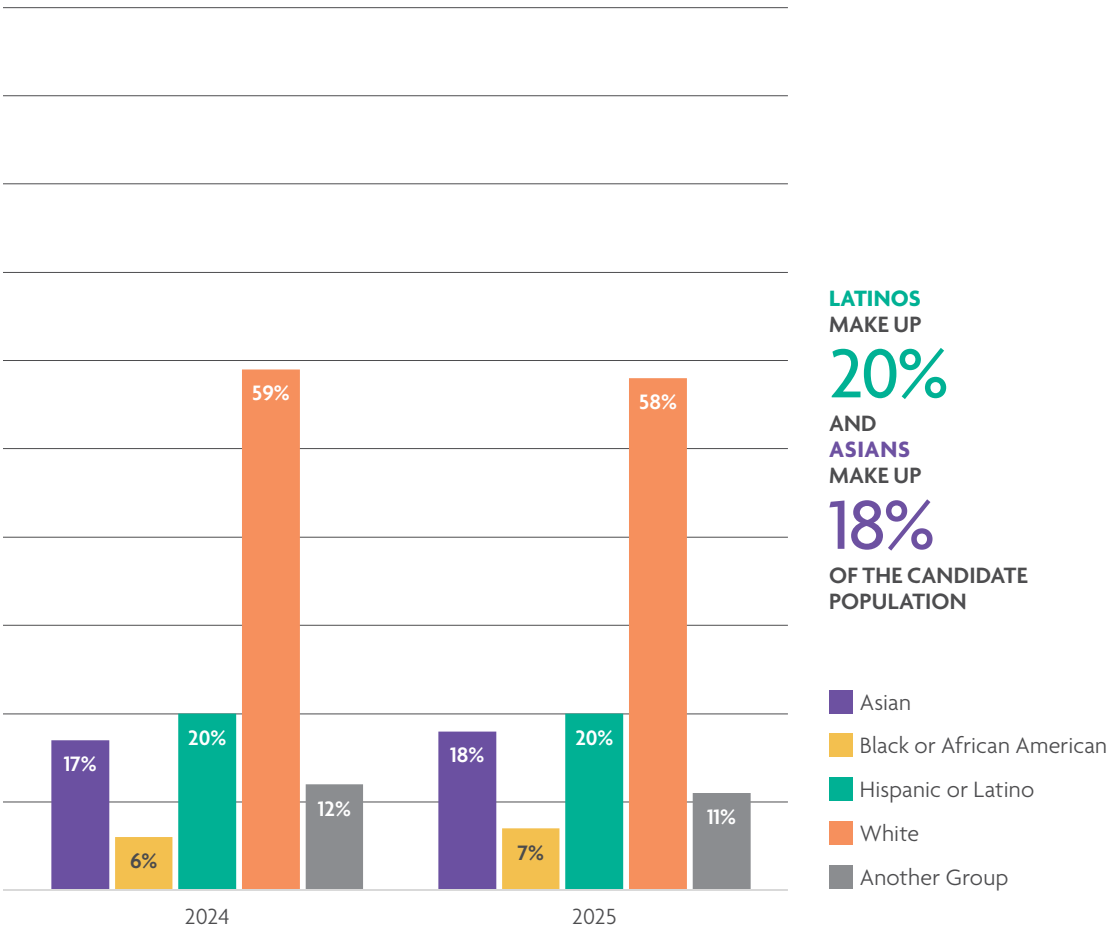
.23% of licensure candidates are nonbinary

Diversity is slowly increasing among licensure candidates.

White candidates remain the most represented group, making up 58% of all licensure candidates. However, representation continues to improve for most other racial and ethnic groups. In 2025, 1 in every 5 licensure candidates identified as Hispanic or Latino—a 2-percentage-point increase

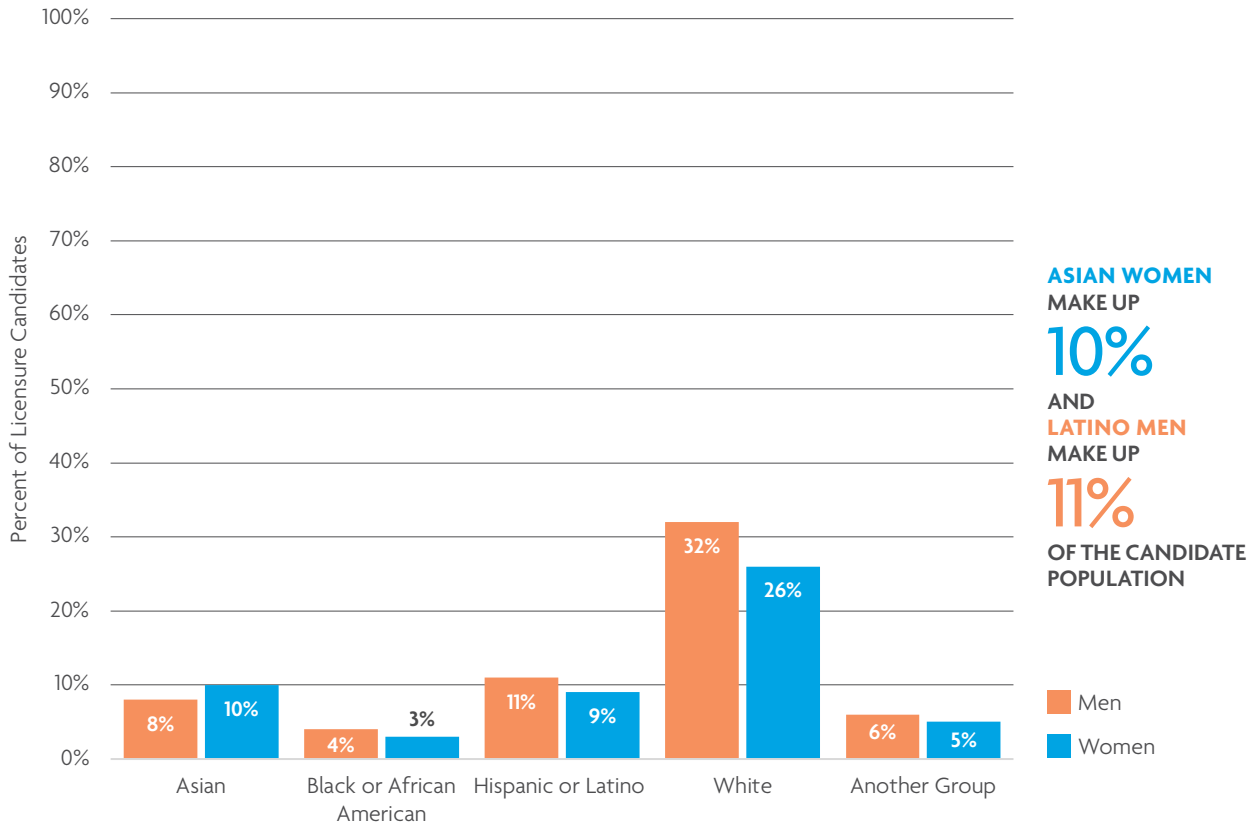


since 2021. Growth has been slower for Asian candidates, who made up 18% of the total candidate population in 2025, as well as Black or African American candidates, who made up 7%—a 1 percentage point increase over the past 5 years for both groups.



Nearly one-third of licensure candidates are white men.

As we continue to facilitate greater diversity and equity at all levels of the architecture profession, progress is most evident in the licensure candidate population. While white men continue to be the most represented group of licensure candidates, making up 32%, people of color now make up nearly half of the candidate population at 49%. **Among candidates of color, Latino men and Asian women are the most represented groups**, accounting for 11% and 10% of the population, respectively. While Black or African American men (4%) and women (3%) continue to be one of the most underrepresented groups of the licensure candidate population, both have increased slightly—1%—since 2021.



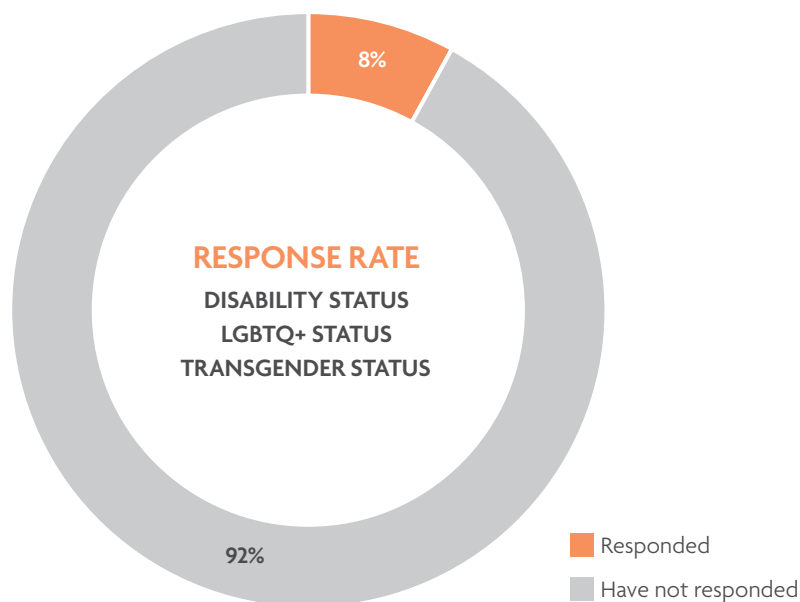
8% of Record holders are using NCARB's new demographic fields.

In 2023, NCARB began collecting demographic information on disability status, LGBTQ+ status, and transgender status. Providing this information is optional—approximately 8% of Record holders are taking advantage of the new demographic fields.

Of Record holders who have chosen to self-identify, approximately:

- 9% identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community
- 5% have a disability
- 0.4% are transgender

NCARB aligns our demographic options with industry best practices, enabling the organization to make informed, equitable decisions regarding our programs and services.



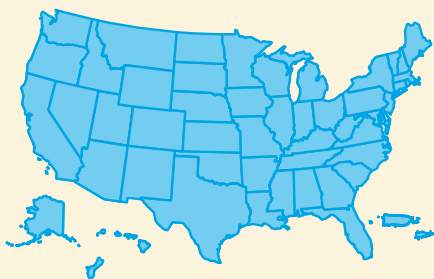
Building Toward Competency

The licensure process is designed to help candidates build up their ability to competently practice architecture—specifically in areas of practice that are tied to the public’s health, safety, and welfare.

Typically, candidates develop these competencies through a combination of education and experience. Most candidates satisfy education and experience requirements by earning a degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) and completing the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®). However, the proportion of candidates pursuing licensure through alternative Pathways to Practice—and acceptance of those alternative paths at the jurisdictional level—is growing. In 2025, 13% of new architects chose to earn additional experience in lieu of earning a degree from a NAAB-accredited program, up 2 percentage points from 2024.

Through our Pathways to Practice initiative, NCARB is working to expand access to licensure for those with non-traditional education or career paths—including those without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program.

NCARB also launched several updates to the AXP in 2025, aligning the program with the *NCARB Competency Standard for Architects* and refreshing the program’s reporting policy. As a result, NCARB saw above-average numbers of candidates complete the AXP in 2024 – 2025, as well as a drop in the average time to complete the program.



19 JURISDICTIONS

ALLOW MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT

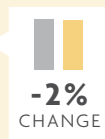
But earning a degree from a NAAB-accredited program is still the most popular path

26,440

CANDIDATES
REPORTING EXPERIENCE

6,002

CANDIDATES
SUBMITTED THEIR
LAST EXPERIENCE REPORT



Average time
to complete AXP
—6 months faster
than in 2024

OF NEW ARCHITECTS:



88%

followed the
NAAB-accredited
education path

13%

earned
additional
experience

More than

2 IN 5



CANDIDATES

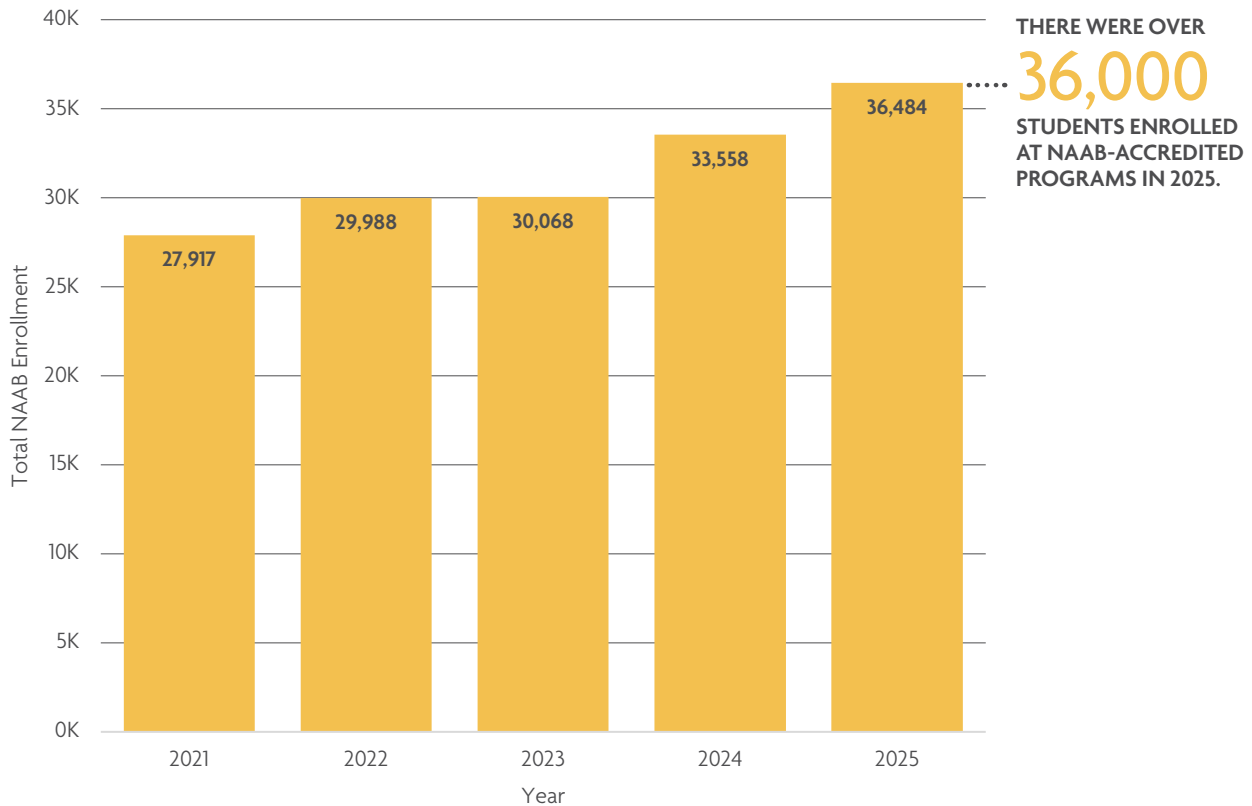
completed the AXP
in less than 4 years

NAAB enrollment grew by 9% in 2025.

More than 36,000 students were enrolled in a NAAB-accredited program in the 2024 – 2025 school year, a 9% increase compared to the previous school year. The total number of students enrolled in a NAAB-accredited program has been steadily growing over the past several years. Of the more than 36,000 total enrollees, over 11,000 graduated in the 2024 – 2025 school year.

Of students enrolled in NAAB-accredited programs, 69% are enrolled in Bachelor of Architecture programs, and 31% are enrolled in Master of Architecture or Doctor of Architecture programs.

Note: This data is provided to the NAAB by accredited programs and will be published in the 2025 NAAB Report on Accreditation in Architecture, available at www.naab.org. Students enrolled in non-accredited architecture programs are not represented.

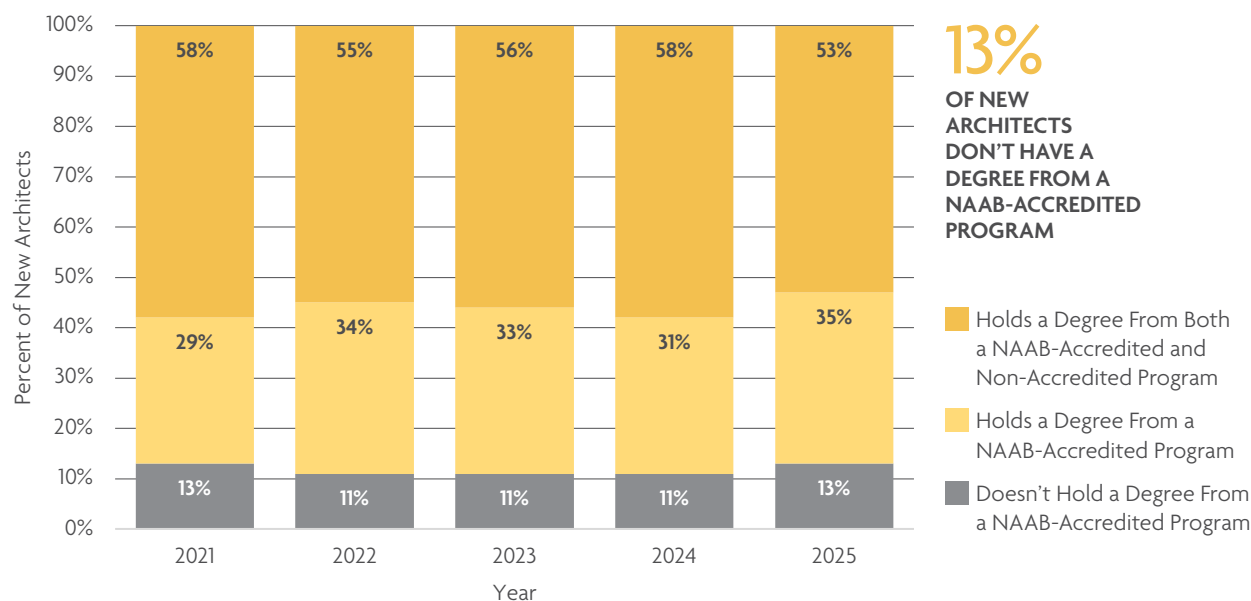


Most new architects have a degree from a NAAB-accredited program.

Most of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions require licensure candidates to have a degree from a NAAB-accredited program for initial licensure. In 2025, only 19 jurisdictions offered multiple pathways to initial licensure. However, 49 jurisdictions allowed multiple pathways to reciprocal licensure, an option NCARB is working to expand through our Pathways to Practice effort.

Because most jurisdictions require a degree from a NAAB-accredited program, this is the most common path to earning a license in the United States. However, several additional jurisdictions have recently adopted multiple pathways for initial licensure. **The proportion of new architects without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program rose to 13% in 2025, up 2 percentage points from 2024.**

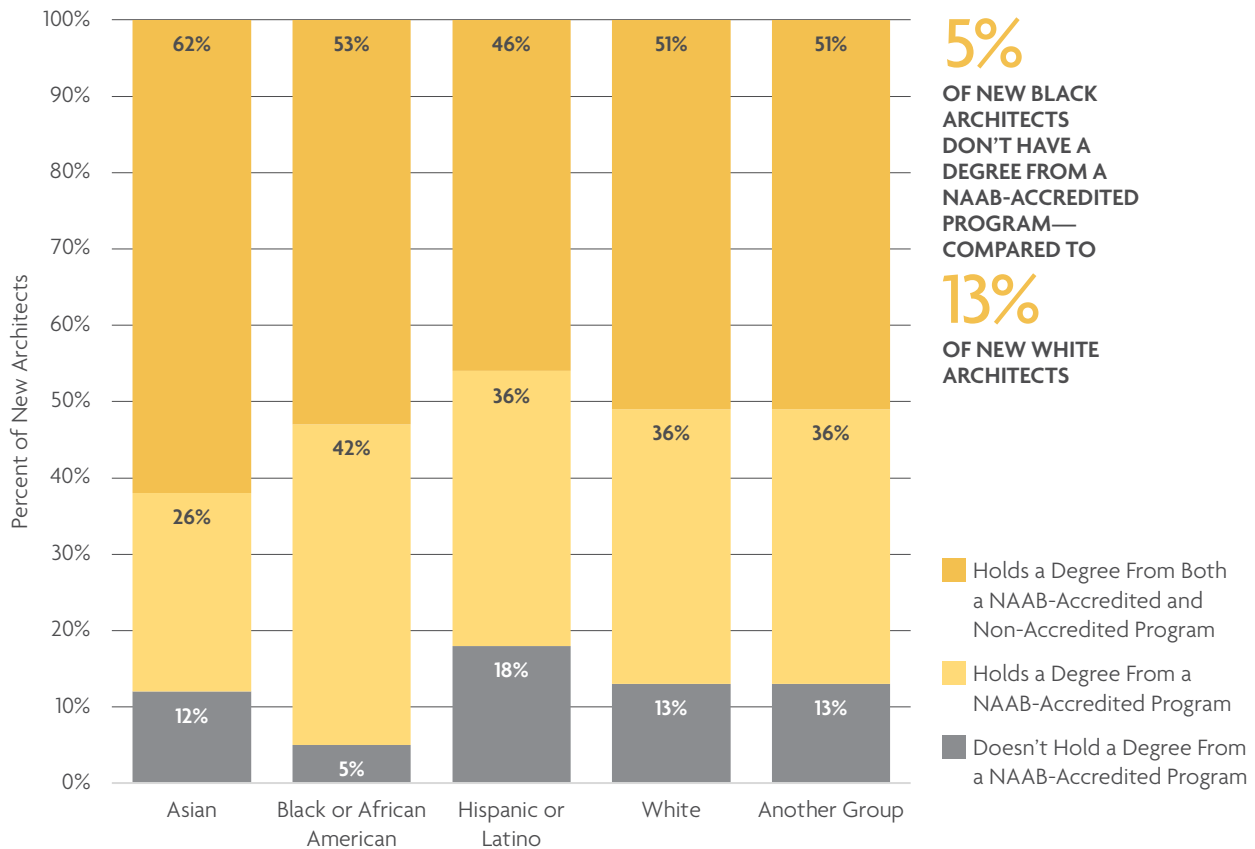
Earning a degree from an accredited program typically takes 5 – 7 years. Often, candidates graduate from a non-accredited, 4-year program and then return to school for a Master of Architecture degree, an investment of time and resources that can create a significant burden on early career professionals. To address this impediment, NCARB is working to create multiple pathways to licensure that include a variety of education, experience, and examination opportunities.



New Black architects are most likely to have a degree from a NAAB-accredited program.

Newly licensed architects who identify as Black or African American are typically the most likely to hold a degree from a NAAB-accredited program. In 2025, just 5% of new Black architects did not have an accredited degree—8 percentage points fewer than the proportion of new white architects without an accredited degree.

Newly licensed architects who identified as Hispanic or Latino were the most likely not to hold a degree from a NAAB-accredited program at 18%.



70% of new architects graduated from public universities.

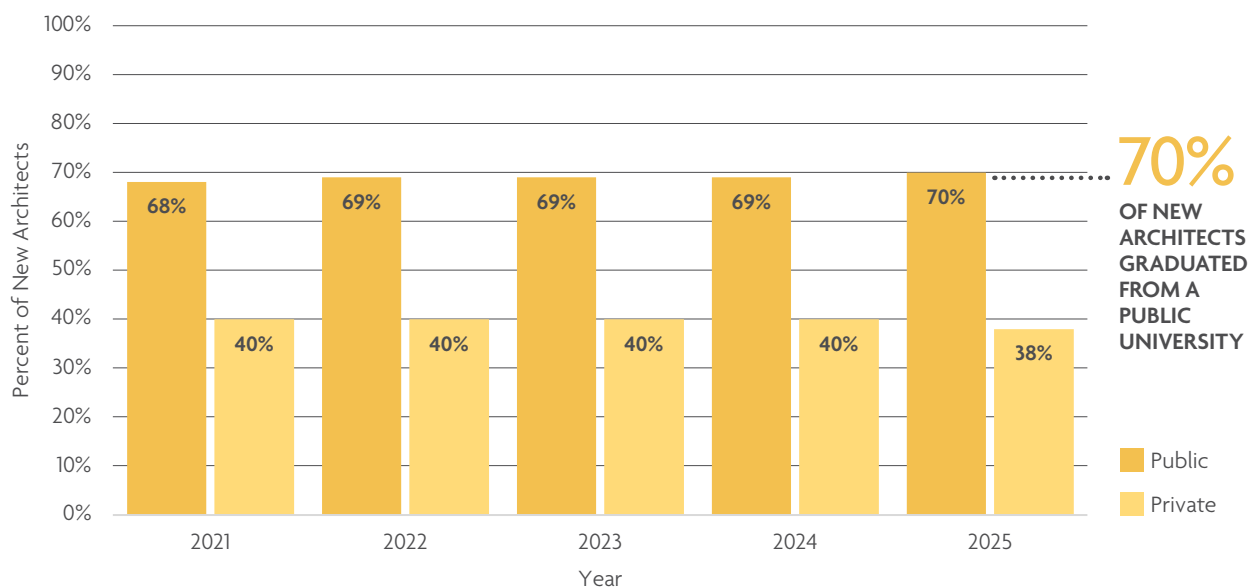
Most new architects attend public, rather than private, universities. The ratio of public to private has stayed relatively stable over the past 5 years, with 68 – 70% of new architects each year attending a public institution. According to the NAAB's latest report, 60% of schools that offer NAAB-accredited programs are public institutions, and the remaining 40% are private.

4 of the 5 of the schools whose graduates make up the largest proportion of new architects are public universities. Of architects licensed in 2025:

- 2.4% attended Virginia Tech
- 2.3% attended Cal Poly
- 2.2% attended the University of Oregon
- 2.0% attended the University of Michigan
- 1.9% attended Harvard University

WHY DOES THIS CHART ADD TO MORE THAN 100%?

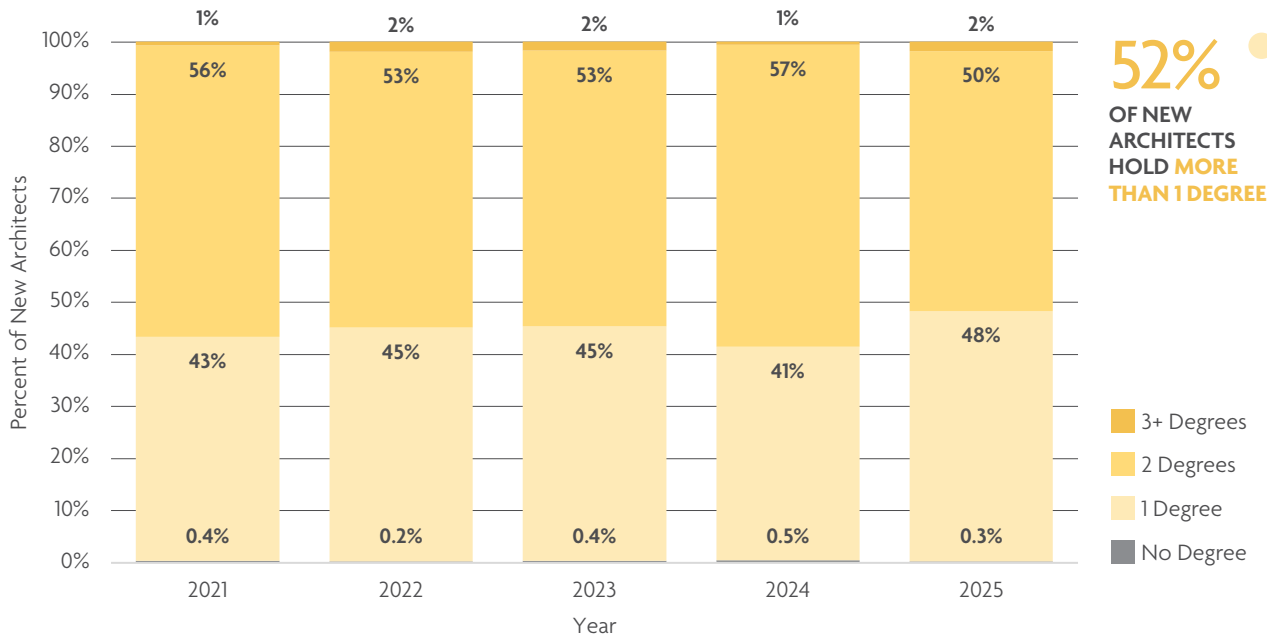
Because many architects have more than one degree, individuals can be represented in more than one column on this chart. Some new architects hold degrees from both public and private institutions.



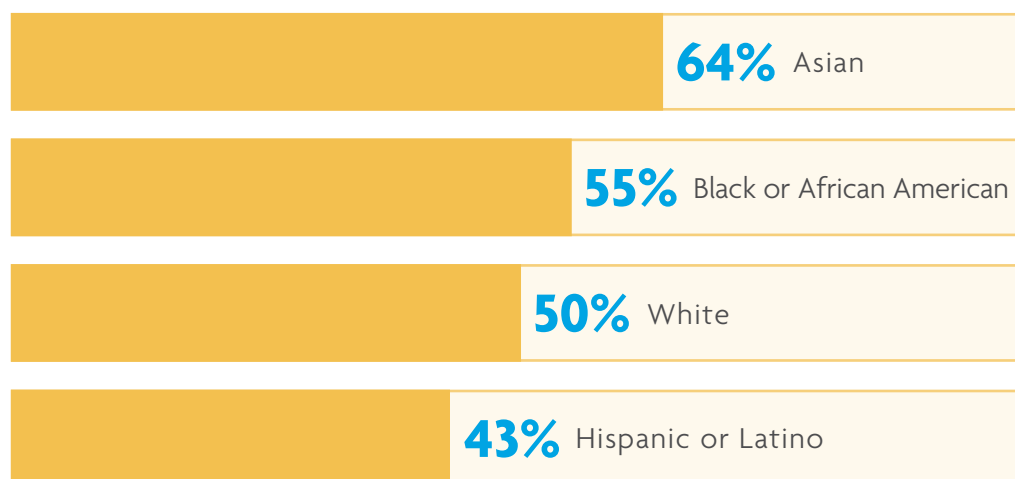
Over half of new architects have more than 1 degree.

NCARB saw a 7-percentage point increase in the number of new architects with only 1 degree between 2024 and 2025, from 41% to 48%. However, most new architects still hold more than one post-secondary degree. **Half (50%) of the nearly 3,500 architects licensed in 2025 held 2 degrees,** and an additional 2% held 3 or more degrees.

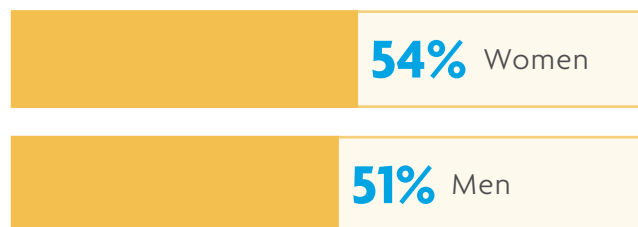
This data aligns with NCARB's data regarding the *types* of degrees held by new architects. Approximately 53% of new architects in 2025 hold both a degree from a NAAB-accredited program and a degree from a program not accredited by the NAAB. For some, this approach is planned: Many candidates intentionally attend a non-accredited bachelor's program first and then complete their education at a NAAB-accredited Master of Architecture program. But for others, holding multiple degrees may be the result of low awareness of the education requirements for licensure. Because many candidates don't know they'll need a degree from a NAAB-accredited program, they must eventually return to school for an additional degree before earning a license in their chosen jurisdiction.



ASIAN ARCHITECTS ARE MORE LIKELY
THAN ANY OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP
TO HOLD **MULTIPLE DEGREES**



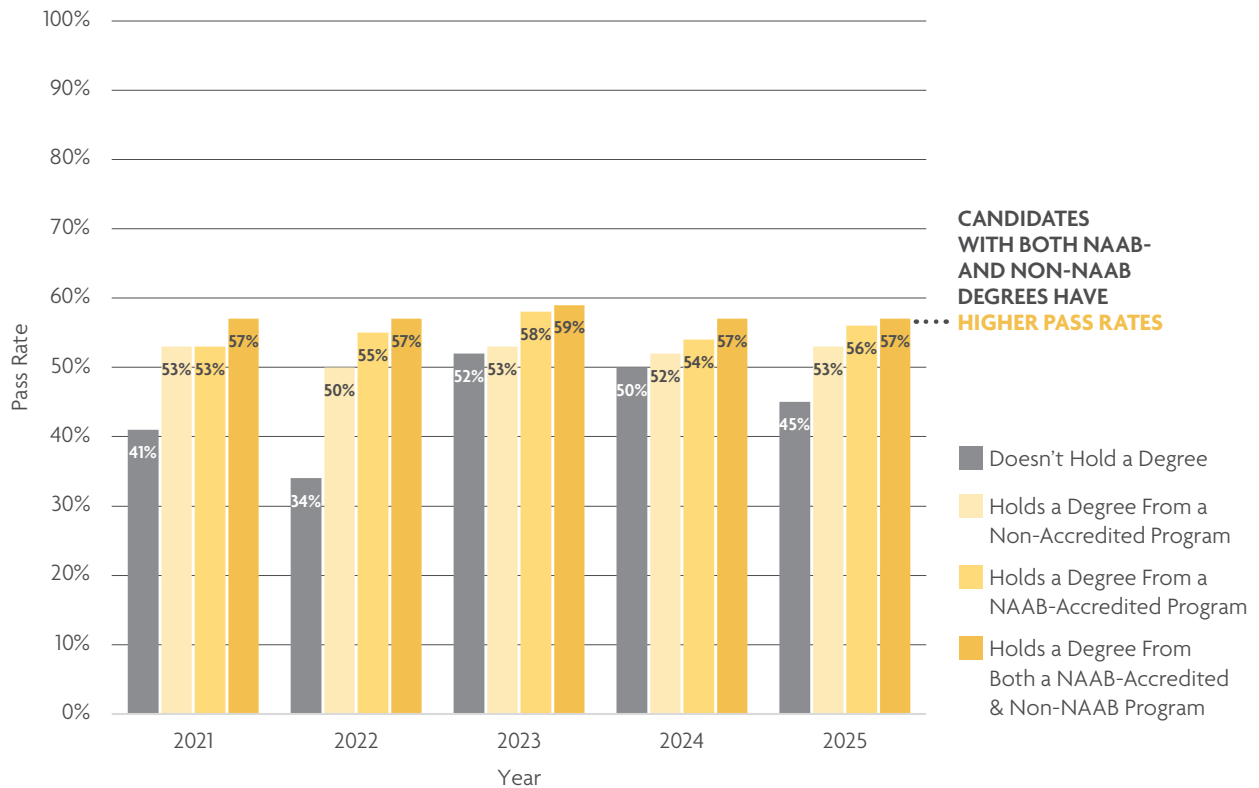
WOMEN are
also more likely
than men to hold
multiple degrees



Candidates with multiple degrees consistently perform better on the exam.

Historically, candidates who hold a degree from a NAAB-accredited program have been more likely to pass the ARE than their peers who don't hold a degree from an accredited program. **Licensure candidates who hold both a degree from a program accredited by the NAAB and from a non-accredited program are even more likely to pass the exam than those who only hold an accredited degree**—performing 2 percentage points above the national average overall.

Similar to previous years, candidates with multiple degrees had slightly higher pass rates (1 or 2 percentage points above the national average) across most divisions, rather than significantly higher pass rates on a single division.



Comparatively, candidates who only hold a degree from a non-accredited program perform at or slightly below the national average across most divisions, with the exception of the Project Development & Documentation division in 2025, where they saw pass rates 1 percentage point above the national average.

Candidates who don't hold any degrees consistently hold the lowest overall ARE pass rates; however, there are not enough candidates in this cohort to explore pass rates by division.

	Construction & Evaluation	Practice Management	Programming & Analysis	Project Development & Documentation	Project Management	Project Planning & Design
National Average	61%	51%	60%	54%	63%	48%
Holds a Degree From a Non-Accredited Program	60%	48%	57%	55%	58%	45%
Holds a Degree From a NAAB-Accredited Program	61%	50%	59%	55%	63%	48%
Holds a Degree From Both a NAAB-Accredited & Non-NAAB Program	62%	53%	61%	54%	65%	49%

National Average

Below National Average

On Par With National Average (+/- 2)

Above National Average

NCARB updated the Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL).

There are currently 32 programs at 27 colleges participating in NCARB's Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL) initiative.

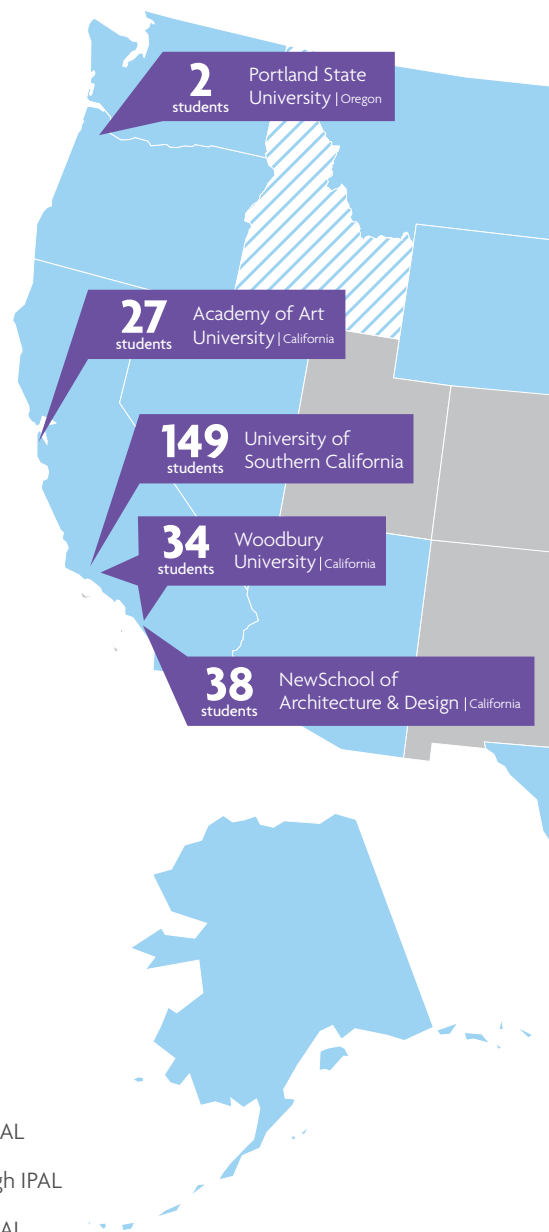
The IPAL option—offered as an additional path within an existing NAAB-accredited program—seeks to shorten the time it takes to become an architect for students who are focused on earning a license. In 2025, NCARB implemented several updates to IPAL's requirements to expand access to a wider range of students.

