



**AIA**  
Virginia

Directory of Public Policies and  
Position Statements

As adopted by the  
AIA Virginia Board of Directors  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Public Policies and Position Statements that follow have been approved by the AIA Virginia Board of Directors and are in effect until rescinded by the Board. They are in alignment with National AIA Public Policies and Position Statements and the principles of the 2014 Virginia Accord. To the degree any Public Policies or Position Statements of AIA Virginia (or any positions taken by AIA Virginia) are inconsistent with those of the Institute, the National AIA Public Policies and Position Statements (and the conformance process stated in the Institute's Rules of the Board) will govern.

Public Policies are statements of belief to policy-makers, the public, and the construction industry on issues of public policy affecting the membership, the profession of architecture, or The American Institute of Architects.

Position Statements elaborate on Public Policies or apply them to specific conditions or events.

## **PUBLIC POLICIES AND POSITION STATEMENTS**

### **“Meta” Policy**

*Architecture profoundly affects people. The work of architects is essential to human well-being, and architects must embrace their ethical obligation to uphold this public trust.*

## **I. CATEGORY: THE ARCHITECT**

### **A. Public Policy: Civic Engagement**

As members of their communities, architects are professionally obligated to use their knowledge, skill, and experience to engage in civic life.

### **Supporting Position Statements**

#### **1. Civic Engagement**

AIA Virginia believes that society and the profession benefit from civically engaged architects, and we actively support members who wish to become civically engaged. In order to advance leadership among architects to promote livable, healthy, sustainable, and quality-designed environments for future generations through community participation and advocacy, AIA Virginia supports its members who wish to become civically engaged and does not prevent those members from participating in AIA Virginia activities, except where it may be required by law.

(approved June 2019)

#### **2. Art and Architecture**

AIA Virginia believes that art enhances the human experience in the built environment. The organization supports public and private building programs that include an appropriate budget for the introduction of art integrated into the project so that it complements the architecture, when appropriate, into all project types. The integration of art should be an early and essential part of the design process, so that art can be fully coordinated with architecture. AIA Virginia also supports government funding for the inclusion of art in public projects, and funding of federal, state, and local programs with missions that promote the use of art in public buildings and spaces.

(approved June 2019)

## **B. Public Policy: Professional Development**

Design, construction, and society are constantly changing. To serve society, architects must commit to continual professional growth through learning, innovation, and exploration.

### **Supporting Position Statements**

#### **1. Mandatory Continuing Education**

AIA Virginia maintains that its jurisdiction should mandate a minimum amount of continuing education for architectural licensure renewal. AIA Virginia supports a uniform standard for HSW continuing education requirements across all jurisdictions. We further advocate that any jurisdiction considering continuing education for re-licensure accept The American Institute of Architects' continuing education requirement for membership and record-keeping system as a means of fulfilling the jurisdiction's requirement. Emeritus architects should not be required to fulfill continuing education requirements, unless they wish to resume the practice of architecture.

(approved June 2018)

#### **2. Practice Specialty Credentialing**

AIA Virginia considers its architect members, by virtue of their license, equipped through education, experience, and practice to capably design a wide range of project types. When it is important to clients and the public that specialized knowledge is necessary, we are committed to evaluating specialty credential programs.

(approved June 2018)

#### **3. Research and Development**

AIA Virginia supports the promotion of research and development of materials, technologies, and practices that advance the needs of clients and the public, maintain the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare, and improve the quality of the built and natural environments.

(approved June 2019)

## **C. Public Policy: Regulation of Architecture**

The practice of architecture should be regulated. The privileges and responsibilities of practice should be extended only to those architects who demonstrate through education, experience, and examination that they are ethically and technically prepared.

### **Supporting Position Statements**

#### **1. Definition of Professional Practice and Use of the Title Architect**

AIA Virginia supports a uniform definition of the “practice of architecture” that delineates the scope of services a registered architect may perform as stipulated by regulatory controls of the local jurisdiction. The definition should follow the recommendations developed by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. Furthermore, we support protecting the public by reserving the use of the term “architect” to those individuals licensed as architects. We further recommend that all jurisdictions implement a category designated as Emeritus or Retired, for persons who have held a license to practice architecture but have retired and are no longer in practice.

(approved June 2018)

#### **2. Design of Structures for Human Occupancy or Use**

AIA Virginia maintains that to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, only architects should program and design all structures primarily intended for human occupancy or use. Architects are uniquely qualified through education, experience, examination, and practice to lead the design process to design buildings. The process of planning and designing the construction of buildings is complex, so sound professional judgment of an architect is needed before and throughout the design process and in construction. Therefore, it is incumbent on each jurisdiction that has a responsibility to the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens to ensure that the architect is engaged early in planning and managing the design of buildings.

