



Membership Demographics Report 2021

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aia.org

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Letter from Lakisha Ann Woods, CAE

I am proud to present the 2021 AIA Membership Demographic Report.

AIA's more than 94,000 members—a near historic high—included architectural professionals, licensed professionals, individuals pursuing licensure, and those on a non-traditional path. In addition to AIA member demographic data, this report also includes the demographics of the Board of Directors, Strategic Council, and the national office staff.

The AIA community is thriving and remains dedicated to advancing the ideal that the built world should always promote and enhance the safety, equity, and dignity of everyone, everywhere.

Looking ahead, we will update our options to allow members to better describe race and ethnicity along with gender identity and expression. We ask that current and future members provide this information to ensure that we have the most accurate accounting of who we represent and trends in the field. That said, as in the past, the decision to self-report demographic information is at the sole discretion of the member. Some choose not to disclose this information, which we respect, but we hope everyone will choose to share their demographic information.

The 2021 AIA Membership Demographic Report, like other demographic reports in the industry, indicates that women and members of racial and/or ethnic groups remain underrepresented in AIA's total membership. However, the trend toward a more diverse profession continues. In fact, the data show that incoming cohorts are more gender, racially and or ethnically diverse than ever before.

If you have any comments on how we can improve the report, please reach out to memberservices@aia.org.



Lakisha Ann Woods, CAE
CEO/EVP, The American Institute of Architects

Background & overview

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is a professional association that advocates for the value of architecture on society and delivers resources to those working in design to do their best work. Our membership community represents more than 94,000 design professionals, from licensed architects to those pursuing architecture licensure to those on a nontraditional path in design.

The following report aggregates key demographic trends regarding AIA membership, Board of Directors, Strategic Council, and national staff. Please note that while AIA's membership is an extensive community of more than 94,000 architectural professionals, participation in AIA is not mandatory to practice, and not all AIA members are licensed in the United States. Therefore, any current and future reporting on the demographics of AIA members should not be construed as a census of the entire profession. Additionally, reporting demographic information to AIA is not a prerequisite for membership and is strictly voluntary, and some members choose not to disclose their race and/or ethnicity, gender identity and expression, or age. In some cases, nonreporting makes it challenging to fully determine AIA's member demographics.

Full definitions for our membership categories can be found in the appendix.

Beyond this report, members and others may be interested in numerous other data sources that report on the profession. Please refer to data resources provided by:

- National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc. (NAAB)
- National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in the U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Census Bureau in the U.S. Department of Commerce

Key findings from these sources are provided in this report as a benchmark for AIA's numbers and show the potential growth in the profession.

Key findings

While the reported diversity of AIA's membership increased during 2020, the long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on design professionals are still to be determined. Of particular interest is the impact the pandemic has had on individuals entering the field of architecture, both through accredited educational programs and nontraditional paths, as well as how different demographic groups were impacted by the downturn. For example, preliminary research on gender by the National Bureau of Economic Research finds that, unlike in prior recessions, women have been more impacted by the downturn due to the particular sectors in which women work and childcare responsibilities.ⁱ AIA will monitor any developing trends closely.

The U.S. Census Bureau tracks and projects the demographics of the United States. In a recent report, the bureau forecasts that 2030 will represent a turning point in U.S. demographics as Americans above the age of 65 will outnumber those below the age of 18, and immigration will be the main driver of population growth, leading to a more diverse society.ⁱⁱ

The profession of architecture will be influenced by changes in U.S. demographics in the coming decades. Reported statistics from the National Association of Architectural Accrediting Boards (NAAB) on graduates and from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) on newly licensed individuals show a more diverse pipeline into the profession.

AIA's membership reflects steady growth in the number of women and underrepresented racial and/or ethnic groups, though white men make up the majority of AIA's membership. Data clearly show that incoming cohorts of future architecture professionals are more gender and racially and/or ethnically diverse than the profession today.

Key findings

AIA member gender identity and expression

AIA's membership has become more gender diverse over time. This is attributed in part to several key factors.

- NAAB reports that women make up nearly half of enrolled students and graduates from NAAB-accredited architecture programs, indicating gender diversity in the pipeline to the profession.ⁱⁱⁱ
- NCARB reports that in 2020 women made up 42% of those completing the ARE and 44% of those completing AXP requirements, up from 35% and 39%, respectively, in 2012.^{iv}
- The trends in the profession are reflected in AIA's membership. The overall percentage of women members has grown by 8.6-points since 2012, to 25.7% in 2021. Across all member categories, 39% of first-time joining members were women in 2021.
- There is a higher share of women in the Associate membership category (41.7% in 2021) than in overall membership. Likewise, a consistently strong share of Associate members obtaining their licenses are women (40.1% in 2021).

AIA member race and/or ethnicity

AIA is committed to increasing equity and diversity within the profession and encouraging members to provide race and/or ethnicity data. It is important to note that incomplete member data on race and/or ethnicity as a result of under-reporting impacts our ability to show trends. In 2021, 17.1% of AIA members did not report a race and or an ethnicity. However, there are data points that reveal trends.

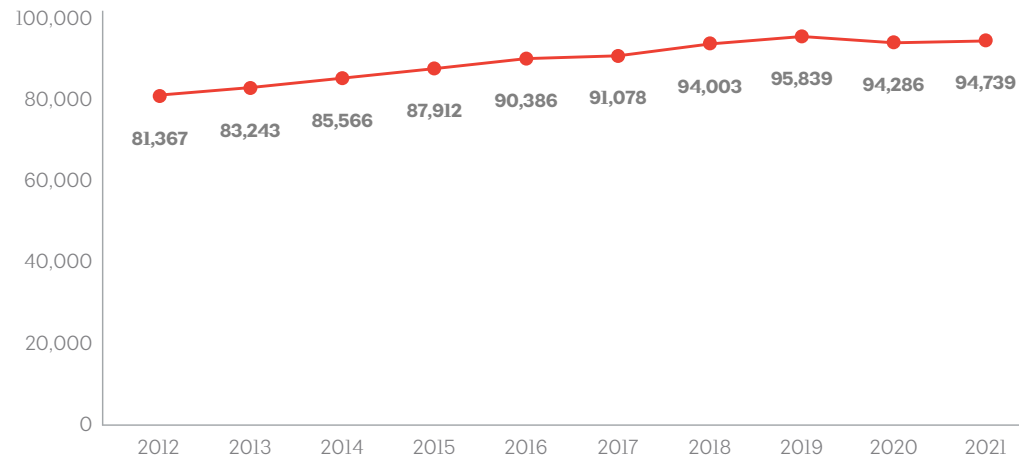
- In 2019, NAAB reported that 30.3% of its graduates were from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. The highest shares of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups were Hispanic/Latina/o and Asian at 14.3% and 8.5%, respectively.^v
- NCARB reports that 29% of people completing the ARE “identified as a person of color” in 2020. Asians made up the second largest proportion of those completing exams at 13.71%.^{vi}
- 17% of AIA members across all member categories identify as belonging to an underrepresented racial or ethnic group, while just under 66% were White/Caucasian.
- Within the Associate membership category, a greater number of members identify as underrepresented races and ethnicities than in the membership as a whole, growing 13.8-points since 2012.

