



THE ADVOCATE BY DESIGN HANDBOOK

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
INTERIOR
DESIGNERS



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INTRODUCTION

Like good interior design, successful advocacy doesn't happen by accident and requires diligent planning, thoughtful deliberation, long-term strategic vision, and active participation. That's why ASID "advocates by design." The ASID Advocate by Design (AxD) program advocates for the profession of interior design on the international, federal, state, and local levels of government, fighting for legislative and regulatory policy issues that advance and protect the practice of interior design and its related interests.

ASID relies heavily on members in the states to be the voice of the profession and lead advocacy efforts. In this comprehensive guide, you will find the tools and information you'll need to successfully advocate. You'll also learn more about the policy issues that ASID is fighting for and against in a wide range of topic areas important to interior designers and the industry as a whole.

The Advocate by Design Handbook is a comprehensive resource to introduce public policy, advocacy and advocacy best practices to ASID members, chapters, chapter boards, and government affairs representatives. The Handbook covers many topics, including: what government affairs is, how laws are made, talking points for interior design advocates, a discussion of the issues in which interior designers have interests, advocacy event planning tips and considerations, a directory of the resources ASID offers for advocacy, and more!

This Handbook is intended to be a tool to help educate and guide members on the advocacy questions they may have but is not a replacement for interaction with and assistance from ASID HQ.

Use HQ as a resource for advocacy efforts in your state by visiting the **[Advocate by Design Website](#)** or by contacting **membership@asid.org** or the ASID Vice President of Government and Public Affairs.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, ADVOCACY, & THE LAWMAKING PROCESS:

A. How Does a Bill Become a Law?

The process of making laws is largely the same at the federal level and in most states, with some varying differences (such as Nebraska’s single chamber or “unicameral” legislature). This summary is meant to serve as a general outline of how the legislative process typically works, but you will need to confirm the specific procedures in your state before beginning the advocacy process.

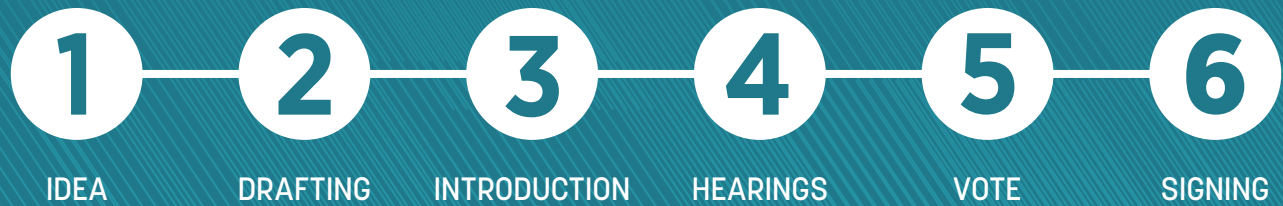
First, someone somewhere decides there should be a new law or change in existing law. That idea goes to a legislator who then decides to write a bill or a proposal and sends it to the proper entity for bill drafting and review. Once the bill is finalized by the bill drafters, it is introduced by the sponsoring legislator. The bill is read on the floor to the sponsor’s chamber (senate or house) first and then goes to the committee with jurisdiction over the subject matter of the bill. The committee will hear the sponsor speak to the bill and hear testimony, if there is any, on the bill (both in favor and opposed) from the public, professional lobbyists, and other interested stakeholders. The committee may accept amendments to the bill if requested.

Typically, the committee may:

- Pass the bill and send it to the floor of the originating chamber,
- Pass it and send it to another committee with jurisdiction for further consideration (particularly if the legislation has a fiscal impact),
- Pass it and put it on the uncontested calendar to be considered in a block vote on the floor,
- Send it to the floor with no recommendation, or
- Kill the bill by voting it down, tabling it, ignoring it, or returning it to the sponsor

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

How a bill becomes a law



If the bill makes it to the floor, the chamber will conduct a second reading of the bill and schedule a floor debate. Once the bill comes up, it is read for a third time and the entire chamber has the opportunity to debate the bill or the issues contained within the bill. The bill may be considered uncontested from committee and follow this process in a block vote without any debate (as it is agreed to by the entire chamber unanimously). Once the debate is over, the chamber will vote on the bill. If passed, the bill is sent to the other chamber in the legislature (i.e. from house to senate) and follows the same committee and floor process. If the bill is not passed, it may go back to committee to be amended and brought up again or lapse.

If the bill passes both chambers in identical form, the bill is then sent to the governor (or, on the federal level, the president), however, if the bills are not identical, the bill must go to a conference committee, made up of members from both chambers to concur on a version of the bill. Once a single version of the bill is agreed to in the conference committee, the bill is sent back to both chambers for a final reading and vote in each chamber. The bill will then go to the governor if passed by both chambers.

The governor can (depending on the state):

- Sign the whole bill;
- Sign with line-item vetoes (in certain states);
- Veto the entire bill, or
- Pocket veto the bill (in certain states, meaning the bill dies without a signature).

If vetoed, the bill may go back to the legislature for reconsideration. Typically, if 2/3 of each chamber votes to pass the bill, the legislature overturns the governor's veto and the bill becomes law.

Check with your state legislature's webpage for specific process information.

B. Understanding Your State Legislature

Members who want to be involved in advocacy need to do their research to ensure they are prepared for advocacy in their specific state's legislature.

- Each state is different in the schedule it holds during the legislative session. Some states are in session for as little as six weeks beginning in January, while in others it can last up to 10 months. Others still are in session year-round and some only meet in odd or even years. The U.S. Congress meets year-round with breaks and recesses.
- Make sure to look up what your state does and be aware of the committee hearings and floor vote schedule so that you can take advantage of the timing and interact strategically when it is best for the organization.
- The party makeup of the legislature is important to break down so that you can properly advance your advocacy efforts by tailoring your arguments based on political ideology, the specific makeup of the legislators' district (including whether there are any firms, interior designers, or large commercial buildings/projects), and the industries and policies the legislator supports.
- Identify the house and senate committees that will have oversight on the issues important to interior design. These committees and committee members are where much of your advocacy will be focused.
- Understand the legislators involved in the process, the history of the state's legislation related to interior designers or lack thereof, the success of interior design laws in other nearby states, the opposition to your cause, and the depths of the issue. These points are vital for advocates to know in order to be successful in advocacy. Contact ASID HQ for more information.
- Note, in your state, the legislature may be called the "General Assembly." These terms are synonymous.
- Please see the [**National Conference of State Legislatures' website**](#) for more information on the specifics of your state legislative process.

C. What is Advocacy? What Are the Legal & Policy Implications For the Profession?

Defined as "the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal," advocacy works across many areas and disciplines. It does not have to mean lobbying or litigation, in the traditional sense. It often includes activities such as:

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

REGISTERING VOTERS

MONETARY POLITICAL GIVING

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

PROVIDING RESEARCH
OR TRAINING

SPEAKING WITH LEGISLATORS

Advocacy is how regular citizens impact laws and policies. By making their voices heard, whether through lobbying, letters, rallies, or testimony, the public can make an impact on the laws in their state.

The laws and policies of state governments can affect the practice of interior design by restricting rights on the ability to submit construction documents for permit, right to own part of an interior design-architectural firm, and ability to design interiors that affect the health, safety and welfare of the public. Additionally, the laws and policies that touch on the environment, energy, and even trade on the federal-level affect the work of interior designers.

Accordingly, ASID is engaged in advocacy on the international, federal, state, and local levels.



D. Tools for Successful Advocacy

Chapter Government Affairs Representative:

Each ASID chapter should have a designated “Government Affairs Representative” that will serve as a liaison between the chapter and headquarters:

- Government Affairs Representatives on the Chapter-level will ideally be NCIDQ-certified, a chapter board representative, a designer who works in public spaces (commercial design), and someone who is comfortable with public speaking. Understandably, not every one of these qualifications may be met by the individual.
- Because legislative efforts are usually multiyear events, government affairs representatives should be prepared to serve for at least two consecutive years.
- For chapters that cover multiple states, each state should have their own government affairs representative. The government affairs representative (or at least one, if not more than one) should be a member of the Regional/Chapter Board with voting power and represent advocacy interests of membership on the Board. It is understandable that not every representative will be a board member, however, it is helpful as the representative will be tasked with securing chapter funds for government affairs initiatives.
- In states with more than one chapter, the government affairs representatives from each chapter should coordinate when working on state-wide advocacy efforts.
- These representatives act as the main point people for headquarters to interact with on advocacy issues as well as with lobbyists, contacting advocates within the state, and building relationships with legislators and other organizations in the state.

Government Affairs Representatives may be asked to:

- Join joint-advocacy update calls with Headquarters;
- Visit with legislators (with Headquarters' guidance/training);
- Organize advocacy events;
- Lead fundraising for advocacy;
- Participate in education/training on advocacy;
- Report to Headquarters, chapter, chapter board, members, and lobbyists as required;
- Facilitate communication with the sister IIDA chapter;
- Recruit other members to assist with initiatives.

