



2026 Fellowship Application

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Program details

Fellows are recognized with AIA's highest membership honor for their exceptional work and contributions to architecture and society. Fellowship is applied for through submittal of a portfolio/application that documents the achievements of applicants for review and evaluation by the Jury of Fellows. The following pages provide information and direction for all applicants and sponsors to guide the development of a successful application.

Schedule & Fees

- ▶ Submission open: June 25, 2025
- ▶ Submission close: October 8, 2025, by 5pm ET
- ▶ Notification to candidates: Mid- February 2026
- ▶ Public announcement: Late February 2026

Dates are subject to change.

Fee: There is a non-refundable fee of \$450 for this program.

Eligibility

Candidates for Fellowship must:

- be a licensed AIA Architect Member in good standing. This also applies to Architect Emeritus members.
- have at least (10) cumulative years of Architect Membership prior to the submission deadline.

If uncertainties exist about the period of membership, we recommend consulting with the local chapter. Membership History can also verify the candidate's eligibility prior to preparing the submission.

Candidate year eligibility

- Candidates submit a first-year, second-year, or third-year application. A candidate's application year impacts how many reference letters they may include and whether they are eligible to apply in the next cycle.
- If a candidate takes a cycle off, they revert to first-year status. Second- and third-year candidate status only applies if you submit an application in consecutive cycles.
- If a third-year candidate is not elevated, they are not eligible to submit in the next cycle. After one cycle elapses, they may resubmit as a first-year candidate.

Jury of Fellows

2026 Jury of Fellows:

Sanford Garner, FAIA, Jury Chair, RG Collaborative, Indianapolis, IN

Roderick Ashley, FAIA, Roderick Ashley Architect, Portland, OR

Margaret Carney, FAIA, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Julie Hiromoto, FAIA, HKS, Dallas, TX

John Horky, FAIA, Ripples, by design, Milwaukee, WI

Mitra Kanaani, FAIA, NewSchool of Architecture & Design, San Diego, CA

Christine Mondor, FAIA, evolve, LLC, Pittsburgh, PA

Jose Javier Toro, FAIA, Toro Arquitectos, San Juan, PR

Lourdes Solera, FAIA, M.C. Harry & Associates, Miami, FL

To protect the integrity of the awards process, active candidates are prohibited from contacting members of the Jury during the submission process. Communication with any of the above, from the time of submittal to completion of the jury process, by the candidate or anyone acting on their behalf is cause for immediate disqualification.

Recognition (if elevated)

Recognition for this program typically includes the following elements, but may be subject to change. Elevated candidates will receive additional information about this cycle's recognition benefits with their selection notification.

- Promotional recognition in AIA communication channels.
- Complimentary AIA26 Conference on Architecture & Design registration.
- An invitation to participate in the College of Fellows (COF) Investiture Ceremony, where medals are bestowed upon the new Fellows with family and friends in attendance. Other College of Fellows events take place before and after Investiture at AIA26. For more information about these events, contact cof@aia.org.
- Fellowship certificate.
- 2026 Class and individual Fellow photo with the AIA President and COF Chancellor.
- Digital copy of the Investiture Sketch.

Other recognitions by the College:

- Redbook (Fellows Directory).
- Special Edition of the COF Quarterly featuring the new class of Fellows, distributed digitally to all Fellows. A printed version is given to new Fellows at Investiture.
- Fellowship Pin.
- Other COF merchandise.

General criteria

Demonstrating Impact: The Ripple Effect

Candidates for Fellowship in the AIA are required to submit an application that includes documentation of work that demonstrates the “ripple effect” they have had on the profession. This term is essentially shorthand for the significant impact candidate's work has made on the field of architecture and on society, extending beyond their daily practice or their immediate geographic area. For example, ripple effect should be demonstrated by public speaking, contributions to national and regional publications, mentoring, teaching, service to the profession, broad geographic influence, or legacy through others.

