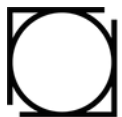

Local Architectural Society Handbook

A Guide to Policies, Governance, Roles, and Responsibilities



Ontario Association
of Architects

2026 Edition



About The Society Handbook

Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook provides guidance for the day-to-day operation and governance of the Local Architectural Societies, as well as details regarding their relationship to their parent organization, the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA).

This handbook may be updated periodically. Please refer to the most recent document provided on the [OAA Website](#).

What You'll Find in This Handbook

- ✎ **Background Info** Understand how Societies are structured, decision-making authority, and relationship to the OAA.
- ✎ **Administrative Info** Guidelines, protocols, and obligations to ensure effective Society operations.
- ✎ **Useful Docs + Links** Additional relevant information.

Questions?

Contact the OAA Society Liaison, Cynthia Mykytyshyn (Public Outreach Specialist), at CynthiaM@oaa.on.ca.



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01

About

1.1 What Are the Local Architectural Societies?

The Local Architectural Societies (“Local Societies” or “Societies”) are constituent organizations of the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA). Located in 14 communities across the province, the Societies are the regional chapters of the OAA, providing an essential touch-point between the Association, the architectural community, and beyond. They are formed by a group of local professionals and other allies who share an interest in architecture and recognize its importance to collective wellbeing and quality of life.

Because of their close connection to their communities across the province of Ontario, the Local Societies are in a unique position to support one of the OAA’s additional objects defined in the *Architects Act*: “to establish and maintain or to assist in the establishment and maintenance of classes, schools, exhibitions or lectures in, and to promote public appreciation of, architecture and the allied arts and sciences.” While some variability is expected due to local contexts, Society activities must not be inconsistent or contrary to the mandate of the OAA, which is **to regulate the practice of architecture to serve and protect the public interest.**

Societies respond to the local regions they serve and their unique contexts, circumstances, and interests. They reflect the desire within those communities for professional dialogue, support networks, leadership, learning, and community connection.

1.2 Establishment

The Societies were established ad hoc over time, some predating the current *Architects Act* by many years. In 1984, the Societies were formalized under the bylaw-making powers provided by the *Architects Act*:

8. (1) 8. providing for the establishment and dissolution and governing the operation of groups of members as societies of the Association and respecting grants by the Association to societies or any of them;

Each Society is established at the initiative of local groups of professionals. They emerge and may change over time, currently encompassing all regions in Ontario. Section 69 of the OAA Bylaws states that:

Any five (5) members of the Association residing in one locality may with the approval of the Council, form a Society of the Association with a headquarters at such place as they may select, provided that the territory of a new Society does not encroach upon the territory of an existing Society. Should any question of encroachment between the territories of two societies arise, the same shall be settled by the Council.

Sections 65 through 75 of Bylaw No.1 under the Architects Act further detail the establishment, dissolution, and governance of the operation of Societies, as well as limitation on their power and authority by the OAA Council.

Visit the OAA Website to view the [current OAA Bylaws](#).



1.3 Society Boundaries

The catchment areas of the Local Societies are defined as follows:

