

Guides for Equitable Practice

Guides for understanding and building equity
in the architecture profession

SECOND EDITION
PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2020



AIA

W



The University of Washington for the American
Institute of Architects Equity and the Future of
Architecture Committee

Colophon

Publisher

University of Minnesota and University of Washington

Copyright

© 2020 The American Institute of Architects (AIA)

Research and Writing Team

Project Lead: Renée Cheng

Project Team:

Nancy Alexander

Cozy Hannula

Andrea Johnson

Laura Osburn

Graphics

Graphic Design: Vadim Gershman

Diagrams: Vadim Gershman, Andrea J. Johnson, Cozy Hannula, Nancy Alexander, Renée Cheng

Copy Editor

Linda Lee

AIA Equity and the Future of Architecture (EQFA)

Steering Group

Emily Grandstaff-Rice, FAIA

Annelise Pitts, AIA

Karen Williams, AIA

AIA EQFA Committee

2020

Gina Calabro

Sarah Curry, AIAS

Adam G. Fogel, Assoc. AIA

Kendall A. Nicholson, Assoc. AIA

Mark A. Schwamel, AIA

Matthew B. Toddy, AIA

Randall C. Vaughn, AIA

2019

Elizabeth del Monte, FAIA

Kimberly N. Dowdell, AIA

Ingrid Gonzalez Featherston, Assoc. AIA

Ryan Gann, Assoc. AIA

Emily A. Grandstaff-Rice, FAIA

Kecia Jackson, CAP-OM

Susan McDaid, Hon. AIA

Annelise M. Pitts, AIA

Yiselle Santos Rivera, Assoc. AIA

Amy Rosen, Assoc. AIA

Michael Skolnick, AIA

Jennie Cannon West, AIA

Karen E. Williams, AIA

Mary-Margaret Zindren, CAE

2018

Keshika De Saram, Assoc. AIA

Betsy del Monte, FAIA

Dan Hart, FAIA

Jana S. Itzen, AIA

Donna Kacmar, FAIA

Bryan Lee Jr., Assoc. AIA

Rosa Sheng, FAIA

2017

Gabrielle Bullock, FAIA

Greg Burke, FAIA

Bryan Hudson, AIA, NOMA

Chere LeClair, AIA

Tania Salgado, AIA

Steven White, AIA

Advisors/Focus Group

Anonymous (2)

Maryam Alaeddini, AIA

Larry Barr, FAIA

Tamarah Begay, AIA, AICAE

Karen Braitmayer, FAIA

Meg Brown

Greg Burke, FAIA, NCARB

Carrie E. Byles, FAIA, LEED BD+C

Erin B. Carpenter, AIA, NCARB

Filo Castore, AIA

Alejandra Cervantes, Assoc. AIA

Jane Chan, AIA, LEED AP

Peter Cook, AIA, NOMA

Angella Dariah

Keshika De Saram, AIAS, Assoc. AIA

Helene Combs Dreiling, FAIA, 2014 AIA President

Julius Erolin

Beau Frail, AIA, RID, NCARB

Shannon Gathings, Assoc. AIA
 Gerardo Gandy, Assoc. AIA, AIGA, NOMA
 James Garrett Jr., AIA, NOMA
 Bethany Lundell Garver, AIA, NCARB
 Katherine Georgeson, FAIA
 Yen Ha, AIA, LEED AP
 Najeeb Hameen, Assoc. AIA, NOMA
 Douglas Hanson, AIA, ASID
 Michael J. Hicks, AIA
 A.L. Hu, Assoc. AIA
 Diane Reicher Jacobs, AIA
 Kristina Kotlier, Assoc. AIA
 Cynthia Kracauer, AIA
 Anna Leach
 Kimber Leblicq
 Evelyn M. Lee, AIA
 Mark R. LePage, AIA
 Yi-chun Lin, ASC AIA, NCARB
 Michael Malone, FAIA
 Gregory Mell, AIA
 Mitra Memari, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
 Gail Zyckowski Merth, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
 Melissa Morancy, Assoc. AIA
 Alec Mulgrave
 Julia Murphy, AIA
 Vini Nathan, PhD
 Rashida Ng, RA
 Jessica O'Donnell, AIA
 Admo Ogun, AIA
 Trina Olson
 Larry Paschall, AIA
 Suzanne Pennasilico, SPHR
 Laura Pirie, AIA
 Ben Ptacek, AIA, LEED AP
 Amrita Raja, AIA
 Joe Remling, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
 Natividad Soto, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C
 Jason Takeuchi, AIA, NCARB
 Ming Thompson, AIA
 Chris Vandall, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
 Carole Wedge, FAIA, LEED AP
 Anne Weisberg
 Jennie Cannon West, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
 Joan Williams
 Mary-Margaret Zindren, CAE

In the text, contributors of quotations and stories are identified by the terms and pronouns they chose for themselves. The project authors have shortened some descriptions for space.

