



The American
Institute
of Architects

AIA

2015

**Annual
Report**

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Letter from Robert Ivy

2015 was a busy year—a healthier economy, near-full employment, backlogs swelled to capacity. And, an AIA remade as a bold and nimble dynamic network for our members. This resurgent AIA—fine-tuned for the 21st century—is already witnessing results.

Our profession is better understood and appreciated, the dividend of a persuasive public awareness campaign. For the first time in more than a decade a visually compelling national television message spoke to the essential role of architects and architecture in our lives. This AIA effort alone reached 66 million people. We leveraged this visibility to millions more with online ads, amplifying our message and connecting with critical new audiences through social media, an inspiring documentary, and a national film competition. Members can take the campaign local, tailoring it for their hometowns.

We moved audiences from passive to passionately-engaged.

Our profession has more influence. AIA advocacy efforts helped persuade Congress to restore and extend the 179D tax deduction, at once an attractive business development and practice management tool. AIAU set a new standard of quality for delivering online continuing education, reflected in the 95 percent of course evaluators who'd recommend it to a friend. At a record-setting crowd at our convention, former president Bill Clinton praised architects for their principled commitment to address climate change and hinged success in limiting its severest

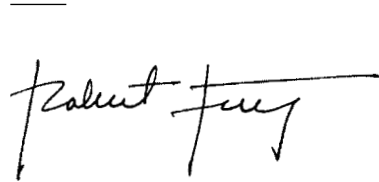
consequences on others' being able to think and act as we do.

Our profession took effective action. We made meaningful progress on design and health, resiliency, and the sustainability of building materials. Our AIA member-led inaugural 2015 Resilience Summit and the second Design & Health Research Consortium charted courses shaped by our leadership. And where we need to do more, for example, increasing diversity in the profession, we conducted our first-in-a-decade survey on how gender and race influence perceptions and equity in the field.

You are the thread connecting all of the 2015 AIA accomplishments. You are the AIA dynamic network we're dedicated to supporting.

Realizing potential—we strive for it personally and professionally.

Thank you for another extraordinary year.



Robert Ivy, FAIA
EVP/Chief Executive Officer



“You are the thread connecting all of the 2015 AIA accomplishments. You are the AIA dynamic network we’re dedicated to supporting.”

Robert Ivy, FAIA

Innovation

Bold strategies and organizational changes helped us better support our members and the profession while expanding architecture’s reach, influence and impact.

Strategic repositioning

The Strategic Council, our new “think tank,” helped us become more proactive, anticipate trends and emerge as a leader in predictive and actionable research. In 2015, the Council set out a five-year Strategic Plan that focuses our priorities. We’ve begun aligning our operations to meet the goals of the Plan—to reinforce the stature of architects, expand our influence, and demonstrate the role architecture plays in serving society’s needs.

Digital transformation

The new digital foundation for the 21st century AIA is nearly completed. The vision: Transform to provide increased member value. Every legacy technology, software and process was scrutinized. We asked the hard question “why” about processes. Now we’ve changed and are working differently on your behalf. We rejuvenated the member and user experience across our entire landscape, enhancing AIA operations by adopting an “agile” project management approach to our work. Using agile, we focused on efficiency, collaboration and learning from the results. A revamped and mobile-ready AIA Architect is increasing readership with open rates consistently higher than industry average. We streamlined a cumbersome online member renewal process, making it easier by eliminating four unnecessary steps. Online renewals increased 11 percent. In spring 2016, a new professional [AIA website](#) will deliver the most compelling and relevant content.

Chapter accreditation

High-quality core member services focused the work of chapter leaders throughout 2015. This top Member Services Resource Task Force recommendation generated statewide conversations on streamlining operations and administration so chapters can access free resources for higher-quality continuing education and communications. Twenty-five states received grants totaling more than \$315,000 and a member service toolkit was developed with sample policies and best practices. All AIA chapters signed a Member Service Agreement and more than 30 are considering becoming part of a state or local chapter. Two hundred thirty-three were accredited by five member accreditation teams, ensuring that members have access to quality services and resources.

Diversity

The highly successful [AIA Women’s Leadership Summit](#) brought 315 architects, interns and students to Seattle in a vital show of support for gender equity. Work–life balance, leadership opportunities and greater attention to developing a more diverse pipeline were among the strategies to better support women in the profession. In addition, AIA completed its first [diversity survey](#) in a decade and found much remains to be done. Now, with data from 7,500 respondents, we are better equipped to establish programs and deliver results.

Already, a blue-ribbon panel is at work on an action plan for the AIA Board by the end of 2016.

Continuing education

Members logged an impressive 1.2 million hours of continuing education through the AIA network. Increasingly, more credit hours are being earned through [AIAU](#), our new online education platform. In 2015, we added 75 more rigorously curated courses, launched a star rating system to rate and rank the courses allowing us to retire those that fell short. It’s serious quality control and it’s working. More than 95 percent of those evaluating their courses would recommend them to a colleague. More classes will be added to the AIAU portfolio in 2016.

“Diversity and inclusion is a priority of AIA. We have made progress, but not fast enough. We have great opportunity now to look at how to achieve the equity, diversity and inclusion in AIA member firms through a creative means and provide a framework for the profession to act faster and better to meet a growing demand for architects.”

2015 AIA President, Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA



Creating Cultural Change, the theme of the 2015 Women’s Leadership Summit, brought more than 300 to Seattle to develop strategies that better support women in the profession and explore new paths to leadership.

Driving awareness

I Look Up campaign

What do you see when you look up? That straightforward question anchored the bedrock message of our [I Look Up](#) public awareness effort: Architects and architecture play an essential role in our lives. Our first advertising campaign in more than a decade invited the public to look up and be inspired by the architecture that surrounds us and shapes the identities of our communities.

