ArchWeek

AIA guidebook for K–12 outreach

Field-tested ideas from AIA chapters across the country

About this guidebook

If you are an AIA member who wants to share your love of architecture with young people, you're in the right place. This guidebook gathers what dozens of AIA chapters and foundations learned running K–12 outreach during Architecture Week, and turns their experience into something you can borrow, adapt, and run yourself.

You do not need a big budget, a large committee, or years of experience. Some of the most memorable programs on these pages reached a single classroom with spaghetti, marshmallows, and two enthusiastic volunteers. Others grew into statewide celebrations. Wherever you're starting from, there is a model here that fits.

Scale is not what makes a program meaningful. A beach full of sandcastles, a single architect at a lunch table, and a statewide network of library story hours all did the same essential thing: they let a young person picture themselves as someone who shapes the world around them.

You are not alone. Every program entry carries a contact name and email, because there are K-12 leaders across the country eager to help you launch your own. Do not hesitate to reach out.

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AIA National K–12 programs & resources

Before you build something, see what already exists. AIA National supports K–12 outreach with ready-made material, and several of the programs in this book started by picking one of these up rather than starting from a blank page.

Architecture Week *Annually in April the week surrounding April 15 (AIA Founder's Day)*

A nationwide celebration recognizing the power of good design, with the goal of inspiring future architecture and design professionals and K–12 students. Each spring, chapters, foundations, firms, and individual members host events that invite young people to see how the built environment shapes their daily lives and to imagine themselves as the people who design it.

Get involved by sharing posts, contributing to a wish list, inviting students to your firm, sending a letter to local schools or libraries, or running a program of your own.

Architecture Week webpage:

- **ArchWeek program tracker:** check it before you plan, and add yours once you've scheduled it.
- **Activity kits, templates & virtual read-alongs**: Downloadable activity kits, event templates, proclamation resources, and virtual read-alongs with children's book authors. AIA St. Louis reported these landed particularly well with their audience. AIA Brazos recommends having volunteer readers watch the author's virtual read-aloud beforehand so they can share more of the author's insights with students.

AIA guides

- Volunteer guide: guidance for members volunteering with young people.
- High School Internships Guide: for chapters and firms building future pathways
- Student design charette: a template for chapters to follow when hosting a design challenge
- Student design competitions: resource guide for chapters interested in creating a competition

K-12 resources

A webpage dedicated to sharing K-12 architecture and design resources from across the country, from books and activities to competitions, camps, and guides. K-12 Initiatives

K-12 IDEA group

A member volunteer group of passionate K-12 advocates who meet on a monthly basis to move the conversation forward as well as plan AIA's annual conference activities, two annual virtual plenary sessions, and support Architecture Week. Interested in joining? Apply through AIA's annual call for volunteers.

K-12 Enthusiasts group

A collection of individuals from across the country who join in conversation about K-12 architecture and design topics on a quarterly basis. Interested? Sign up here.

Allied K–12 programs

AIA supports and partners with organizations running youth design education year-round. Several chapters in this book reached more students by joining an existing program than they could have by building their own.

NOMA Project Pipeline

Summer camps · grades 6–12

The National Organization of Minority Architects hosts local summer camps giving students of color the fundamentals of architecture and design, working closely with architects and designers on projects for their own communities. For many students it is their first introduction to the design world. AIA Utah paired their library scavenger hunt with Project Pipeline firm visits; AIA Colorado recruits mentors through NOMA Colorado.

Find a program

ACE Mentor Program

Weekly · high school

A free after-school program connecting high school students with architecture, engineering, and construction professionals. Mentors guide teams through real-world design challenges, with continuous opportunities from high school through full-time employment.

Find a program

AIAS and NOMAS student chapters

College students are the most effective peer-to-peer recruiters you have, and they bring venues with them. AIA Brooklyn built its entire two-day MAP workshop around a CUNY City Tech partnership that supplied space, plotting, and college-student studio assistants.

Public library systems

Libraries bring venue, audience, and community trust that a chapter cannot manufacture. AIA Pennsylvania's partnership with the Pennsylvania Library Association put story hours in all 23 counties. Two AIA Utah branches adopted the chapter's scavenger hunt as their monthly theme.

Civic and community organizations

United Way, school board associations, and PTAs open school access at scale. AIA Orange County calls the United Way relationship its single key insight; AIA New Jersey reached 125+ districts through the PTA and School Board Associations.

How to use this guidebook

This guidebook is modular. Not every step will apply to your program. Use the sections that fit your goals and community, and come back to them as the program grows.

Guidelines walks through eight steps, from defining your purpose to handing the program off to next year's organizer, then closes with a planning worksheet that mirrors those steps. If you are starting from nothing, start here.

Programs opens with the index, then a short highlight for every program in the book, then twelve complete playbooks — planning timelines, run of show, budgets, partners, volunteer models, outreach, and the files those chapters were willing to share.

Resources holds activity ideas worth stealing, links to national and allied programs, the shared artifacts, and the contributor credits.

In a hurry? Read the guidelines, then skim the index for a program at your lift level. That's enough to start a conversation with a school.

Why this guidebook was created

Chapters have been running excellent K–12 programs independently for years, each tailored to its community, each solving the same problems from scratch — school access, transportation, volunteer readiness, budget. After Architecture Week, chapters were asked what they did, what it cost, what they'd tell someone starting out, and what they wished they'd known. This book is that answer, organized so the next chapter doesn't have to start over.

Planning your program

Step 1: Establish your purpose

Define why your program exists before deciding how it runs. A clear purpose is what makes a school say yes, a partner say yes, and a grant committee say yes.

WHO YOU'RE REACHING

The specific students, not "young people."

- *Example:* AIA San Diego's Young Emerging Professionals named theirs precisely — third and fifth graders from Monarch School, which serves youth impacted by homelessness.
- *Recommendation:* Name the grade band and the community. AIA Kentucky surveyed schools across three counties before choosing, looking specifically for those serving more students from underrepresented communities, and had an easier time building everything that followed.

WHAT STUDENTS LEAVE WITH

The one thing you want them holding, literally or otherwise.

- *Example:* AIA Maryland invited architects who had worked on the students' own school renovations. The profession clicked the moment kids realized someone had designed the building they sit in every day.
- *Recommendation:* Make it concrete and take-home where you can. A design that goes on the fridge keeps working for months.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Two or three measures you will actually collect.

- *Example:* Headcount at sign-in; percentage of students from historically underrepresented communities; number of hosts asking you back.
- *Recommendation:* Follow-on invitations are the most honest measure in this book. Two AIA Utah library branches liked the chapter's scavenger hunt enough to adopt it as their own monthly theme.

Stop! Before you go to Step 2 — is someone near you already doing this? Check the ArchWeek and the AIA K–12 Initiatives webpages and look at the Index of programs in this document. AIA St. Louis reached a broad, diverse audience mostly by cross-promoting events other organizations were already running. Don't reinvent the wheel if you don't have to.

Step 2: Time, resources & talent

Clarify capacity before you promise anything. The most consistent recommendation across every chapter in this book is to start sooner than feels necessary.

TIME

Work backward from Architecture Week.

When	What happens
9–12 months	Identify schools and partners. Send save-the-dates for anything needing off-campus approval.
6 months	Begin volunteer recruitment and host outreach.
3–4 months	Submit your proclamation request. Confirm dates and lock venues.
2 months	Order books, materials, and swag.
1 month	Train volunteers. Coordinate transportation.
Weeks before	Confirm and reconfirm everything.

Recommendation: AIA ALNNJ sends a save-the-date a full year out, because schools have tight transportation budgets and teachers must request off-campus days far ahead. That single move is why 12 schools show up.

RESOURCES

Space, materials, food, accessibility.

- *Example:* AIA Houston ran its charrette on leftover materials from earlier programs and swapped model-building for LEGOs already in inventory. AIA San Francisco reused existing printed boards and easels rather than ordering new signage.
- *Recommendation:* Build the budget and the in-kind list side by side. In this book, in-kind consistently rivals cash — a local reprographics company printed 150 sketch and coloring books for AIA Kentucky at no charge. Plan accessibility from the start: quiet rooms, translated flyers, captioned material.

TALENT

Program lead, facilitators, volunteers, subject-matter experts.

- *Example:* AIA California calls its classroom visits high-impact micro-volunteering — 90 minutes, almost no preparation, and 28 volunteers reaching roughly 500 students across seven sites.
- *Recommendation:* Be specific about the ask. Two- to four-hour shifts work; longer runs into fatigue. Spread the load rather than deepening it: AIA Westchester + Hudson Valley split its week across three committees to cover seven counties, and AIA Newark & Suburban staffed a single 224-student day with 45 volunteers and university partners.

Step 3: Program structure

Match the program to your audience and your capacity, not to your ambition.

FORMAT

- **Single-format** — one focused engagement: a workshop, school visit, charrette, or competition.
- **Multi-format & series** — several connected sessions, multiple schools, or a small series.
- **Festival & statewide** — multi-day festivals, museum partnerships, statewide initiatives.
- *Example:* AIA Atlanta skipped the event entirely and produced a presentation-skills video and webinar — an asset that keeps being shared long after the week ends.
- *Recommendation:* AIA Kansas City's advice after a five-day, 14-school week: don't feel you must run big events. Small ones work.

GRADE BAND

Kindergartners through high schoolers all enjoy hands-on building. Vocabulary and complexity are what change.

- *Example:* AIA West Jersey ran LEGO facades with K–3 and a town-building exercise with high schoolers on the same climate theme. AIA Cleveland covered middle and high school with one integrated activity — design and build a tiny home while learning to read blueprints and work with scale.
- *Recommendation:* Design for a wide age range where you can, so volunteers can present flexibly and you're not rebuilding for each school.

LOCATION

Classroom, library, firm office, university, museum, convention hall, beach.

- *Example:* AIA Las Vegas celebrated its competition winners at the historic Morelli House and found that recognizing students in a professional setting reinforced their interest. AIA Coastal Virginia built a week-long exhibition inside a creative district rather than a school.
- *Recommendation:* Going virtual is a legitimate structural choice, not a downgrade. AIA New Jersey's fully virtual competition reached 125+ districts on a $900 budget.

Step 4: Build your partnerships

Across every chapter in this book, the single biggest amplifier of impact was not budget, it was partnership.

WHO TO ASK

- **Cultural institutions** — venue, staff, and audience. For AIA Fort Worth, a chapter with 1.5 staff, museum partners essentially run the programs.
- **Public libraries** — venue, audience, and embedded community trust. AIA Connecticut had five more libraries asking to host before the first workshop was over.
- **Universities and student chapters** — volunteers, venues, plotters, peer-to-peer recruiting. AIA Brooklyn built a two-day workshop around a CUNY City Tech partnership that supplied space, plotting, and college-student studio assistants.
- **ACE Mentor and NOMA chapters** — mentor capacity and reach into underrepresented communities. AIA Utah paired its library scavenger hunt with NOMA Project Pipeline firm visits.
- **Civic organizations** — United Way, school board associations, PTAs. AIA Orange County calls the United Way relationship its single key insight.
- **Aligned nonprofits** — credibility and a pre-existing audience. The director of the ViBe Creative District donated her time to lead AIA Coastal Virginia's student mural tours.
- **Local firms and reprographics companies** — in-kind printing, lunch, materials, sample libraries. Nine firms covered every student lunch for AIA Kansas City's shadowing day, so it cost the chapter nothing.

HOW TO ASK

- *Example:* AIA Pennsylvania's library association circulated the proposal to every public library in the state and recirculated it for months — a lift no chapter could manage alone.
- *Recommendation:* Tell the partner who you're trying to reach and what you're going to do, not just what you need from them.

WHAT TO FORMALIZE

- *Example:* Monona Terrace sends open-house partners a single email confirming date, time, expected audience, the kind of activity requested, a floor diagram to approve, and an offer of supplies, parking passes, and a thank-you party.
- *Recommendation:* AIA Atlanta's advice: if a nonprofit is partnering on a K–12 grant, start that conversation months before the grant is issued. If a full MOU is too complicated, just document roles and responsibilities.

Step 5: Reach students & schools

Reaching students is the hardest part of this work. Every chapter said so.

GETTING IN

- *Example:* Two ACLA board members work for LA Unified. That relationship is what unlocks school access, transportation funding, and student participation at scale. Without one it is hard — Texas Society of Architects found volunteers struggled to set up visits anywhere they didn't already have a connection.
- *Recommendation:* Make an explicit ask to educators to help match volunteers to schools. Where you have no relationship, go to leadership early and sell the benefit to them: AIA Brazos found that when the principal buys in, scheduling and access get much easier. Learn your district's flyer-approval process — AIA Eastern Oklahoma reached all 45 Tulsa elementary schools through it.

THE CALENDAR

- *Example:* AIA Oregon's bus transport came together only the week before, because district turnaround was slower than expected. Their advice: start coordinating the moment your grant is approved.
- *Recommendation:* Know your state's testing dates before you pick a date — National Architecture Week overlapped Texas standardized testing, so AIA San Antonio now builds engagement before the week and promotes results during it. Some schools need four to six months to book buses, as AIA Central New Jersey learned, and bus cost will shape which schools can attend. Build in schedule resilience: a teacher strike pushed AIA San Fernando Valley from April to May.

PERMISSIONS

- *Example:* AIA Colorado gives students without a photo release a different-colored lanyard. BSA gives opted-out participants a sticker for photographers to avoid. AIA Baltimore frames shots so only the backs of students show, avoiding formal releases entirely.
- *Recommendation:* Ask each host about its photo-sharing policy before you arrive, and record it. Route parent communication — permission slips, dietary needs, transportation — through your school contact rather than contacting families directly, if possible.

Step 6: Execute the program

Deliver it with enough structure that volunteers feel ready and students know what's happening.

RUN OF SHOW

An hour-by-hour schedule naming who leads each block.

- *Example:* The Washington Architectural Foundation's two-day challenge — day one, urban planning and model building in age-grouped teams; day two, presentations judged on sustainability, innovation, and feasibility, closing with certificates and an invitation to families.
- *Recommendation:* Front-load your programming. AIA Eastern Oklahoma watched afternoon attendance drop off.

VOLUNTEER BRIEFING

- *Example:* BSA sends "Know Before You Go" emails and a calendar invite with logistics and a role guide, then runs a 30-minute orientation at the start of each shift and hands out a vest, nametag, and printed guide.
- *Recommendation:* Train volunteers by having them try the activity first — they'll invent variations on their own. A written guidance document is often enough for a short program.

DAY-OF ROLES

Name them: volunteer manager, school helper, bus coordinator, presenter coordinator, floater, historian.

- *Example:* AIA Brooklyn appoints a volunteer "historian" and everyone drops images in a shared folder.
- *Recommendation:* Anchor each student team with a named adult rather than letting volunteers float, and designate someone to take photos.

CONTINGENCY

- *Example:* AIA Pennsylvania shipped materials directly to each library with a guidance letter inside, so a library could run the event even if no volunteer arrived.
- *Recommendation:* Assume one thing will fail. Decide in advance which one you can absorb.

Step 7: Present your results

Did you meet your goals? Find out, then tell people.

PROCLAMATIONS

Most chapters that pursue one succeed. Lead time and one good contact make the difference.

- *Example:* AIA Fort Lauderdale found proclamations and the public exposure they bring sparked community interest and brought other organizations asking how to participate. AIA Pennsylvania capped its week with a State Capitol press conference and a Senate resolution.
- *Recommendation:* Submit at least three months ahead, use AIA template language tailored to your context, build a relationship with one council member or office contact first, and ask for a displayable version. Watch for local quirks — Houston only awards one to a given organization every three years.
- AIA proclamation guide, including template language

PRESS & MEDIA

- *Example:* Many chapters send a press release, then follow with direct emails to individual outlets.
- *Recommendation:* Line up coverage sooner using last year's photos. Don't be timid about promoting the work publicly.

