Detroit Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program - 2027 Info Packet

Overview: The Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program was founded in 2013 by AIA DC, in memory of Christopher Kelley, an employee of Gensler and an active member of the DC architectural community. Christopher, who passed away suddenly in 2012, was a recipient of the AIA Young Architects Award in 2010 and an exemplary, emerging young leader. Through his volunteer efforts, he participated and contributed to initiatives and programs that have had a positive impact on emerging professionals at different stages of their careers. Since its founding, this program, now established in several cities across the country, strives to carry forward Christopher's legacy of leadership and activism.

The year-long program consists of nine individual half-day sessions attended by a competitively selected group of 16 Scholars. Candidates must go through an application process for selection, evaluating criteria including proven career success, community involvement, and the individual's firm/agency support.

Curriculum: The curriculum focuses on core professional skills such as entrepreneurship and firm management; teamwork and collaboration; negotiating skills; client development; community leadership; understanding trends within the industry; and developing one's future within the practice. Candidates selected for the program are responsible for planning and participating in each of the individual sessions. The program will kick off with a **mandatory** "Boot Camp" session in January to introduce Scholars to their cohort, and to develop the curriculum for the year.

Sessions will be held on the second or third Friday of every month, from 12:00pm – 5:00pm, February through October, at venues selected by the scholars, unless virtual options are preferred based on COVID circumstances. If a session is planned to be held a significant distance away and not virtually, scholars are responsible for coordinating with their firm to attend this session. A per diem for travel may be provided.

Application Process: Candidates may be self-nominated or nominated by their firm and will be selected based on their written application, recommendation letters, and resume. Throughout the application process, Candidates are encouraged to emphasize their previous leadership experience, describe the expertise they intend to provide to the program, and clarify how they intend to utilize the skills acquired or refined through the program. A jury will convene in July to select the 2024 cohort. The sixteen (16) Scholars will represent a diverse group of emerging professionals that demonstrate strong potential as future leaders.

> *Call for Applications:* The official Call for Applications announced on October 21, 2026.
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> *Application Deadline:* All forms must be submitted by 11:59pm on **Monday, January 25, 2027** to be eligible.
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> *Notification of Acceptance:* Candidates will be notified of their selection to participate the first week of February, 2027.

Tuition: Tuition for AIA Members is $450; non-AIA member tuition is $500. AIA Detroit may choose to offer tuition assistance to Scholars from small firms who request financial aid and would otherwise not be able to participate. The amount and number of tuition assistance grants will be at the discretion of the Selection Committee.

Tuition Assistance Form (optional): Tuition Assistance is limited to AIA members and dependent upon firm size. Candidates may signify their need for tuition assistance at the end of the online CKLDP Application Form. The CKLDP Chair will follow up with the Tuition Assistance Form if that Candidate is chosen for the program.

AIA Membership: Although AIA membership is encouraged for all Scholars, it is not mandatory. Preference will be given to AIA members, but active membership in other allied organizations will also be considered.

Required Commitment to the Program: The program's success is directly dependent on consistent participation by the Scholars, and therefore, attendance is mandatory. Each Candidate for the program must complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed by both the Candidate and at least one member of their employer's company leadership, attesting to their mutual recognition of the commitment involved in completion of the program. Provided due notice to the Leadership Program Committee, and under extenuating circumstances, each Scholar will be allowed one excused absence. If two sessions are missed, a fine of $50 will be sent to the Scholar's firm/agency. A further absence will result in an additional $50 fine and expulsion from the program. All Scholars are required to attend the "Boot Camp" Session and the Closing Reception (after the last CKLDP session) in 2027.

AIA Continuing Education: It is intended that each scholar session will be accredited for AIA Continuing Education, with a few sessions counting toward Health, Safety, Welfare (HSW) Learning Units.

Sponsorship: The Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program requires that every scholar fundraise not only to cover their own session, but also the costs of Boot Camp, Graduation, and the AIA Detroit staff time dedicated towards helping the program and its participants. Scholars will be given materials to help in this endeavor.

Contact: For more information please visit the AIAD CKLDP website (https://aiadetroit.com/ckldp/) or contact the 2027 CKLDP Leadership Program Committee at CKLDP@aiadetroit.com, or individually as listed below:

Daria Guseinova, Assoc. AIA, Program Co-Chair: daria.guseinova@hok.com
Selina Rustico, Program Co-Chair: srustico@straubpettittmann.com
Lauren Myrand, Assoc. AIA, AIA Detroit Executive Director: lauren@aiadetroit.com

REQUIRED APPLICATION SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

APPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

REQUIRED UPLOADS (to be submitted at the end of the online application form):

1. **Letter of Interest** – candidates must submit a one-page written letter of interest that describes their past experiences and interest in the program, as well as what the candidate feels they will contribute to the 2027 class. Letters are limited to one page and submitted in PDF format. (LastName-FirstName-Letter of Interest.pdf)
2. **Letters of Recommendation** – each application must include at least 1 letter of recommendation (3 letters at the most). It is in the best interest of the Candidate to provide only strong letters of support/recommendation. Letters are limited to one page each and submitted together as a single PDF document. (LastName-FirstName-Letters of Recommendation.pdf)
3. **Personal Resume** – including Candidate's education, employment history, volunteer activity and organizational involvement, as well as honors and awards. Resumes are preferred to be no more than two pages and submitted in PDF format. It is NOT in the best interest of the applicant to simply submit a 1-page firm resume with project experience. (LastName-FirstName-Resume.pdf)
4. **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** – completed and signed by the Candidate and the leadership of the Candidate's firm and submitted in PDF format. (LastName-FirstName-MOU.pdf)

REQUIRED QUESTIONS (to be submitted through the CKLDP Application Form: NOTE – there is a 1,000 CHARACTER limit to responding to each of the following questions. Please be succinct with your responses.

1. How do you define leadership and how have you demonstrated leadership skills to this point in your career?
   - (1,000 characters)
2. What do you feel are the 3 most significant issues and opportunities facing the profession today?
   - (1,000 characters)
3. What are the specific skills or knowledge you hope to gain from your participation in the CKLDP?
   - (1,000 characters)
4. Keeping in mind that the quality of a CKLDP session is determined entirely by the Scholars who organize it, what are the specific skills or knowledge you will contribute via your participation in the Program?
   - (1,000 characters)

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