AIA Values

Throughout the submission, candidates are encouraged to highlight any aspects of their work as an architect or life experience that has reflected contributions to or influence of areas of special interest to AIA, its members, and the architecture profession. These include, but are not limited to, the Public Policies and Position Statements of the AIA. Contributions or influences might include such areas as diversity, sustainability, or the mentoring of emerging professionals, to the degree the candidate has had the opportunity to address them, or as these topics may enhance the presentation.

AIA Framework for Design Excellence

While Fellowship submissions are not required to fit comprehensively within the Framework principles, candidates are strongly encouraged to consider their submission in this context. For additional information, visit the [AIA Framework for Design Excellence](#).

Other criteria are strongly recommended as it significantly aids the Jury in their application review.

- Fonts must be no smaller than 10pt with clear, concise, legible text
- Avoid multiple fonts, multiple colors of text, and the overuse of italics. Keep it simple and clear
- Results-oriented language that is supported by outcome and impact data (e.g., testimonials, post occupancy evaluations, building performance data, etc.)
- Landscape orientation, rather than portrait orientation
- High-quality images
- Inclusion of testimonial quotes from individuals who are prohibited from acting as a reference should not be present (e.g., members of the AIA Board of Directors and Strategic Council; see the “Reference Letters” section for more information)
- In Section 2, avoid duplicating extensive detail that is presented in an Exhibit such as large charts, large photographs, etc.

To ensure legibility, all submissions should have sufficient contrast in both text and graphics. It is recommended that candidates put documents through a contrast checker, such as the tool provided in Adobe Suite.

Fellowship Objects

The Objects of Nomination can be thought of as categories of achievement. Candidates apply under one of these categories to organize their submission. Each Object has specific criteria and requirements associated with it. The Objects are identified in the AIA Rules of the Board (see: Section 2.5)

Candidates are required to select an Object and one of that Object's related Sub-Objects, to best highlight how their achievements have benefited and impacted the profession beyond their own firm, community, or region. It is important to select an Object that is a good fit for the candidate's achievements, because the Jury will be using that criteria to review the candidate's submission.

Objects are the reference frames through which the candidate's achievements are reviewed, and candidates may need to consider multiple relevant Objects. If the candidate is having difficulty deciding amongst different Objects, it is recommended they weigh the options with their Sponsor or another trusted advisor. Selection of a chosen Object does not preclude the candidate from including career achievements that may be better aligned with other Objects. However, those achievements should be presented, where relevant, for how they support the candidate's themes in the selected Object.

Note: Candidates must select one of their chosen Object's related Sub-Objects and cannot mix and match.

Object One: To promote the aesthetic, scientific, and practical efficiency of the profession.

Sub-Objects: Design | Urban Planning & Design | Preservation

Fellowship in this Object is granted to architects who have produced an extensive body of distinguished work that has been broadly recognized for its design excellence by their peers, the media, and/or through publications that have had a significant effect on the trajectory of architectural design. Work should exhibit excellence through a holistic approach that integrates creativity, functionality, sustainability, human experience, context sensitivity, and cultural relevance to create meaningful and impactful built environments that enrich the lives of people and communities. Works submitted may be of any size, for any client, of any scope, and reflecting any type of architectural design service. This may be accomplished through individual or collaborative effort with the applicant playing a significant role in the design. Demonstrating application of the AIA Framework for Design Excellence and resulting impacts should be part of the submission.

Design may include design of a building or project.

Urban Design and Planning may include work related to a city, district, or campus.

Preservation may include design work related to the restoration, conservation, and/or the rehabilitation of a culturally significant work (this differs from the Sub-Object of Technical Advancement in Preservation of Object 2).

Object Two: To advance the science and art of planning and building by advancing the standards of practice.

Sub-Objects: Practice Management | Practice Technical Advancement

Fellowship in this Object is granted to architects who have made notable contributions to the profession through their work and how it has broadly impacted/is impacting others' practice of architecture.

Fellowship Object cont.

Demonstrating application of the AIA Framework for Design Excellence and resulting impacts should be part of the submission.

