

NCARB Live Follow-Up: NCARB as an Organization

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Jared Zurn [00:00]: Thank you, everybody for tuning into another video that answers questions from our most recent NCARB Live. This video is going to cover the topic of NCARB as an organization. And our first question says:

I recently earned my license and found it hard to figure out next steps. NCARB provides some items, but it felt like I was on my own. Is there anything in development to make this process easier?

The question really is, what the candidate is saying here, is that they just became licensed and there is that moment where NCARB works on providing the programs that are used by the jurisdictional licensing boards to grant a license, so that's AXP and ARE. But once you've completed those programs and you've earned your license, as this individual is stating, the relationship is really between you and your jurisdictional licensing board, and every jurisdictional licensing board is a little bit different. I would say in this case, it really comes down to now building your relationship with your local licensing board.

If you want to continue your relationship within NCARB, that's through the NCARB Certificate. Once you're a licensed practitioner, you can earn your NCARB Certificate, which once you have your NCARB Certificate, then NCARB can help you with things like continuing education and things like that related to maintaining your license.

Michelle Cohn [01:22]: Great. Our next question:

What is NCARB doing to prepare its Customer Relations department in the next few months, as it's slightly getting inundated with questions about the new online proctoring and other changes that might be occurring?

Well, we have a strong cross-functional training program at NCARB. Our departments work very closely together, and in fact, we've been working really closely with our Customer Relations team and other teams since day one of thinking about the move to online proctoring. So that has been an ongoing effort. We work together frequently to cross train people in various departments to provide that information, answer questions for each other, where we can make sure that all of our departments are really on the same page with any new changes that are coming out, exam or otherwise.

Jared Zurn [02:15]: Our next question is a very big question, it says:

Who oversees NCARB?

I'll start by saying, we have to remember what NCARB is. NCARB is the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. So NCARB is an organization that has 55 members and those

55 members are the jurisdictional licensing boards. So it's those licensing boards that oversee NCARB. They're the voting members that elect the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors sets the strategy. The Board of Directors sets the budget. So really oversight of NCARB happens from each of the 55 member boards.

Michelle Cohn [02:52]: Continuing on that:

What role do the states or professional groups have in developing exam material and holding NCARB accountable?

Again, this is a big question here, but a lot of this really goes back to those jurisdictional licensing boards that Jared just mentioned. Volunteers from those boards serve on many of our committees, especially our exam development committees.

As committee members, those volunteers really are responsible for overseeing the content development, reviewing content before it gets placed in front of candidates, and from just an overall policy issue, reviewing any new policy changes and procedures that might be put in front of candidates once they're ready to start testing.

The accountability, right there, again comes back to the licensing boards and really to those individual architect volunteers, many of whom serve, or have served, on their licensing boards and then get involved in NCARB committees.

As far as other professional groups, NCARB has ongoing relationships with other professional groups, including AIA, NOMA, AIAS, and many others. So we have ongoing relationships, meetings, dialogue, really where we discuss the initiatives at NCARB, as well as at those other organizations, where we can keep each other informed about areas that we're working on and where we might be able to work across various programs.

Jared Zurn [04:26]: Our next question says:

What is NCARB doing to address equity in the profession?

NCARB understands that equity in the profession is an important topic and it has been for quite some time. And that's one of the reasons that NCARB over the past several years has built a relationship with NOMA, the National Organization of Minority Architects, and this past year went into a joint partnership where they dug in together and really looked at what can we learn that's happening in the profession.

You've probably already seen some data released by NCARB on this, and I think you can, in the future, look for more of the insights that were learned from that. And some of the changes that will be coming because of it.

The other thing NCARB is doing is, NCARB internally has been doing what we call a "pipeline study." As we've mentioned, our members are the jurisdictional licensing boards, and the

members of the jurisdictional licensing boards are people that are appointed to their state licensing boards typically by the governor of that state.

We're also looking at how we can work with the pipeline of people that are getting on their Member Boards because that in itself influences the regulatory process. The third part of this is just internally inside of NCARB we're looking at all of our programs from the perspective of diversity, equity, and inclusion, to make sure that the way the programs are built, that they're not unintentionally impacting any population group in any way that would not be acceptable.

Michelle Cohn [05:53]: All right, our next question:

What percent of our volunteers—I mentioned our volunteer committees, especially those focused on exam developments—What percent of those volunteers are women and minorities?

I have some data on this stretching back for the last five years, and I can say that about two thirds of our volunteers are or have been men, about one third are women. Broken down by race, I can say about two thirds are white, about one third are non-white. But I also want to point out those aren't the only measures of diversity that we look for on our committees. We also consider the types of practice that individual volunteers are engaged in. So for instance, firm size. We want to make sure that we have volunteers working in a range of types of firms certainly when we're developing questions for, say, the practice management exam, project management, how do you operate within a firm setting?

I can say about a third of our volunteers work at large firms, about 40 percent of our volunteers come from small firms, and the rest are either sole practitioners or work at medium-sized firms. So we've got a pretty good range there.

We also look at years of experience. We want to make sure that we're including the voices of practitioners really across the range of how long they've been practicing. We have, let's see here, about a third of our volunteers have been recently licensed within the last five years, about a third of our volunteers have been licensed more than 20 years, and the other third are somewhere in the middle of that. And so that's a really important thing for us as well. Certainly our volunteers who've been practicing longer bring a lot of wealth of experience to the table, at the same time, our volunteers who are recently licensed really bring that great perspective of what it's been like to go through this current exam, what it's like really to practice as a recently licensed professional in terms of the types of questions and the subject matter that they would feel qualified to answer on an exam. And so the combination of all of that really helps us craft an exam that reflects the profession and is fair for our candidates.

Jared Zurn [08:14]: And our final question in this section is:

NCARB's Board of Directors is currently not racially or gender diverse, and doesn't seem to represent the current generation of architecture students or licensure candidates making their way through the pipeline. Is NCARB working to address this?

The short answer is, yes, NCARB is working to address this. I think it's important to understand who the members of the NCARB Board of Directors are. These are people that do represent a diversity across the entire country. Firm size, years of experience, things like that. They bring that to the table. But they are at the table because they've served on their jurisdictional licensing board. That's how they work their way up onto the Board of Directors.

I had mentioned earlier that NCARB is doing this pipeline study to figure out how to diversify at the Member Board level, because that is what is going to cause greater diversity to then move its way up into Board leadership. NCARB is looking at this process. We also have a governance committee right now that's looking at how could the NCARB governance model be changed to bring other voices to the table. So I think you're going to see changes related to NCARB governance in the years to come.

But I will say, I think it's important to also remember that the Board of Directors today does represent diversity across the jurisdictional licensing boards, which is what is critical in making decisions that really can then be accepted by all 55 members, and therefore facilitate better licensure across jurisdictional boundaries.

Thank you for your time in listening to this video, where we answered more questions from the NCARB live, this time all about NCARB as an organization. Thank you.