

**MISSION-DRIVEN**

Aandra Currie Shearer, NCIDQ No. 17159, CIDQ President

At the core of CIDQ's mission and vision is the NCIDQ Exam – and woven tightly around this core are strategic drivers that support the organization and its stakeholders, as well as the industry writ large. Over the past few years, CIDQ has been actively engaging with other advocacy and credentialing organizations in an effort to support our shared missions.

[See how we're staying virtually connected](#)

**SETTING THE STANDARD**

Thom Banks, Chief Executive Officer

CIDQ introduced a new NCIDQ Exam blueprint this spring reflecting the findings of our most recent Practice Analysis (PA). The findings from the PA are used to create an exam content “blueprint” which guides our subject matter experts (SMEs), all NCIDQ Certificate holders, in generating exam questions under the guidance of our exam development consultants.

[Learn more about the scoring process](#)

# NCIDQ Examination

**UPDATES**

With the release of the official spring 2021 score results, CIDQ announced the addition of [535 new NCIDQ certificate holders!](#) REMEMBER to proudly use the NCIDQ appellation that you worked so hard to achieve!

**2021 Comparative Overall Exam Pass Rates:**

IDFX: 61% | IDPX: 60% | PRAC: 54%

Applications for fall will be accepted thru July 31st, 2021. The exam payment and scheduling period is open thru September 30th.

CIDQ supports legislation that allows NCIDQ certificate holders to practice to the fullest extent of their professional capabilities. Learn how you can help support interior design regulation and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Stop by often to see what's happening in your jurisdiction.

speaking out

Join us for the first of a NEW series - **CIDQ Advocacy – a quarterly webinar**

CIDQ is proud to announce that on **July 14, 2021, at 2:00 pm EST**, we will be holding our first ever advocacy webinar as a new benefit for **CIDQ member boards**. This new webinar series will provide an opportunity for member boards to experience educational content, hear from guest speakers, receive professional updates, and connect with your counterparts in other jurisdictions.

For our first webinar, our Government Affairs and Advocacy Manager Matt Barusch will be providing a 2021 Legislative Update to member boards. The 2021 state legislative session was a busy one for interior design regulation, and there have been a lot of legislative developments in the profession. This webinar will walk you through all the proposed bills, enacted laws, and new state interior design regulations. The presentation will be followed by a Q&A period, and an open forum for member board members to engage with one another.

**Register today!** Contact [Matt Barusch](#) if you have any questions. We hope to see everyone there!

**NCIDQ**  
**Examination**  
[cidq.org/apply](http://cidq.org/apply)

### Applying for the NCIDQ Exam?

Here's an inside look at the application process. This video will visually help inform and guide candidates with account setup, application routes, transcript submission, payment, and status notification. Start your NCIDQ journey and apply now!

**Watch** and share with all the students and potential candidates in your networks – and encourage them to apply for the NCIDQ Exam!

### CIDQ Wants You!

Are you passionate about maintaining the standards of the profession? Do you have a desire to evolve and elevate the reputation of interior design? Do you have the commitment and skill to work diligently with a group of dedicated colleagues? Share your interests, experiences and some of the reasons our volunteer community appeals to you by completing our [Volunteer Interest Form](#) by August 31st – for service starting in 2022.

CIDQ will welcome back our exam development volunteers to our first in-person Item Writing/Review meeting in mid-July. We will continue to support those committee members who are unable to attend in-person due to travel restrictions or not yet feeling comfortable traveling by connecting them virtually. We look forward to welcoming you back!



### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

**Sarah Schwuchow, ASID, NCIDQ, RID**  
**NCIDQ Certificate No. 33737**

Sarah Schwuchow, owner and principal interior designer at Sarah Jacquelyn Interiors, shares her NCIDQ journey, why NCIDQ matters, the value of being jurisdictionally registered, and the importance

of paying it forward.



