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Robert Ivy, FAIA
AIA EVP/Chief Executive Officer

In 2013, we launched a key initiative with a vital end goal: Coordinate all three tiers of AIA to deliver a more valuable and relevant member experience. Our Member Service Plan does just that—serving as a map for our components to use to ensure we consistently deliver a baseline of valuable services to all members regardless of where they live or work.

As chapters went through the accreditation process to satisfy the requirements of the Member Service Plan, we learned a lot about each other and ourselves. Our chapters put in countless hours and tremendous effort, and for that I applaud you. The willingness of component members to meet, talk, explore, and decide how to meet the needs of our members once again demonstrates the passion and commitment that lies at the heart of AIA.

We’ve now taken it a step further with the development of the Component Playbook—the companion piece to the Core Member Services—which offers a deeper dive into each of the seven core service areas. What follows are guidelines, tactics, and methods that clearly demonstrate the value of our chapters in providing exceptional and outstanding programs for our members. The playbook is the ultimate guide to growing capacity and building success throughout our vibrant component network.

As we continue working together to position AIA for a brighter future, let’s all commit to continue to learn from one another, to work together toward greater excellence, and to realize the great potential of all our chapters.
Nicki Dennis Stephens
Chair, Component Playbook Task Force

AIA’s commitment to providing a valuable and consistent experience for every member has resulted in a serious look at all components within the organization. The accreditation process showed us our collective strengths and uncovered opportunities for change. This playbook, with its best practices and strategies shared by components, is an invaluable asset and is paramount to our success in delivering the best experience for members.

The playbook builds on the results of the accreditation process and is designed to be your guide for providing the best service and value to AIA members and their communities. It’s compiled from some of the best thinking in association management and organized by each of the seven areas found in the Core Member Service requirements.

Throughout the playbook you’ll find specific suggestions applicable to chapters of any size and leadership structure. We encourage volunteer and staff leaders to use the playbook to establish, design, and build upon current levels of operation and increase value for members, regardless of chapter size.

Although members access the tiers of the organization at different points, the primary source of service for many of our members is their local component. AIA is committed to resourcing them for success. To that end, each component will be provided a copy of this playbook, and we encourage all of you to visit Component Connect for new content and resources. The playbook is a living document that will evolve with the changing landscape within AIA and new requirements of components.

The AIA Component Collaboration and Resources team is also a great resource—reach out to them with specific questions or concerns at componentrelations@aia.org.
Foreword

Bob Harris, CAE
President & Founder, Harris Management,
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AIA is one of the most respected associations across the globe. Part of its vitality comes from the network of components and how effectively they serve their members.

AIA and its components are committed to delivering a core set of services to all members. This playbook breaks them down into seven manageable areas. It provides strategies, proven advice, and valuable resources. Using it will increase your component’s impact and help you successfully meet the requirements for accreditation.

The playbook is not meant to be a one-time read but, rather, a platform for continuous improvement. It is the guide that answers the questions of volunteers and staff. It describes minimum standards while being the platform for your success. Use it to increase member satisfaction and growth, deliver value, and make an impact in your local community.
Acknowledgements

This project was a collaborative endeavor, and we would like to expressly acknowledge the extensive time, effort, and expertise both the committee and AIA staff devoted to this playbook.

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Section 1

Member communications
01. Member communications

AIA works with state and local components to provide members with valuable resources, products, and benefits. Communicating their value helps ensure members take full advantage of all the offerings and are engaged in products, services, and events.

GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Provide AIA member value through communications and promote AIA resources to members
2. Support the AIA brand
3. Offer touch points to members and the public
GOAL 1

Provide AIA member value through communications and promote AIA resources to members

To effectively promote the value of membership, it’s essential to develop a plan to communicate AIA benefits to your members. Your plan should also provide them with what they need to thrive – before they even realize they need it.

PLAY 1: SHARE INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC AIA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

As part of the Core Member Services, your component must communicate information about key benefits, products, and services offered by your chapter and AIA National.

REQUIREMENT:

Your component must provide regular, visible promotion of AIA products including AIA Contract Documents, AIA Career Center, AIA Conference on Architecture, and AIAU in the component’s electronic and print media communications.

PLAY 2: CREATE A MEDIA PLAN

As a first step, determine the specific AIA product, service, or event you want to promote—and when you should promote it. Creating a media plan helps you stay focused, leverage the appropriate media effectively, and avoid legal pitfalls. Be realistic about the amount of time you can dedicate to developing and implementing your communications strategy and media plan, just as you would any other important initiative.

To ensure your plan is effective:

• Create a timeline.
• Cover your component’s benefits and initiatives, as well as those that AIA national offers.
• Coordinate the promotion of products or services with events, webinars, and other engagement opportunities.
• Encourage feedback through firm visits, online forums, blogs, meetings, and surveys.
• Use the feedback to shape upcoming communications.
• Share the feedback with your staff, board, and members to ensure that messages are as clear as possible.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

How to Ask for and Receive Member Feedback

PLAY 3: TOOLS FOR MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Once you determine and prioritize what you want to promote and when you should promote it, you need to establish how. You can use a variety of media to communicate about AIA products, events, and services.
TOOL: NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters (digital or print) can be great tools to engage and inform your members. If you create a newsletter, plan to send it regularly—at least once a month.

AIA Architect, AIA’s member-only biweekly newsletter, includes highlights on award recipients, industry features, and important updates. You can share articles by linking to the newsletter.

Access the current issue of AIA Architect at architectmagazine.com/aia-american-institute-of-architects/.

TOOL: WEBSITES

REQUIREMENT:

Components must contribute at least one upcoming event to your website or AIA.org hosted on the AIA digital platform. A dedicated point of contact should be identified to engage with members and the public.

The ultimate goal is to draw members to your website. Keep your members engaged by updating your website regularly with fresh, practical content targeted specifically to them—local events, continuing education opportunities, or new policies that affect their work, for example.

Components can use AIA.org in addition to—or in place of—their own websites. The AIA’s component website allows components to incorporate both AIA national and component activities on one website. For more information on the digital platform contact Brian McLaren at brianmclaren@aia.org.

Components can also add their events to AIA.org. Please contact componentrelations@aia.org for more information.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

AIA Kentucky on AIA.org

TOOL: SOCIAL MEDIA

Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram provide easy ways to communicate with members, prospective members, and architecture and design enthusiasts.

Before you choose which social media platform you’ll leverage, consider which ones your members use most often. To find out, visit Hootsuite, a platform for managing social media platforms. It offers guidance on how to conduct an audit so you can get a closer look at how your members use social media. Start your social media audit at http://bit.ly/2q3oCL5.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Social Media Audit Template
Social Media Dos and Don’ts
GOAL 2  

Support the AIA brand

Components are a key part of AIA’s brand. That’s why component communications (both print media and electronic) should look, feel, and sound like AIA. When we present a strong message with consistent tone and imagery, we amplify our voice and impact.

**PLAY 1: ADHERE TO AND REGULARLY REVIEW THE BRAND GUIDELINES**

**REQUIREMENT:**
Your component must follow the AIA Brand Guidelines consistently across all the component’s electronic and print media to ensure members experience AIA as a unified organization.

The Brand Guidelines define the standards for using AIA and component logos, typefaces, color palette, and more. They are designed to help you communicate with members and the public in friendly, efficient, and cohesive ways that support the AIA brand, your component, and the architecture industry. Access the AIA Brand Guidelines on the Brandfolder website, brandfolder.com/aia-chapters.

The AIA Brandfolder is your one-stop shop for templates, logos, the Architype typeface, and campaign assets, along with AIA’s official guidelines on imagery, content, and brand tone and voice. Access the Brandfolder at brandfolder.com/aia-chapters.

The AIA Brand Shop is where components can order branded chapter stationery including letterhead, envelopes, business cards, mailing labels, folders, and more. Access the Brand Shop at brand.aia.org. To receive your login credentials, please email brandteam@aia.org.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
- Brandfolder
- Brand Shop

GOAL 3  

Offer touch points to members and the public

Communication plays a critical role in the success of your component. Components should also establish a proactive communication process using a variety of communication channels and establish a permanent location.

**REQUIREMENT:**
A dedicated point of contact, for both internal and external communications, must be identified to engage with members and the public. Components should establish a proactive communication process using a variety of communication channels.

