

Connection

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This issue:

Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (J.E.D.I)

What are the possibilities of J.E.D.I. driven design?

Emerging professionals seek ways to create justice in design process, curate avenues for equitable practice, showcase diversity in thought and leadership, inclusion in work culture, and much more.

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Becoming visible

Amplifying the voices of nine young architects and emerging professionals advocating for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in architecture.

It was an evening in 2004, and my family and I were watching “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.” That night’s episode was about a young boy who has the same medical condition as I do. As they started planning the renovations of that boy’s home, a woman in a wheelchair appeared on the screen. She had the same physical features as I did. I knew in a heartbeat she also had the same condition. Her name popped up on the screen: “Karen Braitmayer, Architect.”

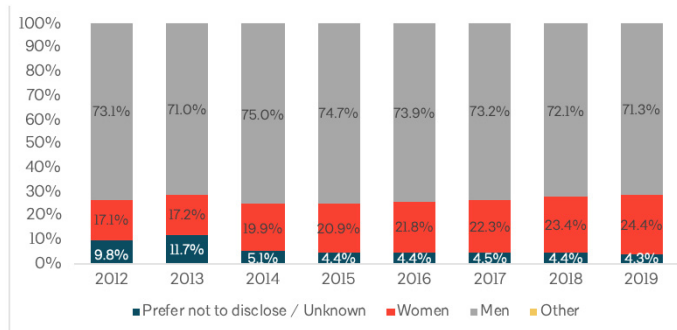
As a young, disabled girl born and raised in the Philippines, I had always been aware of the power that architecture holds. I knew how it can be a barrier, but moving to the United States taught me that it could also create opportunities. Until that night in 2004, I was convinced that architecture was only for strong, “able-bodied” boys. But seeing Karen on that screen changed my perspective and gave me the voice that I needed to follow my dreams.

With the level of diversity in the architecture profession today, moments like this are rare. According to the 2019 AIA Membership Demographics Report, membership was 71.3% male and 66.6% white. The Board of Directors in 2019 was 57% male and 86% white. With these numbers, visibility becomes crucial for the underrepresented.

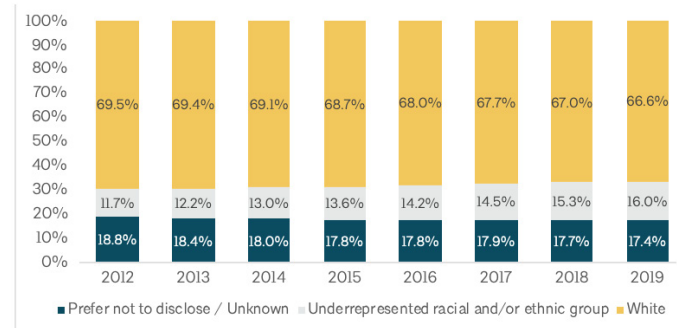
In this article, you will meet nine incredible young architects and emerging professionals who have been gracious enough to tell us their stories. They are here to share their perspective of what justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in architecture means to them; to discuss what we can do now to make our profession more diverse and inclusive; and to be visible for the

younger generation who dreams of becoming an architect but may not have seen themselves as belonging, the voice they need to succeed in this profession, as well.

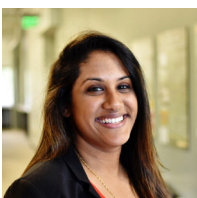
> GENDER: ALL MEMBERS



> RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY: ALL MEMBERS



Source: <https://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/2019-Membership-Demographics-Report.pdf>



Shikha Subhadra Subramanian
Emerging Professional | Union City, California

Subramanian is a job captain at Dahlin Group Architecture in Pleasanton, California, working primarily on affordable housing. She is an active member of NOMASF and BIA-Bay Area’s Professional Women in Building and Young Professionals groups. She is co-coordinating an upcoming series that connects higher education students with mentors, particularly women of color, in diverse career paths in the AEC industry.

Olivia Asuncion (OA) : What would you say is your favorite part of architecture?

right now is housing. Working on housing is my way of directly giving something back to a community.

Shikha Subramanian (SS): It directly is a way to affect social justice and change. You’re creating a setting for people to have these important conversations. The biggest one that’s facing us

OA: Can you tell me how the current status of diversity in architecture personally affected you?



Above: Shikha and her mom attends a San Francisco 49ers game.

SS: It's the fuel for me to provide more action. It's laying out the groundwork for the next generation of Fijian architects.

There are probably other Fijian and Pacific Islander women who are saying, "Is this something that I can fit in with?" I think it's important to look for people who "look like you" in your industry. We don't have that in architecture yet. We need to change that. And I need to start within myself. I'm even more heads down in my ARE studies right now because the easiest thing I could do to change that 0.6% number [percentage of licensed Pacific Islander architects] is to get licensed.

OA: What does justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in architecture mean to you?

SS: When my family came from Fiji, we had a three-bedroom house in San Lorenzo that my grandparents bought. All six of their children, with their families, lived in that little house. An architect probably laid it out for a white family with two kids. But our story is now becoming a majority story. And we need to change how we design to reflect that story. In order to do that and be true to it, we need the same people who represent those countries behind the tracing paper.



Emma Johnston
Emerging Professional | Seattle, Washington

Originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota, Johnston joined the nonprofit Seattle architecture firm, Environmental Works, after graduating from the University of Texas at Austin. Her latest project is an affordable housing community in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, providing homes and resources for LGBTQ seniors.