Acknowledgments

The *Guides for Equitable Practice* were funded and supported by the AIA as a sponsored research project through the University of Minnesota and the University of Washington. In addition to these institutions, the research team would like to acknowledge several groups and individuals who contributed to the project. The project is deeply indebted to the work and leadership of the AIA Equity and Future of Architecture Committee; Damon Leverett, AIA, Managing Director of Workforce Development and Strategy for the AIA; the AIA project management team and staff (Susan McDaid, Hon. AIA, Jay Stephens, Hon. AIA, Erin Murphy, AIA, Del Ruff, Renee Yancey, Kecia Jackson, Nissa Dahlin-Brown, EdD, Assoc. AIA, Marcia Calloway, MS); AIA Equity Commission; and AIA leadership. The project was further informed by the related work of the *Parlour Guides to Equitable Practice* team of Australia and by Equity by Design. We are thankful for the expertise of our advisors, the time and candor of our interviewees, and the excellent questions and insights of our many reviewers.

Guides

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Intercultural Competence
- 2 Workplace Culture
- 3 Compensation
- 4 Recruitment and Retention
- 5 Negotiation
- 6 Mentorship and Sponsorship
- 7 Advancing Careers
- 8 Engaging Community
- 9 Measuring Progress
- Glossary

The *Guides for Equitable Practice* (the guides) are comprised of nine independent guides with executive summaries, this introduction, and a glossary.

Foreword

I am pleased to present again the AIA's *Guides for Equitable Practice*, created in partnership with the University of Washington, the University of Minnesota, and the American Institute of Architects' Equity and the Future of Architecture Committee (EQFA). The guides are a vital part of AIA's long-term commitment to leading efforts that ensure that the profession of architecture is as diverse as the nation it serves. These guides are an essential step toward that end. Each includes real-world-derived best practices, relevant research, and other tools to help address a variety of employment and personnel issues about equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

Since these guides were first conceived, the urgency for architects to lead efforts to find solutions for many of our society's most pressing problems has skyrocketed. The multiple layers of challenges facing people and the built environment have become more starkly visible during the tumultuous events surrounding or triggered by the 2020 global pandemic and the newly heightened attention to systemic racism in the U.S. To successfully meet these challenges, as well as the unknown challenges ahead, will require the talent, passion, and creativity of a diverse cohort of students, professionals, and leaders.

Broadly, these guides will help you make the business and professional case for ensuring that your organization meets the career development, professional environment, and cultural awareness expectations of current and future employees and clients. Ultimately, we hope that these guides will shape our shared goal of a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and just profession for all without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socioeconomic background. It is EQFA's intent to encourage an ongoing, meaningful, and productive dialogue among all members about how best to realize this future for the profession of architecture.

— Emily Grandstaff Rice, FAIA
Chair, Equity and Future of Architecture Committee
December 2020



Introduction

KEY TOPICS

antiracism
 assimilation
 audience
 business case
 context
 diversity
 equity
 ethics
 framework
 guides
 identity
 inclusion
 institutional racism
 institutional sexism
 intersectionality
 justice
 language
 methodology
 practice
 profession
 research
 structural inequality

The need for equitable practice in the architecture profession is becoming ever clearer and more urgent. Yet knowing the issues at hand and how people are affected by them, how to turn intent into action, and how to define success can be challenging. These guides provide support for informed discussions and concrete next steps to help turn intent into action.

This introduction outlines the goals, context, methodology, content, framework, and core concepts of the guides and key ideas on how to start.



The University of Washington for the American Institute of Architects Equity and the Future of Architecture Committee

What are the Guides for Equitable Practice?

The *Guides for Equitable Practice* are one component of a broad commitment by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to overcome inequities and advance the profession, the careers of individual architects, and the quality of the built environment by creating more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and just workplaces and interactions.

The individual guides meet needs identified by the AIA and its constituents in the context of increased national attention to issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Some aspects of American culture have evolved radically in the past decade: for instance, broad public recognition of structural inequities highlighted by Black Lives Matter and the #MeToo movement, legalization of single-sex marriage, and recognition of nonbinary genders. The architecture profession has experienced deepening appreciation for the connection between public health and the built environment, changes in practice to incorporate universal design, and inclusionary principles reinforced by codes and regulations and design justice. However, persistent gender and racial pay gaps and racial disparities in health outcomes, school achievement, housing, and incarceration, are examples that show that many aspects of culture have not changed and that institutional racism and/or sexism are deeply rooted in systems and processes that perpetuate these inequities. Increasingly, corporations have responded to calls for societal change by connecting their own diversity and inclusion efforts to their ethical reputations and ways to protect or increase their market share. Even more importantly, research showing improved decision-making and creativity by diverse teams has increased attention to how people's differences can be leveraged to increase performance.

The AIA has long anchored the profession with policies and resources on ethics and practices, and it is logical that the Institute would sponsor the development of urgently needed guidance at this time. Many recent resources on equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice, while

not all architecture specific, are extremely valuable to anyone working in or leading the architectural profession. These guides augment those resources, translating relevant research into action.

