

AIA Iowa

A Chapter of The American
Institute of Architects

Promoting Design Excellence in Iowa since 1904



Five (5) Steps for Selecting an Architect

Step 1: Research Firms

- Ask colleagues for referrals
- Find out the names of firms that have designed projects similar to yours that you like
- Consult the AIA Iowa website for firm information using our search engine
- Search the Internet

Step 2: Request Information

- Describe your project and ask each firm about their availability
- Seek qualifications and references, including illustrations of recent work

Step 3: Review and Evaluate

Consider these factors:

- The size of the firm
- How long it has been in practice
- Special expertise in this project type
- Their ability to work within budget and schedule constraints
- Management Ability
- Knowledge of local building codes and zoning regulations
- The ability to work with other specialists, if necessary
- Visit at least one project of each architect under consideration
- Call client references

Step 4: Interview Firms

- Create a short list of three to five firms to interview
- Allow at least an hour for the interview
- Make sure that the people you interview are those who will actually be working on your project
- Decide on location for the interview: at your office, the architect can gain a better understanding of you and your project; at the architect's office, you can see how the architect and staff work.

Step 5: Make the Selection

In making your final determination, you will want to look at:

- Design quality
- Technical competence
- Experience
- Cost
- Organization
- Availability of key staff

You will also be looking for an architect who:

- Is responsive to your needs
- Listens carefully
- Understands your situation and is asking the right questions
- Makes you feel comfortable

You will be working with the architect for a long time and it is important that you trust the architect's judgment and ability.

The key to successful design projects is careful management of the process, wise selection of the players, and good communication. A thorough understanding of your goals, needs, and risks will enable you to build relationships and assemble the right team of design and construction professionals for your project. An architect can guide your way through your construction journey and direct you toward solutions you may have never considered.