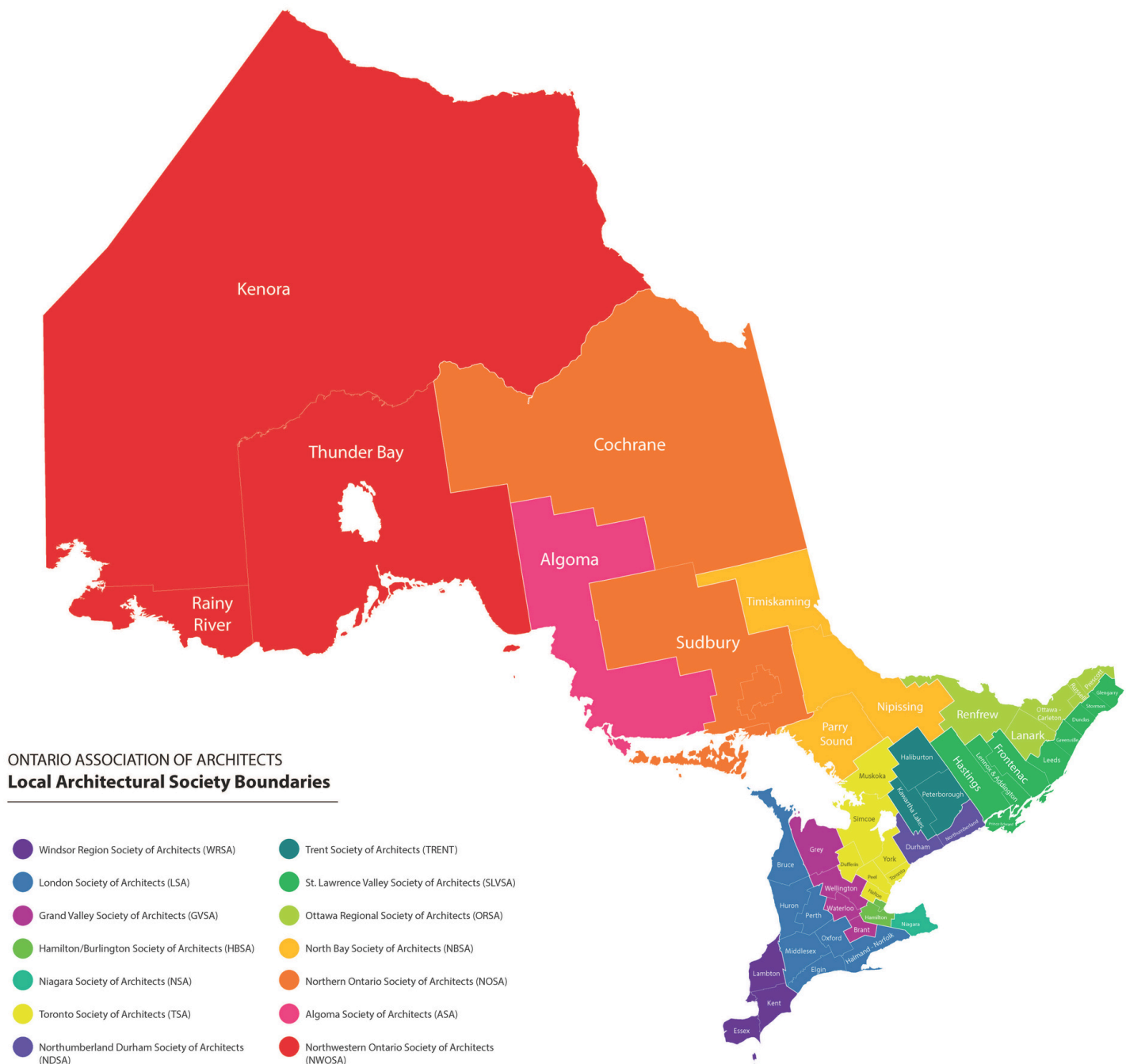
- Algoma: Algoma
- Grand Valley: Brant, Waterloo, Wellington, and Grey
- Hamilton / Burlington: Hamilton-Wentworth and the City of Burlington in the County of Halton
- London: Middlesex, Huron, Bruce, Oxford, Elgin, Perth, and Haldimand-Norfolk
- Northern Ontario: Manitoulin, Cochrane, and Sudbury North Bay: Timiskaming, Nipissing, and Parry Sound Northumberland Durham: Northumberland and Durham
- Northwestern Ontario: Thunder Bay, Rainy River, and Kenora
- Niagara: Niagara
- Ottawa Regional: Ottawa-Carleton, Renfrew, Lanark, Prescott, and Russell
- St. Lawrence Valley: Hastings, Lennox & Addington, Frontenac, Leeds, Grenville, Dundas, Stormont, Glengarry, and Prince Edward
- Trent: Haliburton, Peterborough, and Victoria
- Toronto: City of Toronto, York, Peel, Halton, Dufferin, Muskoka, Simcoe, and all places outside Ontario
- Windsor Region: Essex, Kent, and Lambton

The boundaries of each Society are determined by OAA Council, who also settle any questions of encroachment between the territories of Societies.

1.4 Society Names

A Society shall be known as “The _____ Society of Architects, a Society of the Ontario Association of Architects.”

In addition to the applicable region, the OAA supports the use of the tagline above to connect the local group back to the Association. The Society is also permitted to use the OAA logo along with their own for identification purposes. The specifications for use of the logo, along with the image, can be obtained from the OAA Staff Society Liaison.

