



Candidates FORUM KIT

How AIA Components Can Sponsor Political Campaign Debates

Taking the lead in encouraging discussion of vital community and state issues



**THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS**



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Introduction

Substantive issues that affect the livability, health, and safety of local communities need to be part of the political debate in federal, state, and local elections. Too often, political campaigns are about empty slogans that don't relate to the real issues that touch people's lives. Architects can play an important leadership role in bringing vital issues and values to the public's attention through the sponsorship of candidates and issue forums.

Sponsoring candidates and issue forums will assist your AIA component do the following:

- Highlight public policy issues that affect community sustainability and livability, and discuss a range of important local, state, and federal issues such as the environment, green buildings, infrastructure and public works, transportation, community planning, land use, building codes and permitting, public health and design, historic preservation, sustainable development, housing, tax incentives, liability reforms, water conservation, and small business regulation
- Help political candidates and elected officials become aware of these issues
- Ask candidates to take stands on specific issues that matter—issues important to AIA members
- Showcase for government officials the expertise available from AIA members to deal with these policy matters
- Demonstrate to politicians that architects are organized and involved—and that we care and we vote.

The idea of an AIA-sponsored candidates forum is to bring architects and political candidates together to discuss important issues before an election, whether it's for the U.S. or state Senate, the U.S. or state House, the governorship of a state, the mayoralty of a city, or a position in county or city government.

Candidates (including current and future elected officials) have the opportunity to take stands on important policy issues that may not be addressed in other campaign forums or advertising. In turn, architects have the opportunity to question candidates and to compare their positions on specific issues.

It is recommended that AIA candidates forums be open to all AIA members in a given jurisdiction as well as to members of the local news media. AIA members should not only be invited but urged to attend. Nonarchitect employees of member firms also should be invited.

In addition to candidates forums, AIA components can also sponsor forums that consider both sides of a ballot issue proposition. These AIA issue forums would use many of the same format ideas as candidates forums. Instead of candidates debating, official representatives from each side of an issue would speak on its behalf.

This "Candidates Forum Kit" is designed for AIA components to assist in the sponsorship of local and state candidates and issue forums. A timetable, agenda, model ground rules, and participant checklists for each forum type follow.

Forum Format

Set Styles

Given the nature of most AIA programs, we recommend that candidates be seated at a long rectangular table. The moderator would be seated at a facing table or may be standing at a podium. If there are selected questioners in addition to the moderator, they would be seated at tables facing the candidates. Pick a set style that is most appropriate to the event you are sponsoring. Please make sure that it is simple and dignified. Sets should not detract from the candidates and what they are saying. Set designs should be subtle and understated, especially if the forum is going to be broadcast.

Length of Forum Programs

The length of an overall forum program is problematic for many forum sponsors. If your event features only one set of candidates seeking a single office, the forum should be at least 60 minutes but never more than 90 minutes in length. If your event features multiple elections and sets of candidates, the forums for major elections (statewide offices, congressional offices, major city mayoralty offices), should be 60 minutes in length. Forums for down-ballot offices (state legislature, city council, etc.) may be as short as 30 minutes (if there are only two candidates participating) or 45 minutes (if there are three or more candidates participating).

Issuing Invitations to Candidates

It is unfair to invite candidates at the last minute. Political candidates are busy people and have intense scheduling pressures. Also, candidates need time to prepare for forums and time to study the rules and format requirements. As a rule, invitations should be issued at least eight weeks before the forum, if possible. However, in runoff or special elections with campaigns shorter than eight weeks, invitations may be sent with less notice but should be sent as early as possible.

Moderator

Selecting an experienced and strong forum moderator is one of the biggest issues facing forum sponsors. Moderators play a crucial role in managing forum programs and in making sure they are conducted fairly and professionally. Moderators also play a crucial role if one or more of the candidates refuse to abide by the

rules. That's why having experience is so important.

Forum moderators need to be prepared to handle: (a) rule enforcement, (b) question-and-answer management and follow-up, (c) technical and equipment requirements, (d) set style development, (e) problem and emergency situations, and (f) substantive policy issues that may be discussed during the forum. Before each forum, it is suggested that preparation sessions be held without the actual candidates or representatives of the candidates. This rehearsal mock forum should allow the moderator to practice how to enforce forum rules and how to cut candidates off when necessary.

Questions

Questioners must not show bias for or against any point of view, or preference or opposition for any candidate, in their questioning. They also should not make comments on a candidate's answer if it is not a necessary part of a follow-up question. Questions should be phrased using words that are generally understandable to a public audience.

Surrogates

Political campaigns—especially in statewide elections where proximity to a forum location is an issue—will occasionally ask to send surrogates to a forum on behalf of their candidate. Although there are legitimate schedule conflicts and travel burdens that make it difficult (or in some cases impossible) for candidates to participate in forums, allowing surrogates to participate—along with opposing candidates—greatly diminishes the importance and usefulness of forums and should be discouraged.

