

# ***Licensure Talking Points: Benefits of a Practice Act***

A practice act prohibits unqualified individuals from calling themselves a landscape architect and from practicing the profession. Enactment of a practice act is important for the following reasons:

## **Public Health, Safety, and Welfare**

- The practice of landscape architecture directly impacts public health, safety, and welfare, and a practice act is the strongest form of regulation to ensure that the public is adequately protected. A title act will still allow *anyone* to perform landscape architectural services as long as they are not identified as a landscape architect.
- A practice act outlines a core group of services that licensed landscape architects are qualified to provide by virtue of their education, experience, and examination. Defining the scope of landscape architectural practice is necessary when working with jurisdictions that require site, grading, stormwater, or erosion control plans to be stamped by specific licensed professionals.
- Landscape architecture must be regulated such that untrained individuals are prevented from engaging in professional practice that impacts the public health, safety and welfare. Licensed landscape architects fulfill educational training and examination requirements that prepare professionals to protect the public.
- Landscape architects are called upon for complex services that require highly technical skills, making it difficult for prospective customers to evaluate the quality of the work. Licensure as a measure of competence can assist consumers in identifying appropriate professionals for design services.

## **Fair Competition and Economic Impact**

- Licensure for one profession and registration for the other may be perceived by the consumer as an endorsement of the skill and competence of one profession over the other. This is sharply evident where there is no regulation of landscape architecture at all. Where the professions overlap, it provides a state-sanctioned advantage for one profession over the other. This destroys the competitive, free market in which design professionals compete.
- The licensure of landscape architects is necessary to put the profession on an equal footing with those already licensed to perform tasks traditionally performed by landscape architects. This equality can also facilitate the ability of landscape architects to lead projects, form certain business partnerships, and serve as principals in multidisciplinary firms.
- Without a practice act, landscape architects may be unfairly disadvantaged in the marketplace. A landscape architecture firm may be discouraged from submitting a particular project proposal because the submitter is required or encouraged to be fully licensed. Costs for services may be higher when a landscape architect must obtain a seal of another design professional before moving ahead with a project.
- Leadership of multidisciplinary teams by landscape architects is likely to be more common if landscape architects are fully licensed.

- Without valid licensure, a landscape architect or firm seeking work outside their home state may find their efforts stymied, as proof of licensure is required before reciprocity is granted. This gives the market advantage to out-of-state professionals.

### **Other Benefits**

- In terms of practical numbers, having a practice act will motivate more unlicensed professionals to become licensed. Currently, many simply don't bother because registration conveys a title only.
- Increased visibility and understanding of the profession will grow and the number of licensed landscape architects increases.