How to submit a Component Best Practice

AIA national is working towards creating a database of best practices that are sharable and replicable for components’ use. Best practice submissions should fall under one of the core service categories and should elevate that core service.

Programs should:

- **Innovate** – The program or best practice should demonstrate the ability of the chapter to serve members and the community. It should capture and interpret the needs of your current and future membership. The program should illustrate a comprehensive understanding of the topic and illustrate performance excellence and value.

- **High-quality** – The program or best practice should exemplify and promote relevant knowledge on a topic. Also, evidence should be provided to demonstrate that the program engages in ongoing knowledge and programmatic evaluation and enhancement. An added plus is that the program concept, development, content and implementation engaged the component in collaborative relationships with other allied organizations.

- **Replicable** – The program must be replicable with steps/processes for chapters to follow. The program should incorporate tangible, practical content that can be used by other components.

- **Relevant** – The objectives, design and content of the program should be consistent with the members’ needs and challenges. The program should be reviewed periodically to determine its continued relevance in meeting member needs. The program can engage members as well as nonmembers and expand the influence of architects in their communities and the profession.

- **Measurable** – The submission must have clear and specific measures/indicators of success. The program must have quantitative measures that demonstrate the overall impact or effect on the overall membership.

**Resources**

View previously submitted Best Practices (link to Component Connect)

All Best Practices should abide by the [AIA Content Style Guide](#)

**Contact**

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NAME OF COMPONENT: AIA Eastern Oklahoma

CONTACT: Lindsey Ellerbach

COMPONENT SIZE: Up-to 500 members

PROGRAM TITLE: PAWsh Palaces After School Program

CORE SERVICE: Public Outreach

PROVIDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM:
AIA Eastern Oklahoma partnered with local organizations on this program. Architects were matched up with after school programs in seven underserved schools. They taught 4th and 5th graders about architecture through dog houses. From "interviewing" the client, to sketching, designing and finally building a prototype doghouse for their "client."

Each school then voted on their favorite prototype and it was displayed alongside professional "PAWsh Palaces." The schools teamed with the winning designs won money for their schools. To fill out the rest of the semester, they then wrote books about their pets first day in their new house.

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM ADDRESS THE CORE MEMBER SERVICE?
We formed a coalition on this project of local organizations including AIA Eastern Oklahoma, The Tulsa Regional STEM Alliance, Tulsa SPCA, Union Public Schools and Tulsa Public Schools. By working with these organizations, we were able to amplify our voice about the importance of architecture to a diverse group of kids.

We were able to teach nearly 100 4th and 5th graders of diverse backgrounds, cultures and races about what architects do. They got to "interview a client" thanks to the SPCA bringing a dog to the classes. Then they learned to sketch their ideas. Next, they collaborated with each other to implement different parts of their designs to for a cohesive prototype. They had to learn to adapt by using a set group of materials and only being able to add recyclables to their design. Finally, they learned to present at a Press Conference held at the local mall where their prototypes were on display alongside professionally designed and built "PAWsh Palaces." Finally, they got to be part of a team that raised money for the SPCA and their own schools.

WHO IS THE INTENDED AUDIENCE (include size and demographic)
We worked with 97 students and intentionally chose underserved schools in the Tulsa Metro area. Our students were majority black and Latin-x. They were 4th and 5th graders at area public elementary schools.

We also wanted to reach out to the community and area media.
Here's a great slideshow of the prototype presentations:


And here is an article about the program:


WHAT IS THE BUDGET? (include all costs including sponsors, grants, and other outside funding)
We were very adamant that we pay the teachers for their time in helping us, rather than forcing them to volunteer or operate the program without teachers, which added to our cost. Other than that, our costs included materials for the program. We also provided 3 prizes, which were donated by SPCA donors.

Teachers - $1400 (7 teachers X 5 weeks)
Materials - $953.49 (This included all building materials and extra things for additional activities)
Prizes - $2,000 ($1750 for prize money and $250 for trophies and ribbons for the kids)

You could easily scale this down without the prizes and do it for about $2500 depending on teacher pay.

HOW (list the steps or process to implement this program, be as specific as possible)
First, we meet with our programming partners at the Tulsa STEM Alliance and Tulsa SPCA. Then we organized a meeting with the STEM coordinators at local school districts. Those coordinators then worked with the schools to set up the after-school program and sign up kids.

In the meantime, we organized architects to be our classroom mentors – some classes had firms adopt them and architects traded out from that firm and some had individual architects sign up to be mentors for the entire program.

Once schools were signed up, we attended the weekly after school programs with the following program agenda:
- Week of September 3: Intro Project & Research
- Week of September 10: Meet and Interview the “Client” (Clients provided by SPCA)
- Week of September 17: Sketch Plan/Scale
- Week of September 24: Build Prototype
- Week of October 1: Build Prototype
- Weeks of October 8 & 15: Finish & Decorate Prototype
• Week of October 22: Final projects judged
• Weeks of November 1: Present prototypes at Woodland Hills Mall, lunch with architect mentors, Press Conference
• Week of December 3: Winners announced and celebrations held