



January 17, 2006

Dear Colleagues:

The excitement and enthusiasm for AIA150 continues to build! Since the champions/CACE training conference in November, most of you have been organizing your planning efforts and considering the possibilities of creating more livable communities through Blueprint initiatives—all envisioned at the level of the local components, with the collaboration of your neighbors and community leaders. Indeed, we have been inspired and encouraged by the commitment of so many champions and component leaders to this undertaking. We have heard from a number of components about their plans, and if they are any indication of the caliber of initiatives being proposed across the country, then the Blueprint will surely be a resounding success.

On behalf of everyone involved in AIA150 activities, we are pleased to send you the criteria and grant application for Blueprint for America initiatives. The Blueprint for America subgroup has worked hard to create the criteria and the funding application so that they are easy to understand and complete. In addition to the criteria and application form, you will also find instructions on how to apply for a grant, deadlines, and sample descriptions of Blueprint initiatives. (Note: The enclosed application form is for reference only. The application process will be managed online, and full instructions and details will follow shortly.) As you will recall from our discussions at the champions training sessions, the amount of the grants will depend on the success of our fund-raising efforts, which are currently underway.

Members of the Blueprint for America subgroup will be available at the 2006 Grassroots Leadership and Legislative Conference (February 9–11; Washington, D.C.) to review abstracts of component initiatives and answer questions. Components may sign up for a 15-minute consultation by sending an e-mail to aia150@aia.org. See the “how to apply” section of the enclosed document for details. Questions about the criteria and application process should be sent to communitiesbydesign@aia.org.

All the evidence suggests that our gift to America in 2007 is in good hands. We look forward to seeing you at Grassroots. Keep up the great work!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kate Schwensen in black ink.

Kate Schwensen, FAIA, 2006 AIA President

Handwritten signature of George H. Miller in black ink.

George H. Miller, FAIA, Chair, AIA150 Oversight Committee

Handwritten signature of Anthony J. Costello in black ink.

Anthony J. Costello, FAIA, Chair, Blueprint for America Subgroup



Blueprint for America

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Objectives for Blueprint for America Initiatives

The Blueprint for America is an initiative in which AIA architects engage fellow citizens, mayors, other professionals, and local government officials to collaborate on a community service program that addresses a community's distinct needs with the goal of producing a shared vision for a more livable future. Through a series of local forums and charrettes that bring these constituencies together, AIA members will participate by initiating programs, joining ongoing local programs, or identifying issues that need to be addressed. Blueprint initiatives may use a variety of methodologies, including charrettes, town hall meetings, Regional/Urban Design Assistance Teams and Sustainable Design Assessment Teams, community visioning events and audits, and other community-engaged events.

Blueprint for America initiatives are to be guided by and based on the issues outlined in the AIA Public Policies and the AIA's "10 Principles of Livable Communities." The initiatives should be innovative, design oriented, educational, ongoing, diverse, and interdisciplinary.

The experience gained from collaborative visioning initiatives between architects and their communities will be documented in a predetermined format so that each community's experience can be refined and shared as a chapter in the Blueprint for America. The commonalities among the initiatives will outline and illustrate a path for creating healthy, safe, livable, and sustainable communities.

Desired Outcomes of Blueprint Initiatives

- Lead to consensus about how to improve a community's livability
- Increase the public's awareness of and knowledge about livable communities
- Broaden the recognition of architects as community leaders who help citizens articulate and achieve a vision for the future of the community
- Strengthen or enhance relationships among the civic leaders and elected officials, collateral organizations, and other key stakeholders with architects and the AIA.
- Produce a widespread commitment to community participation and service by AIA members in every component
- Create a stronger issues-based relationship between the AIA national component and its local components and knowledge communities
- Highlight the ability of architects to translate the preferred future vision of citizen participants into a vision of character, form, scale, and attainability
- Elevate the public's understanding of good design and the role of architects

Criteria for Blueprint for America Initiatives

Through their state and local components, AIA architects will initiate, convene, and participate in Blueprint initiatives¹ that utilize community engagement, in a collaborative process, and quality design as keys to improving a community's livability. Blueprint initiatives are a gift to the community from the members of the AIA, and the members' participation in the initiative is provided pro bono.

