



March 26, 2020

His Excellency Charlie Baker  
Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker,

Thank you for your individual leadership and the tireless work of your administration throughout this COVID-19 crisis. The scope of this pandemic is beyond anything we have experienced in our lifetime, and the architecture community appreciates your steady hand during this challenging time.

As residents of Massachusetts and leaders of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA MA), a component of the American Institute of Architects, we stand firmly behind the steps you've taken to protect the public; to keep the people of our community safe; and to support workers and businesses alike. The citizens of Massachusetts are resilient when we work together. With smart and steady leadership, we are confident that we will bounce back stronger than before.

In Massachusetts, architects are entrusted with the responsibility to protect health, safety and welfare in the built environment. We will abide by all public health declarations aimed at minimizing and preventing the spread of COVID-19. As leaders of AIA MA, we stand ready to work with you to overcome this pandemic; to stabilize our communities; and to build a healthy and equitable future together.

Through rigorous education and experience, licensed architects acquire the critical skills necessary to protect public health, safety and welfare in the built environment. There are currently more than 4,000 licensed architects living in Massachusetts and over 3,400 with reciprocal licenses to practice in the state. Many of these individuals possess extensive experience directing complex public health projects, from initial planning through construction administration, for both public and private clients.

Please see below for several specific ways in which architects can be of assistance:

- Evaluate vacant or underutilized property for temporary hospitals and testing centers
- Assist with documenting and retrofitting the buildings or other facilities identified as viable hospital facilities
- Serve as a resource advisor



Our membership stands ready to assist the Commonwealth in this unprecedented health crisis. Further, the architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industry has directly felt the impact of this pandemic. Projects across the country, including critical infrastructure projects, are being delayed and entire offices are closed or requiring employees to work from home. To ensure that essential projects continue to move forward, during construction and in order to assure a pipeline of future development, we request that you designate architecture as an essential business under certain limited circumstances. This will allow architects to continue protecting public health, safety and welfare in the built environment. **Specifically, we ask that in any situation where a general contractor or other construction trade is designated as an essential business, the architect also be designated as an essential business.**

Designating architecture as an essential business will ensure that critical services continue to be available to the public. The professional services provided by an architect, including construction observation and administration, are necessary to the successful, timely completion of these essential projects. To ensure that projects continue to meet building codes requirements and the expectations of public owners and clients, architects must be permitted to be on site to perform their contractually required professional services.

Architects throughout Massachusetts stand ready to work with you to slow the spread of COVID-19. Elected leaders like you are keeping Americans healthy and safe, and preparing our economy to recover fully.

Please contact John Nunnari, Executive Director of AIA MA, [jnunnari@architects.org](mailto:jnunnari@architects.org), 617-901-4685 for more information. We sincerely look forward to this opportunity to work with you to protect public health, safety and welfare and to jointly help our community.

Sincerely,

Ludmilla Pavlova-Gillham AIA  
President, AIA Massachusetts