

# Emerging Professional Friendly Firm Application (2023-2024)

A Collaboration of AIA Minnesota, AIA North Dakota, AIA South Dakota, and AIA Wisconsin Emerging Professional Committees

\* Indicates required question

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Email \*

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## GOALS

AIA would like to recognize regional firms who offer great support and opportunities to their Emerging Professionals (EP) and to suggest more ways that all firms can elevate the level of EP support throughout the region. We hope this process helps foster dialogue within firms and communities and across the state to create new and innovative policies and opportunities to support and develop the future members of our profession.

The EP Friendly Firm Award provides recognition for architecture firms who meet the following criteria:

- Provide fair compensation and benefits to Emerging Professionals
- Support Architectural licensure
- Invest in the professional developments of Emerging Professionals
- Actively create opportunities for Emerging Professionals to grow
- Demonstrate commitment and innovation to mentor and coach Emerging Professionals

## HOW IT WORKS

At least one Emerging Professional or Emerging Architect and at least one Principal should sit down and fill out the following application together. The following questions are intended to be the framework and documentation of that conversation.

In order to be valid, the application must be signed and completed by an AIA member principal and an AIA emerging professional from the applicant firm. Applications without AIA numbers provided will be returned without consideration.

Architecture firms will be evaluated through the EP Friendly Firm Award criteria and rated based on their size of staff with a total of 65 possible points:

- Small firm (10 & under) - 34 Point Threshold
- Medium firm (11-49) - 39 Point Threshold
- Large firm (50+) - 44 Point Threshold

Awards are valid for a two-year period (2023-2024). After that time, firms can re-apply to ensure they meet current criteria.

## EMERGING PROFESSIONAL (EP) DEFINITION:

For the purposes of this application, Emerging Professionals (EP's) are professionals who have completed their academic studies up until 10 years post-licensure. Taking into account this definition, include full-time EP's, part-time EP's, and student interns in your responses to all application questions.

Firm Name \*

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Which state(s) in which your firm operates are you applying for? Select all that apply \*

*If your firm has multiple offices/locations, policies must be the same and questions answered must encompass all offices. If the various offices have different policies, then different applications must be filled out.*

*Check all that apply.*

- MN
- ND
- SD
- WI

Firm Size \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Small (10& under)
- Medium (11-49)
- Large (50+)

## COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

17 possible points

1. Is the starting salary for a "Recent College Graduate (Nonlicensed)" above the AIA Salary Calculator median of \$52,350? \*

*This salary median is set by the 2021 AIA Compensation Survey Salary Calculator.*

<http://info.aia.org/salary/salary.aspx>

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES - 2 points
- NO - 0 points

2. Does your firm cover NCARB fees for starting a record and NCARB annual fees? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, 100% coverage - 2 points
- YES, 50% coverage or more - 1 point
- YES - via an allotment/budget - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

3. Does your firm cover AIA annual fees? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, 100% coverage - 2 points
- YES, 50% coverage or more - 1 point
- YES - via an allotment/budget - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

4. Does your firm cover state licensure fees / renewal? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, 100% coverage - 2 points
- YES, 50% coverage or more - 1 point
- YES - via an allotment/budget - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

5. Are all EPs at your office offered firm supported health insurance coverage through the firm? (students exempt) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, both medical and dental - 2 points
- YES, medical only - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

6. Are all EP's at your office offered paid sick leave? (student interns included) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

7. Are all starting EP's at your office offered PTO (or sick and vacation)? Excludes part-time employees. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, 4 weeks or more - 2 points
- YES, 3 weeks - 1 points
- YES, 2 weeks - 0 point
- NO
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please paste your PTO (vacation/sick) policy \*

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Is paid overtime offered to hourly employees? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES (1 point)
- NO (-1 points)
- Not Applicable - 0 points

9. Are all EP's at your office offered firm supported disability and/or life insurance? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, both disability and life - 2 points
- YES, only one offered - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

10. Are all EP's at your office offered a firm supported retirement plan? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

Please paste your firm policy to the question above. \*

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11. Are all EP's included in firm-wide profit sharing? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

Please include written answers for any question above that needs clarification.