The dynamic of discussion is often altered in forums where surrogates are used. In some cases, surrogates are not prepared to adequately handle all of the questions asked and, consequently, do not fully participate in the discussion at hand. In other cases, surrogates simply repeat prepackaged sound bites and campaign slogans without adding to the argumentation process.

When surrogates are, themselves, prominent elected officials, they often speak for themselves and are not always prepared or willing to completely or accurately represent the candidate's views. In some cases, candi-

dates represented by surrogates are accorded an unfair advantage in that they are given an additional layer of protection against any possible backlash to attacks or missteps. The failure of a candidate to personally appear can be considered, in effect, a decline of the invitation to the forum.

At the start of the debate, the moderator or AIA component executive must announce which candidates were invited and which accepted and declined. If a candidate accepted but does not show up, the moderator or AIA component executive must explain the circumstances.

In noncandidate ballot issue forums, the person invited to the forum should be a designated representative of the official campaign committee organized for that purpose.

Rule Enforcement

Forum participants should be required to abide by all rules, provided that the participants were given notice of those rules well in advance of the forum. Forum moderators should be charged with enforcing rules and doing so fairly and evenhandedly.

When rules allow for areas of flexibility and unstructured discussion, the moderator should be charged with making sure the forum discussion is carried out fairly and evenhandedly. Rules should include specific sanctions that the moderator may impose in case of violations; when a candidate fails to abide by the rules (exceeds time limits, interrupts other candidates, etc.), the moderator should interrupt the speaker and make the violation known. If the candidate refuses to obey the rules, the moderator should have the option to turn off the speaker's microphone and should issue a warning that repeated violations will result in the candidate being asked to leave the forum. If a candidate is asked to leave the forum, the moderator shall have the right to allow the candidate to reenter the forum.

Once rules are established, they should not be changed or modified unless all candidates are notified of the proposed change or modification before the start of the forum and all candidates assent to it.

Organizational Timeline

At least 10 weeks before forum

The AIA component sponsoring the forum selects a date for the forum. It is recommended that forums are not held during the final three to four weeks before an election in major elections. In smaller elections, it is acceptable to time the forum up to two weeks before an election.

Draw up the candidate list for invitations, determine the ground rules and the format, select the moderator, secure the facility, and make room arrangements. The room used should be large enough to accommodate the expected audience but not so big that attendance appears poor.

8 weeks before forum

Mail invitations to candidates. Include the Ground Rules, the Forum Information Sheet, and the text of the first question that will be asked of all candidates. Call each candidate two days after the invitations are mailed, following up the invitation.

6 weeks before forum

Invite all AIA members in the area, as well as employees, by mail and e-mail. Friends and guests of the AIA should also be invited.

5 weeks before forum

Candidates should confirm their participation by this date. Once candidates confirm, send a press release to the local media announcing the forum and inviting the local news media.

4 weeks before forum

Finalize all facility arrangements.

2 weeks before forum

Mail a follow-up post-card invitation to all AIA members, employees, and guests. Call all AIA members to urge their attendance. Call all candidates to reconfirm the details. The forum arrangements committee should meet and finalize all checklist items for the event.

Day before forum

Send a follow-up e-mail to all AIA members. Call all members of the media as a reminder. Call candidates again to reconfirm details.

Sample Forum Program Agenda

Call to Order

The AIA component executive calls the meeting to order.

- Explain why the AIA is sponsoring the forum. (2–3 minutes)
- Introduce AIA component leaders present. (1–2 minutes)
- Introduce the candidates. (2–3 minutes)
- Name candidates who were invited and who did not accept. Explain the criteria used to include or exclude candidates (see page 24 on candidate inclusion).

Opening Question

Format: The moderator asks both candidates the Opening Question, Question 1. Question 1 should be submitted to all the candidates before the forum as part of their original invitation to the forum. Their answers to this question will be, in effect, their opening statements.

In forums with two candidates, each of them should be given four minutes to answer this question. In forums with three or more candidates, each of them should be given three minutes to answer this question. Then, each candidate will have one minute to rebut answers.

We recommend this language for Question 1:

“Through the planning and design of buildings, architects shape the public and private places in which we work and live. Architects share our communities’ deep concerns that our homes, neighborhoods, and communities will be safe, healthy, and sustainable. We would like to ask each of you: What are your priorities with respect to issues in this campaign involving the environment, transportation, housing, and growth? And what actions will you take in these areas that will enhance the quality of life for the people of our . . . (state, county, city, town, or district)?”

If the moderator feels that anything said by either or both of the candidates needs to be clarified, or expanded

upon, the moderator has the discretion to ask a follow-up question.

If the follow-up question is directed to both candidates, they should each be given two minutes to answer.

If it is directed at only one candidate, that candidate should have two minutes to answer and the other candidate(s) should be given one minute to rebut.

However, if the moderator feels the discussion is particularly constructive, he or she may decide to expand the amount of time each candidate has to answer follow-ups, to rebut and to respond, provided that each candidate is given equal time.

Nonetheless, the moderator must always maintain control of the program and ensure that the initial discussion doesn’t jeopardize the time available to consider other issues and questions.