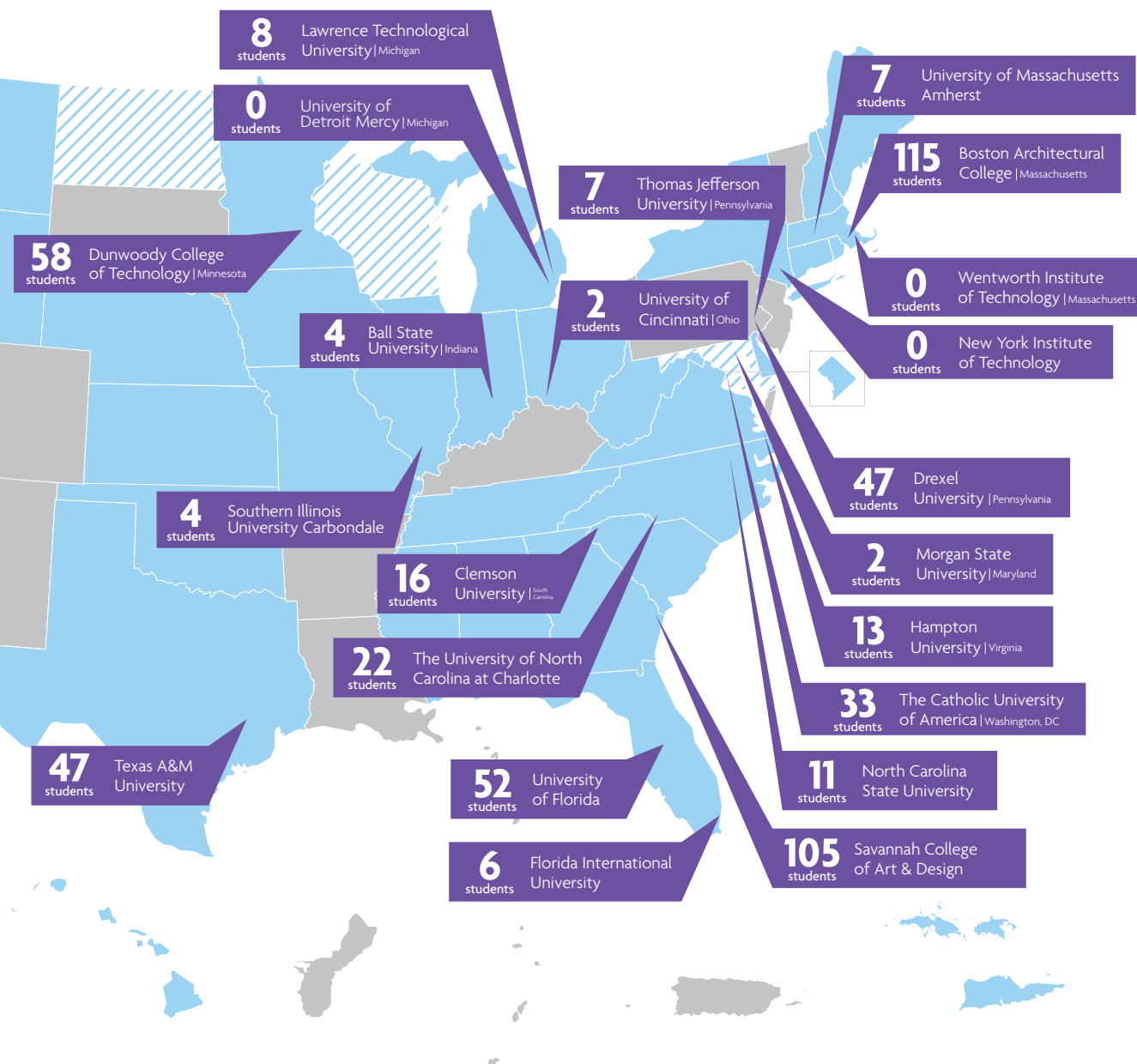
As a result, **NCARB hopes to see participation in IPAL increase in the years ahead.** There were over 800 students enrolled in IPAL options across the United States during the 2024 – 2025 school year.

DID YOU KNOW?

Over **800 students** are enrolled in IPAL options across the U.S.

- Active IPAL Program
- Board Accepts Divisions of the ARE Passed Through IPAL
- Board May Accept Divisions of the ARE Passed Through IPAL
- Board Does Not Accept of the ARE Passed Through IPAL

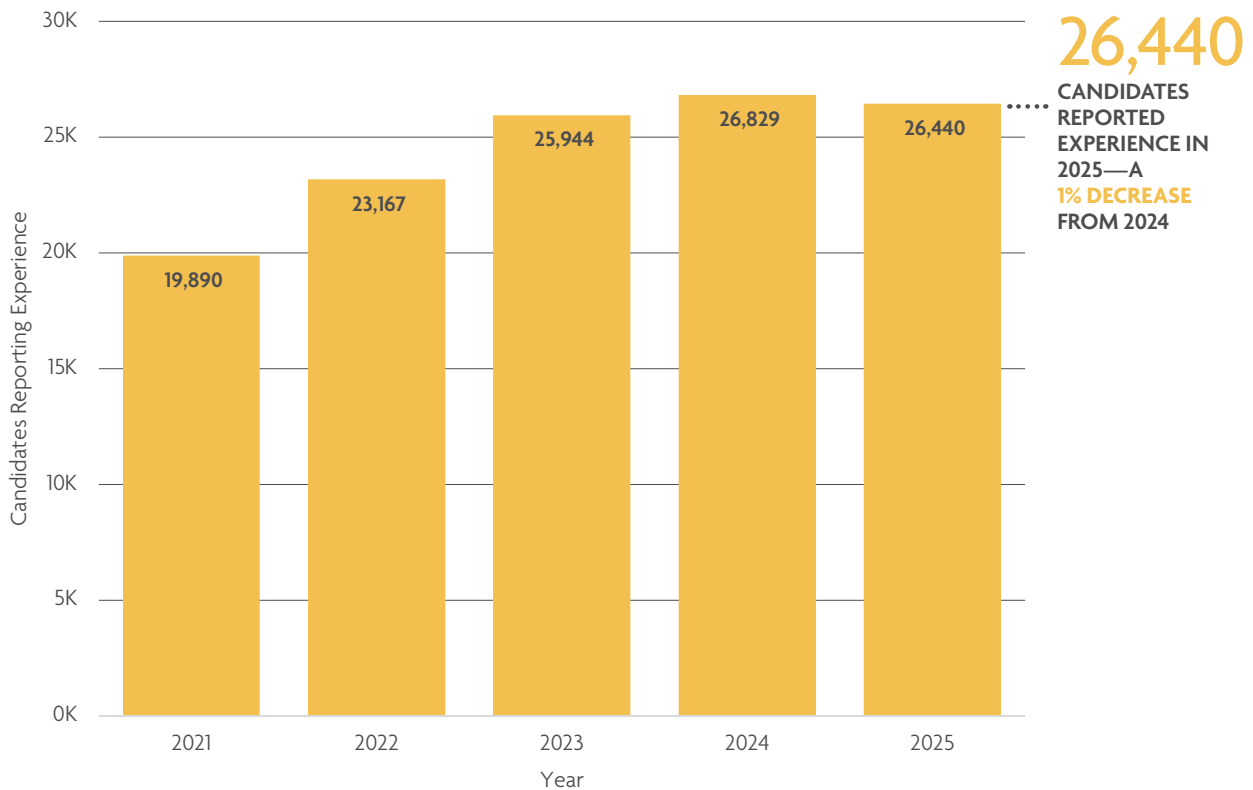




The number of candidates reporting experience fell by 1% in 2025.

Just over 26,400 candidates reported AXP experience in 2025, approximately 400 fewer than in 2024. The number of candidates reporting experience has remained close to 26,000 for the past three years, suggesting a new “normal” level of participation following a decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In November 2025, NCARB launched several updates to the AXP, including a change to the program’s reporting policy that allows candidates to report experience earned at any point in the past for 75% credit. Because NCARB tracks AXP participation by the date the experience was *earned*—not the date it was submitted to NCARB—NCARB expects the number of candidates reporting experience in 2025 to shift upward over time.



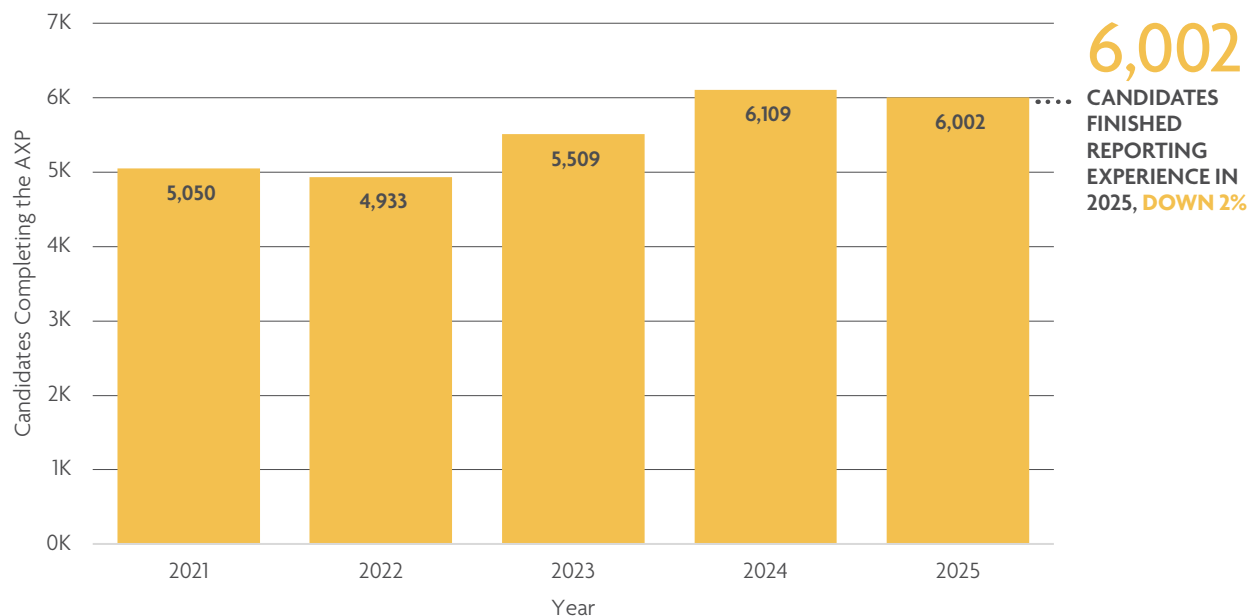
Over 6,000 candidates completed the AXP in 2025.

When NCARB implemented the new experience reporting policy in November 2025, thousands of candidates received retroactive AXP credit—including over 700 candidates who automatically became AXP complete.

Because candidates can submit experience reports for work completed in the past—and past work is now worth 75% credit indefinitely, rather than 50% credit for up to 5 years—NCARB has seen a significant increase in AXP completions for both 2024 and 2025. **In 2025, over 6,000 candidates completed the AXP—2% less than in 2024, but well above the numbers seen in 2021–2023.** The number of AXP completions in 2025 is likely to shift upward over time as candidates report backdated experience in the future.

DID YOU KNOW?

NCARB measures experience start and end dates based on when the work was performed. For example, if a candidate submitted their final experience report in 2025 for work performed in 2022, their AXP complete date would be counted as 2022.



Time to complete the AXP fell by 6 months in 2025.

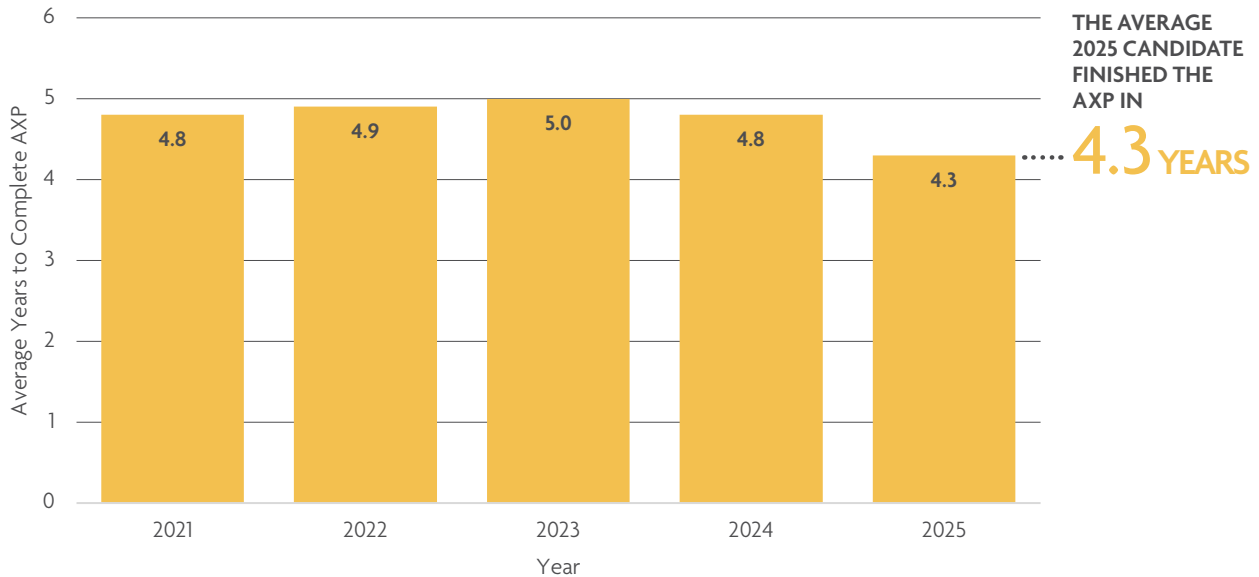
In 2025, the average time to complete the experience program fell significantly as a result of changes to the program's reporting policy.

Candidates who completed the AXP in 2025 took an average of 4.3 years to complete the program, 6 months faster than those who completed it in 2024. Because the new reporting policy provides more flexibility when reporting past experience, NCARB expects fewer candidates to lose significant credit when reporting experience that is several years old.

In addition, NCARB is beginning to see the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic fade from current AXP candidates. Many candidates who completed the program in 2025 would have started earning and reporting professional experience in 2021 and may have experienced fewer immediate impacts than those who began the experience program in 2019 – 2020.

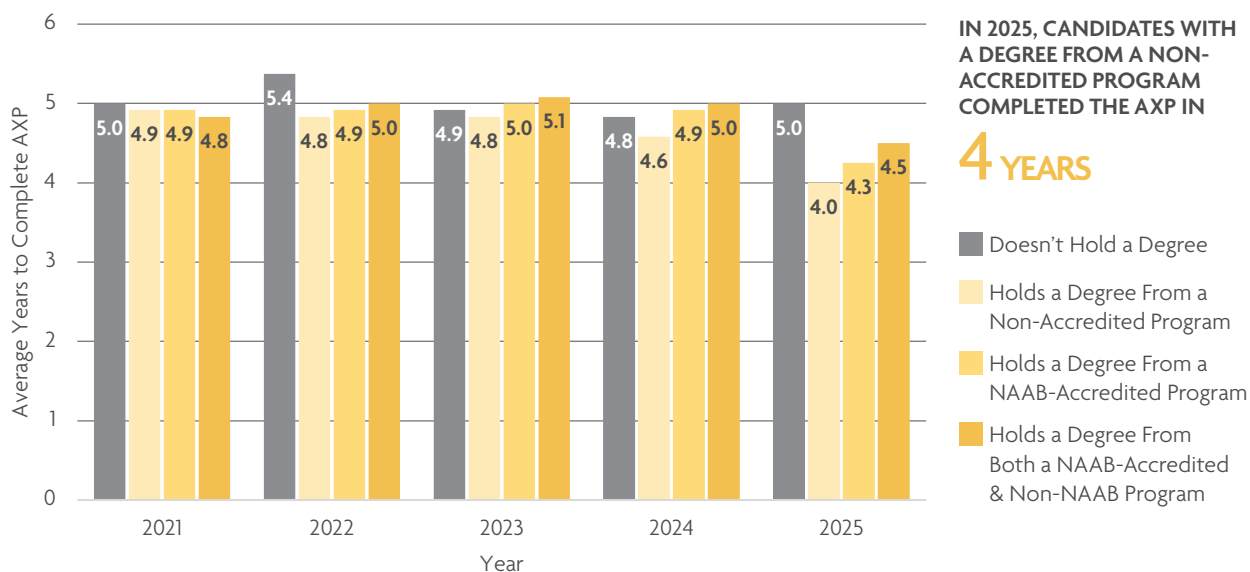
DID YOU KNOW?

Averages can be measured in several ways. NCARB uses **median** to measure averages throughout *NCARB by the Numbers*, which allows us to avoid skewing the average with outlier data points.



Candidates with a degree from a non-accredited program complete the AXP faster than their peers.

For the past several years, licensure candidates with a degree from a program not accredited by the NAAB have consistently completed the AXP several months faster than their peers. **In 2025, graduates of non-accredited programs completed the AXP in an average 4 years**, approximately 6 months faster than candidates who hold degrees from both accredited and non-accredited programs, and 3 months faster than candidates who only hold a degree from a NAAB-accredited program.



Half of candidates complete the AXP in less than 4.3 years.

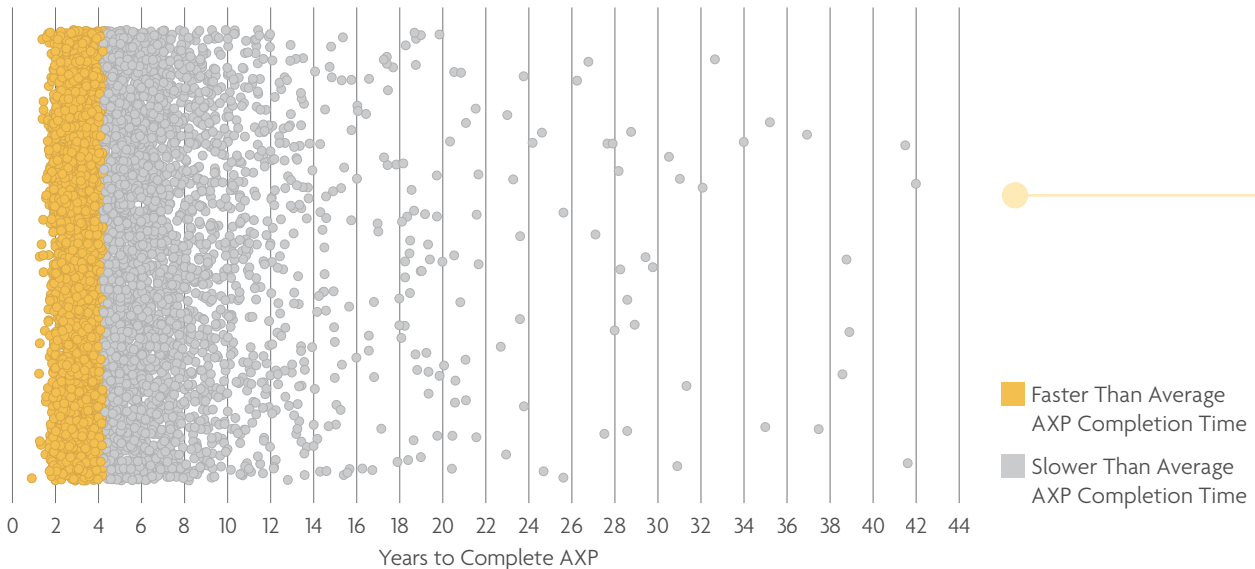
The median time to complete the AXP in 2025 was 4.3 years—meaning that half of all candidates completing the program finished in less time, and half finished in more time.

While many candidates are finishing the program in 4.3 years or less, those who take longer to complete the program are more distributed. Over 200 candidates completed the AXP in less than 2 years in 2025; nearly 20 candidates took more than 30 years.

Typically, women and people of color are more likely to complete the AXP in a shorter time frame compared to their peers. Men and white candidates are more likely to begin reporting experience younger (often while in school), which creates a period of slow progress because they aren't working full-time.

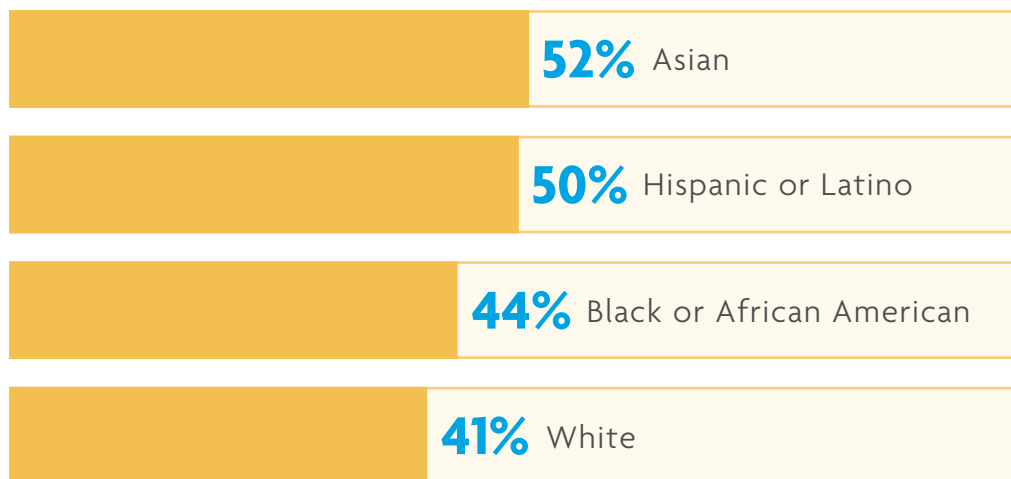
HOW TO READ THIS CHART:

Each dot on this chart represents a candidate who completed the AXP in 2025. Because NCARB uses median—the mid-point—to measure average time to completion, half of the dots are below the 4.3 years mark and half are above.



2 IN 5 CANDIDATES COMPLETE THE AXP IN UNDER 4 YEARS

Some candidates are more likely to complete the AXP in under 4 years:



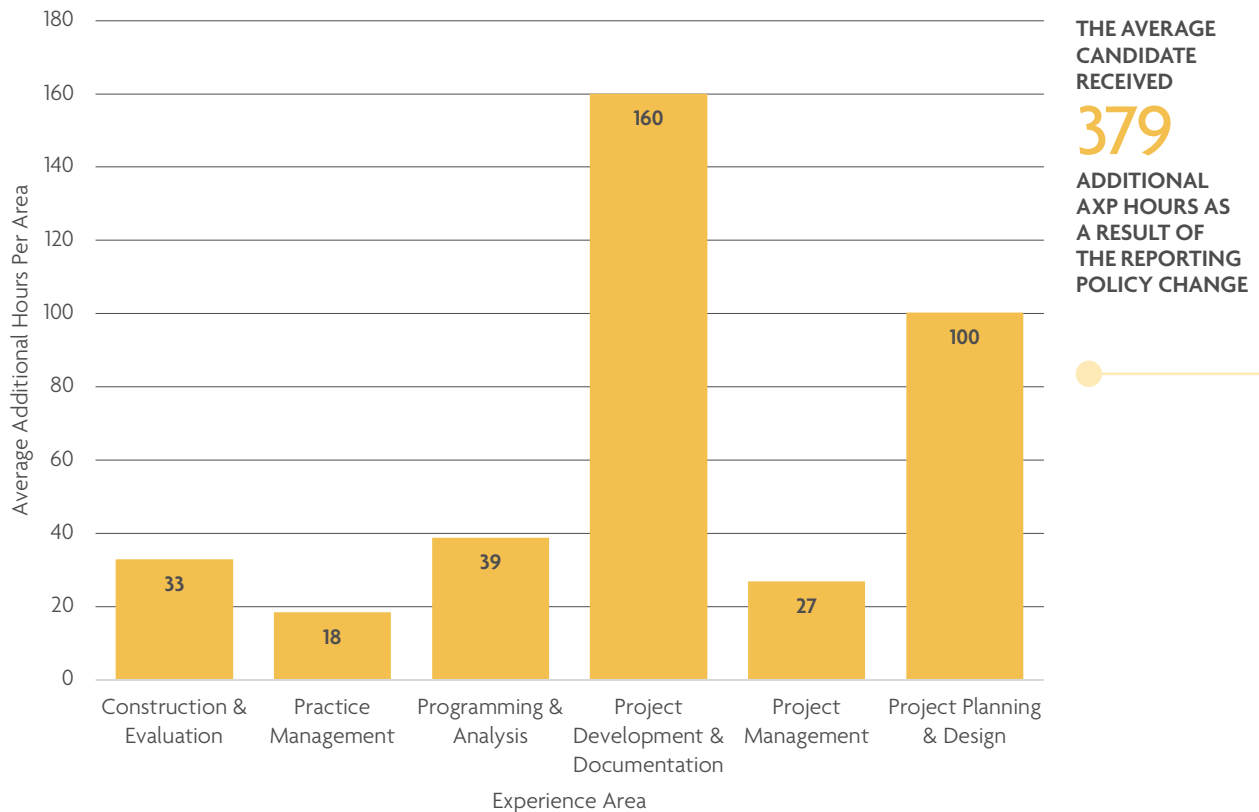
■ **Women** are 4 percentage points more likely than men to complete the AXP in under 4 years

■ 52% of candidates **under 30** complete the AXP in under 4 years

Over 20,000 candidates received positive AXP credit as a result of reporting policy changes.

When the updated reporting policy was implemented in November 2025, NCARB automatically increased AXP credit for previously approved reports that were impacted by the previous reporting requirement. **As a result, over 20,000 candidates received additional AXP credit, averaging nearly 380 hours per candidate.**

Under the new reporting policy, candidates can earn 100% credit for experience up to a year old. Experience older than one year is worth 75% credit, with no limitation on how old that experience can be. Previously, candidates were required to report all experience within eight months of earning it for 100% credit, and within five years for 50% credit; any experience older than five years did not receive any credit.



When NCARB's new reporting policy went into effect:



20,813 CANDIDATES RECEIVED
POSITIVE AXP CREDIT

Including over **13,000** candidates actively
working toward completing the AXP



THE AVERAGE CANDIDATE
RECEIVED **379 HOURS** OF
POSITIVE AXP CREDIT



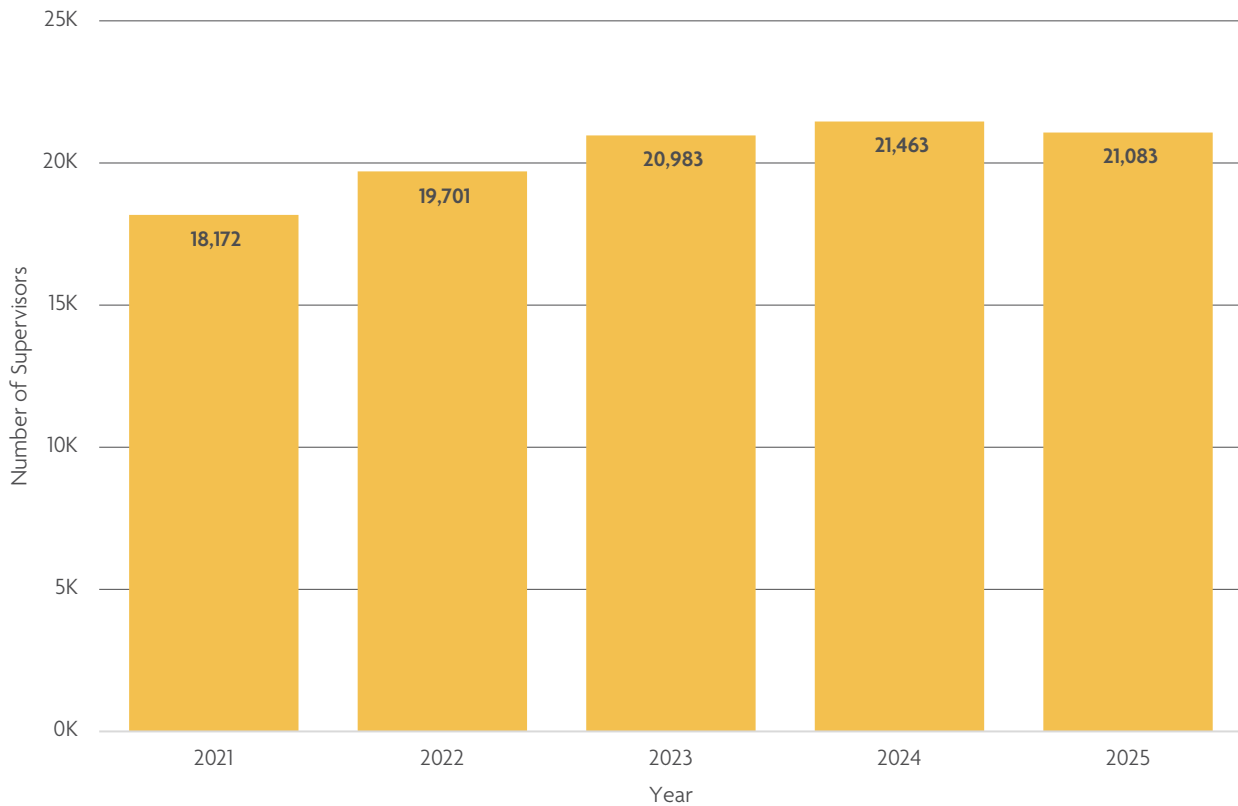
776 CANDIDATES
AUTOMATICALLY
BECAME AXP COMPLETE

■ **Candidates of color**
were slightly more
likely than white
candidates to receive
positive AXP credit

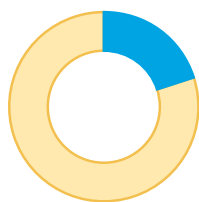
The number of AXP supervisors fell by 2% in 2025.

Licensure candidates are required to have an AXP supervisor who is responsible for guiding them through the process of gaining professional experience. **Over 26,000 candidates submitted experience reports in 2025 to over 21,000 supervisors**—a 2% decrease in the total number of supervisors.

Many candidates report experience to more than 1 supervisor within a given year, whether because they are changing roles or because they are gaining experience outside of their main job through one of the AXP's setting O opportunities.



MORE THAN **21,000**
SUPERVISORS REVIEWED EXPERIENCE IN 2024



20%
OF SUPERVISORS ARE
PEOPLE OF COLOR



26%
OF SUPERVISORS ARE
WOMEN

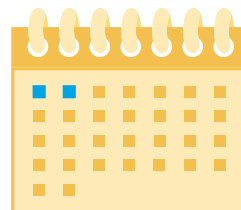
2



AVERAGE NUMBER
OF CANDIDATES PER
SUPERVISOR

2 DAYS

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS TO
REVIEW AN EXPERIENCE REPORT



Examination

NCARB's Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) is a 6-part exam required to become an architect in the United States. For most candidates, taking the ARE is the final step on the path to licensure.

In 2025, NCARB saw the time to complete the exam fall to a record low. The average candidate who finished the ARE in 2025 took just 2 years—4 months faster than in 2024 and the lowest average completion time seen in the history of the computerized ARE. Plus, over 1,000 candidates who finished the exam in 2025 did so in 12 months or less.

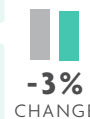
Despite the decreased time to complete the ARE, NCARB saw no change in the number of candidates taking the exam and a slight drop in the number of candidates finishing the exam. Exam pass rates held steady at 55%, with the average 2025 candidate taking a total of 9 attempts across all 6 divisions to pass the ARE. However, nearly a third of candidates pass all 6 divisions on the first try. Candidates who take advantage of NCARB's free practice exams consistently see higher pass rates: In 2025, candidates who used NCARB's practice exams were 15 percentage points more likely to pass than those who didn't.

Over the past several years, NCARB has been implementing changes to improve the equity and accessibility of the ARE. While NCARB continues to see a disparity in pass rates between white candidates and candidates of color, recent changes are helping to close the gap over time.

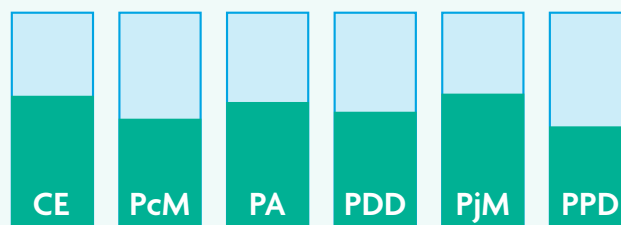
17,747 CANDIDATES
TOOK THE ARE



3,491 CANDIDATES
COMPLETED THE EXAM



**PASS RATES
HELD STEADY AT
55%**



9

AVERAGE TOTAL NUMBER
OF DIVISION ATTEMPTS

30%

OF CANDIDATES PASS ALL
6 DIVISIONS ON THE FIRST TRY

Candidates using
**NCARB'S FREE
PRACTICE EXAMS**
were 15 percentage
points more likely to pass

2.0 YEARS

Average time
TO COMPLETE THE EXAM
—4 months faster than in 2024

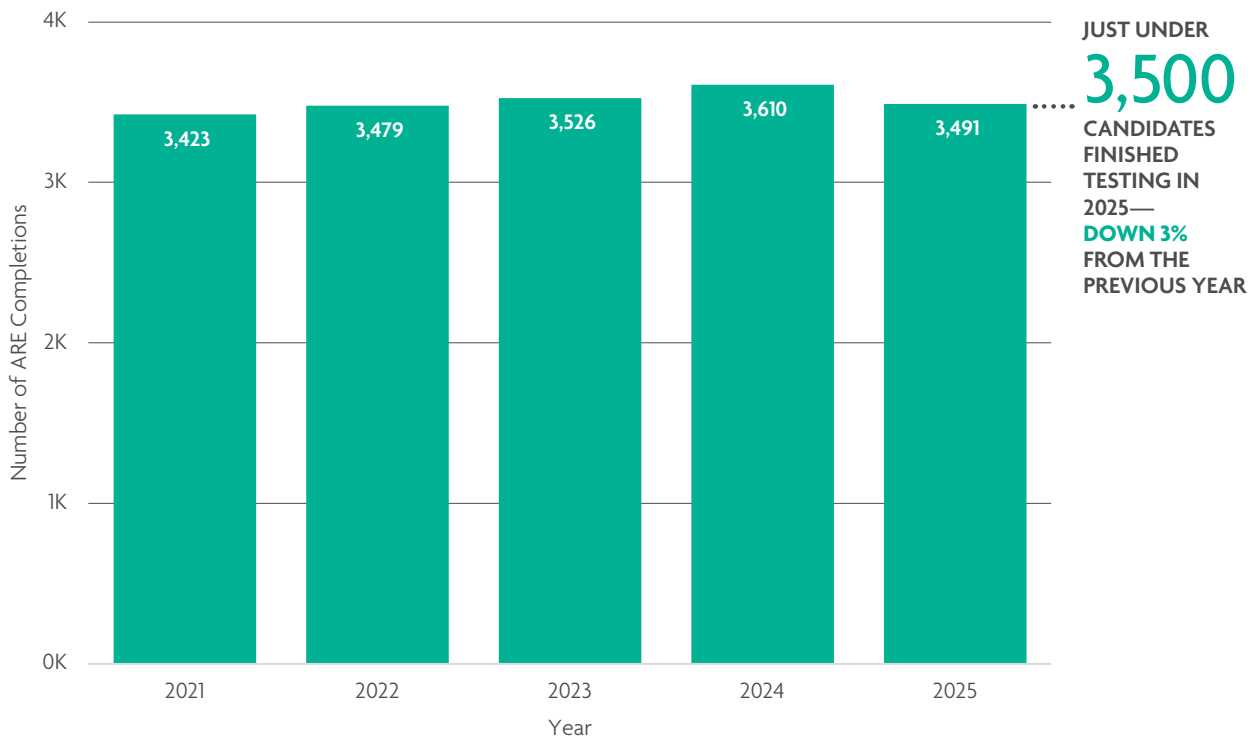
The number of candidates finishing the ARE fell by 3%.

Just under 3,500 candidates finished their final exam division in 2025, a 3% decrease from 2024.

However, 2025's number of ARE completions is still on par with the 5-year average of 3,506.

Despite slight fluctuations from year to year, the number of candidates finishing the exam has held relatively steady since 2021, with the slight uptick in 2023 – 2024 likely a result of the retirement of the exam's 5-year rolling clock policy.

As the licensure pipeline recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022 – 2023, NCARB saw above-average levels of candidates starting the licensure process. We expect to see these candidates begin trickling into the exam pipeline over the next several years, potentially leading to higher levels of exam completions in the near future.



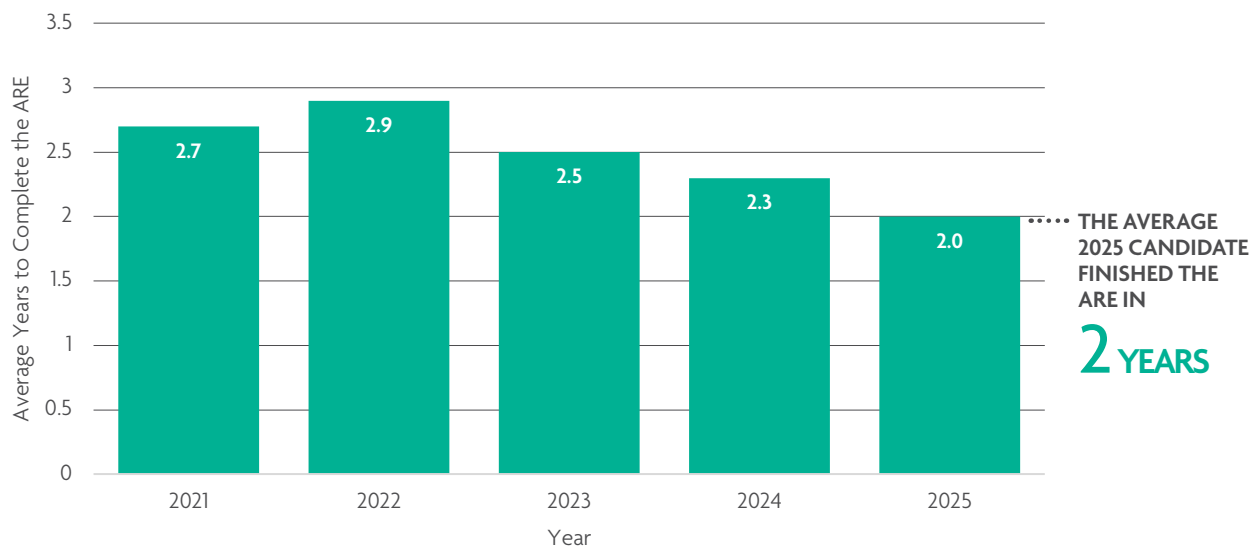
Time to complete the ARE fell to a record low in 2025.

The average time to complete the ARE fell by 4 months in 2025. **On average, candidates who completed the ARE in 2025 took just 2 years**—a record low in the history of the computerized ARE. The steady decrease in time to complete the ARE over the past 3 years is likely due to a combination of the exam changes NCARB has implemented over the past several years, as well as the receding impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2025's average time to complete the ARE is almost an entire year faster than the spike seen in 2022, which was a delayed result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Candidates who finished the exam in 2022 would have started testing in 2019 – 2020, during the height of pandemic-related test center closures. With 2 years between the first and last test, the typical candidate who finished the exam in 2025 would have started testing in 2023, after the majority of the pandemic's impact on the exam had passed.

DID YOU KNOW?

Averages can be measured in several ways. NCARB typically uses **median** to measure averages throughout NBTN, which allows us to avoid skewing the average with outlier data points.



More than 1,000 candidates completed the ARE in a year or less.

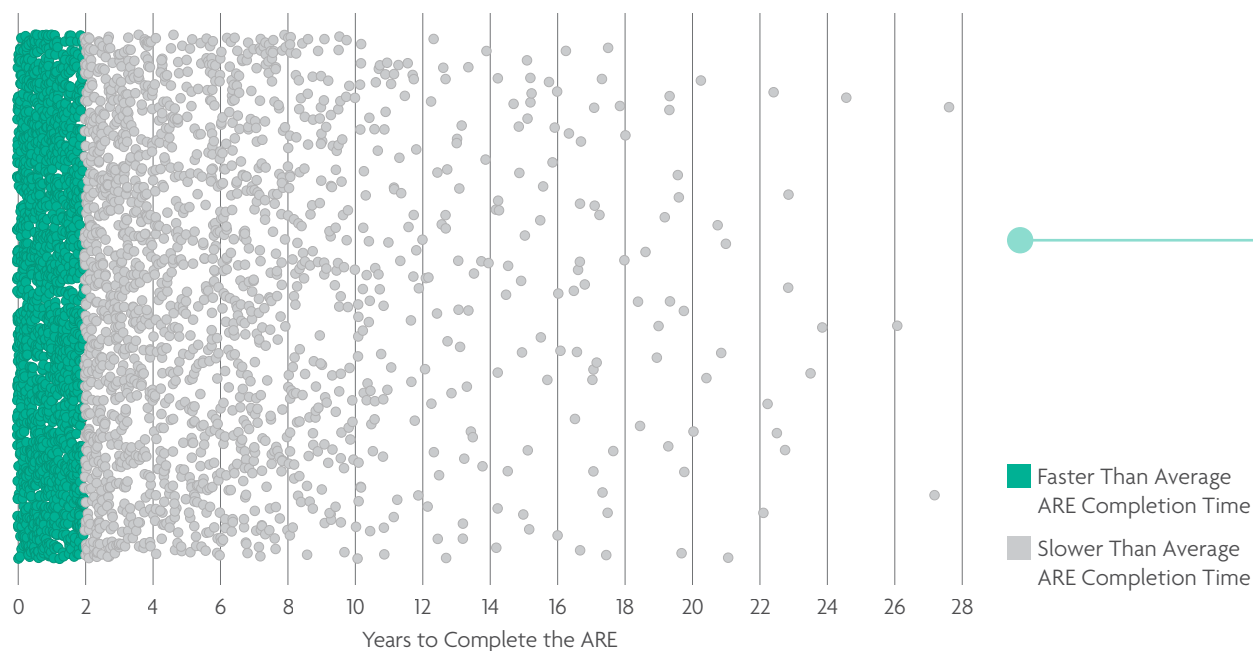
The median time to complete the ARE in 2025 was 2 years—meaning that half of all candidates completing the program finished in less time, and half finished in more time.

As with the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®), candidates who take longer to complete the exam are more widely distributed than those who complete the exam faster than average. Over 1,000 candidates completed the ARE in less than 1 year in 2025; 20 candidates took 20 years or more.