(approved June 2018)

#### **3. Practice and Title Regulations in the Built Environment**

In the public interest, AIA Virginia holds that only architects and engineers licensed through examination possess the necessary education, training and experience to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public in the built environment. Other individuals may assist these licensed professionals in shaping the built environment, but fragmentation of responsible control of the building design process including interior architectural elements as defined by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards Model Regulations 100.903, endangers and misleads the public as to respective areas of competence and expertise. The AIA generally opposes practice or title regulation of individuals or groups other than architects and engineers for the design of buildings.

(approved June 2019)



#### 4. Interstate Reciprocity and International Practice for Architects

AIA Virginia supports the use of uniform criteria for licensure that facilitate reciprocity and do not inhibit the interstate and international practice of architecture. Further, we support the global collaboration of architects, and the continued promotion of excellence in international education, practice, and design while honoring cultural diversity worldwide. We support our members' international practices through the benefits of membership and by fostering positive working relationships among architects and international architecture organizations.

(approved June 2018)

#### 5. Professional Licensure and Examination for Architects

AIA Virginia maintains that examination is an essential requirement for licensure. Such examination should test for public protection competencies, including health, safety, and welfare, that are gained through a combination of appropriate education and practical experience. AIA Virginia, through its members, encourages licensure-track emerging professionals to complete the examination process at their earliest practical opportunity.

AIA Virginia supports the interdependence of practice and education as elements of the profession that, when integrated, enable students, educators, and practitioners to obtain and build upon the knowledge and skills needed to enter and fully participate in the profession, and to achieve design excellence in service to society. To this end, we support architectural registration boards' allowing emerging professionals for licensure candidacy to take registration examinations as permitted by NCARB.

(approved June 2018)

#### 6. Architectural Education and Training Requirements

AIA Virginia supports a professional degree from a National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) accredited program as the most appropriate minimum threshold for architectural education. Consideration should be given to alternative educational pathways, in lieu of a NAAB-accredited degree, as a means to fulfill educational prerequisites to licensure, on an individual candidate basis. In addition, we support a comprehensive internship with measurable qualitative training criteria. Further, we support NCARB's Architectural Experience Program (AXP) and its training areas, which provide emerging professionals with diverse training and experience in architectural practice.

(approved June 2018)

## 7. Architectural Licensure Board Composition and Law Enforcement

AIA Virginia supports composite registration boards that are composed of architects, licensed professionals from other design disciplines, and public members who are residents of the jurisdiction. We support strict enforcement of architectural licensing laws and recommend that disciplinary action be imposed for incompetent or improper practice. Further, AIA Virginia strongly supports vigorous prosecution including seeking penalties and injunctions against those individuals engaged in the unlicensed practice of architecture.

(approved April 2020)

### **D. Public Policy: Future of the Profession**

With an obligation to the future of the architecture profession, architects must encourage, recruit, and inspire those who would become architects.

### **Supporting Position Statements**

#### 1. Architecture Awareness in Education

AIA Virginia believes that education in the art and science of architecture in K-12 core curricula and post-secondary education benefits society by creating early exposure to and public awareness of the impact and importance of design and the built environment. Course offerings should enhance the understanding of the built environment, and inspire creative and critical thinking about the importance of healthy buildings, sustainable design, and livable communities that positively impact quality of life.

(approved June 2019)

#### 2. Mentorship

AIA Virginia supports its members in fulfilling their professional obligation to mentor emerging professionals as they advance throughout their career. Additionally, those members who supervise individuals engaged in the AXP shall reasonably assist in proper and timely documentation in accordance with that program.

(approved June 2018)

#### 3. Practice and Education Cultures

AIA Virginia supports a professional practice environment (“office culture”) that encourages the essential values of optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation. The architectural design studio culture should promote these ideals as the foundation of degree education and extend these values broadly into a career in professional practice.

(approved June 2018)

## **II. CATEGORY: THE PRACTICE**

### **A. Public Policy: Construction Industry Regulation**

Regulation of the construction industry shapes the built environment. As industry leaders and stakeholders, architects must participate in the development and application of appropriate regulations and standards intended to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

#### **Supporting Position Statements**

##### **1. Building Codes and Standards**

AIA Virginia supports regulation by a single set of comprehensive, coordinated, and contemporary building codes and standards that establish sound threshold values of health, safety, and the protection of the public welfare throughout the United States and abroad. To that end, AIA Virginia espouses the development and adoption of model building codes that:

- Include participation by architects and the public in a consensus process;
- Are the product of informed education and research;
- Are without favoritism or bias to any special interest;
- Include provision for a prompt appeals procedure for all that might be aggrieved;
- Are cost-effective in relation to public benefit; and
- Promote building code provisions that set performance rather than prescriptive criteria.