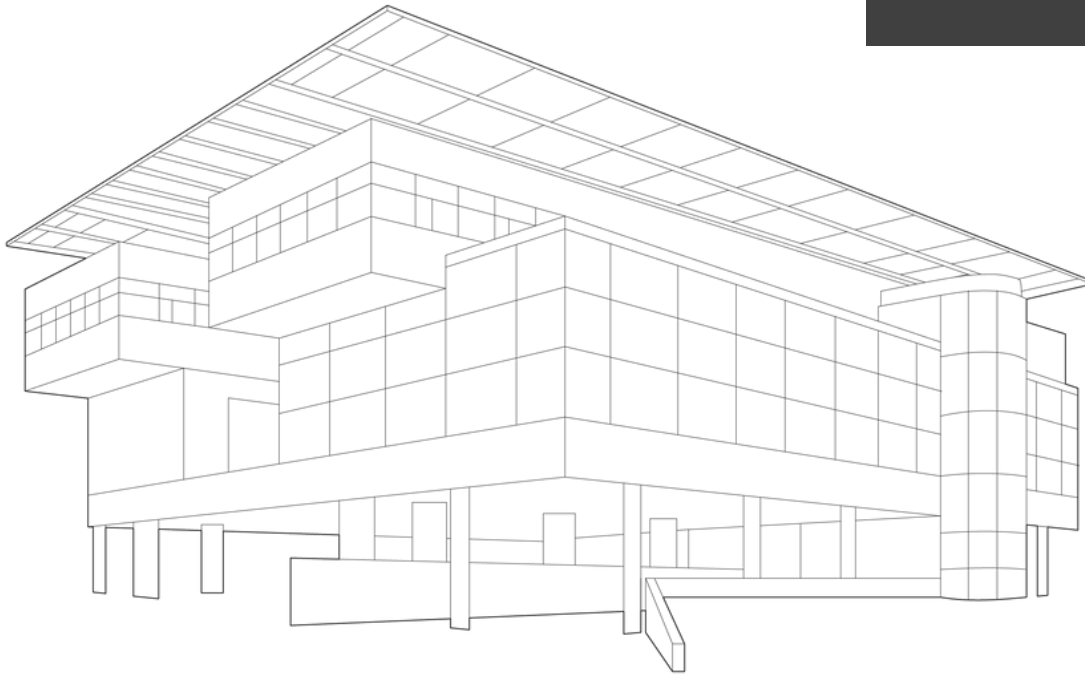


02

Society Governance



*The Local Society governing structure, rules, and responsibilities are extensions of those of the **Ontario Association of Architects**, the Societies' parent organization.*



2.1 Governing Documents

Architects Act, Regulation 27, and Bylaws of the Association

As constituent organizations of the OAA, the Local Societies are bound by the same governing documents as the Association: the Architects Act, Regulation 27, and the Bylaws of the Association.

While the mandate and function of the Societies is not expressly regulatory in nature, they cannot be inconsistent with that of the OAA.

Objects of the Association

The objects of the Association are outlined in Subsections 2(2) and 2(3) of the *Architects Act*:

Principal object

(2) *The principal object of the Association is to regulate the practice of architecture and to govern its members, holders of certificates of practice and holders of temporary licences in accordance with this Act, the regulations and the Bylaws in order that the public interest may be served and protected.*

Additional objects

(3) *For the purpose of carrying out its principal object, the Association has the following additional objects:*

- 1. To establish, maintain and develop standards of knowledge and skill among its members.*
- 2. To establish, maintain and develop standards of qualification and standards of practice for the practice of architecture.*
- 3. To establish, maintain and develop standards of professional ethics among its members.*
- 4. To establish and maintain or to assist in the establishment and maintenance of classes, schools, exhibitions or lectures in, and to promote public appreciation of, architecture and the allied arts and sciences.*
- 5. To perform such other duties and exercise such other powers as are imposed or conferred on the Association by or under any Act.*



Society Bylaws

Under section 71 of the OAA Bylaws, a Society may:

...pass Bylaws governing its operations and respecting the conduct of its affairs including provisions for amendment of such Bylaws...

These Society Bylaws cannot conflict with the provisions of the Act, the OAA Bylaws, or any standard rules of procedures established thereunder. Any amendments passed by a Society are not effective until filed with the OAA.

The establishment of individual Society Bylaws is not mandatory, however it is considered useful in guiding the operation of Societies. A copy of each Society's updated bylaws should be submitted alongside its Annual Report.

OAA 5-Year Strategic Plan

The OAA's mandate, vision, and five-year Strategic Plan can be found on the OAA website at oaa.on.ca/about/what-we-do

The OAA's current five-year **Strategic Plan** is in place from 2022 to end of 2026. It has four clear foundational goals—**Regulatory Leadership, Governance and Operations, Member Competency**, and **Public Education**. The Strategic Plan also includes the OAA's commitment to address two very important environmental and social governance themes—**Climate Action** and **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**—that act as lenses through which the OAA views its work in order to ensure it positively aligns with these principles.

The OAA's strategic plan may be useful to inform how Societies define their own priorities and the work that they do.

Mandate

To regulate and govern the practice of architecture in Ontario in the service and protection of the public interest in accordance with the *Architects Act*, its Regulations and By-laws; to develop and uphold standards of skill, knowledge, qualification, practice, and professional ethics among architects; and, to promote the appreciation of architecture within the broader society.

Vision

An Ontario in which architects are valued contributors to society, by creating a safe and healthy built environment that performs at the highest levels and elevates the human spirit.



2.2 Society Structure

Members of the Society

Refer to Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) as well as provincial privacy legislation regarding maintaining email lists.

The OAA can only share the emails of individuals who have agreed to join a Local Society. Review email lists regularly and always provide an “unsubscribe” option.

Local Societies may engage and maintain a cohort of members. Members may enjoy select professional benefits at the discretion of each individual society, such as networking events, exclusive learning opportunities, and more.