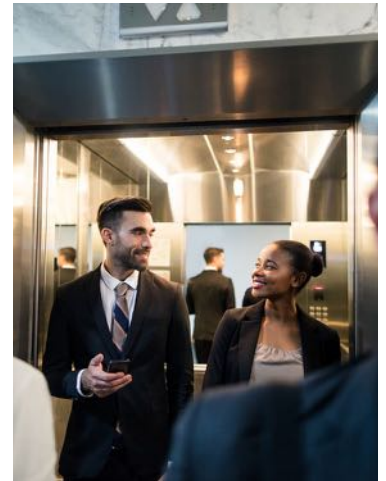
Government Affairs Representatives should be named immediately upon the start of the new fiscal year/at board turnover. HQ should be notified of the appointment and of any change in the representative as soon as possible.

Crafting an Elevator Pitch:

The best advocates are the ones who are prepared to talk about their issues with an “elevator pitch.” An elevator pitch is a quick synopsis of the issue you are talking about, the main arguments, and why a legislator should support your position. It is called an “elevator pitch” because you should be able to give it in the amount of time it takes to ride an elevator.

What to do:

- Introduce yourself;
- Address what the profession does;
- Relate that to the lives of the people you are talking to;
- Describe the major issue you are seeking to find a solution to;
- Propose your solution and why it's the right path; and,
- Ask for support.



Everyone's elevator pitch will be different based on the interests concerned, comfort-level, life/business experience, and communication skills. However, it is vital that the advocates prepare an elevator pitch to give to stakeholders, policymakers, and community members.

You may often only catch a legislator or their staff on their way to a hearing or meeting in the hallway or elevator. You must get out enough information to describe the issue and make your best arguments that leaves the person with enough information to understand the basics of what you are advocating for or against. You can always follow-up later with written materials or request for a formal meeting.

Work with your fellow members and with Headquarters to develop a succinct pitch that drives home the main points of the policies you are seeking to change.

Don't be embarrassed to practice the pitch in front of your family, colleagues, or friends!

Political or Campaign Support:

Getting face-time with a legislator or their staff will be helpful in advocacy efforts when legislation is running in the statehouse. Even without running legislation, getting to know your representatives and having them understand interior design is crucial to future success. Introducing yourself and the profession to a legislator and their staff is the first step in building a relationship with the office and making moves to garner their support.

Create opportunities to meet policymakers in your area. We recommend you start by volunteering some of your free time to your legislator's campaign or attending their events. This is a highly effective way of interacting with your representatives. In this way, you build "political capital."

- Volunteering for your local legislator's campaign, attending other events that host a legislator or key staff, or a fundraiser for a legislator are all ways to get more involved in the community, politically. These opportunities will also help you get to know staff and earn face-time with key staff and policymakers, which will in turn help any future advocacy efforts by interior designers.
- It may seem insignificant, but helping a candidate or campaign by stuffing envelopes, door-knocking, handing out signs/pins/stickers, and other similar volunteer activities are highly effective. Candidates, especially on the state level, remember when a person or group of professionals give of their time and resources to help at a political or campaign event.
 - Make this a chapter event! Organize carpools and bring as many designers as possible to volunteer. Make sure the staff know you're from the American Society of Interior Designers and you're there to help.
- Personal financial support is important! If you are inclined to do so, write a campaign contribution check to a legislator(s) or political action committee (PAC). First, review the rules in your state as there are usually restrictions on where, when, and how much you can give. Check with a local attorney or HQ if you're unsure.



ASID CHAPTER- LEVEL ADVOCACY

ASID believes that there is no one better than interior designers themselves to advocate for the profession because you, as an interior designer or interior design ally, understand the issues and policies that affect interior designers on a personal level. In the states, chapters will be most in-tune with local politics.

Although ASID HQ and members participate in advocacy on the federal level, Headquarters expends most resources supporting member and chapter advocacy in the states. Members and chapters are in the best position to advocate for their interests in their communities. By advocating on behalf of your profession, you can make an impact on the laws and policies that directly touch your practice.

A. How Can You Become Involved in Advocacy?

First, make the decision on an individual-level and as a chapter (with the guidance of ASID Headquarters) to pursue changes in law, regulation, and public perceptions about interior design. Know that this will be a multiyear commitment.

Next, determining the best ways to engage will require developing a strategy.

We recommend starting with the **ASID-IIDA Joint State Advocacy Plan**.

Contact ASID HQ at **membership@asid.org** or contact the VP of Government & Public Affairs directly for advice on planning an advocacy strategy in your state.



Advocacy Doesn't Just Happen During a Legislative Session.

Advocacy is a year-round, every year effort. ASID HQ recognizes that not every year will be one in which interior designers are running legislation or responding to legislation in your statehouse or at the U.S. Capitol. Off-year advocacy is essential.

In off-years, chapters should focus their efforts on educating legislators and community members on what interior designers do and issues that are important to designers. These efforts are still advocacy because members will engage stakeholders, but it will not be targeted at passing or resisting legislation during the legislative session. These efforts can be done throughout the year and are perhaps easier in the off-season when legislators are in their home districts and have more time to attend events like a site visit or meet-and-greets with the profession (more information on these events can be found in the pages to follow).



Advocacy Is About Building Relationships

Building relationships with stakeholders, legislators, and staff in off-years and outside of session is important for when legislation or government-sponsored issues do arise. When legislators have had contact with members of the profession, or even better, remember the designers they interacted with in the past, the issue will not be new to them and will make it easier to schedule a meeting or garner support (even find a champion or sponsor for the legislation) if a relationship already exists with staff or the legislator. For more on how to speak to legislators or how to plan an event, see the sections, below.

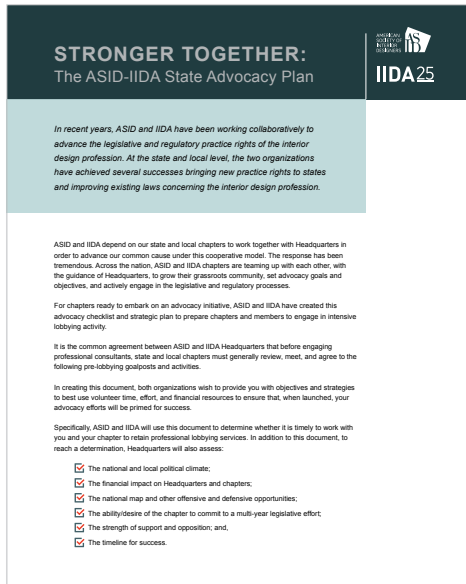


B. Partnerships Within the Profession

The interior design profession is not represented solely by ASID. To make a greater impact on state law and policy, it is vital that ASID members work with IIDA members and unaffiliated designers to advocate and promote the interests of the profession. In recent years, ASID and IIDA have been working collaboratively to advance the legislative and regulatory practice rights of the interior design profession in several states across the country.

ASID depends on chapters working with IIDA chapters and with both Headquarters in order to advance our common cause as a profession under a cooperative model. Across the nation, ASID and IIDA chapters are teaming up, with the guidance of Headquarters, to grow their grassroots community, set advocacy goals and objectives, and actively engage in legislative and regulatory processes. At the state and local level, the two organizations have achieved several successes by bringing new practice rights to states and improving existing laws concerning the interior design profession. ASID believes it should be part of every chapter's efforts to work in coordination with IIDA members to advance the profession's interest. For these reasons, it is incredibly important that ASID and IIDA chapters host events and engage in advocacy together.

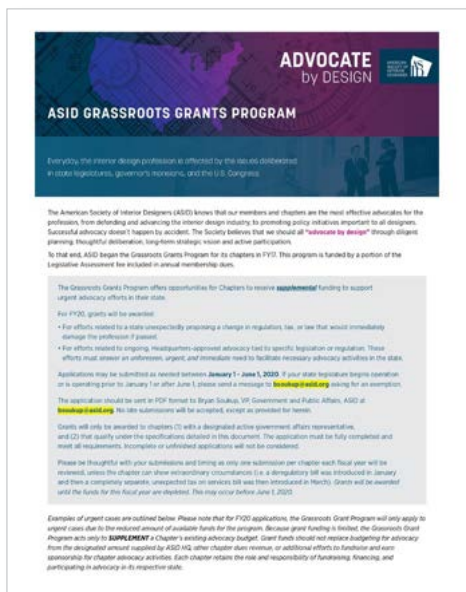
C. ASID Advocacy Resources for Chapters & Members



ASID-IIDA State Advocacy Plan

ASID has partnered with IIDA to develop practice rights for interior designers under a cooperative model of state advocacy. Both organizations understand that working together to grow grassroots advocacy and engage with lawmakers is the best way to achieve success.

