



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS

Background on The American Institute of Architects

AIA History

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) was created in 1857. Through education, government advocacy, community redevelopment, and public outreach activities, the AIA works toward a public environment that is responsive to the people it serves while representing the professional interests of America's architects. In close concert with other members of the design and construction team, the AIA also works to fulfill its commitment to help coordinate the building industry.

AIA Membership

As members of the AIA, more than 80,000 licensed architects and associated professionals express their commitment to quality design and livability in our built environments.

Architect members are currently licensed to practice architecture in the U.S. Associate members are unlicensed, but they do meet one of the following criteria: They are working under the supervision of an architect in a professional or technical capacity; they have earned professional degrees in architecture; they are faculty members in a university program in architecture; or they are interns earning credit toward licensure.

International Associate members hold an architecture license or the equivalent from a licensing authority outside the U.S.

Emeritus members have been AIA members for 15 successive years and are at least 70 years of age, or they are at least 60 years of age and fully retired, or they are incapacitated so as to be unable to work in the profession.

Allied members are individuals whose professions are related to the building and design community, such as engineers, landscape architects, planners or senior executive staff from building and design-related companies, including publishers, product manufacturers, and research firms. Allied membership is a partnership with the AIA and The American Architectural Foundation.

Continued over

Although the AIA functions as a national organization, at its heart are 287 local and state organizations providing members with the essential local focus that reflects the nature of their professional lives. AIA members adhere to a code of ethics and professional conduct that assures clients, the public, and colleagues of an architect's dedication to the highest standards in professional practice.

AIA Service

By speaking with a united voice, AIA architects can influence government practices that affect the practice of the profession and the quality of American life. The Institute constantly monitors legislative and regulatory actions and uses the collective power of its membership to participate in decision making by federal, state, and local policy makers. To serve the public at large, the AIA's community-based programs work in concert with federal legislators and local governments to elevate the design of public spaces, protect the nation's infrastructure, and develop well-designed affordable housing for all Americans.

AIA Professionalism

The Institute serves its members with professional development opportunities, Contract Documents that are the model for the design and construction industry, professional and design information services, personal benefits, and client-oriented resources. In contributing to their profession and communities, AIA members also participate in dozens of specialized Knowledge Communities and Constituencies that are both the source and focus of new ideas and responses.

Through a nationally recognized awards program, the AIA also sets the standard for architectural excellence while cultivating an ever-growing audience for good design. And the AIA Fellowship Program recognizes those members who have made notable contributions to the advancement of the profession. To aid younger professionals, an Intern/Architect Development Program, registration-exam preparation courses, and employment referral services are frequently offered by local chapters.

AIA Public Education

The AIA strives to meet the needs and interests of the nation's architects and the public they serve by developing public awareness of the value of architecture and the importance of good design. In partnership with The American Architectural Foundation, a not-for-profit educational entity, the AIA strives for national design literacy in the belief that a well-trained, creative profession and an informed public are prerequisites for a community's quality of life.