Custom Residential Architects Network

AIA Knowledge Community

STARTING A LOCAL CRAN® GROUP

WHO IS CRAN®?

If you practice residential architecture for individual homeowners - whether you work on bathroom or kitchen remodeling projects, additions to existing residences, or ground-up new homes - you are doing "custom" work and are part of CRAN®.

Inclusivity is key to CRAN® and its future growth. We are a style- neutral group that recognizes members who are engaged in all types of residential architecture design idioms and practice models.

CRAN MISSION STATEMENT

SUPPORT:

CRAN® supports all architects whose practices focus on custom residential work. We address the unique issues related to custom residential practice. We provide a forum for an exchange of ideas and resources that affect the residential practitioner.

ADVOCATE:

CRAN® is finding new avenues to advocate for the residential practitioner through increased media exposure, publication of position papers, and by working closely with AIA, CEDIA, NARI and NAHB. We have established relationships with media outlets such as Hanley Wood and web-based platforms such as Houzz. We also have solid relationships with industry leaders who sponsor our events.

EDUCATE:

CRAN® hosts many programs and events on both the local and national levels. We support vital ongoing discussions and provide resources at www.aia.org/cran. CRAN® provides continuing educational opportunities for its members, the general public and our allied team members for all aspects of residential architecture.

A TOOLKIT TO GET YOU ORGANIZED:

Creating and being involved in a local CRAN® chapter is one of the best ways to tap into what CRAN has to offer and to build momentum for the AIA's most active and fastest-growing Knowledge Community. Local chapter meetings can be as simple as several members getting together, in round-table fashion, to discuss issues that concern the residential architect, from marketing and management to detailing and

spec writing. As the chapter evolves, activities may include homes tours, public outreach and education, academic and professional advocacy, and continuing education seminars.

CRAN® has created a unique Toolkit to help you develop a local AIA CRAN® group. CRAN® members are establishing regional and individual city components across the country, as CRAN® expands membership and provides a platform to fulfill its mission of supporting, advocating and educating its members.

HOW TO START AND SUSTAIN A SUCCESSFUL CRAN CHAPTER

Step 1 Commit to organizing an initial meeting.

A successful local CRAN® group typically begins with one interested individual taking ownership of the idea. While the ways to begin any endeavor are numerous, experience shows that two actions produce the best results:

Planning regularly scheduled meetings and 2) Broadly and consistently publicizing meeting time and location.

Step 2 Select a chairperson or co-chairs.

The local CRAN® chair or co-chair is the central point of the network connecting residential practitioners nationwide. They organize chapter meetings to provide collegial support and knowledge-sharing for residential practitioners. The initial chair may serve temporarily until another member is appointed.

Step 3 Contact the leadership of your state and local AIA components.

These components are vital resources for obtaining a current list of members and for help in publicizing meetings. State and local leadership may also include individuals who want to take a role in organizing a local CRAN® group. They may also be able to provide funding, meeting rooms, or assist you in securing sponsorships.

Step 4 Form an interest group.

Assemble a core group of members who can give the process a good start. The core group is a source for ideas and resources for your local CRAN® group and provides great motivation to move forward.

Step 5 Plan the initial (organizational) meeting.

Using your core group as a sounding board, pick a date, time, and place for the first meeting. The two most popular times are during an extended lunch and right after work. Common meeting places are the local AIA office (if available), a member architect's office, or a conveniently located library or coffee shop.

Step 6 Publicize the initial meeting.

Announce the meeting at a state or local AIA chapter meeting, in the state or local AIA chapter newsletter and through e-mail notifications to local AIA members. Include useful documents such as "CRAN®…a Short History" and "Who is CRAN®?" (in the Toolkit). Consider making phone calls to potential attendees. Send weekly reminder notices, with a final notice distributed the day before the meeting.

Step 7 Host the initial meeting.

Just as every building needs a plan, every meeting needs an agenda. Regardless of how simple it may be, an agenda lets attendees know that the group is organized, has a purpose and objective, and it keeps everyone focused. A sample agenda for the first meeting is included in the Toolkit.

Using nametags is a good way to foster communication.

A sign-in sheet is a great way to obtain member information.