CONTEXT

The *Guides for Equitable Practice* emerged from a series of AIA resolutions responding to growing awareness of equity issues and the need for greater understanding of ways to improve the architecture community. As the guides developed over several years, they evolved to meet changing needs of an audience with increased resolve to connect intent to action.

In 2015, the AIA board ratified Resolution 15-1: Equity in Architecture, which was passed by member delegates at the National Convention, calling for “women and men to realize the goal of equitable practice in order to retain talent, advance the architecture profession, and communicate the value of design in society.”¹ The resolution directed the establishment of a Commission on Equity in Architecture, which in 2017 released five areas of focus with eleven priority recommendations for “expanding and strengthening the profession’s commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in every practice,” to be implemented by the AIA over the following three years.² The Equity and Future of Architecture Committee (EQFA) was launched in 2017 to implement the recommendations and support related initiatives. To begin addressing the fourth recommendation, “create guides for equitable, diverse, and inclusive practice,” the EQFA developed a list of topics for the guides. In 2018, the AIA issued a request for proposals to develop the guides and selected the research team initially based at the University of Minnesota. The core of this team later moved to the University of Washington, where the majority of the guides were completed. The first edition, published in three stages, was completed in late 2019. By 2020, conditions had changed so much that major revisions were needed to reflect new research and heightened consciousness and commitment to actively engage in equitable practices. In 2020, the team also added an executive summary for each guide and a comprehensive glossary.

APPROACH

The AIA selected our research team to create these guides for the AIA EQFA committee, which established the basic structure of topics after looking at the Australian *Parlour Guides to Equitable Practice* as a model. Working with AIA leadership, EQFA members, expert consultants, and other interested parties, the research team led the research, design, and writing of these guides. The views expressed, while reflective of the wide range of perspectives, are our own.

We believe architects advance a more just society through the built environments they design. Our intention with these guides is to support architects who seek to practice equitably while harnessing the power of inclusive decision-making in their work. Translating these goals into reality can be difficult. Therefore, the guides share knowledge, generate discussion, deepen self-awareness, and support organizational discovery and change around discernible and nameable concepts, thereby advancing the architectural profession to become more equitable and inclusive, more effectively serving our communities and clients, and advancing justice. We understand that many of the topics are complex and are at times discussed in politically charged terms. While not ignoring public discourse, the premise of these guides is to provide our readers with frameworks for fully valuing the contributions of people who have identities different from theirs and for removing obstacles to their full engagement.

It was important to include in the guides both the individual level and the system level, since every individual, each firm, and the profession as a whole are located within a system of institutions that have structurally advantaged and disadvantaged people based on their identities. Additionally, U.S. architecture firms work within our country's dominant culture, which has characteristics and norms—individualism, belief in objectivity, desire for psychological comfort instead of challenging conversations—that mask and sustain inequality. At times these guides offer alternatives to dominant cultural norms, and in other instances we simply acknowledge how culture drives past and present patterns and perceptions. We offer the reader four different frames through which to understand the topics and issues: internalized (for the individual), interpersonal (working with others), institutional (within institutions and systems of power), and structural (between institutions and across society).³ While readers may believe their agency is limited to what they can do for themselves or their firms, in reading these guides, additional pathways and personal responsibility and potential for influencing change may become apparent.

AUDIENCE

The guides are intended for individuals, firms, and other organizations within the architectural community. At the time of writing, members of the architecture community are predominantly white men, so the guides generally speak to dominant culture. However, the intention of the guides is to emphasize belonging and welcoming for people from both dominant and nondominant cultures and to bridge between different cultural points of view. Though the antecedents to these guides (in particular, AIA research, the *Parlour Guides*, and the research done by Equity by Design) were primarily gender focused, as is the majority of current research, the AIA's intent was that the guides should define differences broadly and acknowledge that experiences of gender, race, and all the other categories of difference, even as they overlap. Therefore, the guides include the range of identities in the profession and address the importance of acknowledging, valuing, and benefiting from the differences between them. We emphasize data about people of color and women since the research on discrimination against these groups in the workplace is substantial and there is broad societal recognition of the persistent marginalization of Black and Indigenous people. At the same time, there is growing awareness and research on issues around other identities, such as gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, social class, age, and disability. In addition, the concept of intersectionality adds another dimension to our understanding of identity: it explains that identities are multifaceted and that these intersections result in different experiences for young Black women and older white women, for example.⁴

Each guide opens with an introduction that defines core topics and supports a shared understanding of them. It then presents information through several lenses to connect to readers at different stages of their careers and levels of development around these topics. Recognizing that people and groups can share similar goals but prefer different means to achieve them, we hope that the guides provide readers a resource to better learn and practice what moves them and their organizational culture forward in ways that support their values-, mission-, and vision-driven efforts.

