



Women in architecture, design, and the allied building industries are one the most influential groups in these professions. Yet when looking at leadership roles in these industries, we still ask: Where are they?

Women's Leadership Summit, founded by AIA, is a premier event that brings together the industry's largest network of diverse women who are breaking down barriers, making themselves visible, and manifesting the careers they want—while making a difference in the world.

Convening is important, but what happens at WLS is unique.

- **WLS connects you with a diverse community that wants to support you.**
- **WLS shares pathbreaking ideas to tackle challenges, uncover potential, and lead change.**
- **WLS celebrates women leaders at every career stage, empowering all of us to change the future.**

The entire event focuses on networking, leadership training, business development, gender equity, and personal empowerment. It's all powered by the AIA community—the largest, most influential network of architecture professionals and allies creating a better world through architecture, relationships, collaboration, opportunities, and belonging.

The Call for Proposals helps AIA source education sessions that are innovative, fresh, and relevant. We invite you to submit your proposal for one or more of the session opportunities. Applications are currently being accepted [online](#). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at womeninarch@aia.org.

What makes a good proposal?

Invest in the next generation by offering tangible takeaways focused on leadership in practice, organizational culture, and healthy workplaces. Inspire peers across the aisle to align on equity in design and civic engagement in the social world. Your session proposal should be specific, demonstrate impact, and provide active, engaging, and valuable learning opportunities. AIA is looking for submissions with content that attendees can't get elsewhere, and sessions that are valuable for various levels of knowledge and career levels.

A strong proposal will demonstrate one or more of the following:

1. Unique approaches to thriving and succeeding as a woman professional.

2. Creativity and solutions around these priority themes:
 - **Professional Development:** Share key formulas and skills for individual success that every woman will need in her career. Consider emerging trends for professionals that they need to tackle complex problems to lead in a rapidly changing world and universal leadership skills that are critical regardless of career path. Sessions submitted in this category should be in a workshop format, either 1.5- or 3-hour options. Workshops should be designed for 50 attendees.
 - **Business and Organizational Systems:** More women than ever before are leading in business and are in a unique position to transform organizational systems into the future. The pandemic ushered in a new wave of entrepreneurs – many of whom are female—who envisioned a business that met their unique needs. These sessions should explore the intersection of operations management, employee satisfaction, and business prosperity. Sessions submitted in this category should be in a workshop format, either 1.5- or 3-hour options. Workshops should be designed for 50 attendees.
 - **Equity x Workplace:** To advance generational, gender, and racial/ethnic equity in the building industry, we must first start with addressing the greatest barriers and obstacles in the workplace that prevent individuals from achieving success. Research shows that greater diversity yields greater business prosperity. And as we broaden the tent in our places of business, we must simultaneously ensure that we can retain good talent—and that means improving workplace culture, eradicating harassment and bias, improving pipelines into leadership, and more. Sessions in this category should be in a presentation-style format. These sessions will have 150-200 attendees.
 - **Equity x Built Environment:** The built world reflects our deepest beliefs, culture, history, and future as a society. How we design for and with people, and how we invest in the built environment, has a direct impact on our communities. Women have long played a pivotal role in designing, engineering, and building the world around us with a human-centered approach and are leading in the climate action movement. Today’s project teams (made up of architects, designers, landscape architects, engineers, planners, and contractors) are also increasingly female. Share inspiring stories about project work, community engagement, climate action, and the built environment that highlight women doing and leading good work. Sessions in this category should be in a presentation-style format and should be HSW eligible. These sessions will have 150-200 attendees.
 - **Equity x Society:** Many of the challenges women face are widespread, such as women’s health issues, gender wage gap, student loan debt, caretaking, never-ending housework, and more. Oftentimes, these problems can’t be checked at the door when you go to work; and, for many of our most at-risk employees these challenges, coupled with unrealistic workloads, can push people out of the workforce. How may we start thinking of ourselves as citizens of the world and our collective responsibility to be advocates for better policies? How can we tap into ally networks to achieve greater results? What role do businesses have in addressing these issues or what impact do these issues have on our businesses? Sessions in this category should be in a presentation-style format. These sessions will have 150-200 attendees.
3. Address which one of these target career stages your session is geared for. Please note that for WLS 2023, allied professionals (such as interior designers, engineers, construction managers, landscape architects) will also be in attendance.