Olivia Asuncion (OA): How do you view the current status of diversity in architecture right now?

Emma Johnston (EJ): Architecture really struggles to be representative of the world at large. It's taken a really long time to have a lot of women architects. In Seattle, it's a very white profession. And disability is also not talked about as much.

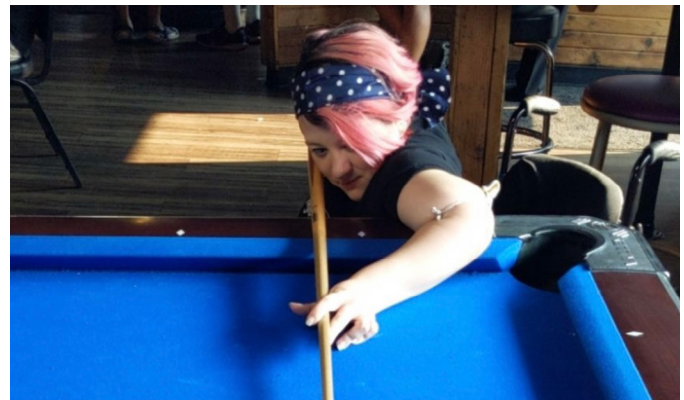
(OA): Can you tell me a little bit about how this has personally affected you?

EJ: Like showing up to a job interview and realizing that the front step is inaccessible or seeing that their pathways are too narrow. When applying for jobs, I have to find a balance between "Do I disclose my disability but then they're prepared?" and "Do I not because I want to be evaluated without that extra piece of information?" I've had interview questions where they were clearly concerned about my ability to do my job, like asking me questions on how I can go on site visits. And I would be like, "Well, we can be creative." Just because I don't do things exactly as everybody you've ever had doesn't mean we don't have GoPros or Skype. But there are many who have a hard time integrating technology for access.

If something is made accessible, it doesn't really inconvenience people who don't require extra access, but it is really seen as a luxury good.

OA: How can we change the culture of architecture to be more inclusive and diverse?

EJ: A lot of it starts with education. What I really had a hard time with was architectural education because of the culture of overwork and elitism and favoritism. I also don't think there's a big stretch in saying that there's some implicit racial bias, gender bias, and ableism within those choices. And when I was in school, we didn't have any education when it came to accessibility. One thing I'm interested in is seeing architects having to take a required ethics course.



Above: Emma enjoys her time playing pool



Ryan Gann

Emerging Professional | Chicago, Illinois

Apart from thriving as an entrepreneur consulting on design projects, business strategies, and marketing, Gann serves as the at-large director for the AIA National Board and chair for the AIA Equity and the Future of Architecture (EQFA). He is passionate about exploring the intersection between community-led design processes and the business strategies around storytelling.

Olivia Asuncion (OA): As a national leader for the profession, can you talk about what diversity in architecture means to you?

Ryan Gann (RG): [As chair of EQFA], we look at it through a few different lenses. First, through the profession itself and as a collective of individuals who have valuable perspectives and skills that we can bring to the clients and the communities that we serve. And then we have what AIA can do. It's more than just looking at how EDI impacts design and spatial experience, it's looking at it through a larger, more cultural-transformation lens.

OA: With the current status of diversity in architecture, can you tell me how it's affected you personally?

RG: As a gay, white male, it's both harder and easier at times at times to have an ear to a conversation that's more empathetic than, I would venture to say, others have. And that's just based on the demographics of who the profession is made up of presently or has historically been led by. But I still think we have a lot of work to do. In the last five years, AIA has been a lot more vocal in acknowledging that the composition of the profession is not as representative of the societies that we serve as it should and could be. Now we're in the actionable stage. We need to start breaking down those systemic barriers and creating the profession that you and I certainly want to be a part of, the people who have already been a part of the profession for 50-plus years feel like they're a part of, and students in eighth grade who are dreaming of being an architect want to be a part of.

OA: What would you say are those actionable items? What has the AIA been doing to contribute to this progress?

RG: The AIA Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 really elevates two topics: climate action and equity. The amount of knowledge and material that has been built related to how architects can

positively support sustainability, that's like 40-50 years in the making. If we can funnel that same amount of knowledge and resources into equity, I think that we can get this conversation into the same space. We had a joint meeting with the NOMA Board of Directors. NOMA last year released their 2030 diversity initiative with the AIA Large Firm Roundtable, and that goal was to double the amount of Black licensed architects. That level of ambition is really empowering in the same way that the 2030 Challenge in sustainability and net zero energy are empowering.

And we have to start pushing ourselves beyond that. How do you as an individual begin to create this space and the sense of belonging for those individuals that don't have the same lived experiences as you, and be able to support them as colleagues, as mentors, as peers? In a deeply divided country, we have to be very cautious about talking about morality in a way that isn't preaching. How do we take this brain trust from cities that are epicenters of culture and transformation and begin to tell those stories in compelling ways that are actionable to different-scaled communities that are having different challenges?



Above: Ryan presents a sketch series during Today @ Apple.



Omarys Carmen Vasquez
Young Architect | New Haven, Connecticut

Vasquez is an associate at Svigals + Partners and has had experience working on a wide range of project typologies. A notable project she is proud of is the Ronald McDonald House, serving primarily South American and other Latin American families. She also serves as vice president for NOMA Connecticut Chapter.

Olivia Asuncion (OA): Can you explain a little bit about your journey of how you became an architect?