Blueprint initiatives should address the following criteria:

- Demonstrate community engagement, which may include a visioning process (for example, charrettes, public forums and debates, town hall meetings)
- Demonstrate a direct, community-wide benefit
- Address issues at a scale no smaller than the neighborhood or as large as a region
- Be sponsored and coordinated through AIA components
- Reinforce applicable aspects of the AIA Public Policies and the AIA's 10 Principles of Livable Communities
- Address aspects of sustainability (economic, social, environmental)
- Be organized, documented, and compiled according to guidelines established by the AIA Center for Communities by Design Committee and the AIA150 Blueprint for America Subgroup, and include a plan for implementation.

¹ The deliberate use of the word *initiative*, instead of *project*, is to make clear that the resulting Blueprint is not something that the community will get on a pro bono basis from the architect in order to build a building.

How to Apply

Complete the online online Blueprint for America grant application form and submit it to the AIA national component before 5:00 p.m., April 1, 2006 (or September 1, 2006, for second-round grants). The enclosed grant application form is for reference only; you will shortly receive details about how to access and complete the application form online.

Components that would like feedback on their initiative may submit an abstract before submitting their full application. Send your abstract to the AIA Center for Communities by Design (communitiesbydesign@aia.org) at the AIA national component before 5:00 p.m., February 3, 2006. Formal responses will be sent by March 1, 2006, which should allow sufficient time to complete the grant application by the first-round deadline.

You can also request a review of your initiative at Grassroots, when members of the Blueprint for America Subgroup will be available for consultation. Sign-up for a 15-minute consultation by sending an e-mail to Robin Lee, Hon. AIA, Senior Director, AIA150 (aia150@aia.org). The following times are available:

- Thursday, February 9: 9:15 a.m.–3:45 p.m.
- Friday, February 10: 10:45 a.m.–11:00 p.m.; 1:30–3:00 p.m.
- Saturday, February 11: 10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Questions about your Blueprint for America initiative and the grant application may be directed to the AIA Center for Communities by Design (communitiesbydesign@aia.org or 202-626-7499).

The Blueprint for America Subgroup will review the initiatives and evaluate them based on their overall comprehensiveness and how closely they meet the criteria.

Based on the success of the fund-raising campaign, grants ranging from \$2,500–\$15,000 may be approved by the Blueprint Subgroup according to the funding formula established by the AIA150 Oversight Committee. While it is anticipated that all initiatives that meet the “Criteria for Blueprint for America Initiatives” will receive funding, it is expected that fund allocation will be tiered and that components will seek outside additional outside funding and sponsorships.

Disbursement of first-round grants will be based on receipt of donor pledges to the AIA Capital Campaign. Disbursements are targeted for June 30, 2006. Grant funds will be disbursed as follows: two-thirds on approval, one-third on receipt of final deliverable.

Guidelines for documenting completed initiatives are being developed. Each initiative will be required to document the progress and final outcomes of the work consistent with the guidelines. The guidelines will facilitate compilation of the final Blueprint document, which will be published in both hard copy and digital formats in 2008.

Blueprint for America initiatives will evolve over the next three years and beyond. In 2006 AIA members will engage local leaders, define the issues, and prepare to launch the eventual program. Component initiatives will be developed in 2007, the anniversary year. In 2008 the

AIA national component will compile initiatives and release the national Blueprint to America. The timeline for Blueprint initiatives should acknowledge these expectations and identify when each stage of the process will occur. It should also include ideas for continued civic engagement into 2009 and beyond.

Application Process: Timelines and Deadlines

First-round grants

November 2005–January 2006: Engagement of local elected officials and begin planning initiatives

Mid-January 2006: Grant application form released

February 3, 2006: AIA begins accepting first-round abstracts of initiatives, which may be reviewed at Grassroots (half-page; not mandatory)

Grassroots 2006 (February 8–10): Review first-round abstracts of initiatives; opportunity to discuss the range of initiatives a component is considering, refine an initiative under development, or submit a list of other initiatives under consideration for fund-raising.