Answer Block

1. Candidate A answers. (4 minutes)
2. Candidate B answers. (4 minutes)
3. Moderator gives Candidate A an opportunity to rebut Candidate B. (1 minute)
4. Moderator gives Candidate B an opportunity to rebut Candidate A. (1 minute)

Subsequent Question-and-Answer Blocks

Format: When two or three candidates are participating, it is suggested that each candidate have two minutes to answer and one minute to rebut.

When there are four or more candidates participating, it is suggested that each candidate have two minutes to answer and no opportunity to rebut, unless one candidate levels an attack against another candidate; in that case, at the moderator’s discretion, the candidate attacked should be given one minute to rebut.

There generally should be no more than five moderator-asked questions when there are two candidates, and no more than four moderator-asked questions when there are three or more candidates.

If the candidates' answers are unusually short, an extra question or two would be acceptable. For possible question topics, see page 28.

**Moderator asks both candidates Question 2.
(less than 30 seconds)**

1. Candidate A answers. (2 minutes)
2. Candidate B answers. (2 minutes)
3. Moderator gives Candidate A an opportunity to rebut Candidate B. (1 minute)
4. Moderator gives Candidate B an opportunity to rebut Candidate A. (1 minute)

**Moderator asks both candidates Question 3.
(less than 30 seconds)**

1. Candidate A answers. (2 minutes)
2. Candidate B answers. (2 minutes)
3. Moderator gives Candidate A an opportunity to rebut Candidate B. (1 minute)
4. Moderator gives Candidate B an opportunity to rebut Candidate A. (1 minute)

**Moderator asks both candidates Question 4.
(less than 30 seconds)**

1. Candidate A answers. (2 minutes)
2. Candidate B answers. (2 minutes)
3. Moderator gives Candidate A an opportunity to rebut Candidate B. (1 minute)
4. Moderator gives Candidate B an opportunity to rebut Candidate A. (1 minute)

**Moderator asks both candidates Question 5.
(less than 30 seconds)**

1. Candidate A answers. (2 minutes)
2. Candidate B answers. (2 minutes)
3. Moderator gives Candidate A an opportunity to rebut Candidate B. (1 minute)

4. Moderator gives Candidate B an opportunity to rebut Candidate A. (1 minute)

Audience Question-and-Answer Session

Format: The moderator opens the question-and-answer session to members of the audience. Questions can be directed to one candidate, or to both.

If a question is directed to both candidates, each candidate is given two minutes to answer and one minute to rebut one another's answers. If the question is directed to only one candidate, that candidate is given two minutes to answer, the other candidate is given one minute to rebut, and the candidate who answered the question is given 30 seconds to respond to the rebuttal.

Depending on time available and the number of audience questioners, it is suggested that no more than four or five audience questions be allowed. AIA members should be given priority to ask questions. After AIA members have a chance to ask questions, representatives of the news media should have the next priority.

Closing Statements

Format: If there are two or three candidates, each one should be given two minutes to close. If there are four or more candidates, each should be given one minute to close.

Moderator calls upon the candidates to give closing statements:

1. Candidate B closes. (2 minutes)
2. Candidate A closes. (2 minutes)

Program Conclusion

Moderator closes the program:

- Thanks candidates and the audience on behalf of the AIA. (less than 1 minute)
- Gives brief closing comments and ends the program. (less than 1 minute)
- If another candidate forum is scheduled immediately after, call for a 10-minute break to assemble the next round of candidates.

Sample Letter to Invite Candidates

Mary B. Jones
23 Main Street
Center City, KS 10101

Dear Ms. Jones:

The American Institute of Architects of Center City wishes to invite you to participate in a Mayoral Candidates Forum, Thursday, September 19. The forum will begin at eight o'clock in the evening and will last one hour. The news media have been invited to cover the event.

The forum will be held at the Thomas Jefferson High School Auditorium, 678 North Street, Center City. Candidates Tom White and George Smith also have been invited to participate.

The purpose of this forum is to give candidates for mayor an opportunity to address a wide range of issues that affect community sustainability and livability in our city.

Enclosed you will find a Forum Information Sheet, which provides important details on location and format, and a copy of the Forum Ground Rules.

The following opening question will be asked of all candidates:

“Through the planning and design of buildings, architects shape the public and private places in which we work and live. Architects share our communities’ deep concerns that our homes, neighborhoods, and communities will be safe, healthy, and sustainable. We would like to ask each of you: What are your priorities with respect to issues in this campaign involving the environment, transportation, housing, and growth? And what actions will you take in these areas that will enhance the quality of life for the people of our city?”

Please accept or decline this invitation in writing and by phone within two weeks of receiving this letter.

You may call *[phone number]* if you or your staff has questions.

Thank you for your time. We believe this is a great opportunity for you, our many members and staff, and all the voters of Center City.

Sincerely,

Bob Martin, AIA
President, AIA Center City

AIA Forum Information Sheet

Date of event

Starting time of event

Candidates must arrive no later than

Anticipated completion time of forum

Location of forum/specific room

Name and cell phone number of forum contact in case of emergency

Candidates who have been invited to participate

The idea of an AIA Candidates Forum is to bring architects and political candidates together to discuss important issues. It is an opportunity for candidates to explain their positions on important policy issues.