Omarys Carmen Vasquez (OCV): I grew up in New York City, and I am a first-generation American, from Dominican parents. Growing up in public housing, I didn't know what architecture was. I didn't have a private school education, and we didn't have the acclaimed career days that you see on TV. So I didn't learn about architecture until roughly around age 13 or so. One of the best moves that my parents did was make sure that we applied to a high school that was outside of our district — one that was just marginally better.

At one point in high school, when it came to recommendations for college, I told my adviser that I wanted to be an architect. So he recommended Pratt Institute because it was local. I applied, and I didn't get accepted because, yet again, I didn't get that quality education, and I didn't meet their merit-based requirements. But because I checked the box that says I'm Hispanic/Latina, they took my application and sent it to their higher education opportunity program, which is a state-funded program providing almost a full-ride scholarship for students who did not initially get accepted, had a reasonable GPA range, were minorities, are financial-needs-based and whose parents didn't go to college. So checking that box got my foot in the door, and that was my way of getting in and being able to study architecture.

OA: What does justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in architecture mean to you?

OCV: I do want to see the profession better represented, to reflect the uniqueness of us as a people. We have such a rich tapestry of individuals in this country that isn't really reflected that much in our profession. A lot of that is systemic, things that are built into the government, into regulation and zoning. We're designing for certain cultures and communities, but those aren't the people that are designing for them. There's an



Above: Omarys loves being an architect -- directing, collaborating, and being a part of a design team

unspoken value that having diversity can help enhance a design because you have more of that representation that can help understand and empathize and relate to the users of certain projects. I'd love to see more representation, but it's really a deep woven problem.

OA: What are the actionable items to take steps forward towards diversity in architecture?

OCV: One of the easiest and quickest ways to start that trend, because it's almost an investment in our future, is public outreach and education in K-12 schools in disadvantaged communities. So that if I were my 8-year-old self, and I had someone come into my school to do a public presentation on what the architecture, engineering, and construction industries are, and have people of different cultures and backgrounds there presenting what that is so that my 8-year-old self can say, "Oh! I can be that?" If we can just infuse ourselves into communities that don't have resources and provide training and education on these different professions at least until zoning reform catches up, that for me would make the biggest impact and the biggest return on our investment.



Antonia Bowman
Young Architect | Oakland, California

A California native, Bowman is an architect at ELS Architecture and Urban Design in Berkeley, California. She serves as a board member for AIA California, representing AIA East Bay. She is also an active contributor and supporter for AIA San Francisco's Equity by Design Committee.

Olivia Asuncion (OA): What can you say about the status of diversity in architecture right now?

Antonia Bowman (AB): It definitely seems like there's a movement where EDI is becoming more of a mainstream topic. In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, hitting a particular awareness after George Floyd's murder, it's challenged many people, including myself, to pay more attention and to educate themselves more.

OA: Can you talk about how that relates to architecture?

AB: Those series of topics just raise awareness that we have inequities in all aspects of society. Inequity in health care, education, housing, justice system — it affects Black Americans, people of color, women, queer people, the disabled, and other marginalized groups of people. How it relates to architecture is that these inequities are reinforced by the built environment. You see the disparities and differences in schools in one neighborhood versus schools in another neighborhood. It's something that architects need to be aware of and figure out how to engage and support.

Instead of trying to design a building for people, the objective should be to design with them. How can we be better? How can we rethink the processes from the same way they've always been done? Status quo doesn't serve people equally.

OA: How would you describe an equity in architecture?



Above: Antonia explores and enjoys places through cycling

When I hear the word diversity in architecture, people usually think, "We need to hire more people of color! Look at all of these people of color and women in our roster!" To me, that idea of diversity doesn't translate into equity and inclusion. You do want people of different backgrounds and interests, gender expression, sexual orientation, life experiences, disabilities — but the firm leadership and the culture of the firm also needs to understand how to create a supportive environment where people can thrive. Are they getting promoted and getting the same opportunities as their white-male counterparts? It's about having the opportunity to lead and to be valued the same, being able to comfortably share ideas, and being able to make mistakes without penalty.



Crystal Day
Young Architect | Seattle, Washington

Day is an associate project architect for NBBJ Design in Seattle. She is also an active leader for NOMA Northwest Chapter (NOMA NW) and a co-chair for AIA Seattle's Diversity Roundtable. She is a board member and volunteer for Sawhorse Revolution, a nonprofit organization mentoring underprivileged students, providing resources and experience in design and construction.

Olivia Asuncion (OA): What are you working on these days? Are there any projects or events that you're excited about and want to share?

Crystal Day (CD): [For NOMA NW], we used to go around from firm to firm to do presentations to try and get member engagement. But then during this last year, we had to shift gears. After the traumatic events of last summer, firms started reaching out to us and asking us what to do. Everyone was



Above: Crystal sails on the Puget Sound in Seattle, often with her dog and her husband

trying to look towards how they can fix systemic racism. So we got together, as the board for NOMA, and we started to make a checklist of actionable items that we could recommend to firms, creating NOMA NW Call to Action. Now it includes specific prerequisites for firms to know that they are accountable for these things and have measurable goals.

OA: Given the lack of diversity in architecture, can you talk about how you've been personally affected by it?

CD: I was a little frustrated at first. We've been saying for years that this is going on, and it feels like some people are just discovering racism. NOMA was founded 50 years ago, and these issues have been around for a while. It's good that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) designers' voices are finally getting heard. It's good that people at work are going out of their way to have really tough conversations and creating safe spaces for employees. Firm leaders are starting to look in the mirror and focus on how we can do a better job. One of the issues now that I'm concerned about is that there was this big momentum last summer, but it's fizzled down. So how can we keep people excited looking at the bigger picture and embracing equity as the end goal?