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## LICENSURE

11 possible points

12. Are all licensure-eligible architectural EPs encouraged to establish an NCARB \* record and register with the Architectural Experience Program (AXP)? (1 point)

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

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

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, study time and exam time - 2 points
- YES, for exam time - 1 point
- 0 points

14. Does your firm reimburse EPs for ARE exams? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES - reimburses ALL passed and ALL failed exams - 4 points
- YES - gives the EP a budget that covers the cost of exams as the EP sees fit, OR reimburses a portion of passed and a portion of failed exams - 3 points
- YES - covers passed exams only - 2 points
- NO - 0 points

15. Does your firm have or provide access to study materials of the EP's preferred study method for all six ARE 5.0 exams? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, subscription-based materials with access to practice exams (Amber Book, Black Spectacles, etc.) - 2 points
- YES, physical materials (books, paper resources, etc.) - 1 point
- NO - 0 points



16. Does your firm celebrate its recently licensed employees (either internally or publicly)? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

17. Does your firm regularly review EP's AXP hours and assign responsibilities that provide a well-rounded architectural experience? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

18. Are EP's provided additional compensation upon licensure? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

Please paste your policy to question above. \*

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Please include written answers for any question above that needs clarification.

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

12 possible points

19. Does your firm employ paid student intern(s) seasonally and/or annually? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

20. What is the retainage for newly hired EP's hired at your firm? Consider EP's hired in the last 5 years (includes interns) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES, 50% retainage for 36+ months - 2 points

YES, 50% retainage for 18 months - 1 point

0 points

21. Do EP's at your firm have the opportunity to be involved in ALL project phases? I.e. Pre-design to Construction Administration \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 2 points

NO - 0 points

22. Does your firm include EP's in all areas of the firm's practice? Client Meetings, \*  
Consultant Meetings, City Review Meetings, Job Site Meetings

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, involved in all four meeting types above - 2 points
- YES, involved in two or more meeting types above - 1 point
- 0 points

23. Does your firm provide a mentor to each Emerging Professional outside of \*  
their direct supervisor to guide licensure and young architect's development? This  
must be an organized mentorship program within the firm (not an organic/informal  
one).

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

24. Does your firm provide reimbursement AND paid time to attend seminars and \*  
conferences (not PTO)?

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, 100% fees covered and paid time to attend - 3 points
- YES, 50% or more fees covered and some paid time to attend - 2 points
- Either reimbursement OR paid time, not both - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

Please paste your policy to question above. \*

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25. Does your firm provide a framework for constructive feedback or an employee review system that encourages and measures growth and development? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

26. Is the path to firm leadership outlined in an employee manual or other firm documentation accessible to employees? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

27. Percent of Emerging Professionals who are in a leadership position (must have a formal title within the company): \*

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28. Does your firm organize continuing education for personal and professional development? (ex: lunch and learns) \*

Mark only one oval.

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

Please include written answers for any question above that needs clarification.

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## OPPORTUNITY

15 possible points

29. Of the Emerging Professionals in your firm, are at least 49% women? \*

According to NCARB, 49% of new record holders are women.

<https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2022/demographics>

Mark only one oval.

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

30. Percent of EPs who are women: \*

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31. Percent of firm leadership who are women (architectural professionals only) \*

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32. Of the EPs in your firm, do at least 60% percent identify as a racial or ethnic minority? According to NCARB's 2020 assessment of demographics, 60% of new record holders identify as people of color. \*

<https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2022/demographics>

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

33. Percent of EPs who are a racial or ethnic minority: \*

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34. Percent of firm leadership who are a racial or ethnic minority (architectural professionals only) : \*

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35. Does your firm interview and extend job offers to at least 50% EPs who may be defined as a disadvantaged group? Disadvantaged groups are identified as ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities or former military personnel. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 2 points

NO - 0 points

36. In which ways is the firm improving the firm culture around Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)? Select all that apply.

