

Community Assessment: Comparing Mission Statements

When seeking to establish a new architecture center, a simple but informative early planning exercise is to round up the mission statements of all the organizations in your community that conduct programs examining the built environment. Seeing the range of examples often helps you begin to identify potentially overserved and underserved audiences, a starting place for determining where your organization might focus its programming efforts. This exercise also builds up your familiarity with the types of aspirational statements and community and educational promises commonly pursued by architecture organizations. The following sample resource identifies how the Chicago Architecture Foundation stacks up against its local peers, and then a listing of other mission statements from communities beyond Chicago.

MISSION STATEMENTS: LIKE-MINDED ORGANIZATIONS IN CHICAGO

Chicago Architecture Foundation

Mission Statement

The Chicago Architecture Foundation inspires people to discover why design matters.

Vision Statement

The Chicago Architecture Foundation is the leading organization devoted to celebrating and promoting Chicago as a center of architectural innovation. As Chicago's forum for the exchange of ideas on urban design, CAF inspires people to participate in the building of vibrant communities and to demand the highest standard in urban design. CAF awakens young people to achieve their potential through the discovery of architecture, engineering, and design.

Metropolitan Planning Council

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) has been dedicated to shaping a more sustainable and prosperous greater Chicago region. As an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, MPC serves communities and residents by developing, promoting and implementing solutions for sound regional growth.

American Institute of Architects – Chicago Chapter

The **American Institute of Architects** is the voice of the architecture profession and the resource for its members in service to society.

Society of Architectural Organizations

The **Society of Architectural Organizations** mission is: (1) to provide multiple forums for presenting, interpreting, and debating architectural history; (2) to foster an appreciation and understanding of the built environment throughout history; (3) to encourage and disseminate research in the field of architectural history; and (4) to promote the preservation of significant monuments worldwide.

Landmarks Illinois

The Landmarks Illinois mission is to preserve, protect, and promote architectural and historic resources in Illinois through advocacy and education.

MISSION STATEMENTS: ARCHITECTURE CENTERS/FOUNDATIONS IN THE US

Architectural League of NY

The mission of the **Architectural League of NY** is to advance the art of architecture. The League carries out its mission by promoting excellence and innovation, and by fostering community discussion in an independent forum for creative and intellectual work in architecture, urbanism, and related disciplines. We present the work and ideas of the world's most interesting and influential architects and designers to New York, national, and international audiences, through lectures, exhibitions, publications, and the worldwide web. We identify and encourage talented young architects, through competitions, grants, exhibitions, and publications. And we help shape the future of our built environment by stimulating debate and provoking design thinking about the critical issues of our time.

Center for Architecture – New York

The NY **Center for Architecture** is a hub for all interested in the built environment. It is a place to gather, share, learn, honor, and advocate. The Center's mission is to:

- Provide a center of learning for the public and building industry professionals in order to improve the quality of the built environment
- Explore cutting-edge topics, technological innovations, and other issues concerning the built environment
- Foster exchange and collaboration among members of the design, construction, and real estate community
- Promote an appreciation of New York's unique urban fabric
- Inspire community values and provide fellowship opportunities
- Promote cultural tourism of New York City's architecture

Center for Architecture – Philadelphia

Public Engagement

- Bringing citizens in touch with their physical environment not only through exhibits, but also through active participation in competitions, symposia, press conferences, and workshops.
- Supporting communities in understanding the existing conditions and the future potential of their physical environments.
- Encouraging civic discourse and an open, transparent, and sustained public dialogue.

Collaboration

- Connecting professionals, community, and civic leaders to build high quality environments.
- Fostering collegiality and exchange between industry professionals and providing professional development opportunities for them.
- Bridging the gap between the suburbs and city on regional issues such as the environment.

Design Excellence

- Challenging design and construction professionals to advance their individual skills in reaching truly integrated design.
- Providing a forum for professional and citizen dialogue about the importance of quality design, beautiful public spaces, good civic architecture, and sustainable, family-friendly neighborhoods.
- Celebrating the design achievements of the region and presenting the design accomplishments of other parts of the world in a manner that raises our aspirations.

Dallas Architecture Forum

The Dallas Architecture Forum provides a continuing and challenging public discourse on architecture and urban design in – and for – the Dallas area. The Forum offers presentations of architecture through public lectures by designers, critics, and historians; through topical discussions; and through occasional study tours to buildings and cities locally and throughout the world. The Dallas Architecture Forum serves as an inclusive arena where people interested in and concerned with the built environment, non-professionals and professionals alike, may interact intellectually and socially.

Dallas Center for Architecture

The Dallas Center for Architecture works to advance architecture through education and collaboration. We seek to foster the public's understanding of the power of architecture to enrich our city and our lives through this online resource as well as the programs, exhibits, and tours that the Center presents.

National Building Museum

Advance the quality of the built environment by educating the public about its impact on people's lives.

Rice Design Alliance

The **Rice Design Alliance** is dedicated to advancing architecture, urban design, and the built environment in the Houston region through educational programs, the publication of Cite, and programs to initiate physical improvements. We seek to enhance the quality of life within our community.

San Francisco AIA / Center for Architecture + Design

The [Center for Architecture + Design](#) enhances public appreciation for architecture and design both locally and internationally through exhibitions, lectures, tours, film series, and other programs that aim to reveal the richness of the design arts. The Center for Architecture + Design celebrates the larger diverse design community and is a collaborative environment where design organizations and affiliates share space and engage in the overall programming goal and mission.

San Francisco Planning + Urban Research Association (SPUR)

Through research, education, and advocacy, **SPUR** promotes good planning and good government in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Seattle Architecture Foundation

SAF connects people to the profound influence of design and inspires them to engage in shaping their communities.

Design shapes communities on many levels, whether we are conscious of its impact or not. Everything we touch, everything we see in the built environment is a product of the design process. Plazas, public spaces, even things considered natural, like parks and landscaping, are intentionally designed. SAF awakens people to these influences and increases the public's awareness and appreciation of design in the built environment. An architecturally informed population becomes involved in exploring options and is enthusiastic about its choices. Ultimately, the shape of our communities reflects who we are and who we want to be.

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