



## CONFIDENTIAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The American Institute of Architects ("AIA" or "Association") is requesting proposals ("RFP") for A Resource of Climate Action-Climate Justice Case Studies for Architects.

Please submit your proposal as a PDF document attached to an email to the contact person shown below by no later than 11:59 PST on October 27, 2023. If you do not plan to submit a response, please email the contact person to let them know. AIA will review submissions and may select finalists by on or about November 3, 2023. Finalists may be invited for remote interviews at a date provided by AIA.

Questions regarding the services needed should be directed *in writing* to: Teresa VanEpps at [teresavanepps@aia.org](mailto:teresavanepps@aia.org).

All responses to the RFP shall be submitted via email to:

American Institute of Architects  
Attn: Teresa VanEpps  
Email: [teresavanepps@aia.org](mailto:teresavanepps@aia.org)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has made climate action a linchpin of its policy platform. It is not only a call to climate action through an unrelenting commitment to sustainable and resilient design, but it actively seeks to address the disproportionate impact of climate change and environmental degradation on vulnerable communities.

The AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE®) is looking to amplify case studies that have effectively engaged communities and addressed climate action through the lens of climate justice. These case studies are intended to inspire, guide, and transform architectural practices to address climate action and climate justice. This resource is intended to supplement other resources that address climate action and equity in the profession and be a companion piece to the AIA Framework for Design Excellence, specifically Principle 2 - Design for Equitable Communities.

#### **Project context**

The AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE®) has a mission to support the industry in achieving climate action and climate justice through design. In 2022, COTE® introduced a new workstream called 'Climate Action-Climate Justice' to explore how COTE® can achieve this mission and what it looks like to successfully advance these concepts in practice. One of the challenges identified by the subgroup is a lack of actionable guidance and replicable case studies to support the advancement of climate action-climate justice in the work of architects. Another hurdle is a lack of clarity in how we measure climate action-climate justice outcomes in our work.

The subcommittee arrived at a working definition of climate action and climate justice as a starting point:

*Climate Action and Climate Justice (in Architecture): engagement, advocacy, planning and design that draws down emissions, builds resilience and capacity, supports human, cultural and ecological health, and protects all communities - particularly those communities that are vulnerable - in the context of climate change.*



When addressing climate justice, a definition to identify who constitutes vulnerable groups is essential:

Vulnerable groups include: “Those with low income, some communities of color, immigrant groups (particularly those with limited English proficiency), Indigenous peoples, children and pregnant women, older adults, vulnerable occupational groups, people with disabilities, and persons with preexisting or chronic medical conditions.” (2016 Climate and Health Assessment, EPA).

The subcommittee recognizes the work of other committees within the AIA that are addressing climate change. It is not the intent to duplicate their efforts, but to supplement knowledge that would help transform architects’ practices to address climate action and climate justice. Similarly, the subcommittee recognizes the considerable work that has produced the invaluable Guides for Equitable Practice. This work is meant to build on those efforts to provide a comprehensive resource to architects that not only address ‘why’ and ‘how’ which the Guides do but inform and inspire them through case studies of projects completed by their peers.

## **2. STATEMENT OF WORK**

Create a resource comprising case studies that have effectively engaged vulnerable communities and addressed Climate Action and Climate Justice through design projects.

The case studies will address the following though this list is not meant to be comprehensive:

- How are architects working with communities to create climate-responsive design that addresses health and equity?
- What are the ways and methods employed, if any, to prove its efficacy?
- How are architects effectively engaging with communities that are impacted positively or negatively by their projects?
- How are existing buildings preserved as community and cultural assets through adaptive re-use?
- How are community knowledge and culture used to develop place-based climate solutions?

Case studies will be identified in different ways: by tapping into COTE® networks for members’ recommendations; identifying projects that have centered around Principle 2: Equitable Communities in the Framework of Design Excellence in COTE® Top Ten winning entries, and other projects that have demonstrated increased accessibility, etc. The studies may also include community and user testimonials as proof points of equity effected.

The intention is that final case studies will include project descriptions, narrative about how the design team incorporated principles of climate action and climate justice in the design process and who was involved, discussion of how the design evolved to generate more just outcomes, barriers that were faced during the process, and discussion of indicators of success. The content of the case studies may evolve based on the findings of the research and outreach phases of work as described below.

### **Scope:**

#### **A. Research (Part 1):**

1. Survey AIA’s current landscape of resources pertaining to or that touch upon climate action and climate justice
2. Survey existing landscape of projects that demonstrate leadership in climate action and climate justice, including but not limited to the roster of COTE® Top Ten past winning projects that have addressed *Principle Two: Equitable Communities* robustly.



**B. Engagement (Part 2 and Part 3):**

1. Seek projects through outreach to membership that fit criteria for a good case study, including probable COTE® Top Ten entrants who are not winners. A goal is to include case studies that represent a diversity of geography, firm size, program, and scale.
2. Curate outreach results and interview participants. Draft an outline of case studies.