- Phase 1 of the ASID-IIDA State Advocacy Plan is the initial stage of setting up joint advocacy in a state, for both ASID and IIDA chapters to come to a common agreement on advocacy goals and evaluate whether to engage a professional consultant in the state upon successful completion of the Plan and HQ approval. The Plan requires meeting five goalposts, each one aimed at laying the foundation for successful advocacy efforts through a chapter-level ASID-IIDA partnership. To find out more, visit the Phase 1 [here](#).
- Phase 2 of the ASID-IIDA State Advocacy Plan is intended to take advocacy in your state beyond the “beginner” level. The Plan requires co-hosting certain events with the IIDA chapter, including two consecutive advocacy training events, fundraising, and a political action event, among other requirements. If Phase 1 was learning to crawl, Phase 2 is learning to walk. To find out more, visit Phase 2 [here](#).
- Stay tuned, as additional phases might be produced in the future.



Grassroots Grant Program

For chapters that engage in headquarters-sanctioned advocacy or are blindsided by legislation that could immediately damage the profession if passed, ASID may grant supplemental funds to chapters under the discretion of ASID HQ staff.

To learn more, visit the application [here](#).

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This is a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") by and among the _____ Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers and the _____ Chapter of the International Interior Design Association (each a "Party", collectively the "Parties" or "Chapters"), entered into as of _____, 20____ regarding the support and collaboration on a _____ ACTIVITY.

Whereas, the Parties, through their authorized representatives, desire to outline the organizational and financial understandings among them with respect to the Activity;

Whereas, this MOU is intended to provide the basis on which the Activity will be organized and implemented by the Parties; and

Whereas, the Parties enter this MOU to collaborate in this endeavor on an equal basis;

Now, Therefore, for and in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, The Parties confirm their understanding in this MOU, intending to be legally bound, and agree to the following terms and condition in their collaborative effort to develop the Activity for the mutual benefit of the Parties.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this collaboration is to:
(Include purpose of Activity and a description)

The goals of the Activity are to:

ASID-IIDA Advocacy Event Memorandum of Understanding

On the **Chapter Resources webpage** of the Advocate by Design website, you can find a copy of a draft MOU to be used when planning advocacy events with your state's IIDA chapter. This is an informal contract for splitting costs, workload, and proceeds with IIDA.

ASID Public Policy Position Statements and One-Pagers

ASID has several issue-specific one-page memos for members who want to learn more about and share the Society's policy positions on issues such as practice rights, lien rights, taxes, firm ownership, sustainability, and more. See the **Advocate by Design webpage** for copies and more information on ASID's official organizational policy positions.



ASID GPA Webinars & Videos

ASID hosts webinars, both for advocacy training and on special public policy topics, to help educate members of the profession on what advocacy means and policy issues that affect the profession. Many of these webinars are eligible for CEUs.

ASID also creates short "explainer videos" to demonstrate how best to speak about the profession and policy issues in public. Find past webinars and videos on the **Advocate by Design multimedia page** and look for invitations to future events in ASID member communications.



Phone2Action

Phone2Action helps reach interior designers and members of the community who support the interior design profession. Ask HQ about how you can start a campaign in your state on Phone2Action to mobilize advocates and support for the profession.

To boost advocate numbers and to receive advocacy alerts, text “Interior Design” to 52886 or input your information [online](#).

Advocate by Design (AxD) Fund

The **Advocate by Design (AxD) Fund** is a political education fund that helps educate the public and policymakers on the impact of interior design work and the policy issues important to the interior design profession. It is not a Political Action Committee (or PAC) and no money will be directed to any individual candidate for public office. The Fund enhances the work of ASID’s Government and Public Affairs Department and enables ASID and our chapters to be consistently represented in national, state, and local policy debates and discussions.

Donate today!



Please see the **Advocate by Design website** for more information or contact **membership@asid.org** or the Vice President of Government & Public Affairs for any questions about these resources.

ADVOCACY TALKING POINTS

Learning to speak about the interior design profession is the most basic responsibility of an advocate. Often, the public misunderstands what interior designers do because of television programs or the inherent broadness of the term “interior design” itself.

The purpose of this section is to help guide interior designers in talking about the code-regulated side of the profession that affects the health, safety, and welfare of the public. This aspect of the profession is most related to governmental interests.

The following talking points are not meant to be comprehensive or take away from the practice of interior designers in the real world. Use these talking points to help you start a conversation about the profession, but also speak from your own experiences and give examples from your practice of interior design.

This section will also cover information on the public policy issues important to the profession and industry.

A. What is Interior Design?

Interior design involves several ideas and activities, thus, defining it is difficult and, for these purposes, must be done in broad terms. Take what is listed here and consider your own practice when talking about what interior designers do. More than just changing laws, advocacy is about engaging with others to elevate and protect the profession. Making the conscious decision to engage with the community and/or lawmakers is only the beginning of the process.

Interior design is the process of planning, developing, and implementing creative and technical aspects of the interior built environment, including both residential and commercial spaces. Such processes are made in conformity with public health, safety, and welfare while adhering to building codes and regulatory requirements. When designing spaces, interior designers must be knowledgeable of federal law (such as the Americans with Disabilities Act), building codes, building construction guidelines and practices, construction materials and methods, specification writing, technical drawings, and business practices.

The services that interior designers perform may include:

- Research and analysis of the client's goals and requirements; and development of documents, drawings and diagrams that outline those needs;
- Formulation of preliminary space plans and, two- and three-dimensional design concept studies and sketches that integrate the client's program needs and are based on knowledge of the principles of interior design and theories of human behavior;
- Confirmation that preliminary space plans and design concepts are safe, functional, aesthetically appropriate, and meet all public health, safety and welfare requirements, including code, accessibility, environmental, and sustainability guidelines;
- Selection of colors, materials and finishes to appropriately convey the design concept, and to meet socio-psychological, functional, maintenance, life-cycle performance, environmental, and safety requirements;
- Selection and specification of furniture, fixtures, equipment and millwork, including layout drawings and detailed product description; and provision of contract documentation to facilitate pricing, procurement and installation of furniture;
- Provision of project management services, including preparation of project budgets and schedules;
- Preparation of construction documents, consisting of plans, elevations, details and specifications, to illustrate non-structural and/or non-seismic partition layouts; power and communications locations; reflected ceiling plans and lighting designs; materials and finishes; and furniture layouts;
- Preparation of construction documents to adhere to regional building and fire codes, municipal codes, and any other jurisdictional statutes, regulations and guidelines applicable to the interior space;
- Coordination and collaboration with other allied design professionals who may be retained to provide consulting services, including but not limited to architects; structural, mechanical and electrical engineers, and various specialty consultants;
- Confirmation that construction documents for non-structural and/or non-seismic construction are signed and sealed by the responsible interior designer, as applicable to jurisdictional requirements for filing with code enforcement officials;
- Administration of contract documents, bids and negotiations as the client's agent;
- Observation and reporting on the implementation of projects while in progress and upon completion, as a representative of and on behalf of the client; and conducting post-occupancy evaluation reports.

The profession is constantly changing with the development of new technologies and changing building codes and regulations. By connecting with other designers, understanding best practices, and staying current with changes in policies regarding the built environment, interior designers can evolve with the changing profession.

B. How to Avoid/Correct Misconceptions & Stereotypes Concerning the Profession:

- When the public hears the term “interior design” they often misunderstand the complexity of what interior designers actually do and the education, experience, and examination it takes to become a professional interior designer.
- When speaking with members of the public, interior designers often hear references to decorating-exclusive practice or television program-type practice. Though ASID believes aesthetic decorating is important, it is not the totality of interior designer practice nor the most important priority in public spaces (which, per traditional norms of law and regulation, is the public’s health, safety, and welfare). Sometimes these references can be derogatory. For example, you might walk into a legislator’s office and the first question he or she could ask upon hearing you’re a designer is, “should I change the fabric on my sofa?” or “what color should I paint my walls?”
- The best way to avoid confusion and misconceptions about the profession is to tell your own story about what you do as an interior designer. Share the details of your practice, what your job looks like on a daily basis, and the steps you go through when you work on a project. Discuss local projects you’ve worked on including restaurants, hotels, nursing facilities, arenas, etc. where the legislator might have already visited for personal or professional reasons. Depending on where you are discussing issues with a legislator or staff, look around the room and discuss why certain features have been designed and constructed a certain way and the science and safety reasons behind it. Use your knowledge of building codes and laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act to illustrate the impact interior design has on health, safety, welfare of occupants as well as the law.
- Interior designers work closely with architects and engineers to change the function of space. The duties between these different professions can often overlap. More so, the work of interior designers is growing faster as the number of projects increase to renovate and rehabilitate the built environment and focus on high-performance and sustainability, instead of building new spaces.
- Be cognizant of the preconceived notions of what each profession in the built environment does or does not do.

When in doubt or when time-constrained, focus on the regulated health, safety, welfare activities that contribute to safe interiors, especially:

- Occupancy calculations
- Fire Safety
 - Flammability
 - Emergency Signage, etc.
- Emergency Wayfinding
- Codes & Standards Application
 - Egress, etc.



