



This FAQ provides answers to all the questions that were posted during the webinar. Many of the questions were addressed live and to ensure all your questions are answered, below is a list of all questions posted during the webinar and their response from your California COF Representative. Questions are broken down by category.

### **Submission Materials, Cycle, and Stats**

**Can any videos or media clips be submitted as part of the exhibits?**

No, they do not have a way to consistently play videos or media clips, so it is risky to include them.

**Do any of you know the average number of submissions in any given year?**

The average number of submissions per year is between 250-300, with 50-60% getting elevated.

**How does the new process for nomination signatures work?**

The nomination signatures from the chapter are done electronically, with the chapter president or secretary emailing the nominee's name.

**If you skip a year between submitting, is the application considered a new application or a reapplication?**

If you skip resubmitting in your 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year. You start over. You have to continue through all three years, if that is what it takes with a break.

**For newspaper or web publications, can you summarize and provide a link for full article?**

While providing links in your nomination is not strictly prohibited, it is discouraged because if the jury decides to click on a link and that link is broken or no longer available, it will reflect poorly on your nomination. The preferred way to convey this information is to provide a graphic of the webpage or newspaper and highlight the part supporting your ripple effect.

**I was told if you submit and it is not a consecutive year, that the jury comments are not considered.**

That is a myth. The jury will consider your response to their comments from the prior year for each year you are in the process. So, the second-year submission must respond to first-year comments, and third-year submissions must respond to second-year comments.

**Is there an application fee for the process and if you need to apply for second and third year, would you again need to pay?**

Yes, there is an application fee. Check the COF website for the current fee, which is about \$450. Once you pay this fee, you do not pay it again as long as you are in the three-year cycle. If you skip a year in the three-year cycle, you don't get a prorated refund. You start over and pay the current fee on submission of a new application.

**When re-applying (Second year), the application is having me re-enter all of my profile information. Is this normal or should it already be populated?**

The electronic application process is not perfect and with the limited COF staff, it is difficult for that information to be carried from one year to the next. You can reach out to the COF staff for help or let them know about the issue. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to manage your nomination process, so don't just let it hang there thinking that someone else is taking care of it.

**What if you are not elevated in 3 years? Can you start over?**

Absolutely! You sit out one year and resubmit. If you are diligent, you can spend the year off rethinking your submission, re-engineering it, and making a strong case for that ripple effect. One candidate example is that he submitted in the 1980s and did not get it. He then resubmitted in 2019 after some encouragement that he really did have a great story and impact statement and was elevated in his first (resubmitted year).

**I was nominated by my chapter and was planning to submit it in 2025. Joyce said 2026 might be more realistic, but is there a time limit on the nomination?**

Once you submit, the only time limit is the three-year window in which you must become elevated.

The amount of time it takes to put your nomination together is about 8-9 months. Joyce is suggesting that it may take you up to 15-18 months to pull it all together, such as, project and contact information, paper and digital data, etc. For those of us who started our careers before everything was digital, I had to dig my old drawings and project information out of storage and/or try to find good images.

If you can work on the nomination and not be rushed, it will result in a much better and likely more successful result. Also, these are recommended times but when you start, it is up to you as long as you meet the deadline.

**How is authorship as one of many contributing authors to a technical e-book publication considered?**

Highlight the section you were responsible for writing. This would make a great exhibit. Graphics of the publication, table of contents, page of writer bios. Have the publisher sign the exhibit.

**Can or should multiple projects be bundled into a single citation. E.g. let's say you've done several health/wellness centers (health clinics) and you want to cite two for their specific and unique attributes?**

No. Not recommended because it will cloud the impact and distract from your impact. This can only work if the exhibit is about a planning document that covers multiple buildings or building types.

**Do you need to be a licensed architect for 10 years?**

This is a bit of a grey area. The requirements are that you be a member in good standing at the time of submission and that you have 10 cumulative years of **membership**. Membership in AIA includes Associate, Regular, Emeritus, and International.

So, logic would say if you were a member with 10 cumulative years, say four years as associate member and six years as regular member; you should be good.

## **Nominations, Sponsors, and Reference Letters**

**Many of this person's reference letters are from retired FAIAs. Is that a problem, and what do they do for letterhead?**

Retired FAIAs can provide reference letters, and they can use their personal letterhead without a company logo.