April 1, 2006: Deadline for receipt of first round applications

May 19, 2006: Notification of grant amounts awarded to a component

June 30, 2006 (estimated): Disbursement of funds

Second-round grants will be allocated with remaining funds (for new or previously denied applications)

September 1, 2006: Deadline for receipt of applications

October 13, 2006: Notification of grant amounts awarded to a component

November 15, 2006: Disbursement of funds

AIA Public Policy Framework (applicable excerpts)

The AIA Board of Directors explicitly recognizes architects' valuable role in shaping communities through its public policies. The AIA Public Policy framework outlines the architect's responsibility to the public, and supporting position statements further detail the architect's contribution to more sustainable, healthy, safe, and livable communities.

The AIA Public Policy states:

Architecture profoundly affects people. The work of architects is essential to human well being, and architects must embrace their ethical obligation to uphold this public trust.

As members of their communities, architects are professionally obligated to use their knowledge, skill, and experience to engage in civic life.

Design, construction, and society are constantly changing. To serve society, architects must commit to continual professional growth through learning, innovation, and exploration.

With an obligation to the future of the architecture profession, architects must encourage, recruit, and inspire those who would become architects.

Regulation of the construction industry shapes the built environment. As stakeholders, architects must participate in the development and application of appropriate regulations and standards.

Leadership in design and construction requires collaboration. Architects must encourage and celebrate the contributions of those who bring diverse experiences, views, and needs into the design process.

Architecture expresses the values of society and has the power to enhance the quality of life for this and future generations. Architects must advocate for responsible design that results in beautiful and healthy places that respect and accommodate society's diverse cultures and needs.

The creation and operation of the built environment require an investment of the earth's resources. Architects must be environmentally responsible and advocate for the sustainable use of those resources.

Position Statements

Position statements are more specific, supporting statements for the broader public policies.

Architects in Government: The AIA supports the involvement of architects in all levels of public service and encourages the election, appointment, and hiring of licensed architects to positions within federal, state, and local governments.

Research and Development: The AIA supports the promotion of research and development directed toward improving our understanding of user needs and increasing the use of sustainable materials and technologies in the built environment.

Architecture Education in K-12 and Community College Settings: The AIA supports integrating the art and science of architecture into K-12 core curricula and community college course offerings to enhance students' understanding of the built environment, inspire them to think creatively and critically about livable communities, and encourage them to appreciate the impact of design excellence on the quality of life.

Mentorship: The AIA supports its members to recognize and fulfill their obligation to nurture

emerging professionals as they advance through all stages of their professional experience, beginning with professional education and progressing through internship and licensure and continuing throughout their career.

Civil Rights: The AIA supports the protection of the human dignity and self worth of all persons and calls for fair, impartial, unbiased, and non prejudicial treatment of all persons in every employment, social, and business transaction.

Diversity: The AIA believes that diversity is a cultural ethos – a way of thinking or acting that fosters inclusion, enhancing our membership, our profession, and the quality of life in our communities. Embracing this culture of diversity, all programs and initiatives of the AIA and its members shall reflect the society that we serve, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, or religious beliefs.

Accessible Environment: The AIA supports governmental policies, programs, and incentives that ensure a built environment that meets the reasonable needs of people with disabilities through accessibility rules and guidelines that are clear, certain, and consistent. Physically disabled individuals should be afforded the means to participate in society to the extent that they are able, through the elimination of physical barriers in a manner that balances the interests of the physically disabled, the public good, and cost effectiveness.

Affordable Housing: The AIA supports governmental policies, programs, and incentives to promote the construction and rehabilitation of more affordable housing units in the U.S. to address an urgent national priority.

Community Enhancement and Transportation: The AIA supports governmental policies, programs, and incentives that promote public transportation expenditures that enhance the development of safe, healthy, economically viable, sustainable, and livable communities.

Protect Historic Preservation Tax Credits: The AIA supports governmental policies, programs, and incentives to preserve and rehabilitate both public and private historic structures.

Urban and Regional Design: The AIA maintains that planning and design at the urban neighborhood and regional scales are indispensable to the creation of safe, attractive, economically viable and environmentally sustainable communities.

Energy and the Built Environment: The AIA supports governmental policies, programs, and incentives to encourage energy conservation as it relates to the built environment as well as aggressive development of renewable energy sources. Architects must strive for energy efficiency and waste reduction in the built environment, encourage energy-conscious design and technology, and support a national program for more efficient use of nonrenewable resources and the development of renewable energy sources.