C. Responding to Industry Opposition

This section is meant to provide a list of do's and don'ts when talking to others in the construction industry about securing and expanding the rights of interior designers. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list and if you have any questions, contact ASID HQ.

Other professionals have different perspectives and priorities based on their experiences and understanding. These conversations may be difficult in environments like the workplace or when completing projects. The suggestions provided are not meant to be perceived as a way to mislead or undermine the rights of other professions, but to help in starting conversations to find mutual understanding to advance interior design.

Remember:

- The construction industry is naturally collaborative. Professionals with different expertise and experience must work together to complete a project and ensure the health, safety, and welfare of building occupants on every project. However, the policy goals may incorrectly appear to negatively affect other professions in the industry. Such areas of contention may come up when interior designers are building initiatives to expand their rights in the states.
- Interior designers often work in firms owned or operated by architects or engineers. This may make involvement in advocacy feel uncomfortable in a work setting, especially if other professions oppose the interior design profession's efforts. It is important to be able to talk about this topic in respectful manner.

There are generally two ways to approach a conversation about expanding interior designers' rights:



PROACTIVE

Positive, preemptive education on what interior designers do, the value and impact they have on projects, and the purpose behind expanding interior design practice rights.



DEFENSIVE

Typically will arise if practice legislation is proposed and made public that is misunderstood by other professions. In this scenario, you may be confronted to "defend" the profession's legislation.



Know the talking points: Speak with confidence that you understand the issues and arguments when you talk to others about advocacy and/or ongoing efforts. Read over the talking points provided by ASID HQ or the local lobbyist, read the proposed legislation, prepare your elevator pitch, be able to succinctly summarize what you do as a professional, and make sure you understand as much as possible about counterpoints.

- Ask questions and work through scenarios with HQ staff, lobbyists, or fellow practitioners if you need to.



Know your goal: Going into a conversation set on changing the other person's mind will likely be fruitless. A better goal to set is to present the information to educate the other person on the issues. You want to provide accurate information and give them the resources they need to follow-up on what you say. Recognize their right to disagree. Sometimes it is best to simply agree to disagree. Remember to be respectful and listen with open-ears and an open mind.



Stay on message: This is not the conversation when you want to bring up any other issues with the person you are speaking with. Additionally, try to stick to the talking points to avoid saying something that is not necessarily true. It is important to make sure everyone has the same, accurate information. If you get a question and you don't know the answer, say you do not know and that you will follow-up. If they're ignorant as to what you do or why ASID is pursuing certain goals, be an educator! Don't be offended. Relate the questions and concerns back to your life and practice.



Be an active listener: You want to make sure the other person is listening when you speak, so make sure you listen when they speak. Treat the other person how you would want to be treated and if you disagree, say so respectfully. Ask questions if you have them.

For more information about ASID's positions on certain issues, see the [AxD webpage](#) for position statements.

Contact ASID HQ or your state's lobbyist for specific information relating to any legislation ongoing in your state.

D. The Issues

I. ASID Core Public Policy Positions

The ASID Board of Directors has established the below core positions representing a broad spectrum of specific public policy issues. These tenets represent umbrellas under which both emerging and existing policies exist or will exist. Board approval of the below general positions allows ASID leadership to situate the organization at the forefront of issues and respond using letters, comments, and official statements. This will also provide members with relevant information and concise talking points when it is important that they be engaged on a particular subject. This could occur when a member is advocating at the state or federal level or representing the organization on a national board, committee, or forum.

1. As interior designers are one of the guardians of public health, safety, and welfare in the built environment, ASID supports voluntary state registration or certification of qualified interior designers and the accompanying independent ability to sign and seal construction documents for permit under that state's defined or proposed scope of practice for interior designers.
2. ASID supports trade, business, and economic policies that benefit the interior design profession and industry. Similarly, ASID opposes economic, business, and trade policies that would harm the profession and industry.
3. Though ASID recognizes and embraces the importance of testing and using new and safe chemicals and other materials in building design and construction, asbestos' and other similar toxic chemicals' long and largely harmful history in construction leads the Society to oppose their use. Only substances and methodologies proven to be benign to construction professionals, manufacturing workers, designers, and occupants should be used in design and construction.
4. ASID supports the development and adoption of modern building codes, design standards, and public policies, laws, and regulations that support safe, sustainable, inclusive, healthy, and efficient design and construction and the wellness of building occupants.
5. ASID supports policies that mitigate climate change and reasonably protect the environment as related to design and construction.
6. ASID supports policies that promote pre-disaster mitigation, resilience, adaptability, and historic preservation in the built and rebuilt environment.
7. ASID supports humanitarian aid initiatives that provide for basic human needs in the built and rebuilt environment.
8. ASID supports policies that provide fair and inclusive access to all individuals regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or religion.

*Approved by the ASID Board of Directors: May 9, 2019
The Official Public Policy Position Statements of the American Society of Interior Designers*

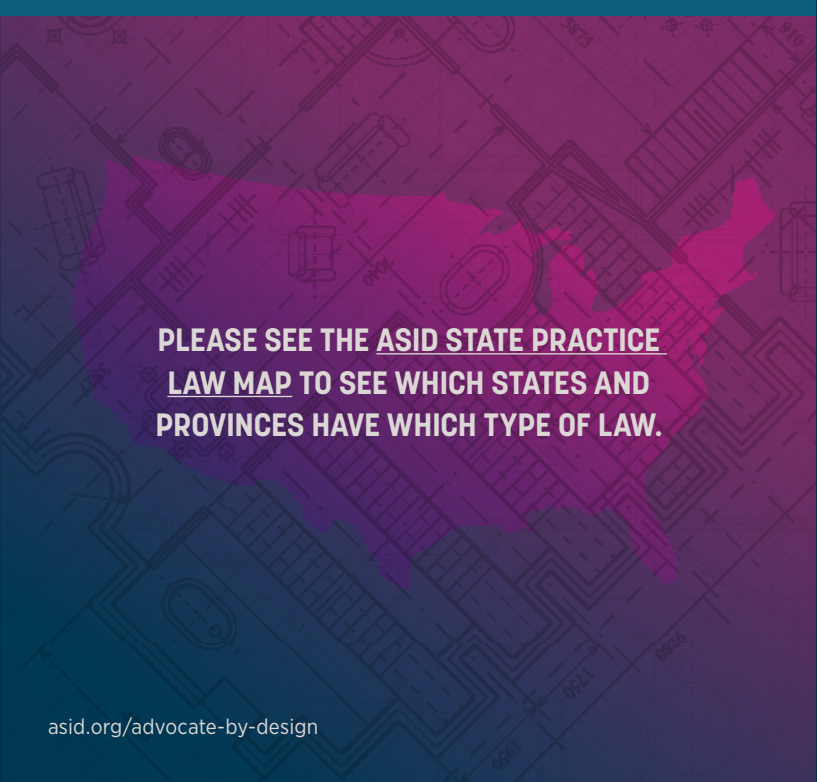
II. Practice Rights

Interior design practice rights are granted by the government to qualified professionals under the law to enable those qualified professionals to practice independently of an architect or engineer within the scope of interior design practice. Because interior designers are one of the guardians of public health, safety, and welfare in the built environment, reasonable government oversight of the profession serves to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare in regulated spaces.

There are two types of laws that states typically pass for interior design practice rights: (a) Title Acts and (b) Voluntary Practice Acts with sign/stamp and seal or permit authority.


A Title Act is a law that controls who can hold oneself out to be a “licensed,” “registered,” or “certified” (or other legal qualifier) interior designer. The term “interior designer” itself cannot be regulated by law as the result of an 11th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals decision (*Locke v. Shore*). However, the government can regulate the term with a qualifier that denotes a level of competence and qualification, i.e., “registered interior designer.”

A Practice Act is a statute allowing for professional state recognition by defining the scope and practice of registered, licensed, or certified interior design within the jurisdiction, outlining licensing, certification or registration requirements for interior designers, establishing business and practice rights and establishing penalties for violations of the law. Under a strict, traditional, mandatory practice act, only individuals who conform to the requirements of the act may hold themselves out to be members of that profession. However, due to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals case (*Locke v. Shore*), interior design practice acts cannot enforce this last restriction. All interior design practice acts are, by law, voluntary.



PLEASE SEE THE ASID STATE PRACTICE LAW MAP TO SEE WHICH STATES AND PROVINCES HAVE WHICH TYPE OF LAW.

The most common practice right sought in voluntary interior design practice acts is stamp and seal or permit authority for code-impacted construction work. Code-impacted design documents need to be stamped/sealed and signed by the appropriate design professional prior to being submitted to the building office to obtain a building/construction permit. The purpose of the stamp and signature is for the design professional to verify for the building department that the documents were prepared in accordance with law and code. Without this ability, interior designers must seek out an architect or engineer to review and seal the interior design document.



Generally, ASID believes that the government should recognize the interior design profession and the scope of work interior designers are capable of doing through examination, experience, and education. ASID believes that determining these qualifications should be left to the individual states.