**PLAY 1: SET UP A LOCATION**
Components should also establish a permanent address for your component. If you’re looking for options beyond renting your own space, consider creative solutions such as using donated space within a local architectural firm, negotiating with another component to provide a point of contact and services, or sharing space with other nonprofits.
Section 2

Education
02. Education

Members rely on AIA for high-quality, useful, and inspiring continuing education at the national, state, and local levels. Our education programs not only help members fulfill licensing and AIA membership requirements, but also advance members’ careers and the profession as a whole.

GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Offer all AIA members, regardless of component, access to component Continuing Education programming
2. Ensure high-quality continuing education
3. Maintain continuing education transcripts
4. Offer licensure and career development support to emerging professionals
GOAL 1

Offer all members, regardless of assigned component, a reasonable opportunity to participate in component continuing education programming.

Your members need certain types and amounts of credit hours to meet state licensure requirements. Collaborating with other components in your state is a win-win. It helps meet this need, and it can also lead to teaming up on other projects, from advocacy to conference materials.

REQUIREMENT:
Collaborate statewide to offer at least 18 CES credit hours annually, (12 must be health/safety/welfare) and 4 of the 18 CES credits must be curated by the component.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
State requirements for continuing education

PLAY 1: PROVIDE MEMBERS’ ACCESS TO AIAU, ANYWHERE OR ANYTIME
Show your members the benefits of AIAU, AIA’s high-quality online continuing education solution. With 150+ courses led by some of the industry’s best architects and firms—nearly 100 of them are HSW courses—it’s the leading source for expert instruction, answers, and inspiration. Courses are fast-paced, dynamic, and focused on in-demand topics. And new courses are added every month. AIA members pay a nominal fee per course.

Components can purchase viewing rights for groups, and your component will automatically receive credit for offering the course.

If your component develops a high-quality course, you can submit it for possible inclusion in the AIAU catalog, where it will be seen by a national audience and can provide your component with revenue. AIAU considers content under two models: Content ready to upload and content that requires further development. Contact AIAU at (202) 626 7495 or aiau@aia.org to learn more.

Learn more about AIAU at aiau.aia.org.

PLAY 2: PROMOTE THE AIA CONFERENCE ON ARCHITECTURE
The annual AIA Conference on Architecture provides opportunities for inspiration, networking, and insight on topics and trends impacting architecture and design. For many, it’s the best time and place for continuing education. It offers 500+ opportunities to earn continuing education credits from some of the best architects and firms practicing today.

Sessions include:
- Workshops and seminars led by experts in architecture and design
- Expertly curated tours of notable architecture and neighborhoods
- Expo credit sessions on new materials and services from providers at the Architecture Expo
- Presentations by well-known leaders from architecture, business, arts, and sciences
- Your component members can also develop educational content for the Conference on Architecture. And don’t forget to alert members that they need to register early to get the courses they want and to get discounts.

Learn more about the conference at http://conferenceonarchitecture.com/.
GOAL 2  

**Ensure high quality continuing education**

AIA national and components offer some of the industry’s best continuing education, and members consistently rank it as a top benefit. Your work is key to helping the organization keep that strong position and maintain their confidence in AIA education. Use the tactics and resources below to develop, register, record, and report courses correctly.

**PLAY 1: READ THE PROVIDER MANUAL**

Your first step is to know the rules in the CES Provider Manual.

**REQUIREMENT:**

Components must comply with the requirements outlined in the CES Provider Manual to assure a basic level of quality and member service.

The AIA Provider Manual has everything you need to know to develop and report on continuing education. It’s created so you can follow the guidelines whether your component is staffed or volunteer led. And it’s required reading before you register or qualify courses.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**

- CES Provider Manual
- Request CES training

**PLAY 2: PARTNER WITH OTHER PROVIDERS**

Working with expert providers can half your resource commitment and increase the quality of the continuing education you offer. Just do it according to the guidelines:

- Be sure the provider’s identity is clear in all advertising materials.
- Have the provider register courses under its own provider number—this keeps the provider accountable for content and compliance.
- Use the Partner Arrangement Form to keep a record of who you partner with, so you’ll get the credit.
- You can skip the Partner Arrangement Form if your component has provided 18 hours of qualified continuing education.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**

- CES Partner Arrangement Form
- CES Partnership FAQ

**PLAY 3: DEVELOP YOUR OWN EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Developing credit-earning content at the state and local levels may be just what your component needs to best serve members. Below are some tips for meeting your four hours of curated content:

- Know what your members need in your region. Ask your members what is relevant for them to know for their practice.
Most sought after topics are:

• Building Science & Performance
• Materials & Methods
• Environmental/High Performance Design
• Codes/ADA/Legal
• Occupant Comfort
• Collaborate with other components nearby for innovative practices.
• Seek your own member experts for possible building tours and projects in process. Ask your membership for advanced projects in the works.
• Collaborate with allied organizations in your area such as USGBC, CSI, AIAS chapters or local universities, local licensing boards, or local municipalities for codes.
• Collaborate with existing approved AIA CES Providers. You can get up-to-date lists from Ramiro Solorzano at ramirosolorzano@aia.org as the list changes throughout the year.
• Use AIAU group viewing options.

GOAL 3

Maintain continuing education transcripts

Register a course, browse other courses, get what you need for course provider compliance, and more through the CES Discovery portal.

Start by signing into CES Discovery. You’ll receive a welcome email that will walk you through registering a course.

Make sure to designate a primary point of contact responsible for all administrative responsibilities in continuing education, which include editing your provider profile, managing user accounts, paying and receiving invoices, and more. Some components give this role to the executive director or a staff person. If your component is volunteer-led, find a volunteer for this role.

CES transcripts are kept in CES Discovery. Components and providers must submit the course and attendance to ensure member transcripts stay current. Three key resources walk you through this process:

• How to submit a new course: This step-by-step guide walks providers through the process of submitting new courses individually online. Please remember that AIA/CES policy states that providers must submit courses five business days or more prior to when the course will occur. Please use Internet Explorer. Firefox does not work with CES Discovery.
  Download the guide

• How to check course status: This step-by-step guide explains how to check the status of a course submission and clarifies the definition of various submission statuses.
  Download the guide

• How to renew or resubmit a course: This web based guide explains the course renewal process. If the provider is resubmitting or updating a course/s in response to a deactivation notice, details regarding locating and renewing old courses are in this document.
GOAL 4

Offer licensure and career development support to emerging professionals

We consider architecture students, recent graduates, professionals working toward licensure, and newly licensed architects to be “emerging professionals.” They’re the future of the architecture profession, our current and future collaborators, and they have specific, important continuing education and prep needs that AIA and its components work hard to support. This includes opportunities for experience, help with exam prep, support transitioning from school to careers, opportunities for leadership in their firms, and more.

REQUIREMENT:
Components must provide career information and mentoring opportunities to emerging professionals to engage members early in their careers.
AIA’s Center for Emerging Professionals is an authoritative resource for architecture students, recent graduates, and newly licensed architects.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
AIA’s Center for Emerging Professionals
See what other components are doing for emerging professionals.
AIA Kansas City ARE Success Teams
How AIA Birmingham supports emerging professionals

PLAY 1: ASSIST WITH ESSENTIAL EXAM PREP
Components can support candidates preparing for the ARE in many ways:
- Maintain a lending library of resources.
- Offer workshops, courses, and study sessions.
- Hold regular meetings or activities for those prepping to give them a break or a chance to share their struggles.

PLAY 2: HELP THEM ACQUIRE EXPERIENCE
To become a licensed architect, graduates need professional experience and they need to record these experience hours. You can help by connecting them to these resources:
- The Architectural Experience Program (AXP) is a comprehensive training developed by NCARB that provides emerging professionals with a framework to get and record professional experience across six practice areas.
- Your component can provide or develop continuing education programs to help emerging professionals meet experience hours. To get licensed, emerging professionals must earn 3,740 hours across six practice areas. One AIA HSW learning unit equals one AXP experience hour.
- Emerge by AIAU provides online video-based education courses that can help fill requirements for experience hours. It’s free for AIA associate members.
**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
- Overview of the AXP experience
- NCARB’s Gain AXP Experience website
- Emerge by AIAU courses

**PLAY 3: CREATE OR EXPAND MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES**
Mentoring strengthens learning, accelerates professional development, and helps emerging architects overcome project or career challenges. Here are a few ways to accomplish this.

