

Component guide

The American Institute of Architects

Capitol Hill Day 2019

WELCOME!

On behalf of 2019 President, Bill Bates, FAIA, First Vice President, Jane Frederick, FAIA, Government Advocacy Committee Chair, Tim Hawk, FAIA, and CEO/EVP, Robert Ivy, FAIA, welcome to Capitol Hill. We hope you enjoy this year's events and meetings with your Congressional delegation as well as the rest of Grassroots 2019.

—Sarah Dodge
Senior Vice President
Advocacy + Relationships

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Kara Kempfski
(202) 731 8462
karakempfski@aia.org

The American Institute of
Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292

UNDERSTANDING YOUR IMPACT

With the help of the AIA national board's Government Advocacy Committee in 2018, AIA's federal relations team worked hard to assemble a robust 2019/2020 federal policy agenda.

With your help, both on Capitol Hill Day and beyond, we can ensure advancement of each agenda item in the next two years of the 116th Congress.

To that end, no tactic is more effective when attempting to convince an elected official to support or oppose a particular issue than having their constituents lobby them. AIA Capitol Hill Day is meant to take full advantage of this fact and help advance two AIA federal agenda issues; school safety and sustainability.

Bottom line: advancing these items will be a team effort and you can be the difference-maker with your conversations and interactions with your Congressional delegation about these issues.

USING THIS GUIDE TO MAKE YOUR IMPACT

The documents in this guide have been assembled to help components effectively prepare and conduct meetings with their Congressional delegation. This is how they should be read and used. All documents (except two) are meant to be internal documents for use by AIA components only. They are not meant to be given to a member of Congress or their staff. The two documents that should be given to them in your Hill meeting are either one of the Issue Briefs.

Issue prep—Read these two documents first. There is one for school safety and one for energy efficiency. They provide a “deep dive” that will help you understand these issues.

Issue talking points—Read these two documents second. There is one for school safety and one for energy efficiency. You should use both to prepare for what you are going to say and how you are going to say it in your Hill meetings.

Congressional meeting guide—Read this document third. It will help you and your group organize and run an effective Capitol Hill meeting.

Issue briefs—Read these documents last. They are “leave behind” documents for members of Congress and/or their staff. Refer to the briefs in your meeting and make sure they have a copy when you leave.



Issue prep

The American Institute of Architects

For use by AIA components

Energy efficiency

BACKGROUND

AIA has a long history of advocating to Congress about energy efficiency in buildings and communities. Perhaps most notably, AIA has been responsible for the creation and continuation of the Energy Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction or “Section 179D”.

Section 179D encourages the energy efficient design of commercial buildings by allowing building owners to claim a federal tax deduction of up to \$1.80 per sq. ft. Consequently, this helps offset the design and construction costs associated with installing energy efficient technologies that would reduce the building’s total energy consumption. Architects can also qualify for the deduction, but only if the property is a public building (local, state, or federal all potentially qualify).

Unfortunately, Congress has not extended 179D to cover work on any building in 2018. With a new Congress, AIA continues to advocate for its permanent extension. But AIA has also been exploring new policy proposals to increase energy efficiency in all types of buildings.

AIA’S NEW APPROACH & STRATEGY

While 179D has been successful, it has been most effective in encouraging the use of energy efficient technologies in new construction. It has not been as effective in encouraging it as part of renovations or retrofits to existing buildings. This is concerning because 95 percent of existing commercial buildings are more than a decade old and were built prior to 2008. Of all commercial buildings, 82 percent were built before 2000; prior to modern versions of building energy codes governing their design and construction. Therein lies the problem; the primary federal law meant to increase energy efficiency in buildings is only impacting a small percentage of them. Furthermore, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1), passed in 2017, has had the unintended consequence of disincentivizing building owners and developers to invest in property improvements that increase energy efficiency. Bottom line: increasing energy efficiency in America’s existing building stock needs a fresh approach and a new public policy solution.

To that end, AIA is urging Congress to amend the federal tax code by expanding the current definition of what is considered “qualified improvement property”, or QIP, to include energy efficient technologies.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Kara Kempski
(202) 731 8462
karakempski@aia.org

The American Institute of
Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292



Issue prep

The American Institute of Architects

QIP is a tax deduction created in The PATH Act of 2015 that applies to interior improvements to non-residential property. QIP does not include improvements for building enlargement, elevators and escalators, or internal structural framework of a building – interior improvements solely apply. But QIP's current definition and original purpose, as written into federal law, does not explicitly include energy efficient technology upgrades. This limits building owners' options for interior improvements and disincentivizes energy efficiency upgrades.

