

Student Information Sheet for Interior Design Licensing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

What is the IDLCPA?

The Interior Design Legislative Coalition of Pennsylvania is comprised of over 800 individuals who support Interior Design Licensing. The members include ASID and IIDA members, unaffiliated designers, industry partners and members of the general public. Anyone who uses public spaces should be concerned that the space is designed following safety codes.

Why do Interior Designers need to be licensed?

The code issue. Before buildings or spaces can be occupied, they must be inspected. Before they are inspected, a permit must be filed. Pennsylvania permitting requirements are governed by the Title 34, Labor and Industry/Part XIV, Uniform Construction Code. This code regulates what types of buildings need to be inspected, what the inspections regulate, what is done if spaces don't pass inspection and ***who is allowed to prepare the documents for inspection.***

Specifically, the code reads:

403.42a Permit application.

(c) A licensed architect or licensed professional engineer shall prepare the construction documents under the Architects Licensure Law (63 P. S. §§ 34.1-34.22), or the Engineer, Land Surveyor and Geologist Registration Law (63 P. S. §§ 148-158.2). An unlicensed person may prepare design documents for the remodeling or alteration of a building if there is no compensation and the remodeling or alteration does not relate to additions to the building or changes to the building's structure or means of egress.

This means that Interior Designers can not submit documents for permitting, even if the scope of architectural work falls within interior boundaries (such as pre-existing buildings or shell buildings that would be considered non-structural commercial fit-outs or renovations). If we do work in spaces of public occupation our choices are either to get an architect or engineer to submit architectural interior construction drawings..... or work for free.

The law is already on the books; IDLCPA is working hard to open up the code to allow for Interior Designers to practice legally to the full extent of their training, testing and experience. Contrary to what many people think, Interior Designers do not just pick colors. They are trained and capable of designing spaces that meet fire codes and ADA regulations. If they are doing work that is regulated by the codes, and affects the health, welfare and safety of the general public, then they should be licensed by the state and held accountable for their work.

What does this mean to Interior Design students/Why Should I Care?

In Pennsylvania alone there are over 2,000 practicing Interior Designers, 17 undergraduate Interior Design schools and three master's programs – totaling over 1,000 enrolled undergraduates and graduates.

Students graduating from Interior Design programs and professionals practicing Interior Design in Pennsylvania are currently facing prohibitive occupational challenges that discourage professionals from private practice in commercial markets and multi-dwelling residential markets. If legislation is not passed that gives Interior Designer practice rights in these markets, students graduating with design degrees will not have the ability to practice the full scope of Interior Design services in Pennsylvania. Education programs could suffer loss of program enrollment and, as a predominantly female occupation the number of women business owners practicing Interior Design in Pennsylvania could decrease.

What will it take to become licensed?

- Education: Hold a degree in an interior design program as approved by the State Licensure Board.
- Experience: Have two years of full time regulated interior design experience, under direct supervision of a registered interior designer or licensed architect. This must follow the form of a monitored intern development program equal to the NCIDQ test taking track; known as the Interior Design Experience Program (IDEP).
- Testing: Pass the NCIDQ
- Continuing Education: Acquire a minimum amount of hours each year of approved Continuing Education Units as approved by the State Licensure Board.

What is the status of Licensing in PA?

In the last couple of years the IDLCPA has introduced 2 separate bills in the House of Representatives and despite gathering support from legislators, positive hearings and a strong grassroots, both bills failed to leave the Professional Licensure Committee within their 2-year-session time frame. After a successful hearing last year, IDLCPA is poised to re-introduce legislation in the 2011-2012 session.

For more information on the legislative process please download our website resource that pictorially shows how a bill becomes law.

What can I do?

Contact your Representative

IDLCPA has been given direction from our lobbyist, Milliron & Associates, to have all members and supporters (including friends and family) of interior design licensing call or visit their associated representative in the PA House of Representatives and Senate asking them to **support interior design licensing!**

Call, email or fax your request to their office every month until we get our legislation passed!

To verify your legislators' contact information go to: <http://www.house.state.pa.us/>

Use address in the upper right hand corner box under "find Members by" and your House Representative will be listed. Then go under House - list alphabetically and click on his/her name for complete contact information. Remember to use the address where you are a registered voter.

What do I say?

- That you live and vote in their district.
- That you are a student (or a parent or friend of a student) of Interior Design and that **you support licensing of interior designers.**
- That you are worried that the education that you are spending a large amount of money and time and effort on will be wasted unless your profession is able to practice in public markets without violating PA-adopted building codes. Reference the code section listed above.
- Ask that they support your future by co-sponsoring the interior design licensure bill when it is introduced this session.
- Thank them for their time and attention to this important issue.
- Contact the IDLCPA or Andy Goodman at Milliron and Associates letting us know about your conversation and any response you received from your legislators.

Become a member

Membership forms are found on the website www.IDLCPA.com. Encourage family and friends to also become members.

More Information

More information can be found on our website www.idlcpa.com . Please contact a board member with any questions.