

Governor's Office of Management and Budget

Alexis Sturm

Director



Regulatory Sunset Act Study of

Registered Interior Designers Act xx, 2026

To the Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor of Illinois

Governor Pritzker:

As required by Section 5 of the Regulatory Sunset Act (5 ILCS 80/1 et seq.), GOMB facilitated a study with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's (IDFPR), the agency responsible for oversight of the Registered Interior Designers Act (225 ILCS 310) (the Act), which is scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2027. This study provides justification for the recommendation to continue this Act.

GOMB's examination of this Act was conducted considering the factors set out in Sections 6 and 7 of the Regulatory Sunset Act. The following report outlines the work of GOMB's study and details the criteria and data utilized to arrive at the above recommendation.

Respectfully,

Alexis Sturm
Director
Governor's Office of Management and Budget

GOMB Regulatory Sunset Act Report: Registered Interior Designers Act

The State of Illinois, acting through the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR or the Department), licenses the profession of Registered Interior Designer pursuant to the Act. The practice of registered interior design involves the design of interior spaces as a part of an interior alteration or interior construction project in conformity with public health, safety, and welfare requirements, including the preparation of documents relating to building code descriptions, project egress plans that require no increase capacity of exits in the space affected, space planning, finish materials, furnishings, fixtures, equipment, and the preparation of documents and interior technical submissions relating to interior construction.

The absence of licensing criteria for registered interior designers would pose a direct harm to the safety and welfare of the public. The lack of regulation would eliminate the professional standards. IDFPR's authority under this Act protects the public's health, safety, and welfare by allowing IDFPR to review the qualifications of registered interior designers in Illinois to ensure that these individuals have completed the requisite education, examinations, and training to practice their profession with reasonable judgment, skill, and safety. The provisions within the Act and the Rules have been modeled with the intent of ensuring the public's health, safety, and welfare are the principal focus. The promulgated provisions of the Act and the Rules mitigate risk by establishing a basis for determining whether an applicant for licensure is fit to practice in Illinois.

1. License Count and Fee Structure (5 ILCS 80/6(1) and (3))

As of July 31, 2025, IDFPR states that there are 686 active licenses for Registered Interior Designers in Illinois. See the following table for the number of Registered Interior Designers licenses issued by IDFPR in the fiscal years indicated:

License Type	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Registered Interior Designers	11	10	15	38	22

Registered Interior Designers have the following licensure fee structure:

License, Credential, or Certification Type	Fee Amount	Online Payment Option
Application Fee	\$100	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Renewal Fee	\$30 per year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Duplicate Fee	\$ n/a	<input type="checkbox"/>

New rules are being implemented throughout 2026 to increase these fees to \$175 for applications (increased from \$100) and \$125 biennial for renewal (increased from \$60), these figures were calculated by the Department as necessary for funding this profession through 2034. No additional increases are expected before 2034.

2. Obtaining Certification in Illinois (5 ILCS 80/6(11))

Applicants are required to submit an application through the CORE system and the Department provides a guide that includes qualifications:

<https://idfpr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idfpr/core/dpr/161-int-design-qual.pdf>

Applicants are also required to pass the Council for Interior Design Qualifications (CIDQ) exam and obtain certification. CIDQ administers the NCIDQ Examination, the leading credential for interior designers in North America: <https://www.cidq.org/apply>.

3. Equity Concerns (5 ILCS 80/6(10), (12) and (13))

IDFPR states that equity issues may have an impact on individuals seeking to become a Registered Interior Designer in the State of Illinois. These issues include financial challenges such as the cost to obtain licensure and the failure to complete licensure due to access to training and education.

Persons who speak English as a second language may also have difficulty with the licensure process. IDFPR asserts that it has done its best to minimize any barriers to licensure by requiring universally accepted qualification requirements and imposing fair standards of professionalism.

4. Agency recommendations to change the statute (5 ILCS 80/6(4) and (9))

As there are interrelated scopes of practice, IDFPR has proposed changes to this Act to deposit funds associated with the regulation of this Act into the Design Profession Fund. This fund is utilized for professions designated as “design professions,” including architects, land surveyors, interior designers, professional engineers, and structural engineers.

5. Agency efforts to comply with enabling laws (5 ILCS 80/6(3), (4) and (5))

At the time of this study, GOMB is not aware of any compliance issues by IDFPR related to the provisions of the Act.

6. Recent bills introduced by the General Assembly (5 ILCS 80/6(9))

As proposed by IDFPR, Public Act 103-1044 passed in 2024. It added language to allow an applicant’s education in a foreign country to be evaluated as part of the application process, as establishes additional provisions regarding endorsement to for consistency with other design profession licenses.