ASID supports voluntary state registration or certification of qualified interior designers and the accompanying independent ability to sign, stamp, and seal construction documents for permit under the state's defined or proposed scope of practice for interior designers. Interior designers would have the autonomy to submit documents for permit without the need to work directly under and pay an architect or engineer for such services. Licensure, registration, or certification of professional interior designers practicing in the code-impacted environment creates accountability for interior designers for safety risks associated with the interior of the regulated space.

The importance of the voluntary nature of this certification and/or registration cannot be understated. Because general public welfare is implicated, the building code and most state laws require that only state-regulated design professionals have the ability to submit drawings for permit; therefore, for interior designers who wish to have this ability, some sort of reasonable government oversight is required. Designers who do not wish to register will still be required to submit drawings for permit that have been approved and stamped (or signed) by an architect, engineer, or otherwise registered interior designer.

This type of legislation is often casually referred to as a “practice act” or “practice legislation;” however, due to the definitions outlined above, legislation granting stamp and seal rights aren’t traditional practice acts. Due to the 11th Circuit case, no legislation run by the interior design profession post-2011 can be viewed as a full, mandatory “practice act.” It’s important for members to understand the nuances.

ASID recognizes that not all interior design or decoration work requires government oversight, regulation, or intervention. However, when an interior space that the general public will use in mass is involved and, therefore, building permits are required, ASID believes that interior designers should have the choice to voluntarily register or become certified with the state to gain construction document stamp and seal privileges for permitting.

III. Lien Rights

The ability to get paid for one's interior design services is the most basic right for any interior designer – whether practicing in the commercial or residential space. That is why, as a profession, advocating for laws that will protect any interior designer from non-payment is important. Specifically, this means lobbying for interior designers to have lien rights in every state. A lien is a legal document that an interior designer could file on the real property (such as a house, land, or other building) of their client. If approved by a court, the client would be unable to sell, refinance, or transfer the real property without paying the interior designer. Unfortunately, most states only grant lien rights to other construction and building professions, not interior designers. There are some exceptions, but overall, interior designers are unfairly disadvantaged because their state's law does not grant them lien rights.

IV. Firm Ownership

Owning a design firm or being eligible for a promotion in your company are two rights that are not fully guaranteed to interior designers throughout the country. Each state law varies in how it treats interior designers. For example, some states prohibit interior designers from owning any stake in a business that offers architectural services. Others allow for them to own a partial stake, but not a majority. There are even states that prohibit an interior designer from being promoted to a “principal” of a design firm that offers architectural and/or engineering services.

Such laws put a glass ceiling over interior designers, literally blocking economic opportunity and progress for interior designers and the growth of the profession's businesses. The solution is to advocate for interior designers to have the same ownership and promotion rights as other design professionals.



V. Interior Design Service Taxes

Interior designers protect businesses and commercial building and real estate owners by ensuring that their spaces are in compliance with laws and regulations and include necessary work to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of building occupants. In residential buildings, interior designers design for the blind, disabled, infirm, and aged ensuring safe use, accessibility, and proper wayfinding. For at-risk Americans and public building owners, proper design is not a luxury, it is a requirement. Safety, in well-trafficked and highly-regulated buildings, is not optional. Burdening designers when providing these necessary services and burdening consumers when obtaining these necessary services with additional taxes will only harm our nation's public interior environments and all built infrastructure.

Types of Interior Design Tax

The most popular option taken by the states is applying a sales tax to services that are performed in conjunction with the sale of taxable products. When tangible personal property is involved in the performance of services, most often in the form of goods or products (such as furniture, paint, window coverings, electronics, etc.), the interior designer is taxed by the state. This means that if a designer sells products (or tangible personal property) as part of the services they provide to a client, the state can tax the fee the designer charges related to the sale. Depending on the state, if the designer makes the transaction of services and products separate, the state will only tax the products transaction and not the services.



**CHECK YOUR STATE'S TAX LAW
FOR SPECIFICS.**

However, a handful states do directly tax interior design services.

A tax on services is a tax directly tied to the amount charged to the client by the professional for interior design services. Fewer than 10 states require such a tax

VI. Procurement

Several U.S. states forbid interior designers and interiors-only firms from bidding on federal and state government design and construction projects that involve work beyond the scope of interior design. Like architects and engineers, certified interior designers are trained to be project managers with the ability to coordinate the work of several construction discipline professionals. Interior designers know how to compile a team of experts from architects and engineers to contractors and trades people to get the job done. Interior designers and interior design firms should be able to bid on all comprehensive building design and construction government projects in all U.S. states and territories.

VII. Resilience

Natural and manmade hazards pose a threat to the safety of the public. Seventy percent of fatalities during Hurricanes Katrina and Maria were residents with access and functional needs impacted by the design and construction of their community, particularly their interior environments. Contemporary planning, building materials, and design, construction, and operational techniques can make our communities more resilient to all sorts of threats. Interior designers use their human-centric design knowledge to positively impact pre-disaster mitigation.

VIII. Trade Issues

The interior design industry is an economic force within the United States and globally. The industry has demonstrated strong, continuous growth in economic contribution, the number of jobs, and the number of firms since 2012. The industry reported a 9.87 billion dollar value of sales in 2015. The U.S. Census reported 66,500 interior design jobs in 2016 (13 percent increase since 2014) and the existence 13,176 firms nationwide. Total 2016 revenue for the interior design sector was estimated to be \$49 billion. The interior design industry is an important part of the engine that keeps the American and global economy moving.

ASID supports trade, business, and economic policies that benefit the interior design profession and industry. Similarly, ASID opposes economic, business, and trade policies that would harm the profession and industry.

IX. Student Debt

Like many other professions, an individual pursuing a degree in interior design can assume costly student loans. CIDQ-certified interior designers must complete formal post-secondary education to learn how to properly protect the health, safety, and welfare of building occupants. From learning about building codes to mastering project management, this education is a necessary step to becoming a designer. The debts accumulated to obtain this education can be a burden to the profession and a potential barrier to entry. ASID supports policies that mitigate interior design student debt by forgiving or mitigating the debt of interior designers who do pro-bono or government service design work.

X. Workforce Development

It is imperative that the design industry continually develop its workforce, as well as future generations of interior designers. Moreover, the interior design profession must support allied professionals including building code officials and skilled trades workers to make sure that all facets of the construction industry are properly staffed.



XI. Sustainability & Environmental Issues

ASID supports policies that mitigate climate change and reasonably protect the environment as related to design and construction. Specifically, buildings can contain many different chemicals of concern. Building materials can impact our health as much as the food we eat, the water we drink, or the air we breathe. Asthmagens, carcinogens, and other hazardous substances can be easily found in building materials and have proven to be exceptionally detrimental to the health of building occupants. ASID believes that only substances and methodologies proven to be benign to construction professionals, manufacturing workers, designers, and occupants should be used in design and construction.

XII. Intellectual Property & Copyright

ASID supports the ability of interior designers to copyright their interior drawings to avoid unauthorized copying of original work as well as the physical embodiment of the design. Interior designers' drawings should be considered original work because the interior designer specifies on the drawing space planning, paths of egress, occupancy plans, partition plans, and unique artistic concepts. Each construction document, as well as the physical embodiment of the document, is distinctive to the client and space on which they are working. It is an original work that reflects the needs and goals of the client, reflected by the creative vision of the designer.

XIII. Housing

Interior designers have a major role to play in solving the affordable housing crisis. ASID designers look at alternative solutions to create safe, healthy, and sustainable spaces for all those in need of government assisted living space. Designers utilize sustainable practices and innovative technologies that can reduce construction, décor, and maintenance costs while providing a space in which inhabitants feel safe and dignified.

Interior designers have taken up this challenge and have come up with some unprecedented moves to offer innovation within government budgets.

ASID takes seriously its role in ending the affordable housing crisis. ASID supports policies and proposals that contribute to the creation of safe housing solutions for all those in need in the United States and around the globe.

PUTTING ADVOCACY STRATEGY INTO ACTION

There are several avenues that interior designers can pursue to advance their policy positions. Advocacy does not necessarily mean lobbying, but includes engaging with peers, stakeholders, and the community on issues important to the advocate and profession. This section outlines different types of events and activities a chapter can hold or participate in to be proactive in advocacy. Events and activities mentioned here, and others like them, are important to furthering advocacy efforts by engaging with the community, legislators, and other professionals in the construction industry. Contact ASID HQ if your chapter wants to plan one of the following events.

A. General Event Planning Tips

- Event content will depend on the type of event your chapter chooses to have, but the planning basics are largely the same.
- Coordinate with partner organizations (such as IIDA or the organizations listed later in this section) to take some of the burden off just one chapter. Also, coordinate with any speakers or special guests invited to present or speak at the event.
- Consider what kind of event you want to have and who you want to invite. Ask yourself: What is the goal of this event? Who is the target audience?
- Once these questions are answered, get an idea of how much money is needed to make the event happen and make a budget. If additional fundraising is needed, ask members to contribute or find partner organizations to help lower the costs.

