

Emerging Professionals Friendly Firm Program

AIA A Collaboration of
AIA Minnesota, AIA North Dakota, AIA South Dakota, & AIA Wisconsin
Emerging Professionals Committees

2021-2022 Emerging Professional Friendly Firm Program SURVEY RESULTS

The goal is 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.

SUMMARY

This report contains the results of the second round of the EP Friendly Firm Application; the application period spanned two years of the COVID pandemic and unprecedented impacts to work and home life. Expanded flexibility in work hours, hybrid working, and remote working were common. It has been easier to have EP's attend virtual client and community meetings they otherwise wouldn't have been a part of. Remote working also came with challenges of supporting employees in a virtual manner (trainings, pro-active check-ins, greater communication, software, etc.)

The EP Friendly Firm application looked at the following categories: Equity Diversity and Inclusion, Opportunity, Professional Development, Licensure, and Compensation + Benefits. Below is a high-level summary of each of these categories.

HIGH LEVEL TAKE-AWAYS

- **Equity Diversity and Inclusion / Opportunity:** This category continues to be a weak part of the application for most firms, although in light of highlighted racial disparities, many firms have initiated change: starting internal JEDI committees, implementing intercultural development trainings, reviewing policies, developing diversity and inclusion initiatives, partnering with non-profit organizations, changing hiring practices, advertising job openings with different organizations, attending career fairs with a focus on diversity, and partnering with schools to support diversity. There are strides to be made when it comes to having a more inclusive, diverse staff. Equity and opportunity as seen through paid family leave reveals a large range of policies; the most notable firms offered paid *parental* leave.
- **Professional Development:** This is a fairly strong category in which all the firms have a structure to provide constructive feedback and promote growth of the individual. The majority of firms, but not all, provide a mentor for the EP. The path to leadership within the company is often unclear and not written, leaving it up to the EP to communicate leadership goals, develop a trajectory, and rely on feedback from leadership.
- **Licensure:** This is a strong firm category. There is generally strong financial support for testing, time off to take exams, and AXP hours are regularly reviewed. The biggest surprise is that not all firms provide materials for testing in ARE 5.0. Another variation among firms is whether or not they pay for a failed exam. The most innovative policies for licensure include a stipend of time and money for the licensure candidate to allocate however they wish. Some companies have an internal EP group that motivates other EPs through the licensure process.
- **Compensation and Benefits:** This is a fairly strong category among all firm sizes. EPs will typically make the AIA median starting salary and cover fees associated with licensure, AIA, and NCARB. Health insurance, paid sick leave, disability/life insurance, and a firm supported retirement plan are fairly standard, with very few exceptions.

Resources

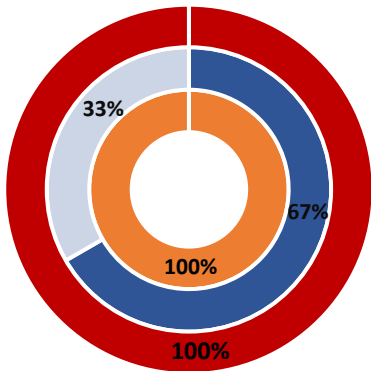
- *Pay Equity Assessment:* <https://aiachicago.org/kc/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-committee/>
- *Culture Change Initiative:* <https://www.aia-mn.org/get-involved/equity-profession/culture-change-initiative/>

10 ENTRIES WERE RECEIVED FOR THE 2021-2020 EMERGING PROFESSIONAL FRIENDLY FIRM AWARD. OF THE ENTRIES:

- 3 WERE FROM LARGE FIRMS, REPRESENTING 50+ EMPLOYEES
- 6 WERE FROM MEDIUM FIRMS, REPRESENTING 10-49 EMPLOYEES
- 1 WAS FROM A SMALL FIRM, REPRESENTING 1-9 EMPLOYEES

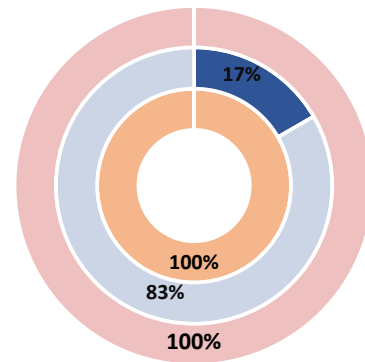
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