*Check all that apply.*

- Established an EDI Committee at the firm
- Sponsor Emerging Professionals to attend EDI related seminars or conferences
- Support Emerging Professionals to attend Equity conferences such as the AIA Women in Leadership Summit or the NOMA Conference
- Instituted an EDI advocate position at the senior leadership level
- Provide a designated space in the office for nursing mothers
- Evaluating pay equity on a yearly basis across all firm employees
- We are currently not implementing any EDI initiatives at the firm
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

37. Does your firm sponsor leadership training for EPs through formal coaching or \* continuing education?

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, internal AND external resources - 2 points
- YES, internal OR external resources - 1 point
- 0 points

38. Has your firm provided company-wide, equity diversity and inclusion training \* to all employees within the past 3 years?

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES - 1 point
- NO - 0 points

39. Has your firm provided company-wide, anti-harassment training to all employees within the past 3 years? \*

Check out this resource: <https://www.aia.org/resources/6072302-harassment-prevention-resources>

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES - 1 point  
 NO - 0 points

40. Does your firm provide paid family leave for caregiving? \*

*Paid Family Leave (PFL) provides benefit payments to people who need to take time off work to care for a seriously ill family member, bond with a new child, or participate in a qualifying event because of a family member's military deployment.*

*Mark only one oval.*

- YES, 4+ weeks of paid family leave - 4 points  
 YES, 2-3 weeks of paid family leave - 2 points  
 0 points

41. Regarding the question above, select all that apply: \*

*Check all that apply.*

- The firm offers Paid Family Leave  
 The firm offers paid maternity and paternity leave with full salary and benefits  
 The firm offers paid maternity and paternity leave with partial salary and benefits  
 The firm offers only paid maternity leave with full salary and benefits  
 The firm offers only paid maternity leave with partial salary and benefits  
 The firm offers maternity and paternity leave without pay  
 The firm offers maternity leave without pay  
 The firm has no written policy



Please paste your paid family leave, parental leave, or maternity leave policy. \*

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42. Does your firm allow the option for employees to work remotely at least partially during traditional business hours (8 am - 5 pm)? Remote EP's must be supported via mentorship, coaching, etc) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

43. Does your firm offer flexible working hours? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

44. Does your firm facilitate opportunities and support for EPs to participate in community service activities? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

YES - 1 point

NO - 0 points

45. Does your firm encourage and support EP's in leadership positions within AIA? (can bill AIA hours, given a time allotment, etc.) \*

Mark only one oval.

- YES - 1 point
- NO - 0 points
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include written answers for any question above that needs clarification.

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**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

10 possible points

Use the space provided below to include additional ways in which your firm supports Emerging Professionals. \*

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## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

By signing your name below, you are indicating that you have read, understand, and agree with the following:

We commit to providing benefits as outlined above in order to promote the professional development of the Emerging Professionals employed by our firm. We commit to providing and maintaining a [harassment-free workplace](#). We certify that we do not have unpaid interns. We commit to the [AIA Code of Ethics](#). If at any time the status of these benefits changes, we agree to notify the AIA chapter affiliates.

We understand that by signing this statement of commitment, we are giving permission to the AIA chapter affiliates to identify our firm name as an "AIA Emerging Professional Friendly Firm." It is further understood that the AIA chapter affiliates to place information (as provided by the firm) regarding the firm's commitment on AIA websites and in written newsletter and emails.

Emerging Professional Name/Signature \*

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Emerging Professional AIA Number \*

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Emerging Professional Phone Number

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Principal Name/Signature \*

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Principal AIA Number \*

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Principal Phone Number

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Thank you.

We will review your application and respond to you shortly.

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