

Become an AIA Fellow

Advancement to Fellowship is one of AIA's highest honors, recognizing exceptional work and contributions to society and the profession. Only 3% of AIA members receive this distinction. Architects with 10 or more years of cumulative AIA membership are eligible to apply.

In addition to honoring those architects who meet the Fellowship criteria, the purpose of the College of Fellows is to stimulate a sharing of interests among Fellows, to advance the profession of architecture, to mentor young architects, and to be of ever-increasing service to society.

AIA Illinois established a committee supporting potential Fellowship candidates from the Eastern, Northeast and Prairie Chapters. The committee would like to support you by offering one-on-one chats as you consider whether you are ready to submit this year. Once you are decided, you must submit resumes or profiles by **July 10, 2026** in order to have a committee nomination. The committee will review submissions based upon Fellowship criteria and will nominate to the AIA National those who have shown distinction in fulfilling one of the six *Objects* of the Institute. (Refer to <https://www.aia.org/design-excellence/awards/fellowship> for detailed information on eligibility, criteria, description of the Objects, and more.)

Please submit a copy of your resume/profile, along with supporting material that illustrates compliance with Fellowship criteria. Please include an initial decision about which *Object* your candidacy is based on. These materials will form the preliminary basis for your final submission in October.

To assist you on your journey, AIA National plans a Zoom session with former AIA president Peter Exley on **July 8, 2026**. This will include essential information about how to select an Object, what to include in your submission, and more.

Use the following informational list of elements that the committee requires along with any additional considerations that will strengthen the submission:

- A well-considered decision about the Object to be pursued, and why.
- Clear information about how the individual's work has had ripple effects beyond the immediate firm/ area of work, specifically on the Object selected.
- Careful separation of the individual's work from any firm's work (this can be difficult, but essential).
- Documented involvement/ contribution to the AIA in some fashion.
- List of broader contributions, even if not directly related to the object, such as mentoring, writing, teaching, community involvement, etc.
- Careful review of AIA national's Fellow requirements to assure that the individual will ultimately be able to comply.

If you are considering applying for the first time, please email council@aiaill.org with **Fellowship Application 2026** in the subject line. Plan to further submit the resume and supporting materials to arrive no later than **5pm on July 10**. Please submit the materials in a single or multiple pdfs no larger than 25MB.

If you are planning to resubmit this year through this committee, please email us at council@aiaill.org with **Fellowship Resubmittal 2026** in the subject line now for instructions on how to submit your materials. You will be on a slightly earlier review timeline.

The committee will send letters of nomination the week of July 27 or before. **Please note that your 2026 dues must be current to be considered for Fellowship.**

Virtual mentoring sessions with the committee are planned for the week of **September 1**. The formal submission to AIA National will be finalized in **October, 2026**. The committee hopes to support eligible candidates to successful submission, increasing statewide representation in the College of Fellows and assuring recognition of deserving candidates.

We're here to help!

AIA Illinois Downstate Fellowship Committee

Holly Gerberding, FAIA, Co-chair

Martha Bell, FAIA, Co-chair

Drew Deering, FAIA

John Syvertsen, FAIA

Eric Klinner, AIA Illinois

Mary Young, AIA Prairie