OA: What can you say to the younger generation who are thinking about becoming architects?

CD: The next generation is gonna be the one to change the industry. It's up to them to rewrite architecture and the way we're thinking about it, integrating non-Western architecture into our studies and changing the curriculum in our schools; the way we uplift our younger staff that we're hiring, and the way we're mentoring and recruiting and retaining our BIPOC staff. I think it's gonna get better with our younger generation.



Krithika Penedo
Young Architect | Honolulu, Hawaii

Born in Zambia, Penedo moved to the United States to attend college at Roger Williams University in Rhode Island and then attended graduate school at Parsons School of Design. After experiencing several countries and several states, she has found home in Honolulu, where she works as an architect at AMA A/E.

Olivia Asuncion (OA): Having lived in so many places, can you talk about what was your experience being in architecture school?

Krithika Penedo (KP): I came fresh from Zambia when I was 18 years old, and it was kind of different. Roger Williams University, at the time, was not as diverse as I expected. I had amazing professors that were really dedicated, and I felt like I could thrive there. But it was kind of a struggle within the student population because it was limited in diversity. But when I went to New York City, it was very different because there were people from everywhere. I found myself finding myself better. And that included personally, but also architecturally and understanding what are the goals of what I want to do, what type of architecture do I want to do, and why do I want to do it. I always knew that once I started, I wanted to continue and be licensed. There are so few women and minorities and immigrants who are licensed, and I wanted to do it for representation. I had a baby two years ago, too, and I went back to work shortly after. And I felt that it was important for me to keep working and staying active. And again, there are not only so few women in the workforce, but moms start leaving the workforce.

OA: When you hear justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in architecture, what does that mean to you?

KP: As hard as it may be, it's important to have many voices at the table: community members, clients, developers, architects, contractors, engineers. All those people must come to the table, and all those people must be different. They need to look



Above: Krithika works on hands-on projects around her home

different, sound different, and be different. And it's not just one homogenous group deciding something for someone else. It's a collective conversation because that is where the most successful architecture comes about. It's harder to pull out the voices, and it's harder to distill the information, but I think that if it exists, the architecture is richer.

OA: Do you have any insight on what we should be doing now to help make architecture more diverse?

KP: Architecture school, especially when getting a professional degree, is very expensive. And coming out of it, the starting salary is very low. So unless you're lucky enough to have come from money, there's such a disproportionate number of people who end up practicing architecture because of the costs. It's a question about the value of our work — who is doing the work and how are we valuing that work relative to education and relative to all factors that go into getting a license.



Margaret Knight
Young Architect | Seattle, Washington

Growing up in Upstate New York, Knight fulfilled her fourth-grade dreams of going to Cornell University to study architecture. She is an architect at minority- and women-owned Schemata Workshop. She also serves as a board member at AIA Seattle and is an active part of the AIA Diversity Roundtable.

Olivia Asuncion (OA): What projects are you working on these days?

Margaret Knight (MK): In Seattle, there's a really big push for communities of color to have staying power in their communities. There's lots of gentrification and displacement happening, particularly in the historically Black community here. We're working on a project that is part of an initiative to allow Black churches, which are big landowners, to be able to self-redevelop their own land, allowing them to stay and not sell their properties and have to move to the outskirts of the city. It's the first one which would hopefully build a roadmap for other churches to do it as well. We've completed the feasibility study and are currently going through fundraising.

OA: How has the current status of diversity in architecture affected you?

MK: One positive effect on me personally is that it lit a fire within me to get licensed. I honestly did not realize how few Black women architects were registered in the entire country. When I got licensed in 2017, there were only seven Black women architects in the entire state of Washington.

OA: What actionable items can we take to bring us out of this lack of diversity?



Above: Margaret gardens near her Seattle apartment in a small community P-Patch plot

MK: Supporting each other. I've been super lucky to have been surrounded by the supportive women that I have in the field. I have cheerleaders in all of my corners. I think once you get on the other side, you need to be the cheerleaders for everybody else; leave the door open behind you; make sure that any opportunity that you're given, you're passing them along. So we can raise everybody up together. In solving the pipeline issue, it's making sure that you get the word out to the young kids, to tell them that it's an option, and help support them when they do.



Kevin Loo-Chan
Young Architect | Honolulu, Hawaii

Loo-Chan was born and raised in Honolulu and was inspired to become an architect by his father, who is also an architect. He started his education at the University of Hawaii, then transferred to the University of Oregon, gaining a wealth of perspective and knowledge. This shaped him to be the skilled architect he is today, notably completing the Ola ka 'Ilima Artspace Lofts, a sustainable, affordable housing complex for artists as part of Urban Works Inc.

Olivia Asuncion (OA): What would you say is your favorite thing about architecture? The least?

Kevin Loo-Chan (KLC): I think most architects are motivated to practice architecture because they are genuinely interested in making a positive impact in their communities. The most rewarding part of our profession is seeing the look on the faces of our clients or end users when a project is turned over to them and seeing how they interact with the spaces you've worked so hard to create.

The least favorite part about architecture? The commodification of employees. It is not a sustainable business model to turn over an unhealthy number of projects just to drive company profits. This approach to architecture leads to unhealthy and unhappy employees who feel disenfranchised.

OA: What does justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in architecture mean to you?