- Host a chapter meeting “speed dating” evening so participants at different ages and career stages can get to know each other.
- Establish a formal mentoring program focused on licensure.
- Look to Fellows (FAIA) in your component for support and ideas for mentoring. Explore the scholarship programs for AIA emerging professional members through the College of Fellows.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
- AIA Charlotte’s Mentorship Exchange program
- AIA Los Angeles’ Mentor the Community program

**PLAY 4: PROMOTE AIA’S CAREER CENTER—& START YOUR OWN**
AIA hosts one of the industry’s premier job boards, along with related career resources at careercenter.aia.org. It’s a vital resource for emerging professionals looking for career opportunities and new graduates looking for their first opportunity.

Many components host their own career centers at the state or local level, providing members with curated job listings and resources in their area.

Developing your own career center is not only a way to encourage networking and collaboration—and to comply with Core Member Services—it can also be a source of revenue for your component. See an example at jobcenter.aiadc.com.

**PLAY 5: CONNECT WITH THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS**
AIAS provides a direct pipeline to future members and the future of the workforce, as well as educating students about the value of AIA membership. Most AIAS chapters are based on campuses. They organize lectures, trips, social events, conferences, and community service projects.

Your component can connect with the energy and ideas from this group through its events, such as the annual FORUM convention, the Grassroots Leadership Conference, the Freedom by Design Orientation and the Quad Conferences. Most student members experience the AIAS through a campus-based chapter.

Components may benefit from some of the materials in different media developed by AIAS, such as:

- “I Want to Work In,” digital content series that examines what it’s like to live and work in a particular city.
- “The #AskAnArchitect Show,” a weekly YouTube video series that interviews an architect.
- “The Architype Project Podcast,” a podcast series that examines individuals with architecture degrees who pursue careers outside of traditional architecture.
• “60th Legacy,” a weekly digital web series that highlights the career of successful alumni.

• “The AIAS 7-in-7 Campaign,” a seven-week series of videos providing ARE-prep tips from past AIAS President Charlie Klecha.

**REQUIREMENT:**
Each state component appoints and maintains contact with the state Architect Licensing Advisor, who serves as a resource to AXP participants.

AIA and NCARB created the State Licensing Advisor program to help bring to every state resident experts to guide emerging professionals through the licensure process. These volunteers come from any level—students, educators, professionals, and more—to share tools, training, and firsthand knowledge of the ARE, AXP, and state licensure requirements directly with candidates. The first step is connecting with licensing advisors in your state.

Download a list of licensing advisors by state
Section 3

Advocacy
03. Advocacy

Government and political advocacy is the process of turning our organization’s core values into reality by mobilizing members to engage with their local, state, and federal policymakers. When we identify emerging issues and move forward as one, we make a difference. Our collective voice matters.

**GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION**

1. Advance AIA’s legislative priorities
2. Engage regulatory entities on issues of importance to architects
3. Empower members to advocate for themselves and their profession
GOAL 1  
**Advance AIA’s legislative priorities**

GOAL 2  
**Engage regulatory entities on issues of importance to architects**

The activities associated with advancing legislative and regulatory policies are similar, and the following plays apply to both requirements.

**PLAY 1: DEVELOP A STATEWIDE POLICY AGENCY AND ADVOCACY STRATEGY**

**REQUIREMENT:**
Components must develop a statewide policy agenda and advocacy strategy that is aligned with the AIA Public Policies and Positions. Share the agenda and critical legislation with the Institute and with local components around the state.

To do this, establish a government affairs or legislative committee that takes charge of developing your state government policy agenda and strategy, which should guide all your component’s advocacy activities at the state level. The government affairs committee typically receives policy direction from the component’s board, based on AIA’s public policy and position statements, and after an evaluation of the major policy opportunities and threats the profession faces. The committee should comprise a diverse group that represents the interests of all AIA members—including local components and members throughout the state.

Follow these key steps when developing your agenda and strategy:

- Establish criteria for deciding which issues to prioritize and align them with AIA public policies and positions statements.
- Ensure your board of directors and the components represented find consensus on the policy goals.
- Determine who speaks publicly for your component.
- Develop clear messages and talking points about your agenda.
- Develop a communications plan to inform members and the public where you stand.
- Prepare issue briefs and other materials to support your agenda.
- Share the statewide agenda and advocacy strategies (see Play 3) with AIA and with components around the state.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**

[How to Develop a Statewide Agenda and Advocacy Strategy](#)

Examples of state component legislative agendas:

- AIA Wisconsin
- AIA Virginia
- AIA Tennessee
- AIA Pennsylvania
- AIA Illinois
PLAY 2: COMPLY WITH AIA POLICIES & POSITIONS

AIA’s board of Directors adopts public policies and position statements—which are binding for all components—on architecture’s most pressing issues. Public policies are statements of belief to policymakers, the public, and the construction industry on policy issues affecting membership, the profession of architecture, or AIA. Position statements elaborate on public policies and apply to specific contexts. Your component must comply with AIA public policies and position statements.

Download a directory of these policies and statements

PLAY 3: ADVANCE THE POLICY AGENDA

Building a campaign to advance a policy issue requires research, a winning message, reliable allies, knowledge of the legislative and political landscape, teamwork, and a strong organizational strategy.

When organizing for legislative and political advocacy work:

- Ensure your advocacy strategies are both clearly articulated and broad enough to allow for flexibility.
- Include advocacy strategies in your component’s strategic plan.
- Develop the necessary skills and training needed to work effectively and legally.

No matter what your policy goals are, using the following elements will help you achieve success:

- Legislative strategy: Verify who holds the decision-making and financial power and how you can gain access to them.
- Message development and communications: Decide how you will make your case to achieve your goals.
- Community and coalitions: Determine how you will work with others who share similar views.
- Elections and PACs: Research how using the campaign process can help you achieve your goal.
- Organizational growth: Examine how the campaign will help grow and strengthen your component and AIA.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Five Elements of a Legislative Campaign

PLAY 4: LOBBY ACCORDING TO APPLICABLE LAWS & REGULATIONS

In most states, there are specific laws and rules pertaining to lobbying—and you should carefully research them before taking action.

For some components, the executive director acts as the lobbyist; many components hire a professional lobbyist. Before hiring a professional lobbyist, perform a conflicts check to ensure that the lobbyist doesn’t represent a group that may oppose your component’s key issues. You should also be aware of the different rules each state has for creating and operating political action committees (PACs).

Consult with your state elections or secretary of state’s office for rules, regulations, and reporting requirements. AIA also highly recommends that you engage a qualified election lawyer in your state for additional guidance.
PLAY 5: ENGAGE AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS

Understanding your state and local political landscape—including demographics and economic conditions—and how architecture fits in is critical to advancing your advocacy strategy. You should strategically build relationships to identify state and local champions of architecture and allies for your causes.

**REQUIREMENT FOR STATE COMPONENTS:**

State components should engage with the state’s legislature, licensing boards, procurement agencies, and other officials on issues of importance to the architectural community.

**REQUIREMENT FOR LOCAL COMPONENTS:**

Local components should engage with local government agencies, decision makers, and building officials on issues of importance to the architectural community.

Participating in city council, planning commission, business association, or school board meetings, for example, can help you identify key issues and provide a line of communication to advance your component’s advocacy strategy.

Once you have identified key issues within your community, keep your members informed through your component website and newsletter. Be sure to determine who and how your component will speak about the state and local advocacy strategy.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**

- How to Create & Use a Local Advocacy Tracker
- Developing a Public Policy Board

GOAL 3

Empower members to advocate for themselves & their profession

PLAY 1: USE AIA NATIONAL’S TOOLS TO ADVANCE YOUR ADVOCACY AGENDA

**TOOL: LEGISLATIVE ACTION NETWORK (LAN)**

Launched in 2016, LAN is a grassroots legislative and political advocacy network that enables members to find out how events in Washington affect them—and how they can speak up for the profession.

Join LAN to give your members access to tools and information that help them make an immediate impact on key state-level issues. Email govaffs@aia.org for more information.

**TOOL: CISION**

Cision is software that enables AIA and state components to send action alerts to members and engage them on pressing issues. You can use Cision to inform members and encourage them to contact their elected officials. Cision connects AIA members with their federal and state legislative districts, so members can easily send messages directly to their representatives. Email govaffs@aia.org for more information.
PLAY 2: GET MEMBERS INVOLVED IN SPEAKUP, AIA’S ADVOCACY TRAINING EVENT

SpeakUp is AIA’s premier advocacy training event featuring three days of hands-on workshops and interactions with federal and state policy experts. SpeakUp is perfect for members of advocacy or PAC committees, super activists looking to advance to the next level, or emerging professionals who want to build power for the profession and learn new skills. Components should send at least one representative to the meeting each year. For more information about SpeakUp, email govaffs@aia.org.

