

Frequently Asked Questions Architect Participation



My project won't be complete by the submission deadline. Is it still eligible to be featured in the tour?

Yes. We require that new construction projects provide a Certificate of Occupancy by August 15. If your project cannot meet that deadline, please contact AIA Minnesota to discuss options.

What information should I provide in my submission materials if my project is still under construction?

If photographs of the project are not available by the submission deadline, you should provide renderings, elevations and other sketches that will sufficiently convey the concept of the project. The Tour Committee must be able to visualize the completed project based on materials you submit.

When do I need to have photography ready if my home is selected for inclusion in the tour?

It is in your best interest to have high-resolution photographs available as soon as possible. All print advertisements feature images of tour homes and are created starting in April and continuing until the tour. Those who provide project images early have a greater chance of their project being featured in print or digital promotions.

The Tour Program is created in July, so having photography by that time is ideal to ensure that your project is shown with a photograph. Renderings will be accepted, but audience feedback shows that those homes featuring a photograph are more likely to be visited.

Architects are strongly encouraged to use a professional photographer for tour photos. AIA Minnesota can give referrals, if necessary.

My homeowners are hesitant to participate. Has there ever been a reported theft during a tour?

In the ten years of tours, AIA Minnesota has not been made aware of any thefts from tour homes. We do encourage homeowners to remove valuables and medications during the tour and recommend that staff and volunteers inside the home monitor visitors closely. Homeowners are welcome to be at the home during tour hours – visitors love to hear homeowners' testimonials.

How does sponsorship work?

When you submit your entry materials we ask you to provide information about companies who supplied materials, products, and services to your project. We contact as many project partners as possible to invite them to be a sponsor. A Home level sponsorship allows a company to be present during the tour in your home to speak with attendees. If you have a good relationship with a vendor/contractor, you are welcome to speak with them yourself about participating.



We look to you to determine how many sponsors you can accommodate in your home during the tour. However, only those companies who have signed a sponsorship contract and paid the appropriate fee may promote themselves in your home during the tour. Our sponsorship menu offers opportunities to participate at many different price points.

Do I need to be present at the home during the tour weekend?

Yes. The Homes by Architects Tour is unique from other home tours because attendees know they can meet and talk with the designing architect during their home visit. Surveys of past attendees indicate this benefit adds enormous value over other home tours. In addition, it's an effective way to meet potential new clients. Be prepared with business cards and other promotional materials.

Do I need approval from the city in order to put my project on the tour?

AIA Minnesota recommends that participating architects consult the regulations and requirements of the municipality where your home is located to ensure that street parking is allowed. If your home is within the jurisdiction of a homeowner's association, make contact with the board to let them know of your intentions. Shuttle service is a reasonable alternative to street parking, but must be arranged for by the architect. It is also courteous to send a letter to neighbors prior to the tour, alerting them to the increased volume of traffic and inviting them to attend.

What should my homeowners do during tour weekend?

Some architects recruit their homeowners to be part of their volunteer crew during the weekend – and homeowners make great cheerleaders! Or, give them tour tickets and invite them to experience the other homes. Some homeowners choose to take a weekend vacation during this time.

What other costs should I expect to incur when participating in the tour?

You may expect to pay for high-quality photography, which is not only great for promoting the tour but can be incorporated into your general firm marketing. Some architects pay for cleaning services for their homeowners before and/or after the tour. You may incur printing costs for printing of marketing materials you choose to place in the home during the tour weekend.



What kind of staffing do I need to provide during tour weekend?

In addition to the architect being present in the home during tour hours, you should plan to have 1-2 people from your staff (or other volunteers) present on each floor of the home during tour hours. You will need them to help direct traffic and monitor areas of the home that are designated as off-limits, or to help attendees who may have questions. AIA Minnesota provides a representative stationed outside the front door to manage ticket sales and check tickets.

Still have questions? Contact Angie McKinley at mckinley@aia-mn.org or (612) 338-6763.