



Directory of Public Policies and Position Statements

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Introduction

The Public Policies and Position Statements that follow have been approved by the AIA Board of Directors and are in effect until rescinded by the Board.

Public Policies are AIA statements of belief to policy-makers, the public, and the construction industry on issues of public policy affecting the membership, the profession of architecture, or The American Institute of Architects.

Position Statements elaborate on Public Policies or apply them to specific conditions or events.

Commentaries are white papers or other analyses that amplify AIA doctrine by presenting rationale and facts to support adherence to a specific Public Policy or Position Statement.

Once approved by the Board of Directors, all AIA Public Policies and Position Statements are binding on AIA components. Specifically, the Institute's Bylaws state "no act" of an AIA component "shall directly or indirectly nullify or contravene any act or policy of the Institute."

Under certain circumstances, components may be granted exceptions to the policy conformance requirement. Rules for requesting and granting exceptions to Institute Policies may be obtained from the Office of the General Counsel.

Rules governing content, format, review, and adoption of policies and positions are in the AIA Rules of the Board.

Public Policies and Position Statements

“Meta” Policy 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.

I. **Category:** **The Architect**

A. *Public Policy:* *As members of their communities, architects are professionally obligated to use their knowledge, skill, and experience to engage in civic life.*
Civic Engagement

Supporting Position Statements

1. Civic Engagement

The AIA believes that society and the profession of architecture benefit from civically engaged architects. In order to advance leadership among architects to promote livable, healthy, sustainable, and quality-designed environments for future generations through community participation and advocacy, the AIA supports its members who wish to become civically engaged and does not prevent those members from participating in AIA activities, except where it may be required by law.

(approved December 2018)

2. Art and Architecture

The AIA believes that art enhances the human experience in the built environment. The AIA supports programs that promote the integration of art into the design and construction process. The AIA also supports government funding for the inclusion of art in public projects, and funding of federal, state, and local programs with missions that promote the use of art in public buildings and spaces.

(approved December 2018)

B. Public Policy: Professional Development *Design, construction, and society are constantly changing. To serve society, architects must commit to continual professional growth through learning, innovation, and exploration.*

**Supporting
Position
Statements**

- 1. Mandatory Continuing Education**

The AIA maintains that each jurisdiction should mandate a minimum amount of continuing education for architectural licensure renewal. The AIA supports a uniform standard for HSW continuing education requirements across all jurisdictions. The AIA further advocates that any jurisdiction considering continuing education for re-licensure accept The American Institute of Architects' continuing education requirement for membership and record keeping system as a means of fulfilling the jurisdiction's requirement. Emeritus architects should not be required to fulfill continuing education requirements, unless they wish to resume the practice of architecture.
(approved September 2015)
- 2. Practice Specialty Credentialing**

The AIA considers its architect members, by virtue of their license, equipped through education, experience, and practice to capably design a wide range of project types. When it is important to clients and the public that specialized knowledge is necessary, the Institute is committed to evaluating specialty credential programs.
(approved September 2015)
- 3. Research and Development**

The AIA supports the promotion of research and development of materials, technologies, and practices that advance the needs of clients and the public, improve the quality of the built and natural environments, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.
(approved December 2018)

- C. Public Policy: Regulation of Architecture** *The practice of architecture should be regulated. The privileges and responsibilities of practice should be extended only to those architects who demonstrate through education, experience, and examination that they are ethically and technically prepared.*

**Supporting
Position
Statements**

**1.
Definition of
Professional
Practice and Use
of the Title
Architect**

The AIA supports a uniform definition of the “practice of architecture” that delineates the scope of services a registered architect may perform as stipulated by regulatory controls of the local jurisdiction. The definition should follow the recommendations developed by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. Furthermore, the AIA supports protecting the public by reserving the use of the term “architect” to those individuals licensed as architects. The AIA further recommends that all jurisdictions implement a category designated as Emeritus or Retired, for persons who have held a license to practice architecture but have retired and are no longer in practice.
(approved September 2015)

**2.
Design of
Structures for
Human
Occupancy or
Use**

The AIA maintains that to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, only architects should program and design all structures primarily intended for human occupancy or use. Architects are uniquely qualified through education, experience, examination, and practice to lead the design process to design buildings. The process of planning and designing the construction of buildings is complex, so sound professional judgment of an architect is needed before and throughout the design process and in construction. Therefore, it is incumbent on each jurisdiction that has a responsibility to the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens to ensure that the architect is engaged early in planning and managing the design of buildings.
(approved September 2015)