METHODOLOGY

In regular dialogue with the EQFA project management team, the researchers developed the outlines and drafts via a thorough review of industry-wide surveys, academic research, and qualitative perspectives from a diverse group of architects and others. The team consulted several experts on the professional workplace, including Joan Williams, founder of Women's Leadership Edge, and Anne Weisberg, formerly of the Families and Work Institute, who produced some of the resources cited in the guides. To gain a broader view of experiences and

needs related to equity in the profession, and for related quotes and stories, the research team interviewed almost one hundred people in-depth. Men and women, representing a range of race/ethnicities, ages, geographic locations, practice types, and career experiences, were asked about their own experiences with equity in the profession, changes they think are needed, and how the guides could be most useful. The team also held a workshop at the AIA 2018 Conference on Architecture during which draft content of the guides provided the basis for discussion and feedback.

Drafts were reviewed by the AIA staff, legal counsel, members of the EQFA committee, interviewees, focus groups from a component chapter (AIA Minnesota) and the University of Minnesota School of Architecture students, and experts in equity, diversity, and inclusion research and training. Feedback from reviewers helped to shape the tenor, level of detail, content, and graphic style and format of the guides.

LANGUAGE AND PUNCTUATION

Terms and acronyms evolve and have come rapidly in and out of favor; in the guides we have chosen to use some of the most current terms at the time of writing. Many of these, such as *cisgender*, appear in the Glossary. Descriptors, including *people of color* / *BIPOC*, *ALANA*, *Black*, *African American*, *Asian American*, and *Latino/Latina/Latinx*, often emerge from within groups, as an expression of solidarity, but become used by out-groups without an understanding of or a regard for context, and are robbed of their political force. In addition, coining and using terms, such as *BIPOC*, that intermingle groups with vastly different histories and lived experiences is seen by many as a way of erasing distinctions, marginalizing those groups, and maintaining the dominance of the majority culture.

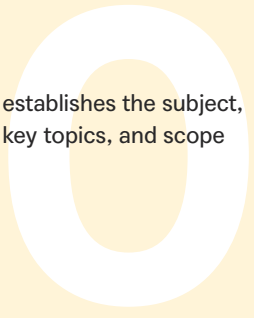
In the 2020 edition of the guides, we have followed the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook's guidance to capitalize *Black* and *Indigenous*; we agree with the AP's assessment that language has evolved and that these terms reflect not only skin color but a degree of shared culture and identity. On the other hand, the AP Stylebook does not capitalize *white*, nor do the guides.

There has been long debate over whether certain racial terms, such as *black* or *indigenous people*, should be capitalized as proper nouns. W.E.B. DuBois led a campaign in the early 1900s to persuade the press to capitalize *Negro* stating that a lowercase n denoted disrespect and racism. Presently, legal scholar Kwame Anthony Appiah advocates for capitalizing both *Black* and *White*, as both are socially constructed, not natural, identities. Other style guides, including the American Psychological Association (APA) style guide, also call for names of racial and ethnic groups to be capitalized—

Black, *White*, *Indigenous People*, *Hispanic*, *Aboriginal*, etc., although “*Indigenous people*” when describing specific individuals. (The APA guide is silent on whether *brown*—a category of skin color that includes *Latino/Latina/Latinx*, *Arab*, and *South Asian people*—should be capitalized.)

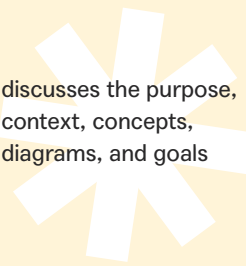
Still, the decision to capitalize *white* is contested. As referenced above, in June 2020, the AP changed its style guide, widely used throughout the journalism industry, to capitalize *Black*. The following month, after further deliberation, the AP decided not to capitalize *white*. Many, including the AP, argue that *white* doesn't merit capitalization, as doing so confers an undeserved dignity and would give credence to the beliefs of *white supremacists*, who do capitalize it; because *white* is merely a skin color, rather than a shared identity or culture; because *white* is a broad category that includes capitalized subgroups like *Italian American* and *Irish American*; or that the decision should not be made hand-in-hand with the decision to capitalize *Black* but each considered separately. Others state that lowercase *white* frames whiteness as a neutral standard and absolves *white people* from taking responsibility for eradicating injustice and inequality.⁵

GUIDE COVER



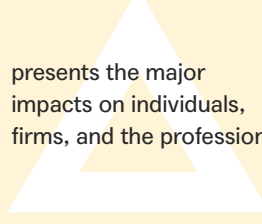
establishes the subject, key topics, and scope

WHAT IS IT?



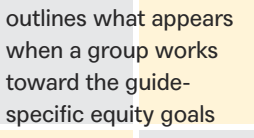
discusses the purpose, context, concepts, diagrams, and goals

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



presents the major impacts on individuals, firms, and the profession

WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?




outlines what appears when a group works toward the guide-specific equity goals

COMPLIANCE



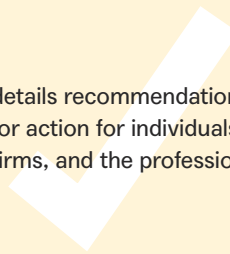
describes legal and regulatory information—and meets mere minimum requirements

ASSESS




offers questions to structure dialogue at different stages of development

ACT



details recommendations for action for individuals, firms, and the profession

CONSIDER



shares stories with questions to frame and prompt discussion

RESOURCES

collects selected books, articles, websites, and tools related to topic areas

NOTES

lists comments and citations for research sources

0.00 Chapter Section

Gendae sus moluptaere

persper ferero omnis

dolorei cienesinim

NAVIGATION

shows guide subject, section, and page number

QUOTES

highlight individual experiences and encourage reflection on related content

HOW TO USE THE GUIDES

The *Guides for Equitable Practice* include this introduction plus nine independent guides, which are structured consistently, plus a glossary of terms used in the guides.