SURVEYS & REPORTING

- *Example:* AIA Colorado surveys after the final workshop and wants a way to track students into high school and college. AIA Maine paired its exhibition with a learning guide so it could measure reach well beyond the 20 students who attended.
- *Recommendation:* Ask for feedback on logistics you're actually willing to change. Build a simple way for volunteers to report their visits back — Texas Society of Architects named this as the missing piece across 48 schools. Report back to your grant.

Step 8: Follow up

The program doesn't end when the students leave. This is the step that turns one event into a program.

STUDENTS, FAMILIES & SCHOOLS

- *Example:* AIA Long Beach / South Bay put a QR code on the coloring book cover linking to an online gallery, so students keep sharing artwork long after the visit. A middle school teacher emailed AIA Kansas City the same day asking for a standing partnership — build-a-city in seventh grade, job shadowing in eighth, class-selection guidance in high school.
- *Recommendation:* Build one thing that keeps working after you leave.

VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERS

- *Example:* AIA Eastern Oklahoma's facility manager and nearly all of its volunteers asked to be involved again. Architecture and Design Foundation Dallas found that even small no-cost touches — ArchDaily clips playing during lunch — kept people engaged between sessions.
- *Recommendation:* Thank volunteers personally, then immediately tell them what's next. Re-engage past participants as facilitators, and strengthen partnerships year over year rather than rebuilding them.

YEAR-OVER-YEAR HANDOFF

- *Example:* AIA LA and ACLA treat the annual leadership handover as critical to the program's survival. AIA Pennsylvania documents its call-for-volunteers emails, budget, design work, and press copy, and keeps a master spreadsheet with one row per library recording contact, volunteer, photo policy, and event date.
- *Recommendation:* If one person has run the program for years, start documenting before you need to. Monona Terrace has had the same lead organizer for seven cycles and names succession planning as its priority.

How this work advances PACE

AIA's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan organizes the Institute's work around four goals — Practice, Advocacy, Climate, and Equity, or PACE. K–12 outreach isn't adjacent to that plan, it appears in it directly. When you need to justify this program to a board, a grant committee, or a school district, this is the language.

Equity

The most direct connection. Under the goal of advancing an equitable and accessible profession, the plan's third strategy is to promote a more inclusive workforce through early outreach to potential architects, with the stated objective of expanding early exposure so more young people — especially those historically excluded — can see the profession as accessible and attainable. That is a description of the work in this book. It is also why nearly every entry reports the share of students reached from historically underrepresented communities: chapters are already producing the evidence that strategy calls for. The plan's companion strategy on connecting career-shaping resources shows up here too, in the career lunches, counselor symposia, licensure conversations, and college-pathway bridges chapters built.

Advocacy

The plan asks members to communicate the value of architecture with clarity and credibility, and to cultivate partnerships that carry that message further. Chapters here did both — proclamations from mayors, governors, and state senates; a press conference at the Pennsylvania State Capitol; and partnerships with library associations, museums, United Way, school board associations, and PTAs that reached audiences no chapter could reach alone.

Climate

The climate goal is about integrating climate action into everyday practice. A striking number of these programs make climate the subject rather than a footnote: solar house builds, resilience charrettes, sustainable campus competitions scored against the Framework for Design Excellence, adaptive reuse studies, and space-habitat toolkits. Students meet the profession and its climate responsibility in the same hour.

Practice

The longest-horizon connection. Every student who leaves a story hour or a shake table able to name architecture as a career is a candidate for the workforce firms will need. And the operational detail in the playbooks — budgets, in-kind tallies, timelines, volunteer models — is itself a small exercise in the business and strategic acumen the plan asks chapters and firms to build.

Underneath the four goals sit three principles: architecture is for everyone, the future is regenerative, and collaboration amplifies impact.

Program planning worksheet

Fill this in and you have a program plan. It also works as a briefing document for volunteers, a reference when leadership asks questions, and a starting point for grant reporting.

Print it, or make a copy and type into it. Every section points back to the step it came from, so if a prompt stumps you, the answer is a few pages earlier. Skip anything that doesn't apply — an empty field is information too.

Program at a glance

Program name	
Chapter or organization	
Program date(s)	
Planning starts	*Work backward from your program date — see the timeline in Step 2*
Program lead	*Name and email*

Format	☐ Single-format ☐ Multi-format & series ☐ Festival & statewide

Estimated lift	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

STEP 1 Establish your purpose

What makes a school, a partner, and a grant committee say yes.

Who you're reaching	*Grade band, schools, community — be specific*
What students leave with	*Concrete and take-home where you can*
Success measure 1	
Success measure 2	
Success measure 3	

Checked the Index?	☐ Nothing similar nearby ☐ Found a program to borrow ☐ Not yet

STEP 2 Time, resources & talent

Clarify capacity before you promise anything.

Your backward timeline. Fill in what happens and who owns it.

When	What happens	Who owns it

Budget — cash	
Budget — in-kind	*Materials, venue, printing, food, volunteer time*
Accessibility provisions	*Quiet room, translated flyers, captioned material*
Volunteers needed	*How many, and in what roles*

STEP 3 Program structure

Match the program to your audience and capacity, not your ambition.

Grade band	
Location(s)	
The activity	*What students will actually do with their hands*

STEP 4 Build your partnerships

The single biggest amplifier of impact in this book.

Partner	What they provide	What we offer them	Asked?

What to document, and by when	*A full MOU, or just roles and responsibilities in writing*

STEP 5 Reach students & schools

School and district contacts	
District flyer or approval process	
State testing dates to avoid	
Transportation plan and lead time	*Some schools need 4–6 months to book buses*

Photo approach	☐ Host's own policy ☐ Our release form ☐ Frame to avoid faces ☐ Opt-out marker

STEP 6 Execute the program

Enough structure that volunteers feel ready.

Run of show.

Time	What happens	Who leads

Volunteer briefing — how and when	
Day-of roles, and who fills them	*Volunteer manager, school helper, bus coordinator, floater, photographer*
The one thing most likely to fail	*And what you'll do about it*

STEP 7 Present your results

Did you meet your goals? Find out, then tell people.

Proclamation — submitted on	*At least three months ahead*
Press outlets to contact	
Hashtags	
Surveys — who, and when	*Families, volunteers, teachers, host sites*

STEP 8 Follow up

The step that turns one event into a program.

Thank-yous — who, and how	
The thing that keeps working after you leave	*A gallery, a donated book, a standing invitation*
Where next year's organizer will find all this	

STEP 9 PACE alignment

The language to use with a board, a grant committee, or a district.

Goals this program advances	☐ Practice ☐ Advocacy ☐ Climate ☐ Equity

Say it in one sentence	*How you would explain this program's value to a school district*

ONE-PAGE WORKSHEET

Planning something small

For a low-lift program — one session, a handful of volunteers, a short runway. If you outgrow this page, use the full worksheet on the previous pages.

Program		**Date**	
Chapter		**Lead**	*Name and email*

Who you're reaching	*Grade, school, community*	**What they leave with**	*Something concrete*
How you'll know it worked	*Two measures you'll collect*	**Where it happens**	*Classroom, library, office*
The activity	*What they do with their hands*	**Materials + cost**	

Your way in	*Teacher, principal, librarian*	**Partner**	*And what they provide*
Date risks	*Testing weeks, bus lead time*	**Photos**	*Ask the host their policy first*
Volunteers needed	*How many, doing what*	**Briefed how, and when**	

Run of show	*Time · what happens · who leads*

Thank-yous	*Volunteers, host, partner*	**What keeps working after**	*A gallery, a donated book*
Saved where	*So next year's organizer can find it*		
PACE goals	☐ Practice ☐ Advocacy ☐ Climate ☐ Equity		

About the program entries

Programs appear in this book at two depths. Both use the same field names, so a term means the same thing wherever you find it.

Highlight entries

Every program in the book has a highlight. They follow the index, grouped by format.

Field	What it tells you
Reach	Students served and share from historically underrepresented communities
Grade level	Elementary, middle, high school, or multi-grade
Volunteers	How many people it took
Lift	Low, medium, or high — see below
Impact without budget	The move that stretched money furthest
What they'd tell the next chapter	The single lesson they most wanted passed on
Contact information	Who you can reach out to for support

Playbook entries

Twelve programs go further, in the playbooks that follow the highlights. They are marked ▸ **Full playbook** on their highlight entry.

Field	What it tells you
At a glance	Format, reach, grade level, volunteers, lead time, approximate budget, lift
Program overview	What actually happens
Planning timeline	Months out, milestone, who, hours
Run of show	Time, what happens, who leads
Budget snapshot	Item, quantity, cost, vendor — plus in-kind and income
Partners	Who, new or established, and what they provided
Volunteer model	Numbers, roles, recruitment, onboarding and screening
Student outreach	How students were reached, and every communication sent
Photo & media approach	Releases, hashtags, press coverage
Outcomes & measurement	What was tracked and what it showed
What they'd tell the next chapter	The lesson
Included artifacts	Files the chapter shared, linked

Lift

Lift is how much program it is to run, not how many students it reaches. AIA Kentucky reached 508 students across three counties with four volunteers. AIA Newark reached 224 in a single day and needed 45. AIA Fort Worth reached 800 with 15, because cultural-institution partners ran the programs.

Find your lift level, then read those entries first.

Lift	What it means
● Low	Roughly ten volunteers or fewer, three months or less of lead time, minimal or fully in-kind budget, a single session. Runnable by one committed person with a school contact.
●● Medium	Roughly ten to thirty volunteers, four to six months of lead time, a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, multiple sessions or multiple sites.
●●● High	Thirty or more volunteers, six to twelve months of lead time, a substantial budget or heavy in-kind, multi-day or statewide. Needs a committee and usually a partner organization.

Index of programs

Every program in the book, grouped by lift — how much program it is to run. Reach and grade level are columns rather than separate lists, so you can scan for whichever matters most to you. Twelve programs marked ▸ also have a complete playbook later in this part.

Lift is not the same as reach. AIA Kentucky reached 508 students with four volunteers; AIA Newark needed 45 to reach 224 in a single day.

● Low lift

Roughly ten volunteers or fewer, three months or less of lead time, minimal or fully in-kind budget, a single session. Runnable by one committed person with a school contact.

Chapter or organization	Program	Reach	Grade level	Playbook
AIA Atlanta | SPIKE Studio	Architectural presentation skills video & webinar	27	High school	
AIA Baltimore	Career lunches at Baltimore Design School	65	High school	▸
AIA Brooklyn, Women in Architecture	Design Like a Girl workshop	17	Grades 4-6	
AIA Central New Jersey	Firm tours + Hands-on design activities	15	High school	▸
AIA Cleveland	DesignIs: Construction	11	Middle & high school	
AIA Fort Lauderdale	Workshops + trivia at Blanche Ely HS	35	High school	
AIA Houston	Climate resilience design charrette	21	Elementary & middle	
AIA San Diego, YEP Committee	Sandcastle architecture at Coronado Beach	30	Elementary	
AIA West Jersey	Westfield Friends + Cherokee HS partnership	50	K-3 & high school	

●● Medium lift

Roughly ten to thirty volunteers, four to six months of lead time, a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, multiple sessions or multiple sites.

Chapter or organization	Program	Reach	Grade level	Playbook
AIA Architects League of Northern New Jersey	Women's STEAM Tower Challenge	50	High school	▸
AIA Brazos	Architecture-in-Schools	56	Elementary (4th)	
AIA Connecticut	Solar energy design workshop	60	Elementary	
AIA Fort Worth	Architecture Week multi-event programming	800	PreK-HS	
AIA Las Vegas	High school design competition	101	High school	
AIA Long Beach / South Bay	Color Your City + GALA sustainability program	100+	Elementary & HS	▸
AIA Maine	From Sketch to Structure	20	Middle school	
AIA New Jersey	K-12 design challenge: Stadium design	100	All grades	▸
AIA Orange County	Daily firm visits with United Way	250	Middle & high school	
AIA Oregon	Discover architecture	20	High school	
AIA San Antonio	Adaptive reuse outreach at Lanier HS	15	High school	
AIA San Fernando Valley	Architecture by the Book & Beyond	60	High school	
AIA St. Louis	K-12 Initiative	32	Elementary & HS	
AIA Utah	Library scavenger hunt + NOMA Project Pipeline	100	K-6, plus middle & high	
AIA Westchester + Hudson Valley	Multi-county community activations	50	Multiple grades	
Architecture and Design Foundation | AIA Dallas	Designing My Future spring camp	11	High school	
Washington Architectural Foundation	Teen Design Challenge	25	High school	

●●● High lift

Thirty or more volunteers, six to twelve months of lead time, a substantial budget or heavy in-kind, multi-day or statewide. Needs a committee and usually a partner organization.

Chapter or organization	Program	Reach	Grade level	Playbook
AIA Brooklyn	Mentoring Architectural Pathways (MAP)	40	High school	▸
AIA California | California Architectural Foundation	Architecture by the Book	240	Elementary	
AIA Coastal Virginia	Designed Here	120	Elementary	
AIA Colorado	Design Like a Girl Colorado	25	Middle school	▸
AIA Eastern Oklahoma	BUILDFEST	28	Pre-elementary & elementary	▸
AIA Kansas City	Explore Architecture Week 2026	193	K-12	
AIA LA | ACLA	Design by Diversity (DxD) Day	420	K-12	▸
AIA Maryland	Architecture in Design: Design Days	1,000	K-12	
AIA Newark & Suburban Architects	Designing Change	224	High school	
AIA Pennsylvania	Statewide Architecture Story Hours	1,500	K-5	▸
AIA San Francisco	Youth Festival 2.0	226	K-12	
BSA | Architecture in Common	KidsBuild! + Classroom Workshops	800+	Pre-elementary to middle	▸
Monona Terrace	Terrace Town	1,2000	K-5	▸
Texas Society of Architects	Blueprints & Books	1,277	K-12	

Program highlights: Single-format

One focused event that is run well can leave a lasting impression. Most chapters used a small team and a modest budget.

> At one classroom's start, only one student raised her hand when asked who wanted to be an architect. By the end, many little hands were raised.
>
> -Texas Society of Architects volunteer

AIA Architects League of Northern New Jersey (ALNNJ)

Women's STEAM Tower Challenge

50 students · high school · 100% historically underrepresented · 16 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium ▸ **Full playbook**

A full-day event challenged high school girls from 12 schools to design mixed-use towers judged on zoning, economics, seismic performance, and aesthetics, then put their spaghetti-and-marshmallow structures to the test on a shake table. For most participants, it was a first.

Impact without budget: Keep materials simple and cheap — spaghetti and marshmallows do the job.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Send a save-the-date a full year in advance; many schools have tight transportation budgets and teachers must request off-campus days well ahead.

Contact: Stacey Kliesch · staceykliesch@gmail.com

> *Most girls had never been exposed to a project like this before. They had fun, learned something new, and had the chance to network directly with members of the AEC community.*

AIA Atlanta | SPIKE Studio

Architectural Presentation Skills Video & Webinar

27 students · high school · ~40% historically underrepresented · 3 volunteers

Lift ● Low

Rather than a one-time event, Atlanta produced a professional video and live webinar teaching presentation skills, then promoted it statewide and nationally. The asset keeps working long after the week ends, even drawing requests from firms wanting to share it with their own teams.

Impact without budget: If a nonprofit is partnering with a chapter on a K–12 grant, start that conversation months before the grant is issued; if a full MOU is too complicated, just document an agreement on roles and responsibilities.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Don't be timid about promoting the work publicly.

Contact: Melody Harclerode · mlharclerode@gmail.com

> *A video produces ongoing impact unlike a one-time event — it keeps being shared.*

AIA Baltimore

Career Lunches at Baltimore Design School

65 students · high school · 100% historically underrepresented · 4 volunteers

Lift ● Low ▸ **Full playbook**

Baltimore reformatted a hurried career panel into intimate lunch sessions, with one architect visiting on each of four separate dates.