Practice Management may include firm leadership, management, administration, or project management if the candidate can demonstrate their impact on others' practices, preferably with a broad ripple effect.

Practice Technical Advancement may include widely sharing specific building type innovations and best practices such as Education, Healthcare, etc., and/or technical expertise such as building performance, envelope design, etc. (For example, practice technical advancement of preservation projects might be based on the architect's strong commitment to historical research, implementation of unique preservation techniques, and coupled with their strong focus on the actual construction implementation to enhance our physical heritage.)

Object Three: To coordinate the building industry, and the profession of architecture.

Sub-Objects: Led the Institute | Led a Related Organization

Fellowship in this Object is granted to architects who have actively, efficiently, and cooperatively led the Institute or a related professional organization over a sustained period of time and have gained widespread recognition for the results of their work. Architects applying in this Object should include information to show how they:

- Elevated the role of the profession and the Institute (or related organization) in the eyes of the community.
- Enhanced the visibility of the Institute (or related organization).
- Directly impacted members' engagement with the Institute (or related organization), that through their actions members are more invested/engaged with the Institute (or related organization) and its mission; make note if the value of the Institute (or related organization) to members has been improved, and how.
- Created or enhanced initiatives that empower members to be more active in the Institute (or related organization) and/or their community; how members have been affected by these initiatives. Show if these initiatives have been replicated or have inspired others to create new initiatives in their regions, and how initiatives sustain themselves once candidate is no longer involved.
- Show impact beyond their chapter's geographic location, i.e., your ripple effect on the profession or society.

Object Four: To ensure the advancement of the living standards of people through their improved environment.

Sub-Objects: Public Service | Government | Industry Organizations

Fellowship in this Object is granted to architects who have made notable contributions in public service, government, or industry organizations by providing transformative leadership in architecture, planning, and design of an organization's unique built environment. Architects applying in this Object will have clearly raised the standards of professional practice within the organizations they are part of, by leading positive change that advances the mission, impact, visibility, and effectiveness of organizations. Significant improvements can include such elements as conservation, beautification, and expansion of buildings, landscape, infrastructure, land-use regulation, transportation infrastructure, removal or transformation of blighted areas. Demonstrating a correlation to the AIA Framework for Design Excellence

Fellowship Object cont.

should be part of the submission.

- Public Service may include providing leadership as an architect within the public service sector including areas such as transportation infrastructure, energy and environmental industry, public libraries, public art, public foundations.
- Government may include providing leadership as an architect within the military, regional, national, or international government service areas such as embassies, government funded programs such the Peace Corps or Army Corp of Engineers.
- Industry Organizations may include providing leadership as an architect within areas such as healthcare, education, higher education, community foundations, and cultural institutions or systems.

Object Five: Making the profession of ever-increasing service to society.

Sub-Objects: Alternative Career | Service to Society | Work with Organizations not directly connected with the Built Environment

Fellowship in this Object is granted to architects who have made notable contributions that have benefited and impacted the profession beyond their own practice, community, or region through one of the following:

- Alternative Career may include a career related to architecture that illustrates outstanding achievements that support the architectural profession.
- Service to Society may include extensive volunteer work related to architecture with organizations not directly connected with the built environment.
- Work with Organizations not directly connected with the Built Environment may include service that transcends the customary architectural practice that have wide reaching impacts that serve as a national model.

Object Six: To advance the science and art of planning and building by advancing the standards of architectural education and training.

Sub-Objects: Education | Research | Literature

Fellowship in this Object is granted to architects who have made notable contributions to one of the following:

- Work in Education may include teaching, academic research, administration, or writing, and should have a lasting impact, be widely recognized, and provide meaningful contributions to academic thought and scholarship, including a commitment to intellectual curiosity, rigor, integrity, and the pursuit of knowledge for the betterment of society.
- Work in Research may include building codes and standards, specifications, new material applications, or inventions. Research should include work that has advanced the profession, informed design practice, or has addressed pressing global issues related to sustainability, urbanization, health, and social justice.
- Work in Literature may include writings that have inspired critical thinking, fostered innovation, and contributed to the ongoing dialogue about the role of architecture in shaping the world we inhabit.