Within each guide, the sections can be read in sequence or discretely and can be extracted or rearranged as needed.



What is equitable practice?

Our profession progresses when we acknowledge, foreground, and change the structures and systems that place higher value on some people and certain skills over others. Calling out how these systems create barriers to participation, we can set goals and take actions to stop perpetuating patterns and norms we believe are harming our profession and limiting our ability to serve our clients and society. Equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice are essential terms in this discussion. Since people use the terms differently and sometimes interchangeably, we describe them here to establish shared meanings and interrelationships as you read and use the guides.

EQUITY

Equity means conditions are level and impartial. Working to guarantee equitable treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement means identifying, acknowledging, and eliminating societal and professional barriers that have disadvantaged many groups in the past (also known as institutional or structural inequities based on group identities). A variety of solutions help identify and dismantle barriers to inclusion for people with different identities—there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Regarding the question of whether to focus on achieving equity or equality for people in the profession, the guides maintain that equity is necessary to acknowledge and solve problems with our current imperfect frameworks, and that equality is a limited view focused on creating ideal conditions for the present and future but that does not meet the additional needs of groups that have been disadvantaged in the past.

DIVERSITY

In the workplace, diversity is neither inherently positive nor negative. It means that there is a mix of kinds of people present, and it may be a measure or outcome of equitable and just practices. It often implies that differences are categorized through identity markers, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, age, and disability, which have all been factors in marginalization (and have thus placed these categories in legally protected classes). People, of course, are much more than mere categories, and there are many characteristics that can make a difference in the workplace. It can be convenient to assume that identities are similar when they actually are not. For example, the general term *people of color* does not capture important differences between a Black person's experience compared to that of an Asian person. Additionally, identities intersect, with two or more identities equally or differently prominent or influential in one's self-perception or perception by others.

At times, “diversity of thought” is invoked to justify an otherwise-homogeneous group's composition; however, it is likely that a group of people who have the same identity markers will be more limited in the perspectives they can bring to finding creative solutions and how

“The profession is limited by the people who are seeking to become engaged in it, the people who are getting architecture degrees. It's more important than ever that we work together in broadening that spectrum.”

Director, Business Owner,
Sole Practitioner, and Educator,
White, Female, 38

well they can work with and serve others outside their group. On the other hand, if a diverse group of employees has not become proficient in using their differences and mutually adapt their thinking and behavior to reach shared goals, then the benefits of their diversity will be difficult to attain.

INCLUSION

Inclusion in the workplace requires creating an environment in which everyone is welcomed, respected, supported, and valued. Like diversity, inclusion can be an outcome of using equitable and just practices. These guides stress that inclusion is more than simply being at the table—it means that those present at the table are able to equally contribute to discussions and decision-making and have the ability to help change systems. They can feel a sense of belonging. And, importantly, no one has more or less power because of a difference in identity.

Yet inclusion can be tricky. People who are different from the workplace norm may minimize or downplay their differences in order to get along within the group. The pressure to assimilate can put stress on them and limit the value their differences could bring to the work. Conversely, if people bring forward their differences and the group has not learned how to work effectively across differences, the resulting stress can lead to less successful outcomes. Inclusion cannot happen if a person must assimilate into the workplace culture, since the potential value of their differences is lost. Therefore, inclusion relies on mutual adaptation through which differences are embraced and negotiated. It is at this point that diversity can begin to drive superior outcomes.

JUSTICE

Justice, or social justice, denotes the assurance of fair treatment; equal economic, political, and social rights; and actively removing barriers to create equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. It also encompasses a repairing of past wrongs, transformative justice, and accountability. Design justice calls for architects and other design professionals to practice in ways that actively engage in challenging structural inequities embodied in or supported by the built environment.

“We want to make architecture an equitable place of study and practice because of the diversity of the world and cities, and we want the same voices of our clients to be within our firms.”

Professor, Administrator, and Architect,
Black, Female, 40s

Why is equitable practice important?

The cases to be made for equitable practice—moral, ethical, business, professional, and societal—all rely on bolstering practices that are inclusive of differences and equitable in approach, process, and effect. Each case may be compelling to different people and useful for motivating change within different audiences and situations. Consequently, understanding all of the cases can help build consensus in groups with many viewpoints.