We made the message mobile—shareable and scalable across all forms of media. Television advertising generated 66 million impressions. Another 5 million watched our ad through online channels. Overall, we reached nearly 30 million people across all communication channels in 2015 and expanded our social networks more than 15 percent. Thousands answered the I Look Up question by posting photos of their favorite architecture to [ilookup.org](#). It's a remarkable response that gets to the heart of the architect's endeavor to create community.

I Look Up Film Challenge

To maintain momentum throughout 2015, we produced premium film content, including a documentary about the life of sight-impaired architect Chris Downey. This film grew into the [I Look Up Film Challenge](#) that encouraged participants to produce a film showcasing a unique perspective on architecture's effect on everyday life. The film challenge pulled a new, energized audience into the AIA orbit. Three winners emerged from more than 26 inspiring film entries and were announced at the opening of the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial. The film challenge reached two million people, including 300,000 through a social media driven People's Choice Awards. The [Tribeca Film Festival's](#) website featured the winners' film under the fitting title "Three Short Films That Will Inspire You to Appreciate Architecture."



2015 AIA President Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA (center) presented the I Look Up Film Challenge awards to the three winning teams at the Chicago Architecture Biennial. "These films," said Richter, "inspire the world to look up and appreciate the beauty of architecture."

"The experience of working on the I Look Up Film Challenge changed my perception of architecture by learning about how much work and passion goes into designing a building. It's a lot like filmmaking in a way—if you do it right, it feels so natural and organic that nobody ever thinks about how it's made."

Filmmaker, I Look Up Film Challenge

Advocacy

Strategic efforts, combined with the collective voice of nearly 88,000 members, achieved big wins in federal, state and local governments and reinforced our commitment to protect the built environment.

Year of the advocate

Advocating for the profession is a core AIA tenant. AIA designated 2015 the Year of the Advocate, recognizing that creating a culture of advocacy will ensure our collective voice is considered whenever and wherever policymakers make decisions that affect our profession. Within the first week after being announced, joining members doubled the ranks of [AIA Advocacy Network](#). This multi-year initiative included a new advocacy pilot launched in three states to help build an effective federal, state and local advocacy infrastructure. The increased interest in advocacy attracted record-setting donations to [ArchiPAC](#), our federal political action committee. We raised more than \$130,000 to help AIA expand its political reach in Washington.

Achieving progress together

In response to a major AIA grassroots push, Congress voted to restore and extend the 179D energy efficient commercial buildings tax deduction, enabling architecture firms to claim a valuable deduction for sustainable work on public buildings. AIA built a strong coalition that includes hundreds of organizations and businesses to fight an effort to repeal the 2030 energy efficiency targets for federal buildings.

Our [federal advocacy program](#) in 2015 included an initiative to reform how the federal government hires and compensates architects who design federal facilities. This AIA focus spurred the U.S. General

Services Administration to announce plans to change the competition process for design-build projects and work with AIA to better train contracting employees on how to establish compensation rates for architects who pursue federal work.

Advancing legislation

AIA continued building bipartisan support for other federal legislation important to the profession: The [National Design Services Act](#) to provide student debt relief for architecture graduates; the Safe Building Code Incentive Act to encourage states to adopt building codes in exchange for increased disaster funding; and the [Historic Tax Credit Improvement Act](#) to preserve and improve the incentive for undertaking historic preservation.

Construction industry leadership

AIA staff collaborated with industry partners and closely monitored issues that impact how architects work. The AIA policy team analyzed [legislative and regulatory issues](#) related to liability exposure for architectural firms, qualifications based selection, construction administration and the use of school barricades, among others. AIA strengthened an already robust partnership with the International Code Council, formally agreeing to collaborate on supporting and advancing the adoption of modern building codes. Our “One Code” policy led to continued collaborative leadership on the development of the International Green Construction Code, the IGCC, which, with wide industry

stakeholder engagement, is being combined with ASHRAE Standard 189.1 to produce a single regulatory tool for green construction.

Collaborating to advance the profession

In 2015, members and staff worked together with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to develop a single definition of a [net-zero energy](#) building, helping policymakers and practitioners better define sustainable design. In conjunction with the DOE we hosted a workshop where nearly 100 experts from 60 organizations envisioned buildings of the future. AIA staff and member volunteers provided training to the staff at the Architect of the Capitol to improve their post-disaster ability to evaluate facilities, buildings and infrastructure. We concluded a three-year cooperative grant with the U.S. Department of Commerce to help open international markets to architects, which featured working-abroad training sessions for members at chapters in Houston and San Francisco.



In 2015, ArchiPAC, the AIA federal political action committee, raised more than \$130,000 to help AIA raise its political reach and advocate for policies that move our profession and country forward.

“...eliminating this language would be a significant setback in the effort to make the nation’s building stock more sustainable.”

AIA EVP/CEO Robert Ivy, FAIA and Michael Brune, Sierra Club Executive Director, writing to Congress to oppose repeal of Section 433

>>> SPOTLIGHT

Preserving 2030 goals

The foundation for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in public buildings—[Section 433 of the Energy and Independence Security Act of 2007](#)—set a goal that all new or significantly renovated federal buildings be carbon neutral by 2030. AIA’s 2030 Commitment championed similar objectives to reduce the use of non-renewable energy sources in building construction and maintenance. When an amendment was proposed to a Senate energy bill that would have gutted the 2030 target goals, AIA joined forces with the Sierra Club and other organizations to continue fighting the move.

Support

Industry standard tools, product launches and new services made it easier for architects and design professionals to do business and manage risk in 2015.

