

American Institute of Architects

CONNECTICUT

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF



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Architects obtain a **Professional License** through a rigorous and nationally regulated process designed to protect the **health, safety, and welfare of the public**. Licensure requires a minimum of four years of higher education from a nationally accredited college or university, followed by multiple years of documented professional training under the direct supervision of a licensed architect. Candidates must also pass seven comprehensive licensing examinations.

These requirements are established and regulated at the national level by the **National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)** and the **National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)**. Upon completion of all requirements, the State of Connecticut issues the professional license.

Architectural licensure is substantially more rigorous than occupational licensure because architects are legally responsible for the safety and performance of buildings and environments used by the public. The **Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection (DCP)** administers both individual and corporate architectural licensure. Connecticut law requires that corporate architectural licenses be owned by more than two-thirds licensed architects, ensuring professional accountability and ethical responsibility.

The title “**Architect**” is protected by state statute. The DCP investigates misuse of the title and pursues enforcement actions when warranted. Oversight is further provided by the **Architectural Licensing Board (ALB)**, a five-member board composed of three licensed architects and two public members, which advises the state on matters of licensure and professional conduct.

When architectural licensure was established more than a century ago, its primary focus was protecting the public from risks such as structural failure, fire, and water damage. Today, that responsibility has expanded significantly. As the frequency and severity of natural disasters increase, architects design buildings that are resilient to hurricanes, blizzards, flooding, and other climate-related events. In addition, buildings—particularly older structures with inefficient envelopes and outdated mechanical systems—are major contributors to energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Architects therefore play a critical role in retrofitting existing buildings, designing energy-efficient new construction, reducing carbon emissions, and limiting reliance on fossil fuels.

WHY WE ARE ESSENTIAL

Architects provide security and protection for building occupants as an integral part of the design process, particularly in schools and public buildings. Safety features are not added after the fact; they are embedded in the design through building layout, visibility and sightlines, material selection, access control, and integrated technology. These decisions directly **impact occupant safety and emergency response and are fundamental to protecting the public**.

The design and construction industry—including architects, engineers, construction managers, and skilled trade professionals—is the second-largest industry in the nation after healthcare. Large-scale public and private projects routinely involve hundreds of licensed professionals and tradespeople. As a result, architects and the broader construction industry are essential drivers of economic activity and workforce stability.

POLICY ENGAGEMENT

- Proactively advance legislation that serves the public interest and protects the integrity of the built environment by introducing bills directly or collaborating with legislators, coalitions, and partner organizations to develop and advance policy proposals. We may support, oppose, or take a neutral position on legislation based on its impact.
- Provide professional expertise to policymakers through testimony, technical assistance, data-driven analysis, and direct engagement to inform sound legislative and regulatory decisions.
- Monitor legislation and emerging policy issues, assess potential impacts, and determine when and how to engage.
- Actively communicate the public value of architecture and the role of high-quality design in strengthening Connecticut’s communities, economy, and public infrastructure.

POLICY PRIORITIES



Affordable and Accessible Housing

Advocate for policies that address Connecticut's housing shortage through zoning reform, adaptive reuse, and state housing initiatives. **Support the development of well-designed, code-compliant, and affordable housing** that serves residents across all income levels while strengthening communities.

Professional Licensing

Support and protect Connecticut's architectural licensure framework as administered by the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) and the Architectural Licensing Board, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 390. **Oppose efforts that would weaken licensure standards or allow unlicensed practice.** Strong licensure requirements—based on accredited education, supervised experience, and examination—are essential to safeguarding public health, safety, and welfare.

Building Codes and Enforcement

Support the adoption, update, and consistent enforcement of the Connecticut State Building Code, maintained by the Office of the State Building Inspector, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §29-252. Modern codes protect taxpayer investments, improve energy efficiency, enhance resilience, and ensure uniform safety standards across municipalities.

Historic Preservation

Support programs that preserve and rehabilitate historic buildings.

AIA Connecticut actively works to advance legislation that protects the public interest and strengthens the built environment.

We engage directly with legislators and collaborate with allied organizations, coalitions, and professional partners to introduce, refine, and support legislation aligned with these goals.

Resiliency and Disaster Response

Advocate for policies that strengthen infrastructure and buildings against climate-related risks and natural disasters. Support design practices that prioritize disaster mitigation, resilience, and rapid recovery.

AIA Connecticut began working in 2020 to ensure architects trained in post-disaster building evaluations could serve as certified volunteers, using national standards. **In 2022**, this effort led to the **passage of HB 5236**, officially protecting architects.

We are developing a Memorandum of Understanding outlining how this professional assistance will be activated, coordinated, and deployed during emergencies will work with the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS). This collaboration strengthens Connecticut's disaster preparedness and ensures that communities receive timely, qualified support when it is needed most.

Education and Workforce Development

Support state programs and partnerships that strengthen architectural and construction **workforce pipelines**, including collaboration with the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, vocational-technical schools, and apprenticeship programs.

Tax Policy

Monitor tax proposals affecting professional services and the construction industry. Oppose new taxes on architectural and engineering services that would increase project costs for municipalities, school districts, and housing providers, and reduce access to professional expertise.

Public Infrastructure Funding

Support the use of surplus funds, bonding, and capital programs to repair and modernize aging infrastructure, including water systems, public schools, courthouses, libraries, and other civic facilities.

CONTACT US



Architects in Public Leadership

Architects are active contributors to public service across Connecticut. They serve on key state-appointed councils, including the Architecture Licensing Board, the Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3), the School Safety Infrastructure Council (SSIC), and the School Building Projects Advisory Council (SBPAC).

At the local level, architects bring their design expertise to Planning & Zoning commissions, design review boards, and even city and town councils or boards of finance

Please contact us if you have questions or for assistance!

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