



• ***AIAS FREEDOM BY DESIGN MANUAL*** •

Across the United States, there are large numbers of people who face challenges everyday due to a disability or accident. What is the solution? Inclusive design that takes everyone into consideration and allows for the best use of space.

AIAS Freedom by Design, the American Institute of Architecture Students community service program, utilizes the talents of architecture students to radically impact the lives of people in their community through modest design and construction solutions. From accessibility modifications to landscaping, emergency plan guides to signage; our priority is to improve the safety, comfort, and dignity of those around us.

AIAS Freedom by Design could not be where it is today without the continued support and guidance of the AIAS Board of Directors, AIAS Staff, and Students across North America.

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# INTRODUCTION

## FBD MISSION STATEMENT

AIAS Freedom by Design is a program of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) that utilizes the skills and talents of architecture students in service to their community. AIAS FBD projects should better the community, promote skill building, and foster relationships.

## FBD VISION STATEMENT

AIAS FBD empowers students to become owners in a process that radically impacts the lives of people in their communities through design and construction solutions.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AIAS Freedom by Design	is used on all advertising publications and promotional materials. In addition this format is used for the first reference of the program in any external document (sponsors, press releases, official reports, and emails).
AIAS FBD	is used only after first stating the above phrasing option except in the case of the logo or general graphic layout needs.
AIAS FBD Program	is used when referring to a certain school that has completed all the steps in the application process. The formatting should always be: AIAS Chapter Name FBD Program. When referring to the FBD program as a whole, the chapter name can be replaced with AIAS as long as the first mention is trademarked as shown above. Ex. "Currently there is not an active AIAS University of Toronto FBD Program."
AIAS FBD Project	is used when referring to the process of working with a client. Ex. "We have just completed the second stage of our AIAS FBD Project."
AIAS FBD Team	is used when referring to the students directly participating in a FBD Project. Ex. "40 members from the AIAS University of Puerto Rico FBD Team finished the ramp."
FBD Local Leadership	Each AIAS Freedom by Design Program should have an executive board at the chapter level, which consists of the following:
Director	The Director acts as the primary link between the local AIAS chapter FBD program and the AIAS National Office. They are responsible for general oversight of the program, attending the annual AIAS Freedom by Design track at AIAS Grassroots, leading client interviews, overseeing the selection process, and periodically, with support from their chapter president, updating the AIAS on the progress of the program.
Project Manager	The Project Manager is responsible for overseeing a specific Freedom by Design project, including establishing the schedule, coordinating the building approval process, and coordinating team members.
Development Manager	The Development Manager, or Fundraiser, is responsible for developing a fundraising strategy and locating donated materials.
Public Relations Manager	The Public Relations Manager, or Historian, is responsible for recording the progress of the team and assembling presentations for the AIAS Office.

Architecture is a practice that is deeply rooted in a value for mentorship between professional and student. A Design Mentor is vital to the success in projects in a variety of ways through client relations, professional guidance, and experience.

A licensed, local architect who helps to guide the team through the design process, including critiquing design solutions and overseeing the creation of construction documents. The mentor need not be a faculty member at the school. But it may be beneficial to have a design mentor who is readily available when seeking advice.

The most meaningful part of the program for some students in the program is the opportunity to build a client their own custom made design. Students crave an opportunity to gain firsthand experience from building these powerful projects. This portion of the program would not be possible without the professional skills of a Construction Mentor.

During this mentoring opportunity, construction professionals can work closely with the students to create cost-effective solutions while also educating the next generation of designers on aspects of site conditions, common building practices, and site.

A local builder who helps to guide the team through the build process, including providing the necessary equipment and overseeing the actual construction.

The Freedom By Design Advisory Group is the committee that is charged with different task relating to FBD. The primary role of the FBDAG is to facilitate communication between the AIAS National Office and the local AIAS Chapter FBD Programs. The other roles of the FBDAG are determined on a year to year basis based on the charges presented to it by the AIAS Board of Directors.

Freedom By Design Network Pods, referred to as FBD Pods, are the form in which the FBDAG communicates with local AIAS Chapter FBD Programs. The purpose of these Pods is to ensure the success of every AIAS Chapter FBD Program by answering questions, facilitating discussions, and by helping FBD Teams find solutions to the problems they are facing.

Design Mentor

Construction Mentor

FBDAG

FBD Pods

The AIAS, which is Headquartered in Washington, DC, was established in 1956 and is an independent, nonprofit, student-run organization. The mission of the AIAS is to promote excellence in architecture education, training, and practice; foster an appreciation of architecture and related disciplines; enrich communities in a spirit of collaboration; and organize students to combine their efforts to advance the art and science of architecture. The AIAS is comprised of more than 5,500 members at over 160 chapters around the world.

The AIAS is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of a President and Vice President (both are recent graduates and full-time, paid employees of the organization), four Student Directors, the immediate Past President, the current Executive Director, a liaison from academia, and a liaison from the profession. The Board of Directors reports to the membership through the local chapter presidents, called the Council of Presidents. The Council of Presidents meets twice a year: once at AIAS Grassroots, the annual leadership conference, in late July and also at AIAS FORUM, the annual convention, held over the New Year's holiday.

AIAS FBD is overseen by the Board of Directors and the Freedom By Design Advisory Group. The AIAS Office provides training, resources, and guidance to AIAS chapters as they participate in the FBD program.



# PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

"I always feel sorry for doctors and lawyers who work only with people in distress, while architects get to work with people who are happy to be moving into new houses. We have a responsibility to work with people who have problems, too, because we have an opportunity to provide them with something beautiful and comfortable."

- Shigeru Ban

# HISTORY OF THE FBD PROGRAM

## **PRE-AIAS [2000-2004]**

Freedom by Design began as a fleeting idea in the mind of Brad Buchanan, FAIA, an architect in Denver. Within four years, it was an organization called Freedom by Design which had completed over \$300,000 in built construction with only \$4,000 in donated seed money. Citizens in Denver were excited about FBD, and architects and students around the country were beginning to hear about it and wanted to contribute. As the program expanded rapidly, Buchanan realized that the current structure was not sustainable, and in an entirely selfless gesture, he began to look for an organization to take this program to a national level. At a board meeting of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) during the fall of 2003, Wayne Mortensen, President of the AIAS and student director on the AIA Board of Directors, heard Brad's call. Seeing a perfect fit with the AIAS, he brought the program to the AIAS Board of Directors, unanimously approving an AIAS FBD Pilot Program, and in the following days the Council of Presidents unanimously endorsed the Board's decision. The AIAS would implement Freedom by Design around the country and commit to serving those low-income individuals with demeaning and life-threatening barriers in their homes.