Separately, there are concerns regarding QIP that don't concern the absence of energy efficient technologies. They stem from simple drafting errors within the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017. While they were simple, they have had a strong negative impact. AIA is one of many industry partners that supports correcting these errors. In so doing, there could be an opportunity to amend QIP to include energy efficient technology. This provides an excellent opportunity for AIA to push for additional QIP revisions, such as the inclusion of energy efficient technology.

Specifically, AIA is pushing to expand QIP's scope of eligible deductions to cover energy efficient improvements to the building envelope, installing mechanical insulation, exterior lighting, and modifications to building management systems. This list of technologies is not exhaustive. Regardless, including them would better incentivize building owners to incorporate energy efficient technologies into their existing building stock.

The key Congressional committees that oversee tax policy are House Ways and Means and Senate Finance while the Senate Energy and Natural Resources and House Energy and Commerce Committees oversee energy efficiency public policy. While changes to QIP would go through the tax writing committees, it will be important to have the support of members of Congress on the other two as well. Furthermore, it will be imperative to have the support of both Democrats and Republicans, regardless of whether they are on these four committees. Bottomline, it is important to have as much support as possible from both sides of the aisle in both chambers of Congress. Finally, the timing is right for AIA components to lobby for these changes with their Congressional delegation.



Issue talking points

The American Institute of Architects

For use by AIA components

Energy efficiency

KEY MESSAGE

Support a new approach to increase energy efficiency in buildings.

THE ASK

AIA urges Congress to amend the federal tax code's definition of qualified improvement property to include energy efficiency technology upgrades.

INTRODUCE THE ISSUE AND DELIVER YOUR KEY MESSAGE

- One of The American Institute of Architect's (AIA) top federal priorities this Congress is to create new tax incentives to increase the energy efficiency of existing buildings.
- Nearly 40 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions are produced by buildings. While we've made great strides to improve the energy efficiency of the building sector, too many existing buildings remain inefficient.
- However, one of the primary federal laws meant to increase energy efficiency in buildings is only impacting a small percentage of them.

DELIVER INFORMATION TO BACK UP YOUR KEY MESSAGE

- Congress passed Section 179D into the Internal Revenue Code in 2005. It was crafted as the main federal tax code provision that would increase the use of energy efficient technologies in all commercial and multi-family buildings.
- However, 179D has been more effective in encouraging their use in new construction, less so for renovations or retrofits to existing buildings.
- 95 percent of existing commercial buildings are more than a decade old and were built prior to 2008. Of all commercial buildings, 82 percent were built before 2000; prior to modern versions of building energy codes governing their design and construction.
- Therein lies the problem; one of the primary federal laws meant to increase energy efficiency in buildings is only impacting a small percentage of them.
- Furthermore, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1), passed in 2017, has had the unintended consequence of disincentivizing building owners and developers to invest in property improvements that increase energy efficiency.
- Bottom line: increasing energy efficiency in America's existing building stock needs a fresh approach and a new public policy solution.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT

Kara Kempfski
(202) 731 8462
karakempfski@aia.org

The American Institute of
Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292



Issue talking points

The American Institute of Architects

- These new EE-QIP related jobs would include the design and construction of upgrades to the building envelope, HVAC systems, mechanical insulation, lighting, windows, roofs, submeters and building management systems, to name some examples.

MAKE “THE ASK”

- Amend the federal tax code to better target and incentivize the use of energy efficient technologies on existing commercial and multi-family buildings.
- Specifically, expand the current definition of what is considered “qualified improvement property”, or QIP, to include energy efficient technologies.
- This change would allow building owners and developers to write off a certain percentage of depreciation costs if they install energy efficient technologies such as HVAC, mechanical insulation, lighting, windows, roofs, submeters, and other building management systems.

**Will you work with your colleagues to prioritize these requests this Congress?
How can we support you?**



Issue Prep

The American Institute of Architects

For use by AIA components

School safety

BACKGROUND I

AIA national launched its school safety initiative in August 2018. It is a multi-phase approach whose ultimate goal is two-fold; 1) advocate for public officials adopting a design-centered approach to keep students and teachers safe from school violence and 2) ensure that new and existing schools remain positive learning environments, not be transformed into prison-like buildings. Both parts of this goal are embodied in the two policy asks that components should ask their Congressional delegation members to support when they are on Capitol Hill.

