Iowa architects - committed to health, safety, and welfare of Iowans.

Designing the places we live, work and play is a great undertaking; it requires a synergy of science and art, overlaid with complex systems of laws, building codes, and industry standards. The work of architects is critical to safety and well-being.

Architecture expresses the values of society and enhances the quality of life for current and future generations. Architects advocate for responsible design that results in beautiful and healthy places that respect and accommodate society’s diverse needs.

Regulation of the construction industry shapes the built environment. As stakeholders, architects participate and advocate for the development and application of appropriate regulations and standards. We are here to help you understand the buildings around you, how they are designed and built, and how to ensure a better future for Iowa, through design.

Architects are motivated by education and professional ethics to offer their specialized knowledge, skills and experiences to enhance Iowa communities – a substantial challenge as design, construction and society undergo constant change.

Architects are a helpful resource to legislators with their expert knowledge on design, planning, construction, procurement and project delivery, among other subjects.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) represents more than 90,000 architects across the nation. The Iowa chapter, AIA Iowa, includes over 1,200 members who reside in Iowa.

- Architect members of AIA Iowa reside in 46 of the 50 Iowa Senate districts.
- Architect members of AIA Iowa reside in 78 of the 100 Iowa House districts.
- For legislators without constituent architects, AIA Iowa will be pleased to be a resource on issues related to architecture, design, and construction.

AIA Iowa’s advocacy platform includes three major principles to enhance Iowa’s vitality and viability:

1. **Livable Communities**

   Beautiful, invigorating and inviting to residents and visitors, well-designed communities create a “Sense of Place”, where all people can belong and live their best life. These communities provide a systemically just and safe environment, with access to health and support services, while nurturing participation in civic, cultural and recreational activities through inclusivity and choice.

2. **Resilient Communities**

   The creation and operations of the built environment require an investment of the earth’s resources. Architects strive for environmental responsibility and advocate for the sustainable use of those resources. Preserving Iowa’s rich natural resources for future generations requires a conscientious approach to energy efficiency, responsible utilization of assets, and the nurture of harmonious relationships between the built environment and nature.

3. **Quality Design**

   Design is both a process and a result. The process demands qualifications, creativity, passion and attention to detail. The results speak for themselves... quality design creates memorable “places” with significant impact on the quality of life where we live, work and play. Investment in a well-designed Iowa benefits all Iowans in a multitude of ways.
Professional Licensure

The buildings we live, work and play in are highly complex and have a significant impact on our well-being, as well as our physical safety. The architects and engineers who are responsible for our buildings are entrusted with hundreds to thousands of design decisions, but only after they have earned a license based on the three E’s: years of education, years of supervised experience, and a battery of exams.

Recommendation for Action:

- Distinction between Occupations and Professions, identify and regulate substantially different work differently and appropriately.
- Qualifications Based Licensure, ensure that work with clear and significant risk to the public only be performed by professionals qualified to do so with the Three E’s and national recognition.
- Alignment with National Standards, utilize standards developed by vetted, expert third parties in collaboration with licensing boards from all 50 states.

Project Delivery

Architects play a vital role in the delivery of public projects in the State of Iowa. With the overriding responsibility to protect and safeguard health, safety, and welfare of the public, architects are best positioned to understand the needs of our communities and efficiently connect them with the greater public good in a way that benefits all parties. AIA Iowa recommends that the State of Iowa upholds the current law, a system in place that has proven to serve taxpayers well. The Chapter remains open to discuss alternate delivery options with stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes as long as the following criteria are met:

Recommendation for Action:

- Qualifications Based Selection, an open selection of architects on the basis of qualifications.
- Direct collaboration, between an Architect and owner is vitally important to the success and safety of the building.
- Licensure and Qualifications, to Practice Architecture and Engineering in the State ensures professionalism and quality.
- Longevity of Materials and Systems, selected must exceed the length of time that the project is financed.

Energy Efficiency + Resiliency

We support the design and construction of buildings that minimize the impact on our environment while providing greater longevity with the strength and resiliency to withstand natural disasters. Additionally, we advocate for a holistic approach to total energy consumption, both the consumption of energy in its operation and the embodied energy used to create it in the first place.

Recommendations for Action:

- Adoption of Energy Codes consistent with the edition of the Building Codes adopted by the State of Iowa, and development of model code requirements for benchmarking performance of publicly funded buildings.
- Foster education about the data available on energy use for buildings & improvement strategies for existing building stock.
- Incentives for retrofitting existing building and new construction to be more resilient and energy efficient.

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