**As a second-year submitter, am I required to have my original seven letters rewritten and addressed to the new chair?**

No, the original letters are already on file. The jury is looking for you to respond to their previous comments.

**Along with a nomination from a local AIA chapter, does a sponsor have to be an AIA member? Can a sponsor be an associate AIA member?**

The sponsor should be a regular AIA member, not an associate member, as they are speaking to a jury of fellows.

**What if I've been nominated by my chapter in the past? Does this carry over to this year?**

No, the nomination only carries over for three consecutive years. If you break that cycle, you need to be nominated again.

**My Brother is a Fellow. We have worked together for over 40 years and knows everything about me. Can he be my sponsor and/or would the jury consider this relation biased?**

If he is associated with a firm, it's best to use the firm letterhead if he is to sponsor you, but recommend you seek other sponsors.

I believe that your brother is not strictly prohibited but probably not recommended (bias).

**Can you be disqualified if after submitting, one of your references passes away?**

No. The process is informed enough to realize that you cannot control external forces. The only caveat is if you know your reference is ill and there is a possibility of a life event occurring close to your submission date, we suggest you arrange for another reference. In fact, there is no prohibition from having more references than is required. So, you may get two extra letters submitted just in case when you are ready to "click" the submit button is when you check the references you want the COF to use. This is also helpful if you find out that one of your letter writers is not in good standing before you submit. On your second or third round you must replace the letter of the deceased person.

**Can you provide a few examples for Sponsors? And what exactly is their role?**

The Sponsor is your coach. This person should know you well enough or know your work so that they can tell you if you are on the mark or not. It is not important that you have a "star name" as a sponsor. We advise that you select and recruit the sponsor that best supports your object...if you know an architect or fellow with similar experience as yours and your selected object. So, if you submit in Object 2-Design, an architect known for their design work would be a great fit as a sponsor...they know what they are talking about when they describe your work in their letter.

## **Fellowship**

**What is Emeritus?**

AIA Member Emeritus—Architect Member Emeritus (Architect Member who has applied for and been granted Emeritus status by AIA as set out in AIA's Bylaws) Minimum age requirements apply.

**Can you be elevated in the first year without any further input?**

Yes, it is possible to be elevated in the first year of submission.

**Can an International Associate AIA member, meaning members recognized for licensure in other countries, be eligible for elevation to fellowship?**

Yes, international associate AIA members can be eligible for elevation to fellowship.

**Besides the label and recognition, is there any purpose to becoming a fellow?**

Most creative people, including architects, like to be recognized for their work, and one of the most honest and rewarding ways is for your peers to make that recognition. Being elevated into the College of Fellows for Architects is that step. This can translate into better job opportunities, a higher level of clients, and your ability to command higher fees as a result of being a fellow.

**Are there any financial or economic benefits to becoming a fellow?**

There are no direct financial benefits, but the FAIA credential can provide marketing advantages and potentially higher compensation.

**Do presentations at other related professional organizational conventions (not just AIA) count such as Greenbuild, Living future, or other local green building conferences?**

Yes. Especially if those events and presentations support your object and ripple effect.

What if you're an A.I.A. Associate for over 20 years, but switched into building International Terminals, Maritime Terminals, restored the Oakland City Hall after the '89 Earthquake...could you be considered by the FAIA Board?

Associate members of AIA are non-licensed individuals and are not eligible to submit for fellowship. If you became a regular member, you can count your work as an Associate member in the 10 years of cumulative active in good standing membership.

## Objects

My accomplishments seem to span a couple of categories. What's the best way to determine which category is the right fit?

Focus on the thread and impact of your work and choose the category that best aligns with your strongest accomplishments and supporting evidence.

I'd like to submit for category one design. However, I only have one award at the California state level. Do I need national awards, or will press at the national level be sufficient?

National awards are not required, but you do need a minimum of five solid design projects that you led as the lead designer. National press can help supplement the lack of national awards.

Regarding Object 1, Design: For the 5 projects required, do these projects need to be completed during the time the submitter was licensed? Or are projects completed previous to the submitter's licensure (i.e., while working as lead designer in other firms) also qualify?

The only requirement is that the project cannot be under construction or proposed. It must be completed before submission. Projects that have not been constructed can be used if they are included in planning documents. The planning document is the exhibit and NOT the actual buildings of the planning document.