Impact without budget: Reformatting the old six-person panel into one architect per week, across four dates, delivered the same number of student lunches with deeper engagement at no added cost.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Established teacher relationships bring buy-in, shared ownership, and scheduling flexibility, which solves the usual K–12 mismatch problems.

Contact: Katherine Somerville · ksomerville@aiabalt.com

> *For students aged 15–18, hearing about a project timeline equal to their own lifetime was mind-blowing.*

AIA Brazos

Architecture-in-Schools

56 students · elementary (4th grade) · ~40% historically underrepresented · 3+ volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

Across ten one-hour sessions, fourth-graders simulate urban development through community design and individual "dream home" projects, guided by volunteers from local firms and Texas A&M architecture students. Slide decks cover zoning, boundaries, environmental impact, and building vocabulary. Town layouts are determined by group, with one community building per student, and each student gets a property and a ten-room house program. The design process runs from bubble diagramming to to-scale floor plans before students build physical models from foam blocks and present their contributions to the town model for families. Students receive printed certificates and backpacks of architecture supplies and firm swag. The large model is cut along each student's property lines and sent home.

Impact without budget: Book read-alouds with grades 2–5 have been a great introduction to new schools, especially during Architecture Week. Have volunteer readers watch the author's virtual read-aloud beforehand so they can share more of the author's insights. Follow the reading with an activity such as sketching prompts.

What they'd tell the next chapter: A PowerPoint of photos related to the reading playing behind the reader assists with discussion and engagement. Take time to show the illustrations on each page.

Contact: Justin Hoermann · justin3504@gmail.com

> *"Sell" the impact and benefits to the school principal — when school leadership buys in, scheduling and access become much easier.*

AIA Brooklyn

Mentoring Architectural Pathways (MAP)

40 students · high school · 80% historically underrepresented · 23 volunteers (5 students to 1 college student, 1 EP, and 1 YA or FAIA)

Lift ●●● High ▸ **Full playbook**

A new two-day high school architecture studio workshop held at CUNY City Tech. Students worked in small clusters — five to eight high schoolers, an assistant college student, an emerging professional, and a licensed architect leading — on design solutions for the local community. The program opened with a keynote from AIA National President Illya Azaroff, FAIA, a firm tour, and a site visit to analyze the urban block, guided by a “Reading the Block” framework developed for volunteers. Day two brought a charrette, final pin-up, and an introduction to the college’s architecture program, bridging students and parents to college pathways.

Impact without budget: Partner with a local university for the venue, engage AIAS college students as assistant volunteers, access department plotters for signage and banners, assemble swag bags on campus, collaborate with Autodesk to sponsor a lunch, and enlist local firms for lunch-and-learns and tours.

What they’d tell the next chapter: Two days were essential as the students wanted to dive right in. Communicate the vision in partnership with the city, university, and public schools. Scale volunteer firms and chapter members to expand beyond “Reading the Block,” and add a program for elementary and middle school students.

Contact: Mi Zhang · ya@aiabrooklyn.org

> *Many parents thanked the chapter — most students had no prior exposure to architecture.*

AIA Brooklyn — Women in Architecture Committee

Design Like a Girl Workshop

17 students · grades 4–6 · 12 volunteers

Lift ● Low

The Women in Architecture Committee introduced grade 4–6 students to architecture through climate resilience and space-habitat design toolkits, with hands-on exploration inspired by space-station systems.

What they’d tell the next chapter: This was a first-year pilot the committee plans to grow.

Contact: Gemma Devesa Gasco · wia@aiabrooklyn.org

AIA Central New Jersey

Firm Tours + Hands-On Design Activities

15 students · high school · 50% historically underrepresented · 4 volunteers

Lift ● Low ▸ **Full playbook**

Central New Jersey paired an office tour and presentation with a hands-on paper-city building activity, giving students a feel for both the workplace and the work itself.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Start outreach in late fall and involve more schools and firms next cycle; some schools need months of lead time to book bus transportation.

Contact: David von Stappenbeck · dvonstappenbeck@kssarchitects.com

> *Students had a great time; a craft/design activity paired well with a presentation around design practice.*

AIA Cleveland

DesignIs: Construction

11 students · middle & high school · 100% historically underrepresented · 1 volunteer

Lift ● Low

A half-day workshop introduced students to architecture, construction, and engineering through one integrated activity: designing and building tiny homes while learning to read blueprints and work with scale.

What they'd tell the next chapter: The single-activity format is built for ongoing replication and for empowering youth as future changemakers.

Contact: Jacinda Walker · jacinda@designexplorr.com

> *Students engaged with both the design and construction sides of the profession through a single integrated activity.*

AIA Colorado

Design Like a Girl Colorado

25 students · middle school · 20 volunteers · 30–40 mentors

Lift ●●● High ▸ **Full playbook**

Three themed workshops paired middle school girls with female professionals for hands-on activities, field trips, and sustained mentorship. The multi-session model builds relationships a single day simply cannot.

Impact without budget: Returning students year over year are the clearest sign of impact — the mentor-and-alumni network compounds annually.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Sustained mentorship across several workshops builds deeper relationships than any single-day event can.

Contact: Sarah Goldblatt · sarah@sarahgoldblatt.com

> *Returning students each year is a strong sign of program impact — the cumulative network of mentors and alumni grows annually.*

AIA Connecticut

Solar Energy Design Workshop

60 students · elementary (ages 6–12) · 95% historically underrepresented · 21 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

At the Connecticut Science Center, children built a working solar house to take home, decorated coloring books, and learned how architects use solar, wind, and geothermal energy. Five more libraries have already asked to run it.

Impact without budget: Costs stay low: the solar-house packets ran about $7 each (100 minimum), logo coloring books about $0.80 each (order of 150), and crayons in bulk about $150.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Five more libraries have already asked to run the program in the fall, and the chapter is reaching out to after-school programs to keep the momentum going.

Contact: Gina Calabro · gcalabro@aiact.org

> *Five other libraries are now interested in running the program in the fall.*

AIA Fort Lauderdale

Architecture Week Workshops + Trivia at Blanche Ely HS

35 students · high school · 99% historically underrepresented · 6 volunteers

Lift ● Low

A DEI-led series paired an intro session with a gamified “Architecture Week Jeopardy,” using students’ own phones and familiar trivia software. Engagement jumped afterward, and one student even reached out about a summer internship.

Impact without budget: Skip the clickers: use students’ own phones (with school consent) and the same trivia software the school already uses, so students are instantly familiar.

What they’d tell the next chapter: Proclamations and the public exposure they bring were huge — they sparked community interest and drew other organizations asking how to take part.

Contact: Stacey Boynton · s.boynton4514@gmail.com

> *Proclamations and the resulting public exposure were huge — they sparked community interest and brought other organizations asking how to participate.*

AIA Houston

Climate Resilience Design Charrette

21 students · elementary & middle · 40% historically underrepresented · 9 volunteers

Lift ● Low

Middle schoolers tackled climate-resilience challenges in teams, building concept models and presentation boards with mentor guidance.

Impact without budget: The chapter used leftover materials from prior programs and swapped physical model-building for Legos already in inventory.

What they’d tell the next chapter: Check your local proclamation rules early — Houston only awards one to a given organization every three years, which complicates annual planning.

Contact: Jennifer Ward · jennifer@aiahouston.org

> *A young student anxious about being separated from her brother gained enough confidence to present her ideas to the group by the end.*

AIA Las Vegas

High School Design Competition

101 students · high school · 20 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

Students designed a sustainable middle school campus aligned with AIA's Framework for Design Excellence, mentored by local architects and celebrated at the historic Morelli House. The desert context produced strikingly thoughtful, climate-responsive work.

Impact without budget: Local school and educator partnerships expanded participation without adding cost, and AIA-member volunteers strengthened the mentorship layer.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Clear, early communication with educators is key, and structured guidelines aligned with curriculum boost participation. A meaningful venue like the Morelli House elevates the whole experience.

Contact: Jeffrey Sarmiento · jsarmiento@csdarchitecture.com

> *Recognizing students in a professional setting reinforced their interest in architecture and design.*

AIA Maine

From Sketch to Structure

20 students directly (+ a guide for 750 statewide) · middle school · 3 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

An exhibition at the Osher Map Library showcased student design work and introduced middle schoolers to architectural thinking, paired with a hands-on learning guide.

What they'd tell the next chapter: This first pilot of an exhibition-plus-curriculum model will inform a statewide expansion in coming years.

Contact: Kelli Shedd · kelli@aiamaine.org

AIA Newark & Suburban Architects

Designing Change: Architecture in Our Communities

224 students · high school · 100% historically underrepresented · 45 volunteers

Lift ●●● High

In a single immersive day, students designed community-driven city blocks alongside AIA professionals and university partners, then presented their work with real pride.

Impact without budget: Imagination, collaboration, and committee strength were the real multipliers — members donated time and expertise and academic partners enriched the day without significant funding.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Don't hold back from something ambitious. Start with a vision, think creatively, and lean on your community.

Contact: Stacey Kliesch · staceykliesch@gmail.com

> *Don't hold back from pursuing something ambitious. Start with a vision, think creatively, and lean on community.*

AIA Oregon

Discover Architecture

20 students · high school · 90% historically underrepresented · 12 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

A statewide activation focused on climate-responsive design brought hands-on workshops and classroom visits to students across Oregon. The clearest measure of success came straight from a volunteer's post-event message.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Start coordinating with the school district the moment the grant is approved — bus transport came together only the week before because of slow turnaround.

Contact: Paul Davis · pdavis@aiaoregon.org

> *When we asked the students at the end if they would do this again next year they pretty much ALL raised their hands. WE NEED TO DO IT AGAIN NEXT YEAR!*

AIA San Antonio

Adaptive Reuse Outreach at Lanier HS

15 students · high school · 100% historically underrepresented · 20 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

Over two days, students explored real-world redevelopment through a hands-on charrette, capped by a public panel with professionals and civic leaders.

What they'd tell the next chapter: National Architecture Week overlapped Texas standardized-testing weeks, when many schools can't host outside activities. Next time, build engagement before the week and promote results during it.

Contact: Belinda Sanchez & Ben Rosas · belinda@aiasa.org

> *National Architecture Week dates coincided with Texas Standardized Testing Weeks. Plan to build engagement before the week, then promote results during it.*

AIA San Diego | YEP Committee

Sandcastle Architecture at Coronado Beach

30 students · elementary (3rd & 5th) · serves Monarch School community · 1 volunteer

Lift ● Low

Third- and fifth-graders from Monarch School, which serves youth impacted by homelessness, explored architectural concepts by building sandcastles at Coronado Beach.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Build in schedule flexibility — the beach day was moved past the official week to fit student and partner availability.

Contact: Zachary Silver · zachary_silver@gensler.com

> *Outdoor, beach-based context creates a joyful, inclusive learning experience that traditional classroom settings can't replicate.*

AIA San Fernando Valley

Architecture by the Book and Beyond

60 students (planned) · high school · 10 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

This program connected Kennedy High School students with architects through book-based lessons, hands-on workshops, and a sustainability-focused site tour.

What they'd tell the next chapter: A teacher strike pushed the event from April to May — plan for schedule resilience when working with public schools.

Contact: Mikela Topey · mikela.topey@aiasfv.org

AIA St. Louis

K–12 Initiative

32 students · elementary & high school · 33% historically underrepresented · 12 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

By cross-promoting with other organizations across the city, St. Louis produced in-school sessions, an interactive networking session for students, and architecture-related tours. Events from similar organizations were highlighted to reach a diverse audience without reinventing the wheel.

Impact without budget: Cross-promoting with other architecture-related organizations let the chapter tap their existing events and audiences without building from scratch.

What they'd tell the next chapter: AIA National's virtual resources landed well with the chapter's audience.

Contact: Patrick Tetley · ptetley@aia-stlouis.org

> *By partnering with organizations across the city, the chapter reached a broad, diverse audience.*

AIA Utah

Library Scavenger Hunt + NOMA Project Pipeline Visits

100 students · K–6 plus middle/high via NOMA · 75% historically underrepresented · 12 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

An architectural scavenger hunt for families at public libraries ran alongside firm visits for NOMA Project Pipeline students. Two library branches even adopted the hunt as their monthly theme.

Impact without budget: It's easily replicable statewide at minimal cost, and partnering with public libraries builds community trust and far broader reach than a chapter can create alone.

Contact: Angie Harris Roberts · ahroberts@aiautah.org

> *Partnering with public libraries builds community trust and far broader reach than the chapter could create alone.*

Washington Architectural Foundation

Teen Design Challenge: Teens Design for Tomorrow

25 students · 23 schools · high school (incl. deaf and hard-of-hearing youth) · 40% historically underrepresented · 6 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

Over two days at the District Architecture Center, high schoolers from across the DC metro envisioned a self-sustainable city for Hains Point on the Potomac for the next 100 years — building models of housing, greenhouses, schools, and community centers judged on sustainability, innovation, and feasibility. Students worked alongside AIA|DC architects on urban planning and the power of natural resources, and their models go on public display at the Center.

Impact without budget: A flooring company sponsored lunches for students and volunteers on both days.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Send students resources beforehand to motivate them, group students by age with an architect facilitating each team, and invite board members to give feedback at the final presentations, closing with certificates and a family invitation.

Contact: Heidi Sohng · hsohng@aiadc.com

AIA West Jersey

Westfield Friends + Cherokee HS Partnership

50 students · K–3 and high school · 50% historically underrepresented · 4 volunteers

Lift ● Low

Two school partnerships offered age-appropriate activities on climate action and inclusivity: K–3 students built Lego facades, while high schoolers took on a town-building exercise after a careers presentation.

Impact without budget: Beyond the cost of the book, the read-along and Lego facade review were low-cost activities.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Start early! Confirm dates and prepare presentation and activity materials well ahead. Challenging, but very rewarding.

Contact: Kent Werner · kwerner@jrparch.com

> *High school students were enthusiastic and well on their way to understanding the built environment. K–3 students were curious and eager to learn more.*

AIA Westchester + Hudson Valley

Multi-County Community Activations

50 students · multiple grades · 4 volunteers across three committees

Lift ●● Medium

Across seven counties, the chapter combined library story hours, a Can-struction Challenge linking design with food justice, and a Shadow an Architect Day. Spreading the work across committees let the chapter reach several audiences at once.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Multi-committee collaboration spreads the workload across the chapter and reaches several audiences in parallel.

Contact: Valerie Brown · vbrown@aiawhv.org

> *Combining design competition with charitable food collection integrates architecture into civic life in a way single-format programs can't.*

Architecture and Design Foundation | AIA Dallas

Designing My Future Spring Camp

11 students · high school with K–12 reach · 85% historically underrepresented · 10 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

A Spring Break camp offered age-tailored activities, a field trip, and creative design exercises. Students left genuinely curious, asking sharp questions about licensure and NCARB.

Impact without budget: Playing ArchDaily YouTube clips during lunch and breaks was simple, successful, no-cost enrichment.

What they'd tell the next chapter: AIA National's support — connections to other chapters and community-building — made the experience richer than a single foundation could create alone.

Contact: Adriana Guisa · aguisa@dallasadex.org

> *High school students showed strong interest in pursuing architecture and asked thoughtful questions about licensure and NCARB.*

Program highlights: Multi-format & series

These chapters connected several sessions, schools, or formats into a richer experience, leaning on partners and early planning to multiply impact without multiplying the budget.

> I think I found my career!
>
> -Student participant, AIA Colorado

AIA California | California Architectural Foundation

Architecture by the Book

240 students (~500 across 7 sites) · elementary · 30% historically underrepresented · 28 volunteers

Lift ●●● High

Architects visited underrepresented schools statewide for 90-minute sessions of book readings, presentations, and hands-on activities, leaving a copy of the featured book for the classroom or school library. At many schools, it was the very first architect visit ever.

Impact without budget: Leaving a copy of the featured book turns a single visit into a lasting resource.

What they'd tell the next chapter: For many schools it was the first architect visit ever. There's a lot of untapped interest. This is a high-impact micro-volunteering opportunity with little preparation for the architect volunteers.