The business of architecture

We expanded the tools we provide members to help them build their businesses and manage their careers. For proven firms and those just-launched, the tools mark new paths to prosperity. Our vibrant network of Knowledge Communities added member-to-member resources, so fellow professionals can stay on top of practice trends with whitepapers, webinars and documented best practices.

Mobile management

Courtesy of the AIA Small Firm Roundtable (SFRT) and the Young Architects Forum, members now have [AIAKinetic](#), a mobile app that connects small firms to a comprehensive suite of real-world how-tos and best practices. The SFRT also assembled a team of member volunteers to keep the content timely and relevant.

New contracts & a digital platform

AIA released 10 new documents and forms in the Design-Build family—endorsed by the Construction Specifications Institute—and four new agreements and forms in our core Conventional family, used for the design-bid-build project delivery method. In December, we premiered a digital platform that improves ACD5 system performance, ensuring continued ease of use and building on customer satisfaction ratings that already exceeded year-end targets. In 2015 we exceeded one million document downloads for the second year

in a row and our contracts were touted on an NBC TODAY show segment “[How to Shop for a Contractor](#).”

Deeper industry alliances

AIA and the Associated General Contractors of America expanded their existing collaboration. Already at work on shared challenges and education-related issues, these representatives of the building team executed an MOU with the Construction Owners Association of America, our counterpart in the design and construction industry, to further advance common goals. A similar MOU with ASHRAE, drafted in 2015, takes effect in 2016.

AIA Trust: New, improved

Practicing architecture implies risk for career newcomers and veterans alike. AIA Trust is all about helping manage risk. An all-new [AIA Trust](#) website, launched in 2015, makes resources and benefits easier to find and better tailored to our member’s personal and professional needs.

AIA Trust now has white papers on topics including effective contract administration, a comparison guide about professional liability policies, documentation techniques to protect your practice and the risks of condominium construction. Added were four webinars to help you run a successful practice and navigate the Affordable Care Act. Another webinar gives AIA chapters an overview of insurance needs.



The AIA Home Design Trends Survey highlights how residential architects are shaping how homes function, look and integrate into communities. Each quarter, billings and inquiries at more than 600 architecture firms documents the financial health of firms in the residential sector.

“...the only way you can really protect yourself is with a strong payment plan. I always recommend using an AIA contract. It itemizes the complete scope of work, materials and installation costs. If you see flooring show up on the job..., you could pay them for that. But don’t pay them before you see the materials show up. And that’s why the AIA contract is brilliant, ‘cause it really protects you.”

John DeSilvia of the DIY Network’s “Rescue My Renovation”

>>> SPOTLIGHT

Entrepreneur Summit

In July AIA held the **Entrepreneur Summit**, a two-day event captured on video that offers interesting perspectives on what it means to be an architect. The takeaway: An architect’s education is the foundation from which to build a practice or chart a versatile career path. Conceived and hosted by 2015 AIA President Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA, the summit addressed how architects can harness potential to enhance their value to their firm or better serve clients and communities.

New ways to apply design thinking was a major theme. One architect-panelist developed project management software that became a separate business enterprise; another developed a materials fabrication business; and everyone discussed how to own your story with the media. Art Gensler, FAIA, delivered an inspiring keynote packed with candid advice on how to build and run a successful firm. Gensler’s speech and a panel on new business models can be found for free on AIAU.

Data driven

Quality data, market intelligence, research and sharp insights equipped members and the industry to make good business decisions.

Business & firm support

Good decisions require good data. AIA’s influential Architecture Billings Index ably predicted the 2015 recovery. The data appeared in more than 800 articles and drew coverage by the Associated Press and Reuters. The AIA Home Design Trends Survey helped members stay competitive with quarterly data showing where new home and remodeling demand converged with consumer interests.

And the 2015 Compensation Report added to its already comprehensive data. The Report covers 39 positions, including job descriptions, for 27 states, 27 metro areas and 15 cities. Plus we debuted the Compensation Survey Salary Calculator that gives emerging professionals salary results for 17 positions.

Economic indicators

In 2015, we added two economic insight tools. A monthly indicator includes data on employment, construction spending, housing starts and vacancy rates. AIA also improved its semiannual State Economic Profiles, a collection of national, regional and state employment and construction data—tools that prove useful for government advocacy and media outreach.

Practice-relevant research

A 2015 Research Summit, a joint activity of the Board Knowledge Committee and Practice and Prosperity Committee, brought together practitioners and members of the Academy to recommend how AIA can support increased literacy and use of research. A 2016 roadmap will augment AIA’s research efforts.

Research initiatives

A jury representing the College of Fellows and the Board Knowledge Committee selected four 2015 recipients for the Upjohn Research Initiative Program that provides matching funds of up to \$30,000 for applied research projects advancing design and professional practice knowledge.

The College of Fellows also awarded the 2015 Latrobe Prize of \$100,000 to a team led by Woodbury University’s Arid Lands Institute (ALI). The grant will enable ALI and its partners to develop and test a proprietary digital design tool which, when fully realized, will support communities and design teams developing and building water-smart infrastructures and devising and shaping public policy for drylands urbanism.

Building Research Information Knowledgebase (BRIK)

This free portal to peer-reviewed research projects and case studies grew to 19 contributing organizations in 2015 across government agencies, architecture firms, academics and research groups. An additional feature was added: Member-only access to thousands of journals through three digital library collections.