■ LARGE FIRM (Y/N)
■ MEDIUM FIRM (Y/N)
■ SMALL FIRM (Y/N)



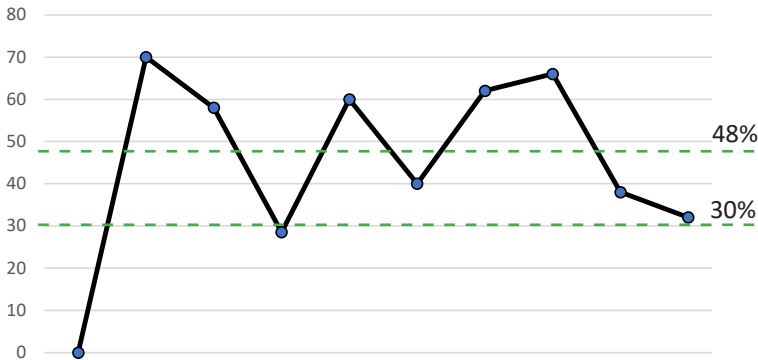
Q: Of the EPs in your firm, are at least 30% architects/designers women?

According to ACSA, 48% of architecture graduates are women.
<https://www.acsa-arch.org/resources/data-resources/where-are-the-women-measuring-progress-on-gender-in-architecture-2/>

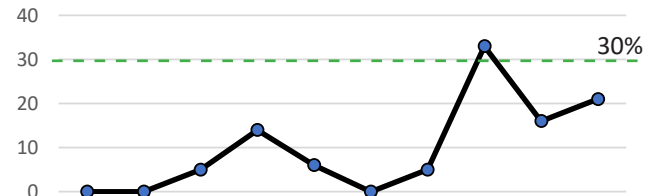


Q: Of the EPs in your firm, do at least 30% percent identify as a racial or ethnic minority?

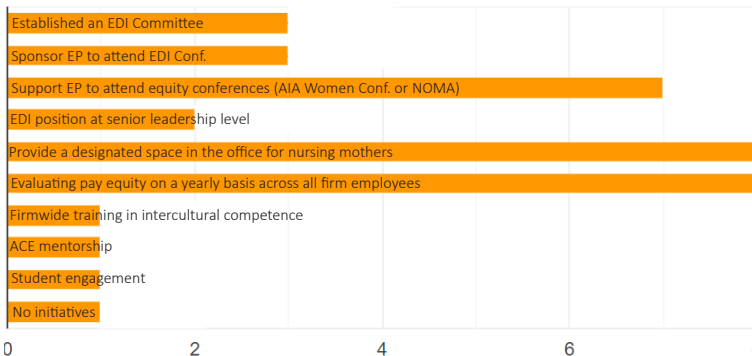
According to NCARB's 2020 assessment of demographics, 44% of exam candidates starting the AXP identified as people of color.
<https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2020/demographics>



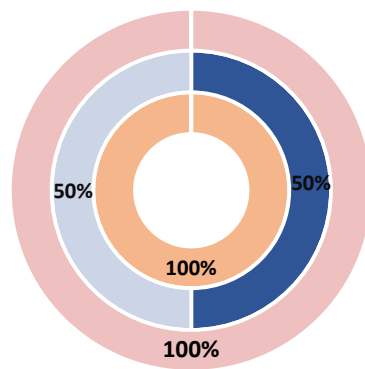
Q: % of Emerging Professionals who are women



Q: % of Emerging Professionals who are a racial or ethnic minority?



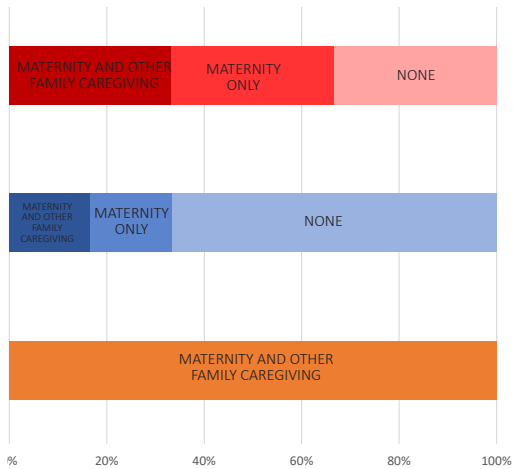
Q: In which ways is the firm improving the firm culture around equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)? Select all that apply.



