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.