

# Negotiation

Negotiation can support equity and inclusion when it is viewed as a collaborative process that seeks to create satisfying solutions for all parties rather than a competition between adversaries.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Negotiation is an everyday event for architecture professionals, whether in hiring and promotion, contracting, community engagement, or project management and teamwork. As a learned skill that improves with practice, honest and flexible negotiating contributes to job satisfaction and employee retention, positive working relationships and office culture, and long-term firm profitability.

## NEGOTIATION CAPABILITY AND OUTCOMES IMPROVE WHEN...

- negotiations consider the larger context and impact on long-term relationships
- negotiation is recognized as a useful professional skill that takes practice
- negotiators convey their interests and determine their common goals up front
- decision-makers understand the role of power in negotiations, and use their position to keep negotiations from perpetuating systemic advantage or disadvantage
- participants build bridges across intercultural differences

### ACT

*Learn the art and skill of negotiation*

- Get training and find opportunities to practice.
- Adapt your communication style (direct or indirect, casual or formal, discursive or to the point) to match your negotiating partner.
- Know your firm's and your own objectives, priorities, flexible points, and bottom lines, as well as your backup plan (or BATNA, best alternative to a negotiated agreement).

*Negotiate to build a healthy workplace*

- Develop relationships with people who can make positive change, and alert them to needs for organizational improvement.
- Always communicate with honesty and integrity.

- Approach negotiations as conversations; bring a creative, optimistic attitude; seek common ground; and appreciate differences. Your stance and your firm's advocacy for justice pave the way for broader change.

*Address bias*

- Note that identity and culture play a role in negotiation dynamics or biases.
- Recognize that members of nondominant groups must negotiate on their own behalf more often because of implicit bias but are often perceived as aggressive when they negotiate as assertively as white men.
- Work to change inequitable policies and decision-making processes.
- Advocate for nonmajority individuals; give credit where credit is due.