Object Specific Portfolio Recommendations

Object One:

- All categories: Include reference to the AIA Framework for Design Excellence. Include exhibits which demonstrate impact on the profession and the extent of its reach.
- **Design:** Include at least one image per project illustrating the surrounding context. Include sketches that demonstrate the development of the design idea.
- **Urban Design and Planning:** Include ‘before and after’ images to convey context and impact.
- **Historic Preservation:** Include ‘before and after’ images, to convey impact.

Object Two:

- **Practice Management:** Include charts, diagrams, tools, etc. that illustrate information which best represents the story of the candidate’s impact. Metrics may include innovations such as firm organization or work, growth, capability, reach, and influence of the firm, methods for mentoring, learning and advancement, example processes for the profession, i.e., evidence of the ripple effect. Describe how the candidate’s accomplishments have positively impacted the profession beyond the confines of their office/firm.
- **Technical Advancement:** Include diagrams or other images that describe advancements in the candidate’s area of expertise and how they have affected the practice of architecture. For preservation, include ‘before and after’ images. (For example, Practice Technical Advancement of preservation projects might be based on the architect’s strong commitment to historical research, implementation of unique preservation techniques, and coupled with their strong focus on the actual construction implementation to enhance our physical heritage.)

Object Three:

- **Led the Institute:** Include text, exhibits, charts, diagrams, tools, etc. which best represents the story of how the candidate elevated the value of the Institute. Include images if they clearly illustrate the importance of events, community initiatives, and/or personal involvement. Show how the candidate shared their leadership, initiatives, and impact to the broader profession.
- **Led a Related Organization:** Include text, exhibits, charts, diagrams, tools, etc. which best represents the story of the candidate’s impact on the Related Organization. Include images if they clearly illustrate the importance of events, community initiatives, their personal involvement and impact. Show/ describe how the candidate shared their leadership, initiatives, and impact to the broader profession.

Object Four:

- **Public Service, Government, or Industry:** Include data or information that illustrates how the candidate’s work went beyond the expectations of their job. Clearly communicate the long-range impact of their work.

Object Five:

- **Alternative Career, Service to Society, Work with Organizations not directly connected with the Built Environment:** Include stories of challenges, actions, and the impact for the candidate’s work. Use data, diagrams, exhibits, and images which enhance the understanding of the results from their participation. Impact should go beyond the local/regional level; this may be represented by media, publications, far-reaching impact that is a service to society.

presentations, and tools which are shared, to characterize how efforts may have a far-reaching impact that is a service to society.

Object Six:

- **Education:** Include images of student work, in addition to diagrams of educational tools developed, context of assignment, etc. Include at least one example with images of the candidate's own work.
- **Research:** Include data and exhibits which enhance the understanding of the candidate's impact on the profession, such as why it was important and the extent of its reach.
- **Literature:** Include data and exhibits which enhance the understanding of the candidate's impact on the profession, such as why it was important and the extent of its reach. Include examples of candidate's work that others have cited in their work.

See the "Portfolio Sections and Format" and "Images and Copyright Information" sections for additional recommendations on those topics. Candidates can view successful submissions in each Object on the Resources tab of the program website.

Portfolio Sections

Documents that do not conform to the following guidelines **will be disqualified**.

General formatting

- PDF format
- 8.5 x 11" page size
- Numbered pages
- Maximum 40 pages
- Upload max for the submission platform is 25MB.

Section order and page limits

- Section 1
 - Sponsor Letter (max 1 page)
 - Summary of Achievements (max 1 page)
- Section 2 (max 18 pages)
 - 2.1: Significant Work
 - 2.2: Significant Awards, Honors & Recognition
 - 2.3: Significant Publications
- Section 3 (max 20 pages)
 - Exhibits List (does not apply towards your page count)
 - Exhibits (7-10 exhibits required)
- Reference Letters
 - Seven (7) letters required
 - max 1 page per letter
 - Letters do not apply towards your page count

Sections with specific formatting requirements (see each for more information)

- Sponsor Letter
- Exhibits
- Reference letters
- Images

Portfolio Sections cont.