KLC: Put simply, a more equitable and diverse architecture profession will lead to better architecture. The more voices and the more influences we can involve in architecture the better and the more informed our decisions can be. Architecture should never discriminate; it should be equitable, fair, and open to all.

OA: How have you seen diversity and inclusion in architecture? And how has it personally affected you?

KLC: Growing up in Hawaii, we learn to respect the land, and we learn to respect each other no matter what kind of background they may come from or what they may look like.



Above: Kevin frequently surfs all over the coast of O'ahu

We have a district in Honolulu called Kakaako. It is a light industrial district in urban Honolulu filled with metal warehouses and auto-mechanic shops. Kakaako has been gentrifying over the past decade or so, and these metal warehouses were in danger of urban plight. Then a group of local artists started an organization called Pow Wow Hawaii. They banded together and began painting large murals on these metal warehouses. This began to fuel a trend that opened the door to urban art and murals in urban Honolulu. It has created a more equitable environment where artists can now carve out a career.

I am excited for the direction of architecture and its increasing diversity. I think it is very healthy and refreshing for the profession. I am seeing a lot more individuals able to express themselves in the work environment and seeing their empowerment. We are starting to see a lot more voices and influences in architecture and its peripheral fields. I am looking forward to seeing what the future of architecture holds.



Olivia Asuncion, AIA
Asuncion is an architect, design researcher, and universal design advocate. She is also serving as AIA Young Architects Regional Director for Northern California.

Emerging professional friendly firm program comparison

New England vs. North Central States

The Emerging Professional Friendly Firm Program has been expanding across the United States since its launch by the Central States Region in 2010. You can now find the program integrated into the annual award offerings in AIA New England, New York, North Central States, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and most recently Houston, North Carolina, and the Northwest and Pacific Region. AIA South Carolina previously offered this program, and later in 2021, a few more cities and states will launch the firm recognition program, too.

The initiative aims to celebrate firms that create nurturing environments and development opportunities for emerging professionals (EP). You can find more information on the program and how to implement it in your city or state, in the 2020 Q3 Part 2 Connection article The Emerging Professional Friendly Firm Program.

As the program continues to grow, a common question is, “How do the firm responses compare to each other?” Let’s take a closer look at AIA New England (AIANE) (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont) and AIA North Central States (AIANCS) (Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin), two regions that publish infographics of their survey responses.

It’s important to note a few disclaimers when looking at the data. First, AIANE offers this program annually, and all entries are submitted by the same deadline. AIANCS offers a two-year cycle and a rolling submission deadline. Second, for this comparison, AIANE references 2019 data, and AIANCS references 2019–2020 data. Third, the questions are compared by themes and may have been phrased differently between the two surveys. Fourth, the results reflect the firms that responded to the survey, and while they capture a cross-section of the firms in each region, the responses do not represent all firms. Lastly, all data is self reported by each firm.

Topic: Diversity of emerging professionals

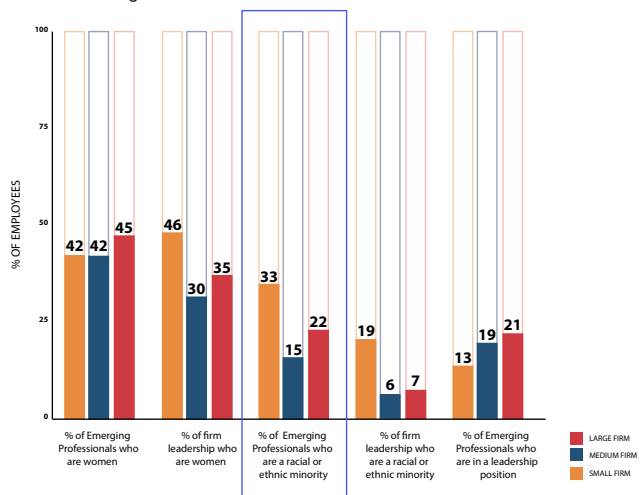
AIANE: 33% of emerging professionals in small firms (one to nine employees) identified as a racial or ethnic minority, in comparison to 22% at large firms (50-plus employees) and only 15% at medium firms (10 to 49 employees).

AIANCS: Firms were asked, “Of the EPs in your firm, do at least 30% identify as a racial or ethnic minority?” To that question, 17% of medium firms said yes in comparison to 15% of large firms and 0% of small firms.

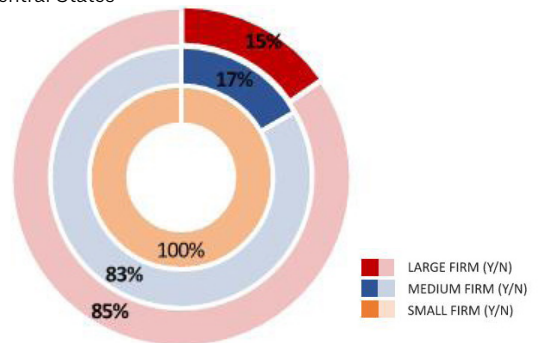
Comparison: AIANE had the most racial diversity in the small-firm category, while AIANCS had the most among medium firms.

According to the 2019 National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) Year in Review results, 35% of new exam candidates are non-white, and 46% of new Architectural Experience Program (AXP) participants identify as non-white. There is an opportunity for both regions to increase their racial diversity to align with NCARB’s data.