Sustainable Architectural Practice: The AIA recognizes a growing body of evidence that demonstrates current planning, design, construction, and real estate practices contribute to patterns of resource consumption that seriously jeopardize the future of the Earth's population. Architects need to accept responsibility for their role in creating the built environment and, consequently, believe we must alter our profession's actions and encourage our clients and the entire design and construction industry to join with us to change the course of the planet's future.

AIA's 10 Principles of Livable Communities

1. *Design on a human scale.* Compact, pedestrian-friendly communities allow residents to walk to shops, services, cultural resources, and jobs and can reduce traffic congestion and benefit people's health.
2. *Provide choices.* People want variety in housing, shopping, recreation, transportation, and employment. Variety creates lively places and accommodates residents in different stages of their lives.
3. *Encourage mixed-use development.* Integrating different land uses and varied building types create vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, and diverse communities.
4. *Preserve urban centers.* Restoring, revitalizing, and infilling urban centers take advantage of existing streets, services, and buildings and avoid the need for new infrastructure. This helps to curb sprawl and promote stability for city neighborhoods.
5. *Vary transportation options.* Giving people the option of walking, biking, and using public transit, in addition to driving, reduces traffic, protects the environment, and encourages physical activity.
6. *Build vibrant public spaces.* Citizens need welcoming, well-defined public places to stimulate face-to-face interaction, encourage civic participation, admire public art, and gather for public events.
7. *Create a neighborhood identity.* A "sense of place" gives neighborhoods a unique character, enhances the walking environment, and creates pride in the community.
8. *Protect environmental resources.* A well-designed balance of nature and development preserves natural systems, protects waterways from pollution, reduces air pollution, and protects property values.
9. *Conserve landscapes.* Open space, farms, and wildlife habitat are essential for environmental, recreational, and cultural reasons.
10. *Design matters.* Design excellence is the foundation of successful and healthy communities.

Descriptions of Sample Blueprint Initiatives

1. The AIA MidState component champion read with great interest a Sunday editorial on the abandoned big-box stores that now plague the MidState community. When national big-box chains abandon stores to build bigger ones, the abandoned smaller buildings often become eyesores and hinder redevelopment efforts. The state component plans to invite the governor, state and local officials, and citizens to one of four regional workshops that will define the issues and produce a report on community goals, adaptive use of the buildings, and other scenarios. Following the workshops, the component will host a charrette to develop (1) a set of public policies for communities to adopt outlining the responsibilities of national chains and the other public entities involved; (2) programmatic scenarios and special requirements for at least five adaptive uses; and (3) a conceptual design showing a phased redevelopment of the building and site. The media will be invited, and the public will be heavily involved in the process.

2. The mayor of Farmtown, USA, has asked the local AIA to help revitalize the traditional main street central business district. AIA Farmtown has agreed to develop a main street corridor plan for the mayor and to invite the citizens of Farmtown to join in the visioning process. The component will use a comprehensive design process that includes an inventory and analysis of the current conditions, development of several concept alternatives for the city, review by the citizens, and creation of the final design. The design will be developed and refined in a charrette. The city will receive design plans, character sketches, program text, and a phased plan for implementation. In addition, AIA Farmtown has partnered with the local college of architecture and design to utilize students to develop two additional concepts working along side mentor architects.

3. Twin Cities, USA, is facing an extreme shortage of affordable housing, which is greatly affecting the availability of service industry workers. The city administration is not interested in the AIA's invitation to help; however, the local Chamber of Commerce and housing nonprofit agencies have formed a partnership to work on improving the situation. The AIA Twin Cities component has agreed to identify a medium-size parcel of underutilized land in the city that is close to public transportation, commerce, and public services. The AIA will develop three mixed-use development concepts for the parcel, all of which will include significant affordable housing. Citizens, businesses, and nonprofit housing organizations will participate in the design process. Upon completion of the concepts, AIA Twin Cities will host a public conference to discuss the issues of affordable housing development and explore the opportunities presented in each of the three concepts. The conference will be open to all members of the community.

