



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT LICENSURE FEES IN COLORADO (Updated 2-27-2010)

Question 1. Why are the renewal fees so high?

Answer. Colorado's present renewal fee level is high compared to other states. According to the American Society of Landscape Architects, Colorado's annual licensure renewal fee is among the highest in the nation. This is because the renewal fee of \$351 (for 2010) must by law cover the operating costs of the Colorado State Board of Landscape Architects (LA Board) in the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA), including their staff, and is now making up for a negative fund balance carried over from 2008 and 2009. In 2010 DORA's operating costs are estimated to be approximately \$165,000. The fee is established by DORA simply by taking the estimated cost (plus the negative fund balance of approx. \$30k carried over from 2009) and dividing it by the number of estimated licensees in Colorado in 2010.

Question 2. Will the renewal fees continue to be high in future years?

Answer. This depends primarily on two components. The first component has to do with DORA expenses. These are expected to go down in the future now that the LA Board is up and running and licensure has been established in Colorado (a lot of the preliminary administrative work is done in terms of creating rules and regulations, reviewing applications and hearing licensure appeals). The 2008-09 negative fund balance will also likely disappear next year. The second component has to do with the number of licensees. Licensure fees are evenly distributed among licensees and the more licensees there are the lower the per capita fee will be. In early 2010 there were 737 licensed Landscape Architects in Colorado (compared to 685 the year before). If costs continue to go down and the number of licensees holds even or goes up then the renewal fees in 2011 will in all probability be lower.

Question 3. What are the DORA expenses?

Answer. The DORA expenses include staff time for a Program Director (3/10 of a position), legal counsel from the Attorney General's office, clerical and administrative time, office space, office equipment, and electricity (overhead), and expenses related to the operation of the unpaid LA Board (including travel). Representatives of ASLA Colorado recently met with DORA and the LA Board and learned that future staffing allocations may be revisited now that licensure is in place and the LA Board will likely meet by teleconference rather than face-to-face during at least some of their quarterly meetings in 2010.

Question 4. Can I save money and make my license inactive if I am not practicing in Colorado right now?

Answer. Colorado law makes no provision for assessing different fees for active and inactive licenses. Between January 1 and March 31 if a Landscape Architect allows their license to lapse then there is a \$15 late fee to renew it. After March 31 of each year licenses that have lapsed go

into expired status and cannot be renewed without going through the formal reinstatement procedure.

Question 5. Are there other ways to cut costs in DORA?

Answer. There is no “silver bullet” that will automatically reduce the costs of administering the program. DORA is working with the LA Board and is accepting suggestions from ASLA Colorado to identify ways to reduce existing staffing and operating expenses. Per capita licensure costs will go down when more licenses are granted. Licensees are advised to consult with their tax advisor because costs associated with licensure may be tax deductible as a business expenses.

Question 6. Can DORA charge more for licensees who live out of state?

Answer. DORA has no policy or provision for a licensure fee scale based on state of residence. In early 2010 there are 88 Landscape Architect licensees who live in states other than Colorado. Increasing their fees will have a minimal effect on the remaining 649 licensees who live in Colorado.

Question 7. Where can I get more information on DORA and the State LA Board?

Answer. Click on the “State Licensure” button on the main page of the ASLA Colorado website www.aslacolorado.org and this will take you to the DORA webpage for Landscape Architects. From there you can obtain a list of DORA LA Board members and their terms of office, read past board minutes, file a complaint if you know of someone practicing without a license, read DORA’s FAQ sheet, renew your license, and obtain a list of current licensees. ASLA Colorado is concerned about the cost of licensure and welcomes your suggestions. Please email them to info@aslacolorado.org.