Overall performance

Historical member performance

AIA’s overall membership increased each year between 2012 and 2019, from just over 81,000 in 2012 to over 95,000 in 2019. Membership decreased in 2020 due to the global pandemic and ensuing economic environment, its first decline since the 2008 recession and recovery. While it remained below the historical high, membership increased in 2021 over 2020 by 0.5%.

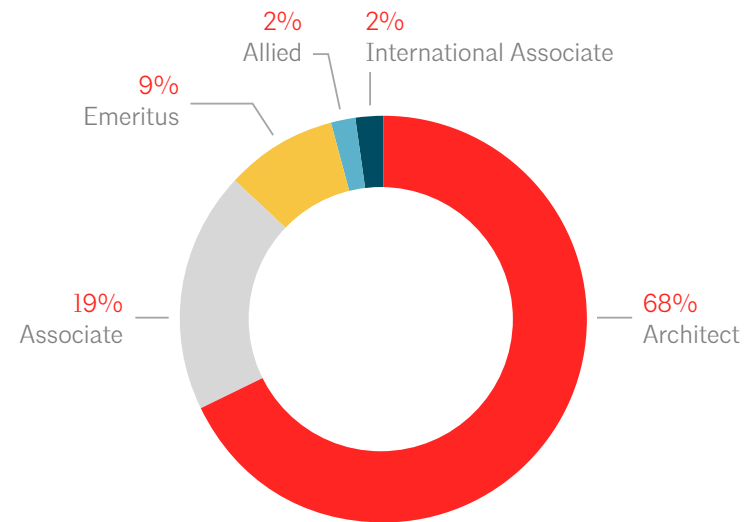
> OVERALL MEMBERSHIP TREND



2021 membership breakdown

Please see the definitions section for full definitions of our membership categories.

> MEMBERSHIP



PLEASE NOTE DUE TO ROUNDING PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ALWAYS TOTAL 100%. EMERITUS MEMBERS MAY BE EITHER FORMER ARCHITECT OR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

Gender identity & expression

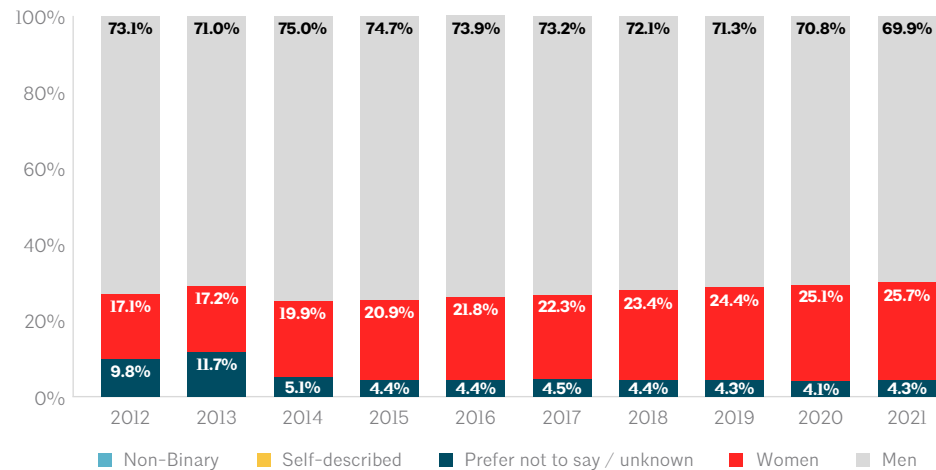
Gender: All members

Gender diversity within overall AIA membership has continued to grow, with the share of women increasing from 17.1% in 2012 to 25.7% in 2021. Please note that starting in 2018, a third option was made available to members to expand the binary options of “men” and “women.” In 2021 and moving forward, the options for members to describe their gender identity and expression will be female, male, non-binary, self-described, and prefer not to say.

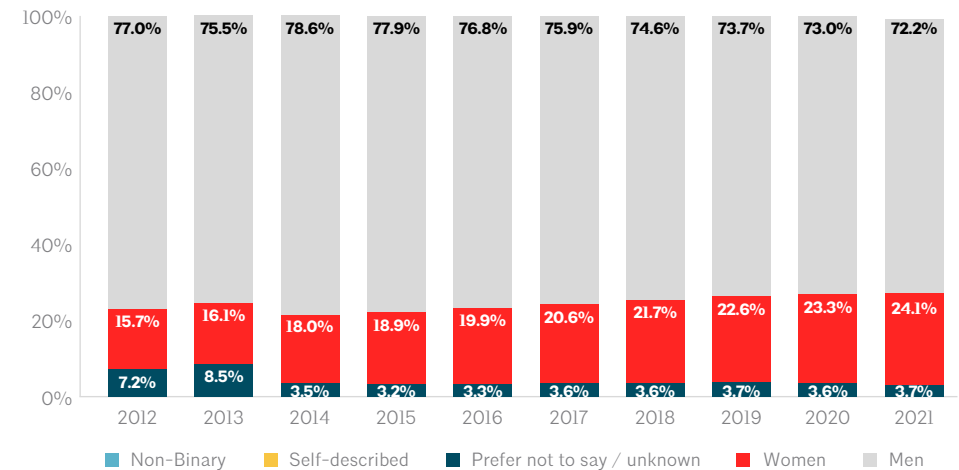
Gender: Architect members

Trends in gender diversity for Architect members are comparable to those in the overall membership, with the percentage of women increasing from 15.7% to 24.1% between 2012 and 2021.

> GENDER: ALL MEMBERS



> GENDER: ARCHITECT MEMBERS



PLEASE NOTE THAT STARTING IN 2018 MEMBERS WERE GIVEN THE OPTION "OTHER." IN 2021 OPTIONS WERE FURTHER EXPANDED TO INCLUDE 'NON-BINARY' AND 'SELF-DESCRIBED' INSTEAD OF 'OTHER'.