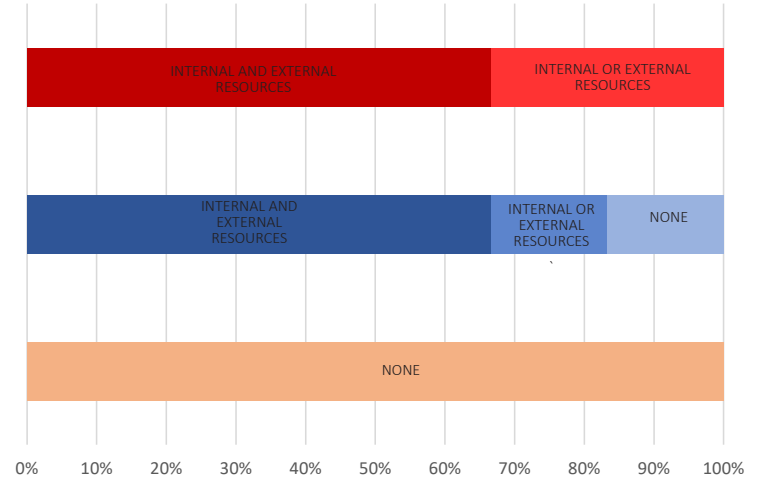
Q: Has your firm provided company-wide, equity diversity and inclusion training to all employees within the past 3 years?

OPPORTUNITY

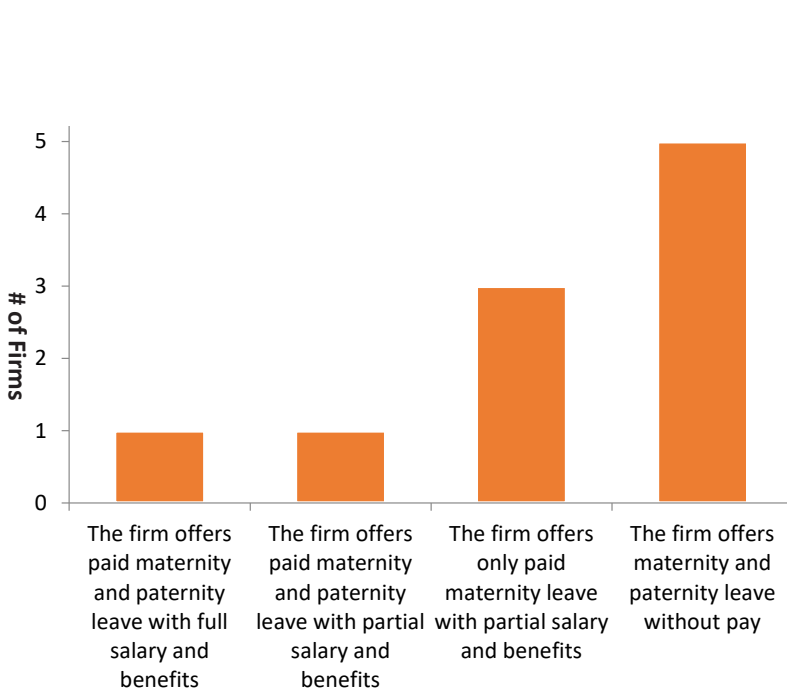
- LARGE FIRM
- MEDIUM FIRM
- SMALL FIRM



Q: Does your firm provide paid family leave for caregiving?

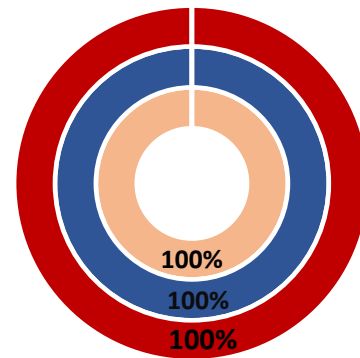


Q: Does your firm sponsor leadership training for EPs through formal coaching or continuing education?