Section 1: Maximum of one (1) page including the Summary Statement.

Summary Statement and Summary of Achievements

Summary Statement (25–35 words)

Often referred to as the candidate’s “zinger,” this statement is the most distilled version of the candidate’s argument for elevation. It should directly communicate impact and establish clear themes the portfolio will follow.

The Summary of Achievements is a high-level narrative of why the candidate should be elevated under the specified Object. A strong summary page uses direct, clear language to communicate the key achievements and results that the portfolio will explore in greater detail.

Candidates are advised to choose thematic areas for this page to focus on, all of which connect back to the Summary Statement. Candidates can see examples of summary pages by reviewing previous submissions on the program website (Resources tab). Candidates should provide both an overview and specifics of their achievements and results in their chosen thematic areas. Strong connection to the selected Sub-Object is necessary.

Section 2: Maximum eighteen (18) pages.

Significant Accomplishments

Section 2 takes a broad look at the impact of the candidate’s work and accomplishments in relation to their Object. This compliments the Exhibits, which provide more extensive detail for key projects or accomplishments. A strong Section 2 will:

- demonstrate a broad ripple effect by describing the candidate’s actions and impact, and by supporting their impact with outcome data.
- connect back to the Object and Sub-Object. For example, if a candidate is applying under Object 2: Practice Management, then the descriptions should show how the candidate’s management and practice model resulted in a successful project, award, media coverage, etc. or firm management results.
- expand upon the story of the themes laid out in the summary page.
- cross reference significant work to the Exhibits as applicable.
- explain any gaps in service, awards, publications, etc

2.0 Curriculum Vitae: Provide summary of education and work experience. (This will primarily be a duplicate of information from the on-line form.)

2.1 Significant Work: Projects, jury service, AIA involvement, civic/volunteer involvement, teaching.

- Always describe achievements that relate directly to the Object and Sub-Object first.
- For positions held, including voluntary ones, include the title and organization name, the duties involved, results achieved, and dates the candidate held the position. It is recommended that information is organized to reinforce the candidate’s story and highlight their ripple effect on the profession and to reinforce their Summary Statement and achievements.
- For design or construction projects, include the location and year of completion and candidate’s specific role or achievement for the project. If work was accomplished as co-collaborator or co-designer specifically identify those individuals as well as clearly stating the candidate’s role.

Portfolio Sections cont.

2.2 Significant Awards, Honors, and Recognition

- Highlight the most significant awards relative to the Object and Sub-Object. For most significant awards/honors provide overview of the award/honor, purpose/focus, and the reason for recognition.
- Include the years in which awards were received.
- Organize/group awards together by type (e.g., AIA National Awards, AIA Component Awards, government honors, education awards, etc.) or by theme (topic, project, theme from the summary page, etc.) so they communicate connection and support of the Object and/or the Summary Statement.

2.3 Significant Publications: books, articles, blogs, guides, infographics, curricula, briefs, etc.

- Organize and clarify which entries are “written by the candidate” vs. “about the candidate” vs. “about candidate's work.”
- Note the audience and reach of the entry when possible, so the Jury can easily understand impact.
- Describe if and how the publication(s) has made a significant ripple effect, has elevated the profession and reinforces the focus of the candidate’s Summary Statement.
- If the title of the entry does not clearly tie back to the candidate’s stated Object or summary themes, add a brief description about the contents or importance based on the Object.

2.4 Significant Presentations and Speaking Engagements

- Include a brief description of presentation and targeted audience.
- Include the year in which engagements occurred.
- Organize/group by year, type, or theme.
- Note the audience and reach of the presentation when possible, so the Jury can easily understand impact.

Section 3: Maximum twenty (20) pages

Significant Accomplishments: Exhibits.

