

# **Report to the RSA Advisory Committee from the RSA Service Agent Examination Process Working Group**

## **Introduction**

The RSA Service Agent Examination Process Working Group was established to evaluate the current examination process and recommend improvements. This report details our findings and recommendations for modernizing the exam while ensuring its effectiveness, accessibility, and security.

## **Methodology**

Our research included a review of relevant statutes (BPC 12540) and regulations (4 CCR 4083), an examination of practices in other states, and considerations of member feedback.

## **Key Findings and Recommendations:**

### **Examination Delivery:**

- We recommend transitioning from the current exam system exam to a secure proctored online format offering immediate results.
- The exam should be offered regularly, with the possibility of on-demand options with additional fees for third-party proctoring services.
- Online video/audio platforms (Zoom, Teams, GoTo) or a reputable third-party proctoring service (Test.com) could be utilized for remote exam monitoring.

### **Identification and Security:**

- To ensure exam integrity, we recommend implementing mandatory photo ID verification during testing, following existing regulations.
- Reinstating Service Agent ID cards with agent numbers and photographs (similar to the BSIS model) is a suggestion for further consideration.

### **Proctoring:**

- We recommend investigating the feasibility of counties resuming proctoring duties in a hybrid model alongside the online option.
- If necessary, exploring regional county collaboration for proctoring could be beneficial.

### **Disqualification and Retake Policy:**

- A disqualification period (potentially 180 days) for failing applicants before retaking the exam should be established, this will need to be aligned with 4 CCR 4083 (e).

**Examination Content:**

- Expanding the question bank questions is recommended, emphasizing critical thinking skills and a broader knowledge base.
- The focus should be on candidates' ability to locate information within relevant resources (BPC, CCR, National model regs, NTEP, CTEP, Placed in Service Reports).
- Offering separate exams for basic knowledge and specializations can be explored further.

**Open-Book Format:**

- Allowing an open-book format with a reduced time limit and a larger question bank is suggested to discourage memorization.

**Fees:**

- A cost analysis should be conducted to determine if fee adjustments are necessary. Aligning fees with other California regulatory agencies like CSLB and DCA can be considered.
- Researching average RSA income levels is crucial to ensure fees remain accessible.

**Exam Time:**

- Establishing a fixed time frame of approximately 50 minutes for the 35-question exam, with accommodations for those with approved needs, is recommended.

**Retakes:**

- Determining a reasonable limit on retake attempts based on the chosen proctoring method and other considerations is necessary.
- Establishing a waiting period after failing an exam (consider the CSLB 3-week model) is recommended.

**Multilingual Support:**

- It does not appear that California requires multilingual support, however researching the legal requirements and feasibility of offering the exam in various languages is advised.

**Regulations Update:**

- A detailed recommendation paper outlining specific changes to 4 CCR 4083 will need to be developed for the RSA Advisory Committee.
- Proposing rule making modifications to 4 CCR 4087 and 4088 to reflect the recommended process will be included.

**Conclusion**

The proposed changes aim to modernize the RSA Service Agent Examination process, ensuring its effectiveness, accessibility, and security. We believe this will enhance consumer confidence in the professionalism of the industry.

We recommend further discussion and refinement of these proposals before finalizing the recommendations for the RSA Advisory Committee.

**Thank you for your consideration.**

**Sincerely,**

The RSA Service Agent Examination Process Working Group