Forum Format

All the candidates will be given the first question in advance. This question will be addressed to all the candidates:

“Through the planning and design of buildings, architects shape the public and private places in which we work and live. Architects share our communities’ deep concerns that our homes, neighborhoods, and communities will be safe, healthy, and sustainable. We would like to ask each of you: What are your priorities with respect to issues in this campaign involving the environment, transportation, housing, and growth? And what actions will you take in these areas that will enhance the quality of life for the people of our . . . (state, county, city, town, or district)?”

Each candidate will have up to [*three or four*] minutes to answer it. This answer will, in effect, be each candidate’s opening statement. Each candidate will then have up to one minute to rebut the opposition’s answer.

The forum moderator will then pose a series of questions to all the candidates. Each candidate has two minutes to answer and one minute to rebut. Exception: If there are four or more candidates participating, there will be no opportunity to rebut.

After the moderator poses this series of questions, members of the audience will be allowed to ask questions. Questions can be directed to one candidate, or to both. If a question is directed to both candidates, each candidate is given two minutes to answer and one minute to rebut one another’s answers. If the question is directed to only one candidate, that candidate is given two minutes to answer, the other candidate is given one minute to rebut, and the candidate who answered the question is given 30 seconds to respond to the rebuttal. Exception: If there are four or more candidates participating, there will be no opportunity to rebut or respond.

The invited news media, AIA members, and others in the audience may ask questions.

Following the audience question-and-answer period, each candidate will be allowed to give a closing statement of no longer than [*one or two*] minutes.

Candidates Forum Ground Rules

Forum invitations. All candidates who are invited to the forum shall be issued invitations in the same manner and at the same time.

Forum sponsors shall issue invitations to the forum in a fair and evenhanded manner where there is documentary evidence of the time and manner of such invitation. As a rule, invitations should be issued at least eight weeks before the forum, if possible. However, in runoff or special elections with campaigns shorter than eight weeks, invitations may be sent with less notice but should be sent as early as possible.

A forum invitation shall include the exact time and place of the forum and all other relevant information. It also shall include a full explanation of the format and a copy of the ground rules.

Accepting a forum invitation. Each invited candidate should be given at least two weeks after receipt of the invitation to decide whether he or she will attend.

Declining a forum invitation. If a candidate does not accept the invitation to the forum, that candidate has a responsibility to notify the AIA sponsor in a timely manner and to provide an explanation in writing.

The AIA component shall include the candidate's full statement with reasons for declining the invitation when distributing releases to the news media announcing forum participants. If a candidate declines a forum invitation, but then changes his or her mind before the forum is held, the sponsoring component must determine whether the candidate should be included.

If several candidates have been invited to a forum and enough candidates accept the invitation to hold the forum, the forum sponsor shall allow candidates who declined the invitation to submit a short statement of up to 50 words explaining why they are not participating. If such a statement is submitted by the candidate and is received by the forum sponsor at least three days before the forum, the moderator shall publicly read this statement at the beginning of the forum program.

Communication. Any communication from the sponsoring organization about the forum relevant to the public, news media, or the candidates shall be provided to all the candidates simultaneously.

Early and equal access. Each candidate, or appointed representatives of each candidate, shall have supervised access to the forum site and stage area between 30 and 60 minutes before the forum begins.

Campaign materials. Candidates participating in the forum are allowed to bring enough copies of one piece of campaign material for the anticipated audience. These materials will be available on a table in the back of the room for audience members to pick up on their own. Candidates are not allowed to bring into the room any other materials, such as banners, signs, posters, hats, or balloons.

Assistance from others. The candidate shall not have access to any person during the forum other than the moderator and the questioners, and, in the case of an emergency, a member of the production crew, sponsor, or security staff.

Audience composition. To ensure that there is not an unfair imbalance of audience members, the sponsoring component of the forum will allow up to six campaign workers or staff members in the room where the forum is held. In addition, candidates may bring spouses, children, siblings, and parents.

Audience reaction. The live audience will be instructed not to applaud or make noise during the forum or do anything visible or audible to express support or opposition to any candidate during the forum.

Candidate introductions. The moderator will introduce candidates. The introduction will include: (a) the candidate's name, as provided by the candidate; (b) the candidate's current public office title (if applicable), former public office title (if not currently a public official) and/or a fair description of his or her current occupation; and (c) the candidate's political party affiliation (if the forum involves candidates of more than

one party). Candidates should be introduced in surname alphabetical order.

Candidate titles. After the introductions, candidates will be referred to as “Mr.” and “Ms.” Married women may request to be referred to as “Mrs.”

Order of statements. When there are two candidates participating, the order of opening and closing statements shall be determined by a coin toss before the forum program. The winner of the toss determines whether he or she will open first. Candidates who open first will close second. Candidates who open second, close first. When there are multiple candidates, the order of opening and closing statements shall be determined by drawing lots (1, 2, 3, etc.) before the forum program. The order for closing statements shall be the reverse of the opening statements.