## **AIAS PILOT PROGRAM [2004-2006]**

In 2004, the pilot program came into fruition. After considerable preparation, six AIAS chapters, representing a diverse group of communities, were selected to participate in the program. After attending an Orientation Session in Denver, CO, these chapters immediately set to work. While many experienced setbacks and growing pains, the final results were conclusive: AIAS and FBD were a perfect fit. With changes as seemingly small as installing handrails in bathrooms to as large as installing accessible ramps outside of the home, people across the country were welcomed into homes that were no longer life-threatening and those who helped them would never be the same.

In 2005, the AIAS expanded the program to eleven chapters. Learning from the past year, the AIAS made several adjustments to the program and began to explore the future of AIAS FBD. FBD has continued to grow and expand across the country. The annual AIAS FBD orientation at AIAS Grassroots has evolved to support the growing numbers of leaders in attendance and their many questions. AIAS FORUM also began to include sessions related to AIAS Freedom by Design.

## NATIONAL AIAS FREEDOM BY DESIGN [2007-2015]

Upon the success of the pilot program in the first two years, the AIAS Board of Directors approved the expansion of the AIAS Freedom by Design Program to a national initiative of the AIAS. An additional 11 schools joined the already active 15 Freedom by Design programs for the 2006-2007 school year. The application process for participating in the AIAS Freedom by Design program was altered and adjusted to a “deadline” like process that allowed all schools of differing sizes and locations to apply. In addition, the AIAS started to develop more resources, a staff position to look over the 26 AIAS chapters with active FBD teams and an 11 person advisory council to oversee the strategic vision of the program as it continued to succeed.

Since the fall of 2007, FBD has continued to grow and expand across the country. The annual AIAS FBD orientation at AIAS Grassroots has evolved to support the growing numbers of leaders in attendance and their many questions. AIAS FORUM also began to include sessions related to AIAS Freedom by Design. Additionally, the AIAS organized a capital campaign effort, raising nearly \$1,000,000, a percentage of which is dedicated to the growth and advancement of Freedom by Design.

In 2012, the then Freedom by Design Task Force was brought on as a Committee of the Board. Under the leadership of Joel Pominville, then Chapter President of Clemson University AIAS, the Freedom by Design Advisory Group (FBDAG) began working with National Staff on FBD programming for Grassroots and FORUM. At FORUM in 2013, the FBDAG instituted the inaugural round of Freedom by Design awards. In 2014, in celebration of the 10th Year Anniversary of the Program, the FBDAG hosted the first Honors and Awards ceremony at FORUM, highlighting the work of chapters from around the nation and awarding ten distinguished FBD Honor Awards.

## NEW PARTNERSHIPS [2016]

During 2016, the FBDAG began to take on more responsibility for the program. They were tasked to reevaluate and develop the Freedom By Design Program. It was during this year that many of the recent changes to the program were discussed. The application process was the main item that the FBDAG wanted to change. In order for chapters to apply to have an FBD Program, a representative from the school had to attend the FBD Track at Grassroots. This was not a financially viable option for many students eager to establish an FBD Program. Thanks to a newly established partnership with NCARB, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, FBD Directors could apply for a grant that allowed them to attend Grassroots for a fraction of the cost. NCARB now also awards a materials grant for chapters that apply before a given deadline that can be found on the AIAS website. Another issue with the application process was the early deadline and the need for chapters to have a list of potential clients, completed forms, and a project description all within the first month of school. Because most chapters have their new officers take over near the end of the previous semester, it required FBD teams to work over the break whether or not they were studying abroad or working an internship in order to be on track by the start of the Fall semester. The simplest way to resolve these issues was to abandon the application process entirely. Now all chapters need do is declare their projects to the AIAS National Office with a simple description, a process that can be done at any time of the year. FBD Directors are still encouraged to attend Grassroots to share their experiences and gain new insight into the program as well as gaining eligibility for the NCARB Grant Funding.

## MORE CONNECTIONS [2017-2018]

Changing the logistics of the FBD Program was only a small part of what the FBDAG accomplished during 2016-2017. The foundation for a network of FBD directors was lacking. Based on discussions at FORUM and Grassroots, many directors wanted the opportunity to discuss and ask questions year round. The AIAS National Office already had a system in place for leaders to do that exact thing. The only difference was this was for chapter presidents. Instead of having FBD Directors piggy back on the Quad Director calls, the FBDAG began to facilitate their own system of hangouts, the FBD Pods.

# THE NEW SCOPE



## FREEDOM BY DESIGN : The AIAS Service Portfolio

### CURRENT FBD SCOPE → EXPANDED FBD SCOPE

CURRENT FBD SCOPE		EXPANDED FBD SCOPE									
BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS	BARRIERS					SOLUTIONS				
PHYSICAL	DESIGN-BUILD	PHYSICAL	EDUCATIONAL	ENVIRONMENTAL	SOCIO-ECONOMIC	CULTURAL	DESIGN-BUILD	ENGAGEMENT			
Physical Accessibility	ADA Compliance	Physical Accessibility	Access to Technology	Awareness	Access to Resources	Knowledge Sharing	ADA Compliance	Reports + Recommendations			
		Privacy	Access to Learning Tools	Access to Food + Water	Community Development	Lack of Empathy	Open-air Structures	Workshops			
		Ownership of Space	Access to Role Models	Health + Wellbeing	Equity + Inclusion	Lack of Context	Landscaping	Resources			
		Limited Use	Access to Information	Inadequate Comfort	Safety + Stability	Lack of Identity	Comfort + Use	Personal Connections + Mentorship			
		etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.			

The FBD program now formally embraces efforts to improve four areas of need:

- Accessibility (ease of physical impairment),
- Sustainability (energy, agriculture, recycling),
- Learning/Education (K-5 or related), and
- Community (homelessness, social impact, community improvement, urban development).

Additionally, FBD embraces the areas of need above with two project levels:

- Design-Build (physical construction)  
i.e. ADA Ramps, Wellness Gardens, Playgrounds, etc.
- Engagement (interactive participation)  
i.e. Emergency Preparedness Manual, Education Outreach, Construction Technique Workshops, etc.

Starting in the 2017-2018 school year, any chapter will be able to declare an FBD project at any point in the year. The new project scope allows chapters to more easily establish an FBD Program at their university because it casts a much wider net that allows for more community outreach.