OAA members and others who hold status with the Association are eligible to join a Local Society provided they have paid their respective OAA annual membership dues. Annual Society membership dues also apply.

Currently, the OAA supports the Societies in attracting and registering new members using its central database system (iMIS). Although the OAA can collect member dues on behalf of each Society, if they choose, Societies may also attract and register members themselves. See the Society Finances section of this handbook for further details.

Affiliates of the Society

In addition to OAA members and status holders noted above, Societies may admit any member of the public as Affiliates of the Society. Eligibility requirements and annual dues for Affiliates are set and administered by the individual Society.

Officers of the Society: The Executive Committee

The affairs of the Society are managed by the Officers of the Society, comprising a **Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer**, who together form the Executive Committee.

At the discretion of the Society, the Executive Committee can also include the Past Chair of the Society, and other members as the Society may deem necessary.

It is understood that the smaller Societies may not have the volunteer resources available to operate with a full complement of officers. *However, one individual cannot serve all roles of the Officers of the Society; at minimum, a Society must have an elected Chair and an elected Treasurer.*



The Executive Committee: Roles and Responsibilities

Chair

The Chair of each Society is responsible for the operation and activities of that Society. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that the work of the Society is carried out in good faith and in accordance with the Society Manual, *Architects Act*, Regulation, and Bylaws. The Chair must be a member of the Ontario Association of Architects (i.e. licensed architect, Non-Practicing Architect, Life or Retired Member). **The Chair shall:**

- Ensure the OAA is informed of results of the Officers of the Society election;
- Be familiar with the Society Manual;
- Arrange a meeting with the outgoing Officers of the Society to ensure a smooth transition of operations;
- Review the Society's financial accounts;
- Call and preside at all meetings of the Society;
- Call and preside at all meetings of the Officers/Executive Committee of the Society;
- Provide the Annual Report to the OAA of the Society's activities and membership;
- Make contact with leaders in the community as appropriate (especially allied professions);
- Attend and participate at Society Chairs meetings; and
- Ensure that the Council Liaison is kept fully informed of all Society activities.

Vice-Chair

In the absence of the Chair, **the Vice-Chair shall** assume and perform their duties and responsibilities.

Secretary

The Secretary is the custodian of the Society's records and documents their activities.

The Secretary shall:

- Give notice of all meetings of the Society members and affiliates, the Council Liaison, and the Society Staff Liaison;
- Attend and record the Society/Executive Committee meetings; and
- Ensure records and documents are transferred to the next Secretary.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the Society's assets, administers the finances of the Society, and reports to the Officers of the Society. They must be prepared to provide a clear and concise statement of the Society's financial position at any time, upon request. **The Treasurer shall:**

- Establish a bank account in the name of the Society and arrange for the appropriate signing authorities and segregation of duties;
- Pay all accounts as authorized by the Officers of the Society;
- Keep a record of all assets and expenditures, including invoices and receipts;
- Review all assets and expenditures to ensure prudent and responsible use of Society funds;
- Prepare the annual statement of accounts (profit/loss statement) and balance sheet of the Society and provide such statements to the OAA by the prescribed deadline;
- Inform the Officers of the Society and the OAA of any situation that impacts the Society's financial position;
- Ensure that all records are transferred in an orderly fashion to the next Treasurer; and
- Register the Society for HST if the total amount of all revenues (before expenses) from the worldwide taxable supplies of all the organization's activities is \$50,000 or more in any single calendar quarter, OR in the last four consecutive calendar quarters.

2.3 Succession Planning

Each Society is encouraged to outline a succession plan to ease transitions in leadership. A succession plan could include:

- Term limits for Society Officers;
- Extended transition timelines;
- A pipeline of prepared leaders (e.g.: a Vice-Chair should be groomed for the Chair role; Co-Chairs allow one Chair to exit without a gap in leadership while seeking a replacement);
- Open and frequent communication with Society Membership lauding the rewards of executive committee involvement;
- Orientation materials and knowledge transfer protocols; and
- Administrative transfer protocols (e.g.: banks accounts in Society name rather than individual names, transferable online workspaces).

Elections

As a rule, Societies are expected to govern the elections process independently, without involvement from the OAA. The procedures for the election of Officers of a Society shall be as follows:

1. Officers shall be nominated by members of the Society.
2. All Individuals who hold status with the OAA may run for elections. The Society may decide to elect others to their Executive Committee to fulfill additional roles and responsibilities not held by the officers noted above.
3. Notwithstanding item 2, the majority of the Officers must be OAA members (whether active or non-practising/retired) in any combination of categories of members. **Only one Intern Architect or Intern Technologist may serve as an officer of the Society at a time and may not hold the position of Chair.**
4. Elections are to take place annually at the Society's Annual General Meeting.
5. The term of office is one year or as otherwise determined by the Society, but Officers may run for re-election.
6. Where a quorum remains in office, a vacancy can be filled by the remaining Officers; where no such quorum remains, the vacancy must be filled by election.