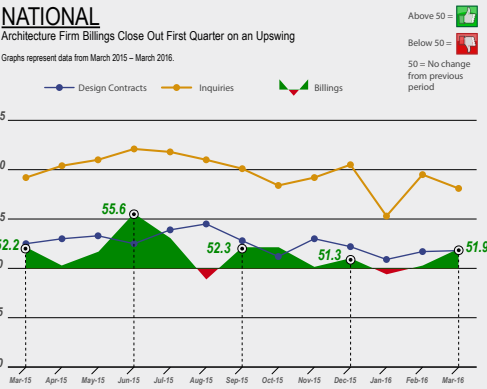
Average compensation for architectural staff positions averaged just under \$80,000 at the beginning of 2015, up about 3.5% from early 2013 levels, or 1.75% per year.

2015 AIA Compensation Report

>>> EXAMPLE

Architecture Billings Index

A leading economic indicator, the **Architecture Billings Index (ABI)** provides a nine-to-12 month lead time between architecture billings and nonresidential construction spending. It is closely followed as an indicator of the health of the construction industry.



SECTOR

Upswing at Residential Firms and Slide at Institutional Firms Continue in March

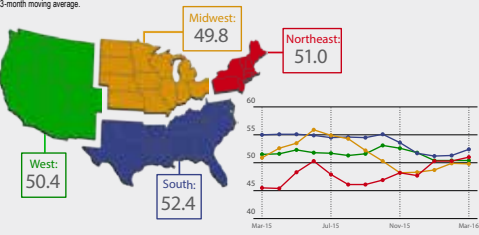
Graph represents data from March 2015 – March 2016 across the three sectors. 50 represents the diffusion center. A score of 50 equals no change from the previous month. Above 50 shows increase; Below 50 shows decrease. 3-month moving average.



REGIONAL

Midwest Firms See Continued Weakness; Firms in Other Regions Report Modest Growth

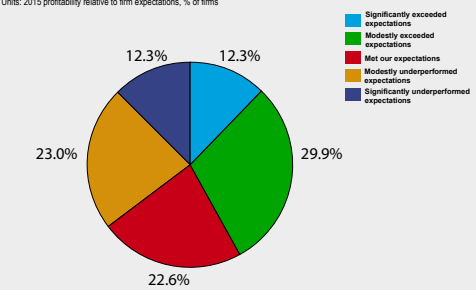
Graphs represent data from March 2015 – March 2016 across the four regions. 50 represents the diffusion center. A score of 50 equals no change from the previous month. Above 50 shows increase; Below 50 shows decrease. 3-month moving average.



PRACTICE

2015 Saw a Mixed Performance Relative to Expectations for Firm Profitability

Units: 2015 profitability relative to firm expectations, % of firms



Sustainability

We put the power of our sustainability portfolio to work in 2015, using diverse new opportunities to improve health, enhance community resilience, reduce energy use and promote materials transparency.

Design & health research

2015 marked the first full year of the AIA Design & Health Research Consortium, created to strengthen understanding of links between design and health. The consortium developed evidence-based tools for professionals and translated the findings for policymakers and the public. Eleven charter members funded research on everything from the effects of indoor temperatures on sleep deprivation and depression (University of Florida) to a “best design” competition for a mobile isolation treatment unit to combat the Ebola epidemic (Texas A&M University’s Center for Health Systems and Design). Six universities joined the consortium in 2015.

Materials transparency

In a sustainable built environment, architects play an important role in helping clients and communities make better choices about the health and environmental impact of building materials. A working group of architects, attorneys and insurers was convened to evaluate risks of this opportunity. The group worked with AIA’s contract team to develop a model contract. A [Materials Transparency](#) white paper is also available on the AIA website.

Supporting resilient communities

Creating [resilient communities](#) requires new and collaborative approaches among stakeholders. We expanded our contribution to this effort with the [2015 Resilience Summit](#) that gathered

representatives of government agencies, scientists, policy experts and the insurance industry. We examined what makes a community “resilient” and who holds the responsibility to ensure it is. The Summit Report laid out next steps. We are also assisting AIA chapters participating in the Rockefeller Foundation 100 Resilient Cities initiative, providing practice and policy-focused resources and access to a digital network where they can share best practices as they host workshops and meet with community officials to promote design as part of making communities more resilient.