PLAY 3: CULTIVATE CITIZEN ARCHITECTS

Citizen Architects engage at the local, state, and federal levels, using their insights, talents, training, and experience to improve lives and communities. They also advocate for the broader benefits of architecture through civic activism, publishing, service on boards and commissions, and elective office.

Encouraging your members to become Citizen Architects strengthens your component, your communities, and the profession as a whole. For more information on the Citizen Architect program, visit aia.org/citizenarchitect.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

- Resources for Citizen Architects
- The AIA Center for Civic Leadership

PLAY 4: LEVERAGE THE STATE GOVERNMENT NETWORK

The AIA State Government Network (SGN) enables state components and AIA national to share best practices, trends, and tools for advocating at the state government level. Your component leaders and/or members should utilize the SGN resource library, participate in monthly policy calls and webinars, and participate in the discussion group/listserv to find out what’s happening in other states on any given issue.

REQUIREMENT:

Your component should attend the annual SGN meeting once every three years on a provided stipend by AIA to discuss the latest issues and policy trends, network, share best practices, and learn how to more effectively advocate.

For more information on SGN, email govaffs@aia.org.

Use Stateside monitoring services

AIA uses Stateside legislative monitoring services to monitor specific issues trending nationally. State components have access to these monitoring services, which are performed by legislative associates who have previously worked in state legislatures across the country.

Here’s how the monitoring service works:

- Legislative associates read all newly introduced or amended measures to identify legislation relevant to AIA’s interests and provide updates on monitored legislation at every step in the legislative process.
- They send updates and email alerts on monitored legislation, and simultaneously update AIA’s client portal, which serves as the repository for all monitored measures.
• They also continuously gather political intelligence about measures through an extensive list of state contacts including chamber clerks, legislative aides, committee staff, bill sponsors, committee staff, chamber leadership, and staff in Governors’ offices.

Components have access to Stateside staff through AIA for nearly unlimited follow-up on activities occurring at the state level related to the specific issues they are monitoring on behalf of AIA. Contact govaffs@aia.org for more information.

**PLAY 5: APPOINT A VOLUNTEER AIA STATE DISASTER COORDINATOR**

Members can use their building knowledge to help their communities both before and after a disaster.

**REQUIREMENT:**

State components must appoint a volunteer AIA state disaster coordinator to interface with emergency management officials, to help components around the state prepare for potential natural or other disasters.

AIA’s disaster assistance program supports components and equips architects with the knowledge and skills to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**

- Disaster Assistance Handbook
- Disaster Assistance Program

**PLAY 6: IMPROVE COMMUNITIES THROUGH AIA RESOURCES**

**TOOL: CENTER FOR COMMUNITIES BY DESIGN**

The Center for Communities by Design helps members understand urban issues and make communities better places to live. For more than 50 years, the Center for Communities by Design has profoundly impacted some of America’s most prominent places, sending multidisciplinary teams to partner with local communities in need. Whether it’s rebuilding after a disaster or helping a community envision its future, AIA brings the resources of a customized team of multidisciplinary experts to partner with and transform communities. AIA members who participate in the Center for Communities by Design find it to be an enriching and educational experience. If you or any of your members have questions about the program, email communitiesbydesign@aia.org.

**TOOL: DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM PROGRAMS**

The Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program helps transform communities by developing a citizen-led vision for a better future. The Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) program helps communities develop a vision for a sustainable future and a realistic, attainable roadmap to get there. The Design and Resiliency Teams (DART) program works in partnership with the Urban Sustainability Director’s Network to help develop customized resilience strategies for local communities.

Contact Joel Mills at joelmills@aia.org for more information on these programs.
Section 4

Public outreach
04. Public outreach

According to recent AIA research, members of the general public often don’t understand what architects do and how this work affects communities. By communicating the value of design and the architect’s role in designing a better world, your component helps bridge this gap. Every message you create matters. As part of the greater AIA brand, you represent your component, the industry, and the organization as a whole.

GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Promote public awareness of the value of design and the role of architects
2. Recognize member excellence
3. Engage with the local community
GOAL 1

Promote public awareness of the value of design & the role of architects

REQUIREMENT:

Using AIA’s tailor-made resources, described below, components should raise awareness about the value of design and the role of architects using messaging and programs aimed at a public audience. The component can promote, use, or adapt the Institute’s public outreach resources or develop its own resources.

Keep track of your efforts, including how your work helped raise the industry’s profile, and report out during the accreditation process.

PLAY 1: TELL YOUR STORY IN THE ARCHITECT’S VOICE

Turn to the Architect’s Voice, also known as the AIA Message Book, for crafting clear, positive, and memorable messages. Developed with AIA members, it draws upon vast research in four key areas to help you articulate the work of architects to the public.

The key areas:

- Architects work with clients: We are collaborative, approachable partners throughout every design process.
- Architects strengthen society: We demonstrate the critical role architecture and design has in our communities.
- Architects design solutions: We offer solutions that showcase our passion, creativity, experience, and professional education.
- Architects transform communities: We show how architecture improves the lives of individuals and the vibrancy of communities.

Use the guide’s many message points and statistics in your public awareness campaigns, and share anecdotes with potential clients. It’s an invaluable resource for effectively telling your story through word-of-mouth campaigns. Download your copy at aia.org/messagebook.

GOAL 2

Recognize member excellence

REQUIREMENT:

Components should highlight outstanding projects through tours, public displays, featured placement in communication, or a design awards program.

Many components celebrate outstanding buildings and spaces—and the professionals behind them—with awards programs. When you publicize winners with local media announcements and displays, these programs do double duty by drawing the public’s attention to architects’ work in local communities. It’s a powerful way of recognizing your members’ work while highlighting architecture’s value. Components should highlight outstanding projects through tours, public displays, featured placement in communication, or a design awards program.
PLAY 1: START AN AWARDS PROGRAM
Awards programs raise member morale and the profile of architecture. AIA and component award programs across the country include:

- Design Awards that celebrate outstanding architecture across budgets, sizes, styles, and type while highlighting the many ways this work improves people’s lives.
- People’s Choice Awards that allow the public to select their favorites, creating connections between architects and the community.
- Lifetime Achievement Awards that recognize members who have contributed significantly to the advancement of architecture.
- Firm or Emerging Firm Awards that recognize a firm’s commitment to excellence in design and to elevating the quality of the built environment.

It’s up to you for how to solicit entries—request simple PDFs or use an awards management system. The resources here will help streamline the process.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
- Invitation to Submit Design Concept for AIA Long Beach/South Bay Design Award
- Winner Display Boards
- Reaching the Public with Design Awards and Photo Release Form Template

PLAY 2: SHARE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Don’t wait for a special occasion to celebrate success. Encourage your members to share their impressive accomplishments in real time—then pitch these stories to your local media connections and post them with images across your social media channels.

If stories have historic significance or mark an innovative breakthrough, host a tour or speaking event and invite the press and public.

GOAL 3
Engage with the local community

To get people more interested in architecture, get them involved. Use the communication strategies outlined in Play 1, media updates, and web postings to draw crowds to public events. Maintain good relationships with local media. They’ll turn to you as an expert voice on all things architecture, and you’ll have an outlet for sharing newsworthy information.

Use the following tactics to generate positive attention from the public and the media, and don’t forget to track your efforts and placements throughout the year for easy reporting.

If your component finds itself dealing with a communications crisis, remain calm and contact AIA. Our staff will work with you to help you communicate the right messages to the right people at the right time.
Section 5

Governance
05. Governance

According to recent AIA research, members of the general public often don’t understand what architects do and how this work affects communities. By communicating the value of design and the architect’s role in designing a better world, your component helps bridge this gap. Every message you create matters. As part of the greater AIA brand, you represent your component, the industry, and the organization as a whole.

GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Comply with federal and state laws
2. Mitigate Risk
3. Keep the Institute, state and local strategic plans up to date and aligned
4. Develop visionary leaders to serve at the national, state, and local levels
GOAL 1

Comply with federal and state laws

PLAY 1: UNDERSTAND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Use the following information as a practical guide to understand the right ingredients for good governance. Good governance mitigates risk through policies and procedures that ensure compliance with legislation and regulations and through legally and ethically responsible boards.

TOOL: INCORPORATE YOUR COMPONENT

Components vary in composition. Most state and local components are not-for-profit corporations and are required to provide Core Member Services. There are also mandatory and voluntary sections that operate in similar ways but may be affiliated with and part of local chapters or state components. Review the requirements for each to determine the best fit for your component. Email Component Relations at componentrelations@aia.org for additional help.