2.4 Society Meetings

*refer to the OAA's
[AI Usage Policy](#).

A majority of Officers constitutes a quorum of the Executive Committee. Meetings of the Executive Committee may be held at the call of the Chair. All Minutes of such meetings should be duly recorded* and confirmed by the membership at a subsequent meeting.

Annual General Meeting

Once a year, each Society is required to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Members of the Society.

During this Annual General Meeting, the Officers of the Society must present the following to the members of the Society:

- Financial report summarizing the financial activities of the Society during the fiscal year; and
- Report on the activities of the Society.

In addition, unless otherwise stated in the Society Bylaws, Societies will hold the election of Officers of the Society during the AGM.

The Society shall:

- Provide notice of the time, date, and location of the AGM to the OAA for information;
- Hold the AGM early in the calendar year, immediately after the annual reporting to the OAA is completed (when possible); and
- Provide the results of the annual election of officers to the OAA along with appropriate contact information (Chair's responsibility). The contact information for the Chair will reside on the [OAA Website](#).

Society Committees

The Officers may appoint such committees as it considers necessary and may nominate a Chair for each such committee.

The Officers shall coordinate the work of all such committees, shall set the Terms of Reference, and take whatever steps are necessary to facilitate the completion of tasks assigned.

The Officers should consider and act on recommendations in a timely manner and in accordance with the approved Terms of Reference put forward by committees. Officers should encourage participation by as many members as possible in the work of the committees.



03

Relationship: OAA + Societies

3.1 Overview

The Ontario Association of Architects is the parent organization of which the Societies are geographically defined constituents. They help to further the objectives of the Association in accordance with the *Architects Act* and to advance the strategic priorities and objectives set out in the OAA's Strategic Plan.

Collectively, the Society Chairs from all jurisdictions form the Committee of Society Chairs. They typically meet bi-monthly with members of OAA staff to discuss issues of relevance to both the local OAA membership and the community at large. The OAA provides both direct and indirect support and guidance to Society representatives in order that they may carry out their work effectively.

3.2 Staying Connected

Council Liaison to Societies

OAA Council holds authority and responsibility for the conduct of the affairs of the Association. OAA Council seeks the constructive views and concerns of Local Societies to better understand issues affecting the practice and profession of architecture across Ontario.

Section 6 of Bylaw No. 1 sets out the Duties of Members of Council which includes:

to take an active role in the affairs of the societies in the electoral district within which they have an address of record, including appearances at Society meetings as a representative of the Council

As such, Councillors are appointed as liaisons to specific Societies, usually within their Electoral District. It is the Council Liaison's role to act as the conduit between the Local Society and OAA Council to foster ongoing communication.

Note: the local members are not constituents of the members of Council

Electoral District boundaries and Local Society boundaries do not necessarily align. Therefore, Council annually assigns specific Council Members to specific Societies to equitably distribute the Council Liaison role.



OAA Staff Society Liaison

The OAA Staff Society Liaison facilitates ongoing connection between the OAA and the individual Societies. They provide select administrative support to the Local Societies and are also responsible for updating the Local Societies Portal on the OAA Website and SharePoint.

The OAA Staff Society Liaison is the first point of contact for Society-related matters.

Contact: Cynthia Mykytyshyn, Public Outreach Specialist
CynthiaM@oaa.on.ca

The OAA is committed to fostering a healthy work environment for all employees and follows the Disconnecting from Work Policy under Ontario's Employment Standards Act. This policy allows our employees to disconnect from work fully after the expected work time. Please note that OAA staff generally work between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, and will only engage in work-related communications between these expected hours.

Society Chairs Meetings

Expenses incurred by the Chair and/or their representative for these meetings will be reimbursed in accordance with the OAA's financial policy regarding volunteer expense reimbursement.

A formal Meeting of Society Chairs is held at least once per year, usually in concert with the OAA's Annual Conference in late Spring. The preferred format for this meeting is in-person. Additional meetings may be called during the year for special purposes or where the OAA seeks collective input from the Societies.

The OAA Staff Liaison will also arrange informal virtual meetings at regular intervals during the year (5-6 times per year). Chairs are encouraged to attend these meetings and take advantage of opportunities to connect, share feedback, learn from each other, and hear important updates from the Association.

Annual President's Visits

The sitting OAA President visits annually with the Local Society Memberships to address key topics and relevant issues. These visits offer a unique opportunity for members from different regions of the province to connect and share ideas with each other, while also offering an opportunity to engage and ask questions of the President directly. OAA Members are eligible to receive Unstructured Learning under the OAA ConEd Program for attending the visits.