Phase I of this initiative was designed to solidify architects as part of the solution to school violence. In addition, it was meant to influence specific sections of the final report of the Federal Commission on School Safety. Both objectives were achieved, and because of this, AIA now has a strong foundation to launch phase 2—which primarily focuses on Capitol Hill.

More specifically, AIA secured in person member testimonies throughout the summer in a variety of field hearings conducted by the commission. Based on these architects' appeals, AIA's federal team was able to convince the education and homeland security departments to include their recommendations in the commission's final report. Those recommendations match exactly, or in part, with the two asks that components will be lobbying on March 6 for Congress to pass into law; creation of a federal clearinghouse for school design best practices and making design services eligible for federal grant funding. Both are very bipartisan proposals whose merits stand on their own regardless of whether they have received favorable billing from a Democrat or Republican.

Bottom line: components can significantly help advance AIA's school safety initiative by lobbying their Congressional delegation on this issue.

BACKGROUND II

Since 9/11, a central focus in the terrorism mitigation strategy of America's local, state, and federal governments has been the design or redesign of new or existing buildings and structures. From airports to sports stadiums and public/private office buildings to mass transit hubs, the design of buildings and structures has been rethought. In summary, architecture and design has been a key tactic in the fight against terrorism.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Kara Kempfski
(202) 731 8462
karakempfski@aia.org

The American Institute of
Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292



Issue Prep

The American Institute of Architects

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the collective response to school mass shootings.

2019 will mark the 20th anniversary of the Columbine shootings. Since then, more than 220,000 students have experienced gun violence at school. Despite this, a systematic approach, like the one seen since 9/11, focusing on safe school design has not occurred. Yet, after a school shooting occurs, the one solution that is consistently called for and agreed up-on by all sides of the political spectrum is “we need to design our schools to be safe learning environments.” However, most of the nation’s 122,000 public and private K-12 school buildings are still not designed to deter these violent acts.

Funding is one of the main parts of implementing a design-centered strategy. Information is too. Currently, local and state education officials lack a central repository of credible best practices, resources, and overall safe school design information. This is a huge deterrent to them estimating, and potentially securing, funding to retrofit existing schools or to build new ones. It also greatly inhibits many of them from considering how architecture and design can help ensure a school is a secure and positive learning environment, not a fortress.

BACKGROUND III

For over 30 years, federal, state and local governments have been publicly attempting to address the issue of school safety. Forty-eight states now fund School Safety Centers, an initiative originally established by President Reagan in 1984. The first annual President’s Report on School Safety was released in 1998, commissioned by President Clinton after a tragic school shooting in 1997. Sadly, its recommendations were eclipsed by the Columbine shooting the following year. President George W. Bush convened a national Conference on School Safety in 2007. President Obama launched the “Now Is the Time” school safety initiative with a report by the same name in 2012. President Trump established the Federal Commission on School Safety in 2018. Their report was released in December of the same year. You can read 2019 AIA President Bill Bates’ statement on the report including some—though not all—of [AIA’s design recommendations](#).

AIA and its members have been focused on this issue for decades, most notably through the work of the Committee on Architecture for Education (CAE). Architects have been changing school design in response to shootings, other forms of school-based violence, and additional scientific research. These design changes have occurred independently of legislative initiatives or regulatory requirements. Only recently have the efforts of policy makers, School Safety Center administrators, and architects begun to merge.

It is important to note that the issue of school safety is set against a backdrop of limited funding for school construction, maintenance, and renovation. The average school building in the United States is 44 years old and has gone 12 years since the last major renovation. Most funding for schools comes at the state and local level. While the federal government has spent resources studying school violence and spending in response to individual incidents, making federal funding available for school safety improvements *before* a tragic event is a more recent trend. In 2018, the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative Grants of 2014 (CSSI),



Issue Prep

The American Institute of Architects

which were primarily research grants administered through the Department of Justice, were absorbed into the STOP School Violence Act. Passed in response to the school shooting in Parkland, FL, this bill specifically called for preemptive investment in school security.

