



Chief Architect

The Challenge

21st century cities face unprecedented challenges related to the built environment. From land use policies to energy efficiency and resilience, these challenges require the expertise of licensed design professionals. Few mayors have architects trained to address these issues in key positions of leadership providing strategic urban design vision.

The Ask

Connect with AIA to learn more about Chief Architects and set your best future.

More Information

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WHY DO MAYORS NEED A CHIEF ARCHITECT?

Whether the challenges in your city concern office building conversion, energy conservation, resilience, housing affordability, historic preservation or smart growth, a Chief Architect can help you see, design, and build your best future.

Mayors of cities large and small face many complex challenges. Successful mayors know that a city that's not adapting, growing, and attracting new residents, is in decline. Architects are critical to transforming a mayor's vision into reality. They are uniquely equipped to design solutions that encourage community-centered and future-focused growth. Architects are not beholden to any specific design style, vendor, or industry. Instead, they are your trusted partner to implement a comprehensive plan that meets your goals. Each day, architects in cities nationwide solve complex design and construction challenges, from site limitations, poor land use and zoning policies, and energy and resiliency requirements, to project management, energy and water conservation, and indoor air quality needs. Architects help mayors engage with the community, think holistically, and reconcile diverse and competing interests.

CHIEF ARCHITECTS PLACE IN THE BIRTH OF AMERICA

Our founding leaders were smart. They understood that they were starting from scratch and must get it right. They examined the great cities throughout history and their own time to determine the path for the new great American city. At the center of it all was the City Architect. It was the City Architect's responsibility to establish a design vision and guide planning through the city's formative years. In recent decades, many cities have forgotten how their cities were first designed and who led that effort—the City Architect. With the complex challenges in our post-COVID economy, climate, energy, and natural resource depletion, and gentrification and redevelopment concerns, the time is now to restore this lost, but critical voice on the mayor's senior leadership team.

UNDERSTANDING THE MAYOR AND COMMUNITY

A Chief Architect understands that every community has unique needs based on size, values, and existing governing structures. With that in mind, AIA's Chief Architect program is designed to be scalable. Mayors select the optimal pathway to implement their vision. Whether it's the small, but crucial step of adding architects to zoning and planning boards and commissions, having architects serve in the mayor's kitchen cabinet, or whether it's formalizing the Chief Architect back into their traditional role within city leadership, AIA and its members are eager to partner with mayors.