

AIA Seattle – Member Guide to Advocacy Engagement v 3.15.2025

AIA Seattle is a 10-county membership organization with a vision for equitable, resilient, thriving communities, and strategic imperatives for climate, housing, and JE:DI. The 2800+ members of AIA Seattle value the organization's engagement in advocacy on issues directly related to the built environment and the profession. While AIA WA Council focuses on state level legislation, AIA Seattle engages in advocacy within the 10 counties of membership, Clallam, Chelan, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom.

How AIA Seattle Takes an Advocacy Position

Advocacy is an activity to amplify AIA Seattle's influence on policy, which could be specific laws, initiatives, or regulations that impact architecture or the built environment. AIA Seattle follows a structured process to determine when and how to engage in advocacy efforts.

Key Topics in the Advocacy Process

1. When can AIA Seattle take an advocacy position?

- The AIA Seattle Board must approve the position after review by the Public Policy Board (PPB).
- The Executive Committee can decide on policy positions when given authority by the Board.
- If a position aligns directly with a Board-approved policy, staff and PPB can move forward while keeping the Board informed.

2. Who brings forward advocacy issues?

- The **PPB** is the steering committee that brings proposals to the AIA Seattle Board.
- Chairs of steering and member committees (with their committee's recommendation), PPB members, AIA Seattle members of any category (at least four), staff, and external partners can propose topics for PPB to consider.

3. How does AIA Seattle decide whether to engage on a potential advocacy position? What is the initial threshold for engagement?

If you are interested in bringing forward a potential advocacy position to the PPB, send an email to NathanW@aiaseattle.org.

Include information that responds to these prompts:

- **Strategic Alignment:** How does the issue align with AIA Seattle's mission, values, and past positions?
- **Organization Influence:** Is AIA Seattle well-positioned to successfully act on or influence this issue? Why? Does the position align with the AIA's ability to lead and advocate for positive change in the built environment?
- **Timeline/Urgency:** Is the matter time-sensitive? Staff will consider possible next steps based on the timing

4. If the initial threshold for engagement is confirmed by AIA Seattle staff, what happens next?

Before recommending a position to the AIA Seattle Board of Directors,

PPB considers a summary of the position. Members, with supporting tools from AIA Seattle staff, develop a summary for a recommendation by sharing the following information (examples available upon request)

- What is being proposed (law, regulation, ballot measure, etc.)
- How the proposal aligns with AIA Seattle's mission and past positions
- How impacted communities have been consulted
- Whether AIA Seattle members and partner organizations support the position
- Advocacy steps required (signing a letter, lobbying, public messaging)?
- The risks of taking or not taking a position

5. **What happens after PPB reviews the summary?** AIA Seattle staff are in touch with members who bring forward potential advocacy positions to share next steps.

- If the proposal **doesn't meet criteria**, it is declined.
- If **more information is needed**, PPB requests further details.
- If **PPB supports the position**, they recommend the AIA Seattle Board affirm the position.
- If **the potential position aligns with an existing AIA Seattle policy**, staff and PPB can act without full Board approval.

6. **Roles in Advocacy in AIA Seattle**

- **Work Groups & Committees:** Research and develop proposals.
- **Staff:** Coordinate advocacy, engage stakeholders, bring forward topics to PPB, communicate with members, and speak on behalf of the organization.
- **PPB:** Reviews proposals, makes recommendations to the Board.
- **AIA Seattle Board:** Approves major advocacy positions.
- **AIA Seattle President:** Speaks on behalf of AIA Seattle when a position is adopted, with support from staff.
- **Members:** Join AIA Seattle advocacy spaces like Housing Taskforce and Comp Plan Work Group, bring forward potential advocacy topics to staff, engage in advocacy efforts of the organization with support from staff