### [Get to Know Sarah.](#)

#### CIDQ Member Board News

The DC Board of Architecture Interior Design & Landscape Architecture currently has a vacancy for an Interior Designer member.

- Applicants MUST be a DC resident and DC-licensed Interior Designer.
- The Board consists of nine members appointed by the Mayor. Four members are architects, two are interior designers, two are landscape architects, and one is a consumer member.
- Meetings are every six weeks on Friday mornings from 9:30-12:30, currently via Webex (in person, they are at DCRA on 4th St SW).
- More information is available here: <https://dcra.dc.gov/architects>

APPLY HERE:

<https://motaboardstheresumator.com/apply/EI1TG8/Board-Of-Architecture-Interior-Designers-And-Landscape-Architecture>

#### LET'S GET BACK TOGETHER!

**CIDQ Annual Meeting  
November 12 & 13, 2021  
Minneapolis, MN**

State and provincial regulatory board staff, their Delegates, and representatives from interior design professional organizations will come together this year – *in person* – to discuss CIDQ, the NCIDQ Exam, and issues related to the interior design profession. Attendees will be able to learn key strategic initiatives, exchange ideas and tools, and collaborate with their peers.

**We can't wait to SEE you again!**





**Aandra Currie  
Shearer**  
CIDQ President  
NCIDQ Certificate  
No. 17159

### President's Message

At the core of CIDQ's mission and vision is the NCIDQ Exam — and woven tightly around this core are strategic drivers that support the organization and its stakeholders, as well as the industry writ large. Over the past few years, CIDQ has been actively engaging with other advocacy and credentialing organizations in an effort to support our shared missions. We continue to grow through these relationships — during the COVID pandemic we have been sharing our successes and snags and are moving ahead with the benefit of our collective experiences. We continue to meet virtually at this time, and in late June we attended NCARB's (National Council of Architectural Registration Boards) annual business meeting. In July we will take part in the FARB (Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards) leadership conference. After these events, we see the return to some in-person meetings on the horizon. The prospect of reconnection with our volunteers and allied professionals is very exciting! While we have been very productive in this virtual work environment, we miss those intangible results of interpersonal connections when we travel to work together.

The spring 2021 NCIDQ Exam administration was the first using our new exam blueprint. Developed from our 2019 Practice Analysis, this version has eliminated overlap between blueprints, called out life safety and universal design as a separate domain in the fundamentals (FX) exam, and is now using a set of codes based on, among others, the International Building Code. This switch to universally-adopted codes strengthens the defensibility of the exam.

535 people became NCIDQ Certified this spring. If you know any of these folks, please congratulate them on their achievement! The pass rates were: IDFX 61%, IDPX 60%, and PRAC 54% respectively. These are all slightly lower than the rates from fall 2020, which is typical for the first administration of a new blueprint. If you know anyone who was not successful, please salute them for their effort, and encourage them to take the exam again this October! Applications for the fall exam administration are being accepted now through July 31st.

CIDQ has a strong volunteer base and relies on this group for much of its exam development and task force work. We are indebted to the generosity of our certificate holders for their continuing efforts to help maintain CIDQ as the leader in its field in North America. If you are not currently involved with us, I hope you will consider dipping a toe in soon. There are many ways for you to be involved and the commitment can be one-time, or over the period of a year or more. Reach out at any time to me, or to the CIDQ office to get Qconnected!



**Thom Banks**  
CIDQ Chief  
Executive Officer

### CEO's Message

As Aandra noted in her message, CIDQ introduced a new NCIDQ Examination blueprint this spring reflecting the findings of our most recent Practice Analysis (PA). The findings from the PA are used to create an exam content “blueprint” which guides our subject matter experts (SMEs), all NCIDQ Certificate holders, in generating exam questions under the guidance of our exam development consultants. The Practice Analysis is conducted every five years, and the “blueprint” is updated to ensure that our exam remains aligned with current practice.