AIA New England



AIA North Central States

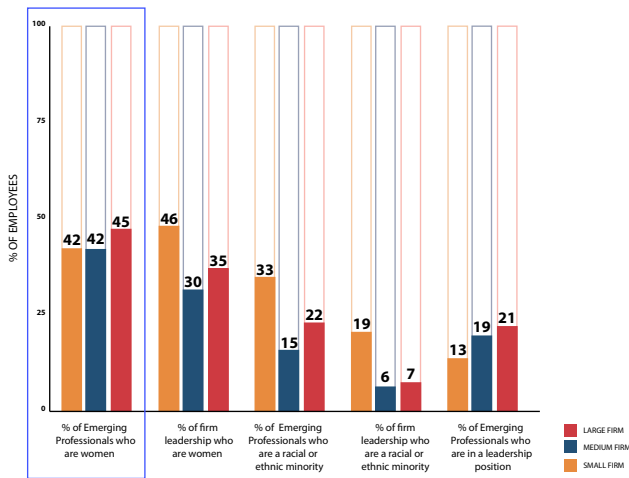


Q: Of the EPs in your firm, do at least 30% percent identify as a racial or ethnic minority?

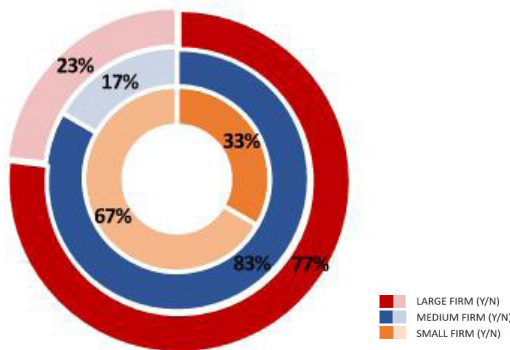
According to NCARB’s 2016 assessment of demographics, 30% of exam candidates identified as non-white. <https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2017/demographics>

Topic: Female emerging professionals

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Q: Of the EPs in your firm, are at least 30% architects/designers women?
 According to ACSA, 43% of architecture graduates are women and 30% of AIA Associate members are women. <http://www.acsa-arch.org/resources/data-resources/women>

AIANE: 45% of emerging professionals in large firms identified as female, in comparison to 42% at small and medium firms.

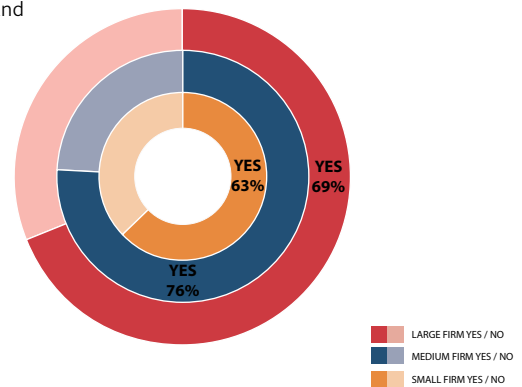
AIANCS: AIANCS firms were asked, “Of the EPs in your firm, are at least 30% architects/designers women?” To that question, 83% of medium firms said yes in comparison to 77% of large firms and only 33% of small firms.

Comparison: Within AIANE, all firm-size categories were above 40% female emerging professionals. Within AIANCS, more than 75% of large and medium firms had over 30% female emerging professionals on their staff. However, the small firms lagged behind significantly.

According to the 2019 NCARB Year in Review results, 44% of new exam candidates identify as female, and 50% of new AXP participants identify as female. According to the 2013 annual report by the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB), 43% of the students enrolled in an NAAB-accredited architecture program were female. New England is close to the national averages, while there is room for improvement for firms in the North Central States.

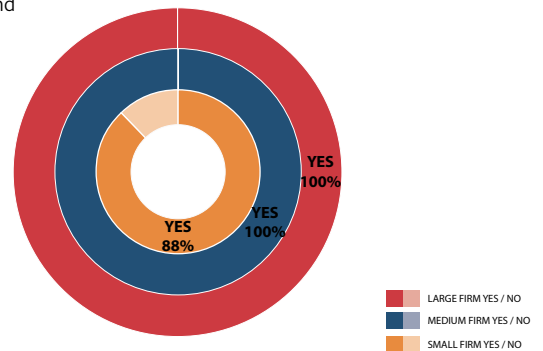
Topic: Exam support and work flexibility

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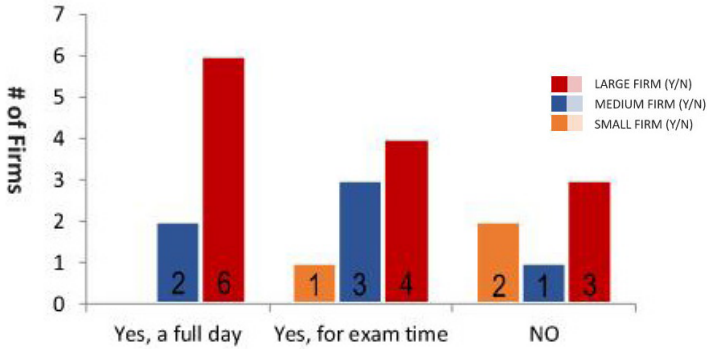
Q: Does the firm compensate Emerging Professional staff a paid day to sit for each of the ARE exams?

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Q: Does the firm provide Emerging Professional staff with the ability to work remotely and have a flexible schedule as needs arise?