Gender identity & expression

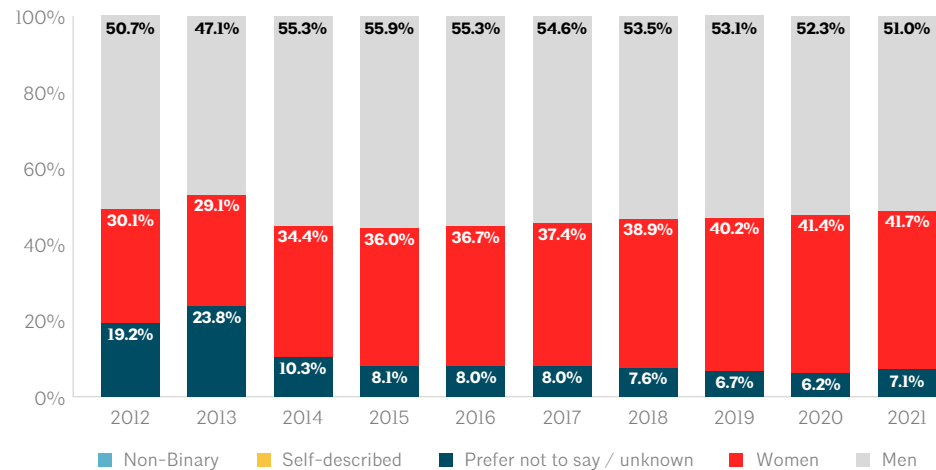
Gender: Associate members

Associate membership continues to be more gender diverse than overall membership. In 2021, 41.7% of Associates reported their gender as women—higher than the overall membership share of 25.7%.

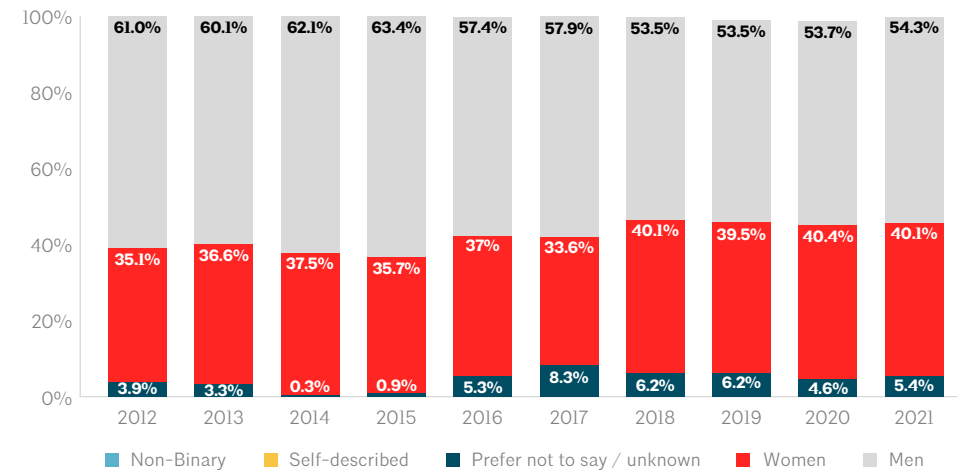
Gender: Associates obtaining licensure

The percentage of women Associate members obtaining their license is similarly high—40.1% in 2021. As a comparison, in 2020 NCARB reported that 42% of those who completed the ARE were women.^{vii}

> GENDER: ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



> GENDER: ASSOCIATES OBTAINING LICENSURE



PLEASE NOTE THAT STARTING IN 2018 MEMBERS WERE GIVEN THE OPTION "OTHER." IN 2021 OPTIONS WERE FURTHER EXPANDED TO INCLUDE 'NON-BINARY' AND 'SELF-DESCRIBED' INSTEAD OF 'OTHER'.

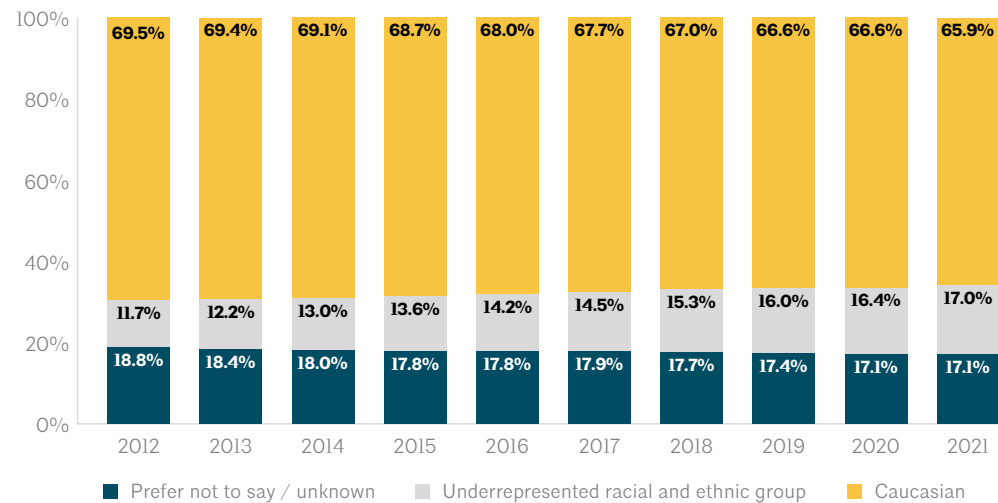
Race and/or ethnicity

Race and/or ethnicity

Unreported race and/or ethnicity data continues to make it difficult to measure the diversification of AIA membership over time. However, there are some trends worth noting.

- The percentage of reported underrepresented racial and ethnic groups grew 5.37-points between 2012 and 2021 to 17%.
- The underrepresented racial and ethnic groups are Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, Indigenous American, and Other Race/Ethnicity.

> RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY: ALL MEMBERS



Race and/or ethnicity

> RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY BY GENDER IDENTITY

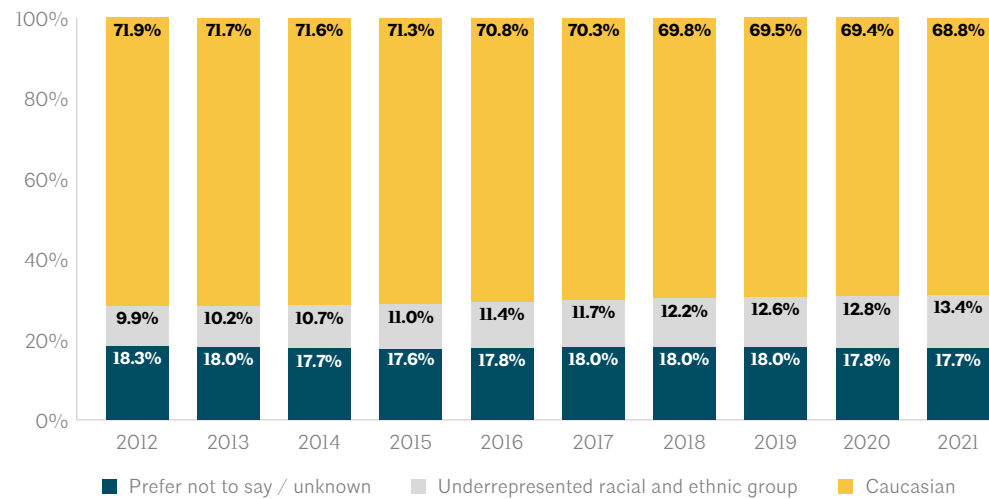
Race and/or Ethnicity	Women	Men	Prefer not to say	Self-Described	Non-Binary	Unknown	Total
Arabic/MENA	18	31	-	-	-	-	49
Asian	2,730	3,662	10	5	-	56	6,463
Black or African American	757	1,452	2	1	1	8	2,221
Caucasian	14,617	47,279	29	10	3	474	62,412
Hispanic or Latina/o	1,835	3,402	6	1	2	46	5,292
Indigenous American	122	292	-	-	-	5	419
Unknown	3,145	7,999	99	1	-	3,057	14,301
Other Race/Ethnicity	657	1,014	5	2	-	22	1,700
Prefer not to say	492	1,117	255	5	-	13	1,882
Total	24,373	66,248	406	25	6	3,681	94,739

Race and/or ethnicity

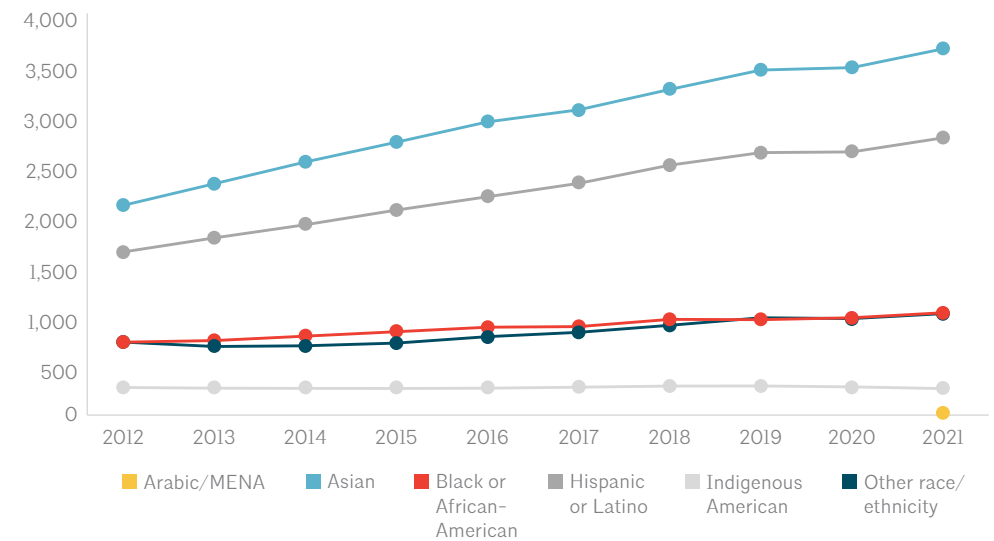
Race and/or Ethnicity: Architect members

The trends seen in underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in overall membership have been reflected in Architect demographics since 2012, with growth among Asian and Hispanic or Latina/o members.

> RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY: ARCHITECT MEMBERS



> RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY: ARCHITECT MEMBERS



Race and/or ethnicity

> RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY: NON-EMERITUS ARCHITECT MEMBERS

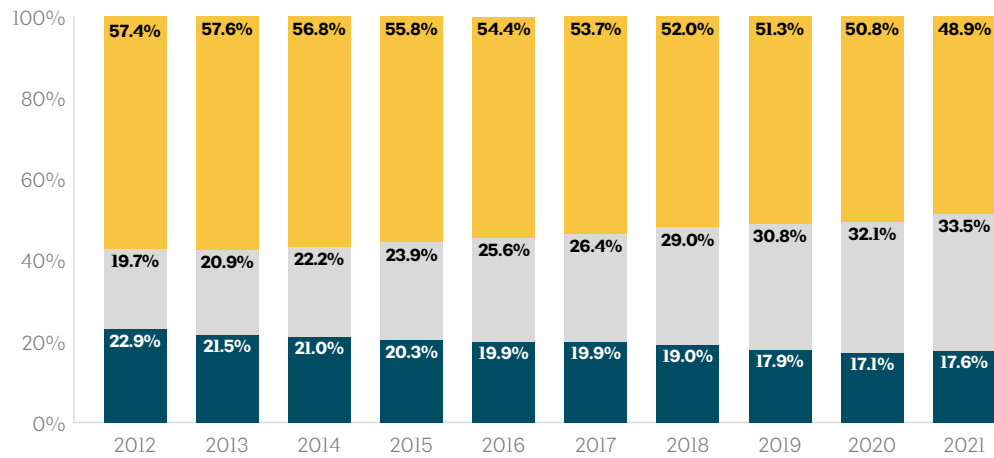
Race and/or Ethnicity	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Arabic/MENA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Asian	2,088	2,303	2,520	2,717	2,919	3,039	3,242	3,435	3,459	3,646
Black or African American	726	742	786	830	875	881	953	950	969	1,019
Hispanic/Latino	1,624	1,764	1,895	2,041	2,174	2,307	2,488	2,613	2,620	2,760
Indigenous American	275	268	266	265	268	278	289	290	281	264
Prefer not to say	-	-	117	389	540	673	829	977	1,037	1,129
Other Race/Ethnicity	727	683	690	717	781	824	894	969	961	1,010
Unknown	10,066	10,147	10,061	10,103	10,441	10,605	10,834	10,828	10,507	10,382
Caucasian	39,585	40,362	41,269	42,477	43,562	44,148	45,162	45,666	44,896	44,645
Total	55,091	56,269	57,604	59,539	61,560	62,755	64,691	65,728	64,730	64,855