An Exhibit is an in-depth documentation of a project or activity that emphasizes the candidate’s contributions and describes in detail how the candidate’s involvement directly resulted in its success. Typically, this section begins with the Exhibit that speaks most strongly to the Object and Sub-Object, Summary Statement and overall ripple effect.

Exhibits are not limited to design work and may include practice/education models, volunteering, publications, organizational leadership, etc.

For AIA Fellowship, all candidates are expected to show built or completed projects, such as a building, published reference book, textbook, peer reviewed research effort, etc.

Exhibits that do not include the following information are subject to disqualification. If candidates are unsure how this information applies to their Exhibits, please contact Muza Conforti.

Portfolio Sections cont.

Descriptive data:

- **Project name**
- **Organization or design firm**
- **Architect or architecture firm of record** (if built work)
- **Completion Date:** For built work, this is the date of substantial completion. For management or other project work, this refers to when candidate's work on the project ended or when the project itself was complete.
- **Role of candidate:** Candidate's specific title or role on the team (e.g., Founder, Designer, Project Manager, etc.). For Object One, the applicant should note when they were "largely responsible for design" or if the work was accomplished as a co-design or collaboration, clarify the specific nature of the "collaborative effort" and the significant responsibility of the applicant. Co designer or collaborators must be identified.
- **Synopsis:** Challenge presented/candidate's specific role/resolution and outcome – as a description which provides detailed benefit, impact, and results of the candidate's participation in the project/firm.
- **Project aspects:** Include aspects of projects that demonstrate alignment with the AIA Framework for Design Excellence, such as sustainability and environmental design challenges and outcomes.
- **Awards and publications:** Include awards and publications about the project, as applicable.

Object specific requirements:

- **Object One:** Exhibits must include a minimum of five (5) built projects for which the candidate "plays a significant role in the design." When work is generated with co-designers or collaborators, the co-designers or collaborators must be identified, and the candidate's role clearly defined.
- **Object Two:** Exhibits must include a minimum of five (5) built projects.
- **Objects Three, Four, Five, and Six:** Exhibits must include a minimum of one (1) completed/built project, such as a building, published reference book, textbook, peer reviewed research effort, etc.

Declaration of Responsibility

Each Exhibit must include a declaration by someone (other than the candidate) who can certify the candidate's stated responsibility. It is highly recommended that the individual be the client, from a collaborating firm, or participant in the project, if from the applicant's firm. Candidates are strongly encouraged to include declarations from a variety of sources, as opposed to one individual.

For the declaration to be valid, it must follow this format:

I have personal knowledge of [the candidate's responsibility, for example: played a significant role in the design, was a lead co-designer of the project, project under direction of nominee, or nominee's firm executed project, etc.]

[Name]

[Title and/or Relationship to the Exhibit]

Signatures: The name of the person making the declaration is sufficient to verify any claims called into question. Please do not include images of signatures or digital signatures as they make the elevated portfolios harder to redact for archival purposes.

Sample declarations:

DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

I have personal knowledge that the nominee is largely responsible for technical content, and is a key advisor for overall 'Guide' conceptual organization of the project listed above.

Beverly Hauschild-Baron, Hon. AIA, Retired EVP, AIA Minnesota

Testimonials: Inclusion of testimonial quotes from individuals prohibited from acting as a reference is not permitted (e.g., no current Officer, Officer-elect, AIA or component staff person; or member of the Board, College of Fellows Executive Committee, or current Jury of Fellows or member of the Jury of Honorary Fellows). See the "Reference Letters" section for more information.

DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

I have personal knowledge that the exhibit listed above was under direction of the nominee.

Michael Meredith

Capital Outlay Project Manager
State of California
Department of General Services
Real Estate Service Division

Nomination & Sponsor Info

Nominator

Architect members may be nominated by:

- the governing board of any component organization.
- a minimum of five (5) Fellows or ten (10) Architect members residing elsewhere.