**C. Compilation (Part 4):**

1. Compile the resource for handover to AIA for graphics and final presentation/deliverable. The final product shall be a Word or InDesign file with separate raster image files.

**Audience:**

AIA components, members, and architects, interested in seeking transformation of their practices by addressing climate action and climate justice and advocating with elected or appointed officials. The audience may also include allied organizations whose work impact the design and planning for communities.

**Contract Timeline:**

The consultant/researcher and/or team is responsible for completing deliverables in order to finalize content in 13-17 weeks, assuming member feedback is provided within the requested timeframe. The timeline below is meant to be illustrative and a modified workplan may be needed.

- Part 1: 3-4 weeks, to research and document review
  - Part 1 progress Word or PDF document at approximately 50% will be submitted within two weeks of commencement along with an invoice, on or about December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Part 1 due at or around December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Part 2: 3-4 weeks, for outreach and identifying projects for case studies, including a draft outline
  - Word or PDF document draft, due on or about January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- Part 3: 4-5 weeks, for interviews with project participants, outline of case studies
  - Word or PDF document draft, due on or about March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- Part 4: 3-4 weeks, for fleshing out and compilation of case studies, including review time for drafts and assembling the final document.
  - Word or InDesign document due March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

The allotted time for each part includes review time for feedback from AIA task force for the project.

The subcommittee's task force will meet approximately twice for each part to review each required draft submission and inform on the progress of the document within one week. The consultant will attend calls with prepared questions and goals for member feedback to advance progress (four 1-hour meetings).

**Budget:**

\$16,000.00 - \$18,000.00

**Proposal Submission:**

Please submit a proposal with the following details (refer to 4. Submission Requirements for other details requested):

- Identify project team; candidates will be evaluated for diversity of staff and perspectives
- Indicate experience and knowledge of climate action and climate justice issues in the built environment. If climate inequities have been experienced personally, it supplants other learned experience.



- Identify project approach and schedule
- Hourly rate
- Estimated projected costs for each of the outlined stages of work
- Total anticipated costs.

### 3. CONFIDENTIALITY

This RFP process is confidential. Accordingly, all information that AIA provides either orally or in writing must be kept in strict confidence and not shared with any third party. If AIA makes public the RFP process it will so advise in writing.

### 4. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this RFP is to seek information from individuals or organizations about their ability to conduct this project and the general approach they would take. The submission requirements for the RFP are detailed below. Please include the following information, where applicable, in a written submission.

- A. Project team members bios/resumes. Indicate experience and knowledge of climate action and climate justice issues in the built environment. If climate inequities have been experienced personally, it supplants other learned experience.
- B. Preliminary project plan including ideas for method, approach, sequence, and timeline of the project, especially regarding any data collection and analysis.
- C. Your willingness to enter into a written contract prepared by AIA, which will be provided.
- D. Your ability to complete the project and deliverables in the timeline outlined below:
  - Kickoff: Upon signed contract in December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.
  - Final deliverable: Final report no later than March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- E. A detailed cost estimate for providing the services requested broken down into the outlined stages of work and including hourly rates for each team member.
- F. Your experience and relevant work history with other associations or other relevant businesses to include:
  - A description of your work with other relevant membership organizations.
  - Names of organizations that have used your services.
  - Qualifications, background and experience of project team.
  - Challenges you see with this project and lessons you have learned from similar projects.
  - Examples of past work, if applicable.
- G. Please review AIA's vision on [Sustainability - AIA](#) and [Equity Diversity Inclusion & Belonging - AIA](#) and provide details on how your organization aligns.
- H. Please provide specific information (including certification) on the following:
  - 1) Minority owned or operated;
  - 2) Women owned or operated;
  - 3) Veteran owned or operated;
  - 4) Small Business Administration certification;
  - 5) Actions relative to social issues and human rights; and



- 6) Demographic diversity of your organization, including the composition of the Board of Directors and staff (at each level of the organization).
- I. Has your organization had any claims of harassment, discrimination or misconduct by current or former employees, Board members or leaders within the past 5 years and if so, please provide a brief explanation (while adhering to confidentiality restrictions).
- J. Any other information you deem relevant, such as recommendations of your services.

## **5. CONTRACTING REQUIREMENTS – AGREEMENT TO USE AIA’S CONTRACT**

The parties will enter into an Agreement **drafted by AIA**.

## **6. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **A. Proposal Selection**

AIA reserves the right in its sole discretion to select or not select any proposal(s) in whole or in part, without incurring any cost or liability whatsoever relative to a proposal. All proposals will be reviewed for completeness of the submission requirements.

### **B. Evaluation**

AIA reserves the right to determine the suitability of proposals on the basis of meeting the requirements set forth herein, and other criteria as determined by AIA.

During the evaluation process, AIA may require a proposer to answer questions with regard to the proposal and/or require certain proposers to make a formal presentation to AIA, at a mutually agreeable time.

### **C. Release**

By submitting a proposal, a proposer agrees to these terms and waives any right to pursue a cause of action against AIA for damages incurred as a result of this proposal.