Race and/or ethnicity

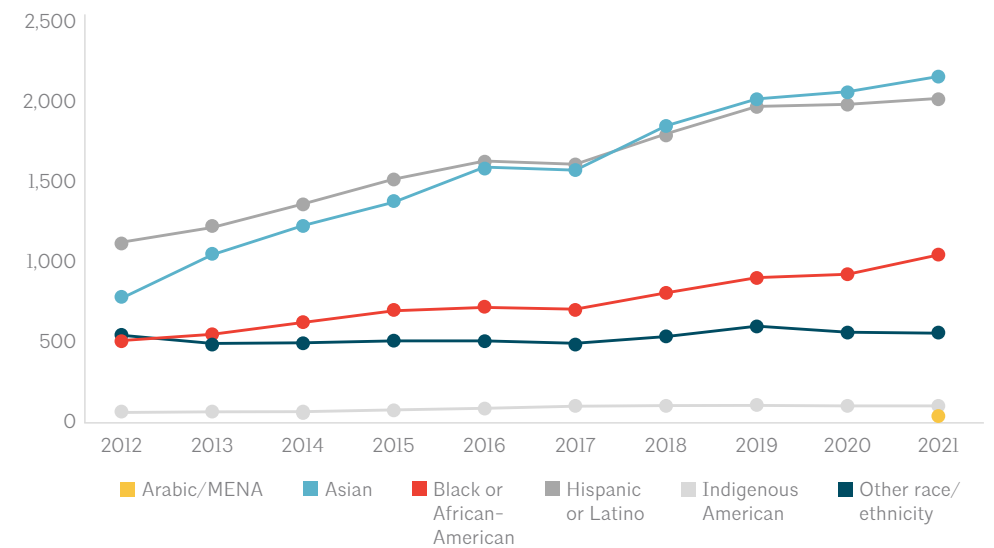
Race and/or Ethnicity: Associate members

Associate membership continues to be more racially and/or ethnically diverse than AIA's overall membership. The reported percentage of members from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in the Associate category has grown from 19.7% in 2012 to 33.5% in 2021, a 13.8-point increase for this period. Associates are, on average, younger and newer to the profession, so they should drive future demographic change of licensed architects.

> RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY: ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



> RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY: ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



Race and/or ethnicity

> RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY: NON-EMERITUS ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

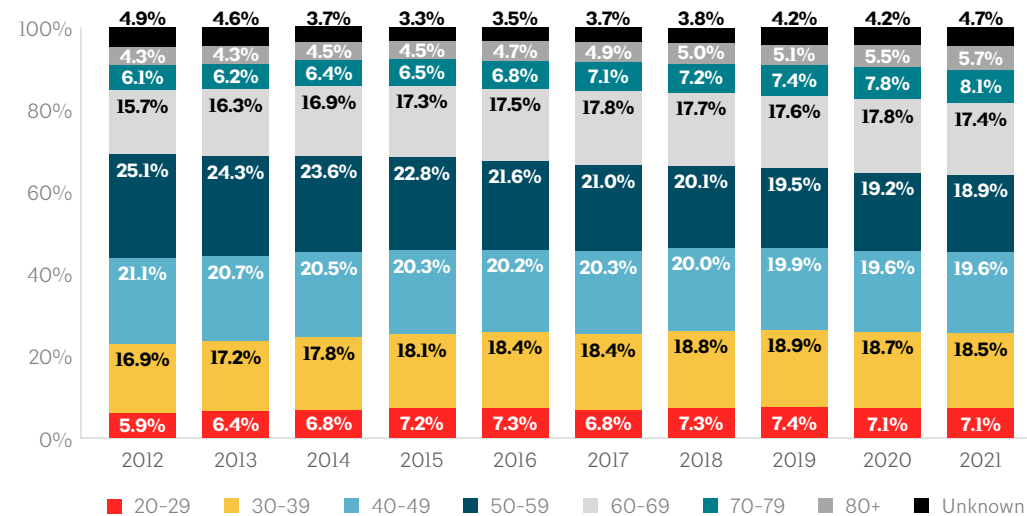
Race and/or Ethnicity	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Arabic/MENA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
Asian	778	1,050	1,232	1,378	1,597	1,578	1,855	2,023	2,068	2,163
Black or African American	514	553	627	700	721	710	812	907	928	1,049
Hispanic/Latino	1,128	1,220	1,367	1,522	1,635	1,615	1,805	1,976	1,989	2,026
Indigenous American	65	69	70	81	91	104	108	109	106	106
Prefer not to say	-	-	59	215	318	370	493	594	605	595
Other Race/Ethnicity	547	496	500	512	512	497	539	604	566	560
Unknown	3,515	3,471	3,528	3,341	3,226	3,029	2,866	2,662	2,414	2,521
Caucasian	8,808	9,317	9,711	9,791	9,676	9,148	9,192	9,364	8,958	8,661
Total	15,355	16,176	17,094	17,540	17,776	17,051	17,670	18,239	17,634	17,715

Age

Age Grouping

The median age of members remains stable; however, there is growth among older and younger cohorts. In 2020, the median age of members was 51, about where it has been since 2012 (51). However, the percentage of members above the age of 60 has increased by 5.1 points since 2012, while those aged 20–39 has increased by 2.7 points. The percentage of members in the 40–59 age range, which contains our current median, has shrunk by 7.7 points since 2012.

> AGE: ALL MEMBERS



AIA leadership

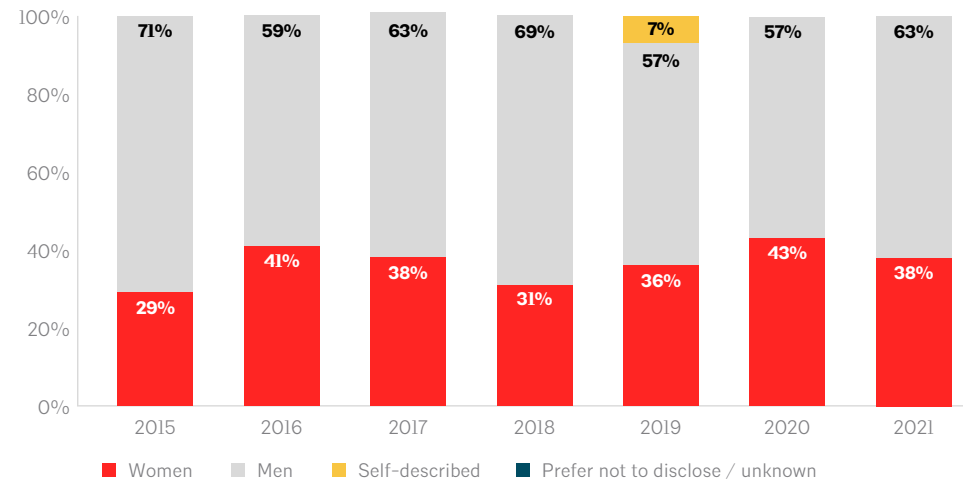
AIA Board of Directors

The AIA Board of Directors' responsibilities include providing leadership to inspire the membership through the careful establishment of broad organizational values and perspectives. It approves AIA's strategic and operating plans as well as the annual operating budget.