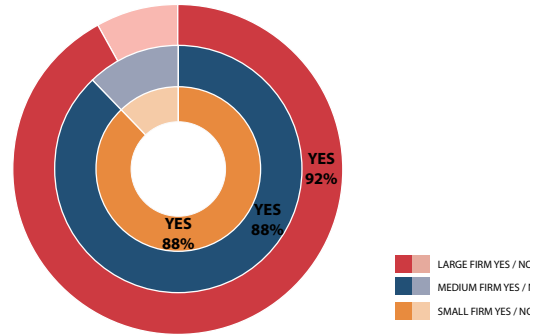
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Q: Does your firm provide paid time off from work to take the ARE exams?
This time may not count against an employee's vacation days or regular PTO.

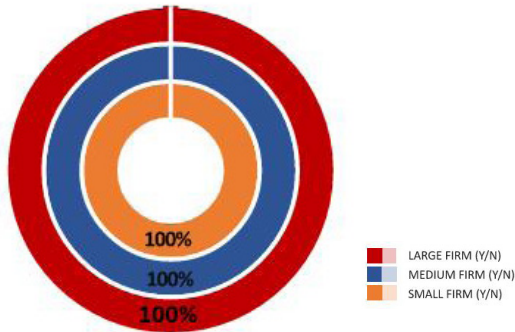
Topic: In-house mentorship

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Q: Does the firm provide and/or encourage each Emerging Professional staff member to have an in-house mentor?

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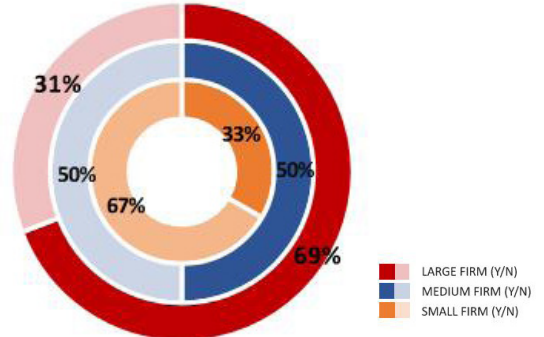
Q: Does your firm offer flexible working hours?

AIANE: Before the pandemic, 100% of large and medium firms and 88% of small firms offered employees the ability to work remotely or have a flexible schedule as needs arose. 76% of medium firms compensated EPs a paid day off to sit for each ARE exam, while 69% of large firms and 63% of small firms offered the same benefit.

AIANCS: In the survey year 2019-2020, 100% of all firm sizes offered flexible working hours. 83% of medium firms offered time to cover the exam or a full working day on exam days for employees, in comparison to 77% of large firms and 33% of small firms.

Comparison: All the firms in AIANCS and the majority in AIANE offered flexible work schedules to their employees. Between 63% and 76% of firms in AIANE compensated an EP to sit for an exam, which was similar to the 77% to 83% of medium and large AIANCS firms. Small firms in the AIANCS were considerably behind the other size categories. This support enables employees to sit for an exam and accommodate unexpected changes in one's schedule without having to use vacation time or paid time off.

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Q: Does your firm provide a mentor to each Emerging Professional outside of their direct supervisor to guide licensure and young architects development?

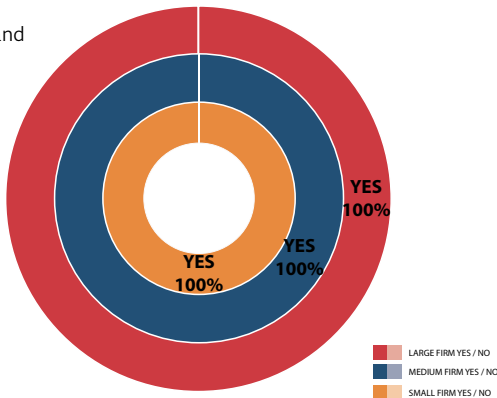
AIANE: According to the survey results, 92% of large firms, 88% of medium firms, and 86% of small firms encouraged emerging professionals to have an in-house mentor.

AIANCS: According to the survey results, 69% of large firms, 50% of medium firms, and 33% of small firms encouraged emerging professionals to have an in-house mentor.

Comparison: AIANE large, medium, and small firms had a much higher percentage of emerging professional staff members who had an in-house mentor when compared with AIANCS. However, when comparing the specific data collected by AIANE versus AIANCS, AIANCS large, medium, and small firms still provide a rather high percentage of in-house mentorship through an emerging professional's direct supervisor, though they may not offer mentorship outside of that relationship.

Topic: Leadership outside the office and firm support

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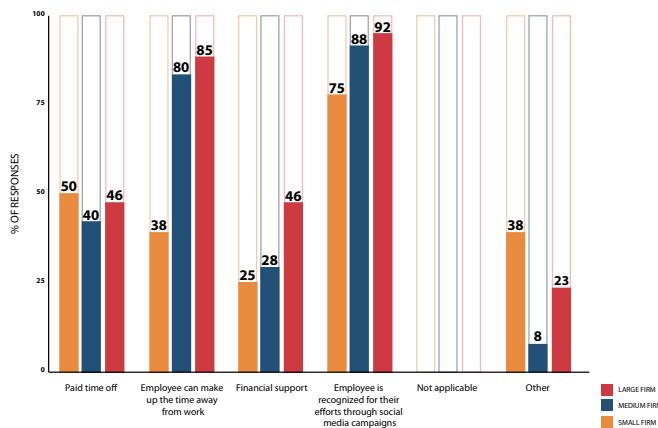
Q: Does the firm encourage and support Emerging Professional staff to be involved in a committee, professional affiliation, community group and/or design organization within or outside of the firm?

