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**

Jack Charlton, Manager Component Communications & Information Resources
NAME OF COMPONENT: AIA Orange County

CONTACT: Jeffrey Gill, FAIA

COMPONENT SIZE: 500-1,000 members

PROGRAM TITLE: Student Design Competition

CORE SERVICE: Public Outreach

PROVIDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM:
Orange County does not have an accredited School of Architecture. However, we do have community colleges that offer architectural programs.

For three decades, AIA Orange County has been providing colleges with an annual Student Design Competition. We use this to mentor our future and help them to advance to accredited schools. The colleges use the SDC as part of their curriculum.

The sites are real. The program is administered by a local firm as the ‘sponsor’, assisting with scholarships and firm team members. All AIAOC members are asked to help critique and mentor students.

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM ADDRESS THE CORE MEMBER SERVICE?
It is a direct outreach and engagement of our local public. Through this competition, the AIA is known as a promoter of the importance of good design. The programs are complex enough to make students ‘think’ about how to problem solve, and create unique and intriguing responses.

Winners are celebrated at the annual Design Awards Gala, on our website, and PR announcements are sent out to the press to broaden the impact we make as AIA Architects.

WHO IS THE INTENDED AUDIENCE (include size and demographic)
We currently have 4 schools we engage to participate in this program. All students are first- and second-year students at colleges.

WHAT IS THE BUDGET? (include all costs including sponsors, grants, and other outside funding)
The host firm serves as an AIAOC sponsor and contributes $2,500 for award sponsorship for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. AIAOC then contributes $100 for each Merit award winner. These vary from 2-4 total.

There are no other costs.
HOW (list the steps or process to implement this program, be as specific as possible)
The Student design competition committee meets in early Fall to decide the program. The committee consists of the host firm, AIAOC executive director, and representatives from the colleges.
Real sites and issues are discussed, and a selection is made.

The competition is sent to the schools in December to be used as part of the Winter curriculum. Students are asked to attend crits and mentorship opportunities February-April. The jury meets in May, and a SDC reception is held late May as the AIAOC monthly General Meeting. Winners are announced, but not what level of award (this is done at the Gala since it relates to cash prizes). Letting them know early allows them to plan to attend the Gala in September since some move to other schools.

Winners are celebrated at the September Design Awards Gala as part of the program. Cash prizes are handed out then and a PR announcement goes out to the press the next day.