State the group's purpose. This can often be summed up in one or two sentences, such as "This CRAN® group addresses the unique issues related to custom residential practice. As a forum, it provides for the exchange of ideas and resources that affect residential practice." Incorporate this statement into a formal group mission statement. The "CRAN®…a Short History" and "Who is CRAN®?" documents can facilitate this presentation. Also, state what you perceive to be the goals and outcomes of the meetings, and ask the attendees about their interests and expectations. This may actually occur at several meetings as new members join and enthusiasm builds.

Discuss who will act as chair/co-chair, and how long the term should be; however, these positions may be loosely defined until the group gets better established.

A chair/co-chairs selected form the core planning group typically conducts the initial meeting. After welcoming the attendees and introducing themselves, ask attendees to introduce themselves while passing around a sign-in sheet.

Next, develop meeting norms. Discuss the frequency, format, date, time, and location of future meetings. Additional norms may relate to participation (e.g., AIA members are free, but pay a small fee to attend), leadership, confidentiality, and the inclusion of allied professionals. Still others may address amenities, like the provision of snacks and drinks.

It is critical at this first meeting to have a brainstorming session on the topics group members want to discuss. The list may be extensive enough to require that some time be spent prioritizing it.

The group can decide if the topics are for discussion only – pulling expertise from its members – or if it wants to solicit an outside expert to present and discuss the issue. Consider developing an outline schedule for the entire year. If enough members attend the initial meeting, consider delegating organization of future meetings between them.

Before the meeting ends, recap the norms and set the schedule and topics for the next few meetings. This will help members save the dates, and a published schedule is a great public relations tool!

Step 8 Present the results of the initial meeting.

Soon after the initial meeting, send minutes to the attendees as well as to people who were invited but unable to attend, and to others who might be interested.

Step 9 Affiliate your group with AIA National CRAN®.

After your organizational meeting, affiliate your group with the AIA National CRAN® by calling AIA Member Services at 800-242-3837. Individual group members may designate CRAN® as one of their

Knowledge Communities by calling the same number. Affiliating with AIA National CRAN® provides resources, learning opportunities, and the ability to participate in the CRAN® forum on a national level

Step 10 Keep it going!

Once you get the ball rolling, momentum and interest will keep it moving, but energy and focus are still key. Delegating duties and sharing responsibilities help to increase leadership capacity, organizational learning, camaraderie, and the chances for success. Keep the core group members involved throughout the year, and plan an annual or bi-annual organizational retreat or meeting that allows the leadership to analyze, brainstorm and establish long range goals for the group.

Some Suggested Meeting Topics

Educating clients and the larger community about the benefits of using an architect

Public and Professional promotion and advocacy of residential architecture

Academic advocacy and awareness of residential architecture

Public outreach programs, speaker bureaus, public events, home shows and tours

Governmental code requirements, regulations, zoning and design reviews

Professional liability insurance and alternatives

Contracts, documents and support materials targeted for the residential practitioner

Design-build as an alternative

Office management models and profitability

Custom residential awards programs

Continuing education programs

Record the "who, what, when, where, how, and why" of your group so as new leaders take the helm, a history is in place of where the group has been, how it got there, and where it's headed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are AIA Knowledge Communities?

Knowledge Communities are groups of people who share a common interest in a given area and who collaborate to deepen their understanding of that area through ongoing learning and knowledge-sharing.

What is the CRAN® Knowledge Community and what does it do?

The CRAN® Knowledge Community develops knowledge and information to benefit architects who are engaged in, or who are interested in learning more about, custom residential practice. CRAN presents information and facilitates the exchange of knowledge and expertise to promote the professional

development of its members via discussion forums (www.cran.groupsite.com), national symposia and conventions, publications, and local activities.

Can I be an individual member of the CRAN® Knowledge Community?

As a member of the AIA, you are entitled to become a member of any Knowledge Community at no extra charge (learn about AIA Knowledge Communities at www.aia.org). Simply send an e-mail to Membership Services at memberservices@aia.org stating you would like your AIA membership to include membership in CRAN.

Why should I join the CRAN® Knowledge Community?