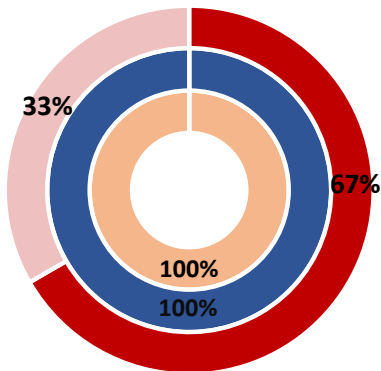
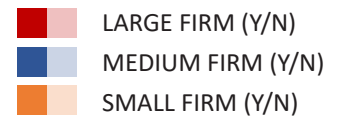
Q: Regarding paid family leave, select all that apply:

- LARGE FIRM (Y/N)
- MEDIUM FIRM (Y/N)
- SMALL FIRM (Y/N)

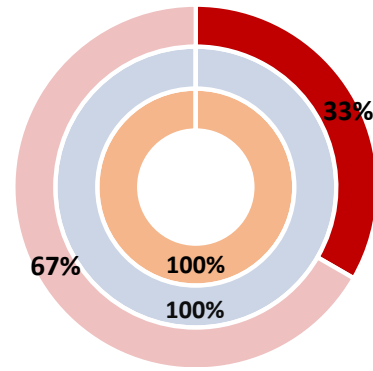


Q: Does your firm allow the option for employees to work remotely at least partially during traditional business hours (8 am - 5 pm)?

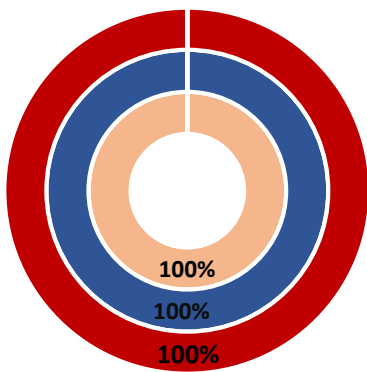
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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



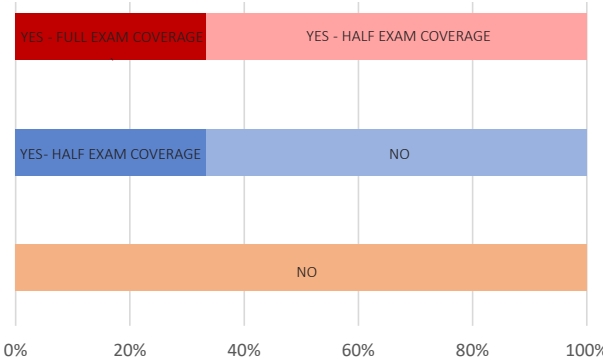
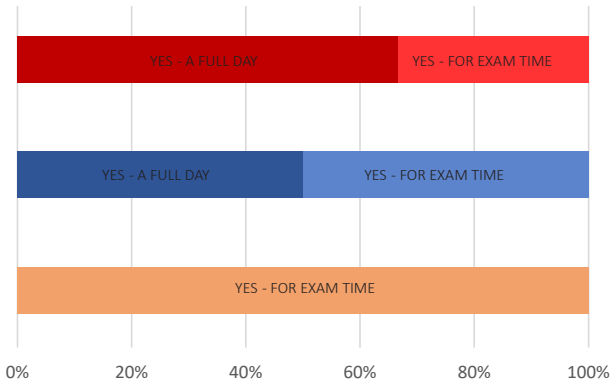
Q: Is the path to firm leadership outlined in an employee manual?



Q: Does your firm provide a framework for constructive feedback or an employee review system that encourages and measures growth and development?

LICENSURE

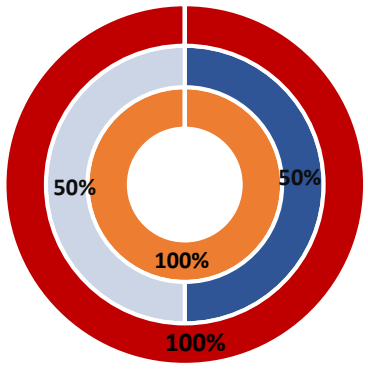
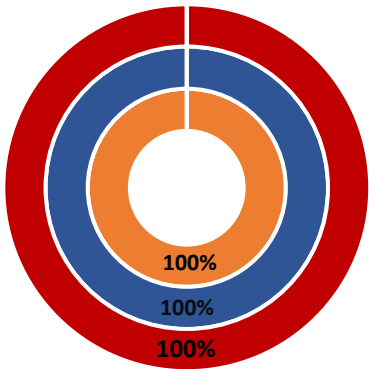
- LARGE FIRM
- MEDIUM FIRM
- SMALL FIRM



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.