3.3 Liability of Societies and the Association

A Society may not bind the OAA or represent that it may bind the OAA; the Society may not incur any indebtedness on behalf of the OAA. Section 75 of the OAA Bylaws dictates:

No officer, member or affiliate of a Society, nor any Society shall have any power or authority as such to contract in the name of the Association nor to assume any obligations on behalf of the Association and the Association shall have no liability with respect to any debts or obligations assumed or incurred by any Society.

It is the responsibility of the Society Chair and/or Treasurer to advise the OAA immediately should an issue arise such that a Society incurs any debt beyond that which is part of its usual operation and administration.

Immunity and Indemnification

The *Architects Act* states the following regarding immunity and indemnification for members of committees of the Association:

51.(1) No action or other proceeding for damages shall be instituted against the Association, a member of the Council, a member of the Association, a member of a committee of the Association, the chair or any other member of the Joint Practice Board or an officer, employee, agent or appointee of the Association for any act done in good faith in the performance or intended performance of a duty or in the exercise or the intended exercise of a power under this Act or the Professional Engineers Act, a regulation or a by-law, or for any neglect or default in the performance or exercise in good faith of such duty or power.

Same

(2) Every person who is a member of the Council, a member of the Association, a member of a committee of the Association, the chair or other member of the Joint Practice Board or an officer, employee, agent or appointee of the Association, and the person's heirs, executors and administrators, and estate and effects, respectively, may, with the consent of the Council, from time to time and at all times, be indemnified and saved harmless out of the funds of the Association, from and against,

(a) all costs, charges and expenses whatsoever that the person sustains or incurs in or about any action, suit or proceeding that is brought, commenced or prosecuted against the person, for or in respect of any act, deed, matter or thing whatsoever, made, done or committed by the person, in the performance or intended performance of a duty or in the exercise or in the intended exercise of a power under this Act or the Professional Engineers Act, a regulation or a by-law, or for any neglect or default in the performance or exercise in good faith of such duty or power or otherwise in or about the execution of such duties; and

(b) all other costs, charges and expenses that the person sustains or incurs in or about or in relation to the affairs thereof, except such costs, charges or expenses as are occasioned by the person's own willful neglect or default.



04

Society Finances

Please refer to the OAA's [Financial Policy for Local Societies](#) for complete details on expectations regarding Local Societies financial matters.

4.1 Funding

Local Societies receive funding via multiple sources, including Society Fees, Per Capita Allocation, and Society Project Funding (SPF). They may also seek funding from other outside sources such as event admissions, sponsorships, et cetera.

Society Fees

In accordance with Section 71 of the Association's Bylaws, "subject to the provisions of the Act, the Bylaws and any standard rules of procedures established under Section 70, each Society may fix dues for its members." Changes to fees should be discussed with the OAA in advance.

As of December 2024, new membership fees took effect for most Societies. The annual renewal process (December to March) includes the option to join a Society, allowing members to select from a drop-down menu. If a member has previously renewed and opted into a Society, their past selection will automatically be applied.

Fees for Society members who are also OAA members are collected by the OAA on the Societies' behalf during the annual renewal process (including HST). The fee totals (less HST) are then forwarded to each Society once the renewal process has closed at the end of each March. Members can select any Society of their choice, including one outside the catchment area associated with their address of record.

After the renewal process has closed, members of the Association may still join their Local Society through the [OAA Store](#). Contact information for membership fees received after March 31 will be sent throughout April to November. The fees will be forwarded to each Society at the end of the fiscal year.

Societies may also collect fees from Affiliates of the Society who are not members or status category holders of the OAA. Societies must directly administer the process of enrollment and collection of fees for these individuals.

Renewal Fee Administration

In fiscal year 2025, the OAA began accepting renewals on behalf of Societies year-round. Renewal fees for Societies received in December and January are issued in February along with the contact list. Those received in February and March will be transferred in April. Renewals received between April and November will be transferred in December.



Per Capita Allocation

In addition to the Society Fees, OAA Council provides additional funding to each Society based on the number of OAA members or status category holders in that Society. Affiliates of the Society are not eligible for per capita reimbursement.

The total amount allocated to each Society is based on the following sliding scale and is calculated during the annual renewal process.

	\$63 per Society member up to 30 (minimum \$1000 to any Society)
	\$57 per Society member 31 to 50
	\$50 per Society member 51 to 70
	\$44 per Society member 71 to 90
	\$38 per Society member 90+

Reconciliation of Per Capita Allocation

Since the Per Capita Allocation depends on the renewal process of the Association, anyone with OAA status who joins a Local Society after the renewal period (March 31) will not be included in the initial Per Capita Allocation for that year.

Societies are invited to submit for a reconciliation of their Per Capita Allocation for the fiscal year by submitting a list of any additional members and status holders of the Association who joined the Society after the renewal period by October of each year.