To schedule the event, you will want to get a rough calculation of how many attendees to invite and how many will show up. Research and book an event space that will meet your calculations. Organize food and drink, if needed through the venue or a caterer.

Remember:


- Send out invitations to invitees or open registration to the public. Consider advertising the event on social media. Ensure you have a reliable RSVP system to keep track of how many attendees you expect.
- Prepare the content of the event in advance and share with the people who need it. Finally, make sure there are volunteers or staff are available to greet and check-in attendees on the day of the event.
- Coordinating with the legislator's office is critical for political events in which you are attempting to get a legislator to come to an event you are hosting. Make sure you are professional with the staff of the legislator's office and be flexible to the busy schedule of the legislator.
- If considering supporting a legislator with political giving, please contact an attorney in your state or ASID HQ to be advised on the laws of your state.
- Always inform ASID HQ if legislators will be invited to an event.

Other Considerations:

SPONSORSHIP	LOCATION	LEGALITY
Is there an industry representative who would sponsor this event?	Will you have to secure space? Or can you host the event at a firm, industry partner venue, or project site (finished or unfinished)?	Depending on the type of event, some states have restrictions on political fundraising, what can be served/ given to legislators at events, and when these events can or cannot be held. Be sure to check with a local attorney, lobbyist, or HQ.

B. Advocacy Education Events

These events involve sessions within and outside the profession to learn more about what the practice of interior design looks like, as it is not always consistent among practitioners or understood by the public/policymakers. Members should consider partnering closely with IIDA chapters and members in your state. Events within the chapter itself are important, but equally important is partnering with other organizations and unaffiliated interior designers and opening the doors to members of the public to strengthen advocacy for the profession in your state.



Community support for efforts of interior designers can help influence successful advocacy. Because interior design touches everyone in some way, educating the public on what interior designers do helps change the conversations and perceptions about interior designers in the community. Helping the public and the community at-large to better understand the profession will change the way the people see interior spaces and realize the impact that interior design has on their everyday lives.

This sort of public relations goes a long way in furthering the legislative goals of the profession.

Education/Information Session:

- An education session can be broad (for example, about what interior designers do), or it can be specific to an area of practice, an issue of interest to designers, or the opportunity for designers and outsiders to learn about something new to interior design practice. This event can be for interior designers to learn more about the practice of their profession or for the public to learn what interior design is.
- For the profession, it helps inform designers about what other members are doing in their own practice. Since interior design is such a broad profession, consisting of so many types and areas of practice, this helps designers stay up-to-date on what is going on in the profession.
- This event can teach the community, general public, and policymakers about the different types of work interior designers do in their practice. For example, having a panel of practitioners who talk about what it is like when they work on a hospital or nursing home project from start to finish or what factors to consider when working in a regulated commercial space.
- Invite speakers and panelists who can provide valuable insight into the diversity of the profession as well as interior design practice. For an event for the profession, look to the design community for professionals who are doing interesting or innovative work. Events can also include inviting people from other professions who work closely with interior designers, like code officials or trades people, to expand their knowledge about design practice and new tools of design.
- The cost of an education event is likely to be the lowest of the events that a chapter can do. If the speakers or invitees are from the state where the chapter is located, the costs should be low to organize the event. Consider partnering with other organizations, like IIDA, or other professional associations in the state, to reduce costs and find speakers.

Education on or Promotion of the NCIDQ/Certification:

- As the basis for interior design competence, the NCIDQ exam is a critical component to expanding practice rights for interior designers. ASID encourages interior designers and design students to take the NCIDQ exam.
- The number of NCIDQ exam certificate holders is a good measurement for how many citizens will be positively impacted by practice rights legislation. Legislators are more likely to act if a large number of constituents will benefit from a policy.
- Promoting the exam with interior design students, perhaps in partnership with local schools, will help increase the number of exam takers and support advocacy efforts in promoting voluntary registration legislation. For example, an event could include a speaker on how the certification has changed their practice, career trajectory, or business.
- Discussing the rigor of the exam and the education and experience prerequisites with the public can also be eye-opening and bolster the professionalism of interior design within the community.
- The costs for this kind of event can be reduced by partnering with the local design schools and/or other interior design associations that have an interest in promoting the NCIDQ.
- Other considerations might include:
 - How many CIDA-accredited schools are there in your state? This is a great event for states with multiple schools and many students.
 - How many NCIDQ-certificate holders already exist in your state? If the number is high, maybe this isn't an important event in which to invest.

C. Advocacy Training

- An advocacy training is an event to teach members the meaning of advocacy, tips on how to advocate, strategies for effective advocacy, and how to start their own advocacy efforts.
- Like many Americans, interior designers likely do not know much about advocacy or grassroots mobilization to influence policy. As the constituents of elected officials in your state and the subject matter experts on the profession, practitioners are the best advocates for the interior design profession.
- Holding an event for members, even in conjunction with other chapters or organizations, can lend itself to preparing interior designers with foundational knowledge about their state and how to advocate for the profession.
- The cost will depend on how the chapter decides to hold the event. These events can be held by participating in webinars, presentations and trainings by external organizations and/or consultants that specialize in advocacy, conferences, Headquarters-hosted events, community events, and more. Consult with Headquarters on the best option for your chapter.
- See the event planning tips above to understand other considerations. Also consider finding an organization or industry partner to sponsor the event, or if the chapter lacks expertise, contacting HQ or a consultant to conduct the training. Look into the possibility of continuing education hours, and finally, seriously consider partnering with IIDA or other organizations to reduce the cost on the chapter and to increase attendance and effectiveness.
- Training topics could include:
 - How to Craft Your Elevator Pitch
 - "Senate Bill XYZ: Learn how sales tax on services could impact your business and how we can stop it"
 - A session to train members to attend a capitol day



D. Political Events & Activities to Influence Policy

Capitol Day:

A Capitol Day is when a group of members and interior design professionals go to the state capitol to talk to legislators and staff on behalf of the profession to educate and advocate for the profession's interests. Activities typically include meeting with as many legislators as possible, speaking with staff members, (if the legislator is unavailable), dropping-off background materials, potentially testifying at committee hearings, holding a rally for interior designers within the capitol complex, talking to the press about the profession's interests, and educating the public and the press on your issue/the profession (these activities will vary based on a several factors).

- When ASID (and/or IIDA) is running legislation in a state, it is important that interior designers go talk to legislators to educate them on what the profession does and ask for their support. Legislators are accountable to their constituents, thus having design professionals who live in the districts of those legislators is compelling to support advocacy efforts. Even when no legislation is running, bringing interior designers in large numbers to the capitol to do education about the profession will leave a lasting impression with legislators.
- To organize a successful capitol day, choose a day when you can get a substantially-sizable group to travel to the capitol (at least 15 members). Schedule meetings ahead of time, particularly with legislators for whom you have constituents in your group. Try to see as many offices as you can that day.
- Several factors may influence the day you choose:
 - Is the legislature in session?
 - Are there hearings scheduled for that day?
 - Will weather be an issue?
 - Is it a “travel day” when legislators are trying to get to or out of the capital city?
 - Etc.
- To schedule meetings with legislators, visit your state legislator’s webpage and view staff contact information. Call or email the appropriate contact. Let staff know you’re a constituent, that you’ll be at the capitol on a certain date, and ask for a time to meet. Consolidate all meetings on a single agenda so members understand the schedule.
- Divide into groups based on geography and try to keep the groups meeting with each legislator small so your presence isn’t overwhelming.
- Consider holding a rally or coordinating an event for staffers and members of the press within the complex to learn about the profession, any legislation, and to ask questions about the profession’s legislative efforts. Several states allow organizations to exhibit/table-top in public areas of the capitol complex. Search your state legislature’s website for options.
- Know your talking points or legislative “asks” before planning the capitol day. Even if your purpose is simply education on the profession, understand what that means and how you’ll express that to the legislator or staff. Legislators are busy and these meetings shouldn’t merely be “social” visits.
- Print off leave-behind materials, position statements, and one-pagers from the Advocate by Design Website. Print enough to leave a few copies with each office you visit.

CAPITOL DAYS ARE VERY COMPLEX EVENTS TO ORGANIZE AND THERE ARE SEVERAL LOGISTICAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS TO ADDRESS BEFORE EXECUTING SUCH AN EVENT.

Be sure to contact ASID HQ before starting to plan a capitol day and consider engaging an outside service to assist with coordination and execution, if chapter funding exists.

