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AIA Strategic Plan  
2021-2025



# Forward

Strategic Plan 2021–2025

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The American Institute of Architects, the profession, and the world we live in are at a crossroads. What we do now will define the future.

Over the course of 18 months, the Strategic Planning Committee interviewed and surveyed hundreds of people, members and non-members alike. What we heard is remarkable and consistent: Now is the time for real change and revolutionary thinking. For turning conversations and ideas into bold action in how we prepare for and shape the future of AIA and architecture.

This means an AIA and a profession that emphasize:

**Climate action.** To deliver real action to help mitigate climate change.

**Justice and equity.** To ensure equity in the profession, in our communities, and for all who inhabit the built environment we design.

**The role of the architect.** To help society recognize the value of their work in addressing the world’s most pressing challenges.

**Research and technology.** To recognize that our unique knowledge defines who we are and what we do, and that innovation allows us to create a better world.

**Architectural Education.** To better prepare architects for the future and to include a true cross-section of society.

They also reminded us that we cannot do this alone, that we need to:

**Create a bigger tent.** Collaborate with those who realize the power of design to solve problems.

**Focus selectively on issues that really matter.** Mobilize our resources, educate, and prepare architects while refocusing activities that are not part of our core values.

**Prepare a new generation.** Ensure today’s emerging professionals are equipped with the tools and knowledge to lead the industry forward.

This Strategic Plan includes groundbreaking ideas; however, ideas alone are not enough. True change will come only through strategic action.

Brian J. Frickie, AIA  
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee 2019–2020

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## The future we envision

It is 2030, and we have met the seemingly insurmountable climate crisis with courageous, creative, and decisive action. People everywhere are united under a common pledge to create an equitable, resilient, regenerative, and carbon-free future.

At the heart of this movement, AIA has energized a global community of professionals to leverage their knowledge and activism to enact positive change through design.

AIA is widely recognized for its commitment to excellence in the education and leadership development of design professionals. Architects have become leaders in our communities, bringing innovative yet practical solutions to the challenges we face. We foster diversity and inclusion in the profession.

AIA has become a catalyst for change, for bold action that develops and delivers solutions to society's most pressing needs. Architects are positioned at the center of policy discussions surrounding the built environment.

AIA has convened broad coalitions to collaborate on solutions. We have generated, curated, and disseminated knowledge that magnifies the transformative impact of design. We have mobilized our members to meet challenges with decisive action.

AIA and allied organizational partners generate unity and accelerate progress in the design and construction industry.

AIA is at the center of the world's most urgent conversations and is acknowledged as the driving force inspiring and empowering architects to improve society and change the world.

# AIA Strategic Plan 2021–2025

## Introduction

The American Institute of Architects will deliver profound change through this strategic plan: for our members, our profession, our communities, and our planet.

Key principles and guiding assumptions that informed the development of this plan include:

**Urgency.** The global climate crisis requires immediate, bold action to bring about meaningful change. Underpinned by AIA’s recent Big Move Toward Environmental Stewardship, the strategic plan amplifies this call to action for our members to redouble our efforts to develop solutions that will address the existential challenge of our time.

**Alignment.** The principal activities of AIA should be coordinated, focused, and deliberate. We will use our capabilities, scale, and structure to bring new levels of efficiency and impact to our work.

**Collaboration.** The role of the architect is changing dramatically. To realize our full potential as professionals and as an Institute, it is essential that architects collaborate: within firms, in professional relationships, and in communities. AIA will provide leadership to engage a broad network of professionals and community leaders to develop solutions.

## Mission

AIA inspires and empowers architects to improve society and transform the world.

## Vision

Drive positive change through the power of design and focused activism.

## Core values

**Impactful.** What we do matters and is relevant to our clients and to society.

**Transformative.** We work for profound, lasting, positive change in the profession and in society.

**Visionary.** We imagine a better future, and act courageously and confidently to achieve it.

**Equitable and inclusive.** We believe architecture is for everyone, and we model deep collaboration and inclusion in all we do.

