

# CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL

## Chicago Architecture Biennial Announces Youth and Family Engagement Opportunities for 2021 Edition: *The Available City*

*Free programming for students, families, and teachers including workshops, drop-in activities, virtual field trips, a youth council, and bp Student Ideas Competition will bring youth voices into citywide conversations about community-based design.*

**CHICAGO (August 19, 2021)** - Today, the Chicago Architecture Biennial announced key features of school and family programming for the 2021 edition, *The Available City*, expanding the reach of the citywide event through direct and consistent engagement with Chicago's youth.

Inspired by the community-based, collaborative approach and themes of sustainability and equity central to the 2021 edition, school and family programs prioritize active engagement towards a deeper understanding of the built environment as it relates to the spaces where young people live and learn. CAB's free youth programming focuses on supporting educators and students of all ages in envisioning architecture and design as tools for change through engagement both in their classrooms and in their communities.

"CAB's youth engagement initiatives provide an opportunity for young people, particularly those on our South and West Sides where *The Available City* is anchored, to contribute their unique voices and envision our city's future," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "Our students are the city's next generation of leaders, and through these programs they are able to learn from and collaborate with local and global experts in architecture, design, and urban planning. I look forward to seeing how their ideas will impact and beautify our neighborhoods."

CAB's youth learning and engagement efforts support the development and participation of strong youth voices in critical conversations about how architecture and design shape our lives. CAB's youth learning and engagement aims to facilitate meaningful and ongoing engagements, encourage connections between learners' lived experiences and Biennial content, reach students from populations historically underrepresented in architecture, and provide opportunities for co-learning across generations and disciplines.

"Since its inception, CAB's educational outreach has been fundamental to its program," states Jack Guthman, Chicago Architecture Biennial Chairman of the Board. "We greatly value our partnerships with schools and cultural organizations which enable us to reach youth of all ages across the city—and to the parents and teachers who facilitate our efforts."

In 2021, youth learning and engagement at CAB will be closely tied to the current edition theme, *The Available City*, which presents a new approach to urban design that connects community residents and designers to collaboratively envision transformative possibilities for vacant urban spaces. Programming will provide opportunities for engagement with key issues faced by young people in their daily lives through the lens of architecture, design, and urbanism. Additionally, young people are playing a role in the

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development of Biennial sites across the city as part of *The Available City's* community-based, multigenerational model of collaborative design.

“CCA Academy is proud to take part in *The Available City* and showcase the permaculture food forest and gathering space our students have been creating on six formerly vacant lots since 2017,” said Dr. Myra Sampson, Principal and Chief Education Officer at CCA Academy in North Lawndale. “We are especially excited that the designs developed in workshops supported by CAB in 2019 are being realized into an outdoor classroom for our students in collaboration with The Bittertang Farm for the 2021 Biennial.”

“Youth participation is vital to the community-driven design process of *The Available City*,” said Artistic Director David Brown. “Students, especially those living in the neighborhoods with large numbers of vacant lots understand as well as anyone how the lots impact communities and the transformative potential they can have as community resources. CAB’s youth engagement programs create spaces for young people to participate in conversations about new ways architecture and design can shape the future of our city.”

This Fall, CAB will offer a wide range of programming designed to support young people in building skills in architecture and design, but also in team work, relationship building, community engagement, and problem solving. CAB programs also invite families and other community members to work alongside young people and design professionals to address relevant issues. CAB 2021 youth learning and engagement programs include:

- **Youth Studios**  
More than 20 creative youth studios will run across Chicago from September through December 2021. Youth Studios will include youth-led tours, workshops, and design-build projects led by partners including Territory NFP, BUILD, and 6018North.
- **Graphic Design Studios**  
A series of Youth Studios presented by Allstate and in partnership with the Design Museum of Chicago will focus on developing graphic installations to be displayed in spaces around the city.
- **Family Programs**  
Family-friendly activities hosted at CAB project and community partner sites will engage families with young children in hands-on activities. A series of virtual, interactive programs for family audiences created by Chicago Mobile Makers and Could Be Architecture will be released bi-weekly online beginning in September.
- **Virtual Field Trips**  
An engaging and interactive virtual field trip experience will be available through the platform Streamable as well as on the CAB website. Field trips for grades 2-12 will take students on a tour of several *The Available City* sites, prompt questions and conversation, and encourage

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participants to think about how they can shape their communities.

- **Curriculum Toolkit and Teacher Trainings**

A standards-aligned curriculum resource for grades 2-12 will provide both classroom teachers as well as out-of-school educators and caregivers with resources and activities to bring architecture and design learning to students. The toolkit will be supplemented by a series of facilitated teacher trainings.

- **Youth Council**

CAB's first Youth Council will kick off this year with a session running October through December. The Fall session will focus on meeting design professionals and city stakeholders, working on collaborative projects with real-world outcomes, and helping build the structure of CAB's Youth Council for the future.

"The Zell Family Foundation is proud to support Learning Initiatives aligned with the 2021 edition of the Chicago Architecture Biennial, *The Available City*," said Helen Zell, Executive Director of the Zell Family Foundation. "These programs provide a unique opportunity for young people from across Chicago to see how they can play a role in shaping their communities through architecture and design."

In addition, bp America will return as the lead sponsor for the **bp Student Ideas Competition**. The fall competition will launch on September 20 and will be closely aligned with the 2021 edition. CAB's student competitions for middle and high school students across Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana encourage exploration of the built environment through design, the humanities, visual and performing arts, and STEM fields. Winning entries will be displayed for CAB audiences and honored with prizes at an awards ceremony in December.

"bp is honored to support Chicagoland's next generation of leaders and visionaries participating in the Student Ideas Competition," said Janet Kong, CEO trading & shipping for bp Americas. "We can't wait to see the varied and innovative ways students leverage the power of design to reimagine vacant space in service of their communities."

Additional details about programming, including the prompt for the Fall 2021 bp Student Ideas Competition, will be announced in the coming weeks. Visit us [here](#) for a continuously updated list of Chicago Architecture Biennial opportunities for youth, families, and educators.

## ABOUT

[The Chicago Architecture Biennial](#) is the largest exhibition of contemporary architecture, art and design in North America. Over the course of the first three editions, CAB has supported projects created by more than 350 architects, designers, and artists from more than 40 countries considering critical topics through the lens of architecture and design. As a platform designed to highlight and explore innovation in the field, CAB is poised to present a global event that responds to changes in the way we gather, engage, and learn. The fourth edition will imagine new and exciting possibilities for activating spaces throughout the city, expanding access to architecture and design, and engaging new voices.

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The Chicago Architecture Biennial provides free, educational programming to learners of all ages through its youth engagement and Learning Initiatives programs as a way to promote active exploration of the built environment and empower audiences to see architecture and design as tools for change. CAB's youth programming aims to: facilitate meaningful and ongoing engagements with students, schools, community organizations, universities, museums, and other cultural institutions; encourage connections between learners' lived experiences and CAB content; reach students from populations historically underrepresented in architecture, and; provide opportunities for co-learning across generations and disciplines.