*Freedom by Design Program  
and Project Awards awarded to  
University of North Carolina -  
Charlotte at FORUM 2015 in San  
Francisco, CA*

*(AIAS National Office)*

# GETTING STARTED

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”.

- Mahatma Gandhi

After reviewing the Freedom by Design materials, chapter leaders should ask themselves:

1. Do we have the chapter leadership, resources, and faculty support to see the process through from start through finish? If not, how can we get it?
2. Are there members who would be interested in serving as AIAS FBD Team Leaders? Are these individuals organized, good time managers, have good communication skills, patient, etc.?
3. How challenging will it be to identify mentors for construction and design? Is our chapter currently working with the local AIA component or have connections with professionals in the industry through our school, faculty, etc. who can help us?
4. How will the chapter raise funds to support the program? Do we have activities already in place we can use to raise funds?
5. Are we located in an area where individuals who may need our services are accessible and volunteers can easily get to them?



# SNAPSHOT OF THE FBD PROCESS

<b><u>Find Leadership</u></b>
<b><u>Find a Project</u></b>
<b><u>Declare your Project</u></b>
<b><u>Material Gathering &amp; Fundraising</u></b>
<b><u>Design</u></b>
<b><u>Find Volunteers</u></b>
<b><u>Build It</u></b>
<b><u>Document</u></b>

The process for each AIAS Freedom by Design team typically begins at the end of the spring semester. Each team should be compiling lists of potential projects, laying groundwork to seek out their official client in the following fall academic term following the AIAS Freedom by Design Orientation at Grassroots.

The first major step to establish an AIAS FBD program begins at the annual Freedom by Design Orientation track at AIAS Grassroots, attended by the FBD Director, or someone on the leadership team. During the orientation, FBD Directors gain valuable information on taking a project from start to finish, see precedent from other schools and form close bonds with other FBD Directors around the nation. FBD Directors return to their campus to share what was learned at the orientation with their teammates and begin seeking possible clients. Chapters seeking NCARB Grant Funding should declare their projects before the deadlines listed on the AIAS website.

The second step is for the Director and the rest of the FBD team to review the FBD Manual as well as the FBD Project Scope and discuss what project level would best suite their chapter this semester. In addition, teams should also begin contacting potential clients, for instance: local hospitals, churches, occupational and physical therapists, veterans’ offices, and city and/or county housing agencies.

Once a team has identified potential clients, they should set up one or more site visits in order to meet with the client, gather information on the project such as constraints, take photos, etc. After the visit, chapters with multiple potential projects should compile a pros and cons list to help in the decision making process. Once the project has been selected, the FBD Director will meet with their team and mentors to discuss how to move forward. Following that meeting, the AIAS FBD team is encouraged to declare their project to the AIAS National Office. The team will then move into the pre-design phase of the project, often holding a design charrette, working with other members of the school and community as well as the client. Once the design is finalized, the team focuses on gathering volunteers, securing a building permit (if necessary), gathering materials and donations, and setting a schedule for the build. The final phase in the project is actually completing the build, which takes considerable coordination by the team and other volunteers.



# FINDING A TEAM

The Freedom By Design Team is comprised of several individuals, each vital in the success of an FBD Program. The following roles are considered the minimum team required to establish and execute projects throughout the semester but many chapters find that adding extra team members helps them achieve the goals they set out to do. Also note that the roles listed below are not exhaustive. Chapters may adjust these roles and responsibilities as they see fit.

## The FBD Director

The Director acts as the primary link between the local AIAS chapter, FBD program, and the AIAS National Office. They are responsible for general oversight of the program, attending the annual AIAS Freedom by Design track at AIAS Grassroots, leading client interviews, overseeing the selection process, and periodically, with support from their chapter president, updating the AIAS on the progress of the program.

## The Project Manager

The Project Manager is responsible for overseeing a specific Freedom by Design project, including establishing the schedule, coordinating the building approval process, and coordinating team members.

## The Development Manager

The Development Manager, or Fundraiser, is responsible for developing a fund raising strategy and locating donated materials.

## The Public Relations Manager

The Public Relations Manager, or Historian, is responsible for recording the progress of the team and assembling presentations for the AIAS Office.

## **PRO TIP:**

*There are several approaches for assembling a team: some chapters elect their FBD board positions along with their AIAS Executive Board; some appoint these positions; and others do a combination of the two. Find the process that best suites your AIAS Chapter!*

## **PRO TIP:**

*While a single person may be qualified to serve in both mentor roles, the AIAS FBD Director will want to foster multiple relationships in order to broaden the network of professionals available to aid in the project.*

### **The Design and Construction Mentors**

Mentors are to be wise and trusted counselors for their mentees. A mentor's knowledge, experience, encouragement, and skills offer guidance, advice, and small amounts of hands-on training. However, while a mentor can steer a mentee in the right direction to reach their potential, a mentor should not attempt to force change against the will of the younger leader or activist.

#### **The Mentor Should Expect To:**

- Provide guidance
- Create a positive counseling relationship and climate for open communication
- Help the team members identify problems and solutions.
- Lead the AIAS FBD team through problem solving processes
- Offer constructive criticism
- Share your own thought processes and availability with the team
- Solicit feedback from the team

#### **Together the Mentor & the AIAS FBD team should:**

- Identify roles the mentor can play to help the team achieve their goals
- Communicate on a regular basis
- Refer back to previous conversations to make sure that things have been done
- Set the agenda for each meeting

#### **Where to Find a Mentor:**

- If you are having trouble recruiting mentors, start by asking your AIAS Faculty Advisor for some help. They are often your eyes, ears, and voice when it comes to the faculty. Many Advisors know what other professors might be interested in supporting an FBD Program.
- Many students say that finding a Design Mentor is much easier than finding a Construction Mentor. The best way to recruit a Construction Mentor is often through your Design Mentor. Being active in the workforce, your Design Mentor should have contacts in the construction field. Ask them if they would be willing to give you contact information or reach out themselves.

## Design Mentor Responsibilities

While working with the AIAS FBD Captain and AIAS FBD project volunteers, the Design Mentor has four main responsibilities:

1. Meet regularly with the team to review design progress and to verify appropriateness of proposed design.
2. Suggest additional training materials and secondary design concepts.
3. Provide guidance to enhance the team's professional growth.
4. Confer, if needed, with the team and client.

Translating each of these responsibilities into actual activities with the AIAS FBD team will vary depending upon where the mentor resides and how busy their professional life is. Similarly, mentors must be conversant with the client, local accessibility codes and the principals of universal design which determine the project's purpose, objectives, organization, and procedures.