4. The City of South Shores sits on the beautiful Sunset River. To the far north is a public access riverfront, but the remaining riverfront is privately held and the city has a significant shortage of public open space. The mayor of South Shores knows this is a problem and has asked the AIA South Shores component to help develop pocket parks throughout the community. AIA South

Shores, along with the South Shores Rotary charity, will inventory underused property throughout the town and identify opportunities for pocket parks. The search will begin with city-owned property and then examine privately held property. Following the inventory, AIA South Shores will work to develop a master plan for a citywide pocket park system and then will link a series of open spaces with the river's public access location on the northern end of town. A city program and accompanying ordinance will be drafted to set forth an incentive for private developers to donate or purchase property for park use in return for accelerated project schedules and/or increases in allowable density. Where feasible, recommendations will be made to the Rotary charities for critical land acquisition.

5. A small city of about 85,000 is home to a major university whose college of design and planning houses the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, and historic preservation. As with many such communities, "town-gown" relationships run hot and cold. Each knows that they must coexist, but the richness and potential "win-win" of this situation has never been built upon. Over the years, the college has undertaken some community-based projects, but never with continuity and a sense of long-term commitment. The local AIA, ASLA, and APA chapters support their respective academic departments with scholarship money. Several architects and faculty members who are AIA members, along with the AIAS and other student groups in the college, see an opportunity to establish a permanent "Community Design Studio" in a vacant store in the heart of downtown, about a mile from the campus. The mayor and local Chamber of Commerce have expressed interest, and the local planning and historic preservation commissions see an opportunity for students to do internships in the studio. The AIA chapter and the AIAS are ready to take the lead to make the studio a reality.



AIA150 Blueprint for America Grant Application

Blueprint for America grants support component efforts to collaborate on community-wide initiatives that address a community's distinct needs and produce a shared vision for a more livable future. The grant criteria, deadlines, and other documents related to Blueprint initiatives are attached. As part of the process for creating the Blueprint for America, grant recipients will be required to post monthly updates on initiatives (details to follow). Applications for first-round grants are due April 1, 2006. In addition to addressing the Blueprint criteria, the application also requests information about collaboration, timelines, and budget. While it is anticipated that all applications that meet the Blueprint criteria will be funded, components are encouraged to seek additional outside support and sponsorships.

Component and Champion Information

Component name

Contact _____
Phone _____
Fax _____
E-mail _____

Champion name

Address _____
Phone _____
Fax _____
E-mail _____

Date

Grant amount requested

Initiative Information

Title of initiative _____

1. Provide a brief summary of the initiative.
2. Describe the community issue(s) the initiative seeks to address.
3. Characterize the component's interface with elected officials, nonprofit organizations, local media, and/or community groups (or other entities that comprise the community's civic leadership).
4. How will the initiative benefit the community? Specifically consider that initiatives should address community issues at a scale no smaller than the neighborhood and perhaps as large as a region.
5. Will the initiative include a visioning process, charrette, or other facilitated community engagement exercise? If so, please describe.
6. How will this initiative relate to the AIA's Ten Principles of Livable Communities and the AIA Public Policies?
7. Describe how the initiative addresses issues of social, economic, and/or environmental sustainability.

- 8. Please note any collaboration with educational institutions (K-12 through university) and with allied professional organizations (e.g., American Institute of Architecture Students, American Society of Landscape Architects, Associated General Contractors, American Planning Association).

- 9. Provide a schedule/timeline for the initiative. Include preliminary activities planned for 2006–2007. Outline your component’s plan for continued community engagement in 2008 and beyond. Include the deliverables envisioned and the medium being considered (sketch, CAD, GIS, video, audio, etc.)

- 10. Provide a budget for this initiative. Please be as specific as possible, as funding decisions will be based on need and how realistic and achievable the initiative budget is. Be sure to list all (realistic) commitments of matching funds and provision of in-kind services from local partners.

Recipient Statement of Responsibility

I hereby approve this request for an AIA150 Blueprint for America grant. (In the case of unstaffed components, the application should be signed by the component president.)

Name of component

Name of component executive

Signature of component executive

Name of champion

Signature of champion

Name of component president

Signature of component president

Date