

Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Updated Architecture Reciprocity Agreement Signed by Canada and the U.S. Expanding international opportunities for qualified architects of various backgrounds

On November 13, 2025, representatives from the [Regulatory Organizations of Architecture in Canada](#) (ROAC) and the U.S. [National Council of Architectural Registration Boards](#) (NCARB) signed an updated Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) that will expand access to opportunities for Canadian and U.S. architects. The refreshed MRA goes into effect on January 15, 2026, and will replace the existing one between the two countries.

The updated agreement is based on substantially equivalent competencies obtained at the point of licensure. It accepts architects from each country who have been licensed through a variety of paths—including those who have been licensed through the Canadian Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program (BEFA) or hold the NCARB Certificate through the Education Alternative or International Architect pathways. The updated language was approved by ROAC's Board of Directors earlier this year, as well as NCARB's member licensing boards during the organization's 2025 Annual Business Meeting. It aligns in spirit with ongoing national and provincial activities to increase opportunities for architects looking to practise in other jurisdictions without any regulatory compromise on the protection of safety or the public interest.

"The new MRA is the natural evolution for our two organizations' longstanding agreement," says ROAC Chair Ian McDonald, an architect registered in British Columbia and Alberta. "It removes some administrative obstacles for those looking to work in Canada and the United States, improving labour mobility of qualified individuals while maintaining the critical focus on competency."

Updated Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for reciprocal licensure, architects must be licensed and in good standing in a participating jurisdiction in their home country. The updated agreement between ROAC and its U.S. counterpart removes several barriers to reciprocity from the previous agreement, including eliminating the 2,000 required hours of post-licensure experience and requirements related to citizenship, residency, and principal place of practice. It also accepts architects licensed or certified through alternative pathways.

"We are thrilled to continue expanding access to international practice through the NCARB Certificate," says FY26 NCARB President Edward T. Marley, an Arizona architect. "By streamlining the reciprocity process, we're recognizing that whether architects have obtained their license via traditional or non-traditional paths, they should be able to bring their expertise to a global market. All architects eligible to take advantage of this revised MRA have met the high standards required for competent practice that protects the public."

The first Mutual Reciprocity Agreement between Canada and the United States was originally signed in 1994 and most recently updated in 2013. It is based on an assessment of similarities between the architecture licensing standards established by NCARB for its member jurisdictions and those set by Canadian provinces.

About ROAC

The Regulatory Organizations of Architecture in Canada (ROAC) represents the 11 provincial and territorial regulators of the profession of architecture in Canada. These regulatory bodies are responsible for setting the standards for entry into the profession and for issuing registrations/licenses to those who meet established standards of qualifications and practice. These regulators individually regulate the practice of architecture so that the public interest is protected within their respective province or territory. Through ROAC, the Canadian architectural regulators work collectively to develop and adopt nationally recognized standards and programs which meet their regulatory responsibilities as well as the needs of the architectural profession. To learn more about the information in this release, visit roac.ca/professional-mobility.

About NCARB

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards' membership is made up of the architectural licensing boards of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. NCARB, in collaboration with these boards, facilitates the licensure and credentialing of architects to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. To achieve these goals, NCARB works with its Member Boards and volunteers to develop and facilitate standards for licensure, including the national examination and experience program. NCARB also recommends regulatory guidelines for licensing boards and helps architects expand their professional reach through the NCARB Certificate. To learn more about the information in this release, visit ncarb.org/international.