Typically, men and white candidates are more likely to complete the ARE in a shorter time frame compared to their peers.

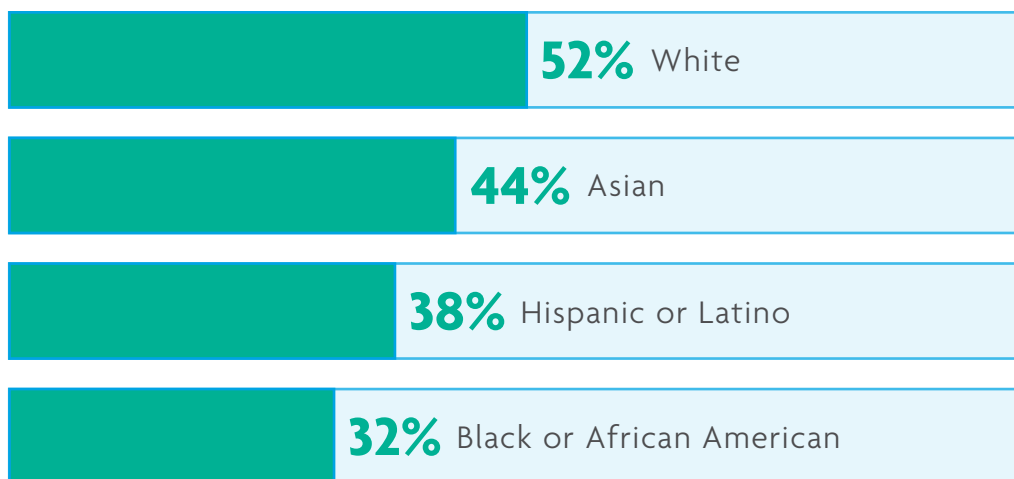
HOW TO READ THIS CHART:

Each dot on this chart represents a candidate who completed the ARE in 2025. Because NCARB uses median—the mid-point—to measure average time to completion, half of the dots are below the 2-year mark and half are above.



Half of all candidates complete the ARE in 2 years or less

Some demographic groups see a larger proportion of candidates finishing in 2 years or less:



■ **Men** are 3 percentage points more likely than women to complete the ARE in 2 years or less

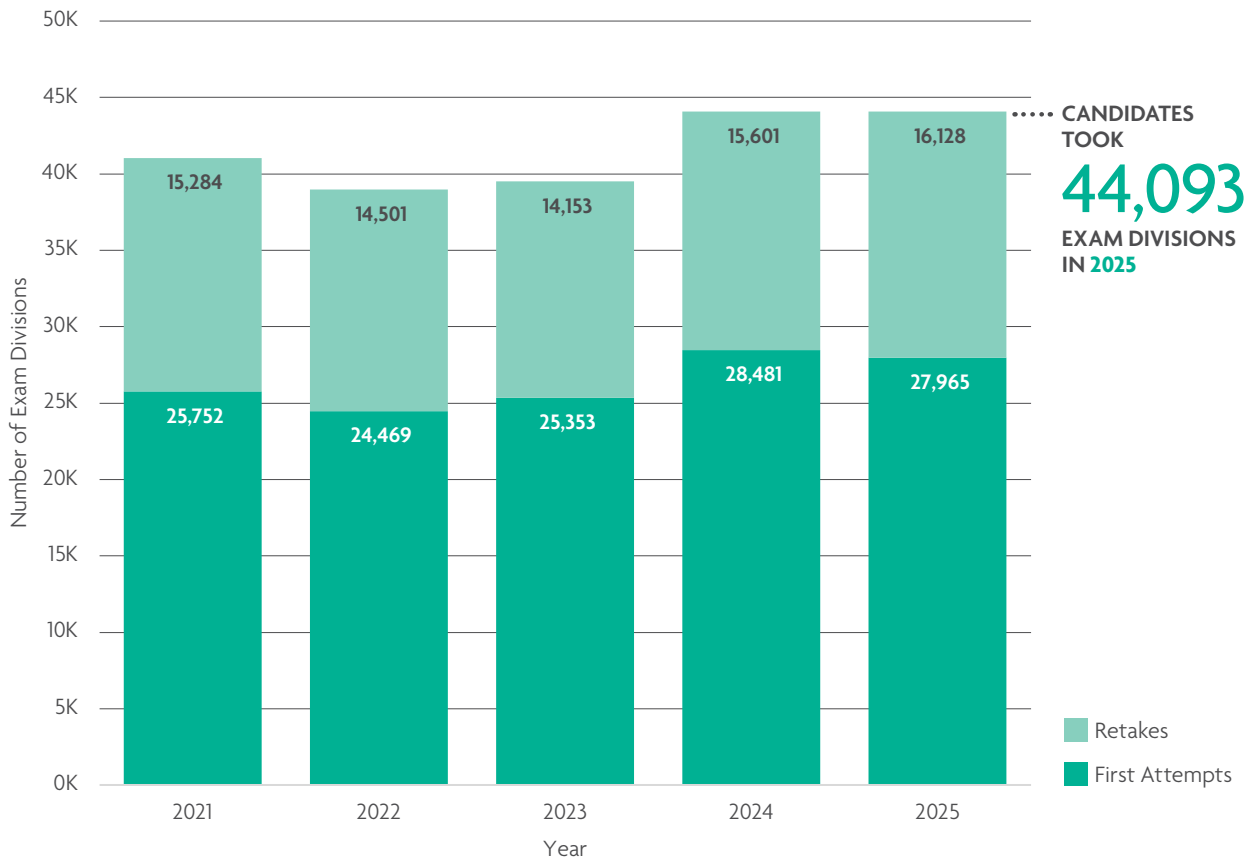
■ 78% of candidates **under 30** complete the ARE in 2 years or less

Candidates' exam activity held steady in 2025.

The number of exam divisions taken in 2025 held at approximately the same number seen in 2024:

Candidates took 44,093 divisions of the ARE, about 10 more total attempts than in 2024. This is the highest number of total division attempts seen since the COVID-19 pandemic, but still below the record high of over 56,000 divisions taken in 2017 as candidates rushed to complete the exam before the retirement of ARE 4.0.

Approximately 63% of all exams administered in 2025 were first attempts, while the remaining 37% were retakes of previously failed divisions. Over the past 5 years, first attempts have consistently made up 63% – 65% of all exam attempts.



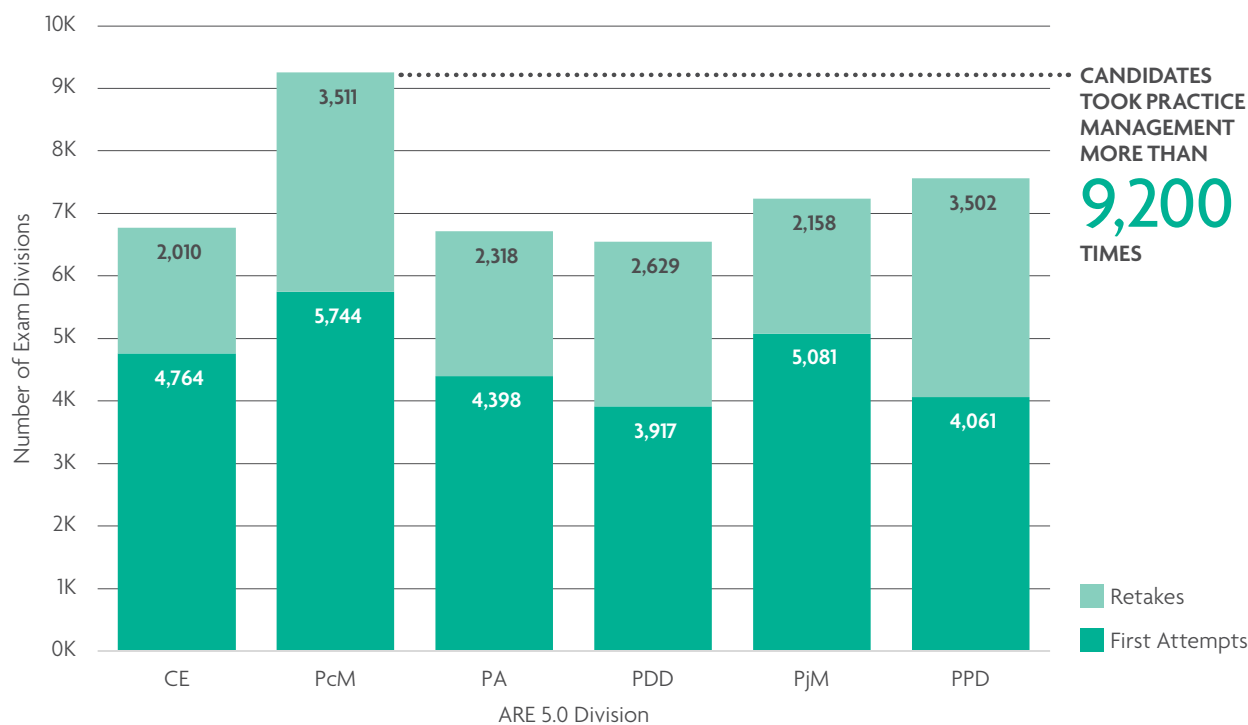
More than 20% of all exam attempts were for the Practice Management division.

Of the 44,093 ARE divisions taken in 2025, more than 9,200 were in the Practice Management division—21% of all exam attempts.

Though candidates can take the divisions in any order, many candidates start their exam journey with Practice Management, which is typically listed first in NCARB's materials. The next most-taken division was Project Planning & Design, which also has one of the highest number of retakes out of the 6 divisions (alongside Practice Management).

ARE 5.0 DIVISIONS

- Practice Management (PcM)
- Project Management (PjM)
- Programming & Analysis (PA)
- Project Planning & Design (PPD)
- Project Development & Documentation (PDD)
- Construction & Evaluation (CE)



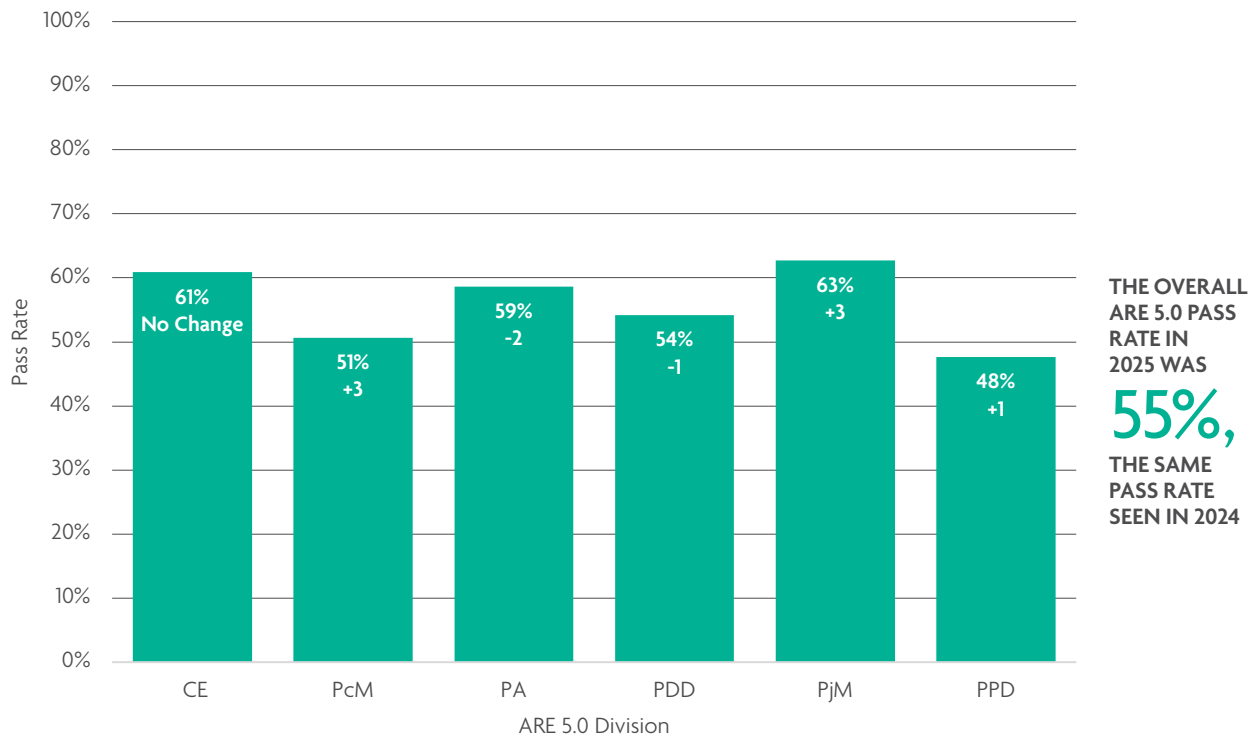
Overall exam pass rates held steady at 55%.

The overall ARE 5.0 pass rate held steady at 55% in 2025, the same pass rate seen in 2024.

Three of the 6 ARE 5.0 divisions saw higher pass rates than in 2024: Practice Management, Project Management, and Project Planning & Design.

Pass rates for the Programming & Analysis division decreased by 2 percentage points, and pass rates for Project Development & Documentation fell by 1 percentage point. Meanwhile, pass rates for Construction & Evaluation held steady at 61%.

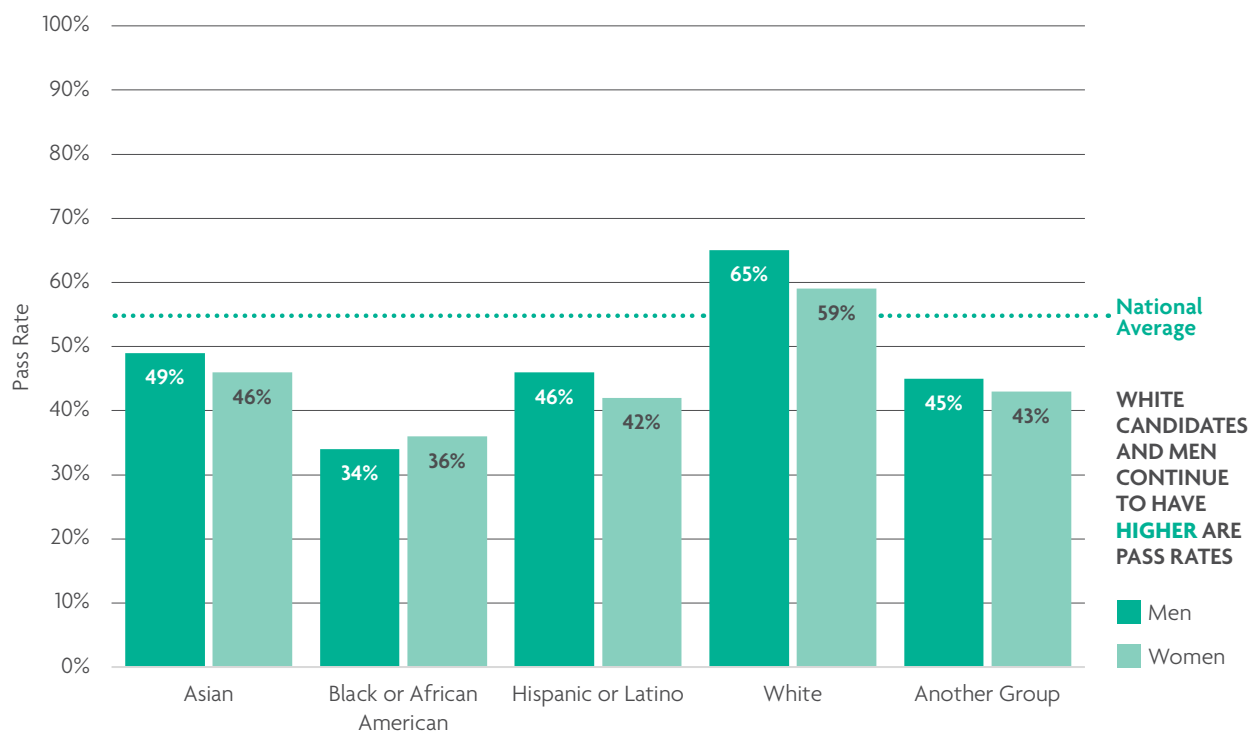
Over the past several years, NCARB has made several updates to the exam to align with current testing best practices and ensure greater accessibility, including expanding accommodations, launching free practice exams, retiring the 5-year rolling clock policy, and removing certain item types. Going forward, NCARB will continue to monitor the impact of these changes and explore opportunities for additional exam improvements.



White men had the highest ARE pass rates.

While NCARB has implemented updates to make the exam more accessible for candidates of all backgrounds, pass rates remained higher for white candidates than for candidates of color. **White men continued to have the highest pass rate at 65% in 2025, 10 percentage points above the national average.**

Additionally, women tended to receive lower pass rates than men of the same racial or ethnic group, with the exception of Black or African American men, who generally had the lowest overall pass rate.



On average, candidates took each division 1 – 2 times.

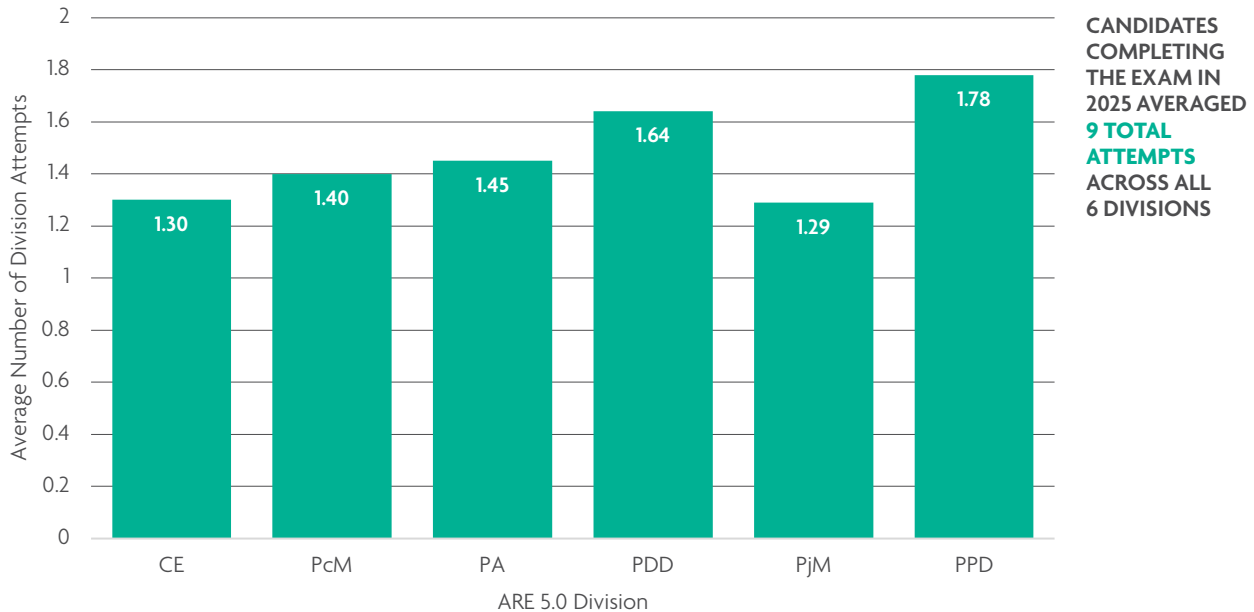
The typical candidate who completed the ARE in 2025 took each division 1 – 2 times. **On average, candidates who passed their final ARE division in 2025 took a total of 9 attempts across all 6 divisions**—indicating that the average candidate fails approximately 3 divisions before completing the exam.

By division, Project Planning & Design—the ARE 5.0 division with the lowest pass rate—has the highest average number of attempts at 1.78. Project Management—the division with the highest pass rate—has the lowest average number of attempts at 1.29.

DID YOU KNOW?

Averages can be measured in several ways. NCARB often uses **median** to measure averages throughout NBTN, which allows us to avoid skewing the average with outlier data points.

However, for this particular data point, a **mean** is more appropriate. When we refer to the average number of exam attempts, we're referring to the **arithmetic average**, or mean.

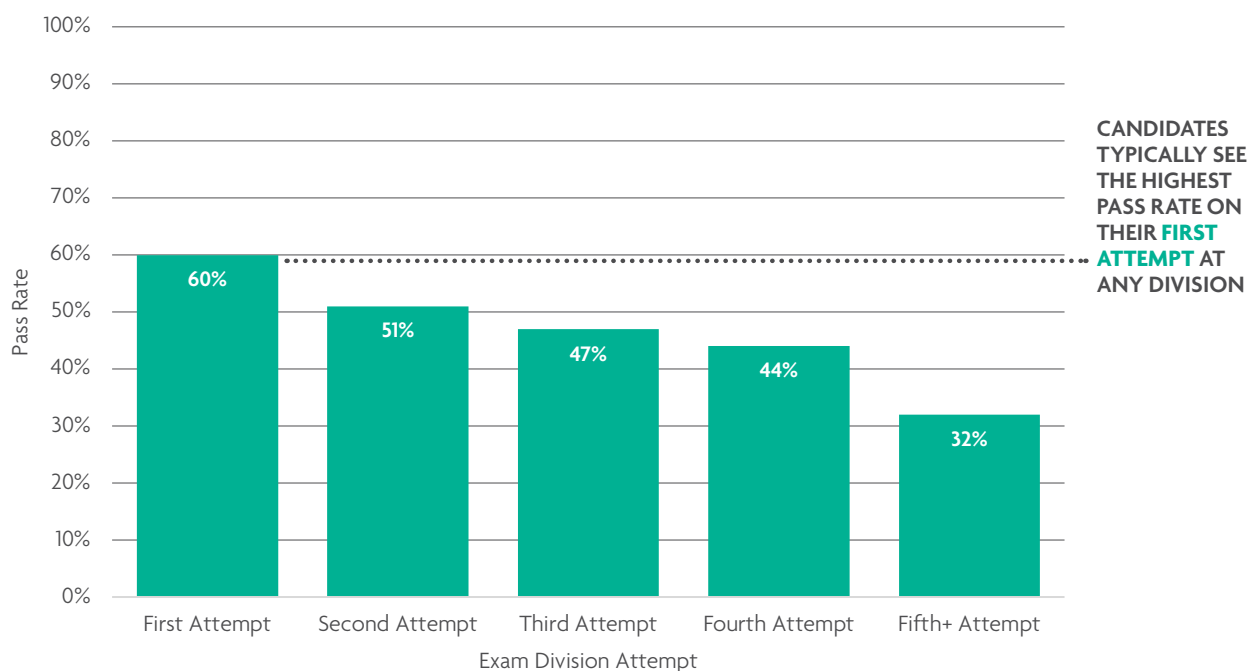


Pass rates were significantly higher for first attempts.

Across all exam divisions, pass rates were higher for candidates attempting any division for the first time compared to those retaking after failing that division at least once. **Averaged across the exam's divisions, candidates saw a 60% pass rate on their first attempt at any division in 2025**—5 percentage points higher than the overall average pass rate.

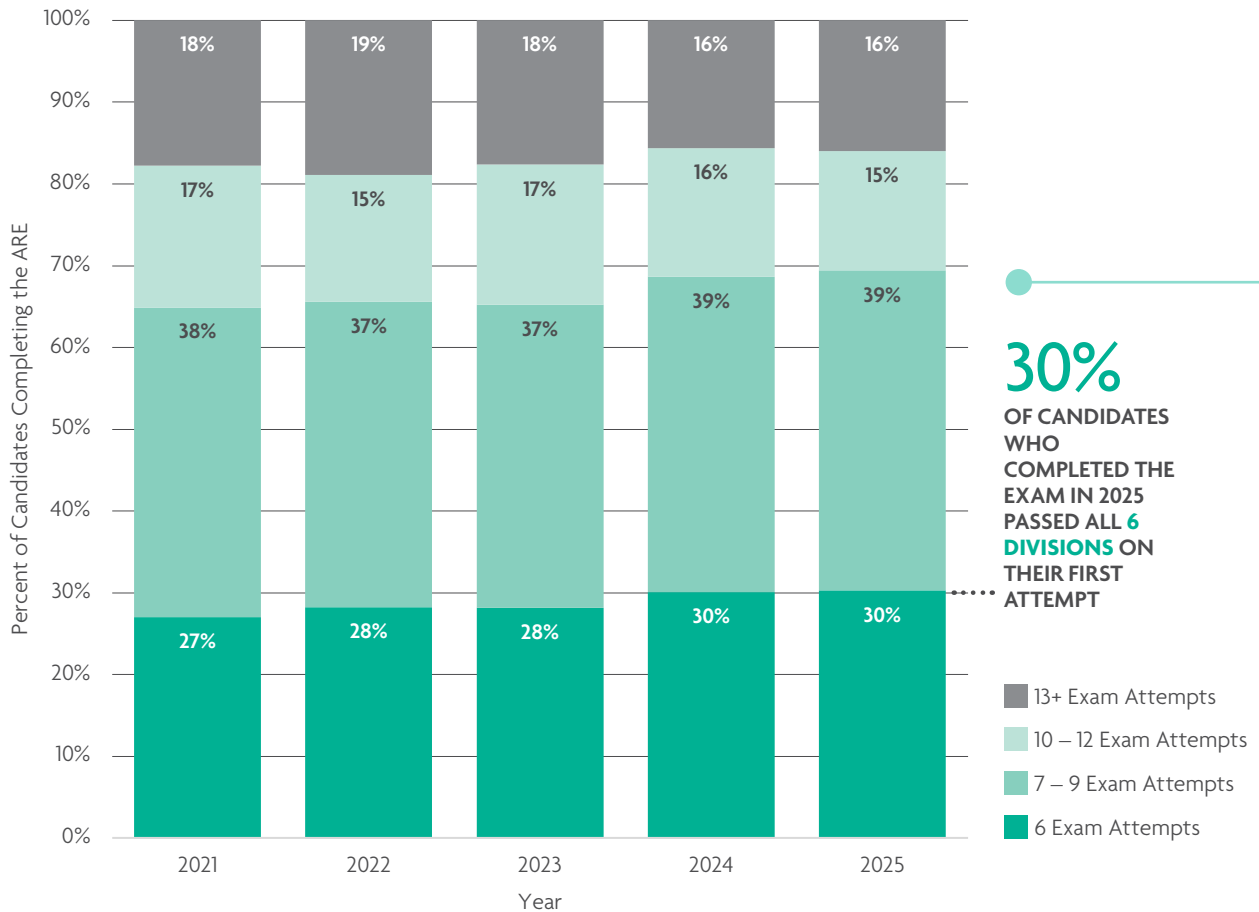
Pass rates fell with each subsequent attempt at the division, with a 51% pass rate for second attempts. While the majority of candidates passed on either their first or second attempt at any division, those who took a division more than 2 times faced significantly lower pass rates, falling to 32% for those attempting 5 or more times.

Through Pathways to Practice, NCARB hopes to develop a licensure model that offers multiple methods of demonstrating competency across each essential area of architectural practice, providing candidates facing challenges navigating the current licensure process additional options to demonstrate their competency.



Nearly a third of candidates passed all 6 divisions on their first try.

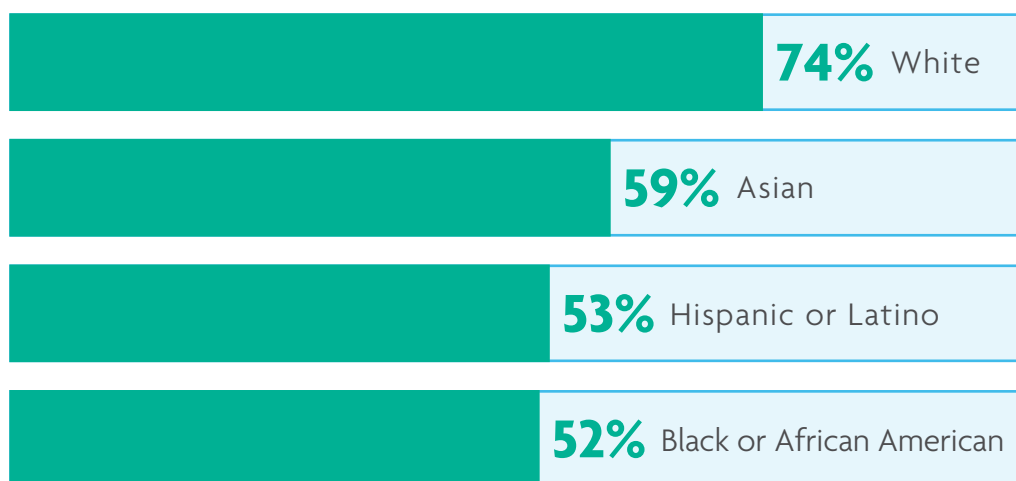
While the average number of exam attempts for candidates finishing the ARE was 9, 69% of candidates who finished the exam in 2025 hit at or below this average. Of candidates who completed the ARE in 2025, nearly a third took just 6 total division attempts to do so—in other words, **30% of ARE complete candidates passed all 6 divisions on their first try.** Another 39% of candidates completing the exam in 2025 attempted 7 – 9 total divisions, failing between 1 and 3 divisions.



Candidates from some demographic groups are more likely to pass the exam in fewer total attempts



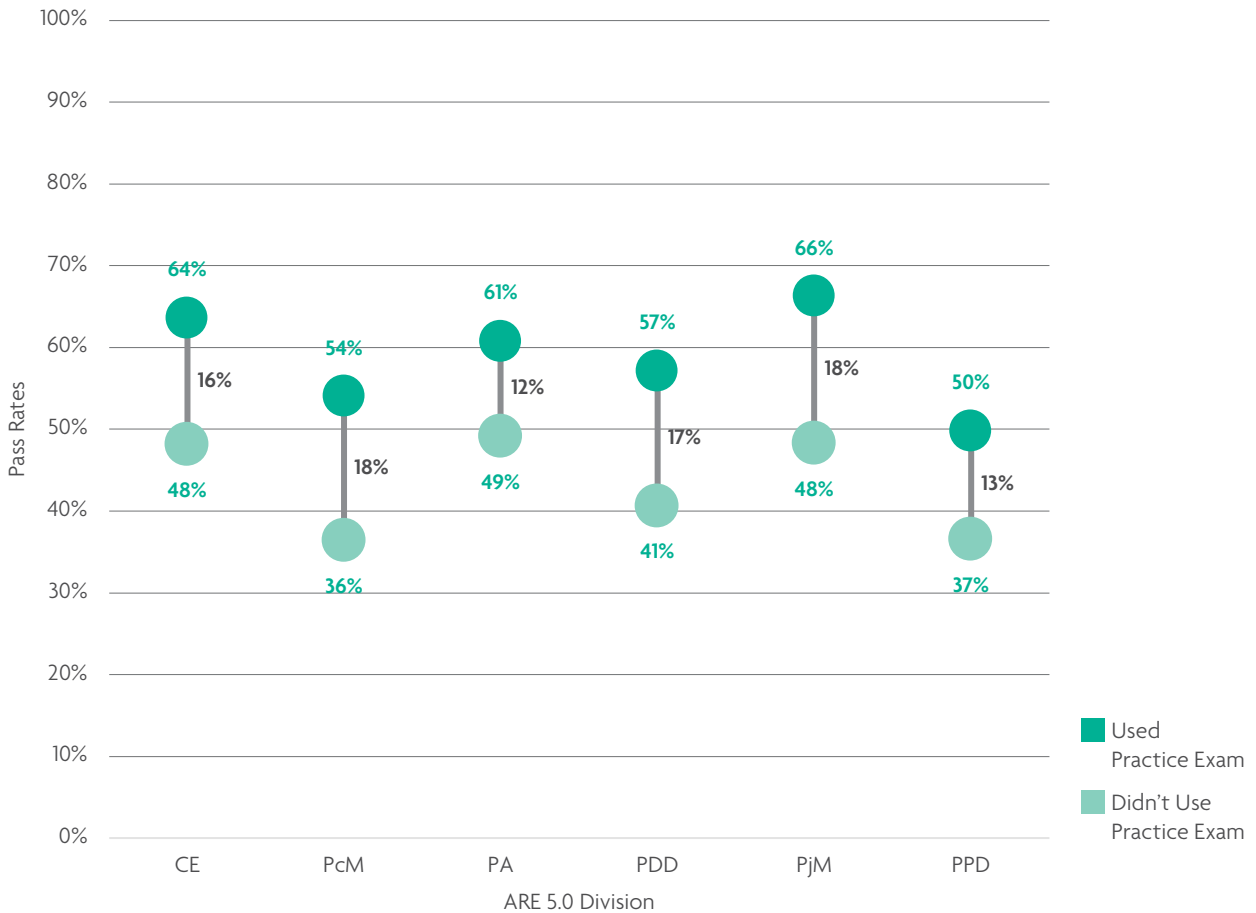
69% OF CANDIDATES
**COMPLETED THE ARE IN 9 DIVISION
ATTEMPTS OR LESS, INCLUDING:**



- **Women** are 7 percentage points less likely than men to complete the exam in 9 division attempts or less
- Younger candidates are more likely to pass the exam in fewer attempts—84% of candidates **under 30** complete the complete the exam in 9 division attempts or less

Candidates who used NCARB's practice exams performed 15 percentage points better.

Overall, candidates who took a free NCARB practice exam before attempting the related division were 15 percentage points more likely to succeed. **Higher pass rates ranged anywhere from 12 – 18 percentage points, depending on the division.** Performance improved most (18 percentage points) for candidates taking Practice Management and Project Management, and least (12 percentage points) for candidates taking the Programming & Analysis division.

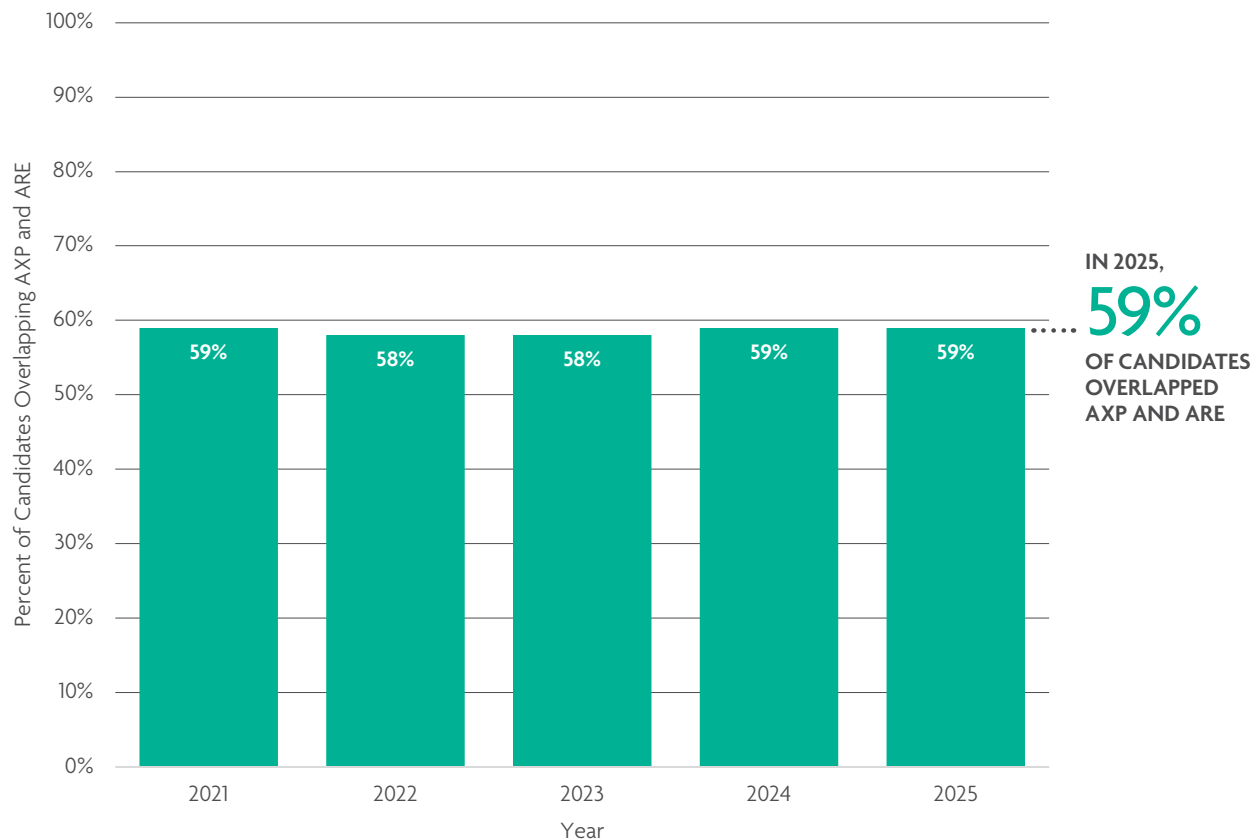


Nearly 60% of candidates overlapped the AXP and ARE.

Although AXP experience areas and ARE 5.0 divisions were intentionally designed to align with each other, **NCARB's data shows that just under 60% of candidates typically take the exam while working to complete the experience program.**

In 2025, 59% of candidates took at least 1 ARE division while they were still working toward completing the AXP—the same proportion seen in 2024. This proportion has held steady for the past 5 years.

Note: Because candidates can backdate experience, AXP data can shift over time.



The best time to take an exam division was within 3 months of completing the related experience area.

NCARB recommends that candidates take the ARE at the time that best meets their needs—whether that’s based on finances, bandwidth, preparation, or other factors. But NCARB’s data indicates that candidates should also consider their AXP progress when establishing a testing timeline. **On average, candidates perform better on the exam when they take an ARE division immediately after finishing the related AXP experience area.**

Currently, most candidates wait a year or more after finishing an AXP area before taking its related ARE division. However, pass rates at that point are anywhere from 5 – 12 percentage points lower on average compared to divisions taken within 0 – 3 months of completing the related experience area.

The ARE is designed to reflect day-to-day practice, so testing while related experience is fresh might help candidates connect the exam to the real world.

ARE 5.0 Division

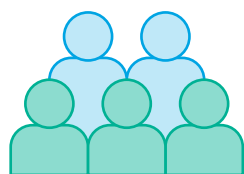
		Area Incomplete			Area Complete		
	National Average	Less than 33% Complete	33%-66% Complete	67-99% Complete	0-3 Months	4-12 Months	1+ Year
CE	61%	57%	64%	64%	67%	65%	57%
PcM	51%	45%	53%	53%	55%	51%	50%
PA	59%	52%	62%	69%	66%	61%	55%
PDD	54%	51%	60%	54%	62%	60%	50%
PjM	63%	58%	65%	65%	67%	63%	62%
PPD	48%	41%	54%	53%	55%	53%	44%

Below National Average

On Par With National Average (+/- 2)

Above National Average

Overlapping the AXP and ARE is proven to lead to higher exam performance—but less than 60% of candidates take the exam while working to meet the experience requirement



3 IN 5 CANDIDATES

OVERLAP THE AXP AND ARE



0-3 MONTHS

Pass rates are highest right after completing the related AXP area

A YEAR OR MORE

Most candidates test a year or more after completing the related experience area

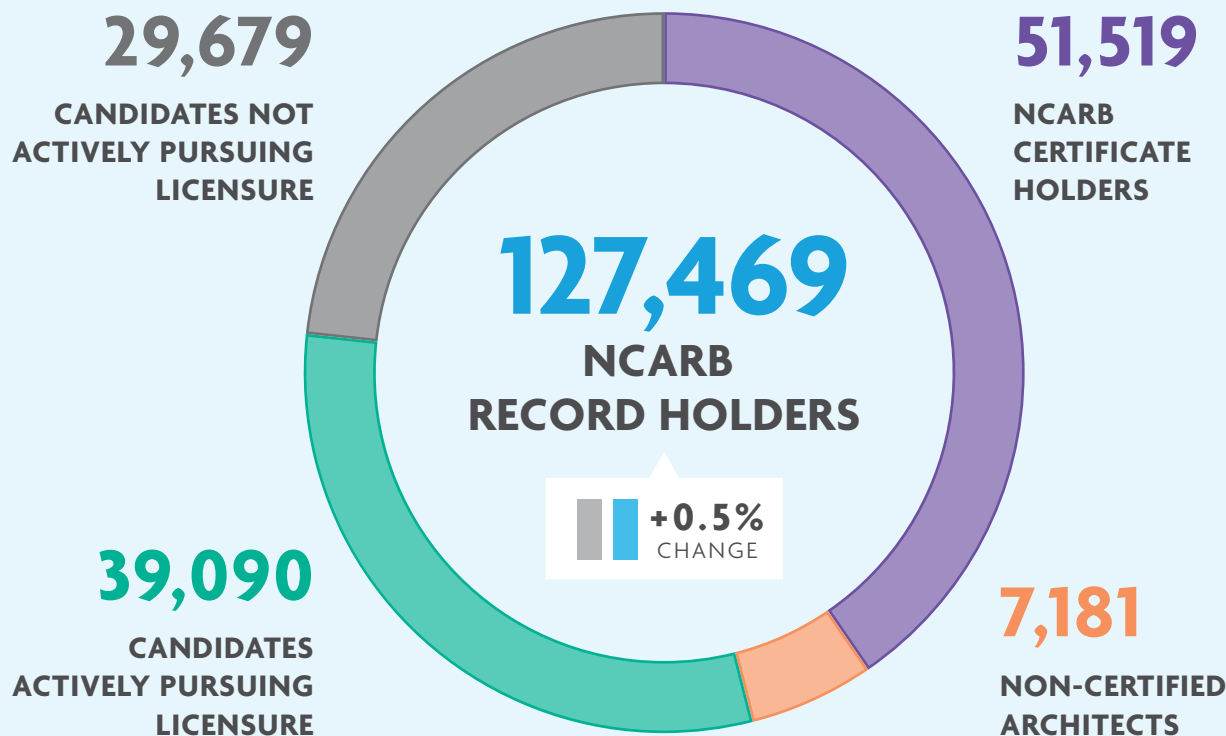
Candidates who took **Project Development & Documentation within 3 months of completing the experience area** performed 8 percentage points higher than the national average

+8 POINTS

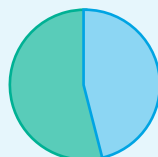
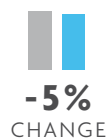
Inside NCARB

Throughout the year, NCARB worked to support our growing community of licensing board members, architects, licensure candidates, volunteers, and more. We offer support to the 55 U.S. architectural licensing boards who make up NCARB's members, encourage program alignment across the United States, and assist individuals seeking licensure as they navigate jurisdictional requirements.