### Regular Meetings

With respect to scheduling regular meetings, ideally the Design Mentor will be available for in person meetings at least twice per month. While this may not always be feasible, the more often there is interaction, the greater likelihood exists for the mentoring relationship to mature and, in turn, positively influence the professional growth of the program's members. Regular dialogue promotes open and continuous exchange of ideas and information. In instances when direct in-person meetings cannot be scheduled, alternative means of communicating should be pursued such as e-mail and/or telephone calls.

## **PRO TIP:**

*Design mentors must be licensed architects in the state your chapter resides in.*

*Design Mentors can be found by speaking to a faculty member at your school, by reaching out to your local AIA component, or by talking to former or current employers of team members, etc.*

## **PRO TIP:**

*Construction mentors must be licensed contractors in their respective jurisdiction. Construction mentors can be found several ways: if your school has a Construction Science department, ask for any contacts; you can also go through your city's planning and development office; and calling construction management firms is another good way to start.*

### **Construction Mentor Responsibilities**

While working with the AIAS FBD Project Manager and FBD project volunteers, the Construction Mentor has four main responsibilities:

1. Meet regularly with the team to review the project schedule and to verify appropriateness of proposed design.
2. Offer training for materials, building processes and necessary tools.
3. Provide guidance to enhance the team's professional growth.
4. Confer, if needed, with the team and client.

Translating each of these responsibilities into actual activities with the AIAS FBD team will vary depending upon where the mentor resides and how busy their professional life is. Similarly, mentors must be conversant with the client, local building codes and the proposed project's design, objectives, schedule, budget, and procedures.

### **Regular Meetings**

With respect to scheduling regular meetings, ideally the Construction Mentor would be available for meetings at least three times prior to the build day(s). While this may or may not always be feasible, the more often there is interaction, the greater likelihood exists for the mentoring relationship to mature and, in turn, positively influence the professional growth of the program's members. Regular dialogue promotes open and continuous exchange of ideas and information. In instances when in person meetings cannot be scheduled, alternative means of communicating should be pursued such as e-mail and/or telephone calls. During the project build day(s) the Construction Mentor should be available to guide in the building process. While this does not mean they must be there for the entirety of the build, a strong presence is suggested. At minimum the Construction Mentor should be able to visit the job site at the end of each day of building to ensure nothing was completed incorrectly or harmfully.

# THINGS TO CONSIDER

Take time to consider whether everyone is comfortable working with each other. In other words, assess overall compatibility and ability to communicate. If there is a level of comfort, then the relationship(s) should move forward. Alternatively, there might be a need to identify another professional to serve as the mentor. **Discuss any issues about your team during the FBD Pod calls.**

**Keep appointments and anticipate changes.** Professionals in all walks of life depend upon effective scheduling and the reliability of people with whom they are scheduling meetings and engagements. This is the same for the mentors and the AIAS FBD team. However, even if all parties are responsible about setting and keeping appointments, there should be a backup plan in place to handle circumstances where appointments must be changed. The important thing is to remember to follow through quickly and promptly to reschedule any meeting that has to be rescheduled. Meeting together can take place both outside of and/or within the office environment.

**Help each other set priorities and develop a focused game plan** for reaching the required benchmarks of the project in a timely fashion (typically no more than 120 days from acceptance of the project).

Provide specific and constructive feedback about the progress that is being achieved. There will, of course, be circumstances when the progress is less than anticipated. However, by **being honest and communicating with each other the project will continue to move forward.** Remember that meetings do not have to be in person. They can take place by telephone, e-mail, skype, google hangouts, etc.

**Set goals for the entire AIAS FBD team** to address problem areas. When circumstances arise that seem particularly challenging, identify particular goals that would provide a template for effectively addressing the challenges.

**Give advice honestly and straightforwardly.** Everyone is working to improve their professional lives as well as the lives of the client. Confidentiality is essential in all matters.

**Communicate with the client** as needed and necessary. On occasion, there will be situations that will perhaps warrant a meeting between the AIAS FBD Director, the Mentors and the client to determine how circumstances can be handled in the best interests of all involved.





*Over the course of a few weeks, University of Kansas's Freedom by Design worked to build benches of varying sizes, planters, balance beams, and concrete stepping stones for the outdoor transformation of the shelter home.*

*(AIAS University of Kansas FBD Program)*



# IT'S PROJECT TIME

"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give."

- Winston Churchill

## How to Identify Potential Projects

It is vital to begin thinking about resources early in the year. The two most valuable resources will be equipment and volunteers. Any equipment needs for your project should be discussed with the Construction Mentor. It is also important to make a list of the tools already available from volunteers and the school/university shop (hammers, screwdrivers, table saw, etc). Second, you will need to prioritize your volunteers based on their possible time and skill commitment. It is imperative that the AIAS FBD team understands their volunteers' commitment level early to help with scheduling.

- Assess the project in work components and determine how many man-hours the job will take.
- Assess the individuals who have said they will help.
- Total the time available to be used and make sure it is ample to get the job done.
- Ask yourself the following questions: Is this a project I can complete within one academic year? Does it meet the needs and lifestyle of my client? Is the design functional?

On the following page is a list of "levels" which can be used to categorize potential projects. These levels specifically describe projects in terms of time (workdays), energy (man hours), money (budget), and accountability (maximum duration of project).

Beginning teams should look for a Level 1 project.

## PRO TIP:

*The best way to make an AIAS FBD Project seem manageable is to break it down into time segments based on certain major goals. Make sure your goal list is reasonable. Keep in mind that you and your team has other responsibilities like studio and work.*

# PROJECT LEVELS

## PRO TIP:

IMPORTANT: Although projects have been categorized into three scales, students are encouraged to develop more diverse, larger, and innovative projects!

### Level 1 Project:

- A project that can be completed in a single workday with a team of 4-6 workers
- No building permit required
- Less than \$500 in materials required
- Can be completed within 60 days of Declaring Project
- Single work period requiring no prior knowledge or training (Ex: Saturday morning)

*Example: Replacing door knobs, forming and pouring an 8-foot ramp to replace a single exterior step.*

### Level 2 Project:

- A project that can be completed in four workdays with a team of 4-6 workers
- Building permit may be required
- Less than \$2,000 in materials required
- Can be completed within 90 days of Declaring Project
- Willing to work on a series of directed tasks or work periods requiring no prior knowledge or training. (Ex: Multiple Saturday mornings or during a consecutive day break; i.e. Spring Break)

*Example: Building an exterior wood ramp where the first two days are spent forming and pouring the foundations (formwork may require an inspection), and the last two days are spent framing the ramp.*

### Level 3 Project:

- A project that can be completed in 10 workdays with a team of 4-6 workers
- Building permit will be required
- Less than \$10,000 will be required
- Can be completed within 120 days of Declaring Project
- Willing to be accountable for a specific task within a phase of a project and has expertise within that task (i.e. tile setter, carpenter, draftsman or architect, electrician, etc.)

