



PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2025-2026 REVIEW





2025 PILLARS CLASS

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ABOUT PILLARS

The Pillars Leadership Training Program of the American Institute of Architects Kansas City prepares a representative cross section of the chapter's emerging leaders and individuals from the building community for their role in shaping the future of both the architectural profession and the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The training program includes active participation in programs and exposure to community leaders and issues. Each class spends their time exploring core issues that affect our profession and the region within which we practice. Through discussions with leaders and colleagues, dialogue among themselves, tours and research the group will be able to understand and present to the AIA as a whole how we can make a positive change within our community. The AIA Kansas City Pillars program is a nationally recognized program for its originality and depth and has inspired similar AIA leadership studies in other US cities. The program continues to raise the bar of what young professionals want out of their profession and how we as professionals can make an impact on our built environment.



Pillars tour the KC Jazz District and Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.



Pillars are educated on finance and development strategies by Ryan Campbell and Aaron Plump at the PortKC office.

JANUARY: DEVELOPMENT IN KANSAS CITY

Braving the Kansas City monsoon, the Pillars donned their developer hats to learn about the various projects shaping the Kansas City Metro area. The Pillars started their journey where the Negro Leagues Baseball was born: in the heart of the historic Jazz District at the YMCA. Starting with Kekeli Dawes (Multistudio) and Bryce Cummings (DRAW), the group toured the historic YMCA, and learned about the Jazz District and the Revive the Vine initiative. The presentation primarily focused upon the plans to develop a new and expanded Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, hotel, and district parking garage. The Pillars were educated on how each type of project will support overall development of 18th and Vine. They also learned about zoning considerations, and how traffic and pedestrians flow through the area. The presenters also highlighted the impacts of local history on their designs, including the desire to maintain the beautiful culture of the area through murals, signage and exterior material selections. When completed, the new Negro Leagues Baseball Musuem and Hotel will serve as a gateway to the newly revitalized 18th and Vine District.

After touring the 18th and Vine District, the Pillars moved over to the KC Riverfront. With the excitement brewing about the upcoming 2026 World Cup in Kansas City, there is much going on at the Current Landing. Taking a pause to meet with Ryan Campbell, director of commercial administration at CommunityAmerica Credit Union, the Pillars got a crash

course in business and development financing. From the initial risk analysis and appraisal to loan repayment, Ryan walked the cohort through how projects are ultimately funded. Finally, the Pillars met with Aaron Plump, director of development at PortKC. The Pillars were shown the progression of development at the Berkley Riverfront over the course of three phases. Due to the occurrence of the World Cup this year, Current Landing will be a hotspot for tourists and locals alike, with Phase 1 slated to be completed before the 2026 World Cup. However, Aaron reminded the Pillars that success does not happen overnight. The revitalized Riverfront stands as the result of years of trial, error, and persistence before becoming the destination it is today.



Pillars take the opportunity to explore the Current Landing development at the Berkley Riverfront.