All US-based components (except voluntary sections), whether local or state, must be incorporated in the state (or similar jurisdiction) in which they are located. The articles of incorporation contain the basic information required by the state’s corporation law, such as your organization’s name, its purpose, its legal address, and the names of its incorporators.

AIA issues your charter, which identifies your organization as an AIA component and includes its formation date, name, and territory. If you need to make changes—e.g., to your component’s name or status—then you may need to amend the charter and perhaps the articles of incorporation.

TOOL: FOLLOW ALL STATE CORPORATION LAWS & IRS EXEMPTION REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENT:

Comply with all filing requirements for nonprofit organizations in the component’s state.

AIA bylaws require AIA state organizations and domestic chapters (as well as mandatory sections) to be not-for-profit corporations so that you can secure federal recognition as a tax-exempt organization. This means each component is organized under the applicable state not-for-profit corporation laws.

A not-for-profit corporation is like other corporations but often is subject to special state corporate requirements and must apply for tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service and state tax authorities. Most components are approved for not-for-profit IRS status under section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code, which applies to business leagues. While a 501(c)(6) corporation is tax exempt, you must file a tax return—generally a Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax)—on an annual basis. Find out more information about tax returns in the Finance & Operations chapter.

To obtain information about compliance with state corporation laws, contact the office of your state’s secretary of state. To determine if you are current in filing tax returns, contact the IRS and your state department of taxation.
REQUIREMENT:
Adopt and comply with written policies on whistleblower protection, conflicts of interest, and records retention and destruction, and (for staffed components) review the executive director compensation and benefits. Adopt and comply with a policy on joint ventures, if the component participants in them. (The IRS states that such policies can improve tax compliance and prevent activity that is inconsistent with tax-exempt.)

Keep records and policies in a manner that meets the legal requirements and recommended practices for a not-for-profit organization. This includes maintaining written policies regarding records retention and destruction, whistleblower protection, and conflicts of interest. All components must adhere to applicable laws and guidelines (including those involving the IRS) covering maintenance of minutes and financial data, acceptance of gifts, joint ventures and partnerships, and compensation paid to an executive director or contractor for services.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
- Whistleblower Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Record retention template
- Gift acceptance policy template

REQUIREMENT:
Comply with AIA’s policy on antitrust, code of ethics, and sexual harassment. Adopt the Institute’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement (EDI).

Components should review the AIA antitrust compliance policy and the AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct with your board, committees, and members. In all operations and activities of the Institute, you must avoid any discussions or conduct that might violate the antitrust laws or even raise an appearance of impropriety.

It is the practice of The American Institute of Architects and its members to comply strictly with all laws, including federal and state antitrust laws that apply to AIA operations and activities. Accordingly, this meeting will be conducted in full compliance with those laws.

Members of AIA are dedicated to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and competence. The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct states guidelines for the conduct of Members in fulfilling those obligations.

ALL components and firms have a duty—and responsibility to provide a harassment-free work environment by establishing clear policies against sexual harassment and by training all employees, and reporting all incidents. Just as important, components also must take steps to ensure that vendors and sponsors comply with their sexual harassment policies. As defined by the United States’ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), “It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person’s sex.” Harassment can include “sexual harassment” or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

Components must discuss the AIA’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Statement with your board. You might choose to appoint a task force to ensure you have the policies and procedures in place for promoting or improving EDI in your component’s programs and practices. This could include your awards programs, board nominations process, and speaker selection—are they inclusive? Adopting the AIA’s EDI policy is a requirement of component accreditation.
The AIA stands for human and civil rights, the universal respect for human dignity, and the unbiased treatment of all persons in employment, civic and business regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical abilities, or religious practices.

The American Institute of Architects, as part of the global community, champions a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the profession of architecture to create a better environment for all. Achieving this vision has a direct impact on the relevance of our profession and the world’s prosperity, health, and future.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
Antitrust Compliance Guidelines
AIA Code of Ethics
AIA Diversity and Inclusion Statement
AIA Columbus Diversity Policy
AIA Harassment Resources

TOOL: ESTABLISH & UPDATE YOUR BYLAWS

REQUIREMENT:
Review and update bylaws at least once every 10 years using the AIA Model Component Bylaws as a guide. Submit bylaws to AIA’s General Counsel for review as they are created or amended.

Bylaws are a component’s most important governing document: They determine how a component operates. Bylaws are usually the responsibility of the component’s secretary.

Your board of directors should review your bylaws annually to ensure they are in accordance with AIA bylaws, which always supersede components’ bylaws. Amendments to the AIA bylaws are typically adopted at the AIA Conference on Architecture. Submit updates to your bylaws to AIA General Counsel and the AIA Secretary for review and approval. The AIA publishes model bylaw guidelines that can help simplify the revision process.

Core Member Services require that you prove that your bylaws are current and that changes have been submitted to general counsel for review and approval.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
AIA Model Component Bylaws
Institute Bylaws

TOOL: DEVELOP & HONE YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

Your mission statement communicates your purpose and should be clear, memorable, and concise. For example, AIA’s mission statement is “AIA is the voice of the architectural profession and a resource for its members in service to society.” Your mission statement will typically remain the same for a long time, but you can and should update it if your component’s purpose changes.

TOOL: ACQUIRE DIRECTORS & OFFICERS LIABILITY INSURANCE

REQUIREMENT:
Components must maintain directors and officers liability insurance, which ensures against personal damages to your components’ directors as a result of their actions or omissions.
Business insurance protects your component and its officers against potential loss. There are several types of business insurance, including fidelity, general liability, fire, and directors and officers liability insurance. Many companies provide this type of insurance, and you should contact a local insurance carrier or refer to a list of carriers at the end of this chapter.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**

D & O Insurance
General Liability

**GOAL 2**

Mitigate risk

**TOOL: MITIGATE RISK**

When a calamity strikes, from the abrupt leaving or passing of your component executive director to a natural disaster, it can be devastating for your component. Components should have a written succession plan and an emergency continuity plan in place. Boards can get ahead of the game by thinking through their desired course of action in either a planned or emergency transition.

The first step the board must take is to identify what type of transition the component is facing. The type of transition influences the challenges involved and the ultimate strategy the board will adopt to manage the process, as well as what issues it needs to address in order to ensure that the new executive can start the job on firm footing.

**TOOL: TRANSITION PLAN**

The practice of succession planning—which should include ongoing updates to ensure that plans reflect the current operating environment—ensures that the executive transition isn’t unnecessarily drawn out by lack of clarity about the process and initial steps, which can have a serious negative impact on the component. Resist the temptation to try to find someone just like the departing executive. The skills, abilities, and attributes that got the component where it is today may not be what it needs to move forward. The board should be asking where the organization is headed and what kind of leadership it needs to get there. Take a hard look at the executive’s responsibilities and workload. The board should make every effort to ensure that the executive job is doable.

Components with staff should develop employees for succession planning:

- Assign special projects and team leadership roles.
- Offer training and development opportunities.
- Identify and understand the development needs of your staff.
- Focus resources on key employee retention.
- Be aware of employment trends in your area to know the roles you have a difficult filling externally.
- Provide promotional job opportunities.

Planning for the departure of the executive is critical for ensuring the stability and continued smooth operation of the component once that individual departs. Failure to
A plan for this change can result in internal turmoil within the component. Boards should be made aware of the sudden departure or death of the executive director immediately and what steps to take. A plan should already be in place. Services and operations should not be interrupted because of an unexpected or unplanned succession.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
- AIA Florida Transition Plan
- Bob Harris’ Transition Plan Resources
- How to: Succession Planning
- Efficient Succession Planning Tips

**TOOL: EMERGENCY PLANS**

Components should have an Emergency Plan that covers many situations that occur without prediction and require a fast and efficient recovery. The plan should:

- Pinpoint the type of emergency.
- State the goals and objectives for the emergency plan.
- Identify the emergency response team and define what the team is expected to do.
- Include the name of the spokesperson for the component.
- Identify any regulations covered by the plan.