(approved June 2017)

##### **2. Building Permits and Process**

AIA Virginia supports governmental policies, regulatory procedures, and administration that eliminate unnecessary time delays in the construction permitting process; that provide transparency, consistency and predictability; and that maintain or improve health, safety and welfare requirements.

(approved June 2017)

##### **3. Knowledge of Building Codes and Construction**

AIA Virginia believes that knowledge of code principles and their application in building planning and design are essential parts of the necessary education and training for all architects to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

(approved June 2017)

## **B. Public Policy: The Business of Architecture**

The financial health of architecture businesses is essential to the future of the profession. Architects should advocate within the law for sound business practices and compensation that reflects the architect's value to society.

### **Supporting Position Statements**

#### 1. Copyright Protection

AIA Virginia supports copyright protection of the architect's work and other intellectual property in order to prevent their unauthorized use.

(approved June 2017)

#### 2. Legal Form of Practice

AIA Virginia supports architectural practice within any legal structure as long as an architect retains responsible control and individual responsibility for performing architectural services. Within any legal structure the architect performing or in responsible control of the architectural services must be identified and that structure must not be used to shield unlicensed or unlawful practice.

(approved June 2017)

#### 3. Project Delivery

AIA Virginia believes collaborative project delivery processes enhance the quality, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of our built environment. This can best be achieved through industry-wide adoption of approaches to project delivery characterized by early and consistent involvement of owners, architects, engineers, constructors, fabricators and end users in an environment of trust, fair compensation, clearly defined goals and transparency.

There are several viable project delivery models in the marketplace that promote such early collaboration. AIA Virginia believes architects are uniquely qualified and positioned to lead the development of the project and provide architectural services for all project delivery methods. Architectural services may include predesign services, project management, programming, design, construction documentation, and construction administration for building projects.

Architects have a professional and ethical responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public in all Project Delivery methods, while providing reasonable and competent design guidance to the owner and representing their best interests.

(approved June 2017)

#### 4. Qualifications Based Selection

AIA Virginia supports public policies, requirements, and administrative procedures in public procurement processes that mandate the open selection of architects on the basis of qualifications and oppose hiring of architects on the basis of fees or bids. Qualifications-based selection (QBS) is essential to fostering quality design that serves health, safety, and welfare in the built environment. AIA Virginia supports best practice QBS criteria that are clear and concise, encouraging fair market competition. AIA Virginia opposes any requirements by public agencies for uncompensated design solutions as part of QBS processes.

(approved June 2017)

#### 5. Tax and Regulatory System

AIA Virginia supports governmental policies, programs, and administration that promote a fair tax code and business regulations that encourage the free enterprise system and the economic well-being of the American people, the U.S. construction industry, and the profession of architecture. AIA Virginia opposes the imposition of any sales and usage taxes on professional services.

(approved June 2017)

#### 6. Tort Reform

AIA Virginia supports governmental policies and reforms to minimize lawsuit abuse and to promote the administration of a fair civil liability legal system. Society is best served by legislative and regulatory reforms that curtail the cost and risks of professional liability for architects without jeopardizing the public interest. AIA Virginia specifically supports:

- Legislation enacting reasonable statutes of limitation and repose with respect to all actions alleging negligence or fault on the part of the architect.
- Emergency Responder (Good Samaritan) legislation that provides architects with liability protection for providing professional services in response to a declared state of emergency.
- Advocating for legislation that requires a party alleging professional negligence to submit a sworn statement from a qualified expert in the same field of practice attesting to the alleged negligence (Certificate of Merit Statutes)

(approved June 2019)

## 7. Software Interoperability

AIA Virginia believes that all industry-supporting software must facilitate, not inhibit, project planning, design, construction, commissioning and lifecycle management. This software must support non-proprietary, open standards for auditable information exchange and allow for confident information exchanges between different software, and between different versions of the same software. This is best accomplished through professional, public and private sector adoption of open and interoperable software standards. AIA Virginia encourages its members and other industry organizations to assume a leadership role in the development and promulgation of open standards.