Contact: Kimberly Anderson, Hon. AIA CA · kanderson@aiacalifornia.org

> *Yesterday was such an amazing experience for our 5th graders. The architects were engaging and encouraging. Our students had a blast!*
>
> — 5th-grade teacher, host school

AIA Coastal Virginia

Designed Here — Community-Centered Architecture Exhibition

120 students (200 fifth-graders on opening day) · elementary · 75% historically underrepresented · 30 volunteers

Lift ●●● High

A week-long exhibition paired a mural tour with seven hands-on stations — pipe-cleaner structures, modular floor-plan tiles, Lego pop-up parks, and marshmallow towers.

Impact without budget: The director of the ViBe Creative District donated her time to lead the student mural tours.

What they'd tell the next chapter: The model is replicable for any chapter that can line up a community or cultural-district partner.

Contact: Allison Rogers · bkeplinger@aiacova.org

> *It was such a meaningful, real-world learning experience for our students.*
>
> — Title I Instructional Specialist, Virginia Beach Public Schools

AIA Eastern Oklahoma

BUILDFEST

28 students · elementary · 82% historically underrepresented · 34 volunteers

Lift ●●● High ▸ **Full playbook**

Eastern Oklahoma introduced elementary students from underserved Tulsa schools to architecture through after-school sessions and a Saturday build day, where kids built a model city from recycled materials donated by local firms.

Impact without budget: Local companies were eager to donate branded recyclables like cups and to-go boxes for the recycling-themed build, and some firms used the event to clear out their material sample libraries, giving students real designer materials.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Connect with school districts earlier and line up press coverage sooner using year-one photos. Plan for more space than you think you need and front-load programming since afternoon attendance drops off.

Contact: Cindy Chanslor · Cindy.Chanslor@thinkarchitecture.org

> *Every student wanted to explain their building — like the girl who designed a rooftop restaurant "because you want to be able to see the river while you eat."*

AIA Kansas City

Explore Architecture Week 2026

193 students · 14 schools · 45% historically underrepresented · 40 volunteers

Lift ●●● High

Across five days, Kansas City ran classroom sessions, an "Inside Architecture" shadowing experience at nine firms, and a symposium for high school career counselors.

Impact without budget: The "Inside Architecture" shadowing day — 53 students across 9 firms — cost the chapter nothing, since firms covered the only expense, student lunches.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Don't feel you must run big events; small ones work. Counselors specifically asked for plug-and-play, downloadable lesson plans and toolkits for teachers.

Contact: Tiffany Shepherd · tiffany@aiakc.org

> *A middle school teacher emailed the same day: students were so excited about architecture that he wants an ongoing partnership — build-a-city in 7th grade, job shadowing in 8th, then high-school class-selection guidance.*

AIA Kentucky

K–12 Outreach Across Three Counties

508 students · 6 schools · all grades · 50% historically underrepresented · 4 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

Kentucky expanded across three counties with age-tailored builds — tiny-home models for high schoolers, and the runaway-hit AIA Kansas City Animal Dice Game for younger students. Volunteers worked in their home counties to keep logistics light.

Impact without budget: A local reprographics company donated printing for 150 sketch and coloring books, and activities were designed to need no expensive materials.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Survey schools early to find those serving more underrepresented students, reach administrators early with clear goals, and recruit volunteers early then deploy them in their home counties.

Contact: George Donkor · gdonkor@grayaes.com

> *Strategically deployed AIA volunteers in their home counties — lower logistics, higher follow-through.*

AIA Long Beach / South Bay

Color Your City + GALA Sustainability Program

100+ students · elementary and HS · 98% historically underrepresented · 6 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium ▸ **Full playbook**

A sustainability program at an all-girls STEM school ran alongside the launch of the Color Your City coloring book. One elementary visit resonated so strongly the school asked for 100 more copies.

Impact without budget: A follow-on online gallery lets students and families keep sharing artwork, and a regular monthly chapter social gathered sketches from members beyond the committee.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Keep it simple, make it interactive and lasting, and design for a wide age range so volunteers can present flexibly.

Contact: Desiree Gemigniani · des@aialb-sb.org

> *Keep it simple — a coloring book sparks curiosity without complicated curriculum. Make it interactive AND lasting.*

AIA New Jersey

K–12 Design Challenge: Stadium Design

100 students (1,000+ via 125+ districts) · all grades · 70% historically underrepresented · 5 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium ▸ **Full playbook**

A statewide virtual competition tied to the World Cup invited students to design their own stadium, judged by architects across three grade categories.

Impact without budget: Going fully virtual let far more schools and students take part at no added cost.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Start early! Save-the-dates ahead of the competition window are what actually get the challenge in front of students, since reaching students is the hardest part.

Contact: Stacey Kliesch · staceykliesch@gmail.com

AIA Orange County

Daily Firm Visits with United Way

250 students · middle & high school · targets underprivileged schools · 12 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

In partnership with United Way, five firms hosted daily hands-on career visits for students from underprivileged schools, with AIAOC managing logistics. The partnership itself was the breakthrough.

Impact without budget: Volunteer time is what makes this work — some members really step up in a region of 33 cities and 4 million people.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Developing the United Way relationship was the key insight; it's likely most useful in urban areas, but worth the pursuit.

Contact: Jeffrey Gill · jgill@aiaoc.org

AIA San Francisco

Youth Festival 2.0

226 students · 13 schools · 70% historically underrepresented · 9 volunteers

Lift ●●● High

A free three-day, climate-focused festival offered four distinct programs for different ages — from a Girls Garage woodworking showcase to a model-making workshop where a simple scale change unlocked architectural thinking.

Impact without budget: The art university donated the venue and all construction materials, and the chapter reused existing printed boards and easels instead of making new signage.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Educator volunteers with existing student ties drive attendance more than broad outreach, and the festival model works best when each event serves a distinct audience.

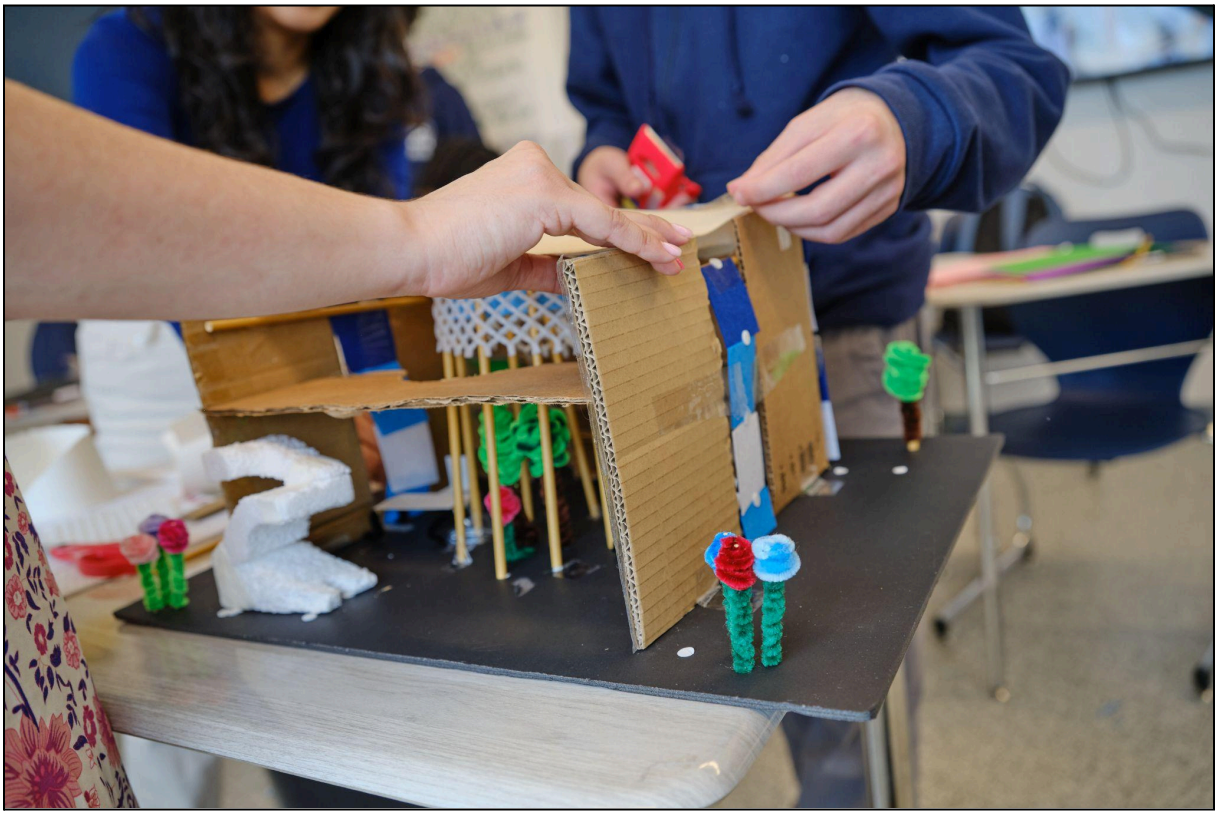
Contact: Amy Ress · aress@aiasf.org

> *When instructors changed scales, students realized their objects could read as buildings, furniture, mountains, or rockets.*

Program highlights: Festival & statewide

Multi-day festivals, museum and library networks, and statewide initiatives reaching hundreds or thousands of students. The chapters here are clear that partnerships, not big budgets, make this scale possible.

> Don’t hold back from pursuing something ambitious—start with a vision, think creatively, lean on community.
>
> -AIA Newark & Suburban Architects



BSA / Architecture in Common (Boston)

KidsBuild! + KidsBuild! Classroom Workshops

800+ students · 30+ schools · 80% historically underrepresented · 125 volunteers across 196 shifts

Lift ●●● High ▸ **Full playbook**

Architecture in Common (formerly BSA Foundation)'s annual flagship event, which includes public programs, a pop-up exhibition, and classroom workshops with underserved students.

Impact without budget: Connecting with the local school district's Early Childhood Department increased new student reach for the main event and grew classroom workshop reach from two to five classrooms with no budget increase.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Strengthen partnerships each year for sustained student outreach and streamline volunteer procedures to support volunteers at scale — grab-and-go guides, clear roles, and in-person orientations help volunteers feel ready for such a large event.

Contact: Taylor Johnson · tjohnson@architects.org

> *Partnerships are key to meaningful growth; invest into them year over year to continually reach more students.*

AIA Fort Worth

Architecture Week Multi-Event Programming

800 participants · pre-K through high school · 40% historically underrepresented · 15 volunteers

Lift ●● Medium

Museum partnerships powered a week of tours, film screenings, and Box City builds, including a new collaboration with a children's hospital so hospitalized kids could build from their beds.

Impact without budget: Cultural-institution partners essentially run the programs — their venues, staff, and promotional networks reach far wider audiences, which is essential for a chapter of 1.5 staff.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Take a scaled approach. Don't try to do too much in year one.

Contact: Katie Hitt Deaton · kdeaton@brick.com

> *Strategic partnerships with cultural institutions reached far wider audiences — their venues and networks essentially run the program.*

AIA LA | ACLA

Design by Diversity (DxD) Day

420 students and family members · K–12 · centers BIPOC architects and underrepresented youth · 40 volunteers

Lift ●●● High ▸ **Full playbook**

The 5th annual Design by Diversity Day block party honored trailblazing BIPOC architect Gin D. Wong, FAIA, with over 60 interactive firm booths, mentoring sessions, a student design competition, and a panel discussion. Previous honorees include Paul R. Williams, Norma Sklarek, and César Pelli. Free and open to all, DxD Day exists to make the profession visible to students it has historically excluded. Hosting on a Friday turned attendance into a school field trip, solving the transportation barrier that limits most weekend career events.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Invite district architects onto your board. Two ACLA board members work for the Los Angeles Unified School District. That direct relationship is what unlocks school access, transportation funding, and student participation at scale.

Contact: Ingalill Wahlroos-Ritter · ingalill.wahlroos-ritter@ac-la.org

> *My daughter had so much fun. It really helped her deep dive into herself. I would love for her to do this every year.*
>
> — Parent, ACLA program participant

AIA Maryland

Architecture in Action: Design Days

1,000 students · 8 schools · 85% historically underrepresented · 20 volunteers

Lift ●●● High

Classroom workshops and a statewide book drive connected students with architecture and sustainability.

Impact without budget: Inviting architects who had worked on the students' own school renovations made the profession click instantly, and a community book drive raised 400+ books to give away.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Plan and reach out to schools early! It can be tricky, but passion and forward thinking are what push these programs through.

Contact: Lori Cardeli · k12@aiamd.org

> *Most kids had no idea what architects actually do — they figured it was just about putting up walls.*

Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center

Terrace Town

1,200 students · 15 schools · 50% historically underrepresented · 75 volunteers

Lift ●●● High ▸ **Full playbook**

A biennial county-wide program in which elementary classrooms spend several weeks designing and building models of sustainable communities, then install them as box cities in a 37,000 sq. ft. exhibition hall for a school day and a public open house. Volunteer mentors — architects, planners, and landscape architects — visit classrooms at least three times to support the work. Teachers, not students, are the recruitment target, and they choose their own curriculum focus.

Impact without budget: The host convention center donates the venue (about $6,700) and the partner organizations supply every classroom mentor, so the program runs with no grant or sponsorship income at all. Teachers' own classroom photos become the jumbo-screen slideshow at both culminating events, at no cost.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Bus transportation costs can be a real barrier to participation — budget for it or expect it to shape which schools can attend.

Contact: Heather Sabin · hsabin@mononaterrace.com

> *This year was an amazing first year experience and our students were over the moon with Terrace Town. They continue to ask me if they get to do it again next year in the next grade.*
>
> — Participating teacher, post-event survey

AIA Pennsylvania

Statewide Architecture Story Hours

1,500 students · 45 story hours across 23 counties · 30% historically underrepresented · 65 volunteers

Lift ●●● High ▸ **Full playbook**

Volunteer architects read architecture-themed books and led design activities at libraries in every Pennsylvania county, with a donated book left at each one. A library-association partnership made the statewide reach manageable, and a Senate resolution capped the week.

Impact without budget: A bulk publisher order cut book costs by 50%, Click-and-Ship saved about $5 per package, and large paper rolls were cut into 20-foot sections to save money.

What they'd tell the next chapter: Begin volunteer and host-library outreach 4–6 months out, keep a spreadsheet with one row per library, and ask each about photo-sharing policies before you arrive.

Contact: Amyra Weiss · aweiss@aiapa.org

> *Begin volunteer and host-library outreach 4–6 months before Architecture Week. Use a spreadsheet with one tab per county.*

Texas Society of Architects

Blueprints & Books

1,277 students · 48 schools · statewide · 60% historically underrepresented · 53 volunteers

Lift ●●● High

A statewide reading initiative connected AIA members with K–12 students through architecture-themed books and a turnkey toolkit. The most moving moments came in the classrooms, where a single visit visibly shifted how children saw their own futures.

Impact without budget: Make an explicit ask to educators to help match volunteers to architects. Volunteers struggled to set up visits without an existing “in” at a school.

What they’d tell the next chapter: Launch much earlier, know the standardized-testing dates in advance, and build a simple way for volunteers to report their visits back to the state society.

Contact: Sharna Pascolo · sharna@texasarchitects.org

> *At one classroom’s start, only one student raised her hand when asked who wanted to be an architect; by the end, many little hands were raised.*
>
> — Maria Sustaeta, AIA LRGV

Program playbooks

Twelve programs in full operational detail — planning timelines, run of show, budgets, partners, volunteer models, outreach, and the files those chapters were willing to share.

Lift ratings are explained under About the Program Entries.