*Example: Demolition and replacement of accessible kitchen cabinets and appliances, installation of an accessible roll-in shower, complex ramps, playgrounds, etc.*



*Level 1:  
Hospitality House Benches*

*(AIAS University of Virginia  
FBD program)*



*Level 2:  
Wheelchair Ramp and  
Concrete Pathway*

*(AIAS University of Tennessee  
FBD Program)*



*Level 3:  
Accessible Kitchen  
Renovation*

*(AIAS University of  
Minnesota FBD Program)*





*Design charrette to kick  
off a new project*

*(AIAS Clemson University  
FBD Program)*

# HOSTING A CHARRETTE

A great way to collect project ideas and recruit potential volunteers is to host a design charrette. A design charrette is a massive brainstorming session that usually takes place all in one day. Some charrettes may last 30 minutes while others go on for several hours. In order to host a successful charrette, prior planning is needed.

## Prior to the Charrette:

- Decide how long the charrette will last
- Determine who will host the charrette
- Determine where the charrette will take place (school, site location, etc)
- Write down a clear goal for the charrette
- List any potential clients and locations for the project

## Sample Charrette Materials:

- Trace paper
- Writing instruments (markers, pens, pencils, etc.)
- AV equipment if needed
- Handouts if needed
- Maps and images of potential sites
- Food (small snacks, drinks, pizza, etc.)

## **PRO TIP:**

*Include charrette materials in your project budget. Alone, the items may appear small, but can become costly when added together.*

# FINDING A CLIENT

## **PRO TIP:**

*Make sure you have a thorough understanding of the client's needs, resources available to you, and your team's ability. You do not want to promise a client a project and not be able to follow-through.*

### **Defining a Client**

The client(s) is the individual, family, or organization that the project is being done for. While meeting with possible clients, it is imperative that no promises concerning possible projects are made. The worst thing that could be done is promise a project and not deliver.

### **Finding Your Clients**

Clients can be found everywhere. They can be families, local hospitals, local churches, or other nonprofits groups or city/county housing agencies. Discuss potential clients with your mentors and the FBDAG.

### **Assessing Your Clients**

Although AIAS FBD does not have any strict guidelines about who receives the benefits of a AIAS FBD program's efforts, there are some general guidelines that should be taken into consideration. In the past, the AIAS FBD Program has been directed toward families that are living at an income level that is at or below 50% of the median income level in that region. The overriding philosophy is to help these people as they have little support elsewhere. It is the hope of the AIAS FBD program that FBD projects will greatly help stabilize the environment and support the success of the client.

In some cases, the client may be able to fund or partially fund the project and/or professional labor. If the AIAS FBD team still decides to work with that client and provide their volunteered services, AIAS FBD teams have been known to ask that client to donate the money toward the AIAS chapter's next FBD project. This allows everyone involved in the AIAS FBD program to gain experience and ensure funding for future clients. Keep in mind that AIAS FBD members cannot be paid for their services.

# DECLARE YOUR PROJECT!

Gone are the days of applications, unreal deadlines, and essays that were all once part of the process to establish an FBD Program. Chapters wishing to complete an FBD Program need only visit [www.aiaa.org/fbd](http://www.aiaa.org/fbd) and click on the DECLARE YOUR PROJECT! button.

After clicking the button, a survey will open which requires the following information:

- Project Category
- University/College
- Topic Area
- Team Contact Info
- Short Description of the Project
- Team's Overall Goals
- Request for NCARB Grant Funding
- Files such as initial plans, images, PDFs may be uploaded as well.

Hit Done and you are done! This process may be completed year round but keep in mind that there are deadlines for the NCARB Grant Funding.

For more information on grants, see page 34.

## **PRO TIP:**

**IMPORTANT:** Although the application process has been changed, it is important that your FBD Program makes sure all the forms and waivers found on the Resources tab are filled out properly.

See Page 45 for more on forms and waivers.

**DECLARE YOUR PROJECT!**





*Over the course of a few weeks, University of Kansas's Freedom by Design worked to build benches of varying sizes, planters, balance beams, and concrete stepping stones for the outdoor transformation of the shelter home.*

*(AIAS University of Kansas FBD Program)*

# THE PROJECT ESSENTIALS

"Design has become the most powerful tool with which man shapes his tools and environments (and, by extension, society and himself)."

- Victor Papanek

Finding a client and project is only the beginning of the FBD process. The following pages provide key information for a successful project. Without funding, volunteers, and community involvement, the Freedom By Design Program would not be possible.

# FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

## **PRO TIP:**

*Many chapters find that asking directly for materials provides better results than asking for money. Small business and larger companies may feel more comfortable knowing that their donation will directly be used in the project.*

### **Collecting the First Donations**

One of the biggest hurdles to starting an AIAS FBD project is raising money. This however does not need to be as difficult as it may seem. Raising a few dollars now will lead to larger and larger donations later. In addition, once an AIAS FBD team feels comfortable asking for small donations, confidence in asking for larger funds is produced.

### **Own Your Design Abilities**

Having a clear, well-designed package is very important in any fundraising effort. Whether in AIAS Freedom by Design or your own personal career, the way that you present yourself in person and on paper will inform the response you get from any given audience.

When putting together a 'Fundraising Packet' to distribute to potential donors, consider providing and including:

- Letter of Intent
- Promotional materials you have used on campus
- List of needed funds or materials
- Past project binders (if applicable)

Community members, clients, donors, businesses etc. will respond more quickly and positively when presented with a clear and thorough package describing who you are and what you are seeking. If you are just beginning a Freedom by Design program at your school, take advantage of resources, images, videos and other material on the AIAS National website.

When putting this package together, consider the following:

- Ask for very specific materials or funding
- Know your audience when speaking
- Leverage community impact
- Support local businesses through promotion
- Always follow up with a thank you



## Knowing What to Say

Throughout the professional world, people ask, “What do you do?” Depending on the quickness and appropriateness of the answer to that simple question, people will develop their opinion of the AIAS FBD program. Having a prepared answer or “elevator speech” is a great way to open a conversation and go into a meeting with confidence. The term “elevator speech” is used to describe a quick, simple and prepared statement about oneself, an organization or possible opportunity. The idea is that in the time it takes an elevator to go a few floors, a person should understand and be interested in the topic presented.