The [nomination signature sheet](#) should be completed by candidate's nominator(s) and uploaded by the applicant to the submission form. For the purposes of a component nomination, the president or executive may sign on behalf of the component's board.

The nomination signature sheet is not reviewed by the Jury.

Sponsor role and duties:

Sponsors support and advise the candidates as they prepare their submission, and the sponsor is required to write a letter of support for the candidate which summarizes their contributions and introduces the portfolio. The sponsor letter should clearly state the Object of Nomination and Sub-object selected by the candidate and should provide strong testimony and specific references to the candidate's achievements within the Object identified. Ideally, themes and key points made by the candidate in their Summary Statement and on the Summary Page should be reflected in themes and key points made by the sponsor in their letter as an introduction to the application.

Sponsors assist the candidate by acting as a point of contact for the reference writers, ensuring they are fully aware of the candidate's summary page and can further support the candidate's application by providing direct reinforcement of stated themes and accomplishments relevant to their shared experiences. Sponsors should support the candidate in selecting their slate of writers to ensure a strong, diverse pool of writers who hold the candidate in high esteem, can provide valuable reinforcement of the candidate's application, and will complete the task of submitting the one-page letter within the defined timeline for submission.

Sponsors provide support, guidance, and clarification of application requirements as needed, including clarification from AIA staff if information shared on the AIA website does not cover any questions that may arise. Of greatest importance is the sponsor's guidance relative to the candidate's selection of the most appropriate Object and Sub-Object, and through clarification of application requirements as they relate to the candidate's selected Object and Sub-Object.

Sponsors should be aware of the specific requirements for each Object and Sub-Object such that they can review all sections of the portfolio and advise the candidate as to the alignment of materials with stated requirements for the candidate's specific Object and Sub-Object.

Sponsors are required to complete "Unpaid Labor and Code of Ethics" and "Professional Conduct" declarations. Receipt of these forms can be tracked in the left-hand menu of the submission site under "My Submissions > Pending 3rd Party Action."

Sponsor eligibility

Any Fellow or Architect member in good standing may act as a sponsor, and a member may be a sponsor to multiple candidates in the same cycle. A sponsor may also be candidate's nomination signatories. Sponsors may not also write or co-author reference letters and should not provide declarations of responsibility for Exhibits, as this reduces the perception of the candidate's broad impact within the profession.

Ideally, the sponsor should be someone who knows the candidate well and can speak knowledgeably and critically about their career. There is no restriction on a member of the candidate's firm acting as a sponsor, however, this approach puts more onus on the submission to demonstrate the candidate's broad influence beyond the firm.

No current AIA National Officer, Officer-elect, member of the Board, member of the Strategic Council, members of the College of Fellows Executive Committee, member of the Jury of Fellows, member of the Jury of Honorary Fellows, or AIA or component staff person may sponsor or be reference for a nominee for Fellowship.

Sponsor letter requirements

Please note that sponsor letters that do not conform to these requirements will not be reviewed by the jury and that this may impact the success of the candidate.

- Included as the first page of the portfolio
- PDF format
- Maximum of one (1) page
- Company name and address must be included in the letterhead (Retired or Emeritus members may use their personal information)
- Sponsors must include their name and applicable AIA designation at the bottom of the letter

Letters should be addressed to the Jury Chair:

Sanford Garner, FAIA

2026 Jury of Fellows

American Institute of Architects

Other sponsor letter recommendations

A strong sponsor letter will avoid broad generalizations and speak directly to the following:

- The candidate's Summary Statement
- The candidate's key accomplishments
- Sponsor's explanation as to why the candidate is an excellent nominee for elevation to Fellowship, in relation to the program criteria
- Introduce the Object and Sub-Object of the candidate's submission
- Introduce the themes of the Summary of Achievements
- Highlight the candidate's ripple effect and impact on the profession and/or society.

Reference Letters

Reference letter writers should be people who know the candidate well and are able to verify and testify to the candidate's accomplishments from a broad range of perspectives and contexts (mentor, competitor, client, colleague, etc.). Sponsors should work with the candidate to determine the strongest slate of writers.