The other primary federal source of funding comes from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It was reauthorized in 2015 to be the “Every Student Succeeds Act,” but was also widely known by its previous reauthorization name, the “No Child Left Behind Act.” This is the primary law that governs Kindergarten–12th grade policy in the United States. It does not specifically address the issue of funding school security improvements. However, given the broad interpretation of its’ Title IV, some schools have used this funding for security. Furthermore, Congress issued a clarification in 2018 that Title IV funds can be used for school security at the school district’s discretion.

APPROACH AND STRATEGY

As quick review, AIA’s school safety initiative’s ultimate goal is two-fold; 1) advocate for public officials adopting a design-centered approach to keep students and teachers safe from school violence and 2) ensure that new and existing schools remain positive learning environments, not be transformed into prison-like buildings. Both parts of this goal are embodied in the two policy asks that components should ask their elected officials to support on March 6 when they are on Capitol Hill.

Federal funding

Design services cannot be funded with STOP School Violence grants and Title IV grants. Schools can buy metal detectors, lighting, locks, or other devices, but without first consulting a licensed architect, they may not be making the most strategic, design-centered choice.

The Congressional committees with jurisdiction or interest over this issue would be the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, specifically the subcommittees on Labor, Health, Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, and the House Education and Labor Committee and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee.

Federal clearinghouse

The other issue facing school districts is that many do not know where to start. While vendors may approach with ideas about new devices and services, it can be hard to know what sources are reliable. AIA has pulled together resources for architects, but those case studies may not be as helpful for school district personnel looking to make an informed budget decision.

Congress can authorize the establishment and funding of a federal clearinghouse. The clearinghouse would need to be staffed to provide training and technical assistance, and to keep all materials up to date. It could be housed in the Department of Homeland Security or in the Department of Education.

The Congressional committees with jurisdiction over this issue would be the House Committee on Homeland Security and the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.



Issue Prep

The American Institute of Architects

It will be imperative to have the support of both Democrats and Republicans, regardless of whether they are on these six committees. Bottomline, it is important to have as much support as possible from both sides of the aisle in both chambers of Congress.



Issue talking points

The American Institute of Architects

For use by AIA components

School safety

KEY MESSAGE

Support safe school design for new and existing schools that keeps them positive learning environments.

THE ASK

AIA urges Congress to:

- Make design services eligible for existing federal grant funding.
- Establish a federal clearing-house of resources on school design best practices.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Kara Kempfski
(202) 731 8462
karakempfski@aia.org

The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292

INTRODUCE THE ISSUE AND DELIVER YOUR KEY MESSAGE

- One of The American Institute of Architect's (AIA) top federal priorities this Congress is to support a design-centered approach to address school violence.
- In the same way that all three levels of government have made building design a central part of the solution of mitigating terrorist threats since 9/11, AIA believes the same approach can and should be taken to address school violence.
- Just like the threat of terrorism, school violence is a national crisis and AIA is eager to be a resource to Congress as it confront this issue.

DELIVER INFORMATION TO BACK UP YOUR KEY MESSAGE

- As architects, we are the first to say that design cannot prevent school violence.
- Design is part of the solution. There are school design best practices that can mitigate violence and maintain a positive learning environment for students and teachers.
- Security measures should be incorporated into the overall design to keep them as passive—or invisible—as possible to the student body.
- This minimizes the disruption to the learning environment while also making each security measure more difficult to circumvent.
- There is no single thing that all schools can do to keep students safe—and what might make sense for one school won't necessarily work for another.
- Architects can help by looking at the whole picture: school size and location, age of the students, campus layout, lighting, distance from the police department, lines of sight, etc.
- Furthermore, security measures should be layered, in keeping with the design principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).



Issue talking points

The American Institute of Architects

- An important aspect of the “deter” goal of CPTED is to create a positive environment, with greater transparency and less anonymity. Fostering a healthy and emotionally supportive learning environment is, and must continue to be, the primary goal when designing a school.

DELIVER “THE ASK”

- AIA believes that these design decisions need to be made at the local level, but there is still a vital role the federal government can, and must, play.
- As school officials determine their appropriate response to the threat of violence, many are unfamiliar with where to begin or what sources of information they can trust.
- To support school officials in making design-centered security decisions that will maintain a positive learning environment, we urge Congress to take two important actions:
 - Authorize design services to be an eligible use of funding in any existing federal grants that support school security. This will help schools to develop a comprehensive and holistic plan for their campus security needs.
 - Establish a federal clearinghouse of resources and school design best practices for school officials to access. This will help them identify trusted and current information to best inform their decisions—both before and after school violence occurs.

