

Engaging Community

As community needs encompass broad concerns, such as social justice and resiliency, architects will do well to learn, build trust, and adopt solutions created in partnership with those communities.

WHY IT MATTERS

Architects have a responsibility for making a positive impact on society. Equitable and inclusive community engagement builds trust between designers and community members, sustains communities, undoes past damage, and helps create functional, affordable, safe spaces. Emerging metrics link design with equity, health, and resilience, offering new ways to establish the value of architecture.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS MORE EQUITABLE WHEN...

- architects earn the trust of the community
- design teams demonstrate intercultural fluency and connect creatively with an array of community members, especially those with less power and privilege
- the project process and result fully engage the intended users from the start
- architects listen to the community's knowledge, vision, and ideas and then use their own expertise to incorporate them into the ultimate design and to correct past injustices

ACT

Engage with community members as partners

- Be active in your own community.
- View communities as cocreators.
- Understand varying communication styles, and use a variety of engagement methods to appeal to different people.
- Make your expertise intelligible through clear language and visuals.

Understand community needs

- Research the historical, cultural, political, and institutional contexts. Don't lean on community members to teach you what you can learn on your own.
- See the big picture of what has happened to communities and aim to remediate past injustice and harm.

- Discover the community's priorities; don't assume you know what is needed.

Improve community relations

- Establish relationships before discussing project specifics.
- Learn the workings and culture of partner organizations.
- Listen before designing.
- Value, promote, and reward community work by your firm members.

Speak out on matters of justice and equity

- Take concrete actions that will improve equity within the profession and also in the world.