

## **Why the AIA Ohio PAC?**

As architects, we design a landscape, an environment, an outdoor space, or a structure that will have a lasting effect on our environment. Each day we strive to create something new, to build something better, or to restore an existing space or building to a new life. With each effort, we work to promote the profession of architecture; a profession that has one of the most substantial influences on our lives, and one that each day, defines our very quality of life.

As a profession, architecture, like many of the buildings we design, does not stand alone. As architects, we work to connect our designs with what exists around us and we often collaborate with consultants and developers to make something from nothing. From an advocacy standpoint, AIA takes a similar approach. Advocacy is about our ability to position the profession within the framework of the many other interests and needs that exist both within and outside of the world of design and construction. The AIA brings many voices together as one to represent a single voice focused on design and community and in designing safe and healthy structures for those individuals with whom we work.

As a way of supporting architecture, the AIA and AIA Ohio, have worked to create advocacy efforts with the use of the PAC as a way to expand our own efforts and to work with others who have the same visions and see the same needs. Through the PAC, the members of the AIA support those in public office, who share similar concerns and who have similar interests. *The use of PAC funds helps those who help us!*

## **PAC, it's not just about giving money**

We all hear the term “grassroots” and, like the word “architect,” it seems that it can be used to mean just about anything. At the AIA, grassroots can mean a lot of things as well. On the national level, we usually refer to “Grassroots” as the annual leadership meeting that helps frame and define the advocacy and leadership efforts of the Institute. We sometimes use it in the same way at AIA Ohio for our spring meeting. But in reality, for us, grassroots is simply about getting every member involved.

That is really the most important part of our PAC efforts. Yes, we have said it's about getting money, and it is. Without contributions to the PAC, we cannot financially help those who support us as they seek office or re-election. But just as importantly, at the state level, our contributing to the PAC is also about building connections with those who represent us, and those who can and will influence the future of our profession. By contributing to the PAC and by participating in the AIA Ohio “Triple Play” members can become part of “our” advocacy effort.

## **What we have done...and what do we need to do**

Each year, AIA Ohio has worked through the AIA Ohio Board of Directors and local PAC campaign chairs to build our PAC funds and to create relationships with those who represent us in the administration, state office, or the legislature. Our past

efforts have proven successful and have provided us with many important legislative victories. With this strong foundation, AIA Ohio is challenged to increase our efforts, expand our vision, and more directly take on the challenges that we face as a profession. This challenge translates simply into participation. Our past efforts have concentrated simply on establishing and meeting financial goals. These annual campaigns have made a big difference in our efforts and have allowed us to continue to fund the Triple Play. They have also permitted us to, on occasion, directly support state officeholders who both understand and are sympathetic to the same issues that concern us as a profession. Yet, we still need to do more.

## **Becoming Engaged**

While we have both good years and some not-so-good years with our campaigns, we have in some ways been limited in our success. This is due mainly to the size of our organization. Going forward, AIA Ohio is attempting to redirect our efforts to concentrate not only on PAC financial goals, but also on increased participation. Working in conjunction with the Institute, the AIA Ohio Valley has already challenged AIA Ohio to achieve 100% participation from our board members for the federal PAC. We ask that each officer and board member of AIA Ohio and our local components also commit to 100% participation in the AIA Ohio PAC effort as leaders within our profession. Even more so, we ask that you not only contribute, but also begin to build relationships with state officeholders in your area. Participation by our current and future leadership is so very important in delivering our message.

In other communications we have noted that we have re-directed our PAC efforts to set aside specific times of the year to concentrate separately on our state and federal PACs. Simply, our federal PAC effort is in the spring and our state effort is in the fall. Our connections and contacts with state officeholders and legislators however, still need to be year round.

As in the past, each chapter will be challenged with a monetary goal. These goals have been made more realistic and more attainable, giving both large and small chapters the opportunity to succeed. But, instead of us focusing on just collecting contributions, we are looking to *increase participation* as well. We have included a participation goal for each component that will *not only* look toward meeting a percentage of each chapter's membership, but rather increase participation over previous years. Only through the expansion of our efforts will we be able to expand our successes.

## **Results, Results, Results**

As with anything, there are any number of ways to get from point A to point B. With each AIA Ohio PAC campaign, we continue our multi-year efforts to grow our influence and standing within the political arena. With help from every member, we can change the way architects, and the profession of architecture, is perceived in Ohio.

Each of us in our own way already contributes much to our profession and we thank each of you for your commitment to the profession and the goals of the AIA. Together, through advocacy, we can achieve so much more.