**3.
Practice and Title
Regulations in
the Built
Environment**

In the public interest, AIA holds that architects licensed through rigorous examination, possess the necessary education, training, and experience to lead the design process to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public in the built environment. While other regulated or licensed professionals may participate or be responsible for specialized and focused components, architects are uniquely qualified to take responsible control for the coordinated integration of building systems through a comprehensive understanding of design, construction, and the coordination of project teams from project inception to completion.
(approved December 2021)

**4.
Interstate
Reciprocity and
International
Practice for
Architects**

The AIA supports the use of uniform criteria for licensure that facilitate reciprocity and do not inhibit the interstate and international practice of architecture. Further, the AIA supports the global collaboration of architects, and the continued promotion of excellence in international education, practice, and design while honoring cultural diversity worldwide. The AIA supports its members' international practices through the benefits of membership and by fostering positive working relationships among architects and international architecture organizations.
(approved September 2015)

**5.
Professional
Licensure and
Examination for
Architects**

The AIA maintains that examination is an essential requirement for licensure. Such examination should test for public protection competencies, including health, safety, and welfare, that are gained through a combination of appropriate education and practical experience. The AIA, through its members, encourages licensure-track emerging professionals to complete the examination process at their earliest practical opportunity. The AIA supports the interdependence of practice and education as elements of the profession that, when integrated, enable students, educators, and practitioners to obtain and build upon the knowledge and skills needed to enter and fully participate in the profession, and to achieve design excellence in service to society. To this end, the AIA supports architectural registration boards' allowing emerging professionals for licensure candidacy to take registration examinations following their graduation from a NAAB-accredited degree program and concurrent with enrollment in the Architectural Experience Program (AXP).
(approved May 2019)

**6.
Architectural
Education and
Training
Requirements**

The AIA supports a professional degree from a National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) accredited program as the most appropriate minimum threshold for architectural education. Consideration should be given to alternative educational pathways, in lieu of a NAAB-accredited degree, as a means to fulfill educational prerequisites to licensure, on an individual candidate basis. In addition, the AIA supports a comprehensive internship with measurable qualitative training criteria. Further, the AIA supports NCARB's Architectural Experience Program (AXP) and its training areas, which provide emerging professionals with diverse training and experience in architectural practice.
(approved May 2019)

**7.
Architectural
Licensure Board
Composition and
Law Enforcement**

The AIA supports architectural registration boards that are composed of architects and public members who are residents of the jurisdiction. Architects should comprise a majority of the board and the terms of architectural members should be staggered. Furthermore, the AIA strongly supports the concept of single discipline boards to license architects. In situations where a single discipline board is not statutorily permitted, measures should be taken to ensure that only architects and the appropriate percentage of public members act on architectural issues. The AIA supports strict enforcement of architectural licensing laws by each jurisdiction and recommends that disciplinary action be imposed for incompetent or improper practice. Further, the AIA strongly supports vigorous prosecution including seeking penalties and injunctions against those individuals engaged in the unlicensed practice of architecture.

(approved September 2015)

D. Public Policy: Future of the Profession *With an obligation to the future of the architecture profession, architects must encourage, recruit, and inspire those who would become architects.*

**Supporting
Position
Statements**

- 1. Architecture Awareness in Education**

The AIA believes that education in the art and science of architecture in K-12 core curricula and post-secondary education will benefit society by creating early exposure to and public awareness of the impact and importance of design and the built environment. The AIA supports the integration of architectural subject matter that promotes creative and critical thinking about the importance of architecture, and its impact on human and environmental health, safety, and welfare.
(approved December 2018)
- 2. Mentorship**

The AIA supports its members in fulfilling their professional obligation to mentor emerging professionals as they advance throughout their career. Additionally, those members who supervise individuals engaged in the IDP shall reasonably assist in proper and timely documentation in accordance with that program.
(approved September 2015)
- 3. Practice and Education Cultures**

The AIA supports a professional practice environment (“office culture”) that encourages the essential values of optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation. The architectural design studio culture should promote these ideals as the foundation of degree education and extend these values broadly into a career in professional practice.
(approved September 2015)
- 4. Pre-licensure Titling**

The AIA supports the title of “intern” for students who are working in an architectural office while actively pursuing architecture degrees in programs accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), or studying in pre-professional programs.