Moral case · Equity, diversity, and inclusion are often embraced as “doing the right thing for the right reason.” This frame can be powerful in communicating the sincerity of a person’s or firm’s motives for equity work and also for spurring an individual or group toward gaining more insight into issues and learning how best to act. But the moral case on its own is not enough, and if not used within an equitable framework it can lead to biased decisions. Acknowledgment of how the structural inequities built into our society affect our moral reasoning also means taking much responsibility. For instance, does being antiracist mean actively engaging in countering these structures? How do we decide what is right? What do we do if we have to choose between two mutually exclusive things that both seem right? What if our dominant cultural preference for “either/or” choices obscures pathways for “both/and” solutions? Moral reasoning is difficult to extricate from social norms, and, therefore, sometimes even well-intentioned actions can lead to an inequitable behavior or policy.

Ethical case · The AIA Code of Ethics (5.101) specifically requires that members “treat their colleagues and employees with mutual respect, and provide an equitable working environment.” The ethical case for diversity and inclusion is based on the premise that members of the profession share values of fairness and justice and believe that anyone should have the opportunity to enter and work within the profession. If employees who hold

this belief perceive unfairness or discrimination, their loyalty to an organization diminishes. Similar negative effects can occur if broad statements about equity are not matched with action. On the other hand, when individuals perceive that their organization’s values are congruent with their own values and that it supports their well-being, they are more likely to want to be part of it and contribute to achieving equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.⁶ It is the premise of these guides that making progress on equity, inclusion, and justice goals is a worthwhile endeavor benefiting all firms regardless of any individual firm’s progress or lack of progress on firm-specific diversity goals.

There is less consensus about the role of social justice—or of design justice—in architecture. A growing movement advocates that all architects and offices should directly confront inequities that are deeply embedded in systems and practices and acknowledge that these structural problems form the context for all types of offices. Accepting this premise means that, regardless of any individual or offices’ direct involvement with creating those systems, unless they are actively

“When you employ or manage people, you have an inherent power over those people. When people are looking to you for their livelihood, you as an employer and a professional have a real responsibility to know what your role is and act appropriately. You have the welfare of people at the root of your professional practice.”

Firm Founder and Principal,
White, Male, 60

disassembling, resisting, or remaking them, they are perpetuating them. It follows, then, that the ethics of social justice in architecture and the built environment call for architecture professionals to think broadly about the impact of their work on communities and society.⁷

Business case · The business case for diversity is a powerful driver for firm leaders. First, because diversity has become valued both within and outside of the workplace, managing it poorly can be costly and lead to brand harm or boycotts. Second, businesses with personnel who reflect the diversity of their markets will have a competitive advantage in both marketing and quality of client service and community engagement. Third, harnessing the value of diversity is a clear strategy for improving the economic growth of a business by increasing organizational outcomes related to effectiveness, performance, and innovation, such as lowered costs, increased revenue, and greater creativity.

Framing a firm's commitment to diversity solely in economic terms or without equity and justice goals can open the door to behavior that favors profit over people and may signal to employees that diversity efforts are disingenuous.⁸ Equity and commitment to social justice are increasingly recognized additions to brand value if well supported. However, if sympathetic statements of support for social-justice advocacy groups are not matched by business policies and actions, such sentiments can be a liability. Therefore, the business case for diversity depends on well-rounded, well-managed, inclusive, equitable practices. Employees, managers, and leaders need awareness, skills, and support, underpinned by an agreement among senior leaders that the benefits are worth the investment.

Professional case · The professional case rests on the belief that we should and can make our profession better through equity, diversity, and inclusion. If we do, we can expect a larger and more diverse pool of talent and can support more creativity in our work and thereby improve the quality of the built environment for more people, clarify the perception and value of the profession, spur economic growth, and increase the ability of the profession to address and adapt to new challenges.

Societal case · The impacts of inequitable practices within society are vast, and the contributing factors numerous, making it feel difficult to make changes as individuals or even as a profession. Even so, we do have the knowledge and power to take steps toward equity, diversity, and inclusion that bring immediate benefit for individuals and groups and will lead to greater positive institutional and structural change within and beyond our profession.

Act

Here are some key ideas to help you get started building equity in architecture, for use as a reference to make connections between the more detailed information and recommendations outlined in each guide. Individuals, managers, firms, organizations—we are in this together!

KNOW YOUR MOTIVATION

- Understand what best motivates you to make practice more inclusive, equitable, and just.
- Be aware of your own patterns and biases—we all have them.

CONSIDER PERSPECTIVES BEYOND YOUR OWN

- Increase your capacity to acknowledge, value, and work effectively with people who are different from you.
- Try shifting your perspective or frame to test out thinking about issues in new ways.
- Avoid making assumptions about what others think, want, or are motivated by—ask and listen.
- Share stories, resources, and knowledge.

EQUIP YOURSELF AND OTHERS TO MAKE CHANGE

- Learn what it takes to contribute to a positive workplace culture.
- Be an advocate for yourself and others.
- Be an ally to others.
- Commit to actively preventing harassment and discrimination through antiracist and antisexist practices.
- Know your rights and responsibilities as an individual and employer.