Society Project Funding

The Society Project Funding (SPF) program, overseen by the OAA Communications and Public Education Committee (CPEC), is intended solely for the Local Architectural Societies. It is awarded to carry out future special projects or events that cannot be covered by current Society assets, and further the OAA's objective to establish classes, schools, exhibitions, or lectures in, and promote public appreciation of, architecture and the allied arts and sciences. It requires submission of an Annual Report at the beginning of each year.

Over the years, the number of requests for project funding grew considerably. OAA Council provides a dedicated \$25,000 each year to expand projects into longer term programming and/or capacity-building activities through the *3-Year Recurring* Society Project Funding stream. Successful applicants can receive consistent annual funding for a three-year term.

Each application will be evaluated on the individual merits of the proposal and how it addresses the objectives of the Association, with priority given to projects excelling under the following criteria:

*Priority will be given to projects that address the OAA's key strategic themes of **climate action** and **equity, diversity, inclusion**, and **Reconciliation**.*

- **The project clearly furthers the OAA's objective to establish classes, schools, exhibitions, or lectures in—and promote public appreciation of—architecture and the allied arts and sciences;**
- **There is demonstrated need and relevance;**
- **The project's feasibility and likelihood of success; and**
- **The project's potential impact.**

If you would like the OAA Communications and Public Education Committee to consider a Society Project Funding proposal, please fill in the application [here](#) (or provide a response that includes all the information outlined therein and return it before the specified deadline to CynthiaM@oaa.on.ca).

You can learn more and see the history of approved applications on the [OAA Website](#).



Non-Profit Status and Harmonized Sales Tax

The OAA is a registered non-profit. It is also an incorporated organization and its HST number is registered to the OAA business number covering the activities under that business number only. *Activities of the Societies are not deemed activities under the OAA business number.*

In general, if the total amount of all revenues (before expenses) from the worldwide taxable supplies of all of the organization's activities is \$50,000 or more in any single calendar quarter, and in the last four consecutive calendar quarters, then you must register for an HST number.

More information can be found on the [Canada Revenue Agency website](#).

4.2 Fiscal Year

The OAA's fiscal year runs from December 1 to November 30 annually. Societies may find aligning with the OAA's fiscal year helpful for reporting purposes.

4.3 Reporting Obligations

Society Annual Report

Each Society is required to submit an Annual Report on their activities to the OAA for Council's review (typically in March). The Report must be accompanied by a financial report which includes a **balance sheet** and **income (profit & loss) statement**, noting any [Society Project Funding \(SPF\)](#) received. These annual reports are also required to be eligible for future SPFs. Reminders identifying the deadline for submission will be issued by the OAA Staff Society Liaison.

Societies may use the templates provided by the OAA for Annual Reports and financial statements (or similar likenesses that contain the same information). Society Annual Reports will be posted on the [OAA Website](#).

Annual Budgets

Each Society is responsible for providing an annual operating budget for the following fiscal year for review by the OAA's Finance & Audit Committee. Submission of the draft budget to the OAA may coincide with the individual Society's own budget development process and timelines. Societies will establish a balanced budget, which may include a line allocation for special initiatives or contingency. Each Society will use the [annual budget template](#) provided by the OAA or one of a similar likeness that provides the same or similar information and detail.



05

Activities + Events

Among the most common activities coordinated by Local Societies are events for members, affiliates, and the community. These can range from social gatherings to educational sessions to building tours. This section covers important information to consider when organizing an event or other engagement initiatives.

5.1 Working with the Public

Working with members of the public requires select government-mandated training. If Societies work with members of the public or wish to host a public event, any volunteer involved should complete the following training.

AODA The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* is the law that sets out a process for developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards. Government, businesses, non-profits, and public sector organizations must follow the standards. [Accessibility laws and standards](#) help reduce and remove barriers and make Ontario more inclusive for everyone.

All non-profit organizations must provide training to:

- all employees and volunteers;
- anyone involved in developing your organization's policies; and
- anyone who provides goods, services or facilities on your organization's behalf.

Volunteers can complete the AODA training *Customer Service Standard Module* available through Ontario's [Access Forward website](#). The training is brief and straightforward.

Where applicable, anyone providing public information and communication such as on a website, social media, et cetera, should also complete the *Information and Communications Standard Module* through Access Forward.

Once complete, please save a copy in your records.

Societies are expected to comply with all other relevant employment legislation including, but not limited to, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, and the Ontario Human Rights Code. In case of emergency, Societies should follow all appropriate safety protocols to ensure the safety of any volunteers and members of the public, before promptly reporting to OAAHR@oaa.on.ca.

5.2 Promotional Support

Societies may wish to maintain their own promotional channels such as e-newsletters, social media, or websites according to their individual needs and capacity.

As extensions of the OAA, Societies can request their events be posted on the OAA Website, the bOAAg, and publicized through the Association's multiple communication vehicles, including social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#)) as well as the OAA News e-newsletter.