AIA Architects League of Northern New Jersey

Women's STEAM Tower Challenge

SINGLE-FORMAT

Contact: Stacey Kliesch · staceykliesch@gmail.com

AT A GLANCE

Format	Full-day tower-design challenge with shake-table testing
Reach	50 students · 100% historically underrepresented
Grade level	High school
Volunteers	16
Lead time	12 months
Approx. budget	Low — simple materials (spaghetti and marshmallows)
Lift	●● Medium

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A full-day event engaging high-school girls from 12 schools in designing mixed-use towers judged on zoning, economics, seismic performance, and aesthetics, culminating in shake-table testing of their spaghetti-and-marshmallow structures. The challenge deliberately prioritizes participation from historically underrepresented communities, and for most girls it was a first exposure to a project like this.

PLANNING TIMELINE

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
12 mo	Confirm the venue location	Chair	1
11 mo	Prepare an introductory letter and issue a save-the-date to potential schools	Chair	1
8 mo	Prepare the program description and apply for an AIA grant	Chair	1
7 mo	Solicit volunteers and assign tasks	Chair	1
6 mo	Meet with volunteers to confirm assignments (design program, slide show)	Committee volunteers	5
4 mo	Confirm which schools are attending and invite more if needed	Chair	1
3 mo	Inventory supplies and prepare the shopping list	Chair	1
2 mo	Meet with venue staff on transportation, logistics, and on-site schedule; distribute notices to schools and volunteers	Chair	2
1 mo	Send out the press release	Chair	—

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Kept low-cost by design — readily available materials like spaghetti and marshmallows keep the barrier to entry minimal.

PARTNERS

12 partner high schools across the region and the broader AEC community network.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

16 volunteers from the AEC community, recruited and assigned tasks (writing the design program, preparing the slide show) starting months ahead.

STUDENT OUTREACH

An introductory letter and save-the-date go to potential schools a full year in advance. This is essential because many schools have limited transportation budgets and teachers must request off-campus days well ahead.

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

Most girls had never been exposed to a project like this; they had fun, learned something new, and networked directly with AEC professionals.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

The format is highly replicable. Send a save-the-date a year in advance, and lean on established relationships with participating schools for future cycles.

> *Most girls had never been exposed to a project like this before. They had fun, learned something new, and had the chance to network directly with members of the AEC community.*
>
> — AIA ALNNJ

AIA Baltimore

Career Lunches at Baltimore Design School

SINGLE-FORMAT

Contact: Katherine Somerville · ksomerville@aiabalt.com

AT A GLANCE

Format	Four weekly lunches, one architect each, ~20 students per session
Reach	65 students · 1 school · 100% historically underrepresented
Grade level	High school (grades 10–12)
Volunteers	4 architects
Lead time	5 months
Approx. budget	~$885 cash; ~$560 in-kind
Lift	● Low

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Reformatted from a prior multi-presenter career panel that ran long, AIA Baltimore and Bmore NOMA spread the program across four April lunches, inviting one architect each week to have a casual lunch with a group of about 20 students. The smaller setting allowed deeper, more memorable conversations. A student t-shirt design contest runs alongside.

PLANNING TIMELINE

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
5 mo	Initial conversation with Baltimore Design School teachers	AIA Baltimore staff + BDS teachers	1
4 mo	Brainstorm possible participants	AIA Baltimore staff + BDS teachers	1
3 mo	Invitations to participate sent	AIA Baltimore staff + BDS teachers	1
3 mo	T-shirt design prompt and guidelines drafted	AIA Baltimore staff	2
2 mo	T-shirt designs created	BDS architecture students	1
1 mo	T-shirt order placed	AIA Baltimore staff	2
0.5 mo	Lunch orders placed	AIA Baltimore staff	1
0.5 mo	Reminders sent	AIA Baltimore staff + BDS teachers	1

RUN OF SHOW

Time	What happens	Who leads
Apr 9, 12:30–1:30	First lunch with an architect; ~20 students	Jerome Gray, architect
Apr 14, 12:30–1:30	Second lunch; ~20 students	MacKenzie Twardus, landscape architect & urban planner
Apr 23, 12:30–1:30	Third lunch; ~20 students	Dustin Watson, architect & AIA Baltimore board member
Apr 30, 12:30–1:30	Fourth lunch; ~20 students	Arianna Parrish, architect & AIA Baltimore board member

In 2024–25 the same partnership ran a single career panel with 4–6 professionals for all ~65 students, but presentations ran long and squeezed out student questions. Spreading it across four April lunches of ~20 students each traded the big-panel format for deeper, casual conversation.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Item	Qty	Approx. cost	Source / vendor
Lunch (pizza, salad, drinks, paper goods)	4 dates	$205	Jay's Catering (local)
Student t-shirts	72	$680	Swag Dog (local screenprinter)

In-kind contributions

What was donated	Est. value	By whom
Preparation time (2.5 hrs each)	$400	4 professional architects
Presentation time (1 hr each)	$160	4 professional architects

PARTNERS

Baltimore Design School (established) — a Baltimore public magnet school — provided coordination support and classroom space. Bmore NOMA co-hosted.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

The chapter keeps a running list of architects who fit K–12 engagement, first inviting board members, then others who bring different perspectives, deliberately assembling a group diverse in age, gender, race, background, firm size, and career path. Each volunteer shares their path to architecture and a current or favorite project, and is asked to bring a short slide deck with visuals. Volunteers weren't formally trained, just given general guidelines for the mini-presentation.

STUDENT OUTREACH

The established relationship with Baltimore Design School provided the direct connection to students.

Communications sent

To volunteers: an invitation from the school and a calendar invitation explaining the Lunch with a Designer series. Lunch provided by AIA for the speaker and ~20 grade 10–12 Architecture Pathway students, with the designer bringing a few slides prepared to discuss their career path and take questions.

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

Staff and teachers took informal photos framed so only the backs of students show, avoiding formal releases; teachers screened out any opted-out students. Shared on the BDS Architecture and AIA Baltimore Instagram accounts.

Hashtags: #ArchitectureWeek · #NationalArchitectureWeek · #BecomeAnArchitect

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

Spreading the event over four weeks delivered the same number of student lunches with deeper engagement and more memorable interactions at no added cost.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Established teacher relationships mean buy-in, shared ownership, and scheduling flexibility, solving the usual K–12 mismatch problems.

INCLUDED ARTIFACTS

- Invitation to prospective participant

> *Hearing about a project timeline equal to their own lifetime was mind-blowing.*
> — AIA Baltimore, on a student reaction

AIA Brooklyn

Mentoring Architectural Pathways (MAP)

SINGLE-FORMAT

Contact: Mi Zhang · ya@aiabrooklyn.org

AT A GLANCE

Format	Two-day workshop: intro, firm tours, site visit, and a community-design charrette
Reach	40 students · 26 schools · 80% historically underrepresented
Grade level	High school
Volunteers	23 (~16 hours each)
Lead time	4 months
Approx. budget	See the chapter's program-cost file; Autodesk sponsored one lunch (~$500)
Lift	●●● High

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A new annual two-day initiative connecting Brooklyn youth from underrepresented backgrounds with architecture through workshops, firm tours, a site visit, and a charrette to design a community improvement. A university partner provided all the space, letting the small budget stretch to reusable totes and supplies for every student. A Brooklyn Borough President proclamation capped the week.

RUN OF SHOW

Time	What happens	Who leads
Day 1, 9 AM–4 PM	Intro to architecture; tour of architecture firms; visit the site; afternoon charrette to design a community improvement for the site	Mi, Kevin, Catherine (MAP committee)
Day 2, 9 AM–4 PM	Studio clusters develop and present their designs, with volunteer studio leads anchoring each cluster	MAP committee + studio leads

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

CUNY City Tech donated office, classroom, and large meeting space plus plotting; iron-on labels let the budget cover reusable totes, scales, sketchbooks, and pens for all students and volunteers.

PARTNERS

CUNY City Tech's architecture department (new) provided all venue space and printing and connected students to the college's summer high-school program and degree pathways; the chair also helped plot the graphics. Autodesk sponsored a lunch.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

23 volunteers, about 16 hours each: studio leads anchoring cluster facilitation, AIA Brooklyn Emerging Professionals on operations, college students as studio assistants, and MAP committee members facilitating. Volunteers welcomed and checked in attendees each morning and led studio clusters; studio leaders reported real joy in the work.

Onboarding & screening

The chapter held a volunteer orientation and provided a guide outlining the objectives for Day 1 and Day 2.

STUDENT OUTREACH

Because NYC schools don't publish an organized contact list, the team Googled schools to find contacts, called for email addresses, then emailed the flyer and program outline with a registration link, all over about three weeks.

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

A volunteer "historian" was designated, and everyone added photos to a shared Google folder. A Brooklyn Borough President proclamation was shared on AIA Brooklyn social media.

Hashtags: #architectureweek

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

A post-event survey showed all students enjoyed it, and some want to pursue architecture as a major. Studio leaders affirmed the joy of volunteering to lead a cluster.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Two days were essential — students wanted to dive in immediately. Promote HS, MS, and elementary options together with higher-ed volunteers, and include emerging professionals to assist studio leads. A longer planning runway than four months would help.

INCLUDED ARTIFACTS

- Poster
- Video promotional
- Faculty volunteer flyer
- Student flyer
- Program coordination spreadsheet
- Waiver
- Banners
- Speaker announcements
- Proclamation request
- Studio leader's guide

> *Most students had no prior exposure to architecture — many parents thanked the chapter.*
> — AIA Brooklyn

BSA / Architecture in Common (Boston)

KidsBuild! + KidsBuild! Classroom Workshops

FESTIVAL & STATEWIDE

Contact Taylor Johnson · tjohnson@architects.org

AT A GLANCE

Format	Multi-day, hands-on design festival with weekday classroom workshops
Reach	800+ students · 30+ schools
Grade level	Pre-elementary, elementary, middle
Volunteers	125 individuals filling 196 shifts (5 hours+ each)
Lead time	6 months
Approx. budget	~$4,000 cash plus ~$4,050 in-kind
Lift	●●● High

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Architecture in Common (formerly BSA Foundation)'s flagship event invites local families to walk through a step-by-step design process and design their own building for a growing model city at the BSA. Additional KidsBuild! Classroom Workshops extend the experience and expand the event's reach to second grade classrooms from underresourced Boston Public Schools. An annual partnership with the district's Early Childhood Department has allowed for continual student outreach for the main event and classroom outreach for the weekday workshops.

PLANNING TIMELINE

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
6 mo	Confirm event space	Senior Manager, K-12	5
5 mo	Begin monthly planning meetings with small volunteer group	Senior Manager, K-12 + volunteers	10
3 mo	Gain sponsors	Executive Director	—
1.5 mo	Seek material donations (Amazon Wish List)	Senior Manager, K-12 + volunteers	—
1.5 mo	Gain volunteer food donations	Senior Manager, K-12 + volunteers	—
1 mo	Launch volunteer outreach and registration	Senior Manager, K-12	10
1 mo	Launch family registration	Senior Manager, K-12	20
1 mo	Update event layout, graphics, signage, and materials	Senior Manager, K-12	40

RUN OF SHOW

Time	What happens	Who leads
Fri, 9 AM–7 PM	Setup day: lay out furniture and city, organize areas (welcome, building department, materials yard, construction zone)	Senior Manager, K-12 + volunteers
Sat, 8 AM–6 PM	9 AM volunteer orientation and setup; 10 AM doors open; 10 AM–4 PM families design, build, and add to the growing city (timed entry); 4 PM debrief and cleanup	Senior Manager, K-12 + volunteers
Sun, 8 AM–6 PM	Same as Saturday; additionally 5 PM set up space, furniture, materials, and workbooks for weekday classroom workshops	Senior Manager, K-12 + volunteers
Tue & Wed, 8 AM–2 PM	Classroom Workshops (Grade 2): 8 AM orientation and setup; 9 AM classrooms arrive; 9 AM–1:15 PM students split into groups, volunteers guide the design process; 1:15 PM debrief and cleanup	Senior Manager, K-12 + volunteers
All week, 8 AM–8 PM	KidsBuild! City on display in public lobby	Senior Manager, K-12
Sat, 9 AM–4 PM	Volunteers split into groups to deconstruct the city, save reusable materials, restock inventory, and restore the furniture layout	Senior Manager, K-12 + volunteers

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Item	Qty	Approx. cost	Source / vendor
Printing (signage, workbooks, nametags)	—	$2,000	Various
Materials + supplies	—	$1,400	Various
Food + drink	—	$600	Various

In-kind contributions

What was donated	Est. value	By whom
Amazon Wish List materials	$1,500	Individuals
Volunteer lunch, coffee, and snacks	$1,700	Local companies + individuals
Printing (small prints, workbook batches)	$850	Individuals

Income: 3 local firms sponsored in the first year of offering event sponsorship, with tiers ranging from $2,500–$10,000. An additional ~$600 came through small individual donations ($10–20 each) during registration for the free event. This was the first year in a decade needing to heavily replenish materials and reprint large signage after drawing down inventory in prior years.

PARTNERS

KidsBuild! is run solely by BSA / Architecture in Common's K-12 Design Education program. No formal partnerships are built around the event itself, but promotion is shared through local K-12 Design Education partners and the BSA network to reach a wide net of students and volunteers.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

125 individuals filled 196 volunteer shifts across setup, event, and cleanup days, with many attending multiple shifts. Volunteers were recruited through the BSA's website, social media, newsletters to recent volunteers, and connections with the local NOMA (BosNOMA) and AIAS chapters. The majority pick one or two shifts with a set time, role, and little to no prep required. A small group of 10 volunteers engage in the months prior to source donations, update material inventories, and provide input into planning.

Onboarding & screening

Before each shift, volunteers receive "Know Before You Go" emails and a calendar invite with their schedule, logistics, and a guide to their specific role. At the start of each shift they are led through a 30-minute orientation introducing the step-by-step KidsBuild! design process and their assigned activity zone, then receive a reflective vest, nametag, and printed guide. While the event is in progress, afternoon volunteers are briefed by the morning volunteers during the shift swap.

STUDENT OUTREACH

KidsBuild! is promoted on the BSA website in the months leading up to the event and in the biweekly newsletter in the month prior. A flyer goes to local early-elementary classroom teachers through the existing Early Childhood Department partnership with Boston and Cambridge Public Schools. All event promotion also goes to past participants through additional newsletters and social media.

Communications sent

To families: email to gather and refill ticket cancellations (2 weeks out); reminder email to registered families (1 week out); "Know Before You Go" email with location, ticket, and parking/transit reminders (2 days out).

To teachers: classroom workshop outreach (1 month out); classroom flyers for teachers to send home (1 month out); field-trip prep (2 weeks out).

To volunteers: outreach emails, newsletters, and social posts (4 weeks out); additional personal outreach and volunteer push (3 weeks out); reminders (2 weeks out); calendar invites, guides, and "Know Before You Go" emails (week of).

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

For most years the event relies on iPhone photography by staff and volunteers. In recent years the organization hired a videographer and photographer to capture the event and showcase participants; that imagery promotes the K-12 Design Education work and serves as promotional material for the following year.

Photo releases are built into all volunteer and participant registrations. Reminders are available at the welcome desk in case any participant opts out; those participants receive a sticker for photographers to avoid during the large-scale event.

Hashtags: #KidsBuild! · #KidsBuild!2026

Press coverage

- https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/video/free-event-aims-to-get-boston-students-to-learn-about-architecture/
- https://www.boston.com/events/arts/2025/04/13/kids-get-creative-at-boston-society-for-architectures-kidsbuild-event/
- https://whdh.com/news/boston-society-for-architectures-kids-build-event-provides-hands-on-learning-activities/
- https://youtu.be/Sh4-nQr-on0

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

Event registration gathers ages, zip code, schools, and number of times participating. This data shows the mix of new and returning families, annual reach, and registration-vs.-attendance rates.

Volunteer retention and continual engagement with K-12 Design Education programs are the key volunteer indicators. Post-event surveys, group debriefs, and volunteer suggestions feed the next planning cycle.

