

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

CONNECTICUT

2023 LEGISLATIVE BRIEF



Connecticut

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ARCHITECTS

Architects gain a Professional License through rigorous instruction and training. Our educational degrees are 4+ years of higher education from an accredited college or university. Becoming a professionally licensed also requires years of training under the direct supervision of an architect, and passing 7 difficult exams. These requirements are regulated nationally by NAAB and NCARB, after which the state of Connecticut issues the Professional License.

This training is much more intense than an occupational license because architects protect the health, safety & welfare of the public through their work. The CT Department of Consumer Protection issues both individual and corporate licensure. Corporate architectural licenses in Connecticut require ownership of more than 2/3 of the corporation by licensed architects.

The term "Architect" is a term protected by state statute. The DCP investigates violations of the use of the term and resolves cases when warranted through legal action. The Architectural Licensing Board (ALB) is a 5-member board consisting of 3 architects and 2 public members.

When professional licensure for architects was introduced 100 years ago, the focus on protecting the public's health, safety & welfare was mainly regarding building collapse, fire, or water damage. As the threat of natural disaster increases, our designs now provide protection and resiliency from hurricanes, blizzards, and other climatic events. Because buildings, especially older buildings with poorly constructed envelopes and outdated mechanical systems, contribute greatly to global warming, architects are responsible for retrofitting and replacing construction with energy efficient structures and reducing carbon usage and reliance on fossil fuels.

WHY WE ARE ESSENTIAL

Architects provide security for building occupants integrally with their designs, especially in school and public buildings. Features such as views, materials, and technology are integrated into the plans.

Architects are also tied to the HSW of the public by building for equity and justice in our communities. We are involved in delivering housing and public projects that not only serve under-represented populations, but dismantle barriers for them to have successful lives.

The design and construction industry, which incorporates architects, engineers, construction managers, and trade contractors, is the second largest business industry after healthcare. Large projects can involve hundreds of professionals and skilled tradesmen. As such, we are essential to the economy.

At the onset of the pandemic, Governor Lamont deemed the construction industry an essential business, and AIACT and architects statewide did not shut down. Construction projects kept moving and kept our economy going.

Architects not only design buildings, but are responsible for cost estimating, and managing the project budget for the owner, whether it be a private developer or a municipality. We are also obligated by contract to serve as the owner's representative and act in their best interest, in both design, and how their money is spent. We bring invaluable knowledge to the table to decide where to build, what to build, and how much to spend.

OUR PRIORITIES



Disaster Assistance

Through our National association and FEMA, architects receive certified training to assist in federal and state disasters as volunteers to assist towns and cities building inspectors on evaluating post disaster occupancy to buildings and homes.

In 2020, we were working with the Trial Lawyers Association and the Judiciary Committee to update verbiage on the Connecticut "Good Samaritan Law" to include architects and engineers. In 2022, the language was in a separate bill, HB 5236: An Act Concerning Architects Who Voluntarily and Without Compensation Assist Public Officials in Evaluating the Safety Elements of Built Environments in the Aftermath of a Major Disaster or Emergency. The bill was signed into law by Governor Lamont in May 2022.

We will now work with the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) on a Memorandum of Understanding on what this assistance will entail.

Energy Efficiency & the 2030 Commitment

Buildings generate nearly 40% of annual global Green House Gas emissions. Approximately two-thirds of the building area that exists today will still exist in 2050. Currently, building renovations affect only 0.5-1% of the building stock annually.

The sustainability, especially the energy efficiency, of the built environment depends on the quality of architectural design and construction. The energy use of new and renovated structures is primarily governed by the International Energy Code as adopted and modified by each state. States have begun to assess and implement additional energy conservation requirements but achieving them requires measures of compliance and enforcement that are challenging to regulate beyond the established work of CT Codes and Standards Committee. Given these challenges, the AIA 2030 Commitment (toward net zero energy buildings) compels its signatory member firms to design more energy efficient buildings.

Architects of AIACT, as such, currently support the work of representatives from the public and private sector (including the Governors Climate Change Council (GC3) and other non-profits) seeking widespread reductions of energy use throughout Connecticut.

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The American Institute of Architects, as part of the global community, champions a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the profession of architecture to create a better environment for all. Achieving this vision has a direct impact on the relevance of our profession and the world's prosperity, health, and future.

Harnessing the passion of our members and the broader design community, AIA is taking steps to advance racial justice and equality in our organization, in our profession, and in our communities. Locally, we are part of the Desegregate CT Coalition of organizations who believe in creating abundant, diverse housing in service of equity, inclusive prosperity, and a cleaner environment.

CONTACT US



You will see architects in many places. We serve on state-appointed councils such as the Architecture Licensing Board, the Governor's Climate Change Council (GC3), School Safety Infrastructure Council (SSIC), and School Building Projects Advisory Council (SBPAC). Locally, most P&Z commissions and design review boards include architects as members. Some town boards of finance and councils also have architects on them.

Please contact us if you have questions or for assistance!

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