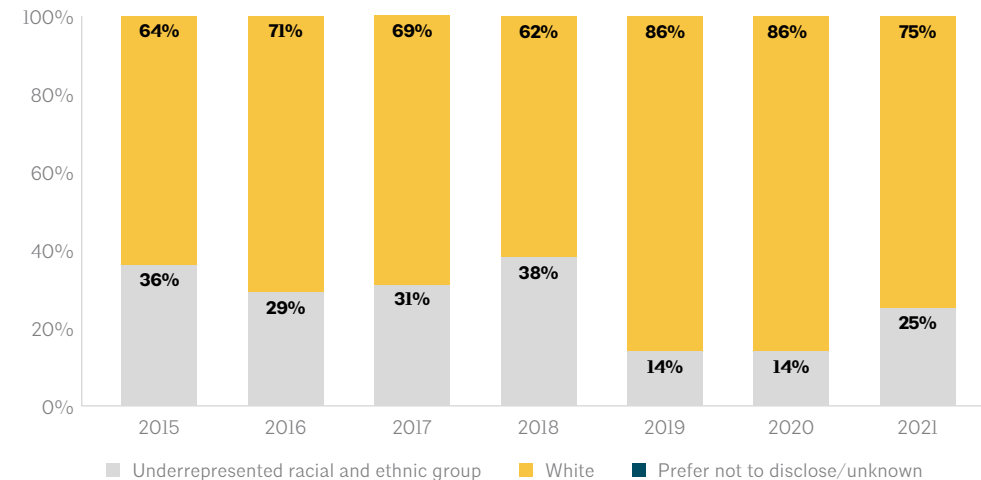
The board is composed of the officers (president, first vice president, secretary, and treasurer); six at-large directors; and representatives from the Council of Architectural Component Executives (CACE), the National Associates Committee, and the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS). The president may appoint up to two additional directors for one-year terms. The EVP/chief executive officer is also a member, ex officio.

Note: In 2015, when this data collection started, the Institute's governance was restructured (the board size was reduced and the Strategic Council was created). The board's composition has varied over the years; in 2021, there were 16 members.

> LEADERSHIP: BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY GENDER



> LEADERSHIP: BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY



AIA leadership

AIA Strategic Council

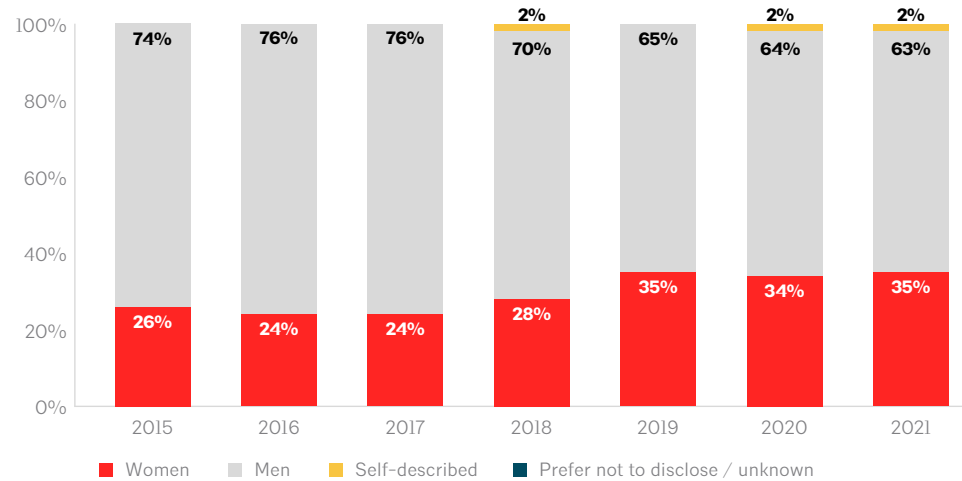
The Strategic Council is charged with advancing the profession of architecture by informing the board and other AIA bodies of important professional issues and opportunities.

It is composed of the officers (president, first vice president, secretary, and treasurer), the immediate past president, and the EVP/chief executive officer, ex officio. The Institute’s 19 regions are represented, and up to 10 at-large representatives are elected by the council. The council also includes representatives from CACE, the National Associates Committee, and AIAS.

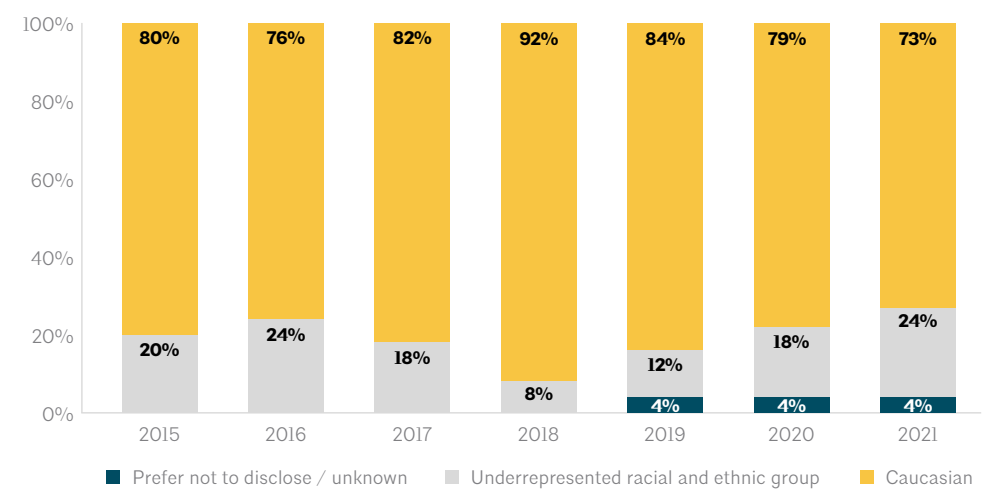
In 2021, there were 51 members of the Strategic Council.