Q: Does your firm provide reimbursement to EPs for all failed ARE exams?

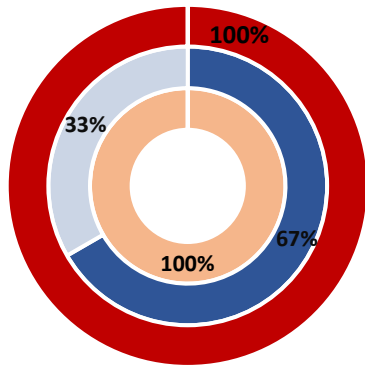
- LARGE FIRM (Y/N)
- MEDIUM FIRM (Y/N)
- SMALL FIRM (Y/N)



Q: Does your firm reimburse EPs for all passed ARE exams?

Q: Does your firm have study material for all six (6) exams of ARE 5.0?

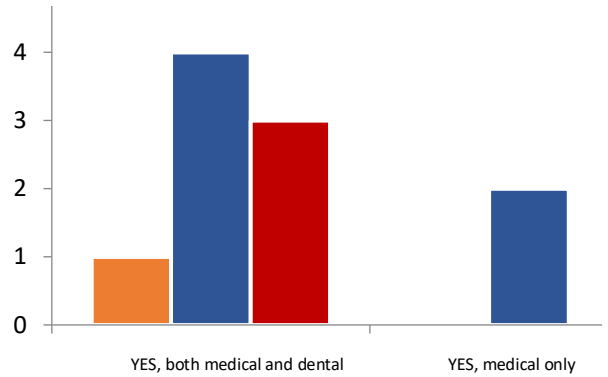
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS



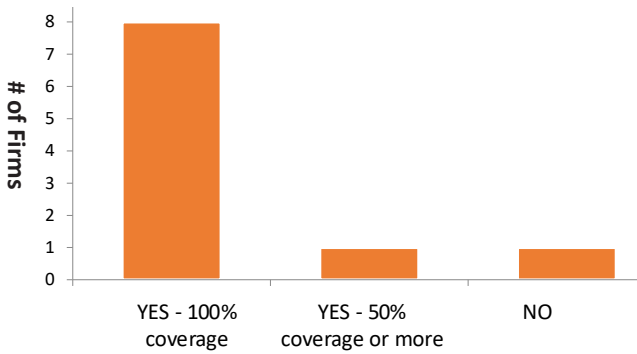
Q: Is the starting salary for a “Recent College Graduate (Nonlicensed)” above the AIA Salary Calculator median of \$49,000?

This salary median is set by the 2019 AIA Compensation Survey Salary Calculator, using the West North Central Region as a baseline <http://info.aia.org/salary/salary.aspx>

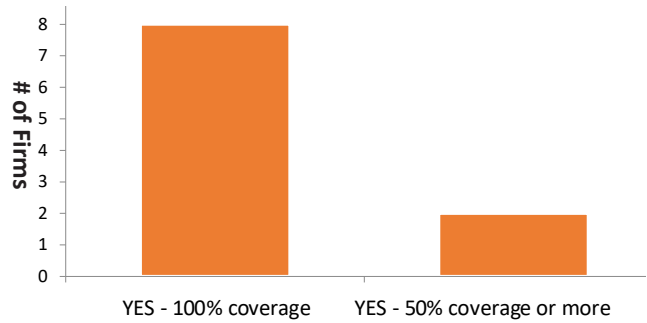
■ LARGE FIRM (Y/N)
■ MEDIUM FIRM (Y/N)
■ SMALL FIRM (Y/N)



Q: Are all EPs at your office offered firm supported health insurance coverage through the firm? (Student Interns are exempt)



Q: Does your firm cover licensure fees / renewal in an architect’s home state?



Q: Does your firm cover AIA annual fees?