Societies can submit the details of their events to the OAA Society Staff Liaison, ideally with at least one month's notice. This ensures sufficient time for website posting and scheduling in the biweekly OAA news. Details submitted with less notice may not be featured.

5.3 Permits + Insurance

Special Occasion Permit

From time to time, a Local Society may organize an event for its members and/or the public that requires a Special Occasion Permit from the LCBO (liquor license). The Society is required to complete the permit application on its own behalf, although the OAA can provide a letter confirming the organization is an official Society of the OAA. For more information on Special Occasion Permits, including requirements and limitations, please see the [Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario website](#).

Event Insurance

A Local Society may organize an event for its members and/or the public that requires it to provide proof of general liability insurance. It is sometimes possible for the OAA to obtain a rider on its own insurance policy for Local Societies for specific purposes, but the circumstances and cost must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, the Society will need to purchase a special event insurance policy.

5.4 Continuing Education

In fulfilment of the Association's object "to establish, maintain and develop standards of knowledge and skill among its members," Societies can organize and coordinate Continuing Education (ConEd) learning activities for their members.

The OAA Continuing Education Program recognizes learning activities that are relevant to the business of architecture and address at least one of the following subjects:

- architectural design;
- building code (Ontario Building Code and/or National Building Code of Canada);
- environment and energy;
- heritage buildings restoration;
- legal issues and legislation related to architectural practice and the construction industry;
- practice management and project management;
- risk management; and
- sustainable design / green architecture.

These learning activities can be either Structured or Unstructured.

Structured Learning

The following requirements must be met for a Continuing Education session to qualify as Structured Learning:

- the session must be at least one hour in length;
- the learning activity is related to the business of architecture as defined above;
- proof of attendance (please see updated protocols);
- the session falls under one of the following categories:
 - In-Person Learning - lectures, college or university courses, Lunch & Learns, tours
 - Distance Education - webinars, online education modules or courses
 - Presentations and Teaching - public speaking engagements in a professional capacity for the purpose of informing others; and
- the learning activity occurred within the current OAA ConEd cycle.

Unstructured Learning

Unstructured learning encompasses many other professional development opportunities.

For complete details on the distinctions between Structured and Unstructured hours, reporting requirements, and other relevant information, please refer to the OAA's [Continuing Education Policy](#).

5.5 OAA Conference in Your Region

Making a Pitch

The OAA's biennial Conference is a great opportunity for OAA members to experience regions across the province. The OAA's **Communications and Public Education Committee (CPEC)** considers possible locations and makes a recommendation to OAA Council for future OAA Conferences.

Societies are uniquely positioned to offer insight about their local community contexts to enhance existing programming offered by the OAA at Conference. As such, **Societies are welcome to submit proposals pitching their region as a suitable location.**

The OAA Conference Team is responsible for reviewing and approving all Conference-related programming to ensure alignment with established policies, procedures, deadlines, and budgetary constraints. The OAA will endeavour to integrate Local Society input where possible.

Proposals will provide background information on the region and a clear rationale for its suitability to host **350 or more delegates**, including details on possible accommodation sites, venues, and attractions. In accordance with event industry timelines, these proposals should be submitted **four years in advance** of the planned Conference dates to allow time for booking venues and accommodations.

The selected region's Society may wish to collaborate with the OAA Conference Team on the following aspects of the OAA Conference Program: opening night event, regional expertise, and onsite activations.

Opening Night Event

Societies may wish to help the OAA Conference Team organize a launch event. Societies may suggest venues, entertainment, and food and beverage vendors.

The OAA will ensure viability of any suggestions received and the Local Society will have the opportunity to make final selections for the opening night party from an approved shortlist.

Regional Expertise

The Societies may wish to offer suggestions for consideration to the OAA Conference Team to highlight unique or especially relevant **venues, local speakers, learning opportunities, activities, and local attractions or experiences**. The OAA may also seek input from Societies when evaluating available options or to source contacts for relevant local organizations and institutions such as the local universities or colleges.

Suggestions can be for integration into the Conference program or to spotlight special events in the region during Conference week.

Onsite Activations

Conference often includes onsite activations that provide added interest to the delegate experience. Ideas can be discussed with the OAA Conference Team for consideration.

The Local Society may also be granted prominent booth space in the Conference Lounge.



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Additional Info

6.1 Useful Links

Please refer to the current online versions of the following important documents and other reference materials:

- [OAA 5-Year Strategic Plan](#)
- The [Architects Act](#)
- [Regulations](#) under the *Architects Act*
- [OAA Bylaws](#)
- [OAA AI Usage Policy](#)
- [OAA Financial Policy for Local Architectural Societies](#) (website)
- [SharePoint folder containing Financial Policy, Guidelines, and Templates](#)
- [Society Project Funding Guidelines](#)
- [Continuing Education Policy](#)

Contact Information

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