Preparing an elevator pitch for the AIAS FBD program is quite simple. Much like the grammar game MadLibs, plugging specific ideas and thoughts into a pre-developed sentence can create a simple and concise elevator speech.

What is the name of your School or University?

What city are you located in?

Write down the top three things that interest you about AIAS FBD:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

# NCARB GRANT FUNDING

## **PRO TIP:**

Be sure to check the AIAS website for the deadlines and updates concerning the NCARB Grant Process.

Through a partnership with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), the AIAS was able to grant almost \$9,000 during Fall 2017 to ten different schools to implement their community-based design projects. The grants are being offered as part of the partnership through the Freedom by Design program. An additional \$16,000 will be granted throughout 2018 Spring and Summer. Each program's project intends on providing design-build solutions to address the following barriers: physical, socio-economic, educational, environmental, and cultural.

The 2017 cycle's projects range from creating weatherproofing kits for low-income renters to developing signage to improve an old church's accessibility. Each project is unique and each program will be making an immediate, positive impact for those associated with their client and their community overall.

All programs that are awarded are encouraged to complete their builds by the end of the following semester and provide documentation of their project in an effort to share their achievements with the AIAS community.

To apply for a grant, chapters must first have a representative attend all FBD Sessions at Grassroots. The next step is to declare your project before the NCARB Grant deadlines which are updated on the AIAS website. At the bottom of the declare page is a question that asks if your chapter is interested in applying for funding. By selecting yes, the AIAS National Office will send the FBD Director an additional form to fill out an return in order to be considered for funding. Grant recipient decisions are generally announced 3-4 weeks after the deadline.

For more information about NCARB Grant Funding, visit [www.aias.org](http://www.aias.org) or contact the AIAS National office at [freedom@aias.org](mailto:freedom@aias.org).

### **Grant Deadlines**

Fall: October 15th

Spring: February 15th

Summer: April 15th

## Where to Find Volunteers

One of the best sources of future volunteers is current volunteers. It is likely that if someone is passionate enough to volunteer their time, they are likely to have at least some friends who share those same passions and interests. Also, a person who is already working for AIAS FBD should not only have a good understanding of the programs needs, but also what types of personalities would do well. In other words, a current volunteer can be the perfect volunteer recruiter... but only if they like the AIAS FBD team enough and feel appreciated enough to recommend the job to others. Keep volunteers happy, and be sure to let them know about any available volunteer positions. Eager and energetic, students can make wonderful volunteers. Find out how to find volunteers at local high schools and colleges.

## Why Students Volunteer:

- It allows them to build up their resume
- It lets them explore a particular career field, gain experience, and hone skills
- It allows them to feel like they are contributing to their community, or taking responsibility for something
- It sounds fun, challenging and/or important
- Some high schools and colleges (and many honor societies) require community service

## What Students Want out of Volunteering:

- Responsibility within a supportive structure. They want to explore and see what they're capable of, but need a clear understanding of what is expected of them. They also need to know that there is someone to turn to when they have questions or doubts
- Credit for their hours volunteered. Be willing to sign time logs, etc.
- Letters of recommendation for a job well done. You can offer a letter after the student has finished volunteering, or just let them know you'd be happy to write a letter if they need one

## **PRO TIP:**

All volunteers must first fill out the volunteer release form located at:  
[www.aias.org/resource](http://www.aias.org/resource)

This includes the design and construction mentors.

### **How to Recruit Volunteers:**

- Find out if the school or college has a volunteer office.
- Contact the principal or dean and ask for them to make an announcement, or ask for leads to specific people who can help
- See if AIAS FBD can take part in the school's volunteer fair or information session
- Contact honor societies
- Talk to specific types of teachers (like science, art, or English) or extracurricular clubs

### **Timing Student Recruitment**

One thing to keep in mind when contemplating recruiting students is that teachers and administrative staff can be very busy during certain times of the year, and hard to reach at other times. AIAS FBD teams should strive to give as much advanced notice as possible about specific volunteer needs, along with reminders regarding any upcoming deadlines.

### **Fostering Continued Commitment**

At this time in their life, many people have trouble honoring commitments. Perhaps they underestimate how much they have on their plate, or overestimate how interesting a particular volunteer assignment will be. Perhaps they were simply coerced by parents or the school administration to volunteer, and their heart is not really into it. Help students succeed in their volunteer assignment by having clear attendance expectations. Schedule on going volunteer opportunities at the same time every week, or make reminder phone calls for irregular volunteer opportunities.

### **Be a Great Place to Volunteer:**

- Be Prepared
- Make Volunteers feel welcome
- Introduce volunteers to AIAS FBD team members
- Set expectations
- Train sufficiently
- Give them purpose
- Be Honest
- Create Ground Rules
- Set Time Parameters for Service
- Show Appreciation



*Garden of Hope volunteers*

*(AIAS Roger Williams  
University FBD Program)*





*Volunteers working on  
courtyard project*

*(AIAS New Jersey Institute of  
Technology FBD Program)*

Much like being prepared to tell people about AIAS FBD, you need to be prepared to let people know why they should volunteer. Here are a few tips and some supporting information that should help convince anyone to join your group.

Some of the best reasons to give are the ones you may not have considered — the ones that make it worth your while to go that extra step. People who have spent time volunteering for a cause report that they get back in satisfaction and joy more than they ever expend in inconvenience or effort — what you get back is immeasurable. You'll also receive these benefits:

- Volunteering makes you feel needed.
- Volunteering can lead to learning new skills.
- Volunteering helps you meet new people and breaks down barriers of misunderstanding, mistrust and fear.
- Volunteering can create new contacts which may help your business or career.

### **It's What You Can Do for the World!**

You might be thinking, "The little bit that I can do will never help much!" or "What in the world can I do?" If you've ever spent ten minutes reading a book to a lonely child, you know that even that small amount of compassion and attention can make a world of difference. No one person can solve the world's problems, but what little you do can make your little corner of the world — or one far away from yours a happier, healthier, safer place to live for those who need your help. Each of us can right a wrong, fill a plate, visit a shut-in or clean up a park — and that does make a difference for us all!