AIA supports the title of “Architectural Associate” or “Design Professional” for those who 1) have earned a degree from a program accredited by NAAB, or who have met education/experience requirements in their jurisdiction AND 2) are participating in the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards’ Architectural Experience Program or are meeting their jurisdictions’ experience requirements.
(approved December 2016)

II. Category: The Practice

- A. Public Policy: Construction Industry Regulation** *Regulation of the construction industry shapes the built environment. As industry leaders and stakeholders, architects must participate in the development and application of appropriate regulations and standards- intended to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.*

Supporting Position Statements

- 1. Building Codes and Standards**

The AIA supports regulation by a single set of comprehensive, coordinated, and contemporary building codes and standards that establish sound threshold values of health, safety, and the protection of the public welfare throughout the United States and abroad. To that end, the AIA espouses the development and adoption of model building codes that:

 - Include participation by architects and the public in a consensus process;
 - Are the product of informed education and research;
 - Are without favoritism or bias to any special interest;
 - Include provision for a prompt appeals procedure for all that might be aggrieved;
 - Are cost-effective in relation to public benefit; and
 - Promote building code provisions that set performance rather than prescriptive criteria.

(approved December 2016)
- 2. Building Permits and Process**

The AIA supports governmental policies, regulatory procedures, and administration that eliminate unnecessary time delays in the construction permitting process; that provide transparency, consistency and predictability; and that maintain or improve health, safety and welfare requirements.

(approved December 2016)
- 3. Knowledge of Building Codes and Construction**

The AIA believes that knowledge of code principles and their application in building planning and design are essential parts of the necessary education and training for all architects to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

(approved December 2016)

B. Public Policy: The Business of Architecture *The financial health of architecture businesses is essential to the future of the profession. Architects should advocate within the law for sound business practices and compensation that reflects the architect's value to society.*

**Supporting
Position
Statements**

1. Copyright Protection The AIA supports copyright protection of the architect's work and other intellectual property in order to prevent their unauthorized use.
(approved December 2016)

2. Legal Form of Practice The AIA supports architectural practice within any legal structure as long as an architect retains responsible control and individual responsibility for performing architectural services. Within any legal structure the architect performing or in responsible control of the architectural services must be identified and that structure must not be used to shield unlicensed or unlawful practice.
(approved December 2016)

3. Project Delivery The AIA believes collaborative project delivery processes enhance the quality, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of our built environment. This can best be achieved through industry-wide adoption of approaches to project delivery characterized by early and consistent involvement of owners, architects, engineers, constructors, fabricators and end users in an environment of trust, fair compensation, clearly defined goals and transparency.

There are several viable project delivery models in the marketplace that promote such early collaboration. The AIA believes architects are uniquely qualified and positioned to lead the development of the project and provide architectural services for all project delivery methods. Architectural services may include predesign services, project management, programming, design, construction documentation, and construction administration for building projects.

Architects have a professional and ethical responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public in all Project Delivery methods, while providing reasonable and competent design guidance to the owner and representing their best interests.
(approved December 2016)

4. Qualifications Based Selection

The AIA supports public policies, requirements, and administrative procedures in public procurement processes that mandate the open selection of architects on the basis of qualifications and oppose hiring of architects on the basis of fees or bids. Qualifications-based selection (QBS) is essential to fostering quality design that serves health, safety, and welfare in the built environment. The AIA supports best practice QBS criteria that are clear and concise, encouraging fair market competition. The AIA opposes any requirements by public agencies for uncompensated design solutions as part of QBS processes.

(approved December 2016)

5. Tax and Regulatory System

The AIA supports governmental policies, programs, and administration that promote a fair tax code and business regulations that encourage the free enterprise system and the economic well-being of the American people, the U.S. construction industry, and the profession of architecture. The AIA opposes the imposition of any sales and usage taxes on professional services.

