

Guides for Equitable Practice

Guides for understanding and building equity
in the architecture profession

FIRST EDITION
PART I – RELEASED NOVEMBER, 2018



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

Colophon

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Guides

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The Guides for Equitable Practice (the Guides) are nine independent guides and an introduction. The 2018-19 first edition of the Guides is released in three parts.

Foreword

Increasingly, architects will be called to lead efforts in finding solutions to many of our society's most pressing issues. To successfully meet these challenges, as well as the unknown challenges ahead, we must have the talent, passion, and creativity of a diverse cohort of students, professionals, and leaders.

I am pleased to present the Guides for Equitable Practice, done in partnership with 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 to ensure that the profession of architecture is as diverse as the nation we serve. These Guides are an essential step toward that end. Each includes real-world-derived best practices, relevant research, and other tools to help you address a variety of employment and personnel issues about equity, diversity, and inclusion.

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 diverse, inclusive, and equitable profession for all without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation or 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 the most inclusive, equitable, and diverse future for the profession of architecture.

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



Introduction

KEY TOPICS

audience
business
context
diversity
equity
ethics
framework
guides
inclusion
methodology
mobility
morality
practice
profession
research
socioeconomics

The need for achieving equitable practices in the architecture profession is increasingly clear. Yet knowing the issues at hand and how people are affected by them, how to define positive outcomes, and how to turn intent into action can be challenging. The guides provide individuals, firms, and groups a way to support informed discussion and concrete next steps.

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



The University of Minnesota 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 diverse, inclusive, and equitable 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 diversity, inclusion, and equity. Some aspects of American culture have radically evolved in the past decade: for instance, legalization of single-sex marriage and recognition of nonbinary genders. In architecture, specifically, universal design mandates inclusionary principles reinforced by codes and regulations. However, persistent gender pay gaps as well as racial disparities evident in school achievement and in health outcomes, for example, make it clear that many aspects of culture have not changed. Increasingly, corporations have connected their own diversity and inclusion efforts to ethical reputation and increased market share. Even more importantly, research showing improved decision-making and creativity by diverse teams has increased attention on 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 was logical that the Institute would sponsor the development of urgently needed guidance at this time. Many recent resources on diversity, inclusion, and equity, 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 to actionable practices that can be used in the profession.

CONTEXT

The Guides for Equitable Practice emerged from a series of AIA resolutions responding to growing awareness of equity issues in the architecture profession and the need for greater understanding of ways to improve the architecture community.

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 called for 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) 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 the list of topics for the guides. In 2018, the AIA issued a request for proposals to develop the guides and selected the research team based at the University of Minnesota.

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 seek to practice equitably while also harnessing the power of inclusive decision-making in their work. Translating these goals into reality can be difficult. Therefore, the guides intend to 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. We understand that many of the topics are complex and sometimes discussed in politically charged terms. While not ignoring public discourse, the premise of these guides is that there is nothing radical about fully valuing the contributions of people who have identities different from yours.

It was important to include in the guides both the individual level and the system level, since addressing one without awareness of the other is ineffective in the long run. To fully utilize the guides, 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 for influencing change may become apparent.

AUDIENCE

The guides are intended for individuals, firms, and other organizations within the architectural community. Though the antecedents to these guides (particularly, AIA, Parlour Guides and Equity by Design's research) were primarily gender focused, as is much of current research, the AIA's intent was that the guides should define differences broadly. Therefore, the guides include the range of identities in the profession and address the importance of acknowledging, valuing, and benefitting 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. 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. For clarity, we specify where research findings are gender-specific or otherwise, and in order to start recognizing and naming differences, we use the contributors' preferred pronouns and identities in quotes and stories.

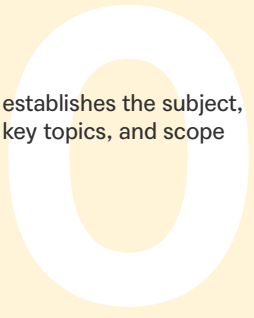
Each guide opens with an introduction that defines core topics and helps develop readers' shared understanding of them. It then presents information through several lenses to connect to readers at different stages of their careers and levels of development around these topics. Recognizing that people 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 you and your organizational culture forward in ways that support your values-, mission-, and vision-driven efforts.