The 2030 Commitment

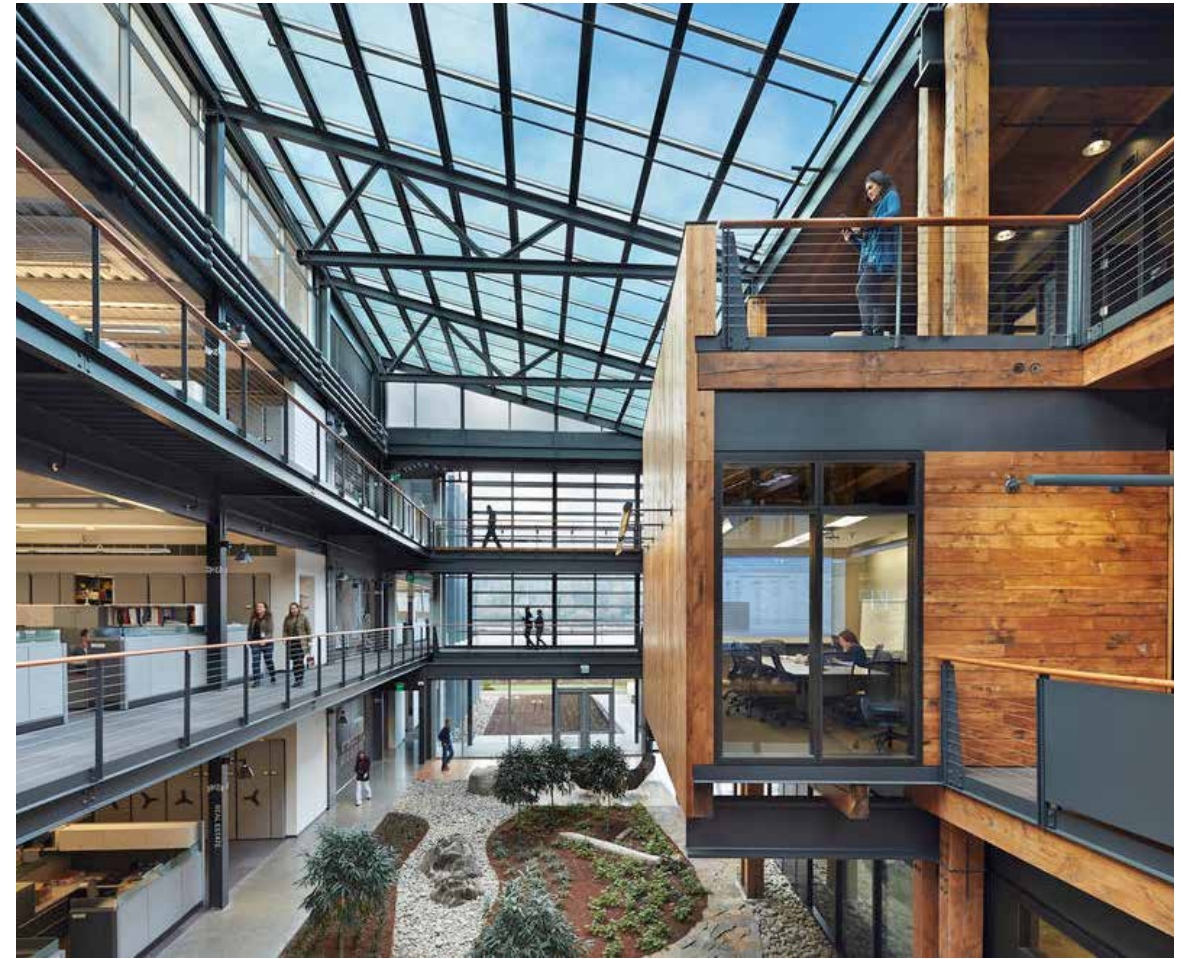
When firms sign the [2030 Commitment](#) they support consistent and rigorous metrics relating to building performance to achieve carbon-neutral buildings by 2030. AIA partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in 2015 to simplify the reporting process through the AIA 2030 Design Data Exchange (DDx), a web-based interface that allows firms to track and report energy use in their design projects. It also helps AIA monitor its own goals. The interface streamlines the job of reporting data and enables project information to be entered in real time. Plus, architects can use the sophisticated reporting and research tools to compare building performance projections with similar projects. Information about specific firms, projects and clients remains completely confidential.

Sustainability in energy

In one example of our effort to increase energy-efficient design literacy in our profession, AIA laid out recommendations at DOE’s 2015 Energy Codes Conference to increase energy efficiency in existing buildings. The presentation reviewed AIA’s work on incentives, energy modeling, energy-efficiency finance and deep energy retrofits.

Sustainability partnerships

We partnered with Architecture 2030 and AIA Seattle to launch the [AIA+2030 Online Series](#) that provides members with an interactive, step-by-step guide to achieving sustainable solutions. Sharing knowledge is intended to help professional designers create super-efficient buildings—and provide firms with skills to set them apart in the marketplace. AIA also convened the inaugural meeting of a broad group of energy-efficiency experts—the Energy Leadership Group—to help set the agenda for AIA’s energy-related activities and provide guidance on the AIA’s energy policy formation and activities, including advocacy and code development and adoption.



2015 COTE Top Ten Plus award winner: U.S. General Services Administration, Seattle Federal Center South Building 1202. After the first year, quantifiable metrics showed the facility’s metered energy performance met every design target, including the contractually required energy performance and the AIA 2030 Commitment. Photo Credit: Benjamin Benschneider

“If architects ask for disclosure of product contents without explaining why they are asking, their intent to use that information is open to interpretation. It is important to be clear with clients and with the public about the reasons for seeking and receiving disclosure documents.”

2015 AIA Materials & Risk Summit

Community

How we serve our communities defines us as an organization and as a profession. In 2015, the answers were increasingly rich and diverse.

Emerging professionals

In 2015, we unveiled powerful programs and alliances to help emerging professionals excel. Targeted educational opportunities, financial support and creative outlets are mainstays of the effort. AIA's [2015 exhibition](#) showcasing the group's startling creative talent perfectly underscores the importance the next generation of architects.

AIA and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture hosted an AIA Convention conference to stress the link between architectural education and practice. We also partnered with Black Spectacles to offer online prep tutorials for the [Architect Registration Exam](#), enhancing our support for emerging professionals on the path to licensure. And the National Associates Committee and Young Architects Forum expanded their reach by helping shape a virtual leadership event that drew 300 participants live-streamed from Washington, D.C. to AIA chapters in Boston, Cleveland, Phoenix and San Antonio.

AIA provides ongoing [scholarships to emerging architects](#), including the AIA Jason Pettigrew Memorial ARE Scholarship, now managed through the Architects Foundation. The Henry Adams Scholarship dispersed nearly \$90,000 to 91 schools and 213 students. AIA awarded \$85,000 in grants to augment existing AIA chapter scholarship programs.

Another 2015 financial initiative targeted unpaid internships with the launch of the [Know Your Worth](#) campaign. It featured two videos, "Value Your Work" and "Value Our Future," about the collective importance of getting paid for internship hours worked.