Resources

ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

Designing for Diversity: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Architectural Profession – Kathryn H. Anthony (2001)

Surveys and interviews of four hundred architects looking at factors that lead to discrimination and how lack of diversity hurts the professions. Recommendations for ways to change. A foundational text that remains relevant today.

Diversity in the Profession of Architecture, Executive Summary – AIA (2016)

<http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

Diversity in the Profession of Architecture, Key Findings – AIA (2015)

<https://www.architecturalrecord.com/ext/resources/news/2016/03-Mar/AIA-Diversity-Survey/AIA-Diversity-Architecture-Survey-02.pdf>

Summary of perceptions of factors that affect the choice of architecture as a profession, job satisfaction, and retention.

Equity by Design Metrics: Key Findings from the 2016 Equity in Architecture Survey – Equity by Design (2016)

<http://eqxdesign.com/blog/2017/2/14/eqxd-metrics-key-findings-from-the-2016-equity-in-architecture-survey>

Equity in Architecture Survey (2018)

<http://eqxdesign.com/equity-in-architecture-survey-2018>

Summaries and analyses of findings from the most recent surveys, focusing on career dynamics (factors that affect perceptions and experiences throughout a career in architecture) and career pinch points (personal and professional milestones that affect career progression).

Parlour Guides to Equitable Practice – Parlour (2014)

<http://www.archiparlour.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Guide0-Introduction2.pdf>

A set of eleven guides to equitable practice focusing on gender equality in architecture in Australia: 1) Pay Equity, 2) Long Hours, 3) Part-Time Work, 4) Flexibility, 5) Recruitment, 6) Career Progression, 7) Negotiation, 8) Career Break, 9) Leadership, 10) Mentoring, and 11) Registration.

Structural Inequality: Black Architects in the United States – Victoria Kaplan (2006)

Voices of twenty Black architects describing lifelong discrimination, marginalization, and pervasive racism in the profession, as well as their ways of navigating. Book addresses larger structural issues in architecture that currently make disadvantage inevitable.

DIVERSITY

American Association of People with Disabilities

<https://www.aapd.com/advocacy/employment/>

The work of this advocacy organization includes information and resources on employment.

Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters – Vivian Hunt, Sundiatu Dixon-Fyle, Sara Prince, and Kevin Dolan – McKinsey (2020)

<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>

Business case draws the connection between diversity, inclusion, performance, and increased profitability.

How to Get Men Involved with Gender Parity Initiatives – Elad N. Sherf and Subra Tangirala – HBR (2017)

<https://hbr.org/2017/09/how-to-get-men-involved-with-gender-parity-initiatives>

Asserts that men avoid involvement in gender-parity efforts, although they have relevant experience and can benefit directly; encourages positive, supportive action. Broadly applicable to the creation of equity initiatives that include stakeholders beyond those most directly affected.

Only Skin Deep: Reexamining the Business Case for Diversity – Deloitte Point of View (2011)

https://www.ced.org/pdf/Deloitte_-_Only_Skin_Deep.pdf

Aimed at organizations interested in the business case for diversity. Expands the demographic definition of diversity to include the diversity of ideas that comes from multiple backgrounds and experiences.

Out and Equal Workplace Advocates

<http://www.outandequal.org>

Nonprofit dedicated to LGBTQ workplace equality.

Fact sheet · <http://outandequal.org/2017-workplace-equality-fact-sheet/>

Best practices · <http://outandequal.org/20-steps/>

Why Diversity Matters – Catalyst (2013)

http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/why_diversity_matters_catalyst_0.pdf

Summary of Catalyst diversity studies makes the business case for diversity: improving financial performance, leveraging talent, reflecting the marketplace, building reputation, and group performance.

GENERAL RESOURCES

Antiracism Resources

<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/antiracismresources>

Compilation of resources to support both Black, Indigenous, and other people of color and potential antiracism allies.

Being Black in Corporate America – Center for Talent Innovation (2019)

https://www.talentinnovation.org/_private/assets/BeingBlack-KeyFindings-CTI.pdf

Statistical data and analysis that provide the basis for understanding the specific challenges of Black professionals and ways to overcome them.

Catalyst

<https://www.catalyst.org/>

Researches many topics related to equity, diversity, inclusion in general and in relation to specific underrepresented groups. Resources to help companies better understand the issues; case studies and tools to help with implementing changes.

Center for WorkLife Law

<https://worklifelaw.org/>

Provides tools and resources around the topics of women's leadership, families, and bias. Note that a partnership between the AIA and Women's Leadership Edge allows all AIA members access to WLE materials through a portal on the AIA equity web page.

Bias Interrupters · <https://biasinterrupters.org/>

Offers many tool kits and worksheets for individuals and organizations to interrupt bias.

Women's Leadership Edge ·

<https://www.womensleadershipedge.org/>

Wide array of tools to help organizations support, advance, and retain women employees: parallels in engineering and law.