METHODOLOGY

In regular dialogue with an 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 the Women's Leadership Edge, 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 twenty-four people in-depth—half invited by AIA and half by the research team. 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.

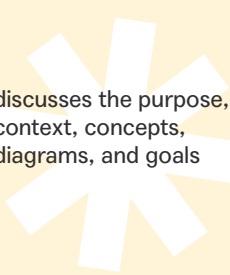
Drafts were reviewed by the AIA staff, legal counsel, members of the EQFA committee, interviewees, focus groups from a component chapter (AIA Minnesota) and University of Minnesota School of Architecture students, and experts in diversity, equity, and inclusion research and training. Feedback from reviewers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

GUIDE COVER



establishes the subject, key topics, and scope

WHAT IS IT?



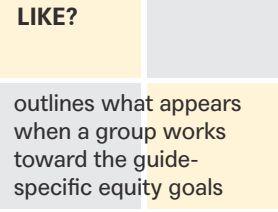
discusses the purpose, context, concepts, diagrams, and goals

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



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

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?




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

COMPLIANCE



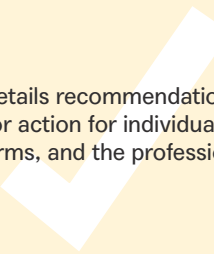
introduces legal and regulatory information

ASSESS




offers questions to structure dialogue at different stages of development

ACT



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

CONSIDER



shares perspectives on common issues with questions to frame and prompt discussion

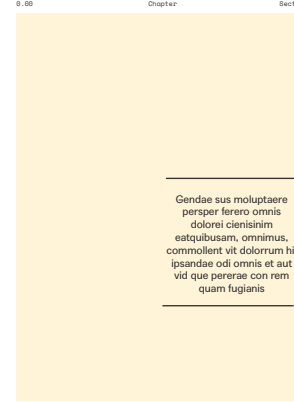
RESOURCES

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

NOTES

provides comments and citations for research sources

0.00 Chapter Section



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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.

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 can help create a level playing field for all by setting goals and taking actions that undo the structures and systems that place higher value on some people than others and that currently make the field inaccessible, uneven, and barrier filled. Diversity, inclusion, and equity are the three primary drivers that, together, can improve the field for all. 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.

DIVERSITY

In the context of the workplace, diversity is neither inherently positive nor negative; it means that there is a mix of kinds of people present. It often implies that differences are categorized through identity markers, such as gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, age, and disability, which have been a factor in a group's marginalization, and have thus placed them in legally protected classes. People, of course, are much more than mere categories, and there are many types of characteristics that could make a difference in the workplace. Yet it is likely that a group of people with the same identity markers will be limited in the perspectives they can bring to finding creative solutions and how well they can work with and serve others outside their group. On the other hand, if a diverse group of employees has not learned how to use their differences and mutually adapt their thinking and behavior to reach shared goals, then the "value" or benefits of their diversity will be difficult to attain.

INCLUSION

Inclusion in the workplace means creating an environment in which everyone is welcomed, respected, supported, and valued. 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. 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, putting stress on those individuals and limiting 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, there will also be increased stress possibly leading to diminished 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.

“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

EQUITY

Equity means a condition is level and impartial. Building equity in the workplace involves acknowledging that many aspects of our society are built on an uneven playing field and in recognizing the inherent power differentials that have resulted in disparate treatment based on identity. A variety of solutions help identify and dismantle barriers to inclusion for people with different identities—there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Working to guarantee equitable treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement means identifying and eliminating barriers that have disadvantaged some groups. Addressing the question of whether to focus on achieving *equity* or *equality* for people in the profession, the guides support the view that equity is necessary to replace our current imperfect frameworks, and equality is an ideal condition, not yet achieved, that drives our goals and efforts.

“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, business, ethical, 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 where many viewpoints are present.

Moral Case • Diversity, equity, and inclusion are often embraced as “doing the right thing.” 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 can lead to biased decisions. 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”? Moral reasoning is difficult to extricate from social norms, and therefore, sometimes even well-intentioned actions could lead to an inequitable practice.

