AIA Upjohn Research Initiative 2020
Call for submissions

Submit an entry >

The AIA Upjohn Research Initiative supports applied research projects that enhance the value of design and professional practice knowledge.

This AIA program funds up to six research grants of $15,000–$30,000 annually for projects completed in a 6-to 18-month period. The funds must be fully matched with hard dollars, with a maximum of 10% allocated for overhead. Grant recipients' research findings and outcomes are published online by AIA.

Grants are eligible to academic institutions, practice, and other research organizations.

2020 grants

Research should be relevant and applicable to practicing architects. Upjohn Research grant funding will be allocated to projects related to the priorities outlined in AIA's 2020 Climate Action Plan. These include a drive toward sustainable design that helps mitigate or adapt to climate change. More specifically, research projects must address one or more of these areas:

I. MITIGATION: address the building industry's footprint as a source of operational and embodied carbon; advance carbon-neutrality

- embodied carbon accounting for existing buildings
- embodied carbon opportunities in different regions and scales
- distributed energy and grid-integrated buildings
- net-zero carbon buildings (i.e., design strategies, materials, technology)
- water-energy-carbon nexus
- regenerative design (i.e., projects that lead to the improvement of the ecosystem, creating resilient and equitable systems)
- circular building economy (e.g., materials market)
- landscape or site design strategies

II. ADAPTATION: address the impacts of climate change in our spaces, buildings, structures, and communities in order to become more functional and high performing

- durability and sustainability of materials (e.g., low carbon, non-toxic, resource efficient)
- building vulnerability assessment processes to address shocks and stresses
- hazard mitigation building/retrofit design strategies for climate hazards
- temporary and transitional housing models
- building strategies (e.g., design, materials) to promote occupant and/or community health and well-being
- passive survivability design strategies
- improving equity through adaptation of spaces/neighborhoods

Submission dates

Submission deadline:
September 1, 2020 by 5pm Pacific

Notifications to applicants:
by November 2, 2020

Verification of matching funds and agreement: by November 23, 2020

Submission fee: None

Submission details

Project submissions are completed online.

- Project title
- Abstract (include project concept and brief description of methodology)
- Budget
- Summary of projected outcomes (include brief description of how the project would help mitigate or adapt to climate change)
- Clients and knowledge communities served
- Approach to collaboration/partnership
- Images (optional)
- Principal investigator(s) with institutional affiliation(s) and contact information
- Contact information for three references

Omit any identifying information from the title, descriptive text, budget, and the optional images before submitting for the blind review process.

Criteria and selection

Given their role in helping establish the program, the jury panel is comprised of seven professionals from the AIA Board Knowledge Committee and the AIA College of Fellows.

The jury evaluates each submission and selects the grant awardees based on:

- Demonstration that the research enhances the value of design and/or professional practice knowledge (30%)
- Innovation (25%)
- Evidence of collaboration/partnership (20%)
- Validity of research method (15%)
- Strength of projected outcomes related to alignment with theme (10%)