The Plan should be reviewed by the board of directors and available for review by all members. The board must be made aware of the spokesperson. It should be distributed to the board of directors and component staff. A master copy of the document should be maintained by the emergency response team. Multiple copies should be stored within the facility to ensure that the component staff can quickly review roles, responsibilities, tasks, and reference information when the team is activated. An electronic copy of this Plan should be stored on a secure and accessible website that would allow team member access if the component’s servers are down. Electronic copies should also be stored on a secured USB flash drive for printing on demand.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
- AIA Florida Emergency Plan
- https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/89518
- https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is235b/is235b.pdf
GOAL 3  
**Keep local, state, & national strategic plans up to date & aligned**

**PLAY 1: DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN THAT Aligns WITH THE INSTITUTE’S PLAN**

**REQUIREMENT:**
Conduct strategic planning at least every 5 years and align it with the institute’s strategic plan to provide focus and direction for the component’s activities.

Strategic planning is the creation of your organizational framework and results in a roadmap for the next 3–5 years. Effective strategic planning articulates where your organization is going, its goals, and the actions needed to make progress. It’s also vital to your component’s success. AIA Core Member Services require that you conduct strategic planning at least every five years, and you must submit your strategic plan as part of your accreditation.

Use your strategic plan to:
- Set your component’s priorities
- Focus energy and resources
- Strengthen operations
- Ensure the board, committees, and volunteers work toward common goals

Review your strategic plan annually, and use it as a guide for each coming year’s actions. Make sure you align your strategic plan with both your component’s mission and AIA’s mission.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
- AIA’s 2016–2020 Strategic Plan
- Sample strategic plan from an AIA component
- Guidelines for submitting resolutions for consideration at the annual Business Meeting

GOAL 4  
**Develop visionary leaders to serve at local, state, & national levels**

**PLAY 1: BUILD AN EFFECTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Each AIA component is governed by its own board of directors, which makes decisions about the component’s strategic direction, serves as its voice, and manages financial oversight. An effective board can make all the difference in carrying out your mission, so it’s important to seek out and nurture leaders to serve. Board responsibilities include:

- Determining and articulating to the public and members your component’s mission and purpose
- Ensuring effective planning
- Monitoring and strengthening programs and services
- Protecting assets and providing proper financial oversight
- Safeguarding legal and ethical integrity
**TOOL: DEVELOP A BOARD**

The makeup of boards varies among components, but boards typically include a president, president-elect, secretary, and treasurer. Additional members—including emerging professionals—can be valuable additions that enable you to increase member participation and train future leaders.

In developing an effective board of directors, assess your ideal configuration and consider:

- Is the board representative of the chapter geographically?
- Is the board representative of architects and emerging professionals at different stages of their careers, including those who aren’t licensed?
- Is the board diverse in gender, ethnicity, race, and other categories?
- Does the board represent different types of practice?

**TOOL: SELECT YOUR BOARD**

Your board selection process will likely depend on your component’s bylaws, but generally you should select your board through a Component Nominating Committee and an election process. Refer to your state not-for-profit laws to help ensure you satisfy all requirements.

**REQUIREMENT:**

Once your board has been selected, report names of the upcoming year’s officers to AIA Component Collaboration and Resources by December 31st, annually to ensure new officers receive leadership communications.

Your bylaws likely determine your Chairs of Nominating Committees, which may include the appointment of a past president, the current president’s election, or election by the board itself. Keep transparency top of mind while considering candidates to ensure a fair and open process.

Make sure all potential board members understand the responsibilities and expectations of serving, the amount of time required to serve, and their fiduciary duties. These duties usually include:

- Duty of Care, requiring leaders to use reasonable care and good judgement in making decisions on behalf of the interests of the organization
- Duty of Loyalty, requiring leaders to be faithful to the organization, avoiding conflicts of interest
- Duty of Obedience, requiring leaders to comply with governing documents and legal requirements (e.g., bylaws, articles of incorporation, and policies)

**TOOL: DETERMINE BOARD TERMS & DESIGN SUCCESSION PLANS**

Recruiting volunteers for your board can seem daunting, but with well-documented and smooth succession plans, you can keep your board fresh and ensure your organization thrives. Clearly outline board terms in your component’s bylaws. Designate your officers in netFORUM, AIA’s member database, by December 31 of each year.
**TOOL: ORIENT YOUR BOARD**

**REQUIREMENT:**
After your board has been chosen, conduct a board orientation annually to engage and initiate board members and improve board effectiveness.

Conduct a board orientation annually—before your board members begin their terms—to improve understanding of your component’s governance structure, policies, positions, and vision. Provide each board member with your organization’s big picture, including the strategic plan and the board’s major functions, and make sure all members understand their fiduciary duties.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
AIA Nashville
AIA Florida
Bob Harris’ Resources

**TOOL: ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES**

Successful committees assist your board in meeting your strategic plan’s goals and objectives. Committees can take several forms, such as standing committees, task forces for short-term projects, or ad hoc groups. They typically serve at the will of the board, and the component president and directors determine their leadership. Committees must adhere to antitrust guidelines and should provide meeting minutes to the board for review.

**TOOL: TAKE CLEAR AND ACCURATE MINUTES**

Minutes are an official record of actions the board took at a meeting, not a record of everything discussed. They serve historical and legal purposes, documenting the board’s procedures and help the board meet your organization’s mission and goals. Minutes and records made during a meeting can be discoverable in litigation, and minutes are public documents; members have the right to ask to review them.

The component secretary typically prepares the minutes, which should include the title of the group that is meeting, the date, time, venue, and names of those attending, including guests. The secretary should sign and date the minutes upon distribution.

When taking a board vote, you don’t have to list the names of those who made the motion, seconded, and approved. Just list what happened (e.g., motion made, seconded, and carried or failed). Exceptions include when the board approves compensation for an employee or contractor and there is a transaction with a board member. In these cases, record the names of those who voted for and against.

Once the minutes are approved, destroy any notes and drafts. Final approved minutes should be the only records of meetings. In order to ensure that you’re following antitrust guidelines, include references to the final approved minutes on each board and committee meeting agenda and read the following compliance reminder at the beginning of each board and committee meeting:

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
Sample board meeting minutes
**PLAY 2: PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: ATTEND AIA GRASSROOTS**

With the future of the profession in mind, the annual AIA Grassroots Leadership Event—usually held in winter or early spring—helps component officers become more effective chapter and civic leaders, strengthening their components, firms, and communities.

Grassroots offers opportunities to connect with peers, share best practices, and learn leadership strategies through general sessions, workshops, and networking. Attendees can also weigh in on AIA initiatives. Two elected leaders and your component executive must attend the Grassroots Leadership Event at least once every three years.

Comply with executive staff employment & training guidelines

**PLAY 1: SCHEDULE REGULAR PERFORMANCE REVIEWS FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Develop a policy for performance reviews—including salary and benefits—for your component’s executive director. Traditionally, performance reviews occur annually with your board of directors. However, more frequent, one-on-one progress meetings between the component president or designate and the executive director can provide more meaningful and open exchanges.

Whether they are quarterly or annually, reviews should clearly assess your executive director’s performance and allow that person to offer her or his perspective on the component’s strengths and weaknesses. The review process should include discussion of:

- last year’s executive evaluation, including compensation
- the executive director’s job description
- board policies that set expectations or limitations on the executive
- the component’s annual operating or strategic plan

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**

Sample executive director performance review
Sample staff performance review
Component administrator performance evaluation template

**PLAY 2: SET APPROPRIATE COMPENSATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The board of directors is typically responsible for establishing the executive director’s compensation, including both salary and benefits. Compensation should be “reasonable and not excessive,” according to the IRS.

As part of IRS Form 990, your component must describe the process used to approve executive compensation. By studying comparable data from other organizations of similar size, you can ensure that you are compensating your executive director fairly. The American Society of Association Executives provides an annual compensation study by size of organization. To access this information, you must be a member of ASAE; you can also purchase the compensation guide through their website at asae.org.
06. Membership

Members are at the core of everything we do, from advocating for architecture’s most pressing issues to offering industry-best continuing education and career resources, to leading innovative initiatives that benefit architects and the profession.

GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION
1. Actively recruit & retain members
2. Engage members in fellowship and community
3. Seek member feedback
Active recruitment & retain members

**Play 1: Understand Membership Types**

Understanding the membership tiers is the first step to actively and successfully recruiting and retaining members.

AIA is a three-tiered organization, and members must join at all levels—local, state, and AIA national. In states without local chapters, members belong to both AIA national and the statewide component.