This year, after efforts to streamline event graphics, layouts, and volunteer orientation, many volunteers and parents remarked on how well-run, fun, and organized the event was.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Strengthen partnerships each year for sustained student outreach. Streamline volunteer procedures to support volunteers at scale; clear communication, schedules, printed guides, set roles, and in-person orientations help volunteers feel ready, comfortable, and excited amidst a large public event, which shows in how smoothly the event runs.

> *Local teachers and parents both shared how important these creative, hands-on learning experiences are for their students. With local classrooms constrained by limited resources and budgets, hands-on learning opportunities have become even more important for young students to learn, get creative, and share their ideas.*
>
> — Architecture in Common

AIA Central New Jersey

Firm Tours + Hands-On Design Activities

SINGLE-FORMAT

Contact David von Stappenbeck · dvonstappenbeck@kssarchitects.com

AT A GLANCE

Format	A single firm visit: office tour, presentation, and a paper-city building activity
Reach	15–20 students · 1 school · 50% historically underrepresented
Grade level	High school (juniors and seniors)
Volunteers	4 (the firm principal + assistants, ~4 hours each)
Lead time	4 months
Approx. budget	~$450 expenses; $500 AIA grant
Lift	● Low

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A class of 15–20 high-school juniors and seniors and their teacher visit the firm's Princeton office for a tour and a 30–40-minute presentation on architectural practice, followed by a hands-on activity: students cut and fold pre-printed paperboard buildings and assemble them into a paper city with neighborhoods, commercial and residential districts, parks, and transit.

RUN OF SHOW

Time	What happens	Who leads
10 AM, Thursday	Office tour; "What does an architect do?" presentation (30–40 min); paper-city building activity	Firm principal + 2 assistants

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Item	Qty	Approx. cost	Source / vendor
Craft paper	1	$100	Amazon
Crafting tools / cutters	25	(incl.)	Amazon
Design patterns	2	$100	no-bu-ru
Food (local pizza)	—	$150	Local pizza

Funded by a $500 AIA grant.

PARTNERS

Up to six local high schools; the program runs out of the firm's own Princeton office.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

The internal firm team — the principal plus assistants, about 4 hours each — staffs the speaking program and the design activity, with a 30-minute briefing.

STUDENT OUTREACH

Direct outreach to high-school technology and design teachers; the event is also posted on the component website, and individual students who reach out get a one-on-one tour or overview.

Communications sent

To students: none this year, but next year the firm will send a primer for the activity.

To schools: outreach should start in late fall to confirm interest, firm up dates in January/February, and finalize details in March for an April event. Note that some schools need 4–6 months' notice to book bus transportation.

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

Shot by volunteers, with limited sharing since photo-policy agreements weren't in place.

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

Students had a great time, and the craft activity paired well with the practice presentation.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Start outreach in late fall and involve more schools and firms next cycle. Send students a primer for the activity, and be aware some schools need months of lead time for bus transportation.

> *Students had a great time; a craft activity paired well with a presentation around design practice.*
> — AIA Central New Jersey

AIA Colorado

Design Like a Girl Colorado

SINGLE-FORMAT

Contact Sarah Goldblatt · sarah@sarahgoldblatt.com

AT A GLANCE

Format	Three mentorship workshops across the school year for middle-school girls
Reach	25 students · 10–12 Denver public schools
Grade level	Middle school
Volunteers	20, plus 30–40 mentors (~5 hours each)
Lead time	Begins by July 1 for the next school year
Approx. budget	Detailed in the chapter's DLAG Budget 2025-26 artifact
Lift	●●● High

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A mentorship program empowering middle-school girls, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, to explore architecture and design. Three themed workshops are held on school days off (to avoid conflicts), with hands-on activities, field trips, and close mentorship from female professionals. Bilingual English/Spanish materials and mentors are built in throughout.

PLANNING TIMELINE

- **By July 1** — Contact the school district to set three workshop dates (fall, winter, spring) on student days off; confirm CU Denver classrooms.
- **August** — Send English/Spanish flyers with a signup QR code to school contacts; open volunteer recruitment (the sign-up form asks about Spanish fluency).
- **Summer** — A core volunteer group plans the workshops and confirms each focus.
- **2 weeks before each workshop** — Assemble and translate slide decks; hold a volunteer orientation; email role assignments and day-of logistics.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

The chapter maintains a detailed budget artifact. Critical partners — the school district and CU Denver's College of Architecture and Planning — keep workshop costs viable.

PARTNERS

Denver Public Schools (the Spark middle-school career program) and CU Denver's College of Architecture and Planning (classroom space) are the critical partners that make the workshops viable, alongside NOMA Colorado and AIAS for volunteer and student recruitment.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

20 volunteers plus 30–40 mentors, about 5 hours each. Recruited via emails to past-year volunteers, the AIA CO e-newsletter, and mentor-recruitment flyers to NOMA CO and AIAS; mentors sign up through a Google form capturing contact info, availability, and Spanish fluency. Volunteers organize and develop the workshops, communicate with the district and CU Denver, set up (including off-site), lead and mentor students, facilitate the slide curriculum, host model-building stations, and write the recap for the AIA CO newsletter.

Onboarding & screening

An orientation is offered two weeks to a month before each workshop. Once a year, program developer Joanna Schmickel gives a comprehensive orientation and overview for mentors.

STUDENT OUTREACH

Students are recruited through Denver Public School contacts, specifically the Spark middle-school career coordinator. The chapter suggests seeking a career-development contact at your local district or your local architectural foundation. In August, bilingual flyers with a signup QR code go to school contacts, who recruit students; parents sign up via the QR code.

Communications sent

To schools: workshop dates are set in early summer and CU Denver classrooms reserved; scheduling confirmations and day-of logistics continue in the two weeks before each workshop.

To parents: all communication — permission slips, photo releases, dietary needs, and transportation — runs through the school contacts.

To volunteers: recruitment in August; a core group plans over the summer; slide decks are assembled and translated ~2 weeks before each workshop, with role assignments emailed to those signed up.

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

Students without a photo release wear a different-colored lanyard so their images are never shared. Photos are collected in a shared Google Photos file; there is no video, and photos aren't distributed to families.

Press coverage

- https://view.publitas.com/modern-in-denver/modern-in-denver-winter-2024/page/58-59
- https://aiacolorado.org/design-like-a-girl-workshop/

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

A survey follows the final workshop. The chapter would value longer-term tracking, such as following students into high school or college. One participant's survey note captured the intent well: she wanted to learn more about the logistics of the job, not just what it entails.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Returning students year over year are the clearest sign of impact. Sustained mentorship across multiple workshops builds deeper relationships than a single day can, and modeling women supporting one another lets students imagine a real future for themselves.

INCLUDED ARTIFACTS

- Mentor Program Info
- Student Flyer
- Mentor Flyer
- Urban Walk BINGO English
- Urban Walk BINGO Spanish
- Workshop 1 Agenda
- Workshop 2 Agenda
- Workshop 3 Agenda
- Drop-off location
- Budget 2025-26

> *The first thing her daughter said at pick-up was, "I think I found my career!"*
> — Parent of a Design Like a Girl participant

AIA Eastern Oklahoma

BUILDFEST

MULTI-FORMAT & SERIES

Contact Cindy Chanslor · Cindy.Chanslor@thinkarchitecture.org

AT A GLANCE

Format	Saturday model-city build day from recycled materials + community viewing days
Reach	28 students · 82% historically underrepresented
Grade level	Pre-elementary and elementary
Volunteers	34 (~4 hours each)
Lead time	12 months
Approx. budget	~$2,600 expenses; $4,250 income; ~$3,000 in-kind
Lift	●●● High

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A partnership between the Education Foundation for Architecture, Engineering, and Design (Think Architecture) and AIA Eastern Oklahoma, modeled on Boston's KidsBuild!. Students from underserved Tulsa schools collaborated with professionals to build a model city from recycled materials, with local firms sponsoring street names. The city stayed open for several community viewing days so families could visit and students could take their buildings home.

PLANNING TIMELINE

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
12 mo	Begin partnership discussions	Director	6
6 mo	Confirm date & location	Director	1
4 mo	Committee meetings begin	Directors	5
4 mo	Design logo & city map	Committee	1
2 mo	Recruit volunteers	Directors	3
1 mo	Sign up students	Director	3
1 mo	Collect donations & finalize plans	Directors	—

RUN OF SHOW

Time	What happens	Who leads
Fri (8 hrs)	Set-up day: build the city layout and stations	Directors
Sat (8 hrs)	Volunteer meeting; main event with students & families; cleanup	Directors
Mon–Wed (8 hrs/day)	Community viewing days	Director
Thu (3 hrs)	Final cleanup and recycle remaining structures	Director

The event itself was one day; the city stayed open for several viewing days so students could bring family and pick up their builds. Next time the chapter will offer fewer viewing days.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Item	Qty	Approx. cost	Source / vendor
Logo banners	2	$300	FedEx
Logo safety vests for volunteers	12	$115	Industrial Safety
Printed materials (booklets & posters)	100	$375	Boomerang Printers
Building supplies (tape, glue, markers, signage)	—	$1,132	Amazon
Security guard (venue requirement)	1	$280	TPS Schools
Custodial services (venue requirement)	1	$400	TPS Schools
Snacks for volunteers	—	$95	Walmart

In-kind contributions

What was donated	Est. value	By whom
Event location	$2,500	Foundation for Tulsa Schools
Supplies & in-house printing	$500	Ethos Architects

Income: $1,500 AIA grant; $2,500 from firm sponsors who paid to name streets in the BUILDFEST city; $250 in board-member donations. Several companies also donated branded recyclables (cups, to-go boxes) for the recycling theme.

PARTNERS

Foundation for Tulsa Schools (new) provided the venue and the connection to Tulsa Public Schools. Ethos Architects, Reed Architecture & Interiors, and AC Owen Construction (established) sponsored and supplied volunteers; Flintco, Nabholz, Southern Millwork, Ziegler Art & Frame, and Bearwood Concepts (new) sponsored, donated materials, or built custom sign posts; JB Creative (established) donated photography. Volunteers also came from many additional AEC firms.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

34 volunteers, about 4 hours each, recruited through AIA EOK members, the Think Architecture board, and emails to all area AEC firms. Roles spanned a set-up day, the event day, three community viewing days, and a cleanup day, all in timed shifts.

Onboarding & screening

Volunteers received an email with basic event information, position roles, and expectations beforehand, then were briefed on their station and given a written “script” on arrival. Next year the chapter plans to add a volunteer walk-through of the design process so volunteers are more comfortable and can model sample structures for students.

STUDENT OUTREACH

Because the Foundation for Tulsa Schools was the venue sponsor, outreach focused on Tulsa’s 45 elementary schools through the district’s strict approved-flyer process: create the flyer, submit for approval, then the district emails it to every family, with a reminder one week out. Other districts got the flyer by email (a weaker return), and registration also lived on the chapter website.

Communications sent

To students: a registration flyer through the schools, plus a confirmation email to all registered families.

To parents: all permissions, liability, and photo releases were part of registration, followed by a personalized pre-event email to each family.

To volunteers: a shift-specific information email, then station information on event day.

PHYSICAL SPACE & SET-UP

Held in a Tulsa Public Schools facility (the venue sponsor), which required a paid security guard and custodial services. The build area could have been twice as large; front-loading programming would help, since afternoon attendance dropped.

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

A photographer donated his time but only in the afternoon — the busy morning was covered by volunteer photos. Photo release was part of registration, and images were shared on the website and social media.

Hashtags: #ArchitectureWeek · #BuildfestTulsa · #ThinkArchitectureOK · #aiaeok

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

A post-event survey went to families and volunteers. Over 75% of families asked whether the event would return next year; the facility manager and nearly all volunteers asked to be involved again. Students who began the day shy visibly grew in confidence — by the end, every one was proud to explain their design.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Start registration far sooner — ideally a save-the-date flyer ~3 months out, with staggered registration, first for the host district before opening to all districts. Plan flexibly around space, front-load programming, and add a volunteer walk-through of the design process.

INCLUDED ARTIFACTS

- Volunteer Request Email
- BuildFest Press Release
- BUILDFEST Registration Flyer
- BUILDFEST Volunteer Placement
- Personalized Email to Registered Families
- Day-of Agenda and Volunteer Assignments
- BUILDFEST Station Information
- Student Booklet
- BUILDFEST Consent Policy
- Sponsorship Sign Up
- Sponsorship Request Email
- Post-event Survey Sent to Families
- Post-event Survey Sent to Volunteers
- BuildFEST Planning Spreadsheets
- By the Numbers

> *Every student was proud of their work and would gladly talk to the volunteers about their design.*
> — AIA Eastern Oklahoma

AIA LA | ACLA

Design by Diversity (DxD) Day

FESTIVAL & STATEWIDE

Contact Ingalill Wahlroos-Ritter · ingalill.wahlroos-ritter@ac-la.org

AT A GLANCE

Format	Free, full-day block party honoring a BIPOC architect, with 60+ booths
Reach	420 students & families · 7 schools · 180+ professionals
Grade level	K–12
Volunteers	40 (~20 hours each)
Lead time	12 months
Approx. budget	~$28,650 expenses; ~$31,400 income
Lift	●●● High

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 5th annual Design by Diversity Day block party celebrates a trailblazing BIPOC architect (this year, Gin D. Wong) and connects K–12 students and families to design professionals. Held April 13, 2026 at Santa Monica College with 60+ firm booths, mentoring sessions, a student competition, and a panel. Hosting on a Friday let schools attend as a field trip.

PLANNING TIMELINE

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
12 mo	Honoree selection, committee formation	Committee chair, board rep, ED	20
10 mo	School outreach begins	Committee volunteers	14
6 mo	Booth-partnership outreach	Committee volunteers	20
3 mo	Logistics confirmed	Committee volunteers	20
1 mo	Final confirmations and permissions	Committee volunteers	20
Day of	Event execution	Committee + volunteers	20

RUN OF SHOW

Time	What happens	Who leads
6–9 AM	Setup and booth installation	Committee + volunteers
8–9 AM	Student arrival and registration	Volunteers
9 AM–12 PM	Main program: booths, mentoring sessions, activities, panel presentation	All
12–2 PM	Student competition prizes handed out	Committee
2–4 PM	Cleanup	Volunteers

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Item	Qty	Approx. cost	Source / vendor
Catering / food	—	$14,000	Various
Student prizes	15	$5,000	Various
Miscellaneous / entertainment	—	$3,800	Various
Advertising / communications	—	$3,400	Various
Transportation (buses/vans)	—	$1,700	Various
Venue security costs	—	$750	Santa Monica College

In-kind contributions

What was donated	Est. value	By whom
Venue	Donated	Santa Monica College
Volunteer time	Donated	40+ volunteers

Income: ~$25,000 in sponsorships, ~$5,000 in booth fees (firms paid; non-profits did not), and a $1,400 AIA K-12 grant.

PARTNERS

Santa Monica College (new — venue), KCRW (new — media partner), and 60+ AEC firms (booths, mentors, volunteers). Established partners include SoCal NOMA, AIA LA, and AWA+D. The wider network spans the LAWA Economic Impact Team, SEAOSC, East Los Angeles College, Cal Poly Pomona, and Woodbury University.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

40 volunteers, about 20 hours each, drawn from the ACLA and AIA LA member networks, the DxD committee, and Santa Monica College student volunteers. They staff booths, mentor students, and handle event logistics and registration, coordinated through regular committee meetings. Because this is an annual event, the year-over-year leadership handover is treated as critical.

STUDENT OUTREACH

Two board members work for LA Unified, giving direct communication with target schools. The biggest challenge is transportation; moving the event to a Friday let schools make it a school-wide field trip — a model the chapter will repeat.

Communications sent

To students: social-media outreach (direct student outreach is the hard part). To schools: logistics, timeline, and transportation funding.

To parents: day-of permission signatures.

To members and volunteers: recruitment beginning a year ahead via ACLA members, past awardees, the emerging-professionals group, AIA LA members, office outreach, and newsletters.

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

A professional photographer is hired for event day; images are posted to social media and the website and shared with partners for their own channels.