A full overview of the AIA’s governance structure can be found in its bylaws.

> LEADERSHIP: STRATEGIC COUNCIL BY GENDER



> LEADERSHIP: STRATEGIC COUNCIL BY RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY

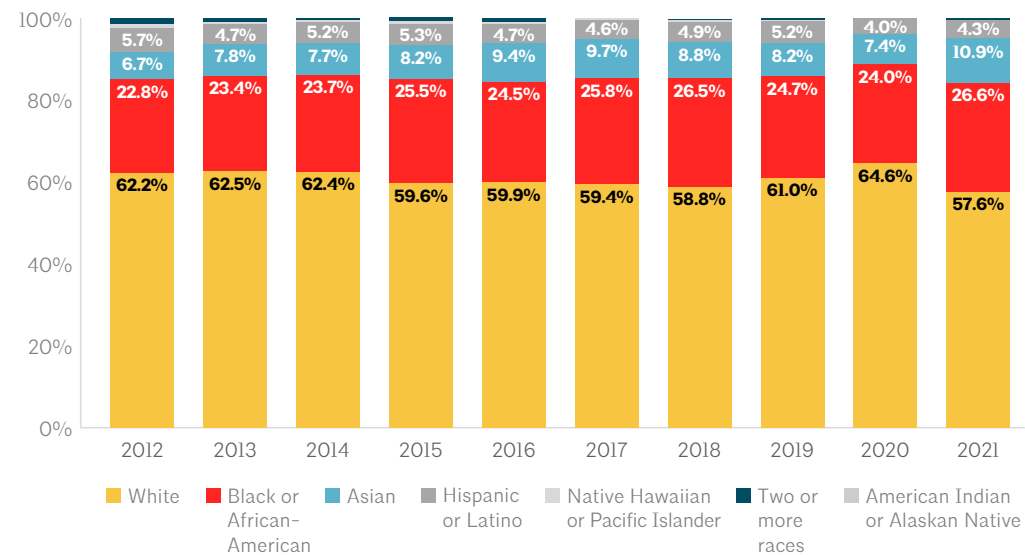


AIA national employees

AIA national employees

There are 184 employees working in or for the AIA national office, located in Washington, DC, as of 2020. They work in a diverse set of areas to advocate on behalf of the profession of architecture, providing research on trends in the profession and administering programming to more than 94,000 professional members. Note that these demographics do not include the employees of AIA's 200+ components across the U.S. and world; these data cover only those employed in the national office. (This is how the data was collected at the time.)

> NATIONAL STAFF: RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY



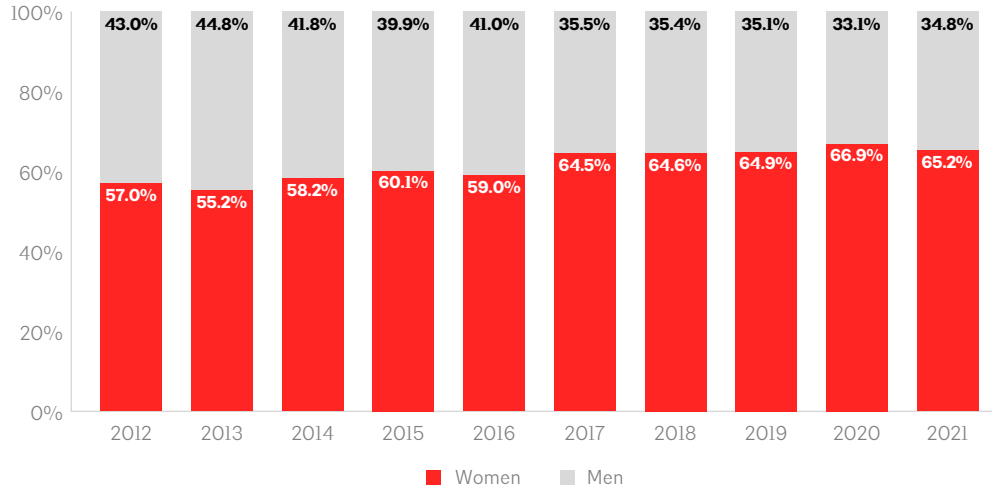
AIA national employees

> NATIONAL STAFF: RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY

Race and/or Ethnicity	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
White	120	120	121	124	127	129	133	141	113	106
Black or African American	44	45	46	53	52	56	60	57	42	49
Asian	13	15	15	17	20	21	20	19	13	20
Hispanic/Latino	11	9	10	11	10	10	11	12	7	8
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Two or More Races	3	2	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	1
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	193	192	194	208	212	217	226	231	175	184