With every new examination rollout comes the necessary step of standard setting. Standard setting is the process used to select a passing score for an exam. The passing score (also known as the passing point, the cut-score, or the standard) is used to classify examinees as either competent or not competent. An examinee’s score must be equal to or greater than the passing score, in order for that examinee to be classified as competent, or to pass the test.

The most common method for establishing a cut score, and the one used by CIDQ, utilizes a statistical process known as the modified Angoff method. In this method, a panel of judges (our SMEs) representing a variety of practice perspectives is assembled to represent the profession. They begin with an orientation to the standard setting process, then define the knowledge level of a candidate with basic competence. With that candidate in mind, the SMEs review each item on the exam and determine the percentage of candidates with basic competence that would answer each item correctly.

These item probabilities, or percentages, are averaged across the set of test items for each judge, forming that judge’s recommended passing score. Then, passing scores are averaged across the individual judges to arrive at the full panel’s average final passing score. An error band is built around that average passing score and presented back to the panel of judges for a consensus discussion. The panel of judges review and discuss the results until they come to consensus on a recommended cut score.

The panel’s final cut score recommendation is presented to the CIDQ Board for consideration and a final decision — the result of which is ultimately applied to the April 2021 exams for scoring. This cut score standard will then be applied to all future exams based on that same exam blueprint.

**CEO's Message Continued**

This process was repeated with different panels of judges for each of the three sections of the NCIDQ Exam in arriving at their recommendations. I am always impressed by and appreciative of the dedication and thoughtfulness which our volunteers bring to this task. It is difficult and time-consuming work that demands a great deal of focus and concentration. Always central to their decision making is CIDQ's mission to protect the public and ensuring that candidates who earn the NCIDQ Certificate are truly qualified to do so. Thank you for continuing to make the NCIDQ Exam the standard for the profession.

# Volunteer Spotlight



**Sarah Schwuchow,**  
**ASID, NCIDQ, RID**  
NCIDQ Certificate No. 33737

Sarah Schwuchow, owner and principal interior designer at Sarah Jacquelyn Interiors, shares her NCIDQ journey, why NCIDQ matters, the value of being jurisdictionally registered, and the importance of paying it forward.

**Q: How did you first get involved with CIDQ and why did you decide to volunteer?**

A: I was inspired to volunteer with CIDQ by another NCIDQ Ambassador, John Cialone, FASID. John is an incredible designer, leader, and mentor. He always takes the time to provide guidance and advice to young designers. After learning more about the importance of the NCIDQ Exam and passing the exam myself, I felt there was a need for more NCIDQ mentorship among the design community. John encouraged me to look into the NCIDQ Ambassadors program where I could provide mentorship to candidates and educate interior design students on the value of the NCIDQ Exam. I wanted to be a resource to other designers, sharing my NCIDQ journey and encouraging them to take the exam.

**Q: Tell us a little about your most recent CIDQ-specific volunteering experiences.**

A: Over the last two years, I have helped mentor many NCIDQ candidates. One candidate in particular stands out, Elyse Kamps. Though we are both Chicago designers, we had never met until we connected via email about the NCIDQ Exam in 2019. Elyse was interested in taking the IDFX portion and had questions about eligibility, exam structure, and study resources. I guided her through the IDFX blueprint and shared my personal recommended study materials and schedule. Elyse passed the IDFX in April 2019 and went on to prepare for the IDPX and PRAC exams. Over the next year, Elyse and I stayed in touch. I provided her with one-on-one support, encouragement, and positivity as she went through the challenging study material. By the fall of 2020, Elyse passed all of her exams and became an NCIDQ Certificate Holder. I am so grateful to have had the

opportunity to meet and support her through her NCIDQ journey. Elyse now hopes to give back to the design community, sharing what she has learned and her study tips for future candidates. Being an NCIDQ Ambassador has allowed me to form new friendships, inspire others, and create a continued cycle of peer support for this important exam.