- **Students and Early-Career Professionals:** Students are defined as individuals registered in a college or university setting and who do not yet have a degree. They can be undergraduate or graduate level. At this phase in their journey, they are still exploring their passions, considering various career paths, considering various licensure and certification opportunities, and learning the technical and soft skills they need to succeed. Early-career professionals have a college or university degree and have been in the workforce for 0–4 years.
- **Early Mid-Career Professionals:** At this phase in their careers, individuals have strong technical knowledge and skills needed to execute project work and support teams. They are narrowing in or have already determined their own direction and starting to articulate how their job should align with their passions. These individuals can be in management or non-management roles, licensed or unlicensed, design-track or non-design track. These individuals have been in the workforce for 5–9 years.
- **Late Mid-Career Professionals:** At this phase in their careers, they have mastered the technical aspects of their field, have been through the full life cycle of several design and construction projects, and have started to mentor and train their peers. These individuals may be looking to pivot their career, tackle workplace conflict head-on, and how to move into more advanced opportunities. These are individuals with 10–19 years of experience. They can be in management or non-management roles, licensed or unlicensed, design-track or non-design track.
- **Executive/Firm Owner:** These individuals are entrepreneurial in spirit and focus predominately on leadership, business, marketing, and operations-related issues, but still have a keen interest in the built environment. They are looking to achieve greater business prosperity. These individuals can be sole proprietors, small business owners, principles/directors who oversee a large studio or business segment or manage large firms. These are individuals with 20+ years of experience or people who are in firm-ownership/senior positions.
- **Bonus Segment:** Is there an audience track that you believe doesn't fit in the categories above? Submit for consideration.

TIPS

- Clear, concise, short titles work best.
- Be specific about educational takeaways and be sure that all elements of your proposal are well aligned with each other.
- No passive lectures or recycled presentation from other events. Highly participatory and engaging sessions are encouraged.
- Sessions may not promote specific products, vendors, or services.
- Check for grammar. Submission quality and attention to detail is critical and will be viewed as a reflection of your presentation/session capabilities. Note that if accepted, your submission text will be made public on the Summit agenda page.

REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals will be blind peer reviewed. Omit any identifying information (individual names and company) from the session title, descriptive text, and the supporting materials before submitting for the blind review process. We expect the submission process will be highly competitive and there are a limited number of sessions. As a result, many excellent proposals will not be accepted into the program. You will be notified if

not selected for this specific opportunity, however, we hope you will look for other venues for your session, at a local or national level.

TIMELINE

Note: Dates are subject to change.

| Task | Deadline |
|--|-------------------------|
| Call for Proposals opens | February 23, 2023 |
| Call for Proposals closes | April 7, 2023 |
| Peer review | April 11–April 24, 2023 |
| Decision | Late April |
| Speaker confirmations | May 5, 2023 |
| 2023 Women’s Leadership Summit dates in Boston | September 14–16, 2023 |

Evaluation Criteria:

Given their role in helping establish the program, the jury panel is comprised of professionals from the AIA Women’s Leadership Summit Advisory Group. The jury evaluates submissions and selects the sessions based on:

- demonstration that the session promotes the advancement of women and equity in business (30%)
- innovative concepts that are forward thinking and push the industry into the future (25%)
- strength of projected outcomes and useful solutions for attendees related to the theme (20%)
- learning objectives align with needs of the specified target audience (15%)
- evidence of EDI focused content; Check out the [Guides for Equitable Practice](#) for inspiration. (10%)

Submission process, Required fields:

SESSION TITLE

Clear, direct, short titles work best. (Max 10 words)

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Session descriptions will appear in the online schedule. Make yours interesting! It should sell attendees on what they’ll learn and what the value in attending is for them. (Max 300 words)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

What will attendees know or be able to do after attending your session? Provide a minimum of four learning objectives. To qualify for HSW (health, safety, welfare) credits, ensure that 3 out of 4 of the LO’s are HSW themed. Please use active verbs and words that are clear and measurable. Check out the [Continuing Education Standards](#) guide for more information. Watch this [training video](#) to learn more about HSW’s and drafting an HSW justification.

