



AIA New York Statement on Immigration Detention Facilities

October 11, 2018

The dignity of people and recognition of human needs must be foremost in every detention facility plan and design. We advocate for the following functional and design principles in any detention project, irrespective of legal status:

Normative Environment – The **detention setting should provide a safe and secure environment**, access to daylight and fresh outdoor air, comfortable furniture, and a healthy atmosphere. Design should allow for positive social opportunities between people, without compromising the safety and security of detainees or their custodians. Specific design elements must consider the human occupants, favoring glazing over bars, using modesty panels where appropriate, and providing activities space to reduce idleness.

Access to Support – Detainees are often confined without access to support from their friends, families, and social service providers, which will inevitably impact their emotional and financial condition. The **planning and design of a detention facility must provide space and accommodate access to a support network** that facilitates communication and interaction between detainees and those who are able to help them. Facilities must also provide space for medical care, including mental health support, which is critical where both mind and body are at risk due to the often-stressful experiences surrounding detention.

Access to Justice – Location and design of a detention facility play key roles in access to justice. Every detention facility should provide adequate space for legal counsel to consult with detainees, and facilities should be located at sites with convenient access to counsel and courts of law. The infrastructure of a detention facility should support access to legal research material to help detainees better understand their legal standing and advocate for themselves. The **planning and design of a facility should work in favor of the rights of a person to access justice**.

Design alone is not capable of solving our immigration crisis; however, poor design can be an element of the problem. AIA New York stands strongly on behalf of the wellbeing of those inside these facilities, and in favor of design solutions that benefit them and their families.

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