

Career Compass: Jobs in Housing & Interior Design



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Jobs in Housing & Interior Design

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Summary

This program explores careers in three areas of the housing and interior design industry: architect, general contractor, and interior designer. A separate segment is dedicated to each category. Descriptions of the education, experience and skill development required to be successful, as well as the duties and likely career paths traveled for select positions are delivered through the personal stories of workers in select careers and by supplemental narrative. Besides the featured professional's career, additional positions for each industry segment are described. A comprehensive review is presented after each chapter, with a final recap at the end of the film.

Careers in Architecture and Design

Main Career Covered: Architect

Interviewee: Alex Schabel, Architect

An architect designs and supervises the construction of buildings. He or she is the first port of call for any new housing that is to be built. Architectural firms vary in size, from just one architect to a few dozen people – and they might not all be architects. As part of an architectural team, architects consult the firm’s clients about their needs for the house or structure they want designed.

Alex Schabel is an architect employed by Booth Hansen, a medium-sized, Chicago-based firm of about 30 people, including architects as well as other designers. Her day-to-day schedule is always different, depending on the projects she’s working on and the progress of each project. She moves the projects forward by recruiting other housing industry professionals—from engineers who oversee construction of the building to suppliers of doors and roofing experts.

The architect should have an understanding of all the different work being done throughout the building process, but it is their knowledge of building design that guides the whole development: from the planning stage to completion.

Careers in General Contracting

Main Career Covered: General Contractor

Interviewee: Darryl Washington, General Contractor

A general contractor directs and manages a construction project. He or she hires, supervises, and pays all the tradespeople who will follow an architect’s designs to build a home or work from plans to refurbish an existing structure.

Darryl Washington is a general contractor and owner of his own small business, Darman Development. For some projects, he might be hired by an architectural firm to oversee the construction phase of a building. For others, he will be contacted directly by the homeowner.

Customer service is a very important part of Darryl’s job. Human resource management is also important since Darryl will hire all the tradespeople, also known as subcontractors, to perform the many functions essential to construction.

Not only does the general contractor coordinate and supervise the different disciplines, he also ensures that all subcontractors perform their jobs correctly—so it helps to know something about how their jobs are done. He also makes certain that all work meets construction codes and regulations. Those codes and rules vary from state to state, which is why general contractors need to be licensed by each state they work in.

Careers in Interior Design

Main Career: Interior Designer

Interviewee: Kenneth Walter, Interior Designer

An interior designer specializes in designing architectural interiors and their furnishings. The interior designer often works with the architectural plan to understand the space and safety issues for a home's layout. However, they'll work directly with the client, or homeowner, when it comes time to decide the look of each room.

Kenneth Walter is the major partner in the interior design firm Gray and Walter. He does most of his designing from his home office.

As colors, fabrics and furniture are selected for the interior, he works with several other professions to complete the job. This stage of design might also be done by an interior decorator, which is not the same as an interior designer. Interior designers are skilled at more than making rooms attractive—they are also well-educated in making rooms safe.

When the project is finished, the interior designer and client walk through the property to ensure the client is pleased with the finished product. After final approval, the project comes to a close.

Careers in Architecture Handout

Where to Work

Architecture firms
Construction companies

Landscape companies
Self-employed

Career Options

Architect's Assistant

Helps visualize designs by hand-sketching floor plans.

CAD Technician

Creates a 2- or 3-dimensional image from drawings.

Construction Manager

Determines the budget, materials, and scheduling, and time needed to complete a project.

Landscape Architect

Designs the landscape and other features that will accent the structure.

Model Maker

Creates a scaled-down version of the structure.

Education

5-year Accredited Architecture Program or 6 years to earn a Bachelor's Degree plus a Master's Degree in architecture.

3 or 4 years experience for accreditation

Many of the related careers may only require an Associate's Degree or Bachelor's Degree.

Supplemental Coursework:

Art
Writing
Math
Science

Internships

Careers in General Contracting and Construction Handout

Where to Work

General Contracting firm
Electrical company
Drywall company

Painting company
Flooring store
Plumbing company

Career Options

Drywall Hanger

Places sheets of drywall along the interior house frame to smooth out the appearance of each wall.

Electrician

Attaches the external overhead electrical lines to the house and installs wiring.

Floor Covering Specialist

Create articles and other material for publications such as newspapers, magazines, and websites.