These membership categories are available to prospective members:

- **Architect members (AIA)**—Individuals licensed to practice architecture from a US licensing authority and can use the title architect in any US jurisdiction. Architect members may use the AIA designation (example: Sara Smith, AIA).
- **Associate members (Assoc. AIA)**—Individuals who meet one of the following criteria:
  - hold a professional degree in architecture; or
  - work under the supervision of an architect in a professional or technical capacity directly related to the practice of architecture; or
  - are eligible by education or experience and employed, enrolled, or participating in programs recognized by licensing authorities as constituting credit toward architectural licensure—typically individuals enrolled in the Architectural Experience Program (AXP) and taking the Architect Registration Examination (ARE); or
  - are a faculty member in a university program in architecture and have not attained licensure.
- **International associate members (Int’l Assoc. AIA)**—Individuals who have an architecture license or equivalent from a non-US licensing authority. International associate members may use the Int’l Assoc. AIA designation (example: Sara Smith, Int’l Assoc. AIA).
- **Allied members**—Professionals who are working in a field related to architecture or who are registered to work outside of their profession (where these requirements exist). Allied members may include engineers, planners, landscape architects, sculptors, muralists, artists, as well as individuals who work in government, education, journalism, manufacturing, or other related fields.

These membership categories are not available to prospective members:

- **Emeritus members**—Architect or associate members (including a fellow) who have been in good standing for 15 consecutive years immediately prior to application and either (1) have reached the age of 70 and are retired from architecture or (2) are unable to work in the profession. Emeritus members don’t pay dues, and architect members emeritus are not required to maintain the right under law to practice and use the title architect.
- **Fellows (FAIA)**—Architect members who have been in good standing for at least 10 cumulative years and meet certain other qualifications may be nominated. Fellows may use the FAIA designation (example: Sara Smith, FAIA).
- **Honorary members (Hon. AIA)**—People of esteemed character who are otherwise ineligible for membership but who have performed distinguished service to the profession or to the arts and sciences. Honorary members may use the Hon. AIA designation (example: Sara Smith, Hon. AIA).
Honorary fellows (Hon. FAIA)—Architects of esteemed character and distinguished achievement who are neither US citizens nor US residents and who don’t primarily practice architecture within the domain of AIA. Honorary fellows may use the Hon. FAIA designation (example: Sara Smith, Hon. FAIA).

More information:
- Find eligibility requirements for all membership categories in the membership policies.
- Email honorsawards@aia.org for more information about honorary membership and fellowship.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
- Download membership policies

**PLAY 2: PROMOTE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS TO RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS**

AIA offers a variety of new member benefits that encourage architecture and design professionals to join. When you promote these benefits, you enhance your recruiting efforts, build new relationships, and strengthen your community. You should also consider establishing your own promotions to complement these offerings.

**REQUIREMENT:**

Welcome all new members and engage with members at each career state to foster active participation in component activates.

In all-volunteer led components, the board and/or a membership committee is typically responsible for member retention and recruitment. Send membership applications and payments to the address on the membership application. New members may also join at aia.org/join.

**ONLINE RESOURCES (CLICK TO DOWNLOAD):**
- Membership applications
- Sample welcome letters
- Sample Member Benefits Guide

**TOOL: 15 FOR 12**

Beginning October 1 each year, new and reinstating members can join AIA and get 15 months of membership for the cost of 12 months. (Their membership will run from October of the current year through December of the following year.) First-time members can take advantage of the 15 for 12 offer by joining at aia.org/join. Reinstating members must complete a paper application, which they can download at aia.org/join. 15 for 12 is offered October through December (for example, October 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018). The earlier someone joins beginning in October, the more they will benefit with additional months of membership for the cost of 12.

**TOOL: FREE REGISTRATION TO THE AIA CONFERENCE ON ARCHITECTURE**

New members receive free registration to the AIA Conference on Architecture, AIA’s annual conference. The offer is valid only for first-time new architect, associate, and international associate members. Members who have been lapsed for at least five years are also eligible. Membership dues must be paid in full or enrolled into the dues installment program to receive free conference registration.
TOOL: DUES INSTALLMENT PROGRAM
Any member or new member can participate in the dues installment program. There is a $40 service fee to participate which is distributed over the number of installments. If new members enroll by April 30, they can pay their dues in up to six monthly installments. They must pay in full by June 30, however.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
- Dues Installment Program information
- Dues Installment Program FAQ

TOOL: NEW GRADUATES
AIA offers free membership to new graduates who:
- recently graduated with a NAAB-accredited bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree in architecture within approximately the past 1–18 months; or
- recently graduated with a non-NAAB bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree within approximately the past 1–18 months and currently work under the supervision of an architect in a professional or technical capacity directly related to the practice of architecture; or
- work under the supervision of an architect in a professional or technical capacity directly related to the practice of architecture and who are enrolled or participating in programs recognized by licensing authorities as constituting credit towards architectural licensure.

NAAB and non-NAAB graduates must provide a copy of their diploma to receive free membership for up to 18 months. Learn more.

PLAY 3: ESTABLISH A STRUCTURE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN MEMBERS

REQUIREMENT:
Components should conduct retention and recruitment efforts annually to ensure a healthy membership base. Use AIA member recruitment and retention resources, as described in the Member & Component Support Resource Guide, or the component may develop other such resources of its own.

While all members work to strengthen a community, a dedicated committee that directly assists your board and staff is the best way to establish a structured program for recruiting and retaining members.

GOAL 2
Engage members in fellowship & community

PLAY 1: CELEBRATE MEMBERS
Whether your component is welcoming new members or celebrating new emeritus members, it’s important to recognize members’ achievements. Recognition makes your members feel more valued, helps your recruitment and retention efforts, and builds a stronger community in the process.

Celebrating new members can be as simple as recognizing them through your component website or newsletter. You can also thank a new or reinstated member, fellow, or recent graduate at a meeting or special event. Contact other components to share ideas and best practices for celebrating member milestones.
PLAY 2: ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO VOTE AT CONFERENCE

The annual AIA Conference on Architecture is the architecture and design event of the year. It’s also where important AIA business, component delegate voting, and information exchange occurs. When member delegates cast their vote at conference, they amplify their voice—and the voice of your component and community.

There are three types of representatives: Delegates-at-large, member delegates, and state delegates:

• Delegates-at-large—Members of the board or strategic council or past presidents of AIA
• State delegates—Architect members representing each state organization chartered by AIA, including statewide chapters functioning as state organizations
• Member delegates—Representatives of components

Component delegates should cast their votes at conference or arrange to be represented by proxy. AIA determines the number of member delegates from each component 60 days before conference.

The delegate accreditation process involves the component’s president or secretary, who certifies the selection and identity of the member delegates. At conference, the Credentials Committee accredits all delegates entitled to represent AIA membership.

Representation by part of delegation—If not all your component’s member delegates are accredited to vote at conference, then those who are accredited can cast, in equal portions, the total number of votes to which the component is entitled.

Representation by proxy and proxy for absent delegation—If none of your component’s member delegates can attend conference, then your component president or the president’s designate can distribute your component’s votes by written proxy to a member delegate or state delegate from another component in the same state or in the same region, in that order of priority.

GOAL 3

Seek member feedback

PLAY 1: SEEK MEMBER FEEDBACK THROUGH SURVEYS, FOCUS GROUPS, AND IN-PERSON MEETINGS

REQUIREMENT:

Components should seek their members’ feedback at least once every 5 years. This can be done through surveying, focus groups, or in-person meetings. Components can also collaborate with other components in their state to accomplish this.

Engage with members at each career stage to foster active participation and gather feedback to improve the member experience.

TOOL: ADDITIONAL MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES

For information on member dues, invoicing and renewals, please use the online resources below.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Member Dues and Renewals
Section 7

Finance & operations
07. Finance & operations

All components must have a strong system of operational and financial policies and controls in place to prevent and detect irregularities. Component leaders—whether paid or volunteer—are responsible for maintaining these internal controls. Plan to work with an independent accountant once a year to review your component’s policies and advise you on sound financial practices.

GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Conduct secure, transparent, and timely financial practices
2. Protect tax-exempt status.
3. Participate in AIA volunteer and component staff training opportunities
GOAL 1  Conduct secure, transparent, and timely financial practices and controls

PLAY 1: FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & RECORD KEEPING

Effective financial management begins with documenting your component’s fiscal policies, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and ensuring your data is an accurate and reliable basis for decision-making.

All nonprofits, including AIA and components, must protect the privacy of constituent information. Government-mandated privacy regulations provide guidelines about what information can be collected, how to establish opt-in and opt-out procedures, and how a nonprofit may use member information.

