

JUSTICE IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beyond equity, diversity, and inclusion is the farther-reaching goal of ensuring justice, not only fair treatment, equal social, political, and economic rights, and equitable opportunities and outcomes for all but also implementing systems and processes that reverse and make amends for long-standing injustices. In the creation of the built environment, justice can take the form of just processes (ones that involve people who have experienced harm) and just outcomes (spaces that are safe, welcoming, and worthy of the beings who inhabit them).

WHY IT MATTERS

People's perception of being treated fairly contributes to a feeling of well-being within a society; it helps ease conflict. At the same time, people have different ideas of what is fair. Clients and the public increasingly expect that places and spaces will support human safety, dignity, connection, community, prosperity and also that they will disrupt current injustices and help heal from past ones. Project designers have a host of opportunities for contributing to a just society, especially when they apply strategies that promote just outcomes.

WE ADVANCE JUSTICE WHEN WE DESIGN IN WAYS THAT...

→ Use human-centered, community-based, universal, sustainable, trauma-informed practices.

- Are intentional—for example, when we notice and identify how different stakeholders define what is “good.”
- Recognize that expertise comes in many forms.
- Conscientiously attempt to find common ground and reconcile client and community interests when they diverge.
- Share and disperse power.
- Attend to environmental, social, racial and ethnic, gender, and economic and financial justice.
- Thoughtfully consider the AIA Code of Ethics when asked to design spaces that are part of the criminal-justice system.
- Understand that merely complying with minimum legal requirements is not the same as achieving justice and that if we implement a regulation or policy in a biased manner the result may still be injustice.
- Carry out justice within our own practice.