Time limits. Time limits on statements, answers, rebuttals, and responses will be monitored and enforced. See the Forum Information Sheet for details.

Timekeeping. The timekeeper shall be someone other than the moderator or a questioner.

In statements or answers that are two minutes or more, there will be three signals given to candidates: The first when there are 20 seconds left; the second when there are 10 seconds left; and the third, a “stop” signal, when the time has run out.

In statements or answers that are less than two minutes, there will be two signals given to candidates: The first when there are 10 seconds left; the second, a “stop” signal, when the time has run out.

If necessary, the timekeeper shall ring a bell two to three seconds after the final “stop” signal is given, and the moderator shall immediately interrupt the candidate and discontinue the statement or answer.

Rule enforcement. The moderator shall enforce all rules and time limits. The moderator may interrupt any participant to enforce the rules and format requirements. The moderator may also take as much time as is needed to explain that a rule has been violated and that the rule was agreed to in advance by all participants.

Disruptive behavior. If a candidate demonstrates unreasonably disruptive behavior and repeatedly violates the rules, the moderator shall have the right to stop the program, turn off the candidate’s microphone, and ask

the candidate to leave the forum. If a candidate is asked to leave the forum, the remaining candidate or candidates shall be allowed to continue to the end of the program. If a candidate is asked to leave the forum, the moderator shall have the right to allow the candidate to reenter.

If any member of the live audience or any person in the forum facility, invited or not, demonstrates unreasonably disruptive behavior, the moderator shall have the right to stop the program and to ask security to remove the person or persons from the forum room or facility.

Adherence to subject matter. The moderator may interrupt any candidate if he or she believes the candidate is straying from the subject matter of a question.

Candidate interruptions. The candidates shall not be allowed to interrupt one another. It is the moderator’s responsibility to enforce this rule.

Audience questions. Each audience question shall relate to one subject only and shall be clearly stated. If a questioner violates this rule, the moderator may restate the question.

Restating questions. The moderator may restate any question that is unclear.

Question disclosure. In advance of the forum, neither the moderator nor any AIA member or staff member shall disclose the topic or substance of any question they intend to ask during the forum to any candidate or representative of any candidate’s campaign, or to any person who may communicate the information to a candidate or representative of a candidate’s campaign, unless the same information is disclosed at the same time to all of the candidates who are expected to participate in the forum.

The moderator shall disclose to the forum audience which questions were made known to the candidates in advance.

Moderator preforum statements. Forum moderators, after their selection, shall make no public statements indicating support or nonsupport, preference or disrespect, for any candidate expected to participate in the forum.

Closing statements and rebuttals. Closing statements made by candidates shall not include charges or attacks against another candidate that have not been previously

raised during the forum. If a candidate violates this rule and the attacked candidate has already completed his or her closing statement, the moderator may offer the attacked candidate the right to make a short rebuttal (30 seconds or less), if time permits, at the end of the closing statement segment.

Accommodating physical limitations. The set, format, and staging of a forum shall reasonably accommodate the physical limitations of all participating candidates.

No indication of preference. The set, format, and staging of a forum shall in no way show any preference, opposition, or disrespect to any of the candidates.

Cameras. Except for professional photographers or camera crews provided by the forum sponsor, no one in the forum room shall be allowed to use flash cameras or motor-driven cameras during the forum program.

No distractions. Forum sponsors shall make every effort to prohibit anything that may be a distraction to the candidates participating in the forum. This includes adjusting lighting, fixing microphones, opening and closing doors, moving camera equipment and furniture, etc.

Room temperature. Forum sponsors should ensure that the room temperature is always comfortable for all the participants and within a normal range. To compensate for heat from lighting, room temperature may have to be set lower at the outset of the program.

Media access. Forum sponsors shall make every effort to accommodate members of the news media but in a way that does not disrupt the program or distract the candidates. To accomplish this, an area for the news media should be assigned to allow for arrival and departure photographs of the candidates and postforum interviews.

Candidate positions. Each candidate is to remain behind the table where he or she is seated.

Water. A glass or small bottle of water will be provided on the table or nearby.

Candidate materials. Candidates are allowed to bring their own writing instrument and may write notes for their own use throughout the forum program. They may also bring in a notebook or a folder of notes. Candidates are not allowed to use charts, graphs, signs, or other audio or visual material.

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 10, 2004

Press contact:
Bob Martin, 222-333-3333

AIA to Sponsor Mayoral Candidates Forum, Sept. 19

The American Institute of Architects of Center City is sponsoring a Mayoral Candidates Forum, Thursday, September 19, beginning at eight o'clock in the evening, in the Thomas Jefferson High School Auditorium, 678 North Street, Center City.

All three candidates for mayor—Mary Jones, Tom White, and George Smith—have been invited and have agreed to participate in the forum.

“The purpose of this forum,” says AIA Center City President Bob Martin, “is to give candidates for mayor an opportunity to address policy issues vital to our city’s future. These issues involve a range of crucial matters that include community planning, land use, infrastructure, environmental sustainability, streets and drainage, parks and playgrounds, economic development, school construction, historic preservation, cultural enhancements, and public health and safety.”