**Will you work with your colleagues to prioritize these requests this Congress?
How can we support you?**



Congressional meeting guide

The American Institute of Architects

For use by AIA components

A framework for effective Congressional meetings

IMPORTANT LEGAL NOTICE

Before you begin any meetings on Capitol Hill, it is important to know the legal barriers that limit what you can and cannot talk about on government property.

It is illegal to discuss political activities of any kind with a MOC or their staff while inside the U.S. Capitol and House and Senate office buildings. This includes any discussion relating to federal political races or federal political donations, such as those given from AIA's political action committee, ArchiPAC. Every Congressional office staff and MOC knows these rules. However, if for any reason you find the conversation navigating away from policy and more into politics, kindly inform the MOC or staffer that you're here to discuss the policy issue, not any politics.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Kara Kempfski
(202) 731 8462
karakempfski@aia.org

The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Review this guide in full.
- Assign roles for your group. See below for the "In the meeting" section to determine which roles should be assigned.
- Review the issue prep, issue talking points, and issue brief so that you know what to say in the meeting. The issue brief is your "leave behind" document for the Members of Congress (MOC) and their staff. The talking points and issue prep documents are for you to brief yourself about the issue so you can communicate effectively about it with the MOC/staff (using the issue brief). Remember, these documents are not a script. They are there to help guide you through the conversation with the MOC/staffer. While it is important to stay "on message", please feel free to explain these issues in your own style and words.
- It's important to determine "the ask" and who is going to deliver it before the meeting begins. Make sure one person is prepared to make "the ask". To be clear, this is the action that you want the MOC to take. For example; AIA wants the MOC to support/oppose a bill.
- Try to arrive several minutes before your meeting. On the day of your meetings, the Soapbox app will be the most convenient way to review the times and locations of your meetings.

IN THE MEETING

Introductions

All: Go around the table and have each group member introduce themselves, being sure to mention where they are from and/or where they work. Share any relevant stories or personal connections to the MOC or the office. At this time, you may also pass your card to the staffer. Please keep introduction short.

Speaker I: Very briefly, give the MOC or their staff background on AIA.



Congressional meeting guide

The American Institute of Architects

Example: “The American Institute of Architects represents over 94,000 architects in the U.S. and around the world. From designing the next generation of energy-saving buildings to making our communities healthier and safer, architects today continue to play a central role in influencing and improving our communities through our work.”

Add any relevant information about state or local component activity in the MOC’s state or district.

Speaker 1: Very briefly, review the initial reason that you asked to meet with the MOC. Turn the meeting over to Speaker 2 who will tell the MOC/staffer more about the issue.

Issue Discussion

Speaker 2: Using the provided issue brief, explain the issue to the MOC/staffer.

The very first thing to ask the MOC/staffer, before you launch into briefing them about the issue, is “how much do you know about this issue”. It will help you frame your talking points based on their response.

After hearing their response, begin your briefing. Feel free to add examples which illustrate the importance of the issue to your work and to the industry more broadly. Anecdotes referencing significant projects within the relevant state or district are particularly effective.

The other members of the group should feel free to interject with relevant supporting information. Turn the meeting over to Speaker 3 who will make the ask to the MOC/staffer.

Make the ask

Speaker 3: When making the ask, ask it directly to the MOC/staffer, then pause, and wait for their response. If the MOC/staffer supports your position, thank them. If the MOC/staffer does not support your position, ask them why and if there is anything that could get them to support your position.

Thank you and leave behind

At the end of your meeting, remember to thank them for their time and leave behind a copy of the one-page issue brief and your business card. Also, feel free to invite any MOC or staff who were in the meeting to AIA’s Congressional Reception later in the evening at the Library of Congress in the Thomas Jefferson Building.

AFTER THE MEETING

Making the connection

Regardless of their position on the issue, it is important to connect the staff in the room to the AIA Federal Relations Team in Washington DC. The best way to do that is to send all the staff that was present at the meeting one follow up email on behalf of your group no later than a week after the meeting. Here are a couple tips for sending the follow-up email:



Congressional meeting guide

The American Institute of Architects

- Assign one person from your meeting to send the follow-up email. Preferably, that person should be an architect who has the closest connection to the MOC's Congressional district or state. If no one from your group is a constituent of the MOC, then whoever was the lead speaker in the meeting should send the email.
- Thank them again for meeting with you and your component group.
- Introduce them to the AIA Federal Relations Team by cc'ing Blake Nanney blakenanney@aia.org. Blake will ensure that he or another member of the team follows up with you and or the MOC/staff to ensure the conversation and relationship building with this MOC continues.