### **Participate in the Tradition of Volunteering**

- Approximately 109 million American adults volunteer annually — that's 56% of all adults.
- Volunteers contribute an average of 3.5 hours per week - totaling 20 billion hours with an estimated dollar value of \$225 billion.
- 59% of teenagers volunteer an average of 3.5 hours per week - that's 13.3 million volunteers totaling 2.4 billion hours at a total value of \$7.7 billion.

## **PRO TIP:**

*FBD cannot take the place of government programs, nor can it single-handedly cure the ills and disparities of society. But everyone can make a difference in a small way, in their own community, and can find ways to help that will make all the efforts worth the time and trouble that is invested in them.*

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The AIAS does require that all AIAS FBD Leaders be active AIAS members (for insurance and legal reasons). However, most AIAS FBD teams need additional volunteers to complete projects. These volunteers can be students, local professionals, parents of other student leaders, friends of the clients, or even the client's neighbors. The more involved the local community can be in the project, the more people will know about AIAS FBD Program and in turn help on future builds. Here are some helpful hints and recommendations to think about when looking for your group of volunteers.

**Patrons:** A person who is interested enough to visit a museum or use a nonprofit's services is more likely to be interested enough to volunteer than a person from the general public. AIAS FBD teams should make sure that volunteer opportunities and applications are clearly posted where patrons can find them, and that front-line staff know enough to field basic questions about volunteering for AIAS FBD. It also does not hurt to personally ask a regular customer if he or she would be willing to help out.

**Seniors:** Retirees are often looking for ways to make meaningful contributions to their communities, to maintain their skills (or learn new skills!) and to interact with others. Because they often have more daytime availability than other people, they can make perfect volunteers. Contact local active living communities and senior centers about the possibility of recruiting volunteers there.

**Social Media:** One way to find volunteers is to make it easy for volunteers to find you. By creating social media accounts for your AIAS FBD Program, you can promote and share content about your upcoming build and ask for volunteers. Have your friends follow the accounts and share posts as well in order to maximize the number of people viewing the call for volunteers. Be sure to include contact info such as an email address so that potential volunteers can easily get in touch with the FBD Team.

**Community Bulletin Boards:** Libraries, coffee shops, places of worship, and local daily and weekly newspapers, and other places often advertise volunteer opportunities. People looking for something to do usually know about these resources, so an AIAS FBD team should take advantage of any place that posts volunteer positions.



# PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

By the end of the year, an AIAS FBD team will have learned a lot of information, met a lot of people and completed a very large amount of work. Even if the FBD team did not complete a project, the chapter should look back and review any questions or concerns that were brought up through the previous year. Writing up a small collection of “case studies” from the chapter’s experiences can drastically help future chapter leaders and future FBD Leaders within the AIAS. Plan an end of the year event where everyone can discuss and talk about their experiences and memories from the year.

While these “case studies” do not have to be lengthy or very detailed summaries, they can give a snap-shot of the overall progress the entire team has made. Also, this would be an interesting time for each individual to take the survey again that they took at the beginning of the year. During the project it may not seem like they are learning anything, but the experiences of FBD can drastically change the knowledge set of those involved.

## Project Content Upload

The process from start to finish isn’t always an easy one but being able to see all of the time and hard work you and your peers dedicated to the project pay off is a fantastic feeling. The AIAS National Office wants to know the amazing work that each chapter is producing in order to promote how Freedom By Design impacts communities all over.

Would a video best display your project? Small handout that can be used for future marketing? Or the classic binder/book format? Whatever layout you see fit can now be used to share your work with the FBDAG and the AIAS National Office.

## How Do I Share My Chapter’s Work?

Visit the FBD Tab on the AIAS website and scroll down to FBD PROJECT CONTENT UPLOAD. Fill out all the required fields, add file(s), and type a brief description of your file(s). Hit Submit and you’re done! The National Office will contact you shortly after for a follow-up.

The FBDAG and AIAS National Office hope that you will take advantage of this new and easy way to share your work. We are always excited to see what our membership is doing!

*“The mind, while blessed with permanent memory, is cursed with lousy recall. Written goals provide clarity. By documenting your dreams, you must think about the process of achieving them.”*

- Gary Ryan Blair

Most Sustainable Project  
Skeen Residence  
University of Tennessee

**Recycle • Reuse**

Use of recycled and re-used material was one of our primary focuses and accounted for approximately 60% of our supplies. Transforming old railroad ties into dynamic planter boxes is one example of this focus.



**Locally Sourced**

All materials for this project were sourced locally within 50 miles of the construction site. As a result we were able to drastically reduce the amount of energy, time, and impact needed to acquire those materials for our Freedom by Design team.



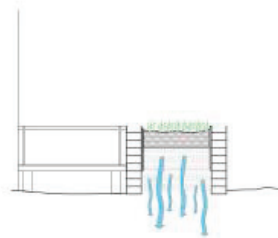
**Careful Consideration of Brick and Concrete**

All deconstructed concrete and brick structures were used as fill for the grading of the project. We also reduced the use of concrete by using joists, stone walking paths, and casting the grade out to slope against the concrete ramp. By consciously reducing the amount of concrete we were able to significantly lower the high energy cost associated with it.



**Planter Filtration**

The planters were constructed on a porous surface, gravel, allowing for water to pass through and transfer back into the aquifer. This was a serious water issue and this system allowed us to contain and more evenly distribute water runoff.



Documentation of  
Sustainable Ramp

(AIAS University of  
Tennessee FBD Program)

# HELPFUL RESOURCES

**AIAS FORUM and Grassroots:** Directors and chapter leaders will share their success and learn more about issues related to the AIAS FBD program by attending a series of lectures/seminars on creating/managing an AIAS FBD team, locating a client, collecting funds and materials, etc.

Chapters interested in applying for an NCARB Grant must have a representative from their school attend all FBD Sessions at Grassroots in order to be eligible.

**The Freedom By Design Advisory Group:** In addition to this instruction manual and an accompanying resources available online which are provided to AIAS chapters embarking in the Freedom by Design program, the FBDAG is there to help answer questions and issues that chapters may face throughout the year.

**Publicity:** The potential impact of AIAS FBD is phenomenal. While those with disabilities are directly affected by the program, the students and professionals who participate in this process are forever changed as well. Entire communities can rally behind causes which truly make a difference, and AIAS FBD is one of those causes. By promoting this program heavily, the AIAS stands firmly behind its mission statement of promoting excellence in architecture education, training and practice; fostering an appreciation of architecture and related disciplines; enriching communities in a spirit of collaboration; and organizing students to combine their efforts to advance the art and science of architecture. The AIAS has, and will continue to advertise and seek different media outlets on behalf of the many AIAS FBD programs across the country.