CRAN® offers a unique opportunity to improve your own practice while contributing to a knowledge base for custom residential practices in general. Registering with the AIA as a member of CRAN® ensures that you'll receive all the mailings and notices sent only to members, like announcements and invitations for exclusive CRAN® events, including CRAN® meetings at the AIA National Conference.

What is a local CRAN® Group?

A local CRAN® Group is a dynamic, interactive group that facilitates knowledge sharing between custom residential practitioners in its geographic area.

Why host a local CRAN® Group?

Hosting a local CRAN group facilitates dialogue between custom residential practitioners, improving the quality of custom residential architecture. The local group can serve to educate its members, the general public and other constituencies about the value of custom residential architecture.

How often should the local CRAN® Group meet?

Monthly meetings are recommended, but a group may elect to meet more or less often, depending on the interest and availability of its members.

How will local CRAN® Group expenses be managed and paid?

Each local group is responsible for managing its own expenses. Expenses may be covered by the local or state component, group members, vendor sponsorships, or a combination of these.

Our local component has a committee that functions with a similar purpose and format, but under a different name. Can our group affiliate?

Absolutely. The overarching goal is to create a knowledge network for AIA members with custom residential practices.

Why should we affiliate our local group with the AIA National CRAN?

By affiliating and communicating with CRAN, you have a direct line to the AIA, helping it work toward better serving its members' needs. CRAN does not dictate content to local groups. Think of CRAN as a peer-to-peer network. Each local group maintains its own integrity and the much-needed freedom to respond to the ideas and issues of its membership. By linking to the AIA National Knowledge CRAN, you share your voice with groups across the country.

What resources are available to a local CRAN® Group?

Resources include the AIA CRAN® Web (www.aia.org/cran), the CRAN discussion group other Knowledge Communities' online discussion forums and other local allied professional groups.

How can local CRAN group members participate with the CRAN® National Community?

Individuals can author articles and practice tips for the CRAN® website or the CRAN® discussion group or suggest topics. They can also submit comments to CRAN® national committee members, attend CRAN® events at the AIA Conference on Architecture, attend annual CRAN® symposium, volunteer to serve on a CRAN® committee, or as a member of the national committee.

What if I have questions about CRAN® or about starting a local CRAN® Group?

Contact AIA National CRAN® at www.aia.org/cran or by calling Member Services at 800-242-3837.

CRAN® Organizational Meeting – Sample Agenda

[date, time, place]

Call to order and welcome with introductions while passing around sign-in sheet.

- Sign-in sheet with phone numbers, e-mail addresses and sample questions.
- Suggested sample questions: "Why did you decide to attend this meeting?"; "What kind of content/ support for residential architects would you like to see CRAN® provide"? "What do you hope to get out of this group?"
- Nametags (optional)
- Discussion of meeting norms:
- Frequency, Date, Time and Locations of Regular Meetings
- Format
- Confidentiality
- Host/coordinator
- Cost and refreshments (optional)
- Participation and Volunteers
- Brainstorm future topics
- Review schedule and appoint volunteers for the next few meetings
- Adjournment

CRAN® Talking Points – Suggestions

- Educating clients and the larger community about the benefits of using an architect
- Public and Professional promotion and advocacy of residential architecture
- Academic advocacy and awareness of residential architecture
- Public outreach programs, speaker bureaus, public events, home shows and tours
- Governmental code requirements, regulations, zoning and design reviews
- Affordable professional liability insurance and alternatives

- Contracts, documents, and support materials targeted for the residential practitioner
- Design-build as an alternative
- Office management models and profitability
- Custom residential awards programs
- Continuing education programs

CRAN® Annual Report and Planning Questions – Suggestions

1. List (or attach) the calendar of activities for the upcoming year:
   <u>Date/</u>   <u>Activity Planned</u>
2. What were the best round-table programs/discussions held in the past?
3. What are the top issues, topics, and concerns for your committee or round table?
4. What issues would your CRAN® like to see addressed during an AIA Conference on Architecture, AIA Grassroots, local or national symposiums or other workshops?
5. What articles or practice tips were submitted to CRAN® by your members during the past year(s)?

For more information about CRAN® visit www.aia.org/cran