Hashtags: #architectureforcommunity · #designforkids · @acla_dxd · @aia_la

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

Headcount at sign-in, partner and post-event surveys, and booth-engagement tracking. This year: 420 students from 7 schools across elementary through high school, 60+ firm booths, and 180+ professionals. First-graders from Malabar Street Elementary were exposed to architecture careers early, and firms reported meaningful engagement at their booths.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Start school and volunteer recruitment at least a year ahead. The trick is finding principals and administrators willing to help with logistics, transportation, and student selection. Hosting on a weekday turns attendance into a school field trip, and the block-party format reaches communities traditional career events can't.

INCLUDED ARTIFACTS

- Google folder organization system

> *My daughter had so much fun. It really helped her deep dive into herself. I would love for her to do this every year.*
>
> — Parent, ACLA program participant

AIA Long Beach / South Bay

Color Your City + GALA Sustainability Program

MULTI-FORMAT & SERIES

Contact Desiree Gemigniani · des@aialb-sb.org

AT A GLANCE

Format	Coloring-book classroom visits + an online gallery; sustainability program at an all-girls STEM school
Reach	100+ students · 98% historically underrepresented
Grade level	Elementary (and HS via GALA)
Volunteers	5 EDI committee members + Emerging Professionals (~25 hours each)
Lead time	6 months (1–2 months for individual school visits)
Approx. budget	~$1,870 (printing + crayon kits); $1,300 AIA grant
Lift	●● Medium

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The EDI Committee created Color Your City, an architecture coloring book, and pairs it with classroom visits where women design professionals present on the profession, read an architecture book, and hand out the coloring book with crayons. A QR code on the cover leads to an online gallery so students keep sharing artwork after the visit, turning a one-time activity into an ongoing community celebration.

PLANNING TIMELINE

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
6 mo	Project kick-off meeting	EDI Committee + staff	3
5 mo	Building selection & program planning	EDI Committee	12
4–5 mo	Community sketching events	EDI Committee + staff	15
3–4 mo	Artwork refinement & sketch conversion	EDI Committee + staff	12
3 mo	Writing content	EDI Committee + staff	12
2–3 mo	Website & online gallery development	Staff	8
2 mo	Book design & layout	EDI Committee + staff	15
1–2 mo	Printing & distribution planning	Staff	8
1–2 mo	School outreach & volunteer training	EDI Committee	10
0	Arch Week school visits & community distribution	EDI Committee	10

RUN OF SHOW

Time	What happens	Who leads
Apr 15, 10 AM–2 PM	Visit to Accelerated Charter Elementary (ACES), south-central LA: talk on the profession, share coloring books with grades 1–5, leave 100 books + crayons for their afterschool Architecture Club	Stephanie Osorio, AIA
May 29, 10–11 AM	Visit to two kindergarten classes at Wilton Place Elementary, Koreatown: share about the profession, leave coloring books + crayons	Casey Chapin, AIA

Ongoing engagement (2–5 hours/month) keeps momentum: more K–8 visits and Title I schools, STEAM camp presentations, library programs, and community events, plus an Arch Week website follow-up.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Item	Qty	Approx. cost	Source / vendor
Coloring-book printing (500)	1	$1,600	ARC DT Los Angeles
Crayon & colored-pencil kits (500)	1	$273	Various

Income: $1,300 AIA Architecture Week grant. The reusable coloring book is the core investment; the program is kept deliberately simple and low-cost.

PARTNERS

First recipients were Accelerated Charter Elementary (ACES) in south-central LA and the Girls Academic Leadership Academy (GALA, California's only all-girls public STEM school). The chapter is building a spreadsheet of all 58 Title I schools in the Long Beach USD region for cold outreach.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

5 EDI Committee members plus Emerging Professionals, about 25 hours each. The committee does all planning and production; Emerging Professionals aim to attend each visit alongside an EDI volunteer. Member Stephanie Osorio, AIA, built a simple, replicable template — fun slides about the profession, an architecture book reading, and the Color Your City book — and trained the other volunteers, including the EPs.

STUDENT OUTREACH

A mix of existing relationships (an ACES school counselor, a Wilton Place teacher, an AAUW contact tied to the Tech Trek STEM camp) and cold outreach. ACES was the first recipient: after a counselor connection led to class visits during Arch Week, the chapter donated 100 books to launch an afterschool Architecture Club and will return in the fall for Career Day.

Communications sent

Volunteers bring a slide presentation, a roll of plans and tools of the trade, an architecture book, and coloring books with individual crayon packs, transported on a rolling cart. Schools are told 1–4 weeks out to expect books and crayons for every child. Parent contact is intentionally minimal (no photos of faces, volunteers don't leave the classroom, and no food is brought) with ongoing participation encouraged through the online gallery (parents grant permission via an online form before artwork is shared).

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

Low-key: a school staffer takes photos at each visit, and the chapter uses only images that don't show students' faces. Posted to the chapter site and social media and shared with the Arch Week grant follow-up.

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

No formal survey in the first rollout, but both visited schools responded with strong enthusiasm and asked for more visits. The chapter tracks online-gallery participation, coloring-book requests, and follow-on invitations as impact indicators, and recommends a simple teacher feedback form and brief student reflection questions for future rounds.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Keep it simple — a coloring book sparks curiosity without a complicated curriculum. Make it interactive and lasting by building something (like the online gallery) that continues beyond the event, and design for a wide age range so volunteers can present flexibly.

INCLUDED ARTIFACTS

- EDI Coloring Book 2026
- Replicating Color Your City

> *Both schools have already expressed interest in hosting additional architecture-related visits.*
> — AIA Long Beach / South Bay

Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center

Terrace Town

FESTIVAL & STATEWIDE

Contact Heather Sabin · hsabin@mononaterrace.com

AT A GLANCE

Format	Multi-week classroom project culminating in a 2-day box-city installation and public open house
Reach	1,200 students · 15 schools · 50% historically underrepresented
Grade level	Elementary (K–5)
Volunteers	75 (± 3 hours each)
Lead time	6 months
Approx. budget	~$3,675 expenses · $6,700 in-kind · no cash income
Lift	●●● High

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Terrace Town is a county-wide program that teaches elementary students how cities are planned, what makes a quality city, and how citizens can participate in improving their community. Classrooms have several weeks to design and build models of sustainable communities, then install them at Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center for public viewing. Volunteer mentors — architects, planners, and design professionals — visit classes and support their learning.

Teachers elect to participate and may register any grade K–5; teachers also dictate the curriculum focus. Monona Terrace has produced the biennial program since 2000 and serves as organizer, handling teacher recruitment, volunteer mentor recruitment, a kick-off meeting for teachers and mentors on teaching the built environment, the culminating two-day event, and a webpage of built environment teaching resources with hands-on materials available for classroom loan.

PLANNING TIMELINE

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
6 mo	Teacher registration	Monona Terrace	4
6 mo	Recruit mentors	Monona Terrace, AIA WI, APA, ASLA	19
6 mo	Venue selection	Monona Terrace	–
6 mo	Recruit partners who will present activities at culminating events	Monona Terrace	12
3 mo	Kick-off orientation and training	Monona Terrace and local partners	3
2 mo	Project begins in classrooms	Teachers and mentors	20
2 mo	Lay out Box City floor plan	Monona Terrace	3
1 mo	Create slideshow using teachers' photographs	Monona Terrace	8

RUN OF SHOW

Time	What happens	Who leads
School Day	Participating Terrace Town schools install their box cities at Monona Terrace and participate in activities onsite	Teachers, chaperones, mentors, program partners, and Monona Terrace
Open House	Families and the general public are invited to view the cities and participate in hands-on activities	Program partners and Monona Terrace

Detailed run of show — School Day

Time	Activity	Lead	Location / notes
8:00 AM	Volunteers arrive	Volunteer coordinator	Volunteer breakroom
9:00 AM	Section 1 schools arrive and install box cities	Project organizer	Exhibition hall
9:45 AM	Section 1 schools do ancillary activity	Dane Arts Mural Arts	Mural-making space
10:30 AM	Section 1 schools ribbon cutting ceremony	Project organizer	Exhibition hall
11:00 AM	Section 1 events end	–	–
12:00 PM	Section 2 schools arrive and repeat the morning agenda	Project organizer	Exhibition hall

Roles on event day

Role	Who	When	What they did
Volunteer manager	Staff – Lisa Maly	8:00–2:30	Checked in and debriefed volunteers
School helpers	Volunteers	8:00–2:30	Assisted schools through their visit, finding rooms, activity areas, restrooms
Project organizer	Staff – Heather Sabin	8:00–2:30	Floater; MC at ribbon-cutting
Bus coordinator	Staff – Misty Lohrentz	8:00–2:30	Helped students deboard on arrival; managed bus temporary parking
Presenter coordinator	Staff – Kristen Durst	8:00–2:30	Coordinated ribbon-cutting performers and speakers

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Item	Qty	Approx. cost	Source / vendor
Presenter fees	–	$2,500	Musicians and artists to lead activities on school day
Food and beverage	6	$800	Onsite caterer
Tarps for city bases	15	$25 each	Various

In-kind contributions

What was donated	Est. value	By whom
Venue	$6,700	Monona Terrace

Income: none. The program carries no grants, sponsorships, or registration fees; the donated venue and partner volunteer time carry it.

PARTNERS

AIA Wisconsin (established) supplies classroom mentor volunteers and presents a LEGO station at the open house. ASLA Wisconsin (established) supplies classroom mentors and presents open house activities. WAPA (established) supplies classroom mentors. The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation (established) presents activities at the open house, as does Engineers Without Borders (new).

Partner agreements

Open house activity partners receive an email confirming date, time, and audience (roughly 500–750 visitors dispersed across the day), with the request that each provide a hands-on activity pitched at 2nd/3rd grade and up — either a make-and-take or a reusable-materials construction demo. The same email attaches a promotional flyer for the partner's own channels and a floor diagram for the partner to approve or amend (tables, chairs, flip chart, poster board) by a stated deadline about two weeks out. Partners are offered supply assistance, parking passes for everyone staffing the station, breakroom snacks, and an invitation to a thank-you pizza party after teardown. Load-in directions follow the week of the event.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

75 volunteers, about 3 hours each. Some are existing Monona Terrace volunteers who support special events; classroom mentors are architects, planners, and landscape architects recruited through AIA Wisconsin, the Wisconsin chapter of the American Planning Association, and the Wisconsin chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Event volunteers assist students during their field trip on School Day and lead a large "Build Your Own Box Building" construction station. Mentors visit their classroom a minimum of three times over the course of the project, leading activities and supporting construction.

Onboarding & screening

Background checks are run on all volunteers; mentors working in Madison Metropolitan School District complete an additional form and watch a training video. First-time mentors receive an orientation to Terrace Town and training on the core hands-on activities they can lead in the classroom. All mentors attend a 2.5-hour kickoff meeting with teachers, where they meet their assigned partner teacher and are given time to plan together; guest speakers on built environment topics present and offer classroom activity ideas. A Volunteer Classroom Mentor job description is provided.

STUDENT OUTREACH

The program recruits teachers rather than students, so there is no direct student outreach.

Communications sent

To schools and teachers: program registration form (6 months out); a "what to expect" handbook for the Terrace Town project and a webpage of learning resources (5 months out); information about the culminating events at Monona Terrace and a parent-facing open house flyer, translated into whatever languages teachers request (3 weeks out).

To parents: the translated open house flyer, sent home by teachers (3 weeks out).

To members and volunteers: mentor recruitment (6 months out); mentor handbook and the learning resources webpage (5 months out); periodic "how's it going" check-in emails during classwork; information about the culminating events (2 weeks out).

PHYSICAL SPACE & SET-UP

Monona Terrace's 37,000 sq. ft. Exhibition Hall accommodates 15 school box cities plus a separate "Build Your Own Box Building" construction area, with additional rooms used for student activities on School Day. City tarp sizes range from 12′ × 16′ to 16′ × 36′. Operations staff outline the city spaces in gaffer tape. Teachers are invited to set up their cities the night before School Day, and students contribute to setup on the day; teachers and family volunteers remove the cities immediately after the open house.

Accessibility provisions

A quiet room is available during School Day, and promotional flyers are translated into a variety of languages.

Emergency procedures

As a venue, Monona Terrace has emergency protocols already in place.

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

Teachers are asked to send classroom photos two weeks before School Day. These become a PowerPoint shown on a jumbo screen both days: on School Day, students watch it as part of the ribbon-cutting ceremony, and at the open house it loops throughout the day. A staff photographer shoots both event days and the images are kept on file.

Press & media outreach

A press release goes to local media, followed by direct emails to individual outlets — an approach that brought visits from all three local television stations this cycle.

Press coverage

- https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/03/13/dane-county-students-build-box-model-cities-monona-terrace/
- https://www.channel3000.com/news/local-news/going-green-invites-kids-to-think-about-city-planning/article_14b19e78-5829-5f95-a9f1-0e267adde5b0.html

MARKETING & OUTREACH

Email list, social media, and promotion through AIA Wisconsin and other partner organizations.

STAFFING & YEAR-OVER-YEAR HANDOFF

The lead organizer has been the same person for seven cycles, which makes succession planning a priority; documenting the program this way is the first step toward an internal operating manual.

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

Teachers and classroom mentors are surveyed after the program. Half of the schools that participated in 2024 returned in 2026. Teacher comments describe strong student response to the project-based format and hands-on activities, with students asking whether they get to do it again the following year.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Bus transportation costs can keep schools out — plan for that barrier early. Recruiting teachers rather than students, and letting them set their own curriculum focus, keeps participation manageable across 15 schools. And if one person has run the program for years, start documenting before you need to.

INCLUDED ARTIFACTS

- AM Schedule
- Individual school schedule
- Mentor job description
- Neighborhood survey
- Open House Exhibit Hall Map
- Scavenger Hunt
- Teacher Handbook
- School Flyer

> *Such a wonderful program and learning opportunity for the students. The students loved the project-based learning experience and hands-on activities.*
>
> — Participating teacher, post-event survey

AIA New Jersey

K–12 Design Challenge: Stadium Design

MULTI-FORMAT & SERIES

Contact Stacey Kliesch · staceykliesch@gmail.com

AT A GLANCE

Format	Statewide virtual design competition over ~3 months
Reach	100 students (1,000+ via 125+ districts) · all grades
Grade level	Elementary, middle, high school
Volunteers	5 (plus 125+ members supporting outreach)
Lead time	8 months
Approx. budget	~$900 ($300 prize money per grade band)
Lift	●● Medium

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A fully virtual statewide competition tied to New Jersey's role in the upcoming World Cup: students design their own stadium, judged by a panel of architects across three grade categories. Going virtual let far more schools participate at almost no cost. The program enjoys strong repeat participation.

PLANNING TIMELINE

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
8 mo	Set the timeline and budget	Event Chair	1
7 mo	Write the competition description; apply for AIA grant	Event Chair	1
6 mo	Send a save-the-date to participants	Event Chair	1
5 mo	Design the logo, write the rules, build the webpage	Committee	20
4 mo	Write and apply to the Governor for a proclamation	Committee member	5
3 mo	Launch the competition	Committee Chair	2
3 mo	Publicize the competition	Committee	2
1 mo	Collect all entries	Website	1
1 mo	Distribute entries to the jury	Committee	2
2 wks	Jury deliberates	Jury	3
1 wk	Prepare and circulate winner press releases	Committee	1
Arch Week	Announce the winners	Committee	1

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Item	Qty	Approx. cost	Source / vendor
Prize money (K–5, 6–8, 9–12)	3	$300	AIA NJ

Funded on a small budget with an AIA grant supporting the prizes.

PARTNERS

The PTA and School Board Associations helped reach districts statewide, and the chapter mobilized 125+ members to spread the invitation.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

A 5-person committee (design, web design, writing, and jurors), about 8 hours each, recruited by asking specific people suited to each responsibility; no formal training. 125+ AIA members shared the invitation with schools and students.