The moderator, James Jones, the dean of the Center City School of Architecture, will ask each candidate the same opening question, which has been submitted in advance, followed by a series of questions. Members of the audience and the news media will then have an opportunity to ask candidates additional questions. ###

Forum Planning Checklists

General Forum Planning

- Select a forum event site, date, and back-up date, at least two months in advance.
- Send out a “save the date” notice to each candidate as well as to the local news media. This will enable candidates and their campaigns to plan ahead or alert you to a date that won’t work. The site will be dictated by whether there will be an audience, accessibility for candidates and audience members, and whether the forum is broadcast.
- Prepare a budget (see next section for budget items).
- Develop a preliminary format and set of ground rules (including time limits, types of speeches, and forum set style).
- Send official letters of invitation to the forum to candidates and include a copy of the rules and format. Determine if you will allow surrogates.
- Invite all AIA members and staff who reside in the area of the election(s).
- Select a moderator and a timekeeper.
- Organize a planning session and send letters of invitation.
- Send a follow-up letter to the candidates including the Forum Information Sheet and a copy of the Forum Ground Rules.
- Publicize the forum via news releases, advertising, newsletters, etc. (*Sample press release follows.*)
- Print programs that include brief biographies of the candidates, names of sponsors, etc.
- Secure donations of goods and services from AIA members or vendors.
- Provide participants with multiple phone numbers to get information prior to the forum. Provide phone numbers where sponsors can be reached at the forum hall the night of the forum. Ask campaigns to

submit phone numbers for campaign staff members to be reached the day of the forum.

- Determine how audience seating will be arranged and prepare tickets if the facility has limited seating.
- Solicit topics for questions from members of your organization or the public.
- Have someone categorize the types of recurring questions and give them to the moderator and panelists.

Forum Budget

- Forum site.** Is there a location that is free of charge or will you need to pay a fee? Is there a set fee or is it by the hour? Remember that you will need time for set up and clean up.
- Furniture.** Does the site include furniture (such as chairs for the audience, lectern, tables, etc.), or will you have to rent or secure furniture from another source?
- Electrical.** Do you need to rent microphones, sound equipment, lights, and the like? Are additional power sources necessary?
- Printed materials:** invitations, programs for audience members, publicity items, and postage.
- Labor.** Do you need to hire individuals to help set up the site and clean up afterward? Do you need to hire individuals to monitor the sound system? Do you need to hire security? Does the site supply staff that you pay on an hourly basis? If it is a televised forum, do you need a makeup person?
- Transcripts and recording equipment.** Do you intend to record the forum and make transcripts available?
- Telephone.** Do you have enough cell phones?
- Refreshments.** Do you plan to have a reception afterward? When possible, find someone to donate materials and services to reduce costs.

Forum Site

- Set up stage (chairs, table for candidates, lectern for moderator, microphones, water, pencils and paper, timing mechanism for the timekeeper).
- Set up seats for the audience if there are no stationary seats. If there is open seating, designate sections for dignitaries or sponsors and campaign families and staff. Set up microphones in the aisles for audience questions, if they are a part of the format.
- Set up a table for materials supplied by candidates.
- Set up a media viewing section. Be sure to have additional power sources available and tables for computers.
- Have stopwatches or other timing devices and time cards or signals for the timekeeper.
- Put programs on chairs or arrange to have ushers distribute them as audience members arrive.
- Double-check all microphones. If televised or broadcast on radio, try to have a back-up system.
- If audience questions are part of the format, have paper and pencils available for audience members to write questions. Assign ushers to collect questions if they are to be read by the moderator rather than asked directly by the audience members.
- Reserve parking spaces for all candidates, if there is a parking problem. Arrange for someone to greet candidates in the parking lot and escort them to their preparation rooms.
- Have candidates and moderator arrive before the forum to review rules, test microphones, etc.
- Have water, soft drinks, coffee, etc. in the candidates' prep rooms.
- Have staff prepare refreshments for reception.
- Arrange for the site to be cleaned and borrowed or rented equipment to be returned.
- Broadcast the forum on the component Web site.
- Contact participants and ask for suggestions for future forums.
- Return all borrowed or rented equipment.
- Prepare a file of news clippings, broadcast video or audiotapes, and reports about the forums.
- Pay bills.
- Hold a staff meeting and prepare a memorandum analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the event and what to do differently for the next forum.

Moderator's Responsibilities

Post-Forum Tasks

- Review the rules and procedures.
 - Study the key issues that may be raised, as well as candidate positions on those issues.
 - Prepare an opening statement to summarize audience and participant rules.
 - Prepare introductions of candidates and panelists.
 - Meet with the timekeeper to coordinate signals.
 - Arrive at least one hour before the forum to become familiar with the setting and to test microphones.
 - Use paper and pencil to help keep track of rotation of questions.
 - Meet with question panelists and candidates to review rules and procedures.
 - In phrasing questions after the opening question, avoid making speeches or providing lengthy introductions to questions. Consider simple structure such as, "What is your position on 'blank' issue?" or "How do you propose to protect key state services without raising taxes?"
 - Consult the candidates' information when designing questions.
 - Structure questions to provide comparisons of candidates' positions or to force candidates to extend their original response in follow-up or subsequent questions. Try to coordinate with other panelists to ask multiple questions on a topic rather than having a random selection of unrelated issues that allow candidates to give only sound-bite responses.
- Issue a news release about the forum.
 - Send thank you letters to all participants, as well as to everyone who helped with arrangements or made donations.

