

JOINT STRATEGIC WORKPLAN
2022-2026

AIA MINNESOTA
AIA MINNEAPOLIS, AIA NORTHERN MINNESOTA, AIA ST. PAUL
MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION

JOINT MISSION OF AIA MINNESOTA, AIA MINNEAPOLIS, AIA NORTHERN MINNESOTA, AND AIA ST. PAUL:

Advancing a vital profession, vibrant communities, and architecture that endures.

MISSION OF THE MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION:

Investing in excellence, leadership, discovery, and equity in the profession of architecture.

SHARED CORE VALUES:

Authenticity
Equity
Collaboration
Integrity

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

These priorities are deeply interrelated, and our approaches will reflect this. Making progress requires attention to how each priority influences and supports the others. Progress also requires living our core value of collaboration within and beyond the AEC industry.

1. **Build and mentor the profession** – from first introduction through every stage of career success, with a priority on expanding access and reflecting the demographics of the broader Minnesota population.
2. **Make architecture accessible, understandable, and highly valued** – engagement to grow awareness of and appreciation for the process, outcomes, and importance of the profession among the general public and key influencers.
3. **Take immediate, bold action to address climate change** – drive wide-scale adoption of sustainable, resilient, and regenerative design solutions for human and ecological health.
4. **Foster equity, belonging, and agency for women, people of color, and other marginalized groups** – in the built environment, the profession of architecture, and the state and local chapters of AIA in Minnesota.

OBJECTIVES 2022-2026

Strengthen the business, working conditions, and culture of architecture

- Provide programs to augment the business acumen of members at all career stages; equip members to recognize and not undermine their own worth, and to strengthen both individual and firm prosperity.
- Develop systems interventions that benefit women, POC, people with disabilities/who are neurodiverse, or otherwise underrepresented or marginalized by the profession.
- Address gaps in key knowledge and skills among new entrants to the profession,
- Support firms in fostering improved working conditions in the architecture profession.
- Support the development of mindsets and practices that accelerate the desired culture of the profession.
- Promote the best of what mentorship and sponsorship can be.
- Encourage pursuit of the Just Label and similar efforts.
- Implement deep dive approaches to accelerate equity in the profession.
- Implement strategies to support the health and wellness of members of the architecture community.

Make design for climate change foundational

- Advocate for public policies that help to make sustainable, resilient, regenerative design foundational.
- Encourage specific, simple steps that firms of various sizes can take to address climate change.
- Implement deep dive approaches that accelerate sustainable, resilient, regenerative design within small and mid-sized firms.
- Collaborate with experts in various fields (e.g., psychology, behavioral economics) to inform how commitment to sustainable, resilient, regenerative approaches can be inspired and sustained throughout all phases of a project.
- Bring forward stories from members, firms, and clients that exemplify challenges and inspire solutions.

Expand member impact beyond buildings and for greater public benefit

- Demonstrate how members can add value beyond buildings.
- Strengthen shared understanding of what equity in the built environment means and how to create it.
- Expand opportunities for people of all incomes and backgrounds to work with AIA members on projects related to the built environment.
- Develop and advocate a multi-sector change agenda to promote development that is healthy, equitable, and environmentally just.
- Implement deep dive approaches to accelerating equity in the built environment.

Expand access to the profession

- Expand awareness of the architecture profession and the impact architecture can have on people's lives and on the planet; grow the connection and agency people of all incomes and geographies feel related to their built environment.
- Evaluate K-12 outreach and develop collaborative, complementary, high-impact approaches to fuel interest in architecture.

- Mitigate and remove financial, cultural, and procedural barriers to joining and remaining within the profession.

Make room through strategic scale-back

- Set aside active pursuit of a physical Center for Architecture until January 2025, after which time AIA Minnesota would re-evaluate the landscape of philanthropic support and potential collaborators. *(This timing is in the context of the AIA Minnesota office space lease expiration date of June 2026; the lease contract includes an option to extend the existing lease agreement for several additional years.)*
- Engage in a scaled-back manner with [Doors Open Minneapolis](#), focusing on informing site recruitment and selection. *(AIA Minneapolis)*

CONTEXT

This workplan incorporates insights gained from the past few years of working with members of the Minnesota architecture community through the intensity of Covid-19 pandemic impacts and hearing their concerns and aspirations related to the future of the profession and of the built environment.

Staff and board members gathered member comments from town-hall listening sessions, focused committee meetings, one-on-one interviews, and a member survey, as well as everyday interactions with members of the architecture community, the broader AEC industry, community members, and key influencers of policy and public opinion.

The AIA Minnesota/local chapter and MAF mission statements are unchanged from what was adopted in 2016 and 2017, respectively. The core values are consistent with the characteristics of the desired culture of the profession that were defined through broad and deep member engagement in the AIA Minnesota Culture Change Initiative.

The first two strategic priorities – focused on building and mentoring the profession and making architecture accessible, understandable, and highly valued – are a continuation of those adopted in 2016. The second two priorities – focused on climate action and equity in the profession and in the built environment – were adopted in 2021 to reflect the actual priority efforts we were engaged in, and to explicitly align with the [AIA national strategic plan](#). The [AIA Framework for Design Excellence](#) will also be core to our implementation efforts, accelerating the adoption of this wholistic definition of success within the architecture community, the AEC industry, and the broader public.

The workplan action items under each strategic priority are intended to guide the efforts of staff and volunteer leaders over the next four years. Progress on these items, and any needed shifts to the workplan, will be reported regularly to all related boards of directors, and to the membership annually.

Staff and volunteer capacity is of significant concern, especially in the context of the workplan calling for increased staff time toward member skill-building and knowledge development and

non-dues revenue activities being negatively impacted by the pandemic in the short term, and potentially the long term as well. With this in mind, work on this strategic workplan will ramp up over time and be purposely phased (there is not the capacity to pursue all workplan items simultaneously).

These capacity issues create constraint but also opportunity – the opportunity to model the desired culture of the profession and business practices that are sustainable in terms of financial, staff, and volunteer capacity. That kind of sustainability requires scaling back from the overextended staff workloads and sustained levels of intensity that were most acute during 2020 and 2021.

During the first years of workplan implementation, staff and volunteer leaders plan to:

- Complete and implement a staff wellness plan;
- Evaluate current programs, services, and approaches;
- Strategically utilize learnings from the [Culture Change Initiative](#) related to leverage points (focusing on high-impact) and cultivating change.
- Develop tools and protocols to support decision-making on new initiatives and partnerships;
- Meet with all AEC-related organizations in Minnesota to build/rebuild relationships, share our workplan, and explore potential areas of collaboration; and
- Experiment with various remote, hybrid, and in-person approaches for member- and public-focused offerings.

Throughout the implementation of this workplan, staff and board members commit to working from our areas of organizational strength and utilizing our resources wisely in service to the membership and to the public good.