Letter writers should support accomplishment(s) or experience(s) with the candidate that aligns with the Object of Nomination. Collectively the letters should reinforce the candidate's Summary Statement, accomplishments, and ripple effect. Ideally, the reference letter writer should highlight item(s) briefly described in the Summary of Achievements page of which they have personal knowledge/understanding.

No current AIA National Officer, Officer-elect, member of the Board, member of the Strategic Council, member of the College of Fellows Executive Committee, member of the Jury of Fellows, member of Jury of Honorary Fellows, or AIA or component staff person may sponsor or be a reference for a nominee for Fellowship.

Letters received after the submission deadline or that do not conform to the formatting requirements below, will not be reviewed by the Jury.

Required letters:

- Seven (7) letters are required for all Fellowship applications.
- Five (5) of the letters must be from AIA members in good standing. This can be any AIA member type.

Additional letters and rollover:

- Second-year candidates may include up to ten (10) letters.
- Third-year candidates may include up to thirteen (13) letters.
- Second- and third-year candidates have the option to rollover or replace letters from the previous cycle's application and will be prompted to do that in the reference letter section of the application.

Formatting requirements:

- PDF format
- Maximum of one (1) page
- Company name and address must be included in the letterhead (Retired or Emeritus members may use their personal information)
- Writers must include their name and AIA designation at the bottom of the letter.
- Letters must be submitted via the online submission platform. Letters sent by email, postal service, etc. will not be reviewed by the Jury.

Confidentiality requirements:

All reference letters are to remain confidential, and candidates should limit contact with their letter writers. It is the sponsor's responsibility to act as a point of contact to the reference writers, establish if each is willing to act as a reference, answer questions, etc. Improper influence on writers by the candidate is grounds for disqualification.

Letter submission and management:

Letters may be officially requested at any point after a candidate begins their submission. When the candidate enters the proposed reference letter writer's name and email, an automatic email with instructions and a unique link to upload their letter will be sent from the platform. After the candidate sends a request, candidate will see in red next to the writer's name whether they have uploaded their letter.

Candidate year

The candidate must select their candidate year status in the online application to view the correct number of reference letters allowed/required.

Reference letter

The candidate will be asked to fill out a field for each reference writer.

Note: The request email to writers uses the candidate's name as provided in the Candidate Information section. If candidates have not completed this field, the platform will direct them to that page when they try to submit the writer's information.

- ▶ Full Name:
- ▶ Email:

Would the candidate like to replace any of the original letters?

This field will only appear for second- and third-year candidates.

Images & Copyright Info**Portfolio images**

Quality photographs, diagrams, sketches, mapping, and other images help the candidate to tell their story and help the Jury to review the portfolio.

General image recommendations:

- When selecting images, or photographs which include the candidate, consider whether the image(s) highlight the candidate's contributions, speak to the candidate's Object, or support the candidate's summary themes.
- Avoid large images of the candidate, especially if they do not add anything to the story.
- If a project is built, include photographs so the Jury can see the resolution of the design.
- If a particular element is referenced in summary themes or in the project description, include images that demonstrate it. This is particularly important if the submission is for Object One: Design, Object Two: Technical Advancement.
- Images with text (diagrams, charts, screen captures, books, etc.) should be legible. Keep it simple and clear.

Announcement image:

Candidates are asked to upload a headshot to be used for the Fellowship Directory and announcements in AIA channels. This photo is not for Jury review.

Image specifications:

- jpg, png format
- 1:1 aspect ratio (square)
- Resolution: at least 72 dpi. Minimum 600 pixels wide
- File name: "Last Name_First Name"

Images that do not align with AIA's style guidelines or are not supported by our web platform will not be used. If AIA needs to source an alternate image, that could impact inclusion in certain announcements.

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If you have any questions after reviewing this documents, please feel free to reach out to Jury of Fellows AIA Staff, Muza Conforti at muzaconforti@aia.org.