

## PHRC Report #D5: A Comparative Analysis of State Mandated Contractor Licensing Examinations

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### **BACKGROUND:**

In the Fall of 1992, the Pennsylvania Builders Association (PBA) began investigating the possibility of developing, implementing, and administering a state-wide certification program for builders and remodelers. The purpose of this certification program would be to add credibility to the image and mission of the Pennsylvania Builders Association by establishing an appropriate level of competency for its members, and in time, to improve the image of the association and the home building and remodeling industry within state government and in the eyes of the housing consumer.

Phase 1 of this project involved assisting PBA's Knowledge Work Group in examining the issue of competency. The Pennsylvania Housing Research Center generated PHRC Report # 35; Suggested Competency Standards for the Pennsylvania Builders Association State-Wide Certification Program, which suggested definitions of the domain of knowledge for the home building industry and assisted in determining the minimum standards and definitions of basic competence within that domain necessary for an individual to be categorized, at a minimum, as a competent home builder or remodeler.

The Pennsylvania Builders Association, and in particular the Knowledge Work Group, deemed Phase 1 of this project a success and asked the PHRC to continue providing assistance in the development of the certification program. The primary purpose of Phase 2 of this research project was to assist PBA with further refining the content areas and developing a competency examination.

### **SUMMARY OF RESULTS:**

The object of this report was to present a comparative analysis of state mandated **residential contractor** licensing examinations for the Pennsylvania Builders Association's Knowledge Work Group. This report assisted the Knowledge Work Group in making

an informed decision about the type and format of the examination which the PBA will use for their builder/remodeler certification program.

At present, 33 states and the territory of Guam have some form of licensing statute which affects building contractors. Of these 33 states, 20 states and Guam require candidates to pass examinations as part of the licensing process. The authors of this report were able to compile data on 17 of the 20 states that utilize licensing examinations.

**WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU:**

This report provided information to the Knowledge Work Group which allowed them to build a model of the "average" state licensing examination. Utilizing this model, PBA was able to make an informed decision about the format and content of the examination. This report, and the model it helped to develop, validated, in part, the methodology used by the PBA in designing a certification examination for its members.

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

The final step of Phase 2 of this project is the development of a pool of questions for the certification examination.