NCARB's community continued to expand in 2025, with over 127,000 Record holders, more than 375 volunteers, and over 400 licensing board members. Our volunteer community—made up of practicing architects, emerging professionals, educators, and experts from other fields—worked together across 20 committees to develop resources for licensing boards, evolve the future of licensure, and more.



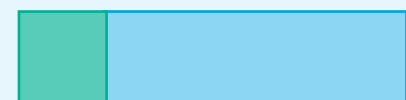
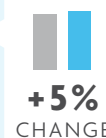
9,354
NEW RECORD HOLDERS



46%
NEW ARCHITECTS STARTED
RECORD WHILE IN SCHOOL



16,663
LICENSURE
APPLICATIONS



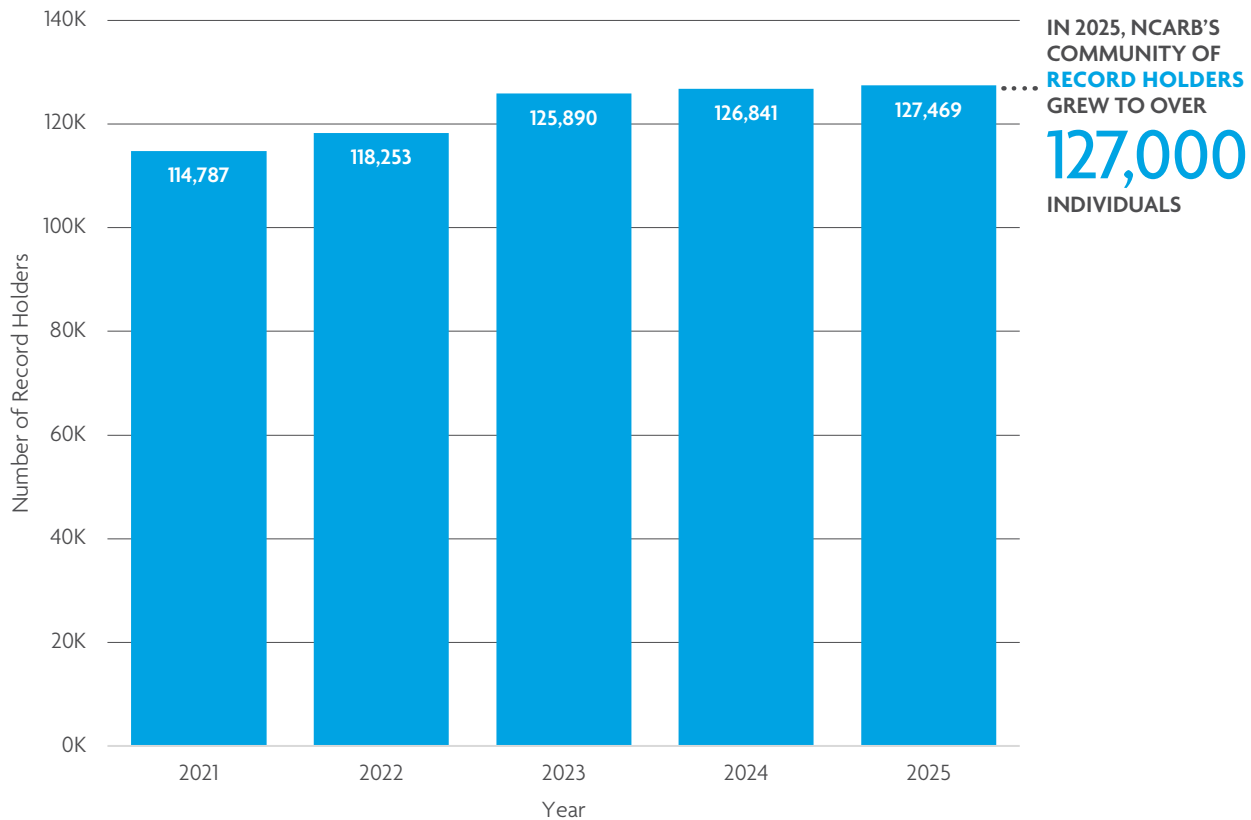
22% New Licenses
78% Reciprocal

NCARB's Record holder community continues to grow.

Over 127,400 individuals held an NCARB Record in 2025, a 0.5% increase compared to 2024. **NCARB's Record holder community has grown by more than 11% since 2021**, a sign that the licensure pipeline has largely recovered from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHO ARE NCARB RECORD HOLDERS?

An NCARB Record holder is **anyone who holds an active NCARB Record**. This includes individuals from a variety of career stages, from students to emerging professionals to practicing architects.



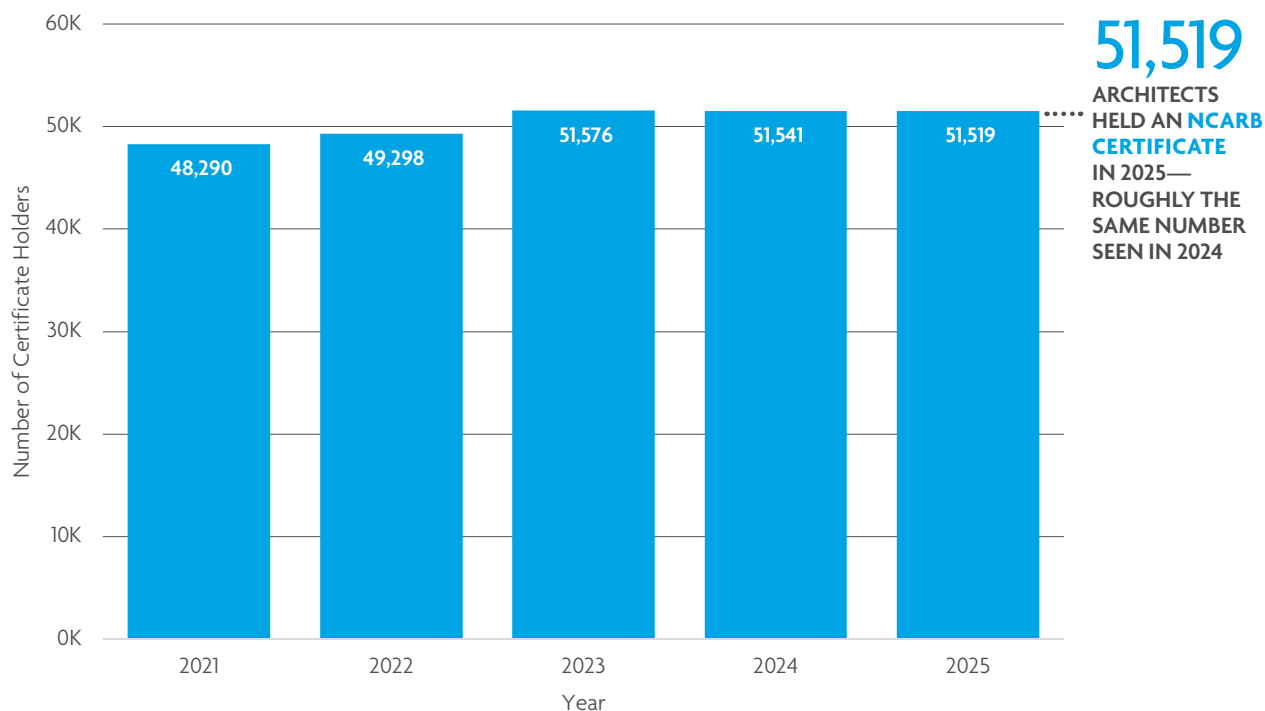
Over 51,000 architects held an NCARB Certificate in 2025.

The number of NCARB Certificate holders held steady in 2025, with just over 51,500 architects holding an active NCARB Certificate. Despite fluctuation in the total number of licensed architects in the United States over the past several years, the number of NCARB Certificate holders has remained relatively unchanged since 2023.

NCARB continues to enhance the value of the NCARB Certificate, regularly releasing new continuing education courses on key industry topics and expanding our mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) with countries outside of the United States.

DID YOU KNOW?

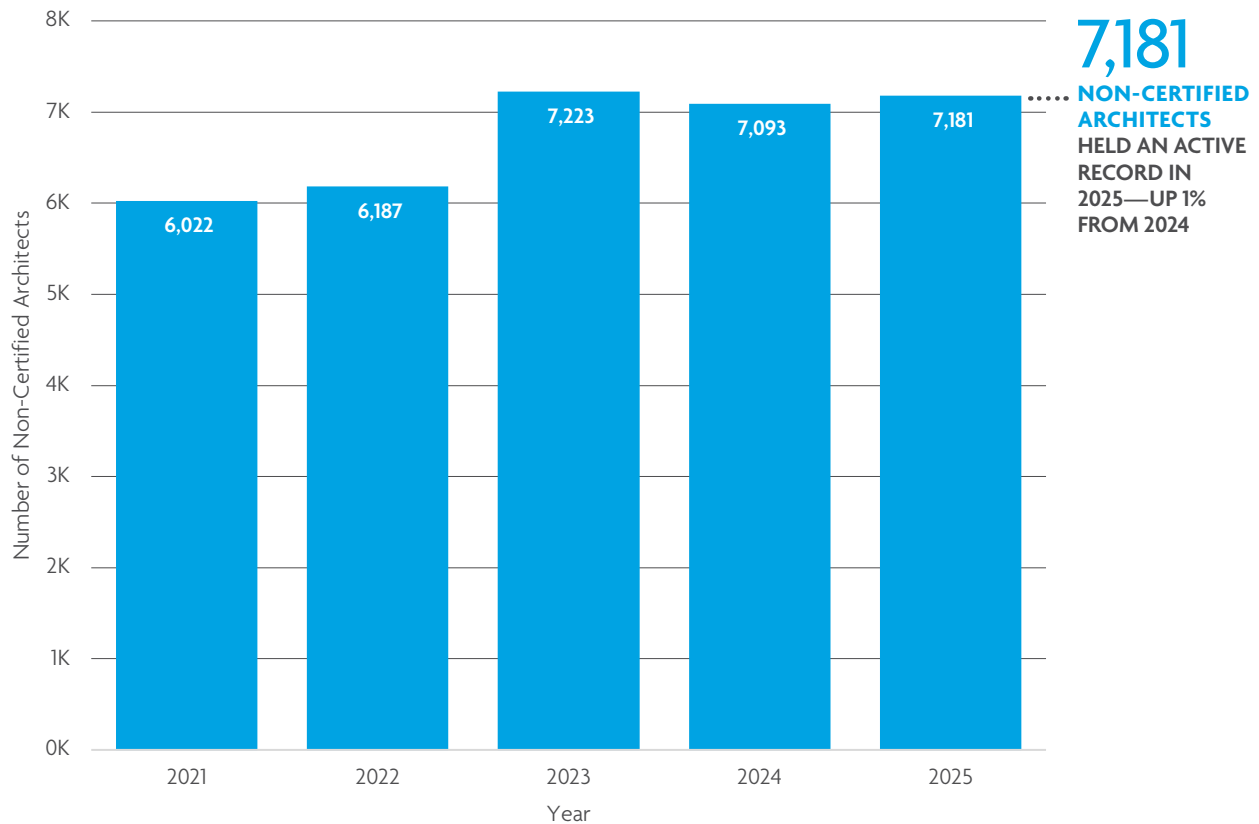
The NCARB Certificate simplifies the process of earning additional licenses in U.S. jurisdictions and can also be used to support licensure in several international locations.



The number of non-certified architects rose slightly.

The number of non-certified architects with an NCARB Record rose by 1% in 2025. Many of these individuals are actively working toward earning an NCARB Certificate, typically through one of NCARB's alternative pathways for those without a degree from a NAAB-accredited program or with an international background.

The number of non-certified architects with an active NCARB Record has held relatively steady over the past several years. The uptick seen in 2023 was most likely a result of NCARB's amnesty campaign, which waived reactivation fees for architects with lapsed NCARB Records.

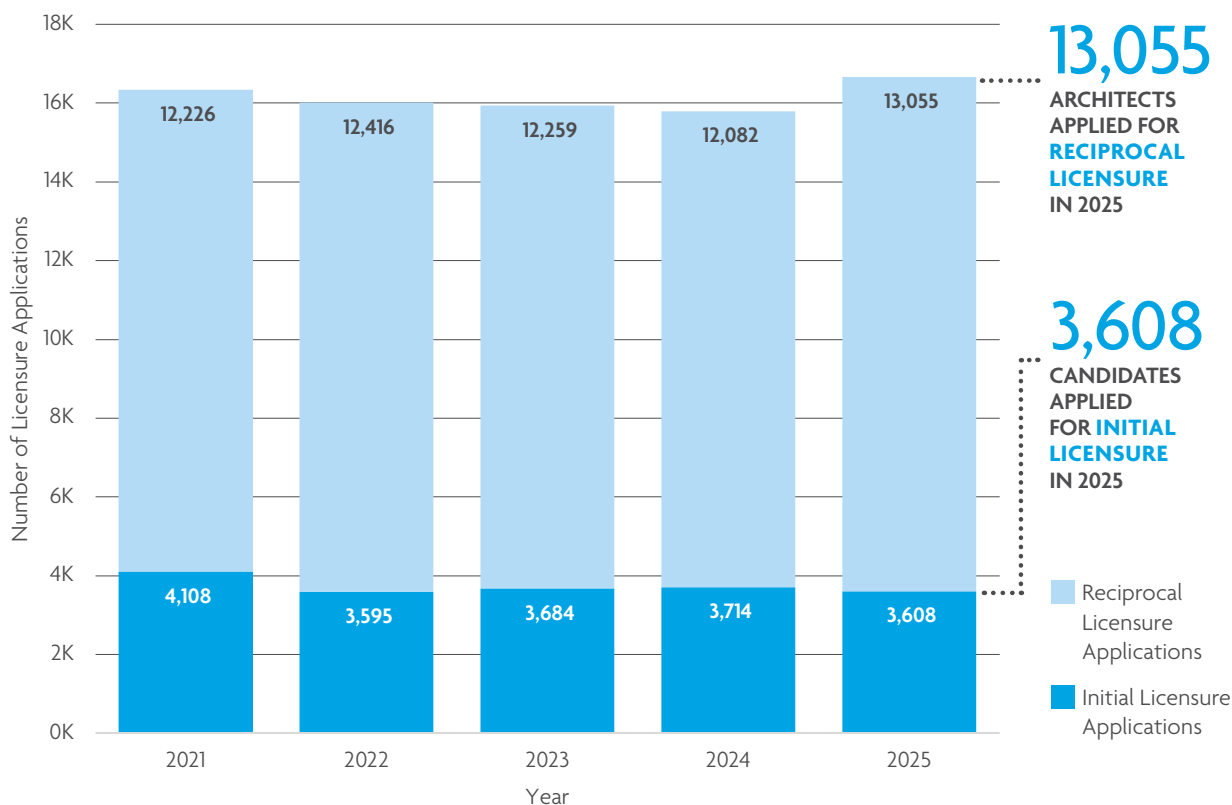


Reciprocal licensure applications on the rise.

When candidates apply for an initial license or architects apply for a reciprocal (out-of-state) license, NCARB transmits their Records to the jurisdiction's licensing board in support of their application.

The total number of transmittals rose by 5% in 2025, which was caused by an increase in reciprocal licensure transmittals. Initial licensure transmittals held relatively steady at just over 3,600. Of the over 16,500 transmittals, more than 13,000 were in support of reciprocal licensure applications—approximately 1,000 more than in 2024.

Despite this increase in reciprocal licensure applications, NCARB's member licensing boards reported an overall decrease in the number of out-of-state licensees, likely a result of some architects allowing their existing reciprocal licenses to lapse.



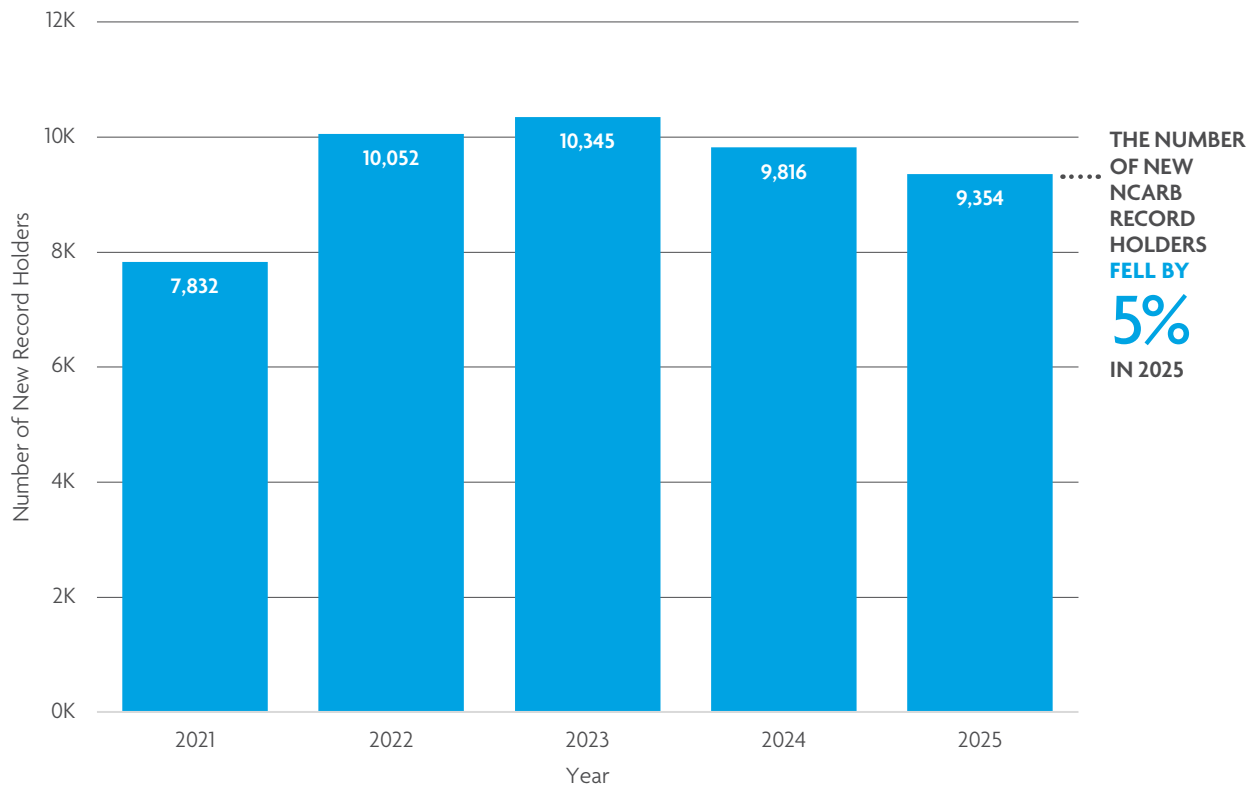
The number of new Record holders continues to fall.

The number of new NCARB Record holders fell to just over 9,300 in 2025—the second year in a row NCARB has seen a 5% drop in the number of individuals creating an NCARB Record. However, this number is still well above the roughly 8,500 new Records per year seen just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The continued decline in new Record holders is likely a sign that the rush of new Record creations seen after the pandemic is beginning to fade as the licensure pipeline returns to a new level of normal.

DID YOU KNOW?

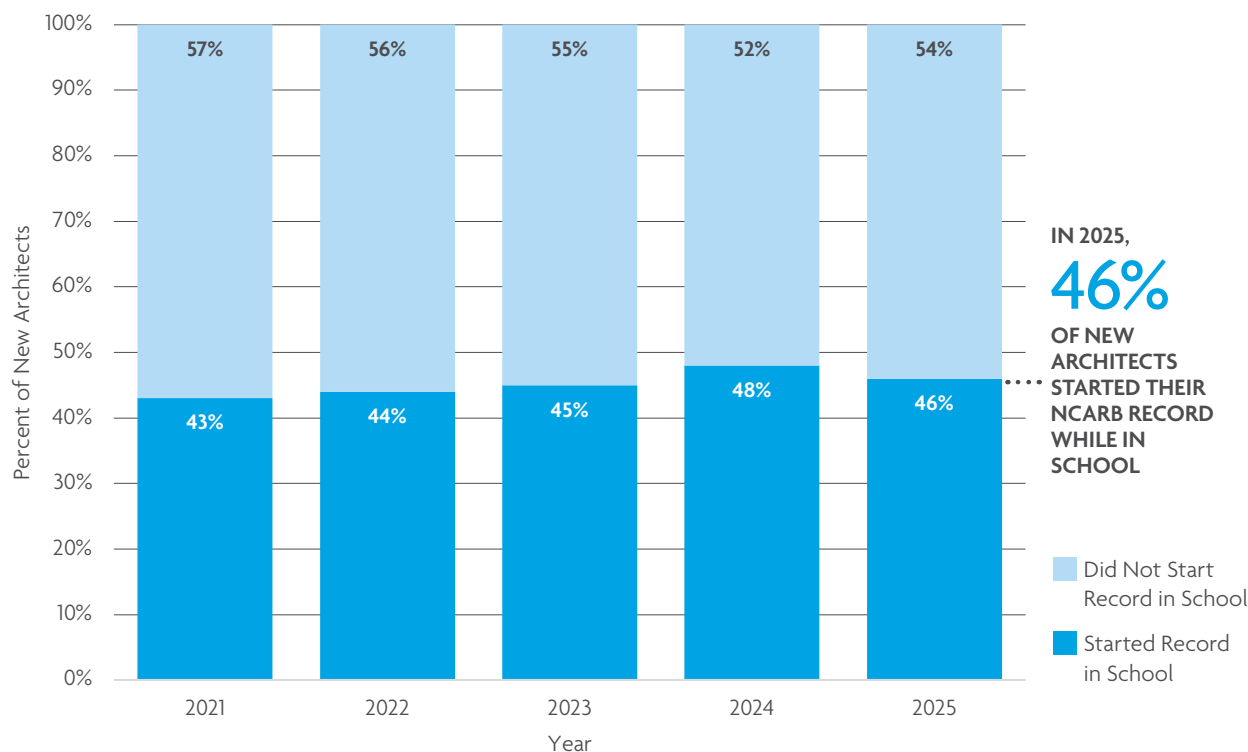
NCARB considers creating an NCARB Record the first step on the path to licensure.



The proportion of architects starting an NCARB Record in school fell slightly.

Slightly less than half (46%) of all new architects licensed in 2025 started their NCARB Record while in school, a 2-percentage point decrease compared to 2024. The remaining 54% waited to start their NCARB Record until after graduating college—a common choice for those who don't have significant Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) experience to report while in school. This is the first decrease in the proportion of architects starting their Record in school that NCARB has seen in recent years.

Because NCARB considers starting a Record the first step to earning an architecture license, a decline in the proportion of new architects starting their Record in school could signal that licensure candidates are waiting to start the licensure process until later in their careers.



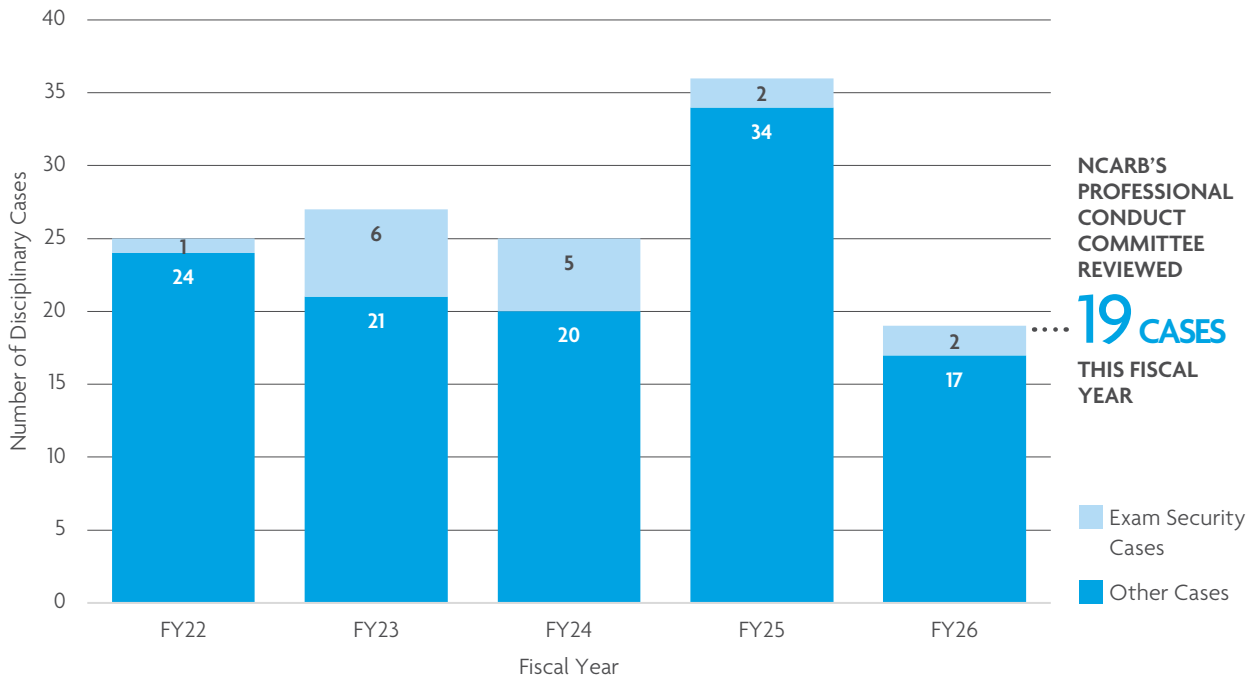
NCARB's Professional Conduct Committee reviews and recommends disciplinary action.

NCARB's Professional Conduct Committee is responsible for overseeing NCARB's policies and practices regarding the professional conduct of NCARB's Record holders and customers. Each year, the committee reviews any cases where an individual may have violated NCARB's professional conduct standards.

Typically, these cases involve reviewing findings from or actions taken by a jurisdictional licensing board, but they can also involve the violation of NCARB's Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) Candidate Agreement.

In FY26 (July 2025 – June 2026), NCARB's Professional Conduct Committee reviewed 19 cases, including 2 cases related to breaches of the exam's content or security.

Note: The number of cases reported for a fiscal year may shift slightly as the committee concludes its work for the fiscal year after *NCARB by the Numbers*' publication.



Jurisdictions

The following section includes baseline comparisons for NCARB's 55 Member Boards, which include all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Each page includes a 2025 snapshot of the jurisdiction's licensure candidate activity, exam pass rate, number of architects, and reciprocity data.

ON AVERAGE, EACH JURISDICTION IN 2025 HAD:

230

taking
the exam

388

reporting
experience

711

ACTIVE LICENSURE
CANDIDATES

93

taking the exam
and reporting
experience

63

CANDIDATES WHO FINISHED
THE PATH TO LICENSURE

55%

exam pass rate

54%

reciprocal
licenses

46%

resident
licenses

4,904

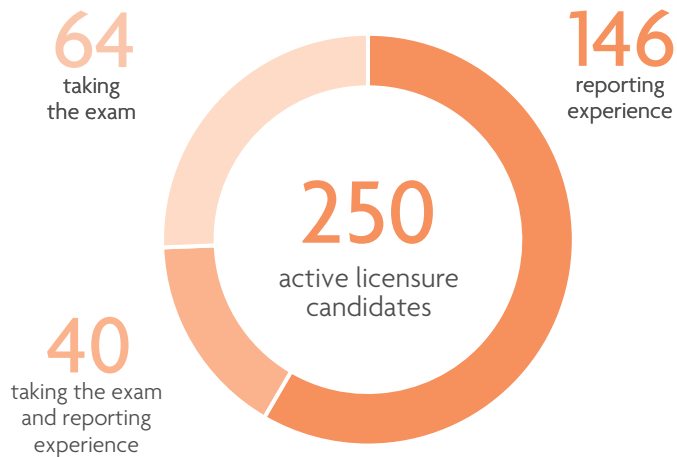
ARCHITECTS

937

NCARB CERTIFICATE
HOLDERS

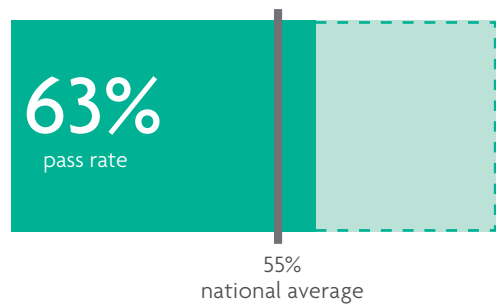
Alabama

PATH TO LICENSURE

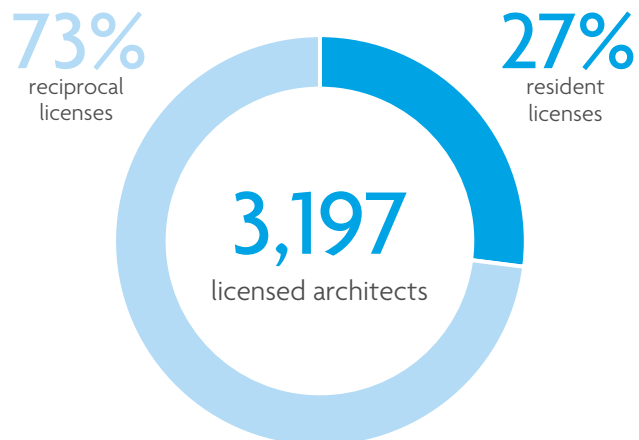


26

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



554

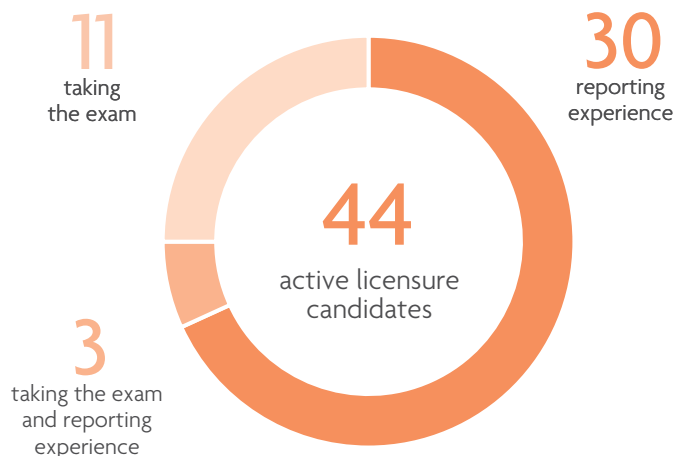
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Alabama are most frequently also licensed in:

- Georgia
- Florida
- Tennessee

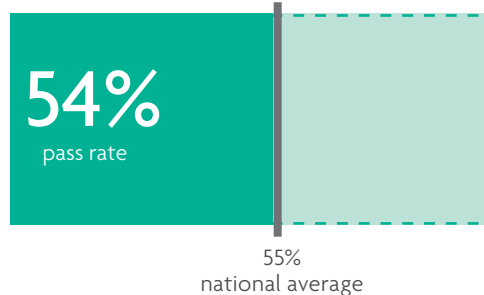
Alaska

PATH TO LICENSURE

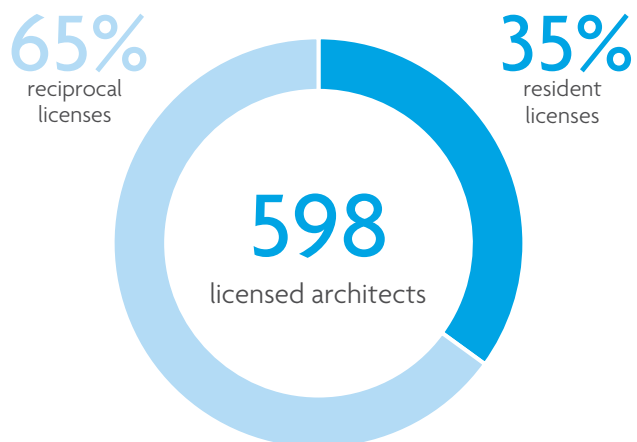


2

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



113

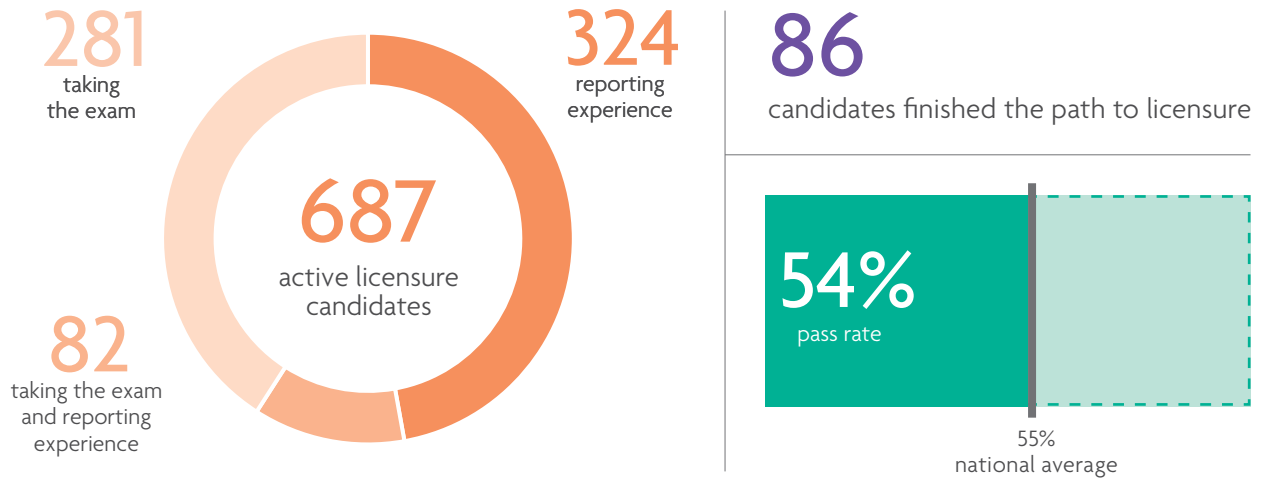
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Alaska are most frequently also licensed in:

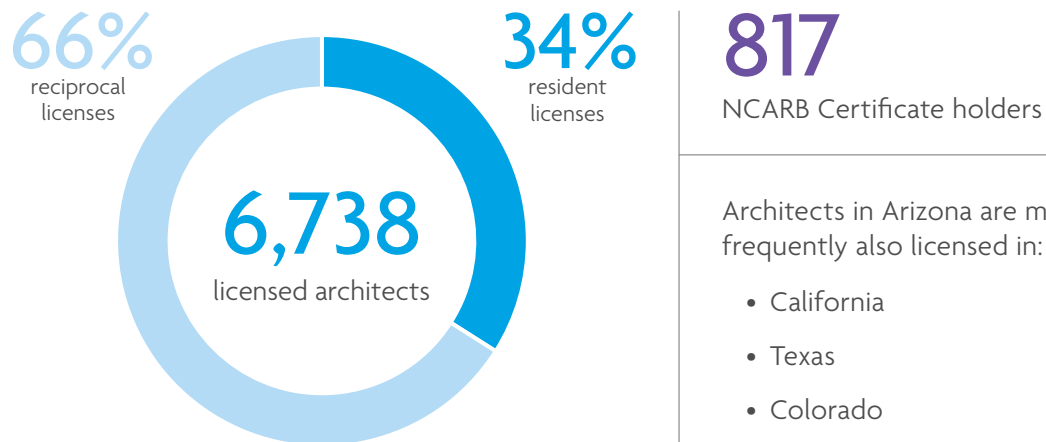
- Washington
- California
- Oregon

Arizona

PATH TO LICENSURE

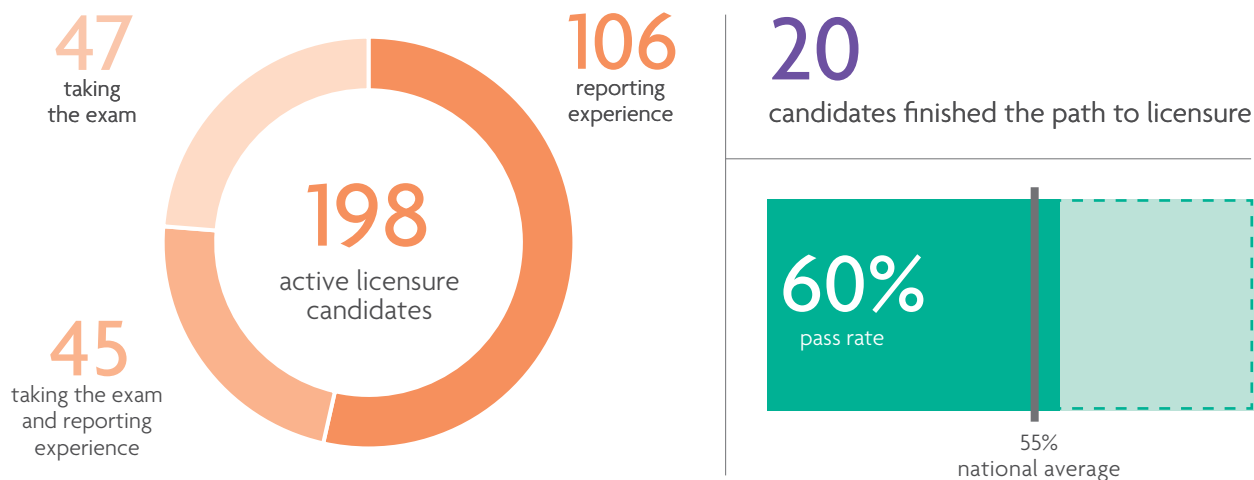


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

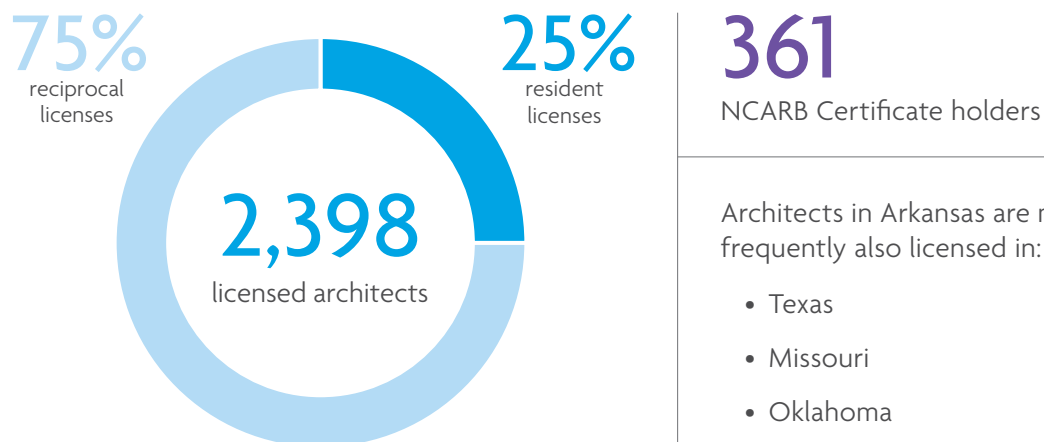


Arkansas

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



Architects in Arkansas are most frequently also licensed in:

- Texas
- Missouri
- Oklahoma

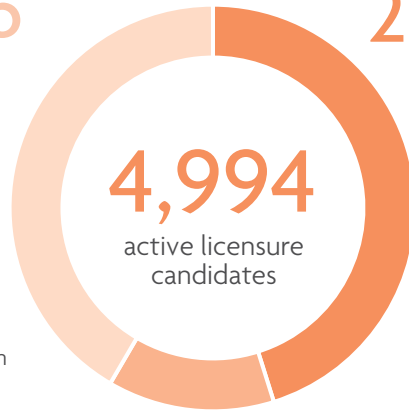
California

PATH TO LICENSURE

2,076
taking
the exam

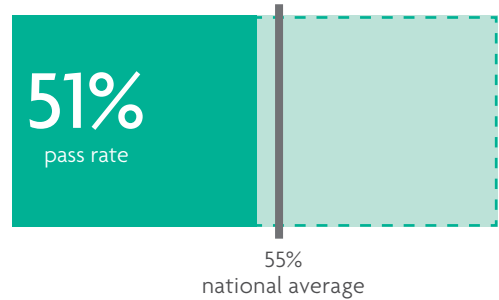
2,255
reporting
experience

663
taking the exam
and reporting
experience



549

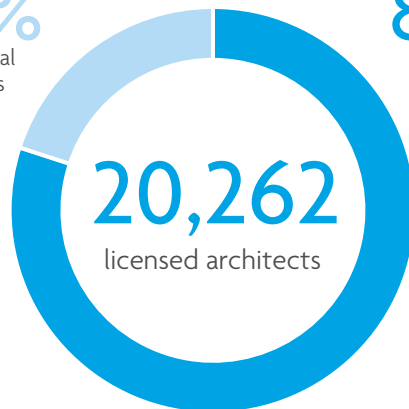
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

20%
reciprocal
licenses

80%
resident
licenses



4,620

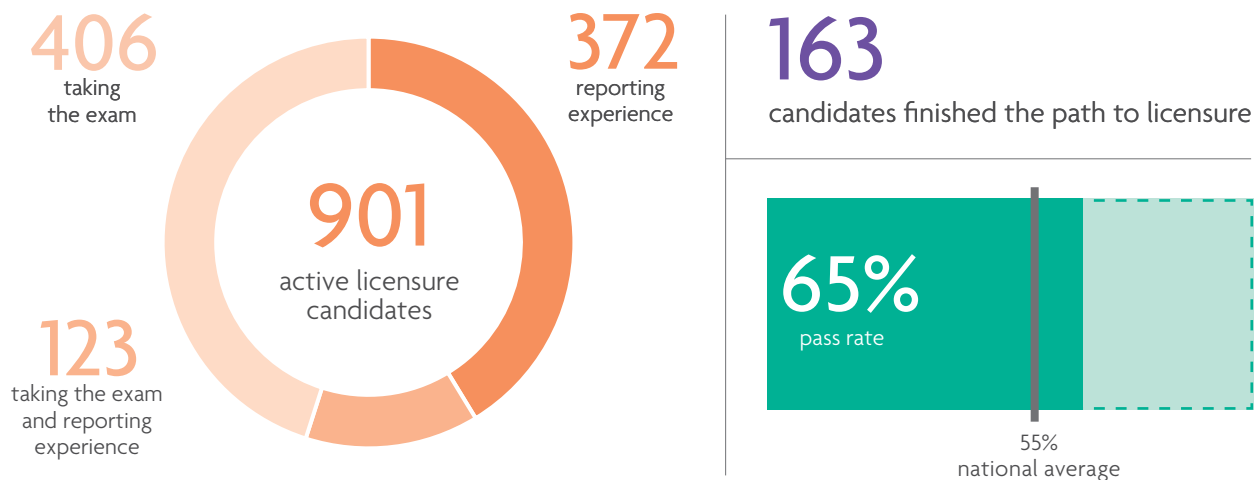
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in California are most frequently also licensed in:

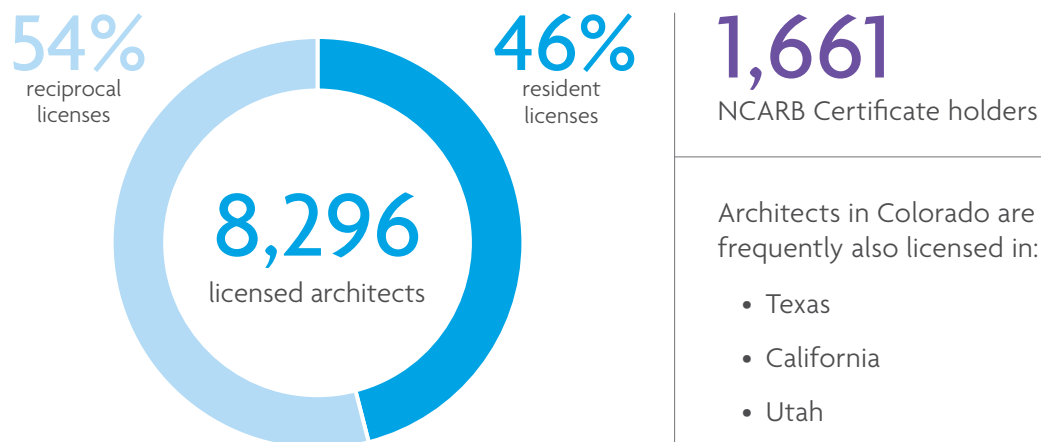
- Texas
- Nevada
- New York

Colorado

PATH TO LICENSURE

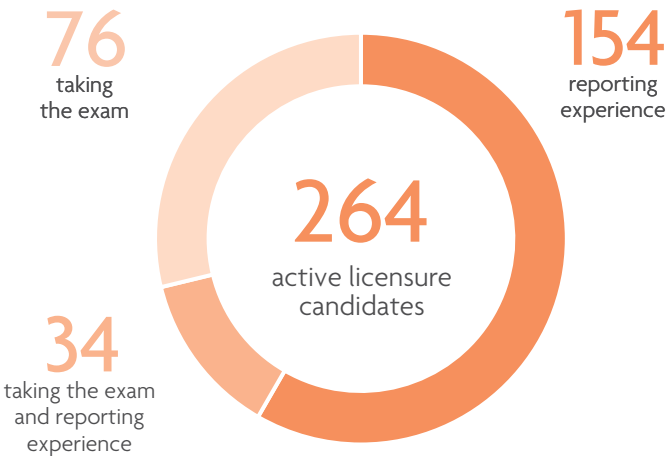


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

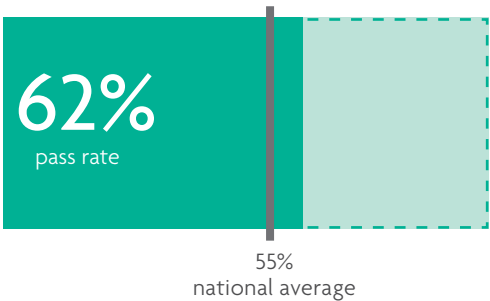


Connecticut

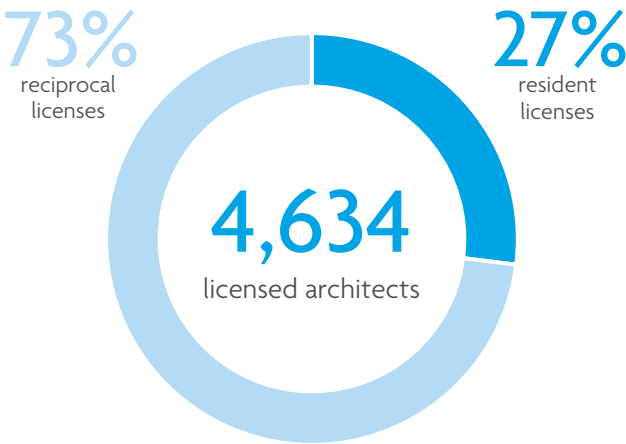
PATH TO LICENSURE



25
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



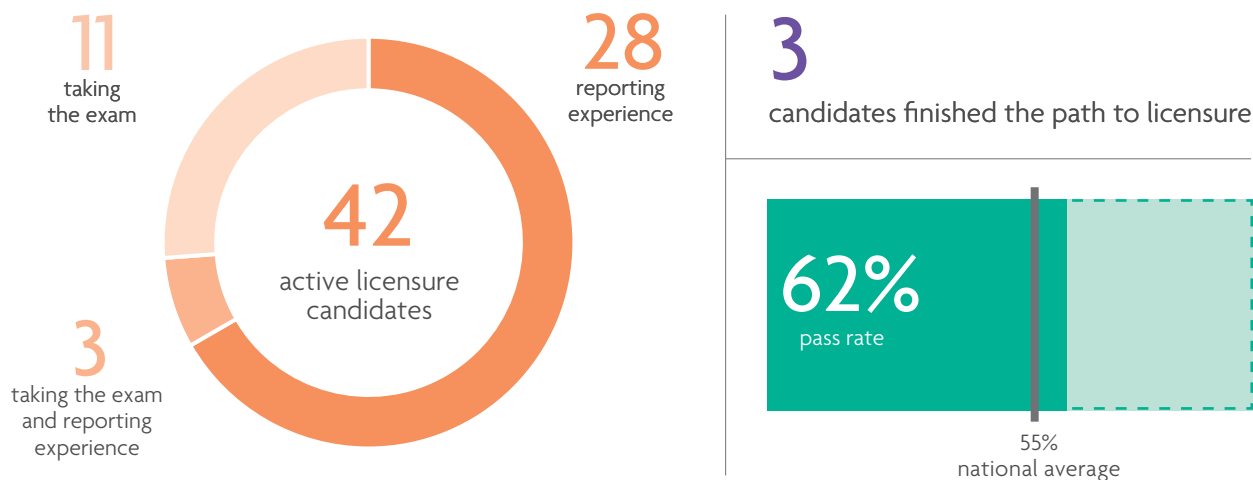
672
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Connecticut are most frequently also licensed in:

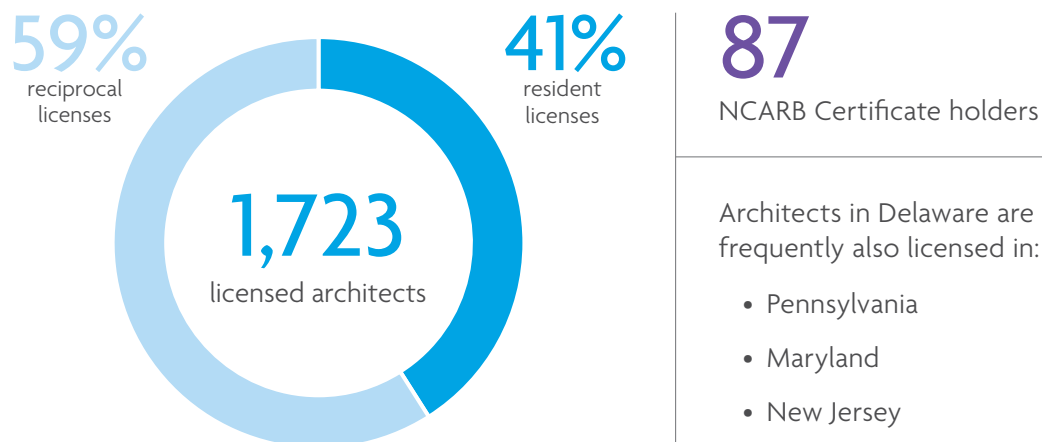
- New York
- Massachusetts
- New Jersey

Delaware

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

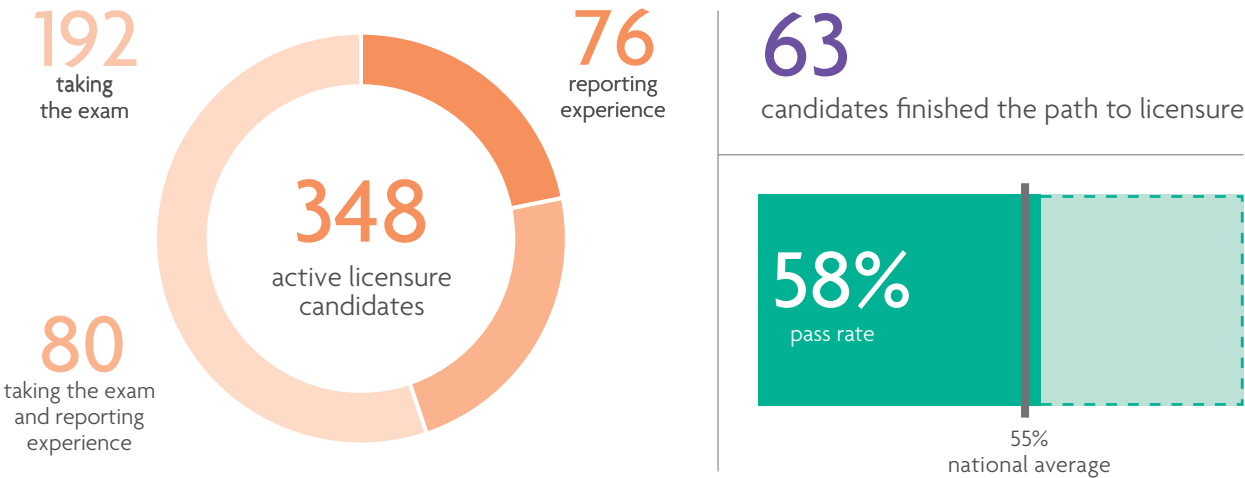


Architects in Delaware are most frequently also licensed in:

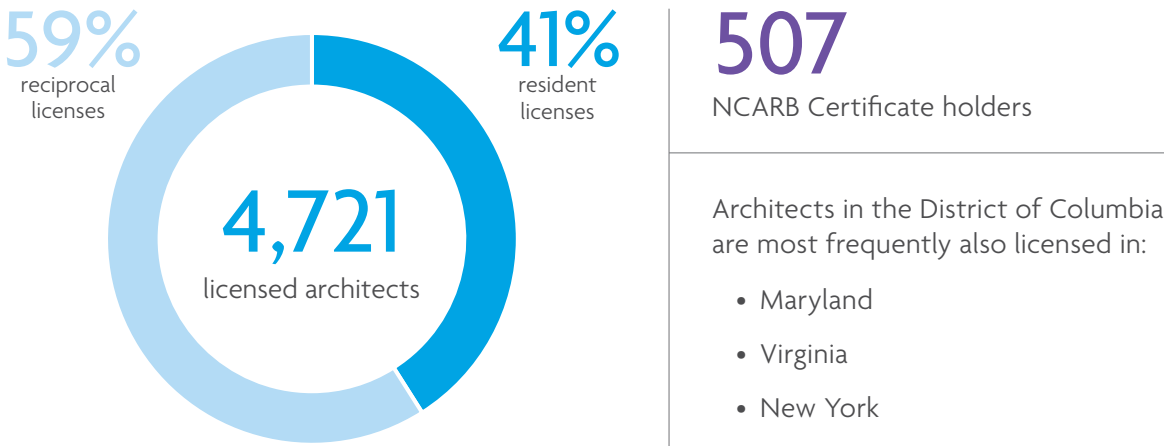
- Pennsylvania
- Maryland
- New Jersey

District of Columbia

PATH TO LICENSURE

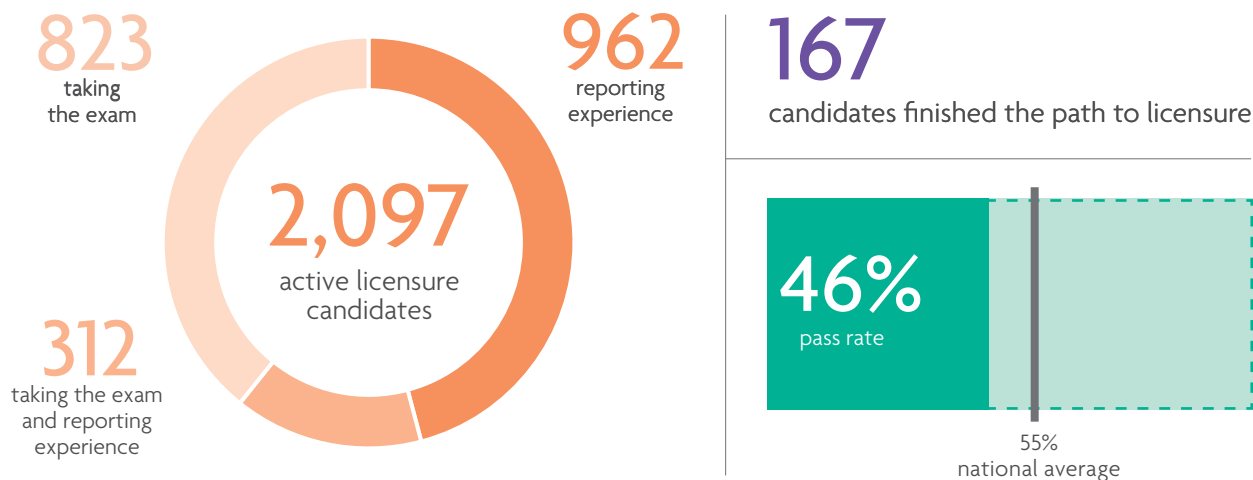


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

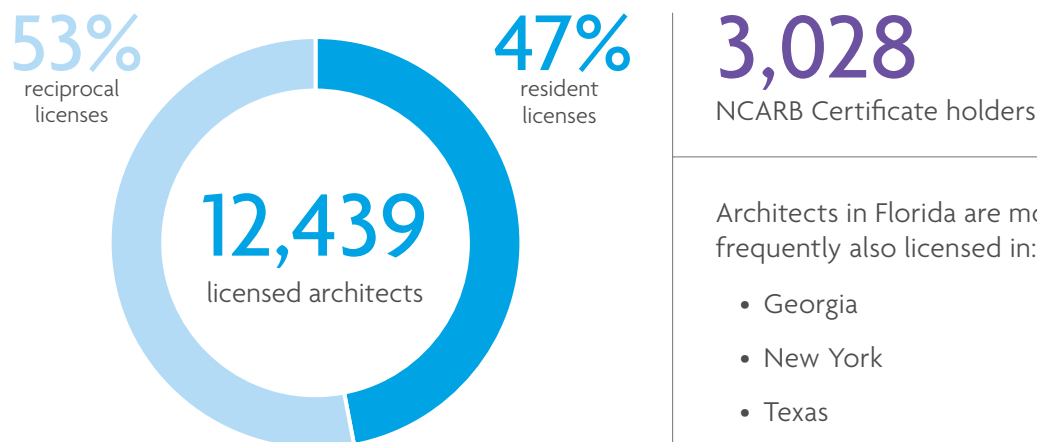


Florida

PATH TO LICENSURE

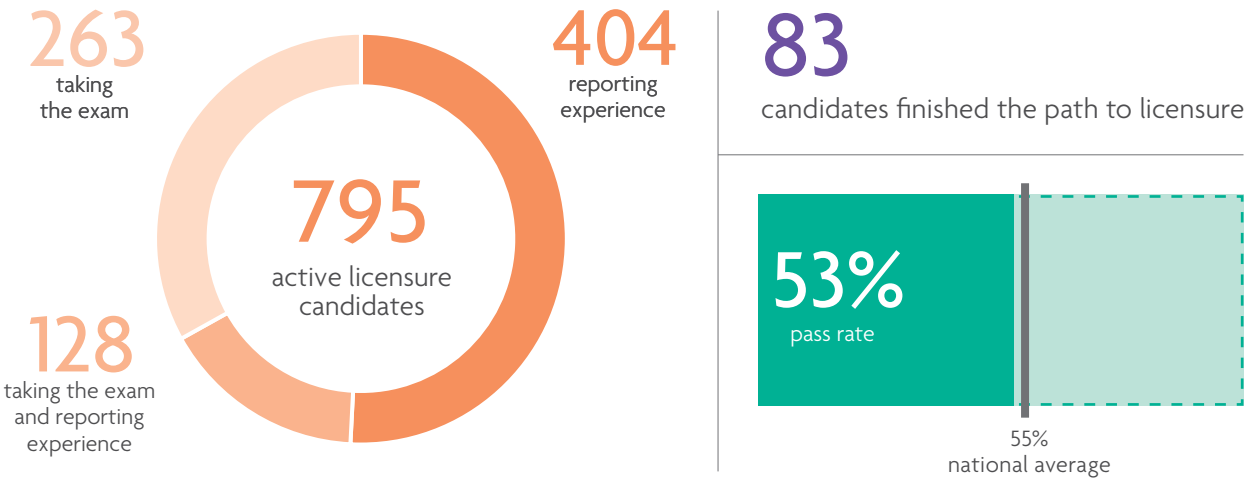


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

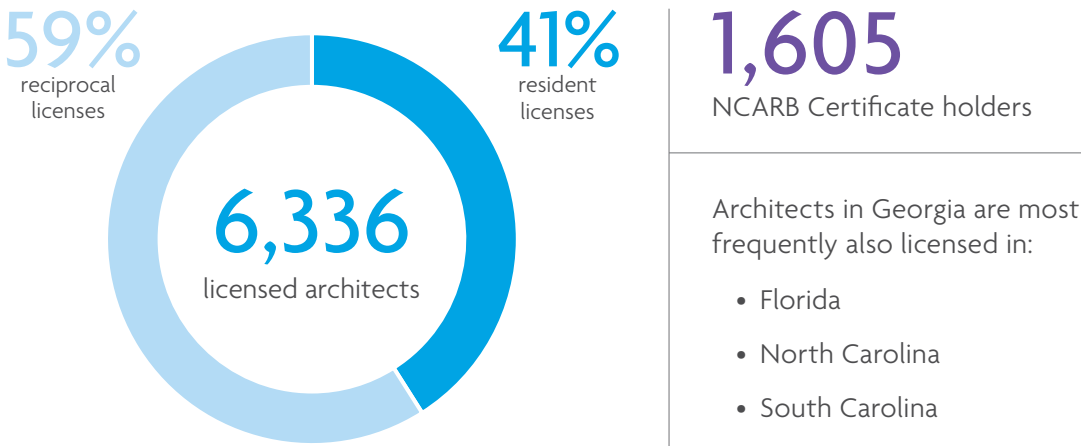


Georgia

PATH TO LICENSURE

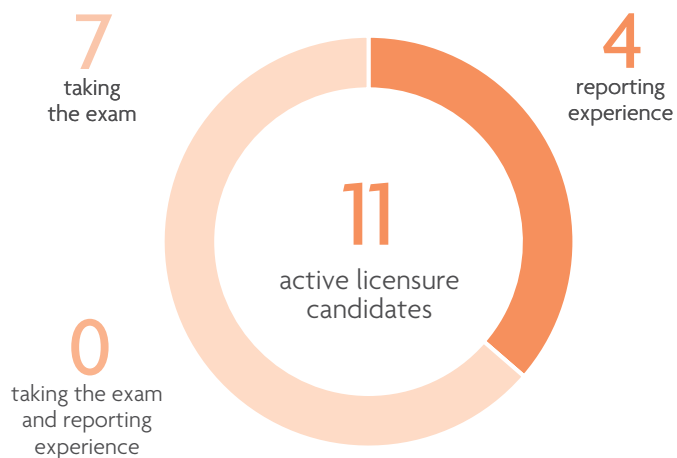


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

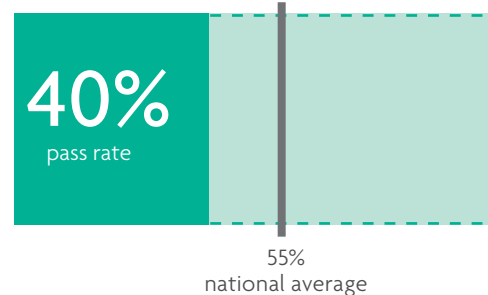


Guam

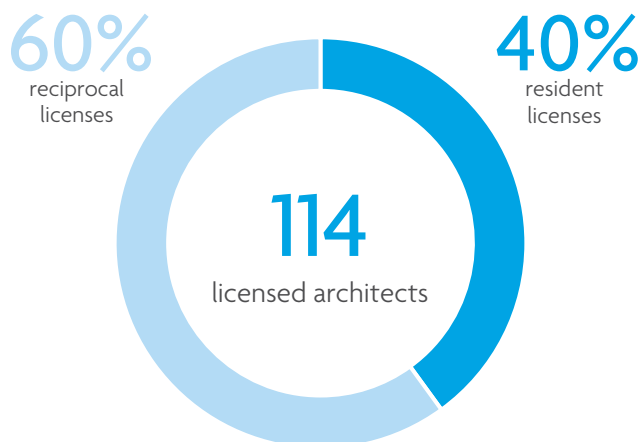
PATH TO LICENSURE



1
candidate finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



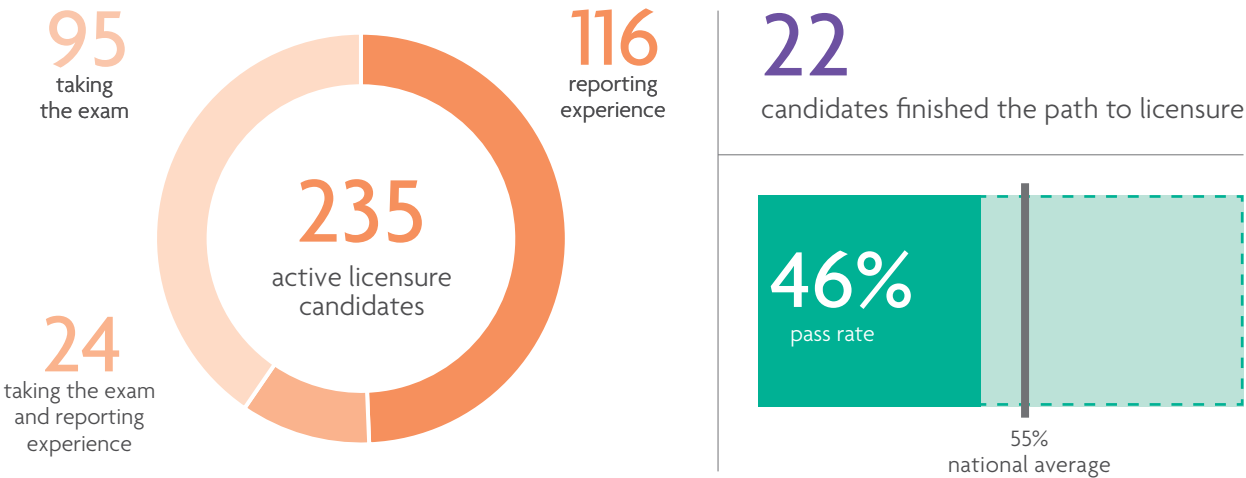
13
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Guam are most frequently also licensed in:

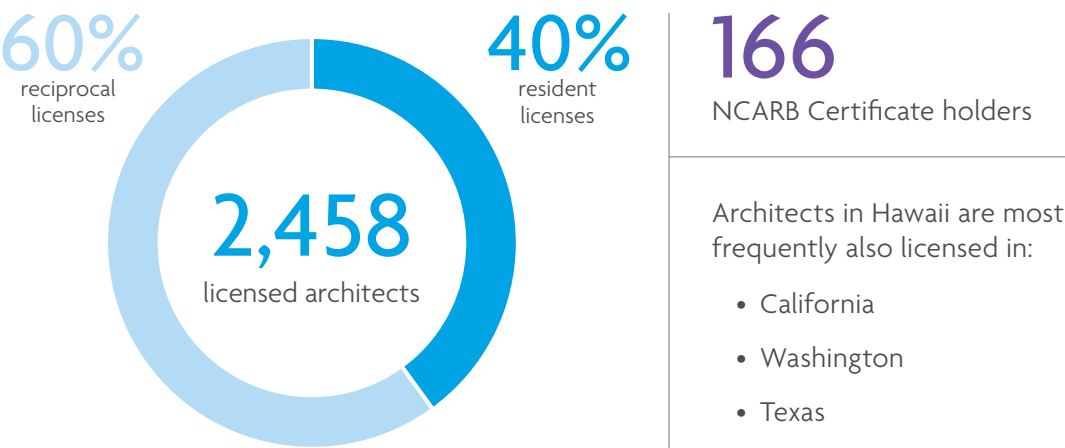
- California
- Illinois
- Hawaii

Hawaii

PATH TO LICENSURE

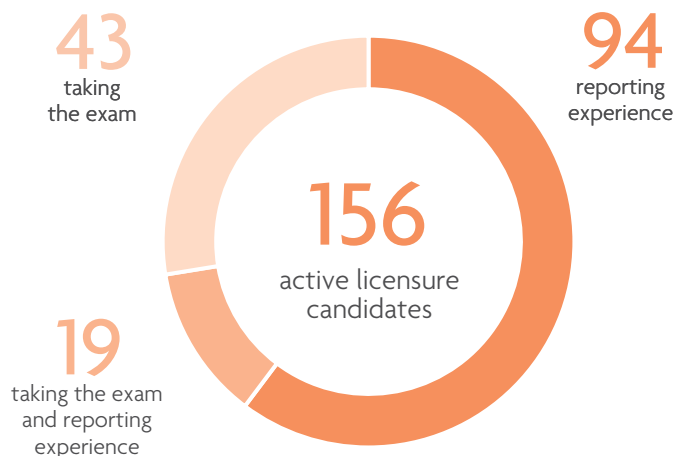


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

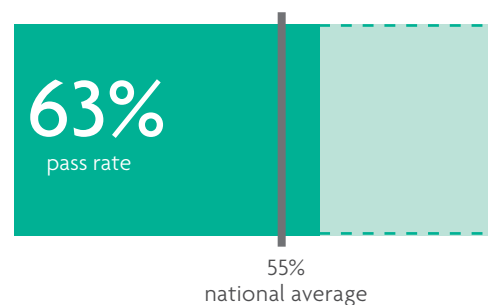


Idaho

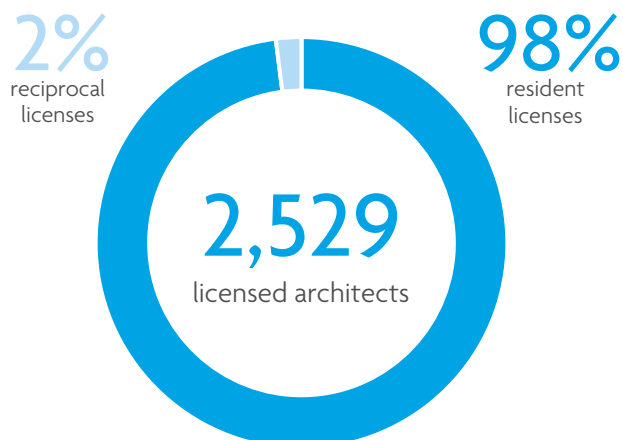
PATH TO LICENSURE



15
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



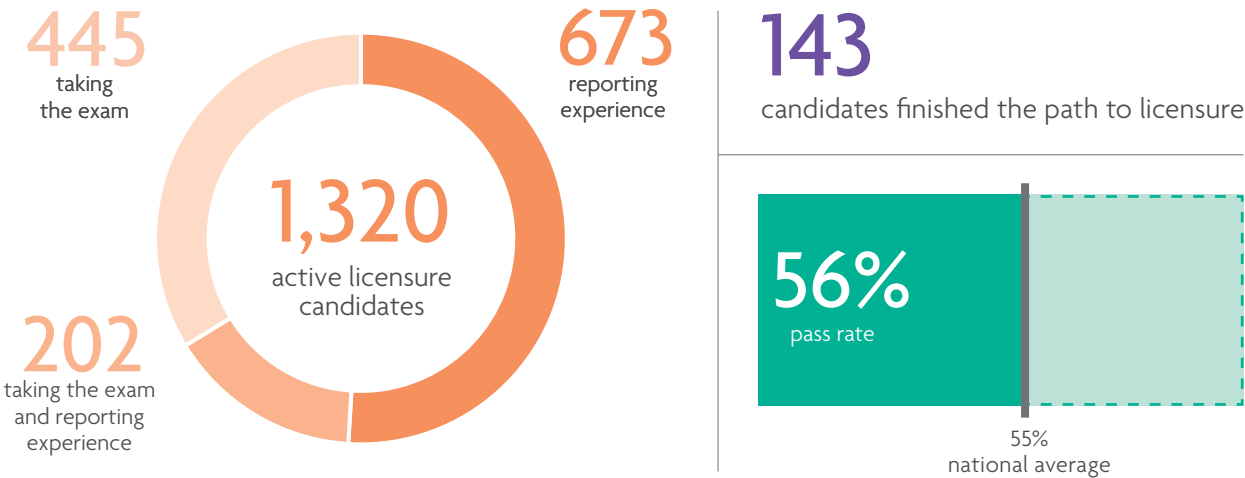
312
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Idaho are most frequently also licensed in:

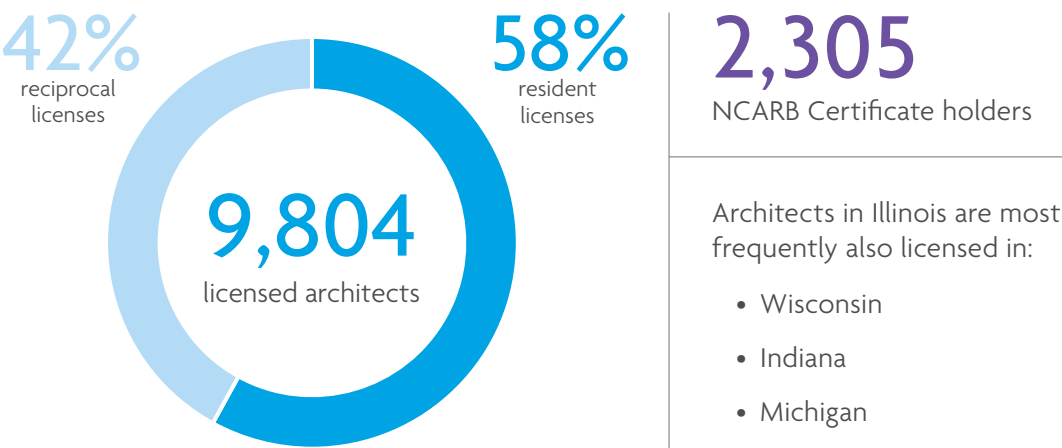
- Washington
- California
- Utah

Illinois

PATH TO LICENSURE

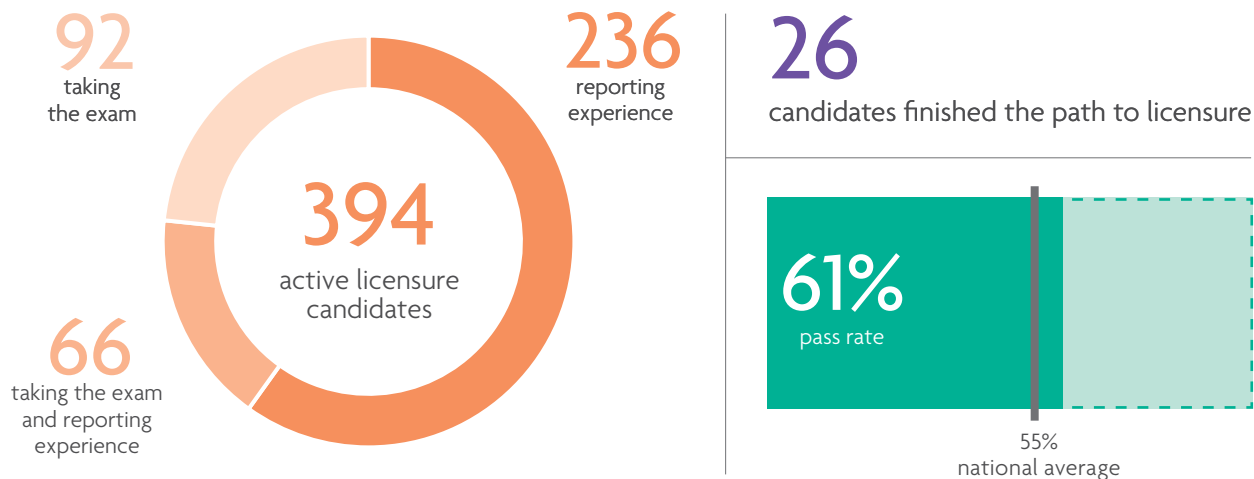


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

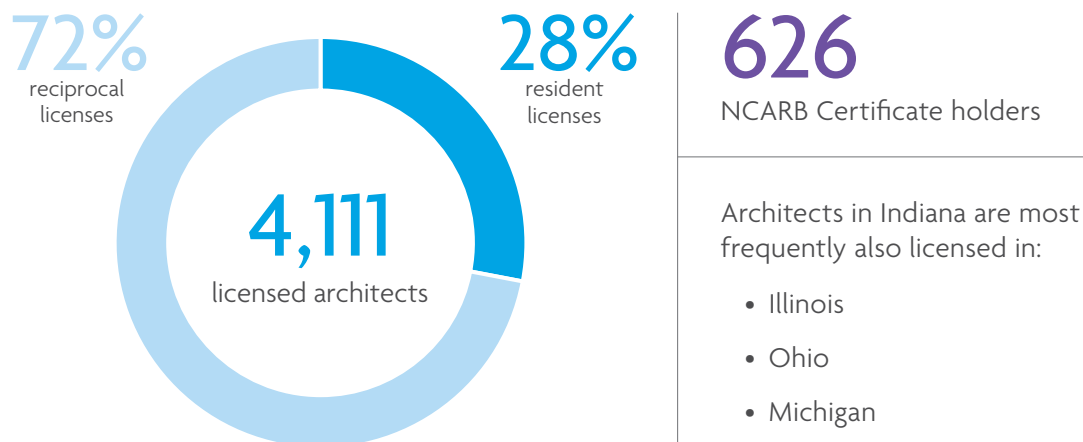


Indiana

PATH TO LICENSURE

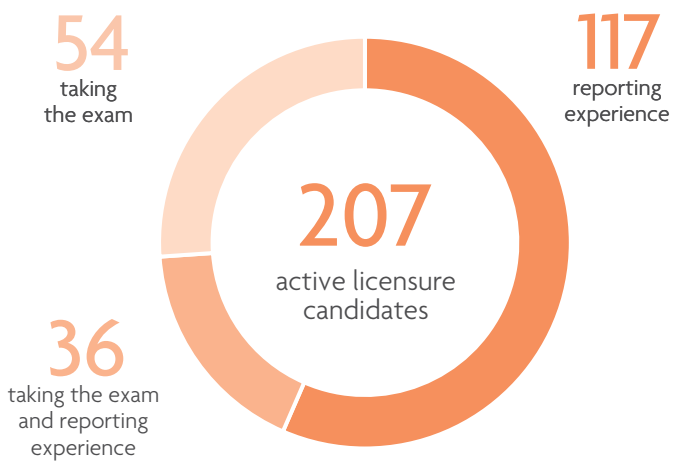


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

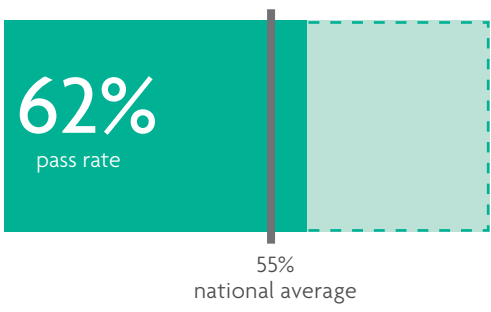


Iowa

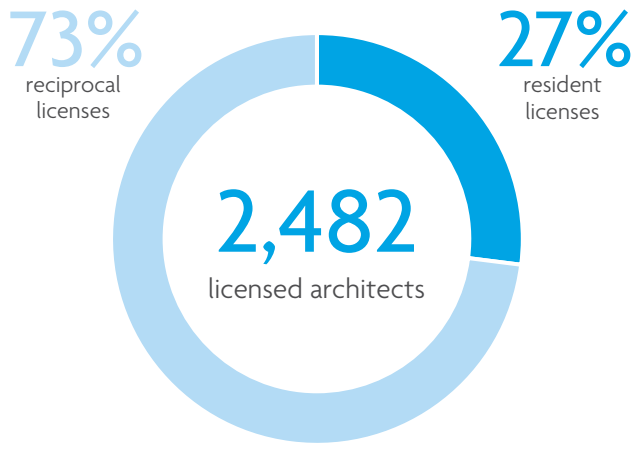
PATH TO LICENSURE



25
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



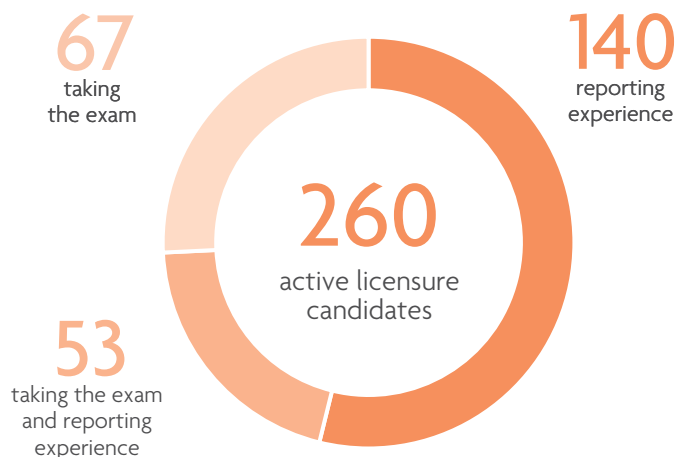
379
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Iowa are most frequently also licensed in:

- Illinois
- Minnesota
- Missouri

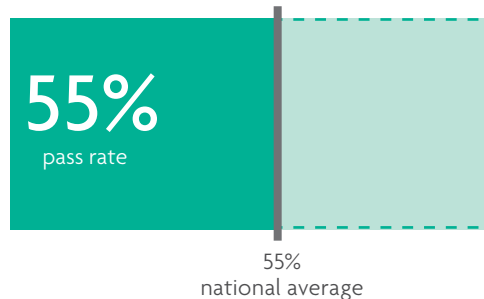
Kansas

PATH TO LICENSURE

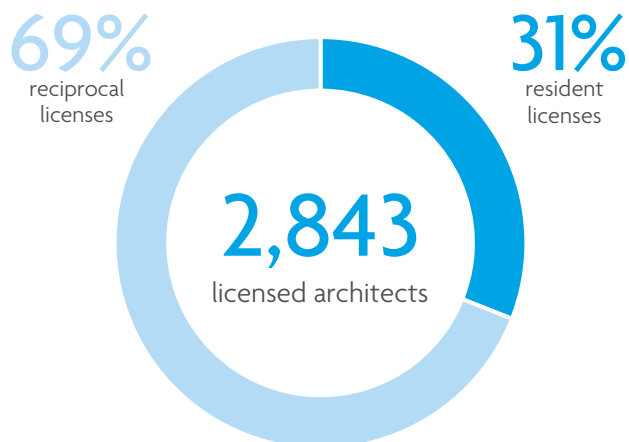


25

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



646

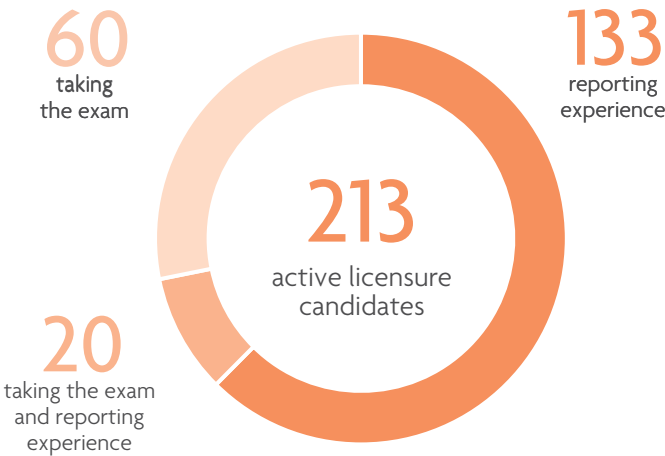
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Kansas are most frequently also licensed in:

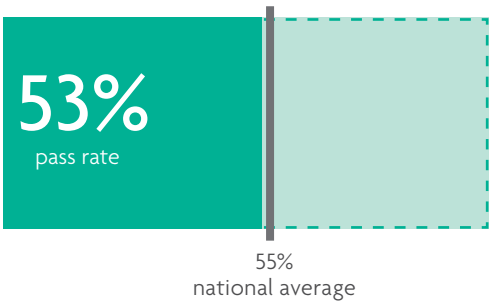
- Missouri
- Texas
- Colorado

Kentucky

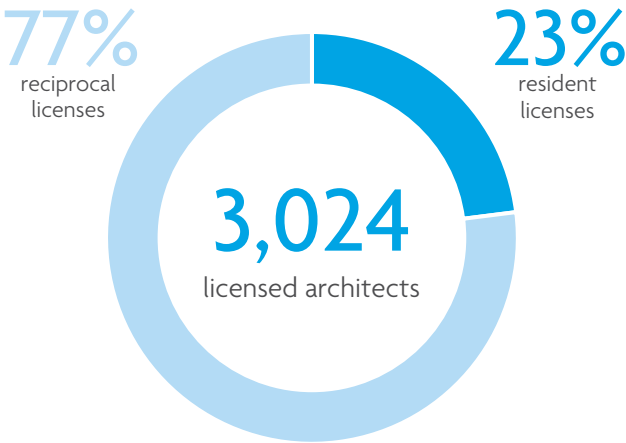
PATH TO LICENSURE



21
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



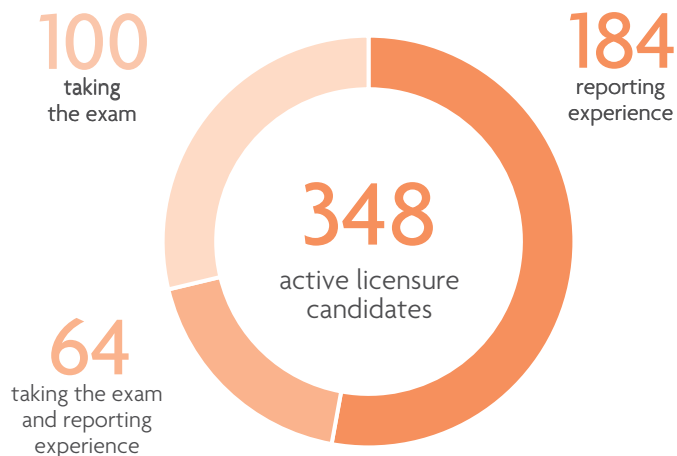
420
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Kentucky are most frequently also licensed in:

- Ohio
- Tennessee
- Indiana

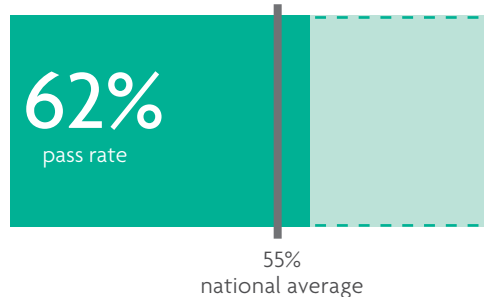
Louisiana

PATH TO LICENSURE

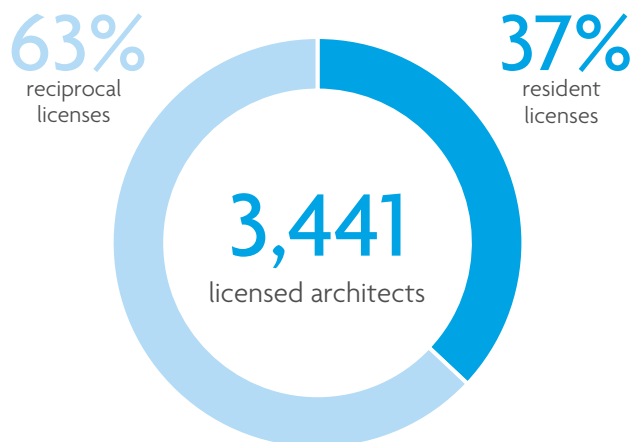


37

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



715

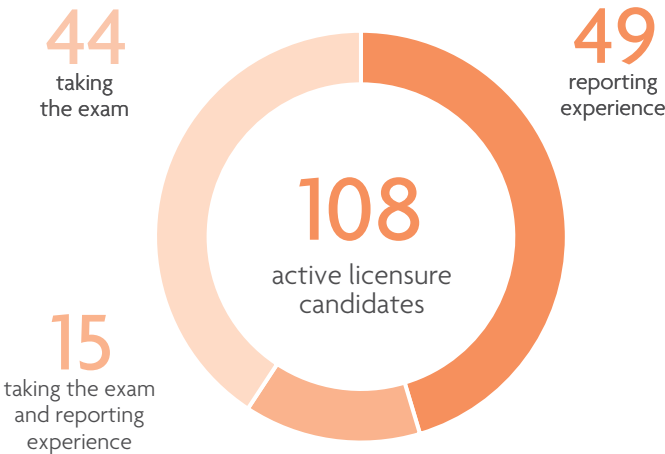
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Louisiana are most frequently also licensed in:

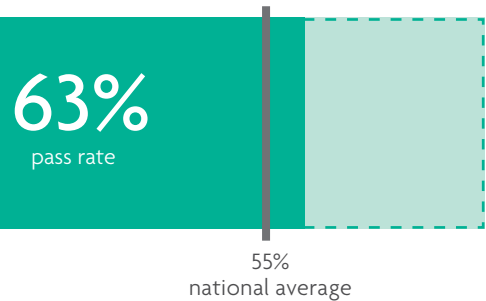
- Texas
- Florida
- Mississippi

Maine

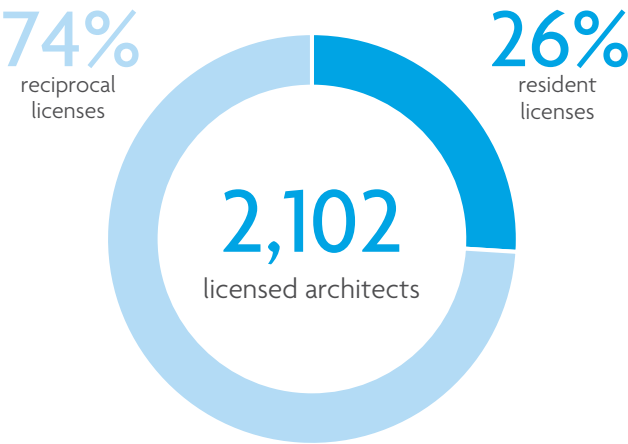
PATH TO LICENSURE



13
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



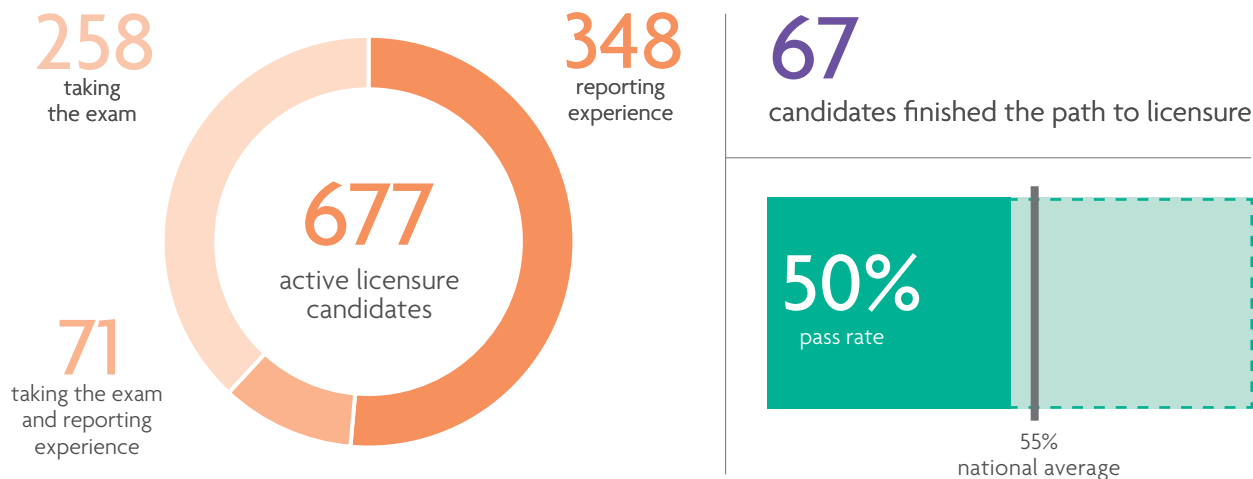
255
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Maine are most frequently also licensed in:

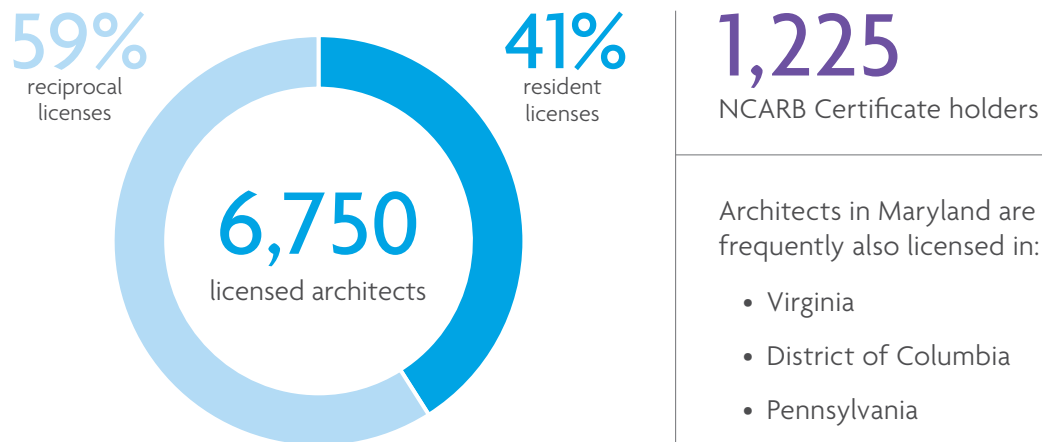
- Massachusetts
- New York
- New Hampshire

Maryland

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

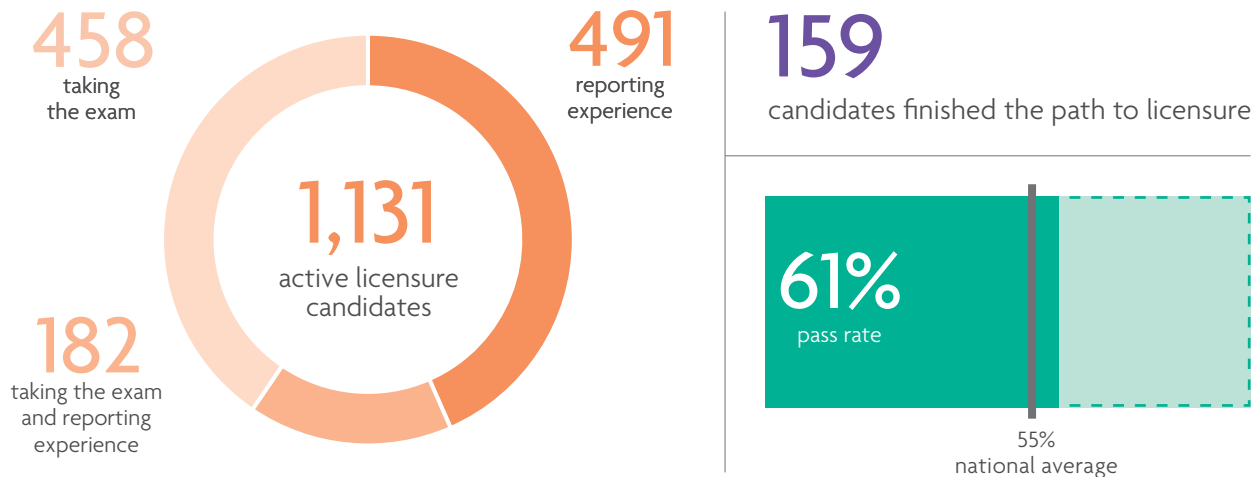


Architects in Maryland are most frequently also licensed in:

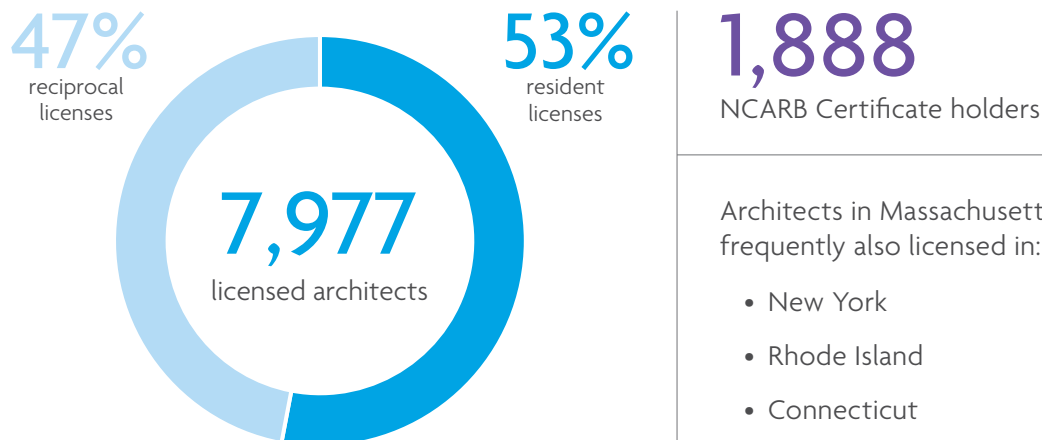
- Virginia
- District of Columbia
- Pennsylvania

Massachusetts

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

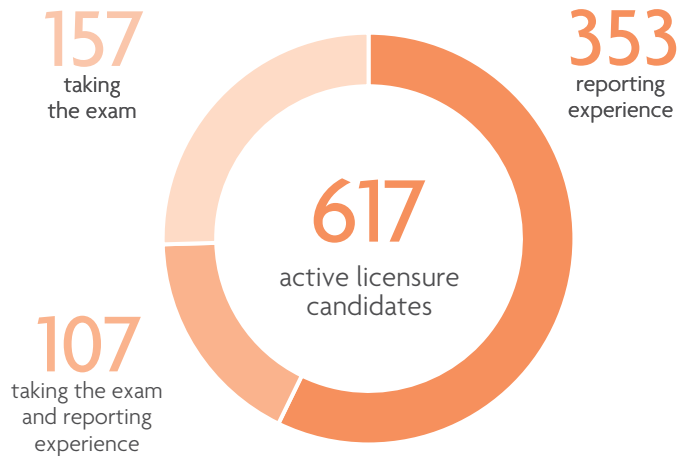


Architects in Massachusetts are most frequently also licensed in:

- New York
- Rhode Island
- Connecticut

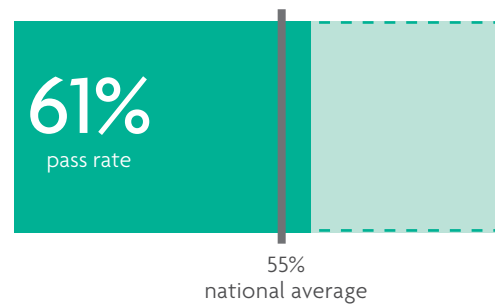
Michigan

PATH TO LICENSURE

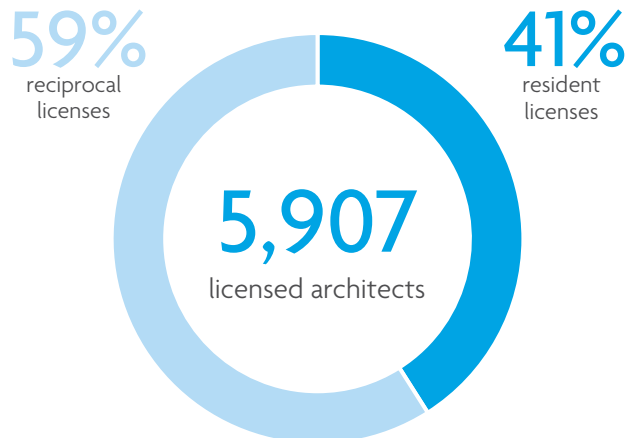


62

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



1,140

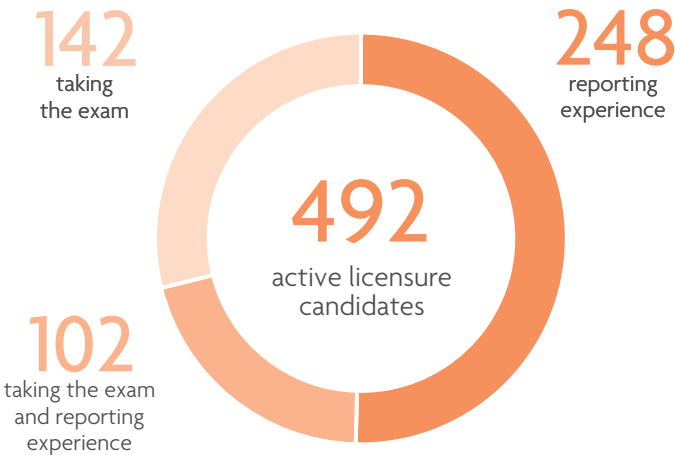
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Michigan are most frequently also licensed in:

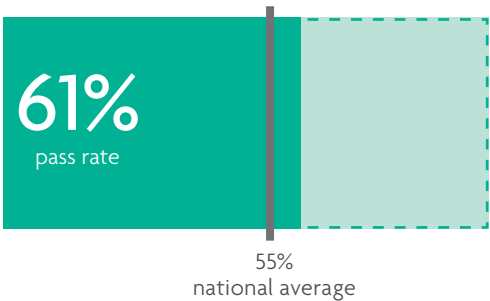
- Illinois
- Ohio
- Indiana

Minnesota

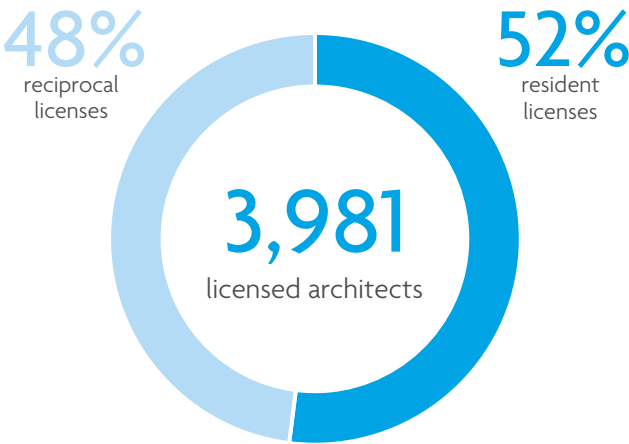
PATH TO LICENSURE



69 candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



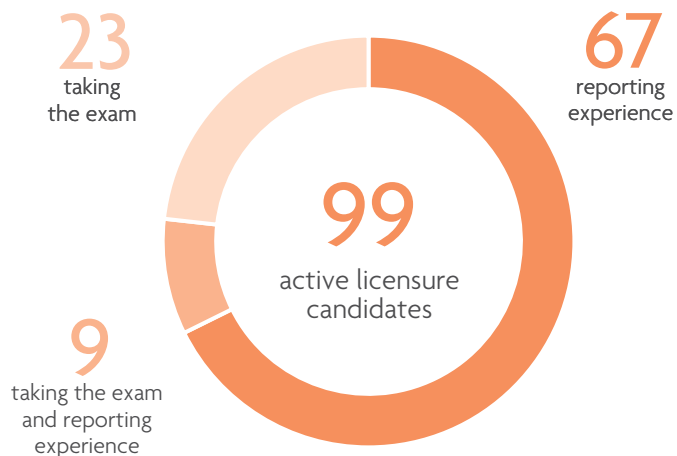
1,078 NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Minnesota are most frequently also licensed in:

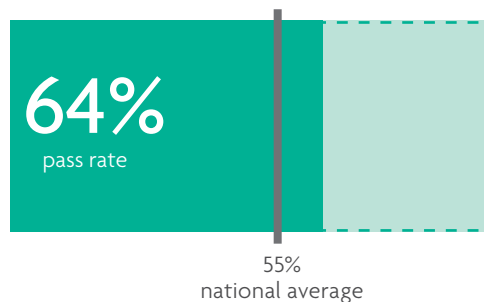
- Wisconsin
- North Dakota
- Illinois

Mississippi

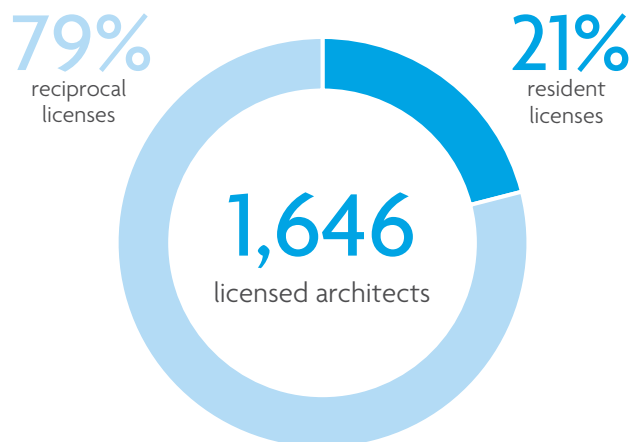
PATH TO LICENSURE



9 candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



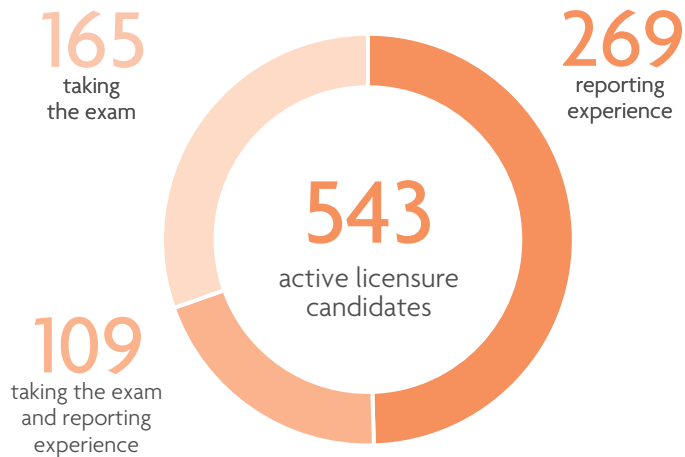
242 NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Mississippi are most frequently also licensed in:

- Louisiana
- Tennessee
- Texas

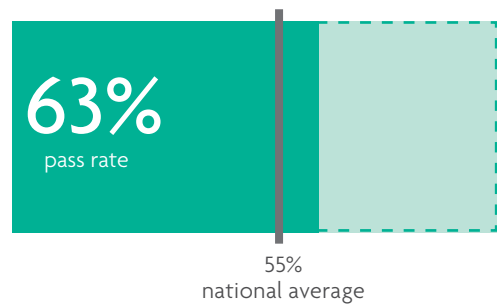
Missouri

PATH TO LICENSURE

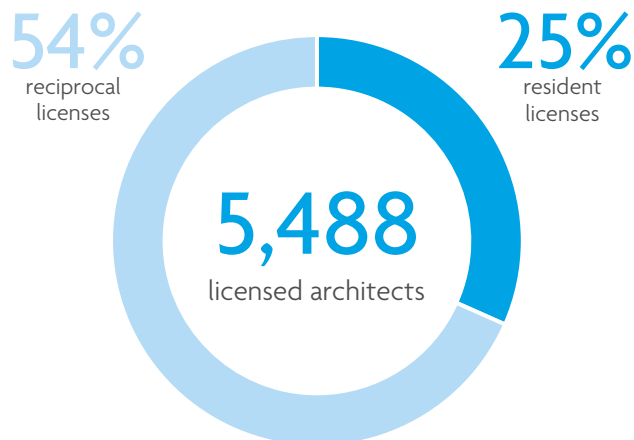


69

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



1,127

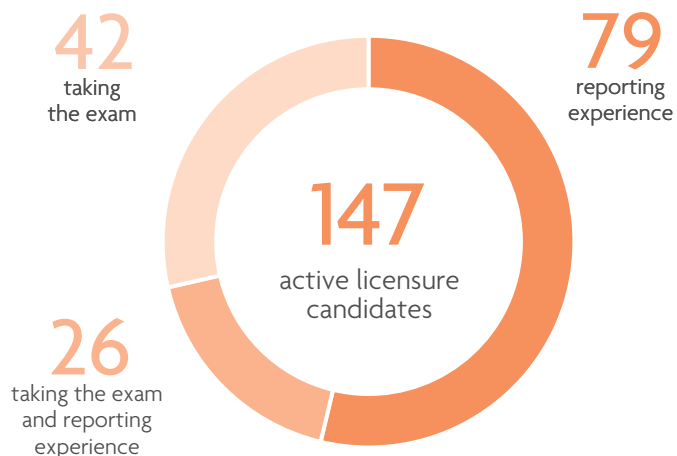
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Missouri are most frequently also licensed in:

- Kansas
- Illinois
- Texas

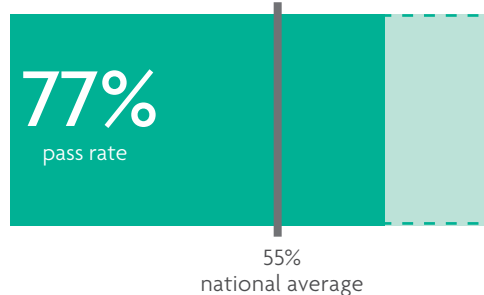
Montana

PATH TO LICENSURE

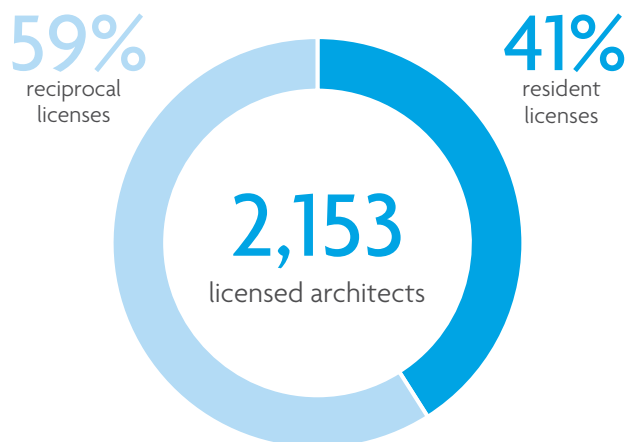


29

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



349

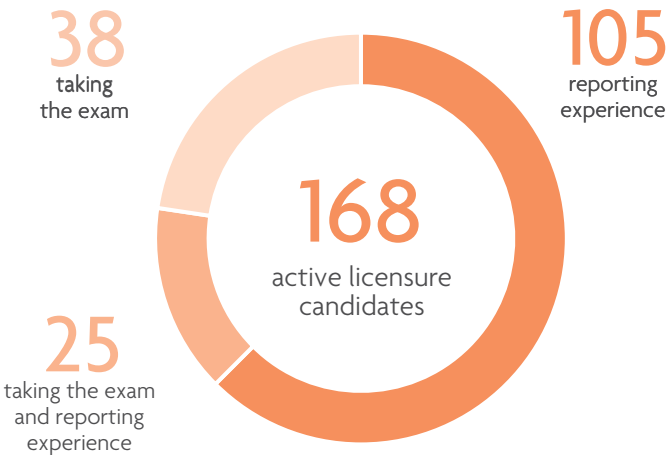
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Montana are most frequently also licensed in:

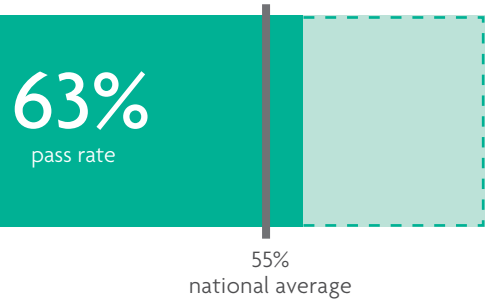
- Colorado
- Washington
- California

Nebraska

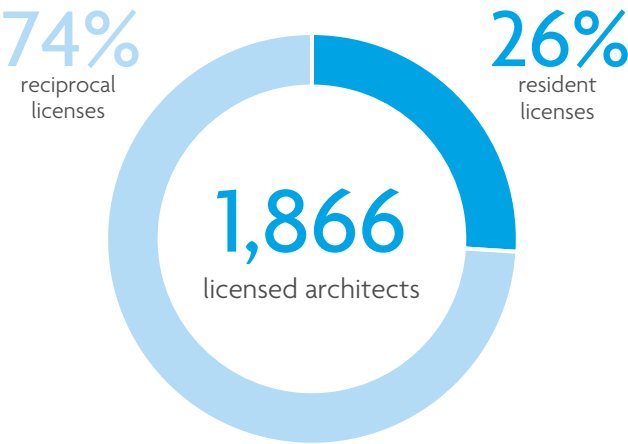
PATH TO LICENSURE



14
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



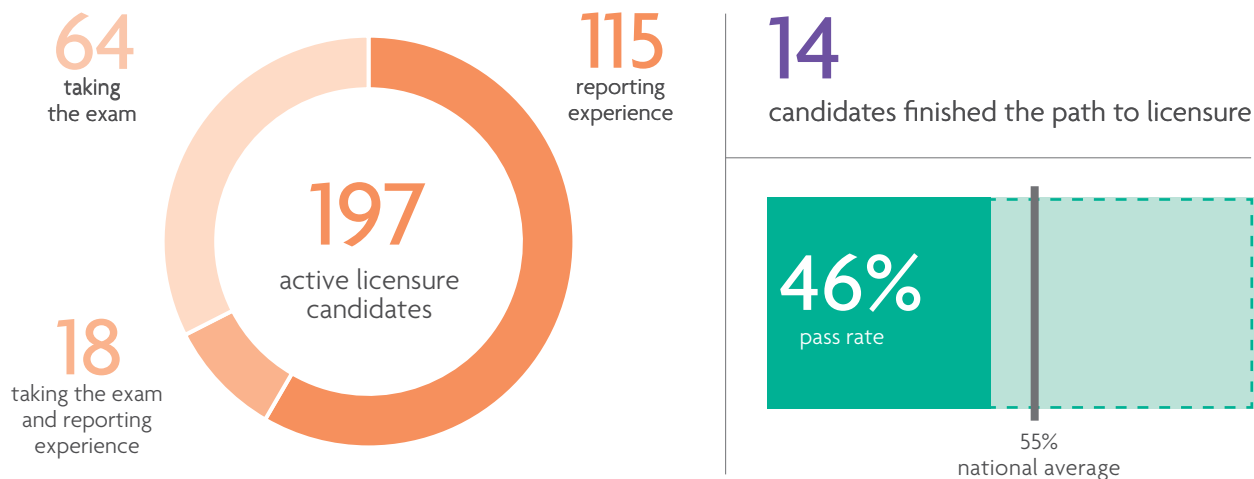
298
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Nebraska are most frequently also licensed in:

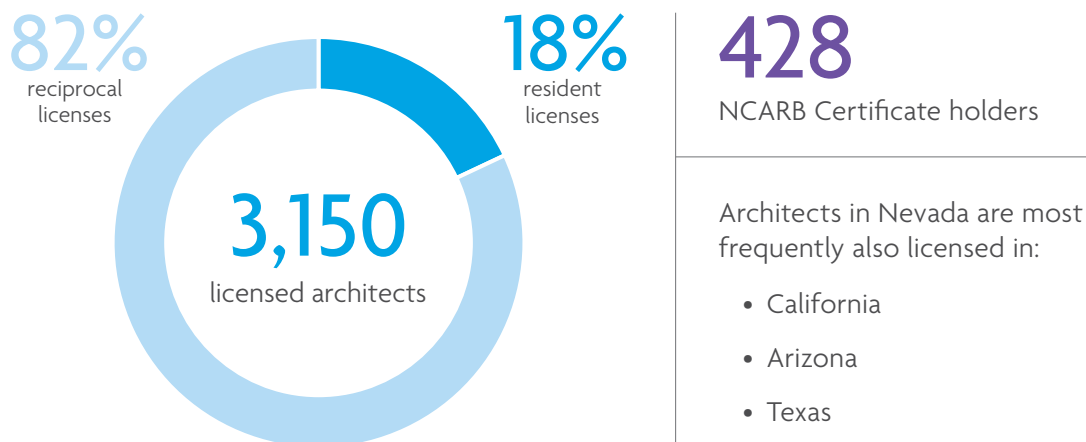
- Iowa
- Missouri
- Kansas

Nevada

PATH TO LICENSURE

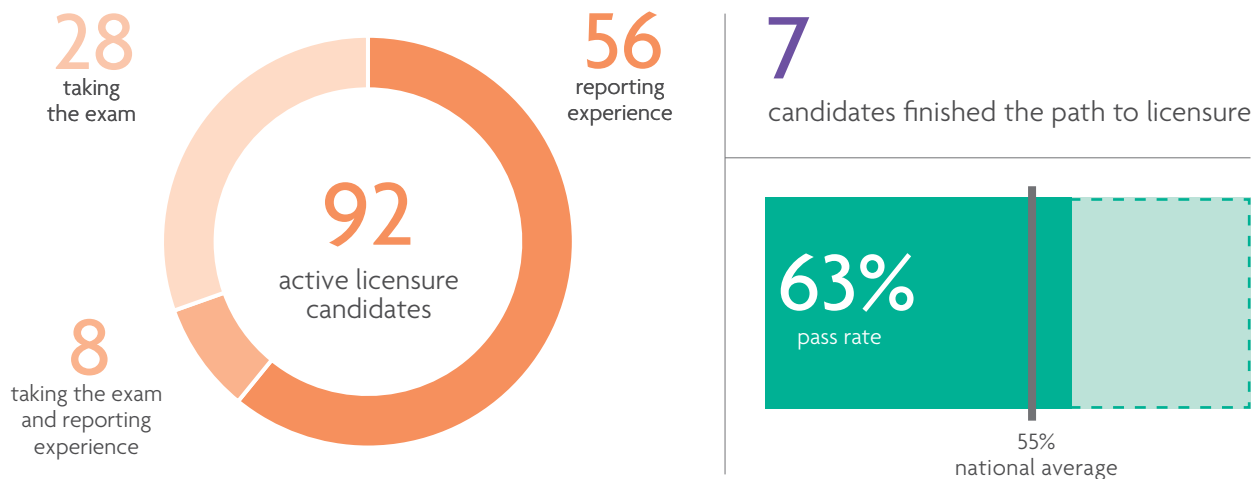


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

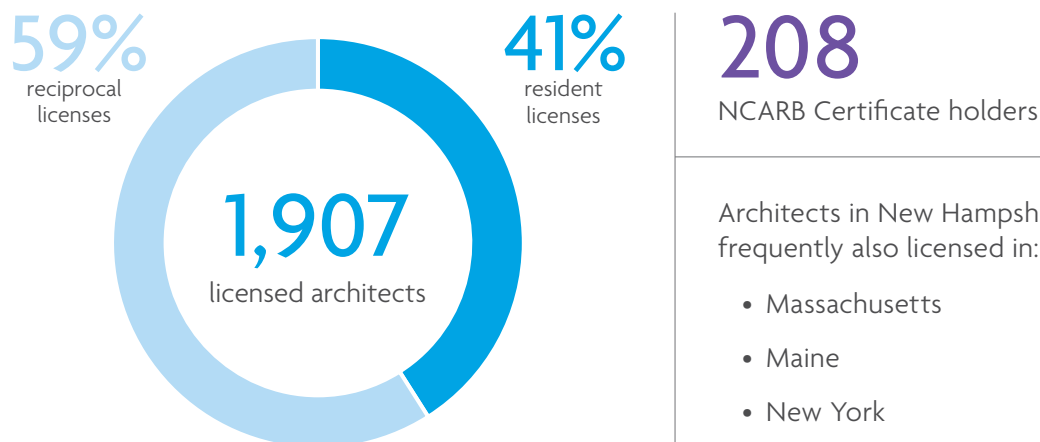


New Hampshire

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

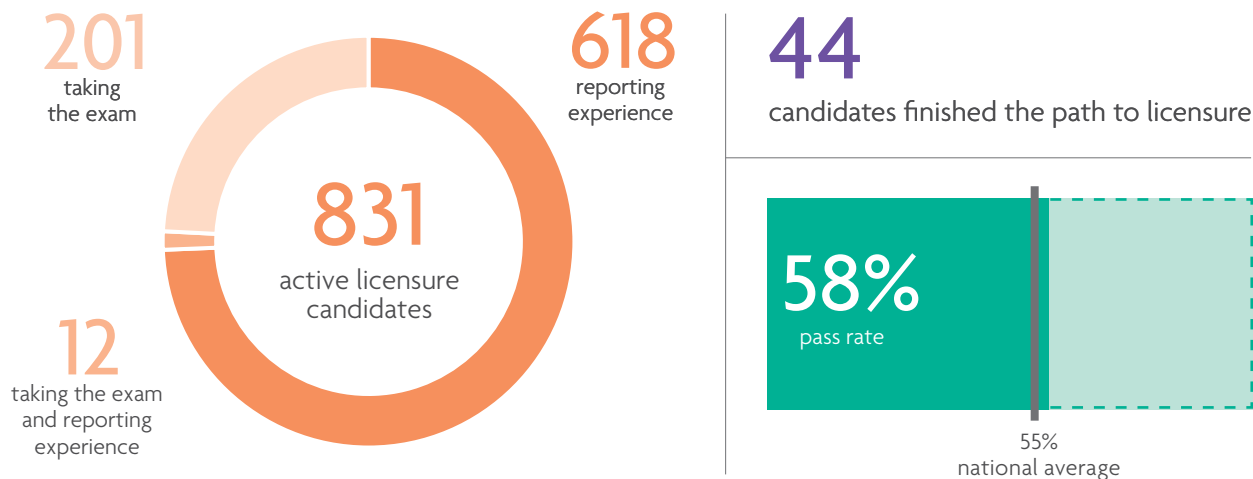


Architects in New Hampshire are most frequently also licensed in:

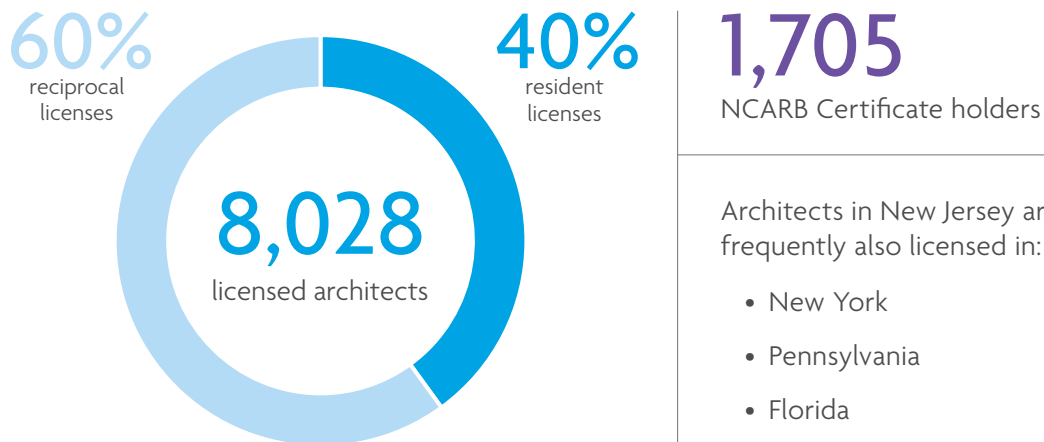
- Massachusetts
- Maine
- New York

New Jersey

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

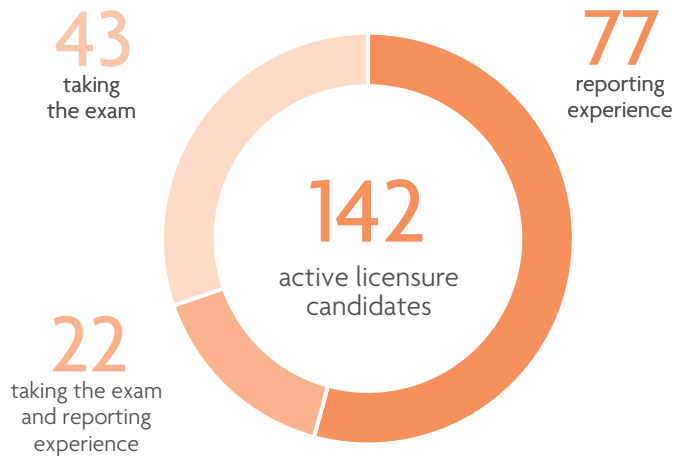


Architects in New Jersey are most frequently also licensed in:

- New York
- Pennsylvania
- Florida

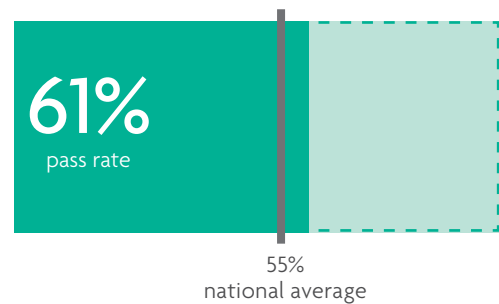
New Mexico

PATH TO LICENSURE

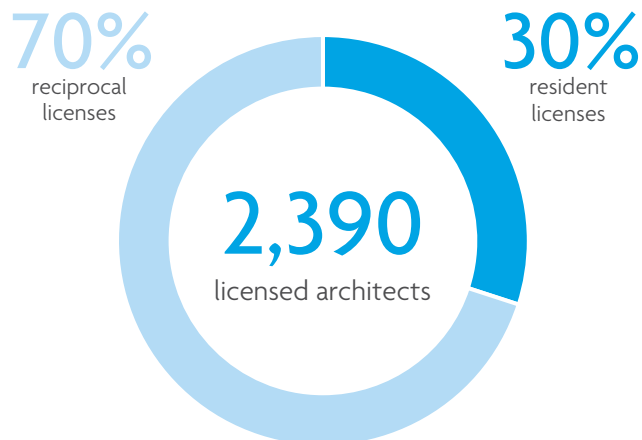


17

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



354

NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in New Mexico are most frequently also licensed in:

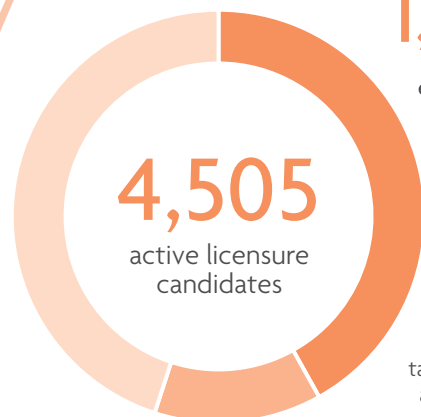
- Texas
- Colorado
- Arizona

New York

PATH TO LICENSURE

2,027
taking
the exam

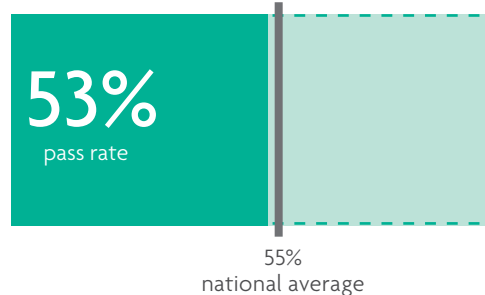
1,888
reporting
experience



590
taking the exam
and reporting
experience

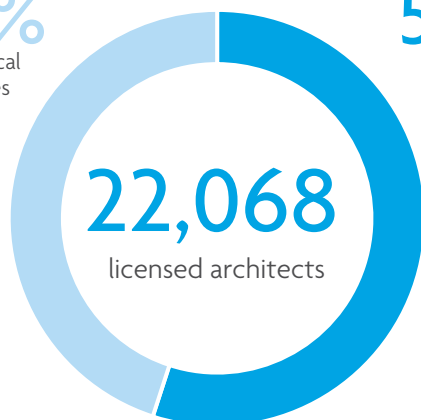
505

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

45%
reciprocal
licenses



55%
resident
licenses

3,516

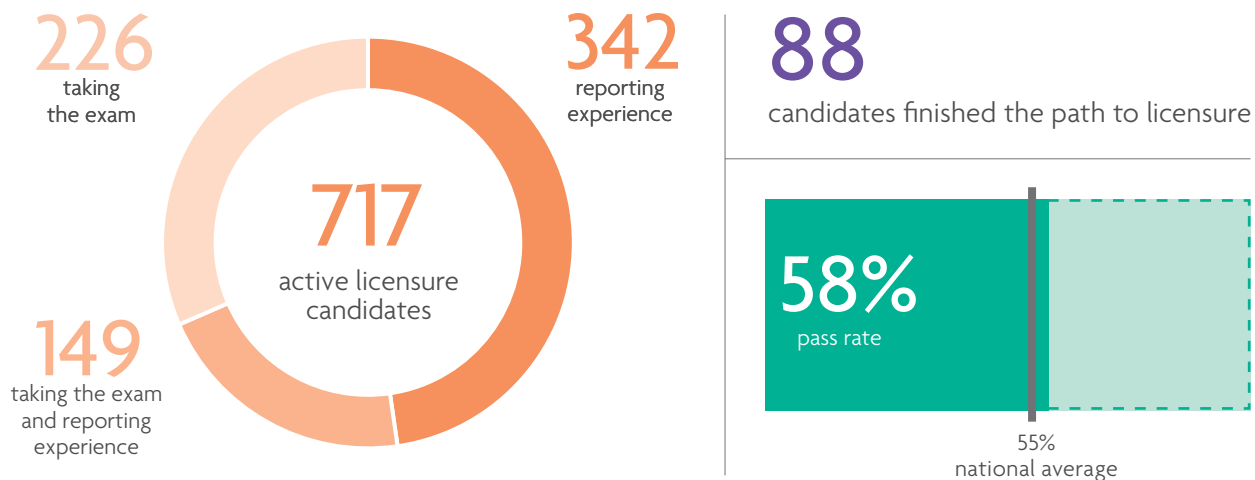
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in New York are most frequently also licensed in:

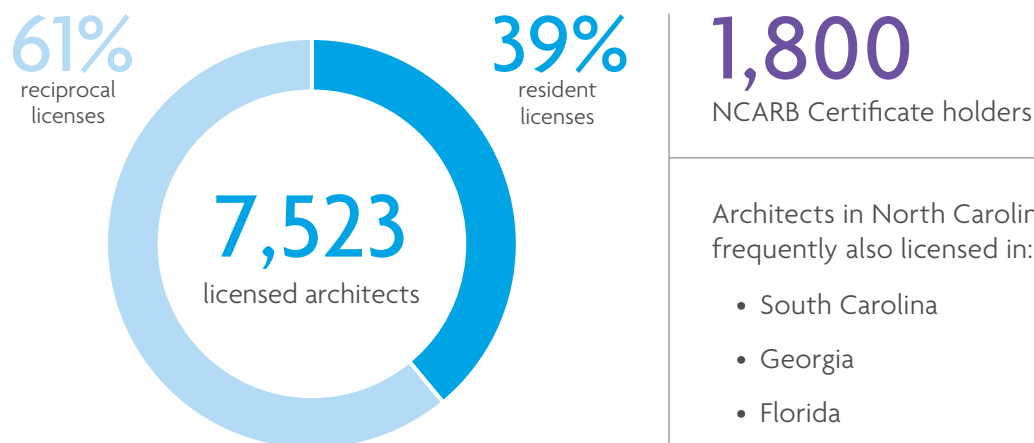
- New Jersey
- Connecticut
- Pennsylvania

North Carolina

PATH TO LICENSURE

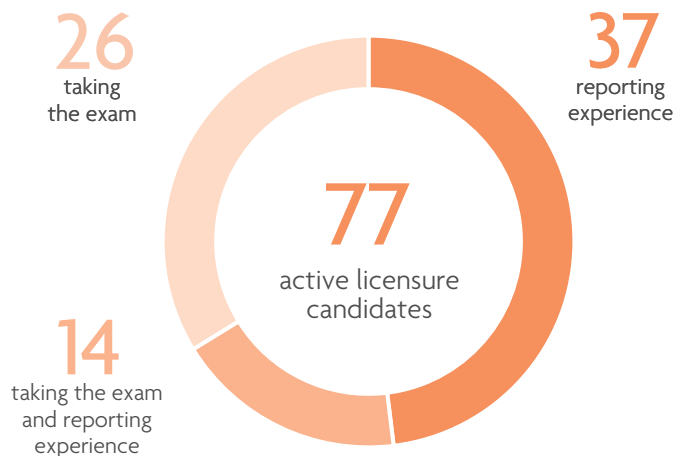


LICENSED ARCHITECTS



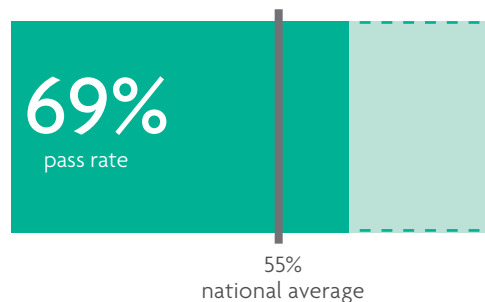
North Dakota

PATH TO LICENSURE

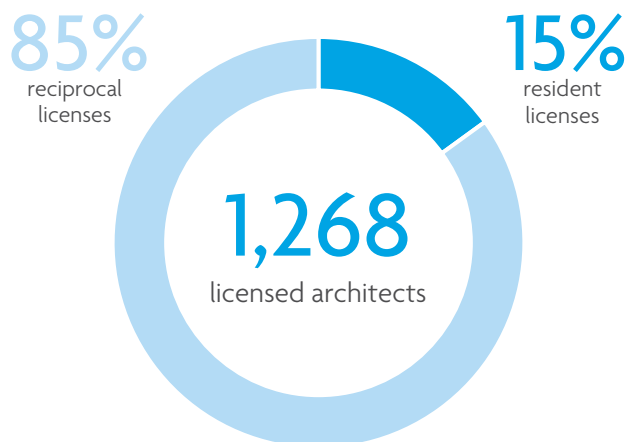


12

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



151

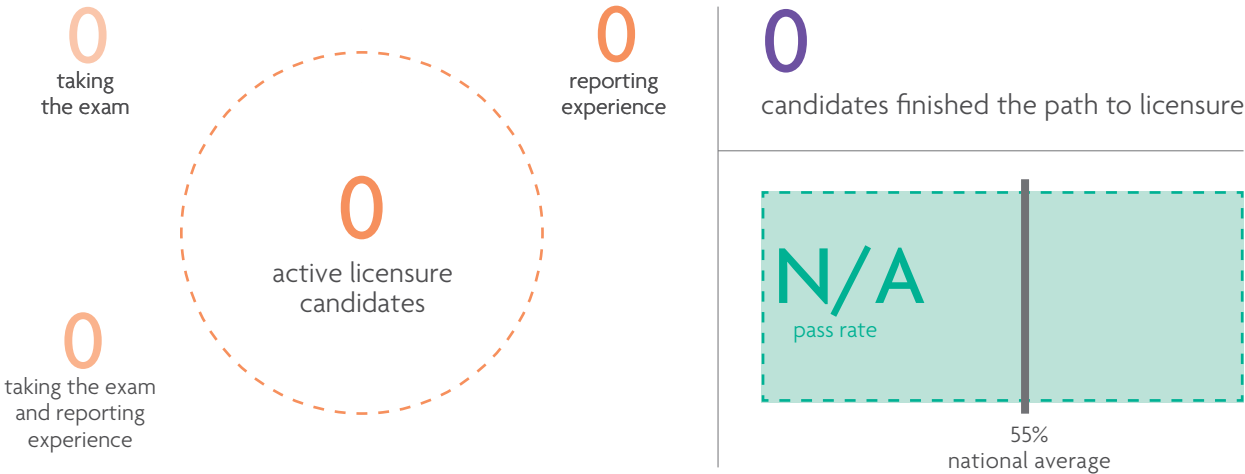
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in North Dakota are most frequently also licensed in:

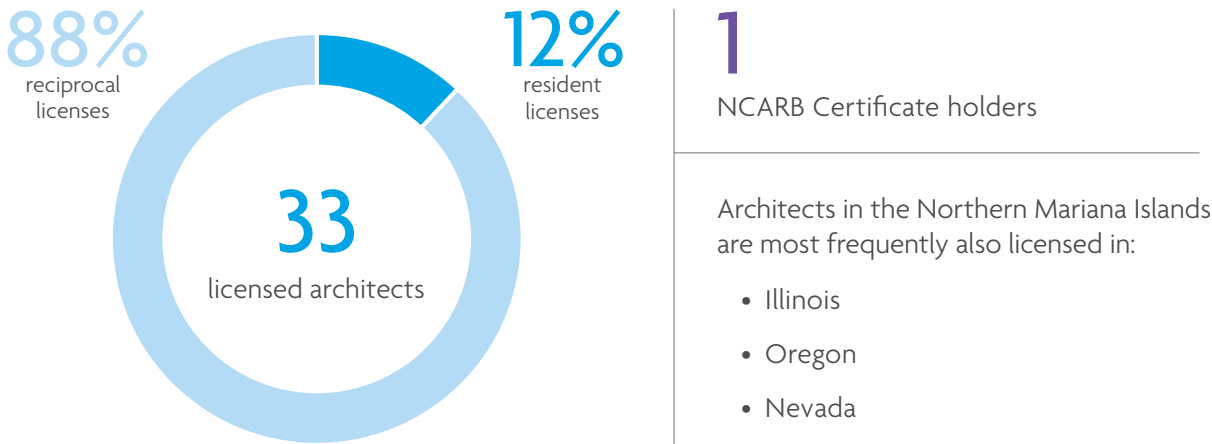
- Minnesota
- Texas
- Illinois

Northern Mariana Islands

PATH TO LICENSURE

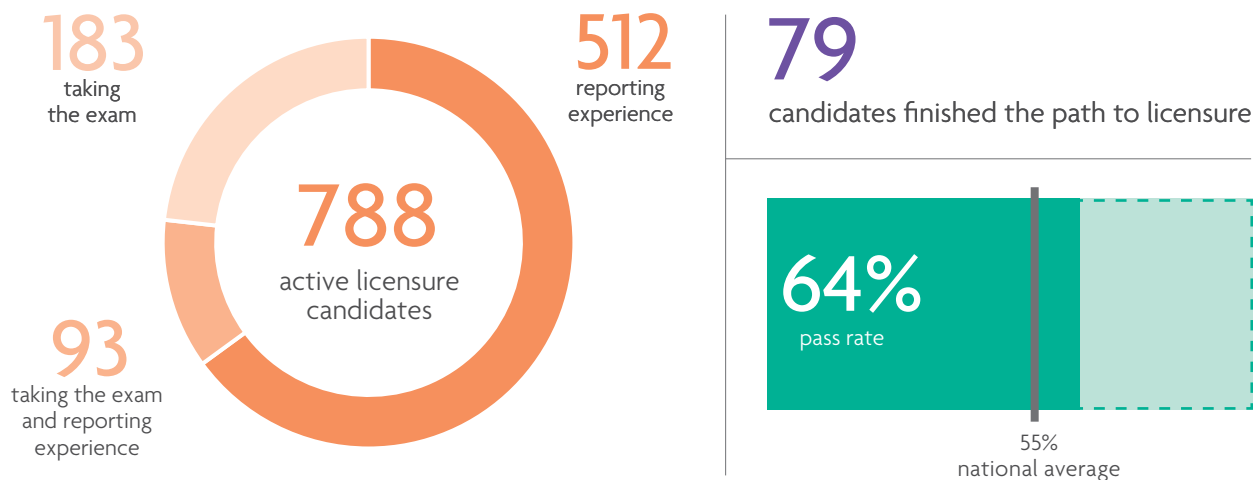


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

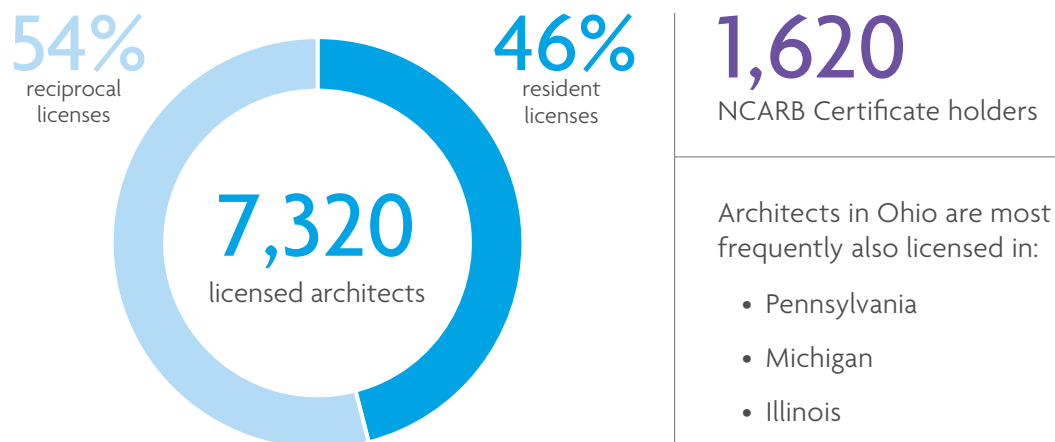


Ohio

PATH TO LICENSURE

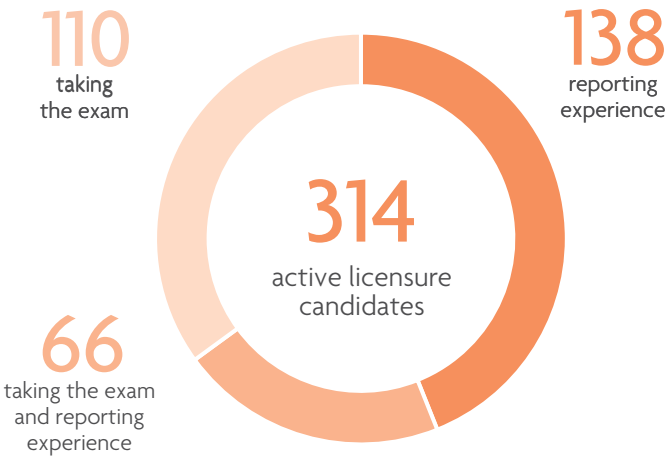


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

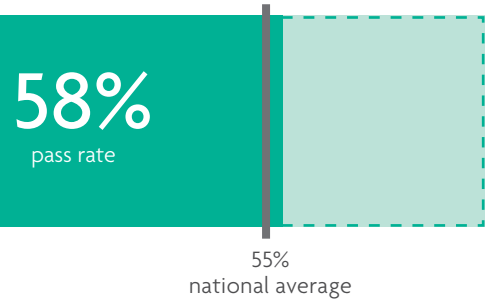


Oklahoma

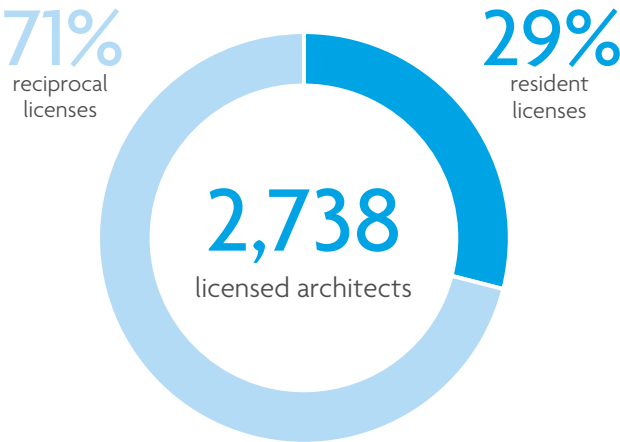
PATH TO LICENSURE



40
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



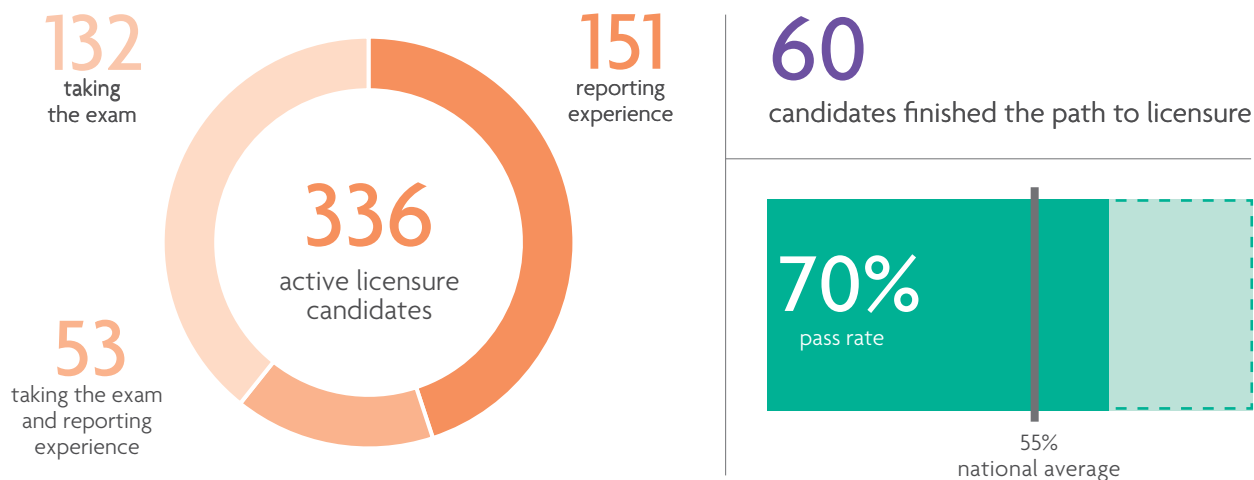
439
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Oklahoma are most frequently also licensed in:

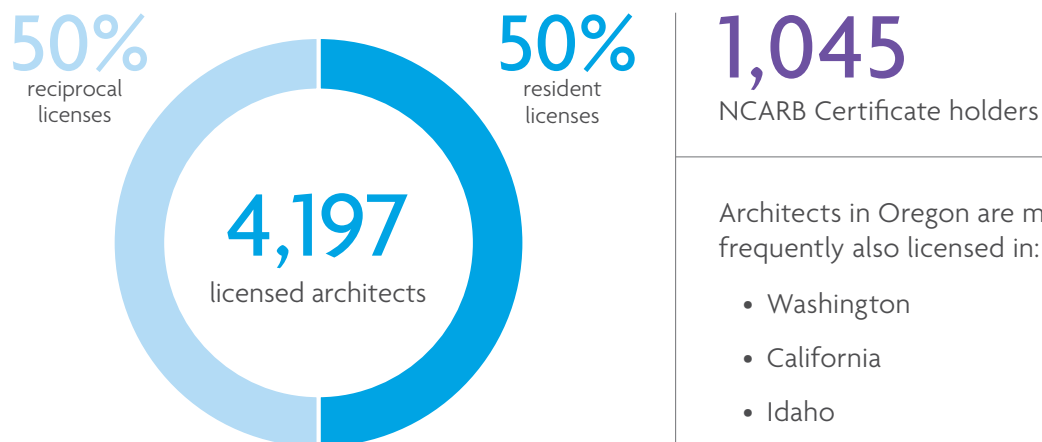
- Texas
- Missouri
- Kansas

Oregon

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

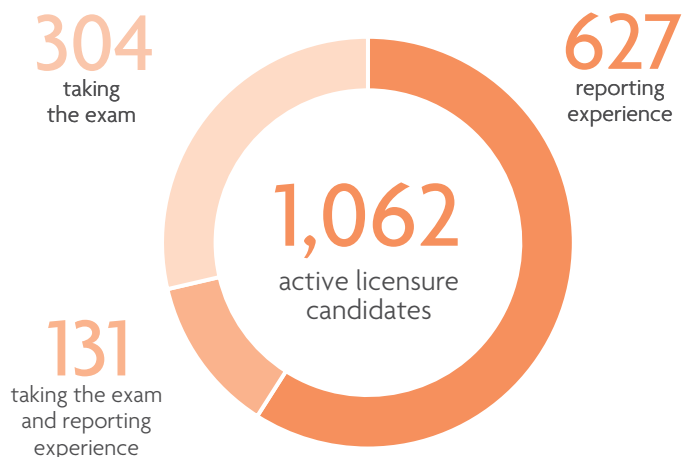


Architects in Oregon are most frequently also licensed in:

- Washington
- California
- Idaho

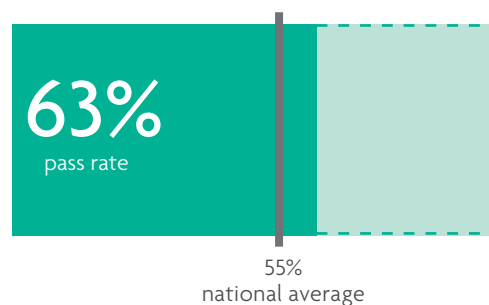
Pennsylvania

PATH TO LICENSURE

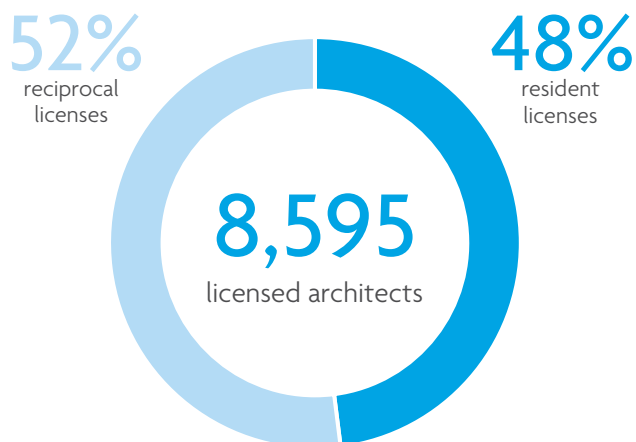


110

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



1,902

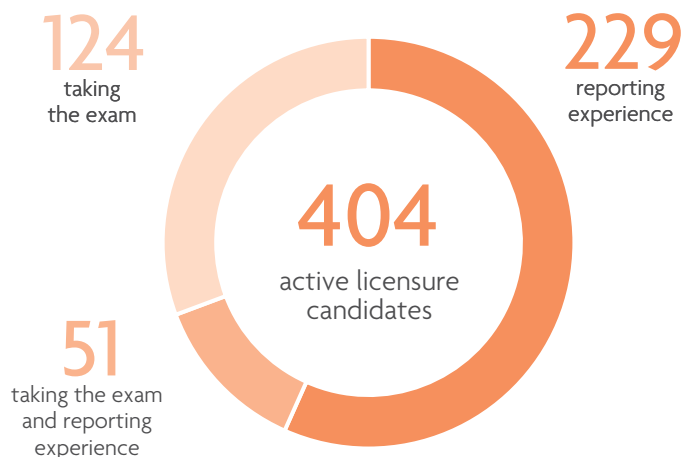
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Pennsylvania are most frequently also licensed in:

- New Jersey
- New York
- Maryland

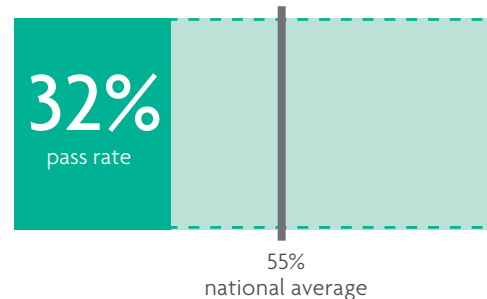
Puerto Rico

PATH TO LICENSURE

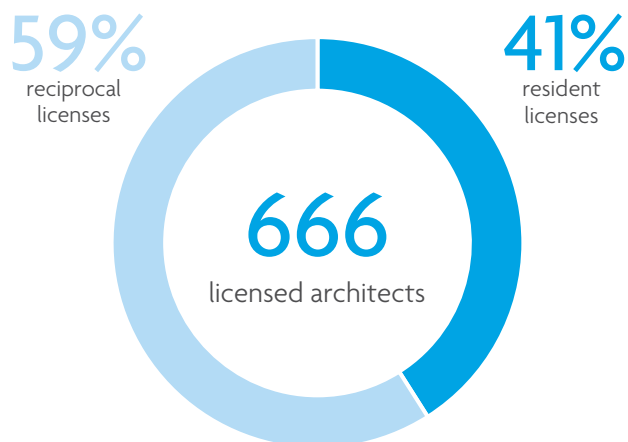


15

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



115

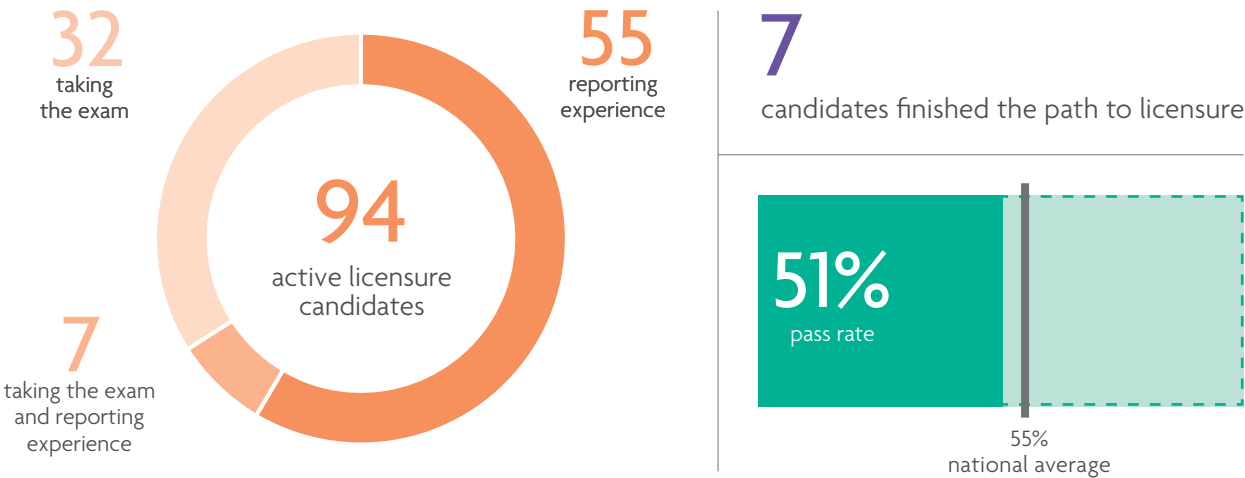
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Puerto Rico are most frequently also licensed in:

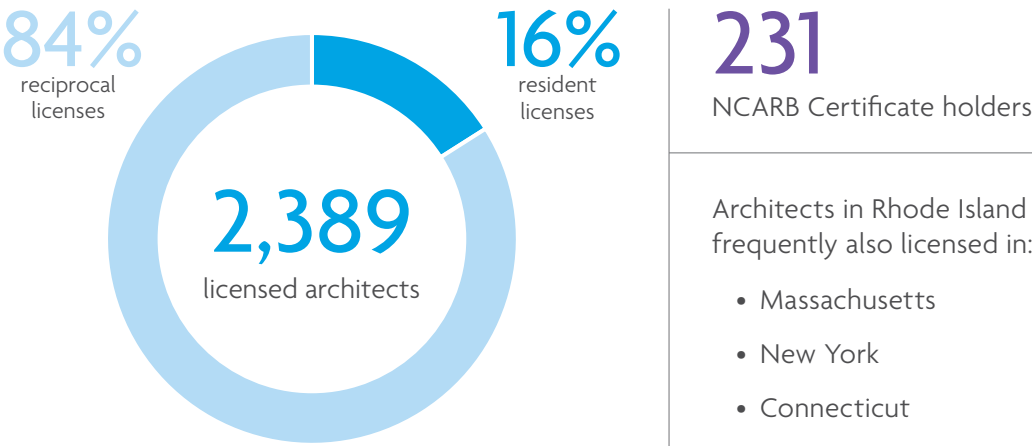
- Florida
- New York
- Texas

Rhode Island

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

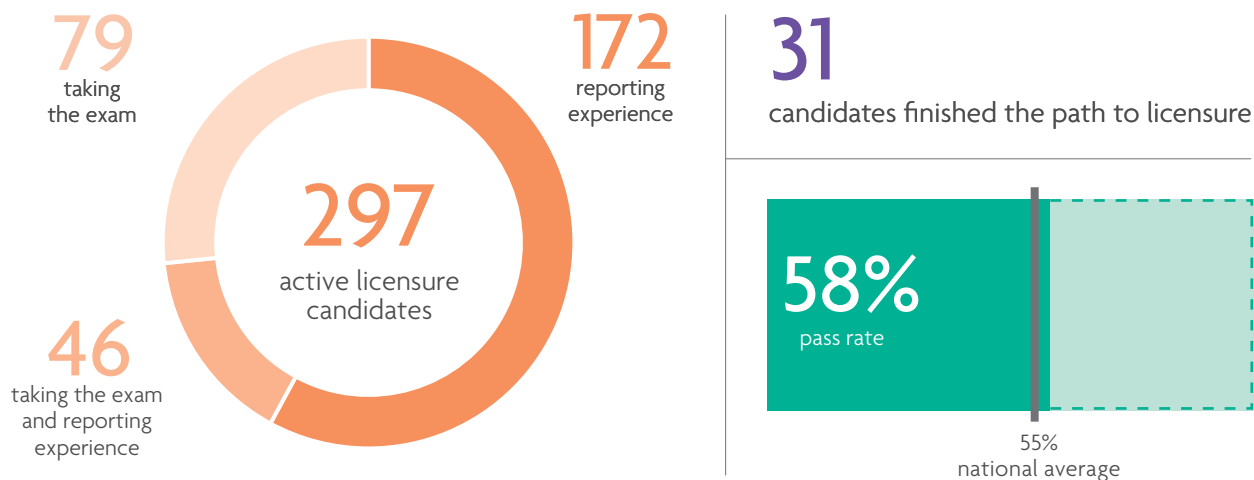


Architects in Rhode Island are most frequently also licensed in:

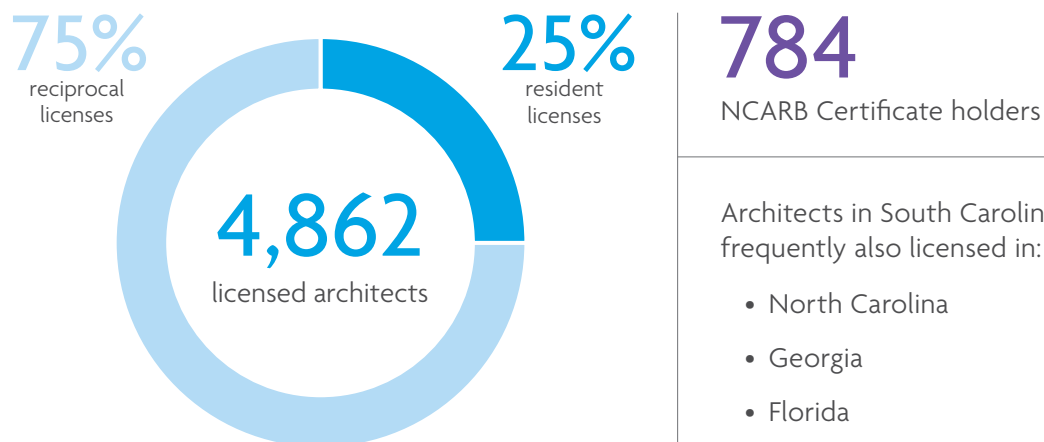
- Massachusetts
- New York
- Connecticut

South Carolina

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

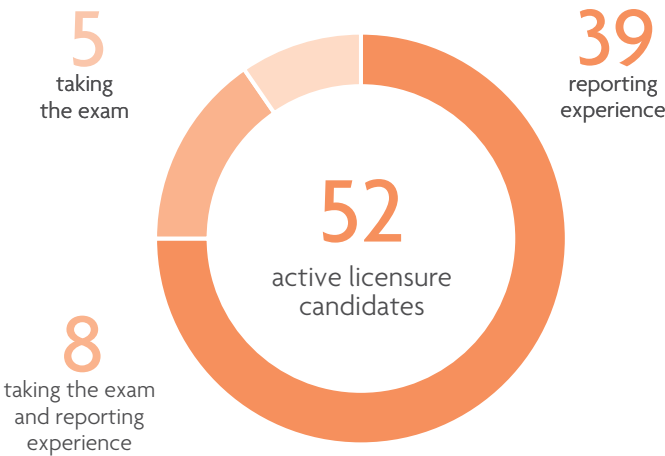


Architects in South Carolina are most frequently also licensed in:

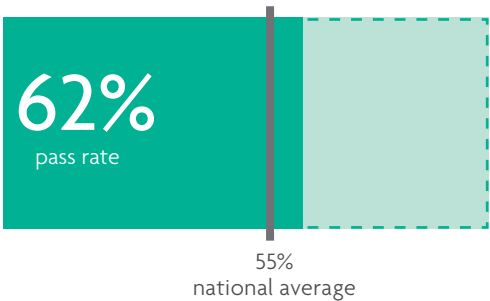
- North Carolina
- Georgia
- Florida

South Dakota

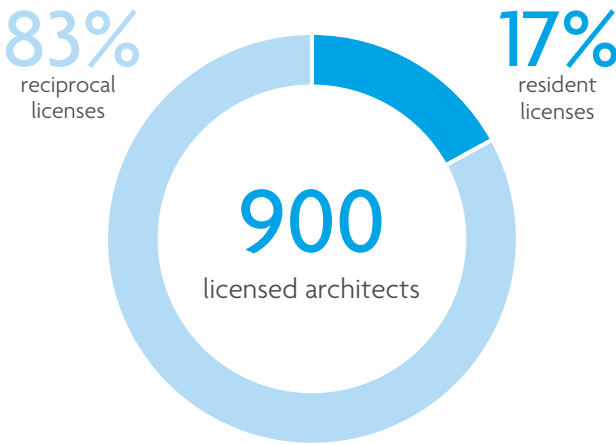
PATH TO LICENSURE



3 candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



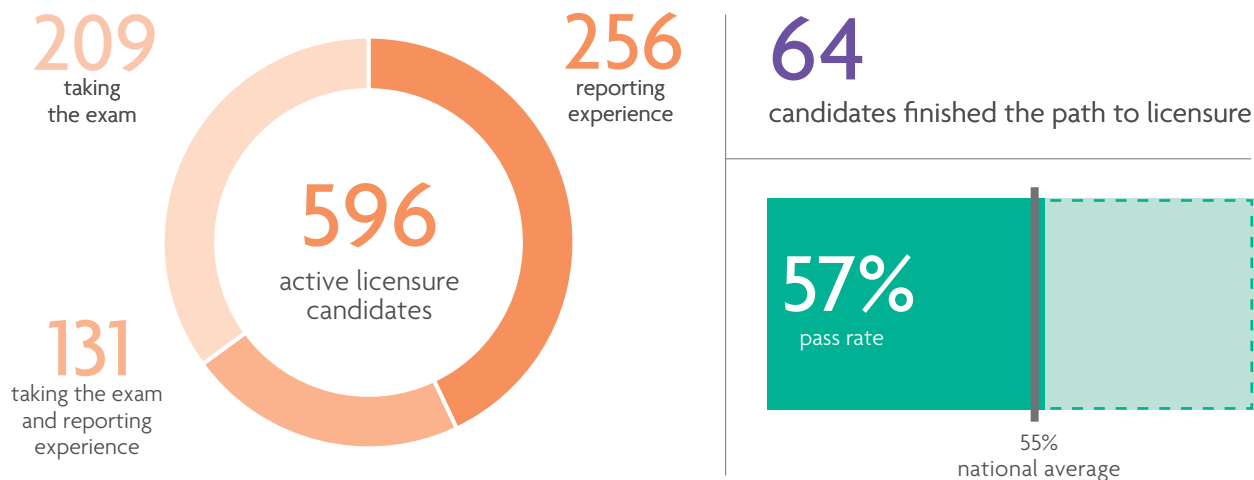
101 NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in South Dakota are most frequently also licensed in:

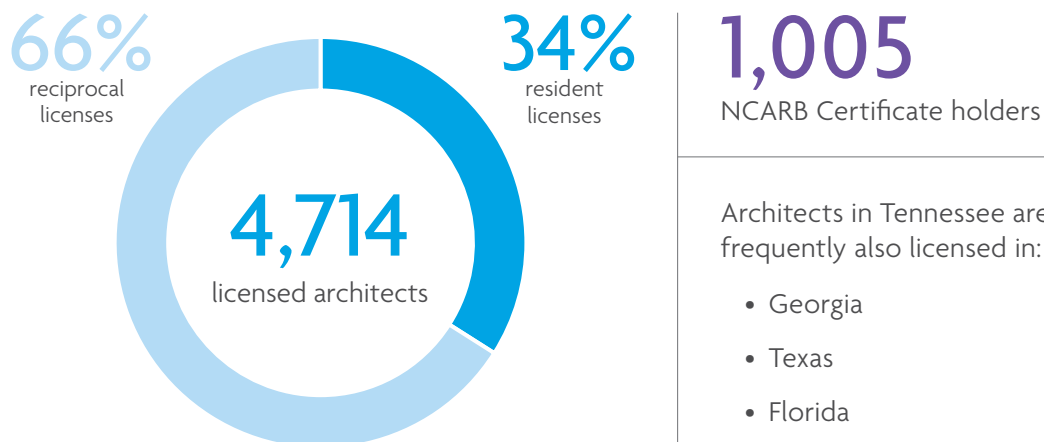
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- Iowa

Tennessee

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

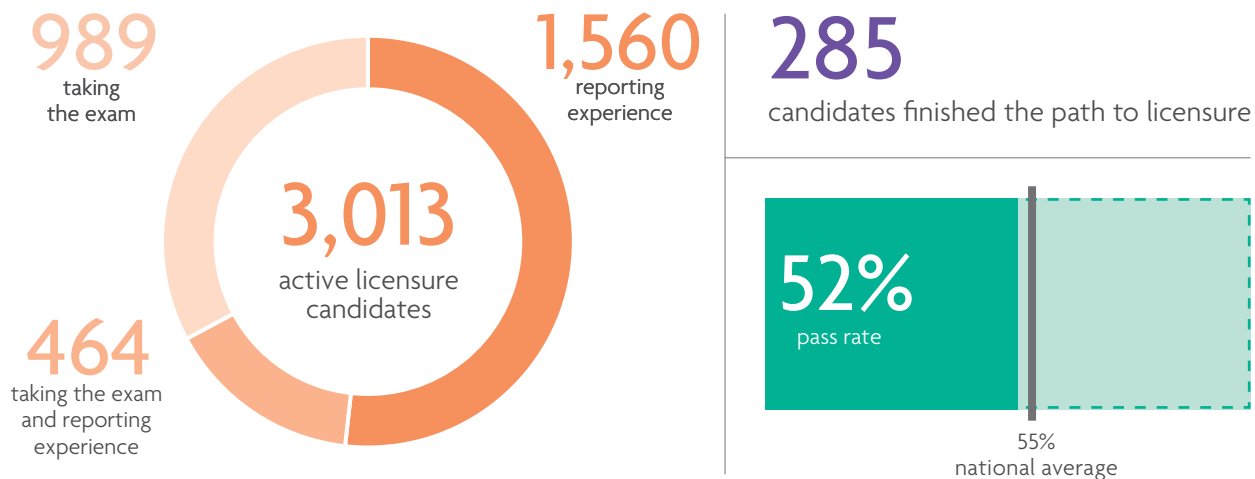


Architects in Tennessee are most frequently also licensed in:

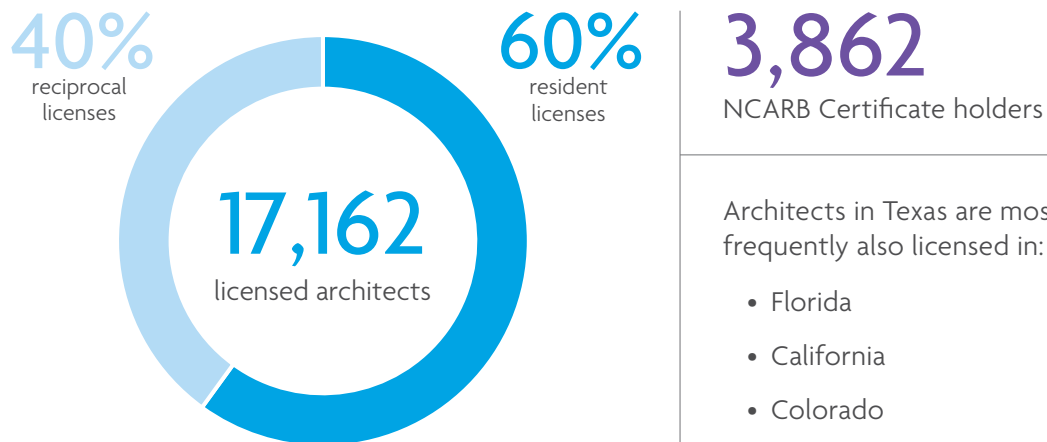
- Georgia
- Texas
- Florida

Texas

PATH TO LICENSURE

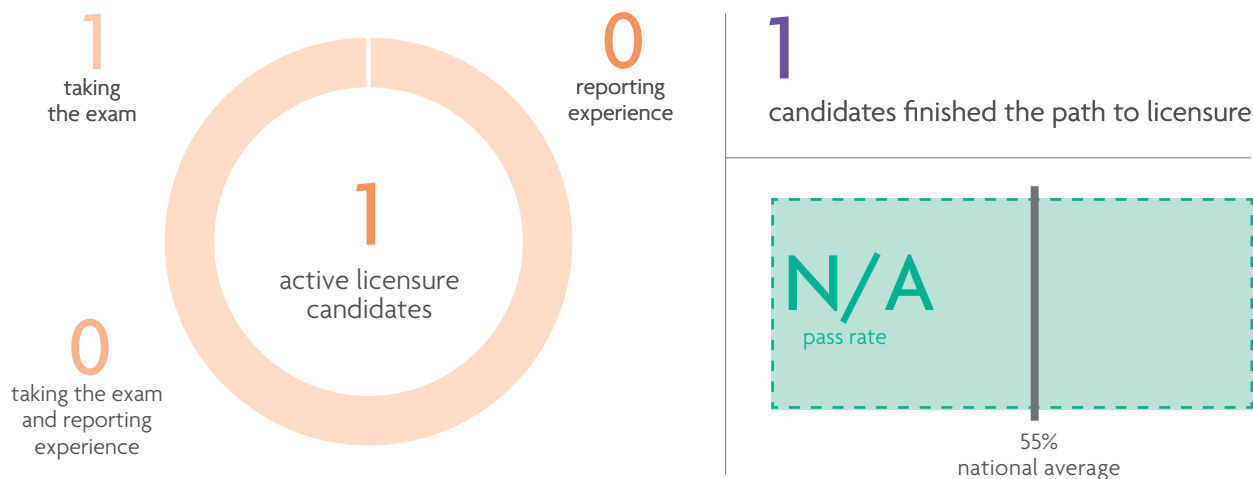


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

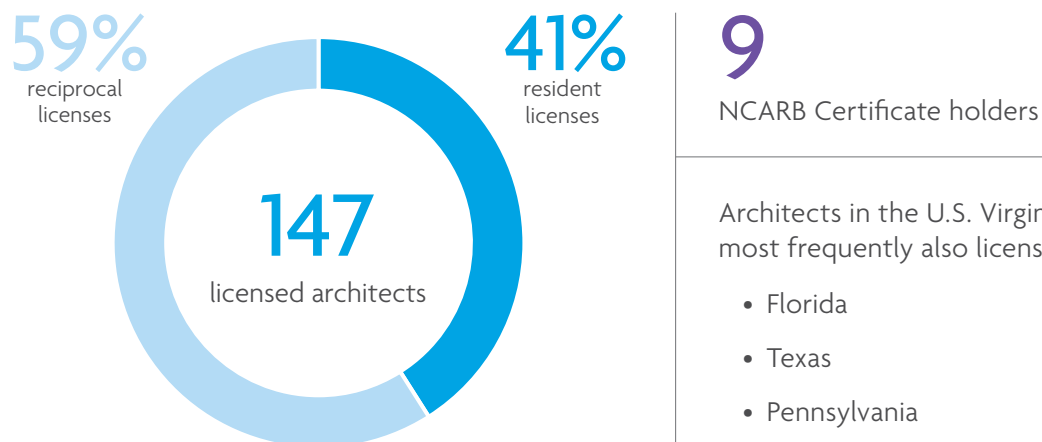


U.S. Virgin Islands

PATH TO LICENSURE

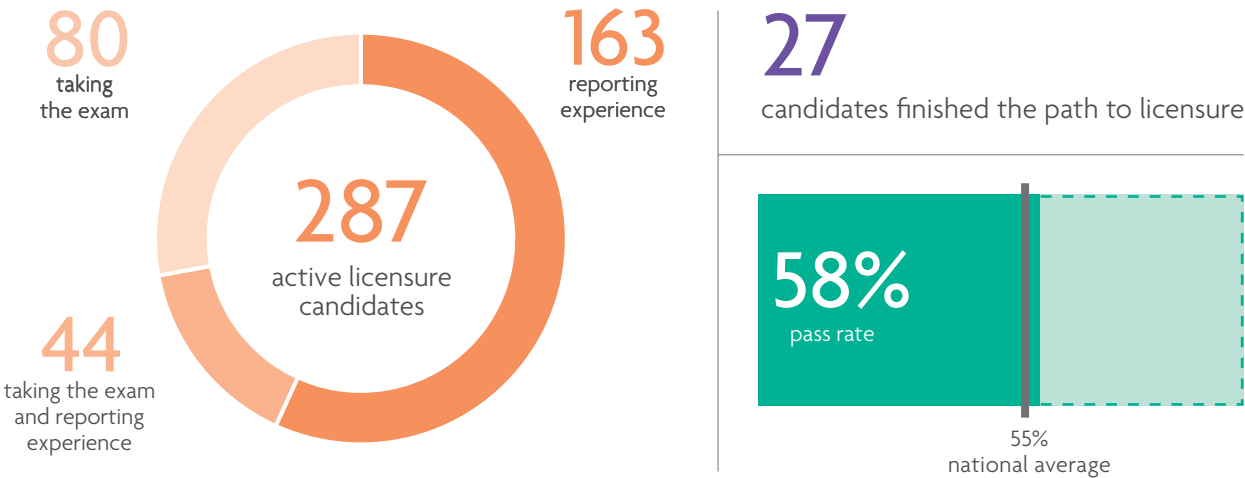


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

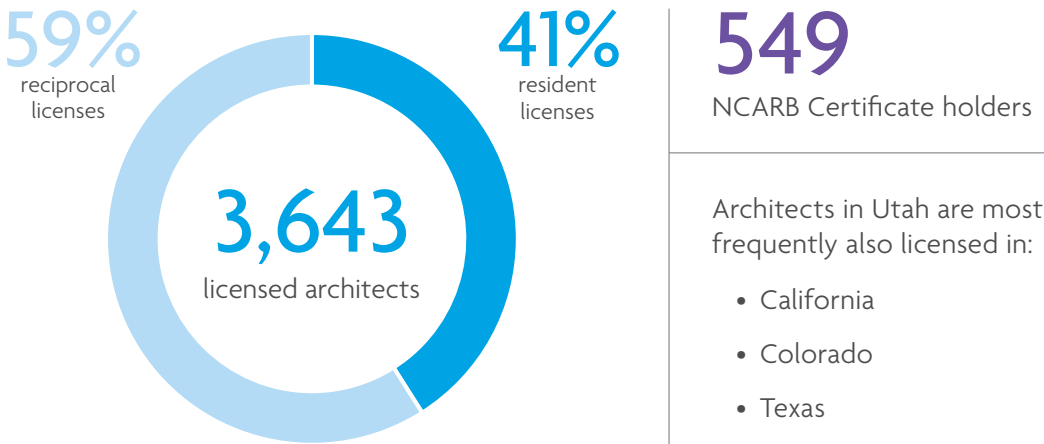


Utah

PATH TO LICENSURE

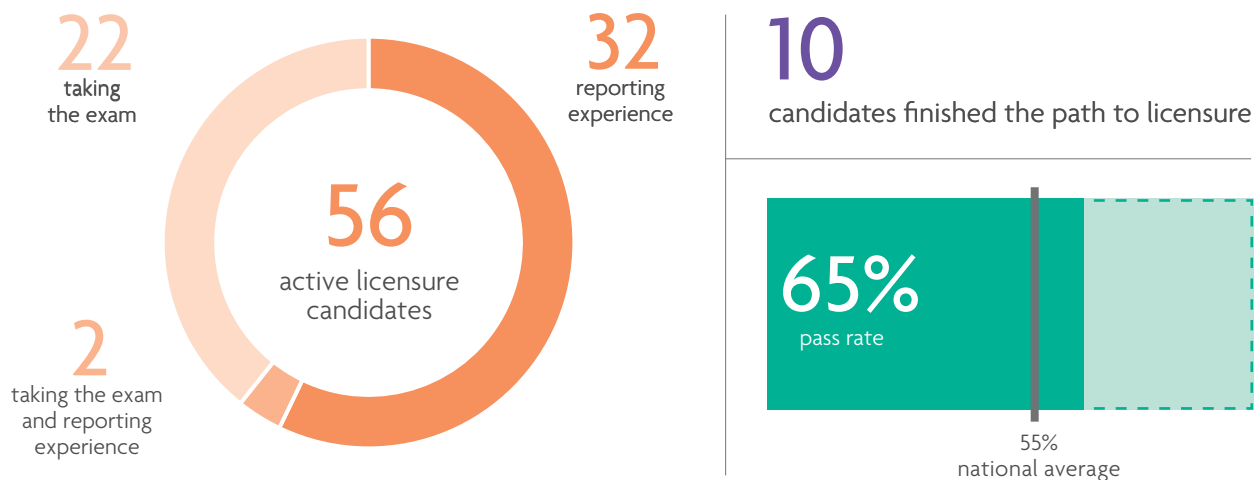


LICENSED ARCHITECTS

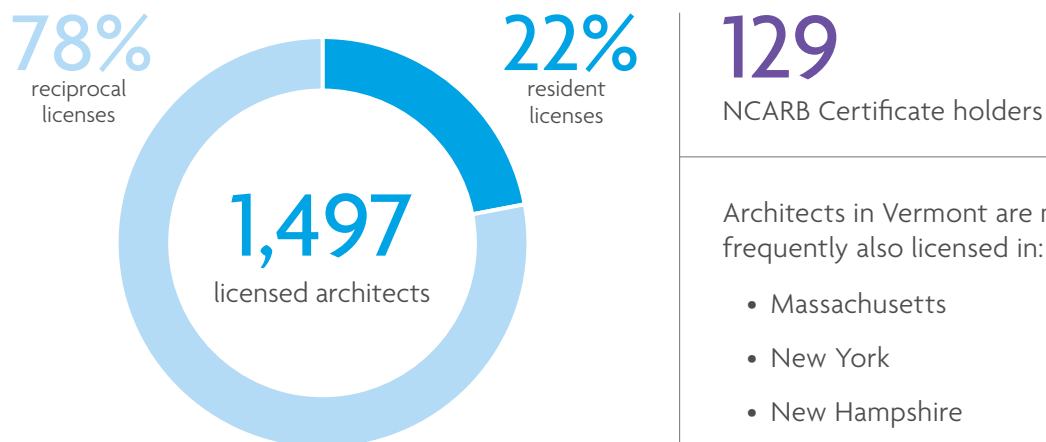


Vermont

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

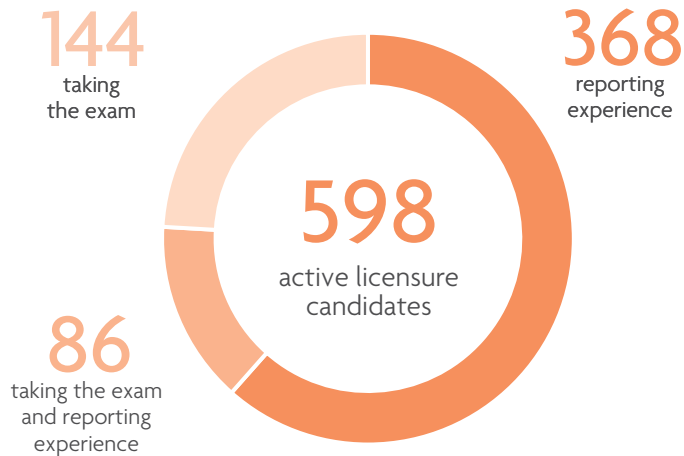


Architects in Vermont are most frequently also licensed in:

- Massachusetts
- New York
- New Hampshire

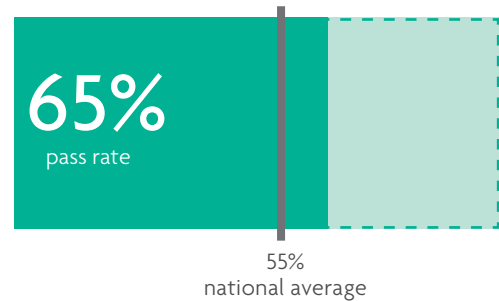
Virginia

PATH TO LICENSURE

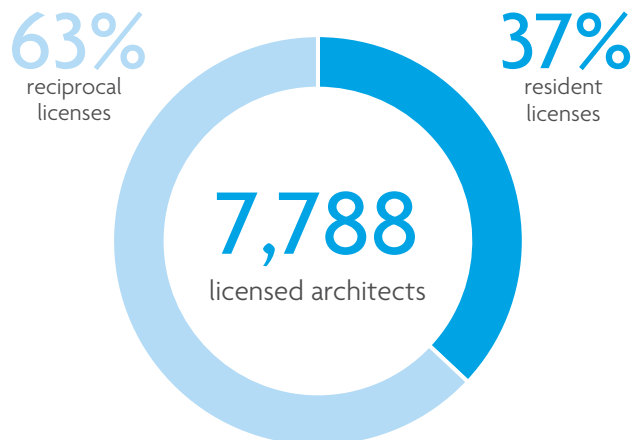


60

candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



1,497

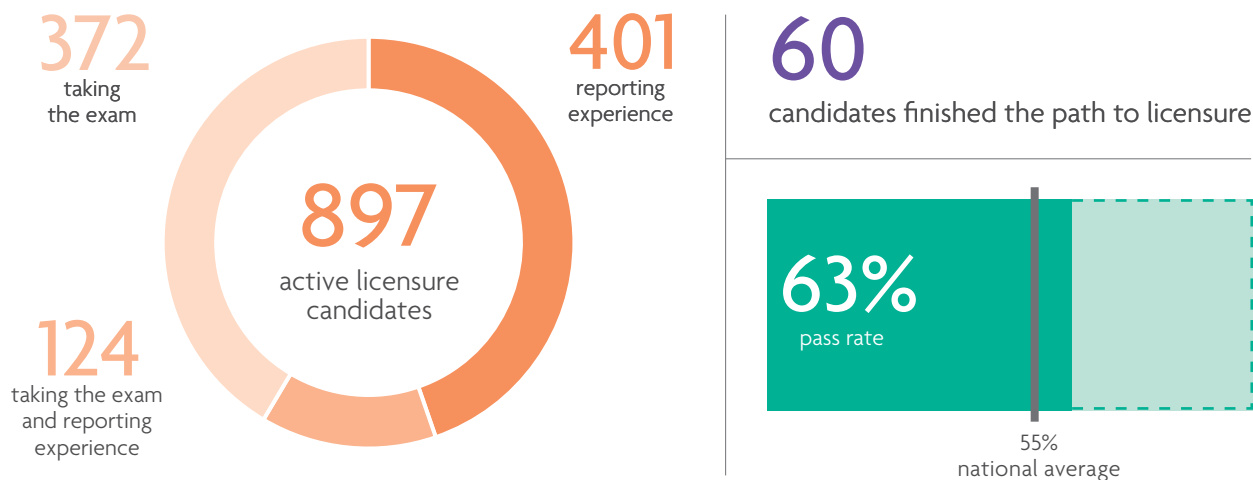
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Virginia are most frequently also licensed in:

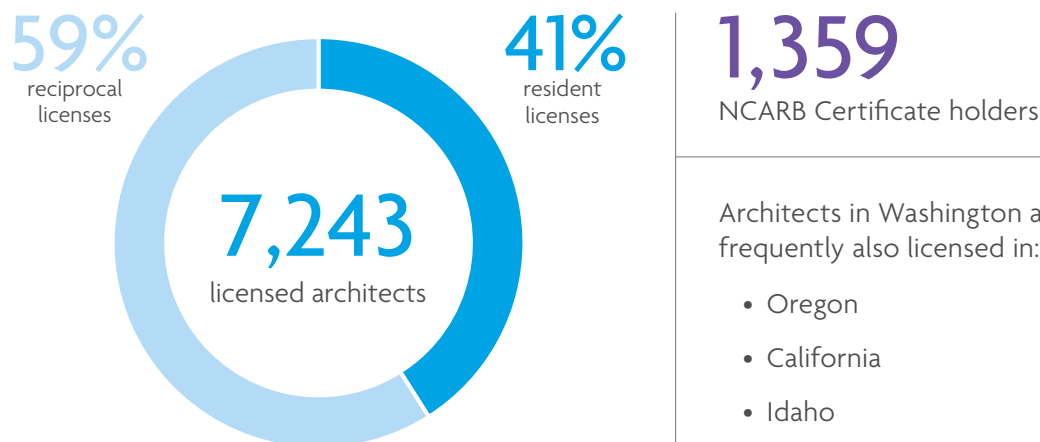
- Maryland
- District of Columbia
- North Carolina

Washington

PATH TO LICENSURE



LICENSED ARCHITECTS

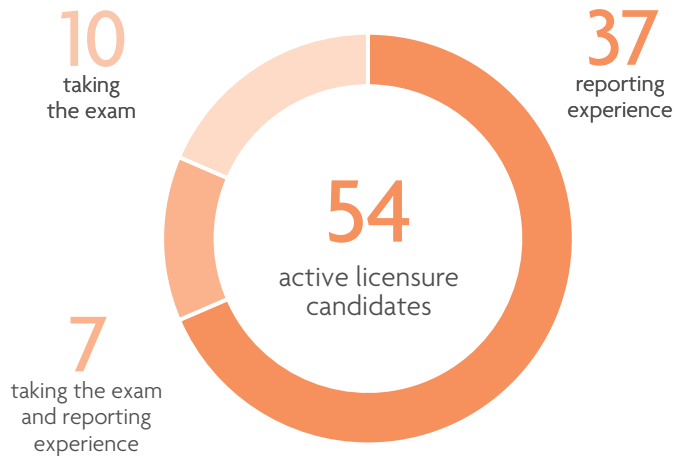


Architects in Washington are most frequently also licensed in:

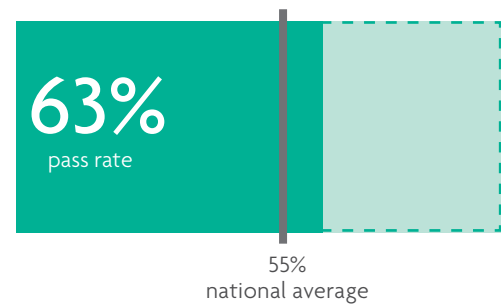
- Oregon
- California
- Idaho

West Virginia

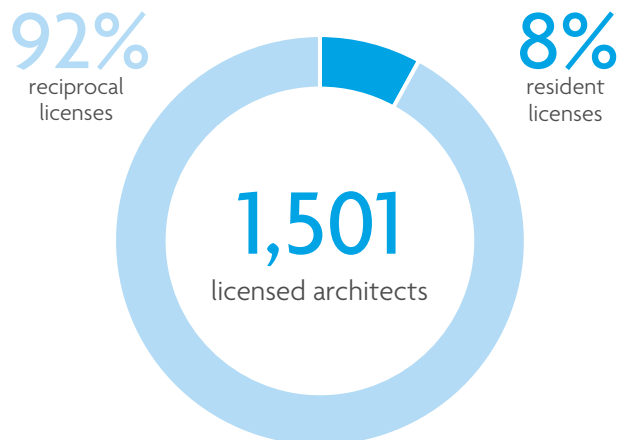
PATH TO LICENSURE



3
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



84
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in West Virginia are most frequently also licensed in:

- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Virginia

Wisconsin

PATH TO LICENSURE

515

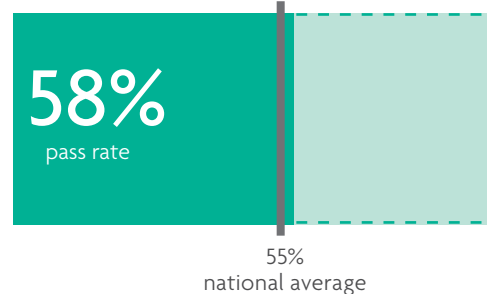
taking
the exam

255

reporting
experience

146

candidates finished the path to licensure



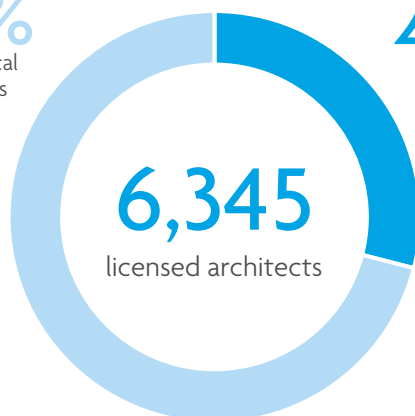
LICENSED ARCHITECTS

71%

reciprocal
licenses

29%

resident
licenses



577

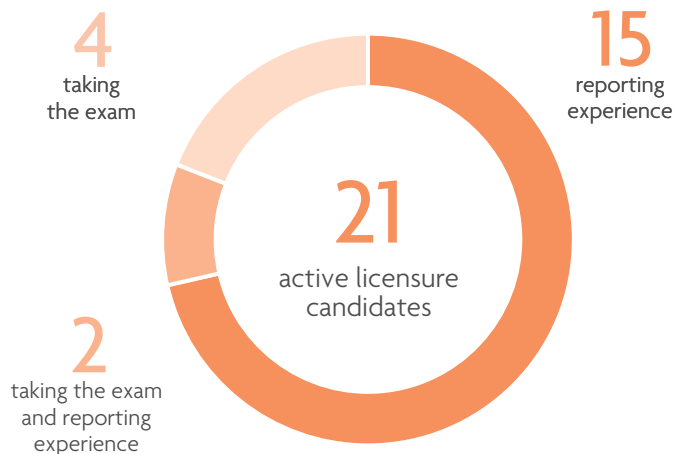
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Wisconsin are most frequently also licensed in:

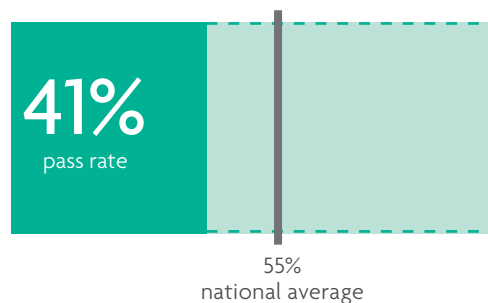
- Illinois
- Minnesota
- Texas

Wyoming

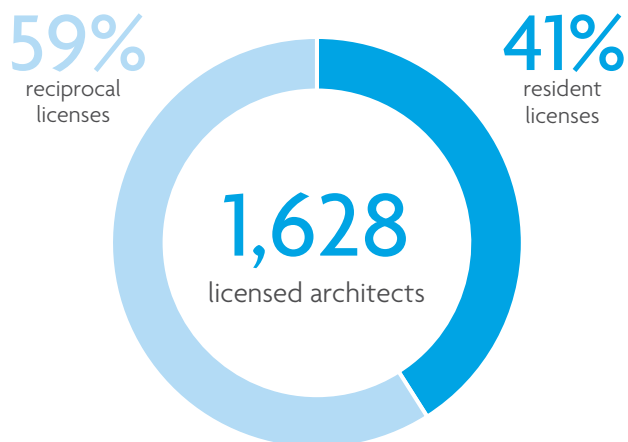
PATH TO LICENSURE



1
candidates finished the path to licensure



LICENSED ARCHITECTS



87
NCARB Certificate holders

Architects in Wyoming are most frequently also licensed in:

- Colorado
- Utah
- Montana

About This Report

This report is based on data collected by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) during the 2025 calendar year, providing insight on the path to licensure. NCARB maintains a database on licensure candidates and Certificate holders. This allows us to track the progression of candidates as they move through the AXP, ARE, and beyond.

Some of the data is self-reported, including age, race and ethnicity, gender, and geographic location. Other data is triggered by candidate actions such as starting the AXP or completing the ARE. NCARB also collects data from the U.S. jurisdictional licensing boards to provide a total count of architects.

Data from the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) was also used in this report to provide the number of students graduating from NAAB-accredited programs. The report also includes some findings from several surveys conducted by NCARB in 2025 – 2026, which are explained in more detail below.

About the *Future of Architectural Licensure* Study

The *Future of Architectural Licensure* study gathered early feedback from licensure candidates and students on the overall licensure framework being considered through Pathways to Practice. The study also measured reactions to potential assessment methods. Over 5,500 students and licensure candidates participated in the study, which was conducted from October 2025 – February 2026.

About the Student Debt Survey

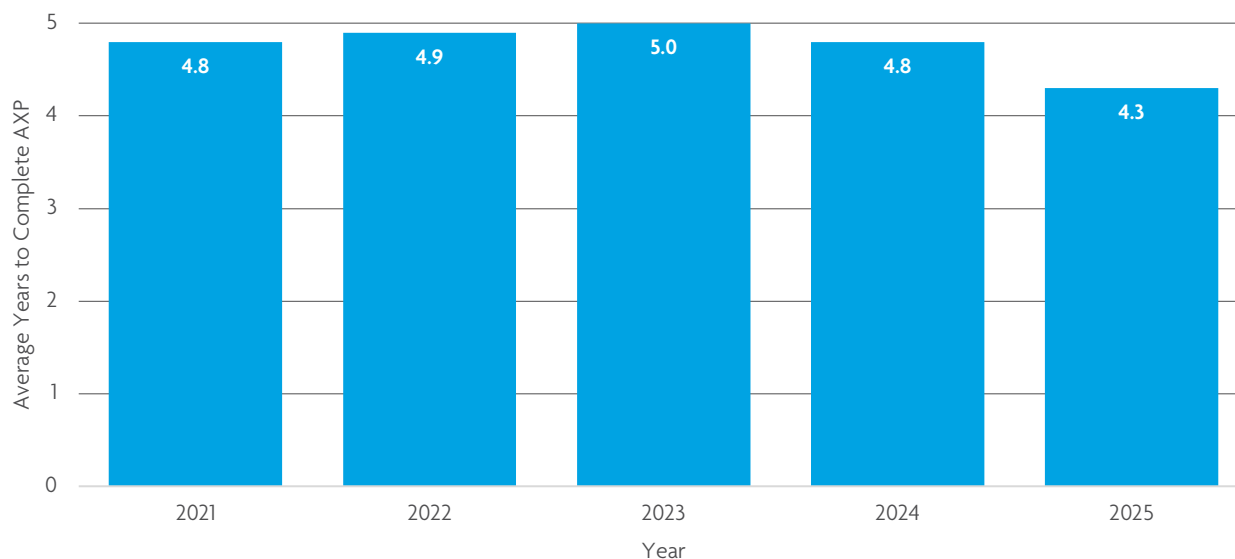
To better understand how a potential lending cap proposed by the Department of Education could impact future architects, NCARB collected data on total and federal student loans from architects, licensure candidates, and current students in late January – early February 2026. When filtered to only respondents who graduated from any degree program between 2010 – 2026, NCARB saw 2,578 responses, including 2,516 complete responses and 62 partial responses.

How to Read This Report

Here are some tips for understanding the data presented in *NCARB by the Numbers*.

Reading Charts

Most *NCARB by the Numbers* charts show a year-over-year comparison of data from NCARB's Record holders. For example, each bar in the chart below shows the average time it took for candidates to complete the experience program in a given year.



The x (or horizontal) axis of this chart measures the year a candidate completed the AXP, while the y (or vertical) axis measures the average time to complete the program in each individual year. Reading this chart, you can see the average licensure candidate who completed the AXP in 2025 took 4.3 years, a 6-month drop compared to 2024.

A note about averages: There are several ways to measure averages. **NCARB typically uses the median, rather than mean.** The median provides a more accurate measure for the types of data shown in *NCARB by the Numbers*, because it better accounts for outliers that skew the overall dataset (like a candidate who takes decades to complete a program). However, there are some charts that use a mean included in this year's report—these charts are noted as appropriate.

Demographics

Throughout this year's report, we segment NCARB Record holder data by a variety of demographic factors, such as race, ethnicity, and gender. Please keep in mind that individuals can identify as more than one race or ethnicity. For this reason, some demographic percentages may add to over 100%. In addition, NCARB launched updated demographics selections for Record holders in 2023, some of which are reflected in this year's report.

Individuals who identify their race as either American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or Middle Eastern or North African make up a fraction of all NCARB customers. For this reason, they—along with individuals who self-describe their race or ethnicity—are grouped in the individuals of “another group” category.

Additionally, NCARB recognizes that our community's gender identity is more diverse than the “men” and “women” categories represented in *NCARB by the Numbers*. However, due to an insufficient sample size of nonbinary and gender non-conforming individuals, NCARB primarily shares data for men and women in this report.

Some new demographic fields—including those related to disability status, sexual orientation, and transgender status—have not been utilized by enough Record holders to include in detail in this year's edition of *NCARB by the Numbers*. We hope to report on these areas in future years.

Percentage Changes vs. Percentage Point Changes

Throughout the 2026 *NCARB by the Numbers*, we refer to changes in the data as either “percentage point changes” or “percent changes.” Percent change measures the rate of change from one number to another (i.e., going from 40,000 to 50,000 is a 25% increase). Percentage point changes, on the other hand, measure the numerical difference in percentages (i.e., going from 40 percent to 50 percent is an increase of 10 percentage points).

NCARB typically uses percentage point changes when comparing proportions of different cohorts or groups—for example, when comparing the racial and ethnic makeup of candidates who completed the AXP in 2025 to 2024. Because the number of candidates completing the AXP each year is different, referring to the change in *percentage points* rather than *percent change* allows for a more accurate comparison of the proportion of candidates who identify as people of color each year.

NCARB is constantly updating how we filter and present data in *NCARB by the Numbers* to provide the most accurate information. If you have questions or comments about this year's *NCARB by the Numbers*, please reach out to us at communications@ncarb.org.

About NCARB

NCARB is a global leader in architectural regulation; our members are the architectural licensing boards of the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

We are dedicated to helping our Member Boards protect the public health, safety, and welfare by recommending and encouraging national requirements for architectural licensure and mobility—including the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®), Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®), and NCARB Certificate. The Certificate facilitates reciprocal licensure across the United States and in several international locations.

Glossary

Age: Median age based on self-reported dates of birth.

Architect: An individual who is licensed to practice architecture by one of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions. NCARB does not have demographic data on all U.S. architects; however, the NCARB Certificate holder population (see below) provides a close approximation.

ARE: The Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) is a multi-division exam used to assess a candidate's knowledge and skills and is required for initial licensure in all U.S. jurisdictions.

ARE Completion: This data point is triggered when a candidate passes their final ARE division.

AXP: The Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) provides a framework to guide licensure candidates through earning and recording professional experience.

AXP Completion: This data point is triggered when a licensure candidate fulfills the AXP's requirements and their Record has been evaluated by NCARB.

Candidate: Shorthand for *licensure candidate*—see below.

CE: Construction & Evaluation

Licensure Candidate: An NCARB Record holder who is actively documenting experience and/or taking the ARE.

NAAB: The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) accredits U.S. professional programs in architecture. All U.S. jurisdictions accept degrees from NAAB-accredited programs for initial licensure.

New Record: A candidate's successful application for an NCARB Record, which is often the first step on the path to licensure.

NCARB Certificate: A credential available to architects that facilitates reciprocal licensure across U.S. jurisdictions, as well as several international locations.

New Architect: NCARB does not receive reliable data regarding when a candidate first receives their license but estimates that a candidate becomes a new architect after becoming ready for licensure. "New Architects" includes candidates who became ready for licensure in 2025.

Non-Certified Architect: An architect who does not hold an NCARB Certificate.

PA: Programming & Analysis

Pass Rate: Percentage of exam attempts that received a passing score out of the total number of exam attempts.

PcM: Practice Management

People of Color: Individuals who identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

PjM: Project Management

PDD: Project Development & Documentation

PPD: Project Planning & Design

Ready for Licensure: The core requirements for licensure in the United States include gaining an education (typically a degree from a NAAB-accredited program), completing the AXP, and passing the ARE. Some jurisdictions have additional requirements that fall outside this “core,” such as a supplemental exam. NCARB considers a candidate ready for licensure when they have completed the core licensure requirements.

Reciprocal License: An architecture license issued by a jurisdiction as a result of the applicant holding an initial license in a separate jurisdiction.

Join the Conversation on Social Media

#NBTN



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