Business Case • The business case for diversity is a powerful driver for firm leaders. First, because diversity is becoming more prevalent both within and outside of the workplace, managing diversity poorly can be costly. Second, businesses with personnel who reflect the diversity of their market will have a competitive advantage in both marketing and quality of client service. 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 can open the door to behavior that favors profit over people and may signal to employees that diversity efforts are disingenuous.⁴ Therefore, the business case for diversity depends on a well-rounded and well-managed inclusive and equitable practice. Employees, managers, and leaders need the awareness, abilities, and support to achieve it, underpinned by an agreement among senior leaders that the benefits are worth the investment.

“When you employ or manage people, you have an inherent power over those people. When people are looking to you for their livelihood and what certain activities mean to them, 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

Ethical Case • The ethical case for diversity is built on the premise that most people value fairness and justice: Everyone should have the opportunity to enter and work within the profession. Those practicing in architecture should have access to the same opportunities and be valued for the quality of their work. The profession should serve society fairly. Employees who value fairness care about the commitment of their organization to employees, the greater community, and the environment, and when people perceive unfairness or discrimination, their loyalty to an organization diminishes. 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 that organization and contribute to achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.⁵

Professional Case · The professional case rests on the belief that we should and can make our profession better through diversity, equity, and inclusion. If we do, we can expect a larger and more diverse pool of talent and can support more creativity within 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 those practices feel difficult to tackle as individuals or even as a profession. Even so, we do have the knowledge and power to take steps toward diversity, equity, and inclusion that bring immediate benefit for individuals and groups and which 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 all in this together!

- Understand what best motivates you to improve equitable practices in architecture.
 - Focus on self-awareness of your own cultural patterns and biases.
 - 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.
 - Develop goals for your career, and work with others to plan steps to reach them.
 - Pay attention to common barriers in the profession that might apply to you, and learn how to avoid, navigate, or reduce them.
 - Learn what it takes to contribute to a positive workplace culture.
 - Be an advocate for yourself and for others.
 - Commit to the prevention of harassment and discrimination in the workplace.
 - Know your rights and responsibilities as an individual and employer.
 - Define and share your organization's core mission and values.
 - Understand the dominant cultural patterns of your firm and whether they are hurting or helping your diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
 - Develop and communicate equitable policies, protocols, and practices.
 - Invest in and train managers to develop knowledge and skills to support diverse employees.
- Question, audit, and correct unfair practices.
 - Make development opportunities available to all employees.
 - Avoid making assumptions about what others are thinking, what they want, or what their motivations are—ask and listen!
 - Seek mentorship and sponsorship and provide them for everyone within, entering, and interested in the profession.
 - Actively reach out to other practitioners and groups to discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
 - Share stories, resources, and knowledge.

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. This is a key foundational text that remains relevant today.

Diversity in the Profession of Architecture – AIA (2016)

<http://aiad8.prod.acquia-sites.com/sites/default/files/2016-05/Diversity-DiversityinArchitecture.pdf>

Summary of a survey that examined diversity in architecture, including perceptions of representation, factors impacting representation, reasons people leave the field, and job satisfaction.

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>

Summary of findings from the most recent Equity by Design's Equity in Architecture Survey, focusing on career dynamics (factors that affect perceptions 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, 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 Matters – Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, and Sara Prince – McKinsey (2015)

<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/why%20diversity%20matters/diversity%20matters.ashx>

Business case draws connection between diversity, 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: Re-Examining 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

Catalyst

<https://worklifelaw.org/>

Researches many topics related to diversity, equity, 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.

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 pioneered 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 on business topics including equity, diversity, and inclusion from a variety of sources.

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 organizing women's peer groups, public awareness, and education.

Pew Research Center

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

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

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.

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. Available at <https://www.aia.org/resources/27246-recommendations-from-aia-equity-in-architec>.
3. Race Forward, Appendix to *Race Reporting Guide*, June 2015, https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/Race%20Reporting%20Guide%20by%20Race%20Forward_V1.1.pdf.
4. “Business-Case Arguments for Diversity and Diversity Programs and Their Impact in the Workplace,” Military Leadership Diversity Commission, February, 2010, <http://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Resources/Commission/docs/Issue%20Papers/Paper%2014%20-%20Business%20Case%20Arguments%20for%20Diversity%20and%20Programs.pdf>.
5. 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>.

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