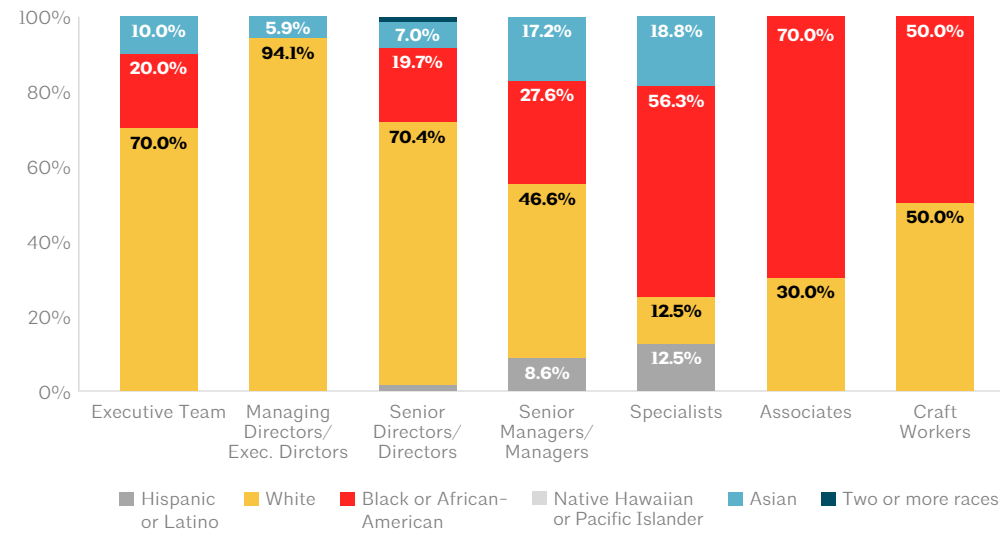
AIA national employees

> NATIONAL STAFF: GENDER

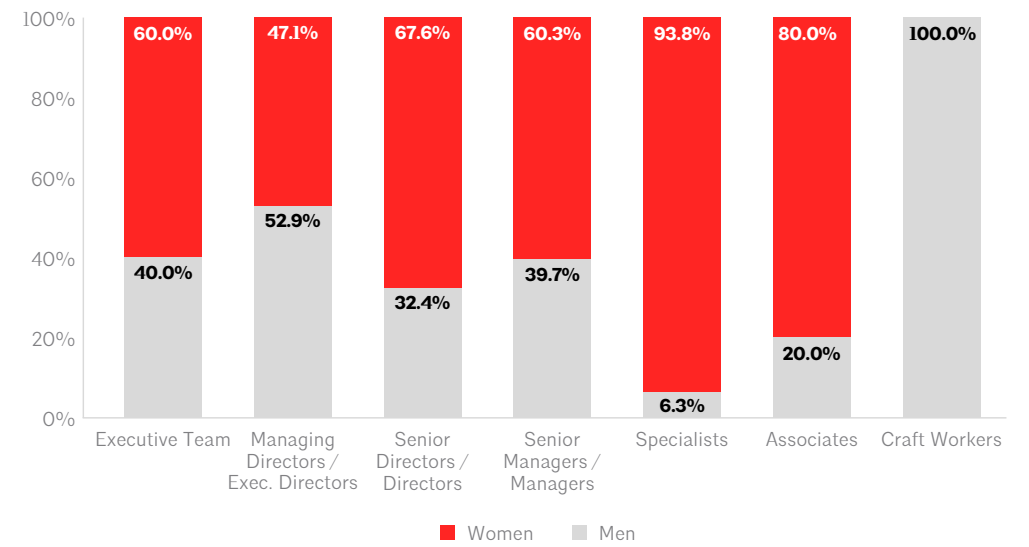


AIA national employees

> NATIONAL STAFF: RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY BY TITLE



> NATIONAL STAFF: GENDER BY TITLE



Appendix

Definitions

For the purposes of this report, overall membership is defined as the member types: Architect, Associate, International Associate, Emeritus, and Allied. Unless otherwise stated, the Architect category includes licensed architects and Fellows, while Emeritus members are treated separately. Unless otherwise stated, Associate and International Associate members are treated separately. No Honorary or Local Affiliate members were included in this analysis. National Allied members are not shown as a unique segment in this report because of their low prevalence within membership. Their demographics are included in the overall membership totals.

Architect: Individuals who are currently entitled under law to practice architecture and use the title architect in any state of the United States are eligible to be Architect members. This includes AIA Fellows.

Associate (non-international): Individuals without architectural licenses from a U.S. authority who meet any of the following requirements:

1. Those who are eligible by education or experience and are employed, enrolled, or participating in circumstances recognized by licensing authorities as constituting credit toward architectural licensure.
2. Those who are employed under the supervision of an architect in a professional or technical capacity directly related to the practice of architecture.
3. Those who have professional degrees in architecture.

4. Those who are faculty members in university programs in architecture and who are actively involved in research, administration, or the teaching of architecture.

International Associates: Individuals without architectural licenses from a U.S. licensing authority who have an architectural license or equivalent from a non-U.S. licensing authority are eligible to be International Associates. Such persons may be residents within or outside the U.S.

Emeritus: Architect and Associate members who have been in good standing in AIA who have attained the age of 70, are retired or so incapacitated that they can no longer work, and have either:

1. 5 consecutive years of membership, or
2. 25 cumulative years of membership with the three most recent years consecutively in good standing.

The AIA secretary may waive the age and period requirements on a case-by-case basis.

Race and ethnicity: According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and are not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the categories for race include racial and national origin or sociocultural groups. People may choose to report more than one race to indicate their racial mixture, such as “American Indian” and “white.” People who identify their ethnicity as Hispanic, Latina/o, or Spanish may be of any race.

Underrepresented racial and/or ethnic groups

Note that AIA is working on restructuring the options for members to report their race and/or ethnicity. The first of this restructuring took place for the 2021 report.

These groups include Arabic/MENA, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, Indigenous American, and Other Race/Ethnicity.

Methodology & references

All data and visuals were created from historical year-end member rosters maintained by AIA unless otherwise noted. AIA data includes reported age, gender expression and identity, and race and ethnicity information.

Associate status changes are determined based on whether a member was an Associate one year and an Architect the next.

NCARB’s 2021 report describes 2020 data. NAAB’s 2019 report describes 2019 data. At the time of publication, NAAB’s 2020 report was not available, so 2019 numbers were used for comparison.

Important sources

National Council of Architectural Registration Boards [ncarb.org](https://www.ncarb.org)

National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, *2021 NCARB by the Numbers*. [ncarb.org/nbtn2021](https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2021)

National Architectural Accrediting Board. [naab.org](https://www.naab.org)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics. [bls.gov](https://www.bls.gov)

i. ABI December 2021: Business conditions at large architecture firms end the year on a strong note <https://www.aia.org/pages/6469775-abi-december-2021-business-conditions-at-a>

ii. Demographic Turning Points for the United States: Population Projections for 2020 to 2060 [census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1144.html](https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1144.html)

iii. 2019 Annual Report on Architecture Education [naab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019_NAAB-Annual-Report.pdf](https://www.naab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019_NAAB-Annual-Report.pdf)

iv. Demographics: AXP and ARE | National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, *2021 NCARB by the Numbers* [ncarb.org/nbtn2021/demographics-axp-are](https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2021/demographics-axp-are)

v. 2019 Annual Report on Architecture Education [naab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019_NAAB-Annual-Report.pdf](https://www.naab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019_NAAB-Annual-Report.pdf)

The race/ethnicity categories included in the NAAB report are white, Asian, two or more races, nonresident alien, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

vi. Demographics: AXP and ARE | National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, *2021 NCARB by the Numbers* [ncarb.org/nbtn2021/demographics-axp-are](https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2021/demographics-axp-are)

vii. Demographics: AXP and ARE | National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, *2021 NCARB by the Numbers* [ncarb.org/nbtn2021/demographics-axp-are](https://www.ncarb.org/nbtn2021/demographics-axp-are)

AIA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Questions? memberservices@aia.org



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