Confirming being a primary firm architect that primarily focused on CA public works (education primarily) for approximately 40 years fits the bill for OBJECT 4.

No, not if you are in private practice. Object 4 is for architects working in the public sector, like a local municipality, state or federal agency or the military.

What category would be recommended for Accessibility/ADA Consultant?

Would depend upon WHAT type of consulting you are doing. If you are consulting on rule making, code writing, etc., then it might be Object 2. If you are providing design work, it might be Object 1. Otherwise, it might fit Object 5, Alternative Practice.

## Continuing Education Units

If you were behind on your CEUs in a particular year, but your dues were always paid, does that have a negative impact?

If you were behind on your CEUs at the time of submission, you have to have all your learning units in place for that year. Your cumulative years of being in good standing do not matter.

If you have Emeritus status in good standing and are current on their CEUs, is this status permitted to apply?

Yes, Emeritus status is a category of membership, and since CEUs don't count for Emeritus members, they can apply.

If you are a long-standing (and in good standing) AIA member for many consecutive years, but any given year(s) had below required LU (but dues always paid) does that have any negative impact?

No. In most cases over the years as AIA audits the CE of members, some members receive a letter or email that asked them to correct the deficiency...if that is the case for you. You are good. Check with the CE staff to see if there are ways to fix the record and make sure you are current with CE units by the end of your submittal year and each year you are in the process.

## The Jury

**Are the Jurors aware of how many years you've submitted?**

Yes. They will be looking to see how you have responded to the prior year comments.

**Do you get extensive helpful feedback from jurors afterward if unsuccessful in any year?**

Yes. Both the jury and the COF support staff will offer comments on your nomination. Within a few months after the announcement of new fellows, the staff will seek to have a telephone conversation with each architect who was not elevated to convey the comments. Take good notes and use those comments to tune up your nomination for round two or three.

**Who is "presenter" in the jury discussion?**

Your nomination will be assigned to one of the seven jury members, but not a jury member from your area. As an example, all California candidates will go to northern, southern or eastern jury members. All eastern nominations will go to the western, southern or northern jury members. The jury member that is assigned to your nomination will likely spend an hour, maybe longer, reviewing and making notes about your submission. This jury member is the "presenter" during the time the jury meets to discuss the pool of candidates and becomes your advocate. If that person gets your story and impact, they will advocate for elevation...if they don't, then you are not being elevated.

Another reason to make your impact and story very clear.

## Engaging a consultant

**Is there a good way to find an experienced consultant to guide the process and review the package?**

It is challenging to find experienced consultants, but reaching out to the various chapter fellowship committees may help find someone in the network.

**Picking up on the sponsorship question, several FAIA sponsors said they would work with me only IF I hired a consultant. Each consultant in the Bay area charges approx. \$7k. Is this expected as part of the process?**

No, and shame on those Fellows—they should be willing to help you regardless. When you consider how much work is required of the Sponsor, it is no wonder some are reluctant to help unless YOU have help. Some of us did all the work ourselves, and some had an assistant. So, if you have or can hire an assistant, you can get more done. The real issue is that you have to be super organized and methodical about each part. The Regional Representatives are willing to support you, read your parts and nomination, and mentor you.

## Other Questions

**Does work outside the states count?**

Yes, global work is considered and can be included in the submission.

**What's all the focus on the lead designer (lead designers can be excellent and non-licensed) ...no love for the Architect of Record?**

This sounds more like a rhetorical question but here goes. Non-licensed individuals are not eligible to submit. The jury is not looking for who designed the building—per se. They are looking for what YOU contributed to the work and whether that was a leading or supportive role. The jury will review all of your exhibits to see if, in the majority of them, you were in a leading role, but what is more important to them is how your project impacted society and whether there was a ripple effect of your work across the country. You can have a minor role in a project that has enormously impacted nationally or semi-nationally.

**If you've worked in CA solely and in my case primarily greater southern CA and San Diego County does that kill you on the whole geographical aspect?**

No. If you can demonstrate that your regionally focused work has had an effect on others, then you have a chance. You must make the case and make it very clear. This is the experience of one of the COF Regional Representatives.

**If it takes "900 hours of work and it comes down to 5-10 minutes" that feels pretty fatalistic, and I would ask why do it at all? What's the benefit? Besides being recognized by your peers?**

Being recognized by your peers is important. But an elevated status could lead to bigger projects, and higher fees or compensation.