Communities by Design

The signature service of the AIA [Center for Communities by Design](#) is bringing community leaders together with sustainable design assessment teams (SDAT) to help citizens stake a claim to their future. The [work of the design assistance program](#) harnesses the potential of design to create sustainable, livable communities and connects with our deep desire to help make the world a better place. The Community Development Society International heralded the Center as outstanding in 2015. The award cited the SDAT program as one that "leads to enormous changes in local approaches by combining community engagement, listening and reflecting, explaining new ideas and making clear and concise recommendations that respect and reflect community priorities in a way that enables communities to develop frameworks and comprehensive plans."

>>> EXAMPLE



Residents of Russell, KY hear details of 2015 AIA SDAT recommendations that, if implemented, will help revitalize the community.



Del Paso Heights and SDAT participants discuss the specifics of a community development plan designed to establish an economic identity that will promote its viability to the city of Sacramento.

Louisville, KY

An SDAT devised a revitalization strategy for Russell, a neighborhood where 58 percent of residents live below the poverty line and residents face 30 percent unemployment. About 15 percent of its housing stock is vacant and crime is five times the citywide rate. The SDAT suggested an urban design strategy to reconnect the neighborhood to downtown and redesign an underutilized state-owned parking lot into higher-density, mid-rise residential buildings above restaurant, retail, cultural and/or entertainment spaces. The team proposed that the neighborhood create a civic organization and leverage modest public investments to attract larger private investment. The community was enthusiastic. The steering committee chair remarked, "I simply can't believe how much work you were able to complete in just three days."

Sacramento, CA

An SDAT focused on transforming Del Paso Heights, a struggling neighborhood in Sacramento. The team called for creating a Community Development Corporation to establish an economic identity and promote its viability to the city. It suggested an urban design strategy for a town center with new approaches to housing and retail infill, and public private partnerships to enhance local infrastructure. Residents applauded the recommendations. One said, "I'd like to commend you very highly for what you've done. I didn't think in three days much could be done, and you've really shown us a vision of what is possible."

AIA Convention 2015

It was one of our best, most inspiring and most impactful events yet, bringing thousands of architects and design professionals to Atlanta and setting a few new records.

Bringing a profession together

The AIA Convention 2015 in Atlanta delivered on its billing. For nearly 17,000 attendees the annual convention offered targeted seminars, educational sessions and architectural tours. Former President Bill Clinton delivered the opening keynote, drawing a straight line from what architects do to the needs of society. He attracted the largest general session audience in our convention history. Trending Topics USA ranked #aiacon15 the nation's eighth most popular Twitter hashtag on May 14, the opening of the three-day event.

Sustainable convention

The convention advanced AIA's greening initiative with a notable reduction in the use of printed materials and increases in recycling and waste diversion. Add to that the attendees' contributions to carbonfund.org to offset 212.6 metric tons of CO² emissions.



Former President Bill Clinton shared his insights with attendees at the AIA Convention 2015, calling on architects to do their best in addressing the most pressing issues of climate change. Photo credit: Carl Bower

“To the extent that we’re going to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, we are depending on [architects] and people like you, and those who begin more to think like you, about how to design the environment in which we live and work.”

Former President Bill Clinton, Day 1 keynote



AIA national staff manning the booth at Town Hall. Photo credit: Carl Bower

Recognition

Recognizing excellence

We joined our members, the industry and the media in celebrating some of the world's best new architecture, visionary projects and up-and-coming architects by awarding recognition across nearly 30 categories.

Our highest honor—AIA's Gold Medal—was awarded to [Moshe Safdie, FAIA](#), for the practice of architecture “in the purest and most complete sense of the word, without regard for fashion, with a hunger to follow ideals and ideas across the globe in his teaching, writing, practice and research.” In his acceptance speech, Safdie called for “a new urban vision” in which city centers are reinvented to integrate culture, commerce and government and malls give way “to vital and inclusive city centers worthy of our civilization.”

[Ehrlich Architects](#) of Culver City, California, received the 2015 AIA Architecture Firm Award. Ehrlich's projects in the American Southwest, the Middle East and Africa are notable for blending classic California modernist style with multicultural and vernacular design elements.

The 2015 AIA [Twenty-five Year Award](#) recognized the distinctive façades of Broadgate Exchange House in central London, completed in 1990. Defined by two parabolic arches against grids of windows, the Skidmore, Owings & Merrill design strategy was to vault 10 stories of

offices over rail tracks feeding Liverpool Street Station. The result: a mid-century modern icon.

The Rural Studio of Newbern, Alabama, received the 2015 [Whitney M. Young Jr. Award](#) for its work to design and build homes and community buildings for western Alabama residents, almost 40 percent of whom live below the poverty line.

Peter Eisenman, FAIA, was the 2015 [AIA/ACSA Topaz Medallion](#) recipient in recognition of his writings, research and scholarship and his commitment to teaching.

COTE Top 10 for Students

The Committee on the Environment ([COTE](#)) awards proved well-established just one year in, drawing 400 entries from 40 schools. The 10 individual and student team winners and their faculty advisors addressed a challenging sustainable design program, integrating natural systems and technology to provide architectural solutions to protect and enhance the environment.



2015 AIA Gold Medal recipient Moshe Safdie accepts the congratulations of colleagues attending the AIA convention
Photo credit: Carl Bower

“I always tell my students that if every time they take a pencil in hand to design, if they can identify completely with those who will live, work and be in their building, it is half the way to victory.”