The Act was also updated in 2022 by Public Act 102-1066, effective 1-1-23, to add definitions of "Accredited institution," "Interior technical submissions," "Practice of registered interior design," and "Responsible control". It also added an exception for noncommercial kitchen and bath design (225 ILCS 310/8); included new sections regarding seals (225 ILCS 310/4.1) and interior technical submissions (225 ILCS 310/4.2). This Public Act further specified that applicants must meet the requirements to sit for and pass the NCIDQ examination, and complete 10 hours of continuing education every 2 years (225 ILCS 310/8). It also added additional grounds of discipline (225 ILCS 310/13).

7. Stakeholder Feedback and Protocols for Registered Interior Designer Licensure (5 ILCS 80/6(5), (6), (7), (8), (10) and 5 ILCS 80/7)

The Board of Registered Interior Design Professionals is the advisory board that recommends discipline and changes to the Act. The board meets three times a year through public meetings. The board members provide insight to the Department about the profession, including recommendations for legislative or rule changes, participate in informal conferences with licensees with pending cases, and make recommendations for final disciplinary action after reviewing the Administrative Law Judge's reports from cases that go to formal hearing.

Interior design professionals are concerned about permits being approved by municipalities. Municipality approvals are a local government issue, not subject to IDFPR jurisdiction. The Act and Rules have been updated regarding seal and permit requirement approvals by municipalities.

Following protocol, IDFPR shared draft administrative rules that have been approved by the Governor's Office with the board members and associations in the industry for feedback. The Department participates in the JCAR public comment process.

8. Public Outreach (5 ILCS 80/6(5), (6), (7) and (8) and 5 ILCS 80/7)

IDFPR provides multiple avenues for members of the public to contact the Department with comments or concerns about the programs it oversees or the Department's rules governing its programs. IDFPR conducts public outreach efforts through social media and other external-facing means.

During public board meetings, the status of this Act and the profession are discussed. The Department also receives and responds to inquiries and feedback received from the public by email and through the Department's website. When proposing rules, IDFPR reaches out to associations in the industry for their feedback.

9. Industry Standards (5 ILCS 80/6(11) and (12))

IDFPR states that the Illinois personal qualifications required for this profession are in line with industry standards.

Minimal national standards can be found here: <https://www.cidq.org/apply>, including education and work experience requirements here: <https://www.cidq.org/paths>. A licensed architect can obtain registration as an interior designer in most states including Illinois.

For information on interior designers on other midwestern states:

Iowa has Registered Interior Designers and also uses the NCIDQ exam. Iowa has very similar educational and experience requirements to Illinois: <https://dial.iowa.gov/licenses/other-professional-licensure/interior-designers>

Indiana also has Registered Interior Designers, very similar qualifications to Illinois, and Indiana's Registered Interior Designers must also qualify for the national exam: <https://www.in.gov/pla/professions/interior-design-registry-home/>

Wisconsin is also very similar to Illinois with the same requirements and exam: <https://dsps.wi.gov/Pages/Professions/InteriorDesigner/Default.aspx>

Per the NCIDQ, all regulated states except California require the NCIDQ exam and certification, A summary of regulated jurisdictions and their requirements is provided here:
<https://www.cidq.org/jurisdictional-requirements>

10. Public Complaint Resolution (5 ILCS 80/6(3), (7), (8) and (10) and 5 ILCS 80/7)

IDFPR has received nine complaints from the public regarding regulated interior designers over the past five fiscal years. The Director of Professional Regulation is generally responsible for resolving complaints regarding IDFPR's regulation of the Act. The average time for resolution of a complaint is six to seven months. The table below outlines the number of complaints received by the Department in the last five years.

Complaints	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Registered Interior Designer	1	5	0	1	2

11. Disciplinary Action (5 ILCS 80/6(14))

IDFPR's authority to enforce the Act ensures that allegations of professional incompetence, gross negligence, malpractice, and unprofessional conduct are investigated and that substantiated allegations are prosecuted by the IDFPR for appropriate discipline.

The Department has investigated several complaints of unlicensed practice. Almost all complaints were closed without action because the practice in question was not within the scope of the Act or because the practice was otherwise allowed.

12. Conclusion

The Act governs the licensure of registered interior designers in the State of Illinois. Registered interior designers manage interior space design, including preparing interior technical plans, and ensuring that interior spaces are properly designed as required by building codes and other regulations.

The Act requires continuing education, including sexual harassment and ethics training, which helps the registered professionals maintain skills in the profession as well as higher ethical standards.

IDFPR states that regulation under the Act is minimal and necessary to provide industry standards and a protocol for complaints regarding professional services and proper registration. The Act ensures Illinois registered interior designers have appropriate education, work experience, and have passed the NCIDQ exam consistent with national standards for interior designers.

Based on the factors in 5 ILCS 80/6 and the additional criteria in 5 ILCS 80/7, GOMB finds that the Act should be recommended for continuation. The record should expressly state that the public protection benefits of regulation outweigh the regulatory costs and that no less restrictive alternative would adequately address the significant and discernible harms identified in this report.

The Act should be continued to promote and enhance the safety and welfare of the public, without

burdening licensees or commerce.