CANDIDATE INCLUSION:

Which Candidates to Invite?

It is perfectly acceptable to invite to a forum all the candidates in a specific election. In fact, when planning a forum, it is preferable to err on the side of inclusion. However, if there are a large number of candidates in a specific election, and some of those candidates do not seem to have a serious purpose, you may want to limit the number of participating candidates.

There is no more vexing problem in sponsoring political candidates forums than whether to include nonmajor candidates. Candidate exclusion is a difficult issue because it requires resolving the legitimate but conflicting principles of fairness and practicality.

Advocates of total inclusion argue that it is unfair to exclude any candidate from participating in a public forum because every candidate has a right to be heard and every voter has a right to hear every candidate. Advocates of limited inclusion argue that only candidates who have a reasonable chance of winning should participate so that forums afford voters the best opportunity to evaluate only those candidates who are in actual contention. To include minor candidates with little or no chance of winning, they argue, only distracts voters, crowds the forum's format, and reduces the amount of time the "major" candidates have to address important issues.

Candidates forum inclusion is not only a matter of principle, it is also a matter of politics. Political analysts have concluded that inclusion of nonmajor candidates in forums adds credibility to their candidacies and provides them an opportunity to increase their share of the votes on Election Day.

Inclusion of nonmajor and third-party candidates in forums can be a factor even in races in which such candidates cannot mount winning campaigns of their own: it can give minor candidates the ability to tip the election to one major candidate by siphoning more votes from another.

The test for including a candidate should be seriousness of purpose. All candidates who have a serious purpose should be included in forums.

Candidates who do not have a serious purpose include "joke" candidates; candidates who do not campaign in a meaningful way; and candidates who admit that their candidacies have only symbolic or trivial intentions.

It is important that nonmajor and third-party candidates who begin their candidacies with little public support or name recognition are nonetheless equitably provided reasonable opportunities to present their credentials and their positions on the issues during the early stages of an election campaign.

To demonstrate seriousness of purpose to be included in forums during the out-period, the candidate shall meet all legal qualifications to hold the office and has either qualified for the ballot or is mounting a write-in campaign for the office sought. In addition, the candidate must meet one or more of the following inclusion criteria:

1. The candidate has received 5 percent or more of the vote, tested in a trial heat in a professionally conducted public opinion survey by an experienced political pollster based on a scientific sample of the entire electorate with a margin of error of less than 5 percent (at a 95 percent level of confidence).
2. The candidate has reported in legal documents filed with federal, state, or local government entities the receipt, during that election campaign, of at least one campaign contribution per 1,000 residents of the constituency (based on the total number of persons enumerated in the last U.S. census) of \$50 or more, excluding contributions received from the candidate himself or herself, the candidate's spouse, or the candidate's natural or adopted children. (Contributors do not have to be residents of the constituency to be counted.)
3. The candidate previously had been elected to, or held, the office that he or she is seeking.
4. The candidate is the official nominee of a political party that: (a) received at least 3 percent of the vote in the most recent gubernatorial general election in the state where the constituency is located; (b)

received at least 3 percent of the vote in the prior presidential general election in the state where the constituency is located; or (c) received at least 5 percent of the vote in the prior general election for the office that he or she is seeking.

5. The candidate sought, during the previous eight years, the nomination of a political party in a primary election to the same office he or she is seeking, provided, however, that the candidate either won the primary or received a number of votes equal to at least 5 percent of the total number of all registered or qualified voters in the constituency in said primary election.
6. The candidate sought the same office during the previous eight years and received at least 20 percent of the vote in the general election.
7. The candidate met a legal petition requirement to be placed on the ballot, provided, however, that said petition legally required the valid signatures of a number of registered or qualified voters in an amount equal to at least 3 per 1,000 residents of the constituency (based on the total number of persons enumerated in the last U.S. census).
8. (a) In a statewide congressional or state legislative election: The candidate has served, or is currently serving, as governor, as a constitutional officer elected statewide in the state, as a member of the U.S. Senate, as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, as a member of an elected statewide governing body, or as a member of the state legislature in the state where the constituency is located.

(b) In a local, county, or municipal election: The candidate has served, or is currently serving, as governor, as a constitutional officer elected statewide, as a member of the U.S. Senate, as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, as a member of an elected statewide governing body, as a member of the state legislature, as a countywide elected official, as a member of a countywide governing body, as a citywide elected municipal official, or as a member of an elected citywide governing body in the state where the constituency is located.