(approved December 2016)

6. Tort Reform

The AIA supports governmental policies and reforms to minimize lawsuit abuse and to promote the administration of a fair civil liability legal system. Society is best served by legislative and regulatory reforms that fairly curtail the cost and risks of litigation without jeopardizing the public interest. The AIA specifically supports:

- Legislation enacting reasonable statutes of limitation and repose with respect to all actions alleging negligence or fault on the part of the architect.
- Emergency Responder (Good Samaritan) legislation that provides architects with liability protection for providing professional services in response to a declared state of emergency.
- Legislation that requires a party alleging professional negligence to submit a sworn statement from a qualified expert in the same field of practice attesting to the alleged negligence (Certificate of Merit Statutes).

(approved December 2016)

7. Software Interoperability

The AIA believes that all industry-supporting software must facilitate, not inhibit, project planning, design, construction, commissioning and lifecycle management. This software must support non-proprietary, open standards for auditable information exchange and allow for confident information exchanges between different software, and between different versions of the same software. This is best accomplished through professional, public and private sector adoption of open and interoperable software standards. The AIA encourages its members and other industry organizations to assume a leadership role in the development and promulgation of open standards.

(approved December 2016)

**C. Public Policy:
Architects are
Environmentally
Responsible**

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.

**1.
Sustainable
Architectural
Practice and
Sustainability**

The AIA advocates for policies, programs, and incentives that promote energy efficiency and renewable energy, materials information transparency, resource conservation, and the protection of water resources. We rely on the development, evaluation and use of codes, standards, and evidence-based rating systems to achieve healthy, resilient buildings and communities for all members of society.

The AIA acknowledges that many current planning, design, construction, and real estate practices contribute to an imbalance that can have disastrous long-term planetary effects on the health of human and natural systems and threaten their survival. Architects, as system thinkers and leaders in the design of the built environment, must engage communities to promote solutions that lead to equitable access for all and use their expertise to design healthy, carbon neutral, and adaptive buildings and communities. The AIA advocates for communities to join with us in changing the course of the planet's future by supporting governmental and private sector policies and programs, including the development, evaluation, and use of codes, standards and evidence-based rating systems that promote the design, preservation, and construction of sustainable communities and high-performance buildings. (approved December 2017)

**2.
Energy and
Carbon in the
Built
Environment**

The AIA advocates for policies, programs, and incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy for the planning, design, construction, and operations of buildings. These strategies reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, lowering risks and costs for our clients and the public. Architects must prioritize energy efficiency and renewable energy to achieve carbon neutral new construction and major renovations by 2030 (2030 Commitment) and a carbon neutral built environment by 2050 (2050 Imperative). (approved December 2017)

**3.
Materials and the
Built
Environment**

The AIA advocates for programs, policies, and practices that inform a holistic approach to selecting and using building materials. Materials significantly affect human and ecosystem health, well-being, climate, and social equity. Architects' ability to understand life-cycle impacts is fundamental to the art, craft, and science of architecture and to making positive material choices that support a healthy, prosperous world. The AIA supports transparent, clear information on the content of building materials and furthermore urges manufacturers to develop materials that are free of toxic substances, minimize greenhouse gas emissions, and are environmentally and socially responsible. (approved December 2017)

**4.
Resilience and
Adaptation**

The AIA supports policies, programs, and practices that promote adaptable and resilient buildings and communities. Buildings and communities are subjected to destructive forces from natural and human-caused hazards such as fire, earthquakes, flooding, sea level rise, tornadoes, tsunamis, severe weather, and even intentional attack. The forces affecting the built environment are evolving with climate change, environmental degradation, population growth, and migration; this alters long term conditions and demands design innovation. Architects design environments that reduce harm and property damage, adapt to evolving conditions, and more readily, effectively and efficiently recover from adverse events. Additionally, the AIA supports member training and active involvement in disaster assistance efforts, providing valuable insights and aid to communities before, during, and after a destructive event.

(approved December 2017)

**5.
Design for
Human Health in
the Built
Environment**

The AIA advocates for policies, programs, research, and practices that promote physical, mental, and social well-being through design. Good design advances equitable access to well-being, physical activity, safety, and environmental quality, among other measurable health benefits. Architects should adopt systematic frameworks to consider health impacts throughout the life of a project working in collaboration with public health professionals and allied organizations. Architects should implement design solutions that promote well-being, and facilitate healthy environments for all members of society.

