



American Institute of Architects (AIA) Top Election Priorities for Next Administration and Congress

1. Housing

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) calls on the next Administration and Congress to prioritize increased federal investments to tackle housing affordability and equity. AIA urges future leaders to implement a comprehensive approach that combines enhanced federal funding and forward-thinking policy measures that encourage community-led innovative housing solutions. This includes financial and technical support for development of new affordable housing units within urban planning and community development initiatives, such as mixed-use developments and modular homes, to improve accessibility for lower-income families.

AIA believes that significant federal investments are crucial to addressing housing challenges facing our nation and abroad. AIA advocates for policies that integrate energy efficiency, climate mitigation, equity, and the health, safety, and welfare of occupants and communities into the planning and production of affordable housing.

Additionally, AIA calls for the next Administration and Congress to support federal, state, and local strategies that promote the adaptive reuse of commercial buildings for residential or commercial purposes as a sustainable and resource-efficient housing development approach. We also call for expedited permit streamlining solutions. This includes supporting federal, state and local adoption of policies that streamline the conversion process, such as adopting flexible zoning regulations and updating building codes to accommodate the unique challenges of repurposing commercial properties. AIA supports the implementation of design strategies that enhance health, livability, and comfort in these converted spaces, ensuring they effectively meet the needs of residential occupants.

2. Climate Action

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) urges the next Administration and Congress to aggressively advance climate action and equity in the built environment in accordance with the key tenants of our mission. AIA believes the next Administration and Congress must continue the effort to aggressively drive zero operational and embodied emissions goals while promoting the adoption of energy-efficient building practices and technologies to reduce overall energy consumption and environmental impact at the state and local level. The Department of Energy's National Definition of a Zero Emission Building for Operating Emissions is a foundational framework for the industry that provides consistency, standardization, measurable achievements.

Architects play a vital role in climate action for human and ecological health, and the positive impact of design to find solutions to cut the nearly 40% of global emissions represented by buildings, and to support healthy, resilient, and equitable communities. AIA calls on the next Administration to uphold the Paris Agreement to keep the global average temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.



3. Resiliency

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) calls on the next Administration and Congress to pass policies that support America's ability to better navigate the realities of climate impacts and natural disasters. Weather and climate disaster events have cost the American people trillions of dollars. AIA supports the integration of policies that enhance the resiliency, durability and adaptability of buildings and communities to improve disaster survivability. This includes funding like Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Building Infrastructure and Community funding, which is smart policy and cost-effective as it allows communities to build back better by rebuilding resiliently. We also support using federal procurement to promote the use of durable materials, elevating structures in flood-prone areas, and incorporating features that can withstand extreme weather events. AIA also supports policies that encourage communities to develop comprehensive resilience plans, including risk assessments and mitigation strategies, to better prepare for and respond to environmental challenges, especially in historically underserved communities.

4. Taxes

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) urges the next Administration and Congress to prioritize tax policy reforms that will have a significant impact on the architecture industry, focusing on R&D expensing, housing tax credits, and pass-through deductions. AIA advocates for future amendments to the tax code that would allow for the immediate deduction of R&D expenses in the year they are incurred, a critical step in fostering ongoing innovation and ensuring the industry's competitiveness. AIA also calls on lawmakers to implement a 12.5% increase in the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) allocation and to reduce the tax-exempt bond financing requirement, actions that are essential for securing funding and expanding affordable housing projects nationwide. AIA urges the next Administration and Congress to extend the provisions allowing partnerships and other pass-through entities to deduct qualified business income. This includes eliminating the current caps on deductions for "Specified Service Trade or Business" entities when income exceeds a certain threshold, which is necessary for driving innovation and maintaining the competitiveness of architecture firms.

5. Contract Parity and Local Design Freedom for Federal Buildings

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) calls on the next Administration and Congress to take decisive action to ensure federal contract parity by enacting legislative changes that guarantee a fair and consistent application of design fee policies across all relevant federal contracts. Additionally, the AIA urges the codification of the Design Excellence Program across all federal agencies, which is crucial for ensuring local communities have the design freedom needed for federal building projects. These policies are a proven method for producing high-quality, sustainable facilities that meet the needs of the American public. The AIA emphasizes that these policies guide the federal government in selecting the most qualified architects and integrated design teams for federal projects, ensuring that the assessment processes used in design and construction provide enduring value. By prioritizing the implementation of the Design Excellence Program, the next Administration and Congress will:

- Provide the best value to partner agencies and taxpayers.
- Leverage the expertise of America's most skilled architects to create safe, durable, efficient, and visually appealing buildings.
- Ensure that projects are completed on time and within budget.
- Integrate local community goals and industry best practices into planning and design decisions.

The AIA urges the next Administration and Congress to make these changes a priority, as they are critical to achieving fairness and freedom in federal design and construction.



6. Student Loans

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) calls on the next Administration and Congress to expand on work done in the last Congress and provide relief and support for graduates. AIA supports the expansion of student loan forgiveness programs, particularly for graduates who enter public service or work in underserved communities. The next Administration should expand current loan repayment assistance programs and scholarship opportunities to help alleviate the financial challenges faced by future professionals.

7. Historic Preservation

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) calls on the new Administration and Congress to commit to the preservation of historic buildings and landmarks as vital components of cultural heritage and community identity. Historic buildings are critical to the fabric of the nation's big cities and small towns, defining our sense of place. These buildings speak to who we were, are, and will become. AIA supports policies that enhance or broaden the path for adaptive reuse of historic structures, increase access to historic tax credits, and expand funding and technical support for these transformative projects.

Historic tax credits have been, and continue to be, critical to the preservation and adaptive reuse of many iconic structures. Many of these exemplary projects demonstrate that preservation efforts can successfully enhance the vibrant history of American towns and cities, while also creating new affordable housing opportunities in vibrant walkable communities and consuming fewer natural resources and energy than comparable new construction. AIA encourages architects to engage in preservation efforts and to incorporate historical considerations into design projects, ensuring that valuable architectural heritage is preserved.