See the **Chapter Resources** for more information on outside services

Site Visit:

- A site visit is when an interior designer (or group/chapter) invites a legislator or group of legislators to the site of one of their projects. The interior designer will walk the legislator through the project, outlining the process from start to finish, pointing out health, safety, and welfare considerations that the designer recognized in the space, and explaining why they chose to do what they did.
- A site visit is an opportunity for the legislator to see and touch what an interior designer does by walking through one of your completed or under construction projects and learning about the profession's impact on health, safety, accessibility, and welfare of building occupants. It is an opportunity to showcase the creativity of an interior designer as well as the knowledge of codes and regulations of buildings.
- Select a legislator or group of legislators who would have the most to benefit from doing a site visit. This is usually based on geography (ex: inviting all the legislators near a city center) or based on interest (ex: inviting all legislators who practice in or have interest in the healthcare field to a nursing home project). Reach out to the legislator's staff and scheduler in order to find a date and time for the site visit. Strategize which site would be the most informative and interesting for the legislator to attend.
- If the project is located in your state's capital city, invite multiple legislators.
- If appropriate and the law allows, the chapter can host a meet & greet for the legislator onsite at the end of or before the tour, potentially with refreshments.
 - **Political Giving:** Depending on the laws in your state, an event with a post or pre-tour meet & greet is a good opportunity for members to write personal political contribution checks to attending legislators.

SITE VISITS ARE VERY COMPLEX EVENTS TO ORGANIZE AND THERE ARE SEVERAL LOGISTICAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS TO ADDRESS BEFORE EXECUTING SUCH AN EVENT.

Be sure to contact ASID HQ before starting to plan a site visit and consider engaging an outside service to assist with coordination and execution, if chapter funding exists.

See the [Chapter Resources](#) for more information on outside services.

Public Testimony:

In most instances, when legislation is before a public legislative committee, members of the public are free to testify for or against that legislation.

Testifying on legislation that could benefit or hurt the profession is important. Testimony will inform the legislators on how a proposed law will affect the profession and bring attention to how it affects members personally.



- If you have identified legislation of interest, make sure to read it and research how it can affect the profession positively or adversely. Be sure to notify HQ and ask for an analysis from the ASID Government & Public Affairs (GPA) Department prior to committing to testify. Please note, there are several topics on which interior designers could expertly testify. ***This section does not only apply to issues with direct impact like tax or practice rights.*** Consider testifying on legislation related to sustainability, materials, accessibility, historic preservation, affordable housing, homelessness, the arts, and so forth to expand the exposure of the profession.
- Prepare your remarks based on the consequences of the legislation and come out with a position, either for or against the legislation, and ask the legislators to follow that position. This is also an opportunity to base your support on amended bill language that you (with HQ's assistance) can recommend to the committee. A good tactic in public testimony is to share how the bill, if passed, would affect you personally and your practice.
- Review the elevator pitch section, above, as verbal testimony and elevator pitches are very similar speeches. Think of testimony as a longer/more detailed elevator pitch.
- When you attend the hearing, make sure to arrive early and pay attention. Sign-up/sign-in if necessary.
- This is your opportunity to persuade policy. Though informing the legislators about your expert qualifications to speak on the subject is critical, do so succinctly. You should introduce yourself at the beginning of your remarks, but this is not an opportunity for you to spend minutes discussing your biography and professional and personal accomplishments. Testimony is usually confined to 2 or 3 minutes. Use your time wisely.
- **Make your points quickly and succinctly and be cognizant of time and the attention span of legislators.**

Public Testimony (cont.)

- It is usually wise to write down your comments beforehand. You can write a verbatim speech, but in most cases, it's best to write an outline or series of talking points to allow for adaptability based on what else is said during the hearing. Even the most accomplished speakers can get flustered at the podium, so it's almost always best to make sure you have written notes and that you practice your remarks beforehand.
- Don't whine! Articulate your position in a calm, dignified, and scientific manner. Occasionally, the remarks of legislators and other witnesses might upset you. Before speaking, stop, take a breath, and remember, it's not personal! Never testify angry. Also, the spectator gallery is not a place for antics. If someone says something with which you disagree, don't react from your seat. Legislative hearings don't allow for "audience interaction."
- Occasionally, members of the public may be asked to register to speak before the hearing or submit written testimony in addition to verbal comments. Other times, hearing testimony may be restricted to a certain topic. For example, at an Appropriations Committee hearing, oftentimes testimony may only be heard on fiscal impacts. Check your legislature's rules on testimony before the hearing.
- If the legislators have questions, be receptive and answer to the best of your ability. If you are unable to answer a question at the hearing, offer to follow-up with the members of the committee in writing and make sure you do so.
- If you don't wish to speak, attend the hearing and sit in the gallery. Many states allow you to introduce a position card, which will be counted, or will allow you to simply raise your hand in support or opposition. There is strength in numbers, even if you don't speak.
- If you do speak, remember that hearings are usually recorded and/or transcribed. Your words will follow you (and ASID), so make sure you are honest, respectful, and clear to avoid any potential negative consequences.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY IS A VERY COMPLEX ACTIVITY AND THERE ARE SEVERAL LOGISTICAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS TO ADDRESS BEFORE YOU SHOULD VOLUNTEER TO SPEAK.

Be sure to contact ASID HQ before you commit to testifying.

Meeting With Your Legislator One-On-One:

- Meeting with your legislator one-on-one at the capitol or in the district office (near your home) gives members the opportunity to educate the legislator on what interior designers do and why they should support or oppose legislation on a personal level. As a constituent, you will be able to tell the legislator how legislation will affect your practice in their district and how they can help the profession in the future.
- **Contact your state legislator's office**, speak with staff, let them know why you're interested in the meeting, and set up a face-to-face meeting with the legislator. Tell the staff you talk to that you are a constituent and provide your address if requested.
- Prepare for the meeting by setting points you want to make sure you express.
- Before meeting with a legislator, contact ASID HQ. Headquarters has materials (like short videos that can be shown from your mobile phone and professionally-made brochures) and tips that may improve the effectiveness of your meeting
- Send any background materials before the meeting (such as documents prepared by ASID HQ or a local lobbyist) to the staff point of contact. Bring printed materials to the meeting to leave behind.
- Do background research on the legislator and appeal to their interests, whether it be something like support of small business, or perhaps you graduated from the same high school, or maybe you know a designer who has done work for the legislator.
- Gather specific information on how many interior designers are in the district, the number of firms, industry partners, and/or projects that exist there. This will be useful information to the legislator and will demonstrate to the legislator how the profession has impacted their district. HQ or your chapter may be able to assist with this information.
- Prepare your own story to tell the legislator and explain why the issue is important to you personally and for the profession at large (review the elevator pitch, public testimony, and talking points sections above to help prepare your remarks).
- Ask for support or opposition on a bill. If there is no legislation pending, explain the profession and its value to society and ask to remain in contact with the legislator.
- Send a thank you note to the legislator and staff contact as soon as possible after the meeting.



Legislator Breakfast, Luncheon, or Reception:

This event requires the chapter to plan and host a “social” event that gives members the opportunity to meet with legislators, talk about what interior designers do, mingle and get to know members of the profession, to discuss interior design practice, talk about the issues of the profession, and enjoy some breakfast, lunch, or drinks.

It can be formal (a specified program agenda with formal speakers) or informal (a social hour to mingle). Because this is a social event, make sure you secure participation by at least 15 designers *before* inviting a legislator(s). The more attendees you can guarantee, the more likely the legislator(s) will be to attend. Make sure at least some of the attendees are from the legislator’s district.

This event may be particularly effective if there are a large number of interior designer constituents or firms in a legislator’s district. This is a good opportunity to invite more than one local legislator. Coordinate with the legislators’ office. It is likely that the legislator will be more available if the event is held outside of the legislative session, especially if in the legislator’s home district.

The chapter should explore options to partner with other organizations or seek sponsorships to help reduce the costs on the chapter itself. See the event planning tips for help in planning this event.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR MEET & GREETs:

Many states restrict when a legislator may accept goods and services from constituents. In this case, even an appetizer or cocktail can be considered a gift. Be sure to check with a local attorney or ASID HQ before planning an event like this where legislators will be invited.

Political Giving:

Depending on the laws in your state, an event like this is a good opportunity for members to write personal political contribution checks to attending legislators.

Though it may not be stated, many legislators will expect checks to be written if they attend and will be insulted if none are received. Check with a local attorney or HQ concerning your state’s laws concerning political giving.

AFTER ANY INTERACTION WITH LEGISLATORS OR STAFF:

Send a thank you note and any follow-up materials promised.

Continue to build your relationship with the legislator(s) or staff by contacting them to check in or, if legislation is introduced, to notify them. If no legislation is running, be sure to check in the next time the issue comes up, particularly in a committee the legislator sits on or when the bill goes to the floor of the legislature for the final vote.

Don't hesitate to drop them a line by sending a holiday card, birthday card, or other communication to remind them of your presence and interests. Though handwritten communications are preferable, email is acceptable.

Don't forget the legislative staff! They are the gatekeepers to the legislators and oftentimes they greatly influence the legislator's schedule and position on bills. Treat them with respect and follow-up, personally, with them as well.

Always remember to take the legislator's and staff person's business cards and leave one of your own.