*“Sarah was a stranger to me at the outset of my NCIDQ Exam journey, but through the long and arduous test prep process, she’s been there every step of the way and has become a true friend. Her interest in mentoring and teaching clearly comes from a genuine place, as she is consistently reliable, patient, positive, and generous with her time. Sarah pushed me harder than I would have pushed myself, providing me with the tools to not only prepare for a passing score, but really learn the content so I can better contribute as an interior designer. Her example inspires me to continually pay it forward to help others advance just like she has helped me and so many others.” — Elyse Kamps, NCIDQ*

**Q: When did you become NCIDQ Certified and why?**

A: I earned my NCIDQ Certification in April 2018. I wanted to become NCIDQ Certified for the highly respected credentials, but also for the knowledge. I wanted to be able to walk onto a jobsite and confidently be able to have a conversation with other trade professionals. It is important to me that my clients feel comfortable with me as their designer and know that I have the skills, education, and experience to ensure their project is executed properly.

The NCIDQ Exam was always a vital goal

# Volunteer Spotlight



of mine and I admired design professionals who held the credentials. In the State of Illinois, you must be an NCIDQ Certificate holder to become a Registered Interior Designer. From a legislative standpoint in Illinois, it is critical that we ensure the “Registered Interior Designers Act” stays in effect, as many legal benefits come with this title such as lien rights. I wanted to be part of the advocacy efforts, increasing our Registered Interior Designer numbers, and supporting the ASID and IIDA chapters who continuously educate the public on interior designs’ impact on health, safety, and welfare.

**Q: How has having an NCIDQ Certificate benefited you and your career?**

A: Becoming an NCIDQ Certified interior designer has been one of the most influential things to impact my career. It set me on a path of professional development, leadership, mentorship, and gave me the confidence to open my own residential interior design firm. Having an NCIDQ Certificate and being a Registered Interior Designer has opened new project opportunities, as it is often a requirement to bid on certain commercial jobs. Having this certification sets me apart as a qualified designer on residential and commercial projects. I use my NCIDQ knowledge daily in my office and refer to my *Interior Design Reference Manual* regularly. The knowledge and resources I have gained from the NCIDQ Exam are invaluable.

**Q: What would you tell a colleague who is considering taking the NCIDQ Exam?**

A: I encourage all my designer peers to take this exam, with the understanding that it is a big commitment and requires a lot of dedication. This exam is challenging for a reason. It is the global standard for interior design professionals and highlights the importance of health, safety, and welfare in the built environment.

**Q: Why does NCIDQ Certification matter?**

A: NCIDQ Certification matters because it is an indicator of our proficiency and knowledge. The interior design profession is still relatively young at only about 100 years old. We are still working towards reasonable regulation, title acts, practice acts, stamping abilities, and legislative rights for our profession. NCIDQ Certification helps to create a standard to ensure designers have the knowledge, education, and experience to create spaces that meet codes, regulations, ADA requirements, health, safety, and welfare. I am proud to be an NCIDQ Certified interior designer that can contribute to the development of the interior design profession.

**Q: What have you learned thru volunteering with CIDQ / how has it impacted your life?**

A: Through volunteering with CIDQ I have learned how to be a better leader, mentor, and designer. I love being a resource to my peers and design students interested in learning more about this exam. Keeping up with the NCIDQ material and exam requirements allows me to be an advocate in the design community and guide others towards advancing their careers.

**Q: What advice would you give to those considering volunteering their time with CIDQ?**

A: It is incredibly rewarding to help someone through the NCIDQ Exam process. We each have our own story of how we passed this exam. We can share our experiences and tips to learn the material. Having a mentor to guide you through the process and provide support is invaluable. For many designers, even thinking about taking the exam can be a daunting task. Knowing there is someone who has been through it before is tremendously helpful.

**Q: Tell us a fun fact about yourself.**

A: I love game nights, escape rooms and Whodunit’s. I also enjoy indoor gardening, cooking, reading, and listening to Audiobooks.