You should establish a component privacy policy—a clearly articulated guide that staff, boards, and volunteers can use. It should outline steps to protect the privacy of member information. At a minimum, the policy should contain the following:

TOOL: ADMINISTRATIVE STEPS

- Establish written information and security policies.
- Promote awareness by training staff and volunteers regularly.

TOOL: PHYSICAL STEPS

- Keep paper documents containing personal information in locked file cabinets.
- Shred paper documents and securely destroy or erase computers and devices containing personal information before discarding.
- For offices, limit the number of people who have access to building keys or alarm codes.

TOOL: TECHNICAL STEPS

- Use antivirus software and stay current with security patch updates.
- Use strong passwords and change them regularly.

REQUIREMENT:

Ensure that financial data and transactions are secure for the protection of both customers and the component. If your component accepts credit cards as a form of payment, you must process these cards in accordance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS). PCI DSS is a set of standards that the credit card industry sets. Please call your merchant services provider to verify compliance.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Record Keeping 101
PLAY 2: MAINTAIN A BANK ACCOUNT

Components must maintain a bank account for deposits and payments. As described in the Membership chapter of this playbook, AIA regularly deposits member dues payments into each component’s bank account. Your component bank account should be established under your component’s taxpayer number. The account must be separate from your personal accounts and also from other components’ accounts.

Depending on the size of your component and its assets, account management can range from simple to more complex. For a small component, you may not need much more than a checkbook. As your component grows, you’ll likely need to develop more elaborate systems.

Establish clear procedures about who is responsible for daily maintenance of bank accounts and who is authorized to sign checks. At a minimum, segregate responsibilities, assigning one staff person or board member to post transactions and another to reconcile and regularly review bank accounts.

Provide the bank statement to your component’s executive director or treasurer unopened, to be reviewed prior to account reconciliation. Clearly articulate who is responsible for authorizing payments and reviewing credit card statements. Dividing these responsibilities in a small or volunteer-led component can be difficult, but such a system will help you avoid problems such as embezzlement or fraudulent charges. Create a finance committee to allocate responsibilities or designate board members to different tasks.

TOOL: CONSIDER THESE ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARDS:

- Require two signatures for checks over a board-established amount
- Assign someone to review and authorize payments prior to disbursement
- Ensure that invoices or other back-up documents accompany all requests for checks or cash disbursements
- Never pre-sign checks
- Require prior written approval for credit card expenses exceeding a certain amount
- Require back-up documentation for all credit card expenses
- Verbally confirm any written or emailed request from an Executive Director, President, or Treasurer to transfer funds

Be aware that many fraudulent schemes seem legitimate. Appropriate financial controls help mitigate the risk of becoming a victim of fraud.

Bob Harris of the Nonprofit Center has developed some best practices for nonprofits, including information on risk management and financial policies and procedures, which you can find at rchcae.com.

PLAY 3: ISSUE REGULAR FINANCIAL REPORTS AND REPORT YEARLY DUES RATE BY THE INSTITUTE’S DEADLINE

REQUIREMENT:

In addition to creating an annual budget that your board of directors approves, provide at least quarterly financial reports of income and expenses (profit/loss statement). It allows leadership to confirm that costs are consistent with your budget and aligned with your strategic plan, identifies discrepancies and potential financial issues quickly, and compares actual results to the budget. These steps allow the board to execute its fiduciary responsibilities.
Establish a reporting procedure for every board meeting and record in the meeting minutes that financials were presented. At a minimum, your reports should include:

- a balance sheet showing assets and liabilities
- an income statement showing income and expenses vs. approved budget over a period

**REQUIREMENT:**
Components should report their dues rates to AIA Member and Component Support as required by the Institute’s schedule (currently September 15) to ensure that dues revenue reach the component without delay.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
Financial reporting best practices & samples

**PLAY 4: CONDUCT AN ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT**

**REQUIREMENT:**
Adopt an audit or review policy. When there is no audit by an accountant, reviews may be performed by an independent financial review committee appointed by the board.

If an audit is not fiscally possible, there are less costly alternatives such as a financial review or a financial compilation. A financial review is also conducted by an independent CPA, but the process is not as thorough as an audit. The review will state whether the CPA is aware of any modifications that should be made so that the financial statements conform with generally accepted accounting principles. With a review, the CPA will not provide an opinion on the financial statements but will provide limited assurances about the financial statements.

A financial compilation simply assembles the financial statements from the information the component provides. An independent CPA doesn’t audit or review the records, and therefore the CPA expresses no opinion or assurances about whether the records comply with generally accepted accounting principles.

During an audit, the CPA will thoroughly examine your component’s accounting records and financial statements to test the accuracy of the records and internal controls. Afterward, the auditor provides an opinion as to whether the financial statements are fair and accurate. An auditor’s positive assessment indicates that component staff and leadership are keeping financial records responsibly.

**PLAY 5: UNDERSTAND IRS AUDITS & FORMS**

**TOOL: IRS AUDIT**
During an IRS audit, an IRS agent examines your component’s tax returns, books, and records. Even if your component has satisfied all its financial and tax obligations, the audit process can be disruptive and time consuming. You can find information regarding nonprofits and IRS audits on the IRS website. If your component is notified of an IRS audit, you should consult a CPA or tax attorney for help through the process.
GOAL 2  

**Protect your tax exempt-status**

**TOOL: IRS FORM 990**

**REQUIREMENT:**

All nonprofits—including AIA components (with the possible exception of voluntary sections)—must file annual returns to ensure continued tax-exempt status.

The form you’ll use—IRS Form 990—varies, from a simple electronically filed return for organizations with income under $50,000 (990-N) to the standard 990.

These returns are due on May 15 every year unless you have filed for an extension. The IRS provides 990 information on thousands of nonprofit groups, including AIA and its components. The IRS Compliance Guide for Tax-Exempt Organizations can be downloaded from the IRS website.

Often, your component must also file an income tax return in its state or local jurisdiction. You’ll likely have to file other corporate reports and tax—for example, sales tax returns, personal property tax returns, and filings with the secretary of state where your component is incorporated. Check with an accountant to determine if your component must file additional returns for state, local, or municipal entities.

*Download Form 990*

**TOOL: UNRELATED BUSINESS INCOME TAX (UBIT)**

Tax-exempt organizations are generally not subject to a corporate-level income tax, but there are circumstances under which your component may be subject to such a tax, known as UBIT. UBIT requires payment of tax on commercial activities considered outside the scope of exempt purposes. The laws regarding UBIT are complex, and you should seek counsel from a tax expert to help safeguard you against potential issues. IRS publication 598 describes UBIT regulations in greater detail; this document is available on the IRS website.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**

- IRS Form 990
- Banking Polices 101
GOAL 3  
Participate in AIA volunteer and component professional development staff training opportunities

PLAY 1: PROVIDE MANDATORY & OPTIONAL STAFF TRAINING

TOOL: GRASSROOTS

REQUIREMENT:
Components must send at least one elected leader to Grassroots at least once every three years for leadership training. Executive directors who work at least 30 hours per week should also attend at least one every three years.

Grassroots, the AIA’s leadership event, provides two to three days of presentations and workshops, allowing leaders to network and share innovative practices. The Event is designed to share knowledge, tools, and resources with peers, learn effective chapter leadership programs and strategies and stimulate change in your chapter, firm and community. Free registration is given to one chapter executive and two leaders or one all-volunteer leader.

TOOL: CACE ANNUAL MEETING

REQUIREMENT:
Component executive directors who work at least 30 hours per week must attend the Council of Architectural Component Executives (CACE) annual meeting at least once every three years.

The CACE annual meeting brings together local and state component executives and staff for professional development and training. There, CACE members can enhance their association management skills and network with peers and AIA national staff. CACE members also engage in discussions about component and AIA programs and initiatives and share best practices and concerns.

CACE also conducts a business meeting to select CACE officers, disseminate up-to-date information on issues being discussed by CACE committee members and AIA leadership, and address issues of concern. There is no registration fee, but components must pay their own travel and expenses.

TOOL: INSTITUTE RESOURCE TRAINING

REQUIREMENT:
New executive directors who work at least 30 hours must attend Institute Resource Training (IRT) within two years of being hired.

IRT is an intensive program designed for new component executives to enhance their understanding of AIA resources, including how to implement them at the state and local levels. Participants work in small groups with AIA staff to exchange ideas about making the most of programs and services. Executive Directors also benefit from networking and information exchange with other component executives and membership in the CACE Executive Committee. AIA national pays for travel and hotel expenses.