Issue brief

The American Institute of Architects

Support a new approach to increase energy efficiency in buildings

THE PROBLEM

The main federal policy that is meant to increase the energy efficiency of buildings is only positively impacting a small percentage of them.

THE ASK

AIA urges Congress to support updating the federal tax code to increase energy efficiency in commercial and multi-family buildings by creating a new tax incentive to decrease the high costs of renovating and retrofitting existing buildings with energy efficient equipment and systems.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO WORK WITH AIA ON THIS ISSUE CONTACT

Kara Kempfski
(202) 731 8462
karakempfski@aia.org

The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292

ANALYSIS

Congress passed Section 179D into the Internal Revenue Code in 2005. It was crafted as the main federal tax code provision that would increase the use of energy efficient technologies in all commercial and multi-family buildings. However, 179D has been more effective in encouraging their use in new construction, less so for renovations or retrofits to existing buildings. This is an issue because 95 percent of existing commercial buildings are more than a decade old and were built prior to 2008. Of all commercial buildings, 82 percent were built before 2000; prior to modern versions of building energy codes governing their design and construction. Therein lies the problem; the primary federal law meant to increase energy efficiency in buildings is only impacting a small percentage of them. Furthermore, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1), passed in 2017, has had the unintended consequence of disincentivizing building owners and developers to invest in property improvements that increase energy efficiency. Bottom line: increasing energy efficiency in America's existing building stock needs a fresh approach and a new public policy solution.

THE SOLUTION

Amend the federal tax code to better target and incentivize the use of energy efficient technologies on existing commercial and multi-family buildings. Specifically, Congress should expand the current definition of what is considered "qualified improvement property", or QIP, to include energy efficient technologies. This change would allow building owners and developers to write off a certain percentage of depreciation costs if they install energy efficient technologies such as HVAC, mechanical insulation, lighting, windows, roofs, submeters, and other building management systems.

AIA advocates for the profession

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has been championing the essential role of architects—and architecture—in designing a better world. Our work, and the work of our members, turns houses into homes and makes the places where we live, work, and play more beautiful, healthy, and safe. As a professional membership organization, AIA advocates for the value of architecture and provides our 94,000 members with the community, advocacy, and knowledge they need to drive positive change through the power of design.

Why do you need an architect?

People need places to live, work, play, learn, worship, meet, govern, shop, and eat. An architect is responsible for designing these places—whether private or public; indoors or out; rooms, buildings, or complexes.

Architects are professionals licensed by their state and trained in the art and science of building design who work closely with their clients to develop concepts for structures and turn those concepts into plans.

Architects create the overall look of buildings and other structures. But the design of a building involves far more than its appearance; buildings must also be functional, safe, and economical. Architects consider all these factors and more when designing.

What does an architect do?

Architects are the lead in terms of the design of a building or structure. The architect will develop a design based on extensive conversations with the client and future occupants, taking into consideration issues such as appropriate adjacencies, emergency evacuation requirements and user comfort and productivity. Throughout this process, the architect will work closely with a variety of specialists, including engineering and construction professionals, to identify suitable materials, explore modifications and alterations, and evaluate structural integrity.

Architects are often involved in all phases of a construction project, from an initial conversation with the client through construction administration and commissioning, through completion of the final structure. This work requires a team of individuals with specific skills—designing, engineering, managing, supervising, and communicating with clients, builders, and contractors. Architects work closely with their clients to understand their goals for the project and spend a significant amount of time working with engineers and other consultants to explain the client’s ideas and ensure that the final building meets their needs.

Policy issues that architects impact

Sustainability	Housing
Procurement	School Safety
Diversity/equity	Building codes
Disaster preparedness and recovery resilience	Business and tax

AIA: A policy resource for Congress

If it impacts buildings or communities, architects are an invaluable resource to members of Congress to address it. Please don’t hesitate to contact AIA’s federal relations team by emailing jimbrewer@aia.org.



**The American
Institute
of Architects**

Visit aia.org to learn more,
or find a local AIA chapter by
visiting aia.org/find-chapter.