SESSION TYPE

60-minute presentation: A presentation that incorporates active learning and participation to facilitate learning.

- Length: 60 minutes
- Presenters: One or two
- Learning objectives: Must include at least four
- Themes: Equity x Workplace, Equity x Built Environment, Equity x Society

90-minute panel presentation: A diverse, lively, engaging, deeper dive, advanced-level presentation and discussion on a specific topic. Include details on how you'll structure the discussion/presentation and facilitate learning interactions.

- Length: 90 minutes
- Presenters/facilitators: Maximum of four (e.g., three panelists, one moderator)
- Learning objectives: Must include at least four
- Themes: Equity x Workplace, Equity x Built Environment, Equity x Society

90-minute workshop: In-person sessions emphasizing the development and practical application of knowledge and skills in a workshop-style environment that includes small group exercises. These are organized for audiences of up to 50.

- Length: 90 minutes
- Presenters/facilitators: Up to four
- Learning objectives: Must include at least four
- Themes: Professional Development, Business and Organizational Systems

90-minute workshops should describe the session activities; discuss the immediate application for participants when they return to the workplace; state what device(s) participants need to bring; and what you need to best facilitate the session (e.g., materials, technology, room set-up)

3-hour workshop: In-person sessions emphasizing the development and practical application of knowledge and skills in a workshop-style environment that includes small group exercises. These are organized for audiences of up to 50.

- Length: 3 hours
- Presenters/facilitators: Up to four
- Learning objectives: Must include at least four
- Themes: Professional Development, Business and Organizational Systems

3-hour workshops should describe the session activities; discuss the immediate application for participants when they return to the workplace; state what device(s) participants need to bring; and what you need to best facilitate the session (e.g., materials, technology, room set-up).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Describe the challenge or issue your session will address and how knowledge and/or application of your solution will benefit professionals and the building industry. Problem statements are not visible by the public. (Max 200 words)

THEME

Select the primary priority theme your proposed session will address.

TARGET CAREER LEVEL

Select the primary career level your proposed session is geared toward.

SESSION HISTORY

Let us know if this is a new session or if it has been delivered previously. We will prioritize those that have not been submitted previously.

POST-SUMMIT VALUE

Describe the impact your session will have on attendees' future as an individual citizen of the world, as a working professional, and/or as a leader in a business. Be sure this is well aligned with the learning outcomes.

EDI+B STATEMENT

AIA is committed to advancing gender and racial equity in the building industry. Share how your submission incorporates equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging vis-à-vis the presenter(s), learning objectives, and post-summit value. Consider how the audience, business, and the broader community may benefit from an equity-driven proposal. For more information on EDI+B, check out AIA's [Guides for Equitable Practice](#).

SPEAKERS

All session speakers must be secured at the time of your submission. Please do not use "TBD." Changes in speakers for accepted programs must be approved by WLS staff. Include company, job title, credentials, and demographic information per speaker. Speaker credentials are subject to revision to meet AIA brand style guidelines. Speaker fields will not be visible to reviewers.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

You may upload optional supporting materials (max 5 pages) to help the review committee better understand your proposed session including a sample presentation deck, white paper, supporting photos or images, etc. Do not use this upload area to submit additional speakers, CVs, or portfolios. Reviewers will see this field, do not reveal information about your business or speaker(s) identity.

Other important information:

SPEAKER BENEFITS

Confirmed WLS 2023 speakers are eligible to receive a 30% discount off their associated conference registration rate. All confirmed speakers are required to register at the discounted rate and attend WLS in Boston. AIA does not provide travel support or cover any expenses.

POLICIES

- If your proposal is accepted, it may be edited to fit within AIA style guidelines.
- AIA educational sessions are noncommercial. Sessions may not promote specific products, vendors, or services.
- If your proposal is accepted, you retain the copyright and all rights attendant to such copyright in your materials; however, you grant AIA permission to use your presentation and the materials you use in your presentation solely for purposes of making your presentation (in part or in whole or in different formats) available as part of AIA's conference materials and/or in other AIA educational offerings, consistent with AIA's mission and purpose. Sessions will not be recorded.