AIANE: 100% of all firms provide opportunities for emerging professionals to be involved in committees or professional affiliations outside of the organization. Firms provide support in different ways, such as paid time off, financial support, and allowing employees to make up time away from work. Additionally, employees are recognized for their efforts through social media campaigns.

AIANCS: Firms were asked, “Does your firm facilitate opportunities and support for EPs to participate in community service activities?” 100% of large and small firms and 83% of medium firms provide support and opportunities for EPs to participate in community events.

Comparison: The support from firms in both regions is positive, and AIANE was able to capture specific ways in which firms can provide support, such as through paid time off and financial help.

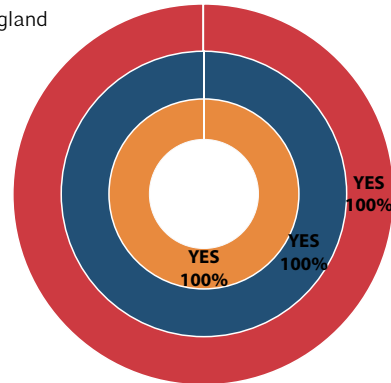
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Q: If the firm does encourage and support Emerging Professional staff's involvement in a committee, professional affiliation, community group and/or design organization within or outside of the firm, how so? Select all that apply.

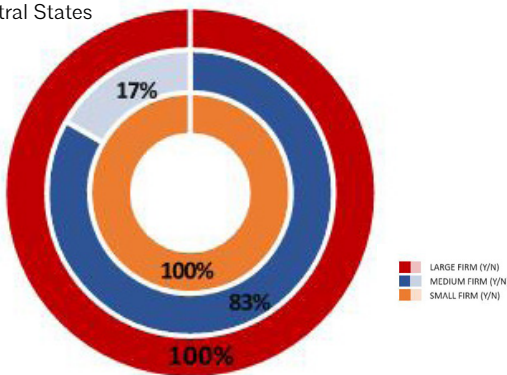
Topic: Leadership inside the office through project exposure

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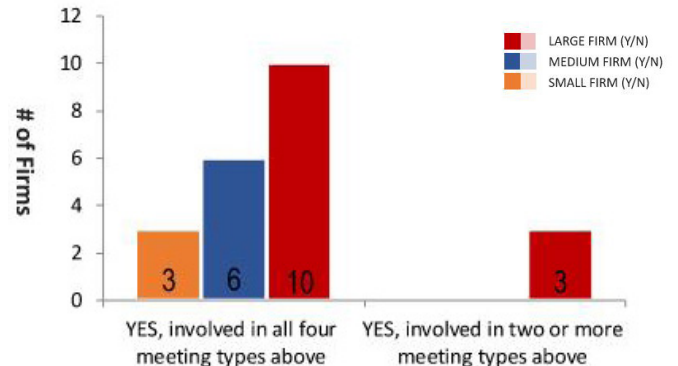
Q: Does the firm include Emerging Professional staff in all areas of the firm's practice, such as design, documentation, construction, presentations, client meetings, consultant coordination meetings, job site meetings, code reviews, etc.?

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Q: Does your firm facilitate opportunities and support for EPs to participate in community service activities?

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Q: Does your firm include EPs in all areas of the firms practice? Client Meetings, Consultant Meetings, City Review Meetings, Job Site Meetings.

AIANE: According to the survey results, 100% of all firms provide emerging professionals opportunities in all phases of a project, such as design, documentation, and construction.

AIANCS: According to the survey results, 100% of small and medium firms provide opportunities to be a part of all aspects of the firms' practice, while 76% of large firms provide opportunities in all areas of practice and 24% provide opportunities in two or more areas.

Comparison: From the responding firms, nearly 100% in all size categories in both regions include emerging professionals in all phases of practice, except for 24% of AIANCS large firms, which include EPs in just two or more areas of practice.

Summary

Results from the Emerging Professional Friendly Firm Program survey help us to recognize differences in emerging professional opportunities among employers, firm sizes, and regions in the U.S. The information identified in this survey can help firms assess, adopt, and implement strategies for more equitable, diverse, and inclusive professional development experiences for emerging professionals in the field of architecture. The data can also be a tool for emerging professionals to advocate for change from within their firms. An equitable path forward includes transparency, communication, and written policies to eliminate any barriers for individual advancement.

Reference the list below for a few ideas to implement today for a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive profession:

- Read the [AIA Guides for Equitable Practice](#)
- Establish a J.E.D.I Committee at the firm
- Sponsor emerging professionals to attend a J.E.D.I.-related seminar or conference (such as a National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) conference or an AIA Women in Leadership Summit)
- Institute a J.E.D.I. advocate position at the senior leadership level
- Provide a designated space in the office for nursing mothers
- Evaluate pay equity on an annual basis across all firm employees
- If mentorship is not offered within the office, seek an outside relationship
- Encourage all eligible employees to start an AXP record
- Support ARE candidates by covering the cost for exam material, study courses, resources, the exam fee, and a paid day out of the office to sit for an exam
- Publicly recognize the accomplishments of emerging professionals in the firm, through social media campaigns, e-blasts, or other means
- Encourage your firm to recruit from historically Black colleges and universities
- Engage with students at your local K-12 schools to share more about your path to the profession and what the field entails

For more information about these two regions:

[AIA New England Website](#)

[AIA NCSR Emerging Professionals](#)



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Chapin is a project architect at Svigals + Partners in New Haven, Connecticut. She is the 2020-2021 community director of AIA National's Young Architects Forum and is a recipient of the 2021 AIA Young Architects Award.



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Young Architects Forum

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