Painter

Primes the drywall and applies a topcoat of color to every room.

Plumber

Installs pipes to carry water from the main line and sewer system into the house or building.

Education

Coursework:

Industrial Arts
Shop Class
Housing
Mathematics
Sales/Marketing

1-2 years vocational training

Valuable Skills and Experience:

Business Skills
Customer Service
Human Resource Management
2 to 4 years On-the-Job Experience
Apprenticeship

Careers in Interior Design Handout

Where to Work

Interior Design firm
Furniture or Cabinet store
Kitchen/Appliance store

Mass retailer
Self-employed

Career Options

Custom Furniture Maker

Designs original furniture in a variety of styles and sizes to finish the look of a room.

Lighting Specialist

Configures the best use of lighting and lighting fixtures.

Kitchen Specialist

Figures out the best layout and appliances for the kitchen.

Education

Coursework:

Art
Design

Bachelor's Degree in a FIDER

Other Skills or Experience:

2-3 yrs of On-the-Job Mentoring
Sales/Marketing
Management

Suggested Activities

Amazing Architecture

Many great architects have created the amazing homes and buildings we see everyday. Select an architect and write a short paper about their life and architectural work. Consider the points below as you research.

- What education did they receive?
- What types of buildings do/did they design?
- Are there methods or design elements commonly found in their work?
- How has their work affected other architects, or society in general?

Create a Room!

Explore the work of an interior designer by designing and decorating a room! Collect pictures of home furnishings, furniture, decorations, lighting options, paint chips, and other design pictures from free catalogs, magazines, newspapers, and advertisements. Create a collage using the pictures that represent how you would decorate a room.

Jobs in Housing & Interior Design Matching

Match the words in the first column to the best available answer in the second column.

- | | | |
|-------|--|---------------------------|
| _____ | Helps visualize designs by hand-sketching floor plans. | 1) Model Maker |
| _____ | Specializes in designing architectural interiors and their furnishings. | 2) Custom Furniture Maker |
| _____ | Directs and manages a construction project. | 3) Drywall Hanger |
| _____ | Places sheets of drywall along the interior house frame to smooth out the appearance of each wall. | 4) Architect's Assistant |
| _____ | Creates a scaled-down version of the structure. | 5) CAD Technician |
| _____ | Designs original furniture in a variety of styles and sizes to finish the look of a room. | 6) Interior Design |
| _____ | Attaches the external overhead electrical lines to the house and installs wiring. | 7) Lighting Specialist |
| _____ | Configures the best use of lighting and lighting fixtures. | 8) Painter |
| _____ | Creates a 2- or 3-dimensional image from drawings. | 9) Electrician |
| _____ | Primes the drywall and applies a topcoat of color to every room. | 10) General Contractor |

Jobs in Housing & Interior Design

Matching Answer Key

Match the words in the first column to the best available answer in the second column.

- | | | |
|-----------|--|---------------------------|
| <u>4</u> | Helps visualize designs by hand-sketching floor plans. | 1) Model Maker |
| <u>6</u> | Specializes in designing architectural interiors and their furnishings. | 2) Custom Furniture Maker |
| <u>10</u> | Directs and manages a construction project. | 3) Drywall Hanger |
| <u>3</u> | Places sheets of drywall along the interior house frame to smooth out the appearance of each wall. | 4) Architect's Assistant |
| <u>1</u> | Creates a scaled-down version of the structure. | 5) CAD Technician |
| <u>2</u> | Designs original furniture in a variety of styles and sizes to finish the look of a room. | 6) Interior Designer |
| <u>9</u> | Attaches the external overhead electrical lines to the house and installs wiring. | 7) Lighting Specialist |
| <u>7</u> | Configures the best use of lighting and lighting fixtures. | 8) Painter |
| <u>5</u> | Creates a 2- or 3-dimensional image from drawings. | 9) Electrician |
| <u>8</u> | Primes the drywall and applies a topcoat of color to every room. | 10) General Contractor |

Additional Resources

American Institute of Architects (AIA)

www.aia.org

American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)

www.asid.org

American Society of Landscape Architects

www.asla.org

Associated General Contractors of American (AGC)

www.agc.org

Association of Licensed Architects

www.licensedarchitect.org

International Interior Design Association (IIDA)

www.iida.org