**Innovative.** We lead with creativity and insight.

## Goals

- Climate action for human and ecological health
- Advance racial, ethnic, and gender equity

## Strategies

**Mobilize for impact:** Focus and align programs, services, structures, and resources to develop innovative solutions to the world’s most pressing challenges.

**Educate and prepare:** Equip members for success by transforming architecture education, expanding access to the profession, cultivating a learning culture, and developing leadership.

**Advance knowledge:** Knowledge is our currency. Generate, curate, and disseminate knowledge required for success.

**Broaden the tent:** Collaborate with design, construction, and community stakeholders. Organize and activate grassroots advocates.

## Imperatives

**Emphasize climate action:** Build impact by focusing on climate action and positioning architects as community leaders to drive widescale adoption of practical design solutions that will rapidly address and mitigate the impacts of climate change. [Learn more >](#)

**Emphasize justice:** Work to eradicate racial and gender inequity within the built environment and profession, and dismantle barriers within the AIA to better reflect the society we serve. [Learn more >](#)

**Catalyze equity:** Foster equity and a sense of belonging within the profession, and advance the health, safety, and welfare of our communities through design and advocacy for lasting solutions in our built environments. [Learn more >](#)

**Optimize the role of the architect:** Optimize architects’ presence and impact by equipping and preparing them to serve as conveners, collaborators, civic leaders, and change agents in developing and delivering solutions to society’s most pressing needs. [Learn more >](#)

**Revolutionize research and technology:** Leverage emerging technologies and social science to accelerate architecture’s progression to a knowledge-driven discipline and evidence-based, transformative solutions. Harness an intra/entrepreneurial start-up mentality to foster rapid innovation. [Learn more >](#)

**Revolutionize architectural education:** Make architectural education more responsive to emerging trends, more inclusive of underserved audiences, and more oriented toward the future role of the architect. [Learn more >](#)



# AIA Strategic Plan 2021-2025

## MISSION

Inspire and empower architects to improve society and transform the world.

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## VISION

Drive positive change through the power of design and focused activism.

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## CORE VALUES

Impactful, transformative, visionary, equitable, inclusive, innovative

- GOALS**
- Climate action for human and ecological health
  - Advance racial, ethnic, and gender equity

## Strategies

### MOBILIZE FOR IMPACT

Focus and align programs, services, structures, and resources to develop innovative solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.

### EDUCATE AND PREPARE

Equip members for success: Transform architecture education, expand access to the profession, cultivate a learning culture, and develop leadership.

### ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is our currency. Generate, curate, and disseminate knowledge required for success.

### BROADEN THE TENT

Collaborate with design, construction, and community stakeholders. Organize and activate grassroots advocates.

## Imperatives

### EMPHASIZE

**Climate action:** Build impact by focusing on climate action and positioning architects as community leaders to drive widescale adoption of practical design solutions that will rapidly address and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

**Justice:** Work to eradicate racial and gender inequity within the built environment and profession, and dismantle barriers within the AIA, to better reflect the society we serve.

### OPTIMIZE

**Role of the architect:** Optimize architects' presence and impact by equipping and preparing them to serve as conveners, collaborators, civic leaders, and change agents in developing and delivering solutions to society's most pressing needs.

### CATALYZE

**Equity:** Foster equity, diversity, and a sense of belonging within the profession, and advance the health, safety and welfare of our communities through design and advocacy for lasting solutions in our built environments.

### REVOLUTIONIZE

**Research and technology:** Leverage emerging technologies and social science to accelerate architecture's progression to a knowledge-driven discipline and evidence-based, transformative solutions. Harness an intra/entrepreneurial start-up mentality to foster rapid innovation.

**Architectural education:** Make architectural education more responsive to emerging trends, more inclusive of underserved audiences, and more oriented toward the future role of the architect.

## Acknowledgements

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