CEOs Action for Diversity and Inclusion

<https://www.ceoaction.com/>

CEO members pledge to advance diversity and inclusion; actions taken by each company and the outcomes are catalogued.

Deloitte

https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/topics/value-of-diversity-and-inclusion.html?icid=left_diversity

Variety of articles with perspectives and insights on business and leadership topics. The company was a pioneer in equitable practices.

Gallup

<https://www.gallup.com/home.aspx>

Collection of tools and services to assist companies in data collection and analytics, including culture, employee engagement, and diversity.

Harvard Business Review

<https://hbr.org/>

Succinct articles summarize research from a variety of sources on business topics, including equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/>

General overview of implicit bias and comprehensive annual reviews of current research into implicit bias across many fields.

Lean In

<https://leanin.org/>

Focused on empowering women to achieve their goals through women's peer groups, public awareness, and education.

Making Commitments to Racial Justice Actionable – Rasha Diab, Thomas Ferrel, Beth Godbee, and Neil Simpkins – Across the Disciplines (2013)

<https://wac.colostate.edu/atd/race/diabetal.cfm>

Offers a framework for both self-work and work-with-others in the process of moving from consciousness to constructive antiracist action.

Pew Research Center

<http://www.pewresearch.org/>

Research looks at issues, attitudes, and trends through a social science lens.

Racial Equity Tools

racialequitytools.org

Website designed to support individuals and groups interested in advancing racial justice; includes research, tools, curricula, and guidance.

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

<https://www.shrm.org/>

Thorough array of resources for any size employer; tools include legal compliance and a variety of human resources topics.

White Supremacy Culture – Tema Okun – dRworks

<https://www.dismantlingracism.org>

[/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture.pdf](https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture.pdf)

List of norms and standards that unconsciously reinforce white culture preferences; suggests alternate ways of thinking and working.

Notes

1. Wanda Lau, “The AIA Establishes a Commission on Equity in Architecture,” *Architect Magazine*, December 17, 2015, https://www.architectmagazine.com/practice/the-aia-establishes-a-commission-on-equity-in-architecture_o.

2. American Institute of Architects, “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Commission: Executive Summary,” January 25, 2017, <https://www.aia.org/resources/27246-recommendations-from-aias-equity-in-architec>.

3. Race Forward, appendix to *Race Reporting Guide*, June 2015, <https://www.raceforward.org/reporting-guide>.

4. Kimberle Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989), <https://philpapers.org/archive/CREDTI.pdf>; and “Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality, More than Two Decades Later,” Columbia Law School, June 8, 2017, <https://www.law.columbia.edu/news/archive/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality-more-two-decades-later>.

5. Kwame Anthony Appiah, “The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black,” *Atlantic*, June 18, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/time-to-capitalize-black-and-white/613159/>; APA Style Guide, “Racial and Ethnic Identity,” accessed July 10, 2020, <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/racial-ethnic-minorities>; Ann Thúy Nguyen and Maya Pendleton, “Recognizing Race in Language: Why We Capitalize ‘Black’ and ‘White,’” Center for the Study of Social Policy, March 20, 2020, <https://cssp.org/2020/03/recognizing-race-in-language-why-we-capitalize-black-and-white/>; and “Explaining AP Style on Black and White,” *AP News*, July 20, 2020, <https://apnews.com/afs:Content:9105661462>.

6. Kristen P. Jones, et al., “Beyond the Business Case: An Ethical Perspective of Diversity Training,” *Human Resource Management* 52, no. 1 (January–February 2013): 55–74, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/hrm.21517>.

7. David Douglass, “The Ethics Argument for Promoting Equality in the Profession,” *ABA Journal*, November 1,

2019, <https://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/the-ethics-argument-for-promoting-equality-in-the-profession>.

8. “Business-Case Arguments for Diversity and Diversity Programs and Their Impact in the Workplace,” Military Leadership Diversity Commission, February, 2010, <https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Resources/Commission/docs/Issue%20Papers/Paper%2014%20-%20Business%20Case%20Arguments%20for%20Diversity%20and%20Programs.pdf>.

SECOND EDITION
Copyright 2020
American Institute of Architects

The *Guides for Equitable Practice* were authored by research teams based at the University of Minnesota and the University of Washington led by Renée Cheng, with co-authors Laura Osburn, Nancy Alexander, and Andrea Johnson, and support from Cozy Hannula. The guides were designed by Vadim Gershman. They are published with the support of the American Institute of Architects Equity and Future of Architecture Committee.

The views expressed are the views of the authors, not necessarily those of the AIA.

The *Guides for Equitable Practice* are designed to provide resources to individuals, firms, and other groups for achieving equitable practices in the profession of architecture. The content of the guides does NOT constitute legal advice. The guides are NOT a substitute for engaging competent legal counsel. Ensure legal and regulatory compliance in enacting any portions of the guides. THE GUIDES ARE PROVIDED “AS IS” WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR USE OR PURPOSE, OR NONINFRINGEMENT. Some jurisdictions do not allow the exclusion of implied warranties, and the above exclusion does not apply to them.