(approved June 2017)

## 8. Responsible Job Creation

AIA Virginia stands for state and local policies that help firms thrive and ensure that small firms remain strong contributors to the Commonwealth's economy. We support a state tax code that treats architects fairly, small business programs that provide loans and financing support and programs that give small firms the chance to compete. We support business practices that encourage entrepreneurship in accordance with the AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

(approved June 2019)

## **C. Public Policy: Architects are Environmentally Responsible**

The creation and operation of the built environment require an investment of the earth's resources. Architects must be environmentally responsible and advocate for the sustainable use of those resources.

### 1. Sustainable Architectural Practice and Sustainability

AIA Virginia recognizes that many current planning, design, construction, and real estate practices contribute to an imbalance that can have disastrous long-term planetary effects on the health of human and natural systems and threaten their survival. The organization advocates for policies, programs, and incentives that promote energy efficiency and renewable energy, materials information transparency, resource conservation, and the protection of water resources. We rely on the development, evaluation and use of codes, standards, and evidence-based rating systems to achieve healthy, resilient buildings and communities for all members of society.

Architects, as system thinkers and leaders in the design and built environment, must engage communities to promote solutions that lead to equitable access for all and use their expertise to design healthy, carbon neutral, and adaptive buildings and communities. AIA Virginia advocates for communities to join with us in changing the course of the planet's future by supporting governmental and private sector policies and programs, including the development, evaluations, and use of codes, standards and evidence-based rating systems that promote the design, preservation and construction of sustainable communities and high-performance buildings.

(approved June 2019)

## 2. Energy and Carbon in the Built Environment

AIA Virginia advocates for policies, programs, and incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy for the planning, design, construction, and operations of buildings. Architects must prioritize energy efficiency and renewable energy to achieve carbon neutral new construction and major renovations by 2030 (2030 Commitment) and a carbon neutral built environment by 2050 (2050 Imperative).

(approved June 2019)

## 3. Materials and the Built Environment

AIA Virginia recognizes that building materials impact the environment and human health before, during, and after their use. We advocate for programs, policies, and practices that inform a holistic approach to selecting and using building materials. Knowledge of the life-cycle impacts of building materials is integral to improving the craft, science, and art of architecture and to making positive material choices that support a healthy, prosperous world. We support transparent, clear information on the content of building materials and furthermore urges manufacturers to develop materials that are free of toxic substances, minimize greenhouse gas emissions, and are environmentally and socially responsible.

(approved June 2019)

## 4. Resilience and Adaptation

AIA Virginia supports policies, programs, and practices that promote adaptable and resilient buildings and communities. Buildings and communities are subjected to destructive forces from natural and human-caused hazards such as fire, earthquakes, flooding, sea level rise, tornadoes, tsunamis, severe weather, and even intentional attack. The challenges facing the built environment are evolving with a changing climate, environmental degradation, population growth, and migration; this alters long term conditions and demands design innovation. Architects have a responsibility to design resilient environments that reduce harm and property damage, adapt to evolving conditions, and more readily, effectively and efficiently recover from adverse events. Additionally, AIA Virginia supports member training and active involvement in

disaster assistance efforts, providing valuable insights and aid to communities before, during, and after a destructive event.

(approved June 2019)

## 5. Design for Human Health in the Built Environment

AIA Virginia advocates for policies, programs, research, and practices that promote physical, mental, and social well-being through design. Good design advances equitable access to well-being, physical activity, safety, and environmental quality, among other measurable health benefits. Architects should adopt systematic frameworks to consider health impacts throughout the life of a project working in collaboration with public health professionals and allied organizations. Architects should implement design solutions that promote well-being, inspire and facilitate healthy environments for all members of society.

(approved June 2019)

## 6. Land Use and Environmental Planning

As design professionals, we advocate for responsible land use and environmental planning to reduce hazards and other environmental risks, and in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Land use strategies such as deed restrictions, setbacks, and eminent domain can be a necessary means for government to retain lands for public safety and benefit for the near and long term. Only under special and unique circumstances should eminent domain be used for projects that will ultimately revert to private ownership. In these circumstances, eminent domain should be considered a tool of last resort and only be applied when there is a clear and compelling public need and benefit demonstrated after an open, broad-based, and transparent community planning process to ensure environmental justice. In all cases, eminent domain should be applied in ways that fairly consider the value of existing land uses and communities, while respecting citizens' rights, equity, all community stakeholders, and community history.

(approved June 2019)

## 7. Systems of Mass Transit

Systems of mass transit can benefit Virginia cities while stimulating job growth and reducing energy use. AIA Virginia supports public policies that advance new transit solutions.

(approved June 2019)



### **III. CATEGORY: THE PUBLIC**

#### **A. Public Policy: Architects Collaborate**

Leadership in design and construction requires collaboration. Architects must encourage and celebrate the contributions of those who bring diverse experiences, views, and needs into the design process.