Issue brief

The American Institute of Architects

Support safe school design for new and existing schools

THE PROBLEM

Most of the nation's 122,000 public and private k-12 school buildings are not designed to deter school violence. Education officials lack funding and credible information about how school violence can be mitigated through architecture and design.

THE ASK

AIA urges Congress to make design services eligible for existing federal grant funding and create a clearinghouse to provide all school officials with a "one-stop shop" repository of credible best practices to make schools more secure by design.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO WORK WITH AIA ON THIS ISSUE CONTACT

Jim Brewer
(202) 213 0931
jimbrewer@aia.org

The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292

ANALYSIS

Since 9/11, a central focus in the terrorism mitigation strategy of America's local, state, and federal governments has been the design or redesign of new or existing buildings and structures. From airports to sports stadiums and public/private office buildings to mass transit hubs, the design of buildings and structures has been rethought. In summary, architecture and design has been a key tactic in the fight against terrorism. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the collective response to school mass shootings.

2019 will mark the 20th anniversary of the Columbine shootings. Since then, more than 220,000 students have experienced gun violence at school. Despite this, a systematic approach, like the one seen since 9/11, focusing on safe school design has not occurred. Yet, after a school shooting occurs, the one solution that is consistently called for and agreed upon by all sides of the political spectrum is "we need to design our schools to be safe learning environments." However, most of the nation's 122,000 public and private K-12 school buildings are still not designed to deter these violent acts.

Funding is one of the main parts of implementing a design-centered strategy. Information is too. Currently, local and state education officials lack a central repository of credible best practices, resources, and overall safe school design information. This is a huge deterrent to them estimating, and potentially securing, funding to retrofit existing schools or to build new ones. It also greatly inhibits many of them from considering how architecture and design can help ensure a school is a secure and positive learning environment, not a fortress.

THE SOLUTION

Authorize the creation of a federally funded and housed information clearinghouse for local and state officials. This entity would serve as an unbiased resource for them to constantly access. It would provide a reliable forum to disseminate relevant information from the numerous stakeholders necessary to ensuring a school safe design such as architects, engineers, first responders, building security experts, and mental health advocates. In addition, design services should be an eligible use of funding in any existing federal grants that support school security.

AIA advocates for the profession

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has been championing the essential role of architects—and architecture—in designing a better world. Our work, and the work of our members, turns houses into homes and makes the places where we live, work, and play more beautiful, healthy, and safe. As a professional membership organization, AIA advocates for the value of architecture and provides our 94,000 members with the community, advocacy, and knowledge they need to drive positive change through the power of design.

Why do you need an architect?

People need places to live, work, play, learn, worship, meet, govern, shop, and eat. An architect is responsible for designing these places—whether private or public; indoors or out; rooms, buildings, or complexes.

Architects are professionals licensed by their state and trained in the art and science of building design who work closely with their clients to develop concepts for structures and turn those concepts into plans.

Architects create the overall look of buildings and other structures. But the design of a building involves far more than its appearance; buildings must also be functional, safe, and economical. Architects consider all these factors and more when designing.

What does an architect do?

Architects are the lead in terms of the design of a building or structure. The architect will develop a design based on extensive conversations with the client and future occupants, taking into consideration issues such as appropriate adjacencies, emergency evacuation requirements and user comfort and productivity. Throughout this process, the architect will work closely with a variety of specialists, including engineering and construction professionals, to identify suitable materials, explore modifications and alterations, and evaluate structural integrity.

Architects are often involved in all phases of a construction project, from an initial conversation with the client through construction administration and commissioning, through completion of the final structure. This work requires a team of individuals with specific skills—designing, engineering, managing, supervising, and communicating with clients, builders, and contractors. Architects work closely with their clients to understand their goals for the project and spend a significant amount of time working with engineers and other consultants to explain the client’s ideas and ensure that the final building meets their needs.

Policy issues that architects impact

Sustainability	Housing
Procurement	School Safety
Diversity/equity	Building codes
Disaster preparedness and recovery resilience	Business and tax

AIA: A policy resource for Congress

If it impacts buildings or communities, architects are an invaluable resource to members of Congress to address it. Please don’t hesitate to contact AIA’s federal relations team by emailing jimbrewer@aia.org.



**The American
Institute
of Architects**

Visit aia.org to learn more,
or find a local AIA chapter by
visiting aia.org/find-chapter.