You can find contact information at [www.aias.org/about/crew](http://www.aias.org/about/crew) and can always contact us at [freedom@aias.org](mailto:freedom@aias.org)

# THE RESOURCES AND NEWS TABS

## The Resources Tab

The AIAS website is a wealth of information for everything AIAS. Everything FBD Programs need for their program can be found at [www.aias.org/resource](http://www.aias.org/resource)

Once on the webpage, select the FBD button to view all resources tagged as Freedom By Design. Things that can be found on the Resources Tab include:

- The FBD Release Forms Packet
- Logo Redesign Information
- Project Portfolios
- Expanded Scope Info Graphic
- The FBD Manual

## The News Tab

Thanks to student feedback, the FBDAG is constantly working with the AIAS National Office to improve the Freedom By Design Program. The program is only successful because of the local chapters that reach out to their communities to accomplish amazing things.

The changes are often in the form of press releases and social media posts. Updates about FBD as well as other announcements can be found at [www.aias.org/news](http://www.aias.org/news)

## Examples of News Posts Include:

- NCARB Grant Recipients
- Changes to the FBD Process
- Committees and Task Forces
- Other Grant Opportunities
- FBD Program Spotlights



**FBD RESOURCES**

*Look for the Resources  
Button on the FBD Tab!*

# WAIVERS, FORMS, AND MORE

Chapters with an FBD Program and an active project must fill out the following forms for liability issues. These forms can be found at

[www.aia.org/resource](http://www.aia.org/resource)

## Team Waiver

*Filled out by the FBD Team.*

The Team Waiver is a signed agreement that acknowledges the roles and responsibilities that an FBD Team will conduct throughout the year.

## Freedom By Design Volunteer Release Agreement

*Filled out by Volunteers before project builds.*

This form outlines the waiver of liability, photography release, and assumption of risk volunteers may face. This form is a great way for AXP advisors to track and approve AXP hours of individuals participating in the FBD project.

## Freedom By Design Client Release Agreement

*Filled out by the client at the start of the project.*

This form discusses the work to be performed, the outcome of the work, and liability. It is extremely important that all parties fill out this form promptly.

## Freedom By Design Photo/Video Release Form

*Filled out by any individual who may be photographed or recorded during the duration of the project.*

This form states the manner in which the AIA National Office is allowed to use and reproduce images and video of the individual involved in the FBD project. It is important that this form is filled out by the parents of anyone under the age of 18 for legal purposes.

# THE ROLE OF THE FBDAG

The Freedom By Design Advisory Group began as a small group of students dedicated to the FBD Program. This small group became known as the FBD Task Force. Once the Task Force was brought on as a special committee to the AIAS National Board, it evolved into the FBDAG. The role of the FBDAG is constantly evolving in order to serve local AIAS chapters to the best of its ability. Every year, the AIAS National Board presents charges to the seven committees and this dictates how the FBDAG will function from year to year.

The FBDAG leads all Freedom by Design programming at national conferences, Grassroots and FORUM. Along with this established task, the FBDAG has begun to solidify practices that should remain in place for many years to come. For example, the AIAS National Office now relies on the FBDAG for insight on issues and concerns of local AIAS chapters as well as promoting the FBD Program and advocating for project submissions.

Thanks to the newly established email, [freedom@aias.org](mailto:freedom@aias.org), the FBDAG is readily equipped to answer questions that chapters with FBD Programs have as well as give advice to chapters seeking to establish an FBD Program. On top of the email, the FBD Pods are another useful resource for chapters that seek information. Whenever the FBDAG cannot answer a specific question, the Chair will relay the question up to the AIAS National office in a timely manner. By providing the FBDAG with this question and answer authority, the AIAS National Office hopes to grow the FBD Program across the nation.

# FBD PODS

## What are they?

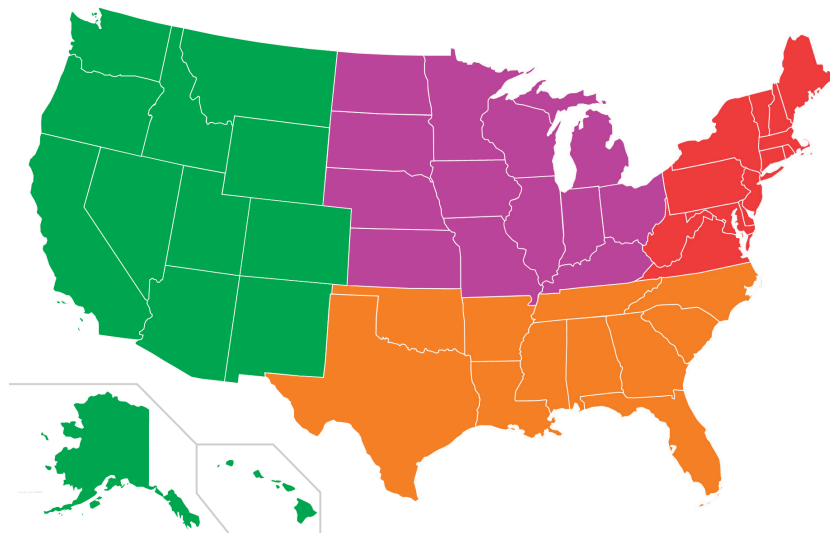
The Freedom By Design Advisory Group has been charged to communicate with chapters and track all projects throughout the year. The best way to do that? Establishing a network for FBD Directors. These networks will be quad based with the FBDAG sharing information across quads.

## Why are they important?

The current structure of communication from the local to the national level is through the Quad Directors. This network of Chapter Presidents creates a huge support group and we want to expand this support to Freedom By Design Directors. Problems finding a Mentor? Having difficulty fundraising? Want to start a program but don't know what the first step is? These are just a few of the many questions you have and that many others have faced in the past. Why not reach out and overcome these challenges together?

## How will they work?

These meetings will happen at least once a month. A member of the FBDAG will reach out to FBD Directors by Quad via email. A Doodle Poll survey will be used to determine the meeting times for each Quad. Based on availability and capacity, two or more hangouts may happen. We want to make sure we can answer as many questions as possible! After meeting times have been confirmed, an agenda will be sent out. Make sure you read it and prepare any questions you may have.





*The American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) is an independent, nonprofit, student-run organization. The mission of the AIAS shall be to promote excellence in architectural education, training, and practice; to foster an appreciation of architecture and related disciplines; to enrich communities in a spirit of collaboration; and to organize students and combine their efforts to advance the art and science of architecture.*

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