STUDENT OUTREACH

Reached through the PTA, School Board Associations, cold emails, and existing relationships; the contact list was built over about three months. The chapter did not contact students directly — distribution to students is the hardest part.

Communications sent

To schools and teachers: a save-the-date followed by a brief introductory letter with a link to competition details to share with students.

To members: a request to share the same invitation and link.

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

The chapter distributed images of the winning entries; the application included a permission statement allowing this. No student photos were collected.

Hashtags: #NJArchWeek · #NJArchitectureWeek · #ArchitectureWeek

Press coverage

- https://aia-nj.org/2026/02/26/share-now-aia-new-jersey-launches-stadium-design-competiton-for-nj-students-in-grades-k-12/
- https://aia-nj.org/2026/04/19/aia-new-jersey-announces-the-winners-of-the-2026-k-12-design-challenge/
- https://aia-nj.org/2026/03/18/join-us-for-architecture-week-2026/

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

Headcount only, but the program has had strong repeat participation.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Start early. Save-the-dates ahead of the competition window are what get the challenge in front of students. Going fully virtual lets many more schools and students participate without extra cost.

> *Great enthusiasm from participants, teachers, and parents; submissions were outstanding.*

AIA Pennsylvania

Statewide Architecture Story Hours

FESTIVAL & STATEWIDE

Contact Amyra Weiss · aweiss@aiapa.org

AT A GLANCE

Format	Library story hours statewide (architect reads a book + guided design activity)
Reach	~1,300–1,500 students · 45 story hours · 23 counties
Grade level	Elementary (K–5)
Volunteers	65 (about 2 hours each)
Lead time	6 months
Approx. budget	~$3,790 in expenses; ~$440 donated in-kind
Lift	●●● High

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Volunteer architects host an interactive story hour at a local library: they introduce themselves and the practice of architecture, read *Iggy Peck, Architect*, and lead an animal-themed guided design activity (AIA Kansas City's Animal Dice Game). A partnership with the Pennsylvania Library Association made it possible to reach every county library system, and each participating library kept a donated copy of the book for its permanent collection. The week was anchored by a press conference at the State Capitol and covered by public media across the state.

PLANNING TIMELINE

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
6 mo	Contact the PA Library Association to partner	AIA PA staff	4
5 mo	Work with libraries to gauge interest and availability to host	AIA PA staff	20
4 mo	Secure architect volunteers to run story hours	AIA PA staff	20
4 mo	Schedule the press conference at the State Capitol	AIA PA staff	1
4 mo	Request book sponsorship from members and member firms	AIA PA staff	4
4 mo	Request Architecture Week proclamation from Governor and State Senate	AIA PA staff	2
2 mo	Order final count of books needed	AIA PA staff	1

Months out	Milestone	Who	Hrs
2 mo	Design and order bookmarks, dice, and stickers for students	AIA PA staff	5
1 mo	Pack and ship books to libraries statewide	AIA PA staff	10
1 mo	Prepare copy for the press conference	AIA PA staff	3
1 mo	Design and order signage for the press conference	AIA PA staff	3
1 mo	Prepare template letters for libraries by participation level	AIA PA staff	3
1 mo	Prepare and distribute press release to media outlets	AIA PA staff	3
1 mo	Prepare and circulate guidance document for architect volunteers	AIA PA staff	2

Program dates: Architecture Week, April 12–18. Across the week, 45 story hours ran in 23 counties, all led by AIA member architects and coordinated with the PA Library Association and individual libraries.

RUN OF SHOW

Time	What happens	Who leads
1:00 PM	Arrive at story hour; introduce yourself and the practice of architecture	Volunteer liaison + member architect
1:15 PM	Read Iggy Peck, Architect	Member architect
1:30 PM	Explain the design activity	Member architect
1:45 PM	Review activity questions with students to prompt design choices	Member architect
2:00 PM	Begin to wrap up the activity	Member architect
2:15 PM	Ask interested students to explain their design	Students

Each session runs about 1 to 1.5 hours at the host library. Students take their designs home, so tear-down is minimal.

Roles on event day

Role	Who	When	What they did
Library liaison	Children's librarian	First few minutes	Greets the architect, gathers students, and introduces the event
Story hour host	Member architect volunteer	1–1.5 hours	Introduces themselves and the practice of architecture, reads Iggy Peck, Architect, and guides students through the design activity

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

Item	Qty	Approx. cost	Source / vendor
Books (Iggy Peck, Architect)	95	$970	Hachette Book Group
Specialty animal dice	100	$900	Board games maker
Bookmarks	200	$305	Canva (ordered 1,500)
Name-tag stickers	200	$150	Canva (ordered 1,500)
Bookplate & sponsorship stickers	120	$100	Staples
Paper for design activity	20 rolls	$206	Walmart
Shipping boxes	100	$294	Uline
Postage	97	$680	USPS Click-and-Ship
Posters for press conference	2	$185	Staples

In-kind contributions

What was donated	Est. value	By whom
44 books	$440	Member architects and firms

Shipping materials to each library in advance meant volunteers never had to carry anything to their event.

PARTNERS

Pennsylvania Library Association (new partner) circulated the Architecture Week proposal to every public library in the state — a huge lift the chapter could not have managed alone — and recirculated it several times in the months leading up to the program. They also attended the State Capitol press conference and spoke about the importance of literacy and putting children on the path to architecture.

Partner & co-branding agreements

The chapter co-branded flyers with the PA Library Association's "PA Forward" program and acknowledged the association at the press conference and during the podcast interview.

VOLUNTEER MODEL

Sixty-five volunteers, about 2 hours each, all either AIA PA staff or member architects. Recruited through general membership emails, newsletter features, and social media campaigns, plus direct firm outreach near libraries where no volunteer had stepped up. Each volunteer hosted a library story hour: introducing themselves and the profession, reading Iggy Peck, Architect, and leading the animal dice design activity. Training was a written guidance document sent by email, paired with activity instructions.

Onboarding & screening

Two of the 23 libraries required security clearances for the host volunteer, completed before the event. Onboarding centered on a volunteer briefing document; the day-of structure (intro, what-architecture-is discussion, book reading, and activity time) is largely self-explanatory, with instructions provided for review.

STUDENT OUTREACH

The chapter worked with libraries to market their individual story hours, providing editable flyers, QR codes for the virtual story hours, and guidance letters shipped inside each box. Most story hours were scheduled 2–4 months ahead, and libraries promoted their own sessions via websites, social media, and newsletters right up to the event.

Communications sent

To schools and libraries: guidance letters were shipped inside each materials box (sent in advance so volunteers didn't have to bring anything), and libraries were connected by email to their architect volunteer for any follow-up, then sent a post-event feedback form.

To members and volunteers: a document with guidance on how to structure and lead the program, along with activity instructions; materials were shipped to libraries ahead of time so volunteers weren't responsible for bringing them.

PHYSICAL SPACE & SET-UP

Host libraries served as the venue, with capacity varying by location. Students gathered on the floor or in chairs for the introduction and book reading, then moved to tables or floor space where rolls of paper were spread out for the design activity. Set-up and tear-down were minimal, and students took their designs home. Recommended adult-to-student ratio: about 1 to 20.

Contingency plans

Because materials were shipped directly to each host library, a library could still run the event if no volunteer arrived — a guidance letter on the format was included for exactly that case. A few sessions had no student turnout owing to gaps in library marketing or scheduling conflicts.

PHOTO & MEDIA APPROACH

Libraries were asked about their photo-sharing policy up front and it was recorded on a master spreadsheet for future reference. The chapter requested shareable photos through the feedback form, and some volunteers contributed images where they had permission. Photos ended up in the recap video, on social media, and on the website.

Hashtags: #ArchitectureWeek · #PAArchWeek

Press & media outreach

The chapter used a vendor press-contact list to circulate its release statewide to newspapers and TV stations, held a press conference at the State Capitol, and was invited onto WITF's The Spark podcast to discuss the initiative.

Press coverage

- https://youtu.be/_ZInqK6xlu8
- https://youtu.be/TOgonYooM44
- https://www.witf.org/2026/05/28/architecture-week-brings-design-and-learning-to-communities-across-pennsylvania/

SPONSOR RECOGNITION

A book-sponsor tier (about $10.20, the cost of one book) put the sponsor's name on the bookplate of the donated book. Sponsors were thanked in the wrap-up video and in an email to members.

STAFFING & YEAR-OVER-YEAR HANDOFF

For year-over-year handoff, the call-for-volunteer emails, budget, and all design work for bookmarks and stickers are documented, along with the press release and press-conference copy. A master spreadsheet records each participating library's contact, its volunteer, the photo policy, and the event date. Amyra Weiss, Chief Communications Visionary and Storyteller at AIA PA, led the project and holds the institutional memory.

OUTCOMES & MEASUREMENT

Feedback surveys went to both volunteers and host libraries. By the numbers: 45 story hours in 23 counties with 65 volunteers. Every participating library said it would host again, and libraries that received a box but didn't participate this year asked to be added for next year. Volunteers were overwhelmingly positive about sharing the profession with students.

WHAT THEY'D TELL THE NEXT CHAPTER

Begin volunteer and host-library outreach 4–6 months out, and lean on a statewide partner like the library association to reach every county. Keep a master spreadsheet with one row per library (contact, volunteer, photo policy, event date). Ship materials directly to hosts so the event can run even if a volunteer can't make it, and ask each library about its photo-sharing policy before the event.

INCLUDED ARTIFACTS

- Confirmed library letter
- Press release
- Flyer
- Bookmark
- Poster
- Stickers

> *This was a well-designed, easily hosted program. Some of our school-age students, who can be quite hard to engage, really enjoyed it and fully participated.*
>
> — Host library feedback

Resources, marketing & media

Activity ideas to steal

Low-cost, high-impact activities chapters have run successfully.

- Marshmallow-and-spaghetti tower challenges, with shake-table testing for older students
- Pipe-cleaner structural design
- Modular floor-plan tile games
- “Build a city” with paper cutouts, recycled materials, or LEGOs
- Animal Dice Game (AIA Kansas City) — design a building for a randomly assigned animal client
- Coloring books featuring local architecture, with an online gallery follow-on
- Library scavenger hunts that double as a library’s monthly theme
- Sandcastle architecture for waterfront chapters
- Solar house take-home builds (~$7 per packet at 100 minimum)
- Tiny-home plan, elevation, and cardboard model
- Architecture Week passports that turn the week into a stamp-collecting adventure
- Gamified trivia using students’ own phones and software the school already uses
- Attend virtual read-alouds hosted by AIA National

Shared artifacts

Chapters shared the following working files. Links appear on each program’s playbook page.

- **Flyers, posters and banners** — AIA Brooklyn, AIA Colorado, AIA Eastern Oklahoma, AIA Pennsylvania, Monona Terrace
- **Registration, consent and waiver forms** — AIA Brooklyn, AIA Eastern Oklahoma
- **Volunteer guides and role descriptions** — AIA Brooklyn (studio leader’s guide), AIA Eastern Oklahoma (station information, volunteer placement), Monona Terrace (mentor job description)
- **Budgets and planning spreadsheets** — AIA Colorado, AIA Eastern Oklahoma, AIA Brooklyn, ACLA
- **Post-event surveys** — AIA Eastern Oklahoma (families and volunteers)
- **Press releases and proclamation requests** — AIA Brooklyn, AIA Eastern Oklahoma, AIA Pennsylvania
- **Curriculum and activity materials** — AIA Colorado (Urban Walk BINGO, workshop agendas), AIA Eastern Oklahoma (student booklet), AIA Long Beach / South Bay (EDI coloring book, replication guide), Monona Terrace (teacher handbook, scavenger hunt)

With thanks

This guidebook exists because these chapters, foundations, and organizations documented their work and shared it.

Organization	Program	Contributor
AIA Architects League of Northern New Jersey	Women's STEAM Tower Challenge	Stacey Kliesch
AIA Atlanta | SPIKE Studio	Architectural Presentation Skills Video & Webinar	Melody Harclerode
AIA Baltimore	Career Lunches at Baltimore Design School	Katherine Somerville
AIA Brazos	Architecture-in-Schools	Justin Hoermann
AIA Brooklyn	Mentoring Architectural Pathways (MAP)	Mi Zhang
AIA Brooklyn, Women in Architecture	Design Like a Girl Workshop	Gemma Devesa Gasco
AIA California / California Architectural Foundation	Architecture by the Book	Kimberly Anderson
AIA Central New Jersey	Firm Tours + Hands-On Design Activities	David von Stappenbeck
AIA Cleveland	DesignIs: Construction	Jacinda Walker
AIA Coastal Virginia	Designed Here	Allison Rogers
AIA Colorado	Design Like a Girl Colorado	Sarah Goldblatt
AIA Connecticut	Solar Energy Design Workshop	Gina Calabro
AIA Eastern Oklahoma	BUILDFEST	Lindsey Ellerbach & Cindy Chanslor
AIA Fort Lauderdale	Workshops + Trivia at Blanche Ely HS	Stacey Boynton
AIA Fort Worth	Architecture Week Multi-Event Programming	Katie Hitt Deaton
AIA Houston	Climate Resilience Design Charrette	Jennifer Ward
AIA Kansas City	Explore Architecture Week 2026	Tiffany Shepherd
AIA Kentucky	K–12 Outreach Across Three Counties	George Donkor
AIA Las Vegas	High School Design Competition	Jeffrey Sarmiento
AIA Long Beach / South Bay	Color Your City + GALA	Kristine Hammond & Desiree Gemigniani
AIA LA | ACLA	Design by Diversity Day	Ingalill Wahlroos-Ritter
AIA Maine	From Sketch to Structure	Kelli Shedd
AIA Maryland	Architecture in Action: Design Days	Lori Cardeli
AIA New Jersey	K–12 Design Challenge: Stadium Design	Stacey Kliesch
AIA Newark & Suburban Architects	Designing Change	Stacey Kliesch
AIA Orange County	Daily Firm Visits with United Way	Jeffrey Gill
AIA Oregon	Discover Architecture	Paul Davis

Organization	Program	Contributor
AIA Pennsylvania	Statewide Architecture Story Hours	Amyra Weiss
AIA San Antonio	Adaptive Reuse Outreach at Lanier HS	Belinda Sanchez & Ben Rosas
AIA San Diego, YEP Committee	Sandcastle Architecture at Coronado Beach	Zachary Silver
AIA San Francisco	Youth Festival 2.0	Amy Ress
AIA San Fernando Valley	Architecture by the Book and Beyond	Mikela Topey
AIA St. Louis	K–12 Initiative	Patrick Tetley
AIA Utah	Library Scavenger Hunt + NOMA Project Pipeline	Angie Harris Roberts
AIA West Jersey	Westfield Friends + Cherokee HS Partnership	Kent Werner
AIA Westchester + Hudson Valley	Multi-County Community Activations	Valerie Brown
Architecture and Design Foundation | AIA Dallas	Designing My Future Spring Camp	Adriana Guisa
BSA / Architecture in Common	KidsBuild! + Classroom Workshops	Taylor Johnson
Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center	Terrace Town	Heather Sabin
Texas Society of Architects	Blueprints & Books	Sharna Pascolo
Washington Architectural Foundation	Teen Design Challenge	Heidi Sohng

About AIA K–12 initiatives

AIA K–12 Initiatives supports members, chapters, firms, and foundations in bringing architecture to young people. Architecture Week each spring is the anchor: a nationwide celebration recognizing the power of good design, with the goal of inspiring future architecture and design professionals and K–12 students.

AIA National provides activity kits, event templates, proclamation resources, virtual read-alongs with children's book authors, and a running list of programs nationwide.

Get involved

- Share Architecture Week posts and contribute to a wish list
- Invite students to your firm
- Send a letter to your local schools or libraries
- Run a program of your own and add it to the ArchWeek Program Tracker
- Reach out to any contact in this book. They said yes to being listed for a reason.

Pick one idea, reach out to one partner, and invite a few young people to imagine what they might build.