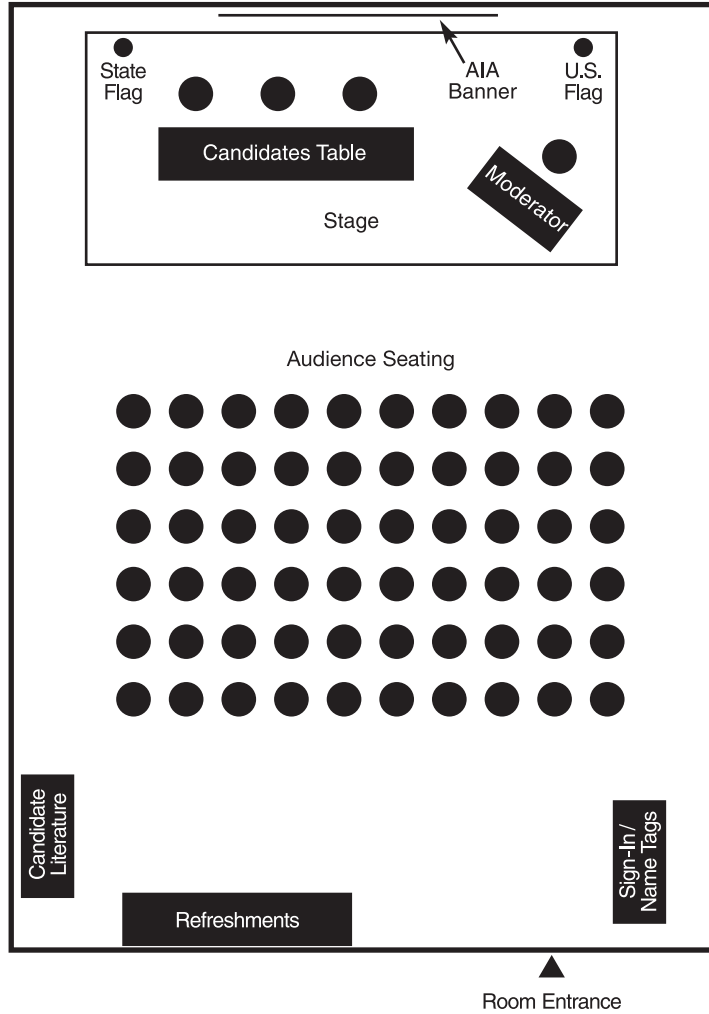
The following examples illustrate the above criteria:

- Charlie Peterson is running for mayor of Jefferson City, population 22,356. To meet criterion 2, he

would need to have raised at least 22 contributions of \$50 or more.

- John Jones, the Libertarian Party nominee for the state Assembly seat, would meet criterion 4a if the Libertarian Party candidate for president of the United States had received at least 3 percent of the statewide vote in the last presidential election.
- Mary Smith, the Green Party nominee for mayor of Santa Fe, would meet criterion 4b if the Green Party candidate for governor of New Mexico had received at least 3 percent of the statewide vote in the last gubernatorial election.
- Bill Thompson, the Natural Law nominee for Congress in the Second District, would meet criterion 4c if he had received at least 5 percent of the vote in the Second District in the last general election for Congress.
- Jane Martin, who received 16,565 votes in the Democratic primary for Congress in the Third District of her state in the prior congressional election, would meet criterion 5 in this election provided that there were fewer than 331,300 eligible or registered voters in the district at the time of her primary election, ensuring that she received at least 5 percent of that total.
- Ralph Kelly, a candidate for governor, received 21 percent of the vote as an independent candidate for governor in the election eight years earlier. He would meet criterion 6.
- Phil Pitts, a Republican candidate for Congress from the Fourth District, had been his party's nominee for Congress from the Fourth District two years before, losing 63 to 37 percent. He would meet criterion 6.

Sample Forum Room Layout



Possible Topics for Questions

We recommend this language for the opening question for all candidates:

“Through the planning and design of buildings, architects shape the public and private places in which we work and live. Architects share our communities’ deep concerns that our homes, neighborhoods, and communities will be safe, healthy, and sustainable. We would like to ask each of you: What are your priorities with respect to issues in this campaign involving the environment, transportation, housing, and growth? And what actions will you take in these areas that will enhance the quality of life for the people of our . . . (state, county, city, town, or district)?”

The following are topic ideas for subsequent moderator-asked questions. Actual questions should reflect the hot issues in your area as well as your members’ interests:

- Quality-based selection of architects for public projects
- Changes in building codes and permitting advocated by your AIA component
- Green building design standards in public structures and facilities that encourage energy conservation, public health, and safety
- Tax incentives to encourage historic preservation and affordable housing
- Plans and policies to deal with sprawl and traffic congestion
- Plans and policies to encourage sustainable development
- Formal inclusion of architects in public planning projects
- Professional service taxes
- Professional licensing measures advocated by your AIA component
- Liability reforms advocated by your AIA component
- Legislative definitions of “engineers” and “interior designers” as advocated by your AIA component
- State, local, and federal government procurement policies
- Security design features in public structures and facilities
- Water conservation, the built environment, and economic growth
- Funding of state and local public facilities, such as transportation projects and school construction