Moshe Safdie, FAIA, accepting the 2015 Gold Medal



2015 Honor Award for Architecture recipient John Jay College of Criminal Justice, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill provides all the functions of a traditional college campus within the confines of a single city block. The jury commented, “The diversity of space is impressive, and it is hard to imagine that it could be done better.” Photo credit: Eduard Hueber | Archphot; Brett Beye

Practitioners to watch

2015 Young Architects Awards

José Alvarez, AIA

An ardent advocate for design excellence and a profession that embraces diversity

Zachary R. Benedict, AIA

A leader who connects urban sociology and social interaction to show new roles architecture can play

Hafsa Burt, AIA

A business owner, green building advocate, mentor and exemplary role model for architects

Justin Crane, AIA

An architecture festival creator who connects the profession with the public to deepen the value of good design

Sarah W. Dirs, AIA

An inspiring leader who gives back to her community through architecture

Andrew Dunlap, AIA

An intellectually curious designer who leads by example

James Henry, AIA

A talented design principal dedicated to advancing health and wellness through design

Chris Hong, AIA

A capable leader committed to helping others and promoting architecture as a public good

James A. Meyer, AIA

An advocate who harnesses underutilized design profession resources to enhance stewardship of the public realm

Ann Sobiech Munson, AIA

A city council member with a passion for broadening public understanding of the profession

Adrianne Steichen, AIA

A committed leader and advocate for affordable housing

Rebecca Talbert, AIA

An architect, educator and advocate who leverages academic expertise to effect real change

Derek C. Webb, AIA

An architect, educator and mentor committed to the professional development of emerging professionals

Elizabeth Whittaker, AIA

An innovator helping pave the way for other architects to embrace the “maker” ethos of the profession

2015 Associates Awards

Stephen Francis Gray, Assoc. AIA

A community activist and leader dedicated to improving the built environment and helping communities

Mary E. Hale, Assoc. AIA

An inspiring advocate for improving the world through architectural design and public discourse

Architects Foundation

In communities from Nepal to Arkansas, the Architects Foundation put its mission into action, using the power of design to transform lives, solve problems and create a better world.

Addressing local & global needs

In 2015, the Architects Foundation worked to prepare tomorrow's architects for the challenges that lay ahead—enhancing and expanding scholarships, including the Diversity Advancement Scholarship, which in addition to financial support provides mentors and professional training opportunities. Through its major programs, the Foundation advanced its efforts to connect design professionals with the immediate and long-term needs of communities.

National Resilience Initiative

The Foundation's National Resilience Initiative (NRI) is building a nationwide professional and academic network of design programs that create community-based resilience solutions. With support from AIA, the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities, the Clinton Global Initiative, Public Architecture, and the Association for Collegiate Schools of Architecture, the NRI added two design studios: Mississippi State University's Gulf Coast Community Design Studio and the University of Arkansas Community Design Center. These centers offer design services to households and communities

on issues ranging from hurricane risks to the complexities of population growth, transit-oriented development and watershed urbanism. The goal is to forge local solutions that are models for mitigating social and disaster-related risk around the globe.

Resilience & reconstruction

The Foundation partnered with the relief organization All Hands Volunteers to launch a three million dollar reconstruction program for the villages in Nepal devastated by the April 25, 2015 earthquake. The two-year initiative includes coordinating with the Society of Nepalese Architects (SONA), ARCASIA (Architects Regional Council Asia) and Small Works with the intention of building up to 75 model homes compliant with international model building codes and increased resilience to natural disasters. Training will be made available to enhance Nepal's design and construction practices. The final phase will extend the program into other Nepalese villages and communities.



The Architects Foundation launched a three million dollar reconstruction initiative in 2015 to rebuild Nepalese villages and improve construction techniques in areas effected by a devastating earthquake. Photo credit: Getty Images

AIA leaders, member experts, data, policy positions and award recipients were featured in more than 6,000 articles or broadcast segments in 2015.

“On Earth Day, ten modern buildings were crowned winners of the American Institute of Architects’ annual sustainable design competition. They showcase attractive ways to reuse construction materials, save water and energy, and improve indoor air quality... ‘If a net-zero office building can be built in Seattle, one of America’s cloudiest cities, then one can be built anywhere in the nation,’ say the jurors on AIA’s Committee on the Environment.”

National Geographic, Earth Day Pictures, “10 of the World’s Greenest Buildings,” April 22

“[Jon] Dick was also a juror on the American Institute of Architects’ 2015 Housing Awards panel, which annually recognizes 10 of the year’s best buildings... All were inspired by the family histories, cultures, and diverse life experiences of the people who live in them, and many of the architects go the extra mile to accommodate the landscapes and ecosystems of the land on which they’re built.”

CBS Money Watch, “Architects pick 10 best homes of the year,” May 15

“Many fields have opportunities for student loan assistance—or even forgiveness—if the student agrees to contribute his or her expertise to a worthwhile societal cause... Graduating architectural students today have no opportunity to get hands-on experience in return for student loan assistance or forgiveness...That’s why we are working with the American Institute of Architecture Students and the American Institute of Architects on H.R. 2938, legislation that will create opportunities for emerging architectural professionals to jumpstart their careers.”