(approved December 2017)

**6.
Land Use and
Environmental
Planning**

As design professionals, we advocate for responsible land use and environmental planning to reduce hazards and other environmental risks, and in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Land use strategies such as deed restrictions, setbacks, and eminent domain can be a necessary means for government to retain lands for public safety and benefit for the near and long term. Only under special and unique circumstances should eminent domain be used for projects that will ultimately revert to private ownership, and it should be considered a strategy of last resort, applied when a clear and compelling public need and benefit is demonstrated, after an open, broad-based, and transparent community planning process, to ensure environmental justice. Eminent domain should be applied in ways that fairly consider the value of existing land uses and communities, while respecting citizens' rights, equity, all community stakeholders, and community history.

(approved December 2017)

III.

Category: The Public

- A. Public Policy:** *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.*
- Architects Collaborate**

Supporting Position Statements

- 1. Civil Rights**

The AIA supports the promotion of human and civil rights, the universal respect for human dignity, and the unbiased treatment of all persons in employment, civic, and business transactions.

Embracing a culture of equity, all programs and initiatives of the AIA and its members shall reflect the society that we serve, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical abilities, or religious practices.
(approved December 2017)
- 2. Diversity**

The American Institute of Architects, as part of the global community, champions a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the profession of architecture to create a better environment for all. Achieving this vision has a direct impact on the relevance of our profession and the world's prosperity, health, and future.
(approved December 2017)
- 3. Relationship to National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)**

The AIA will advocate for the interests of the architectural profession and collaborate with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) in the adoption of legislative standards for licensing.
(approved December 2017)
- 4. Project Team Collaboration**

Architectural design and construction is a complex process requiring the coordinated teamwork of many diverse entities. The AIA supports a collaborative teamwork approach among architects, designers, clients, communities, jurisdictions, contractors, and industry partners, to achieve successful project completion.
(approved December 2017)

**5.
Inclusive Public
Engagement**

As a profession that envisions the future built environment and therefore impacts every member of society, we should strive to be inclusive of all stakeholders in the communities we serve. Through community design, social impact design and a spirit of service in practice, AIA members can engage with the majority of society that would never commission our work but whose voices are equally important.
(approved December 2017)

B. Public Policy: Architectural Design Matters *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.*

**Supporting
Position
Statements**

**1.
Accessible
Environment**

The AIA supports governmental programs, incentives, and policies, including clear and consistent accessibility rules and guidelines, that ensure a built environment that meets the reasonable needs of people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities should be afforded the means to participate in society to the extent that they are able, through the elimination of physical barriers and through universal design principles that balance the interests of an inclusive society.
(approved December 2017)

**2.
Housing**

The AIA advocates for access to housing as a fundamental right. Architects are at the forefront of the challenges inherent to providing safe, healthy and sustainable housing to all. The AIA advocates for governmental policies, programs, and incentives to promote the design, construction, renovation, rehabilitation, preservation and stabilization of safe, healthy, affordable, sustainable and disaster resistant housing within the means of all people. In addition, the AIA supports regional, private-public, non-traditional, holistic approaches to solving the global housing crisis, teaching communities the benefits of higher density housing near transit. We must proactively stem future sprawl and work with communities and legislators to provide real solutions that can accommodate the additional 2.5 billion people estimated to live on this planet by 2050.
(approved December 2017)

**3.
Livable
Communities**

The AIA advocates for policies, programs, and incentives that promote well-designed communities and maximize public participation in an inclusive community planning process. Architects must integrate transportation, housing, and land-use policies at the neighborhood, community, and regional scales to create safe, healthy, affordable, equitable, walkable, sustainable and resilient communities that recognize and address local natural hazards.
(approved December 2017)

**4.
Historic
Preservation**

The AIA supports governmental policies, programs, and incentives to preserve and rehabilitate diverse historic structures, sites, and places.
(approved December 2017)

**5.
Design
Excellence in
Publicly Funded
Projects**

The AIA believes that society is best served by public buildings, places, and projects that represent the highest ideals of citizens and their elected government. The AIA supports the funding for and creation of public buildings that demonstrate advanced sustainability strategies for integrated teams and systems, resource efficiency, community responsiveness, and human health and well-being that meet and exceed the specific requirements inherent in each individual project and site.
(approved December 2018)