#### **Supporting Position Statements**

##### **1. Civil Rights**

AIA Virginia supports the promotion of human and civil rights, the universal respect for human dignity, and the unbiased treatment of all persons in employment, civic, and business transactions.

Embracing a culture of equity, all programs and initiatives of AIA Virginia and its members shall reflect the society that we serve, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical abilities, or religious practices.

(approved June 2019)

##### **2. Diversity**

AIA Virginia recognizes that diversity is a cultural ethos – a way of thinking or acting that fosters inclusion and enhances our membership, our profession, and the quality of life in our communities. Embracing this culture of diversity, all programs and initiatives of the AIA and its members shall reflect the society that we serve, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical abilities, or religious practices. AIA Virginia supports the development of policies and programs that endeavor to ensure equal access to professional degrees in architecture for those who are underrepresented in our profession.

(approved June 2017)

##### **3. Relationship to National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)**

AIA Virginia will participate in the establishment of legislative standards for licensing, collaborate with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), and advocate the interests of the architectural profession on those issues being considered by NCARB, including the improvement of access and conditions for those aspiring to be part of the profession.

(approved June 2017)

#### 4. Project Team Collaboration

Architectural design and construction is a complex process requiring the coordinated teamwork of many diverse entities. AIA Virginia supports a collaborative teamwork approach among architects, designers, clients, communities, jurisdictions, contractors, and industry partners, to achieve successful project completion.

(approved June 2019)

#### 5. Inclusive Public Engagement

As a profession that envisions the future built environment and therefore impacts every member of society, we should strive to be inclusive of all stakeholders in the communities we serve. Through community design, social impact design and a spirit of service in practice, AIA members can engage with the majority of society that would never commission our work but whose voices are equally important.

(approved June 2019)

### **B. Public Policy: Architectural Design Matters**

Architecture expresses the values of society and has the power to enhance the quality of life for this and future generations. Architects must advocate for responsible design that results in beautiful and healthy places that respect and accommodate society's diverse cultures and needs.

### **Supporting Position Statements**

#### 1. Accessible Environment

AIA Virginia supports governmental programs, incentives, and policies, including clear and consistent accessibility rules and guidelines that ensure a built environment that meets the reasonable needs of people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities should be afforded the means to participate in society to the extent that they are able, through the elimination of physical barriers and through universal design principles that balance the interests of an inclusive society.

(approved June 2017)

## 2. Housing

AIA Virginia believes that access to housing is a fundamental right. Architects are at the forefront of the challenges inherent to providing safe, healthy, sustainable, non-discriminatory housing to all. We advocate for governmental policies, programs, and incentives to promote the design, construction, renovation, rehabilitation, preservation and stabilization of safe, healthy, affordable, sustainable and disaster resistant housing within the means of all people. In addition, AIA Virginia supports regional, private-public, non-traditional, holistic approaches to solving the global housing crisis, teaching communities the benefits of higher density housing near transit. We must proactively stem future sprawl and work with communities and legislators to provide real solutions that can accommodate the additional 2.5 billion people estimated to live on this planet by 2050.

(approved June 2019)

## 3. Livable Communities

AIA Virginia advocates for governmental policies, programs, and incentives that promote well-designed communities and maximize public participation in an inclusive community planning process. We recognize that planning and design that integrates transportation, housing, and land-use policies at the neighborhood, community, and regional scales are prerequisites to the creation of safe, healthy, affordable, equitable, walkable, sustainable and resilient communities that recognize and address local natural hazards.

(approved June 2019)

## 4. Historic Preservation

AIA Virginia supports governmental policies, programs, and incentives to preserve and rehabilitate diverse historic structures, sites, and places.

(approved June 2017)

## 5. Design Excellence in Publicly Funded Projects

AIA Virginia supports the creation and preservation of publicly funded buildings, places, and projects of lasting significance and usefulness that represent the highest ideals of citizens and their government. We support funding for and creation of public buildings that demonstrate advanced sustainability strategies for integrated teams and systems, resource efficiency, community responsiveness, and human health and well-being that meet and exceed the specific requirements inherent in each individual project and site.

(approved June 2019)

## 6. Educate the Public, Elevate the Profession

AIA Virginia believes architects serve all of society. Because of their education and training, architects understand the role buildings play in shaping our private lives as well as the public spaces within which social discourse, political life, and commerce take place. Architects can and should take on a larger role in informing public policy and educating the public on the power of design to physically manifest societal values. AIA Virginia supports elevating public awareness to help society better understand what architects do through education, programs, and initiatives of AIA Virginia and its members.

(approved June 2020)