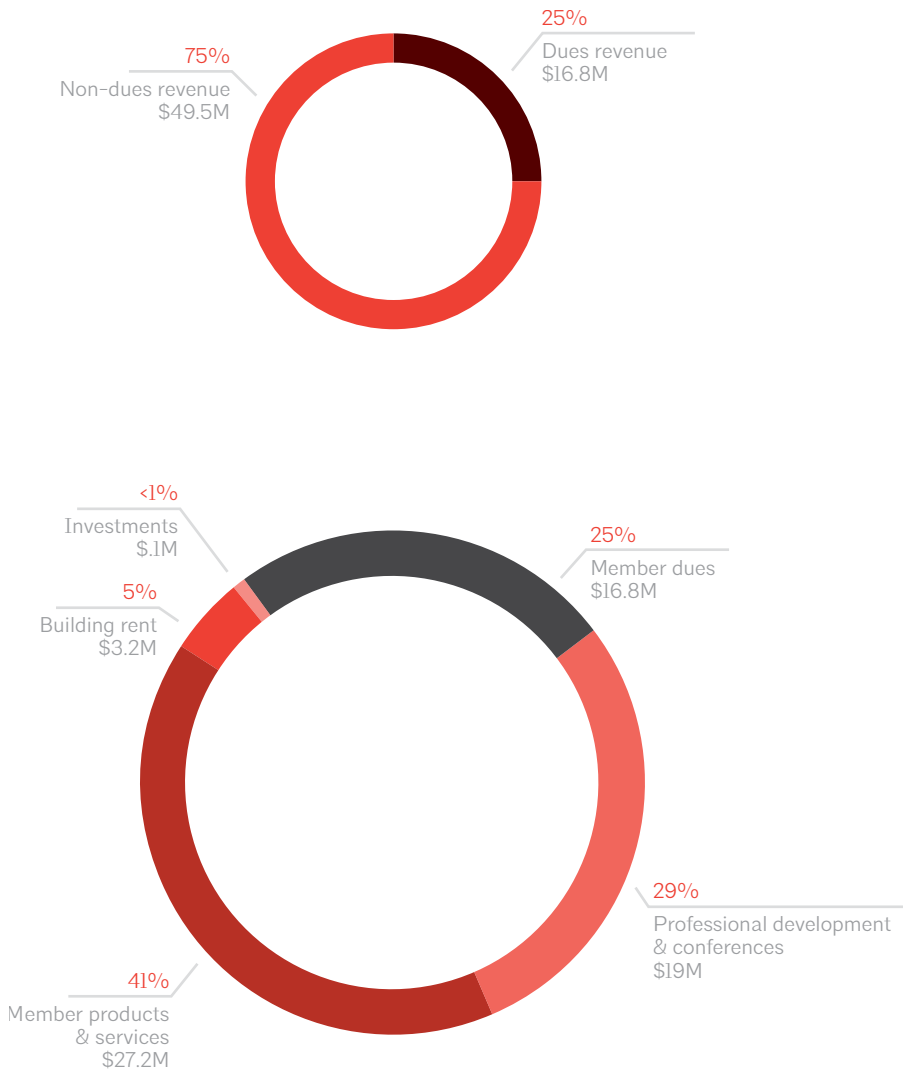
Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.) and Danielle Mitchell, President AIAS, The Hill, “Pay off student debt with community service,” October 20

“For the fifth year running, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has crunched the numbers on its national sustainability challenge, the AIA 2030 Commitment...The square footage represented in the AIA’s database has grown to 2.4 billion, an increase of 50 percent. The number of architectural projects represented has risen even more dramatically to 4,354, a 78 percent increase. These figures suggest that high-performance building is gaining momentum among U.S. architects.”

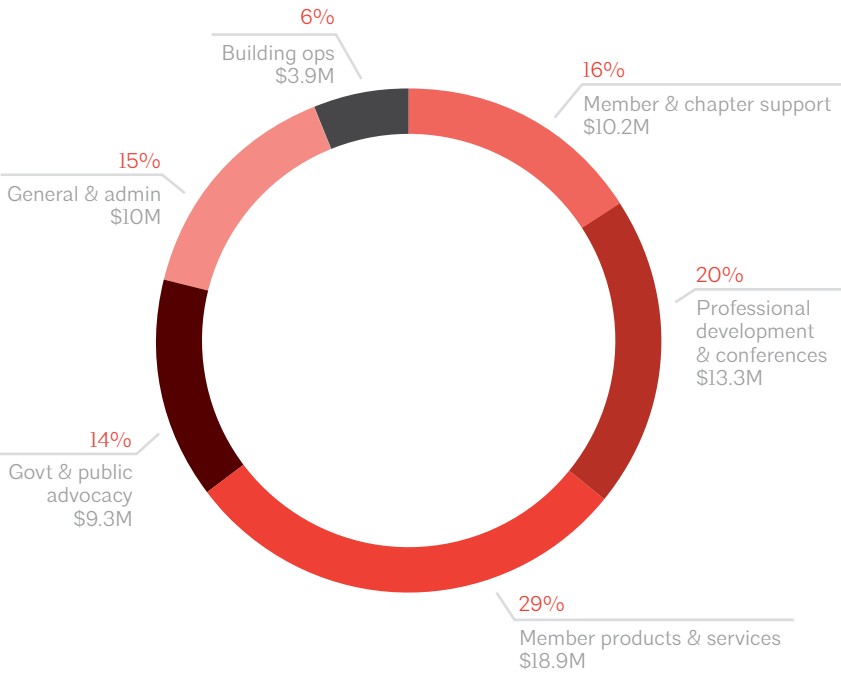
The Atlantic’s CityLab: “Why Aren’t There More Energy-Efficient Buildings?” October 22

Financials

2015 Revenue Total revenue: \$66.3M



2015 Expenses Total expenses: \$65.6M



Strategic partners



>>> SPOTLIGHT

What a year it’s been! A new governance structure was launched and we’ve achieved some serious firsts that point the profession toward a more resilient and prosperous future.

We shared a compelling public message about the impact of architecture in our world. We elevated important conversations about diversity and advancement of women in architecture. We tapped into our entrepreneurial spirit and global opportunities. And we took action to ensure healthy economics as an obligation to the next generation.

More than ever, we recognized it takes us all—a visionary AIA Board, energetic Strategic Council, courageous chapter leaders, dedicated staff, and, most of all, AIA members who each day bring honor to our profession and a better way of life to the communities we serve.

Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA
2015 AIA President



**The American
Institute
of Architects**

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