A man and a woman in business attire are collaborating at a table. The man, on the left, is looking at a laptop screen. The woman, on the right, is pointing at the screen. They are surrounded by documents and a laptop. The background is blurred, showing other people in a professional setting.

E. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is often referred to as “coalition building,” meaning relationship building across different people, associations, organizations, and professions. This does not refer to the ASID-IIDA coalitions that the interior design profession used in the past to mobilize and advocate for the profession.

Partnering with other professions and industries will make advocacy more influential. Partners allow the profession to demonstrate greater support for our issues as well as to gain additional resources for advocacy efforts. Usually partners will be groups of other professionals that have seen firsthand what interior designers do and the benefits to the construction industry and the community. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes partners can be found in the least likely places as long as you can demonstrate to them value in what interior designers do and the positions we advocate for and against.

Building relationships helps grow the industry by creating a mutual understanding of what the different professions do and how they contribute to society. Partners who have a clear understanding of the role of interior designers in the industry and the benefits the profession has on projects may be willing to speak on behalf of interior designers in an advocacy setting. Additionally, letters and testimonials supporting the profession may also be helpful in efforts to pass or defeat legislation and show support from other industries and professions on interior design issues.

Like any good relationship, coalition building does not happen overnight and is not about isolated or token interaction every few years. Building an effective partnership requires time, effort, consistent communication, and investment.

Start coalition building by reaching out to a potential partner to set up a meeting and open a dialogue between the two organizations.

If an ASID member knows someone in that organization, ask that member if they can reach out and make an introduction or assist in setting up a meeting from their contact.

Before the meeting, develop a strategy on how you want to approach the other organization. Play to their interests and explore how the two organizations can help each other.

When in the meeting, approach the potential partner by pitching that the two organizations interests are aligned in some way, talking about those shared interests and goals, how the two organizations can work together, how to build a positive and lasting relationship, and how both organizations can support each other going forward. Set goals, action items, and follow-up opportunities.

Note: This interaction need not be based in legislation or advocacy. Relationships and coalitions should be built during off-years so that when advocacy support is needed, that strong bond is already in place.

Examples of possible coalition partners include:

- Women business owners associations
- Chambers of commerce/Small business associations
- Independent business associations
- Home builders associations
- Building code official/inspectors, plans reviewers & permit technician organizations. Learn more about your local International Code Council (ICC) chapters [here](#).
- Realtor associations
- Apartment associations
- Affiliated construction trades
- General contractors associations
- Professional engineers associations
- Building & construction trades councils
- Building owners & managers associations
- Home inspectors
- Urban community building organizations
- State administrative departments
- Architects/engineers/landscape architects boards and organizations
- Kitchen and bath associations
- Retail merchants associations
- Seniors & disability rights organizations

Note: These organizations are examples. They may have different names or affiliations in your state. Use this list as guidance and, when in doubt, ask which local/state organizations would have any interest in interior design work, legislation, practice, or the industry.

E. Fundraising

Regardless of advocacy activity, **EVERY ASID chapter should have on-hand between \$2,000 and \$5,000 for advocacy each year.** Having these funds on hand is important in the event that unexpected legislation is introduced that would gravely damage the interior design profession in some way. Such funds may be needed for activities like sending advocates to the capitol to testify or meet with legislators. Funds may also be used to sponsor partners or events that would further efforts for stakeholder engagement and community outreach.

Fundraising events to raise money for advocacy are vitally important to the success of advocacy on the chapter level. Without the adequate funds to pay for events and other expenses, advocacy is difficult to successfully execute. Remember, chapters are responsible for raising the funds for advocacy in their state(s) and this funding should be in place even if legislation is not running in your state!

Chapters Should Use Creative Ways to Fundraise For Advocacy on the Chapter Level



Consider holding a fun/social event with the greatest potential for raising attendance money



Partner with other chapters or organizations (such as IIDA) to raise funds for advocacy efforts for the profession. This is a great way to spread some of the weight and responsibility to others who will benefit from successful advocacy.

Fundraising events can include:

- A raffle or silent auction on prizes or services donated by members or partners;
- Parties (such as a wine-tasting event, afternoon tea, etc.);
- Community breakfast or dinner;
- Crowdfunding or social media campaign;
- Profit-sharing from an education or training event;
- Phone banking; or
- Personal letter writing campaign.

An easy way to raise money without holding a separate fundraising event would be to secure a portion of ticket sales to other events mentioned above, or general chapter events like banquets or awards galas, to go into the advocacy fund. For example, \$5 of every banquet ticket sold goes to advocacy. This is an easy way to raise funds quickly for advocacy, while also promoting chapter events to the profession and the community.

G. Designing an Advocacy Social Media Presence That Works for Your Chapter

Advocacy is about engaging with others. One of the best tools to do so is social media. Through social media, the chapters mobilize members, designers, the public, and other groups to engage with advocacy. Social media is also a great way to connect people, share stories, and promote advocacy events and efforts. Keeping in communication with advocates is a vital part of advocacy.

For example, when you want to reach advocates to update them on the status of legislation or invite them to an event, social media is a great tool to make these things happen.

Using social media to promote advocacy is a growing trend and should be utilized by chapters and individuals. Consider how you want to use the chapter's social media account(s) and set up a thoughtful strategy. Set goals on what you seek to achieve from the efforts. There are multiple ways to consider needs and set goals. Below are two frameworks to frame setting goals and a social media strategy, but you are encouraged to research other resources and consider other methods to establish goals and a strategy.

Consider what messaging is really important for your chapter to get out into the public. Are the efforts largely to educate the public, mobilize designers and allies, provide resources on practice, or send updates on advocacy efforts? How does the social media goals fit into the larger advocacy strategy?

GOAL-ORIENTED FRAMEWORK:



SPECIFIC:

Specificity will help you track progress and measure success.



ATTAINABLE:

Set goals that are within reach but require the chapter to push and stretch efforts.



MEASURABLE:

For example, set a measurable milestone goals, such as gain 500 followers in the next year.



TIMELY:

Include a timeframe for achieving goals to hold those involved in the social media. This will also keep people accountable to meeting set milestones.



RELEVANT:

You want your goals to tie back to the larger objectives and goals of the chapter.

Objectives and Key Results Framework: These goals are not meant to be achieved fully but are ambitious and bold. Reaching milestones at a high-level (above 50%) is considered a success for this strategy. You want to answer two questions for this framework:

- Where do we go from here? There are the objectives of what you want to achieve and the impact you are trying to make by using social media in advocacy.
- How will we pace ourselves to track whether we are getting there? What specific results will indicate progress or success? We recommend having three key results you want to have for each objective.

Using features like hashtags and tagging will help spread your message to more people and organizations. Using ASID HQ-established messaging can expand the chapter's efforts to connect with interior designers across the country and open-up the chapter to other organizations and online resources. Such examples include:

#AdvocateByDesign #AxD #DesignImpactsLives #DefendDesign
or Text 'ASID' to 52886 to receive mobile advocacy updates!
(per our Phone2Action system)

Sharing posts from HQ, members, allies, and other organizations helps engage the chapter's advocacy efforts by starting conversations about the profession and shared interests across different populations and professions. For example, if the chapter is sponsoring an event of another organization, the chapter should promote the event on their social media.

- Social media is about talking to people. Don't be afraid to connect with elected officials, experts, other professionals, or organizations on social media to start conversations, build relationships, or ask questions. Though connecting and following is a great first step, consult with HQ or your state's lobbyist before sending a targeted message to or about an elected official, candidate, piece of legislation, or political organization.
- Maintaining social media accounts is important for keeping people engaged. Make sure to post often and at varying times. Share interesting news articles, stories, or posts with followers. Pay attention to what is going on in the world regarding interior design, the profession, public policy, and members.
- Finally, monitor and reflect on what works well for the chapter's social media account, what people respond to the most, and what content gaps you feel are missing. Take note of what you like from other organization's social media accounts or what they are doing well and incorporate those ideas into the chapter's account. Social media can be used for so many different purposes, find your chapter's voice and tell the stories of your members.
- Social media requires content! This means the chapter should be taking photos and videos at advocacy events to post, finding articles and research of interest, and keeping up to date on legislative news to share with followers.

**Remember! The Internet is "forever."
Think before you post. Consider the short-term
& long-term consequences of your message.**

*Please note: social media should be used as a tool to reach members, advocates, and the public.
Contact ASID HQ with any questions about what to post or how best to promote advocacy efforts on social media.*

STATE ADVOCACY RESOURCES: OUTSIDE SERVICES

In an effort to help members engage in successful advocacy, HQ has partnered with services to assist chapters with advocacy training and organization. Contact these services directly and mention ASID or talk to HQ for more guidance. Please note these are not lobbying services and chapters cannot acquire lobbying services without the permission of ASID HQ.

Further, chapters will be financially responsible for any outside advocacy services procured unless a specific arrangement has been made with HQ.

The ASID Outside Advocacy Consulting Service Partners:

Agora

Prime Advocacy