



The American  
Institute  
of Architects

# Diversity in the Profession of Architecture

Key Findings 2015



## Diversity in the Profession of Architecture Key Findings 2015

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## Acknowledgments

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Views of individual survey participants included in this report  
do not necessarily reflect those of the American Institute of Architects.

## Foreword



**Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA**  
2015 AIA President

Architecture ties our communities and each of us to the other. Architecture touches everything—health, wellness, education, history, culture, and beauty. It reflects who we are. To grow a robust and valued profession prepared to serve the needs of people young and old, rich and poor—all hungry for better communities, better infrastructure, and better lives—our profession requires talents as diverse as life itself.

In a world where technology seems to be the driving force in how we act and react, maintaining the human touch has never been more important. We need architects, creative men and women whose training is complemented by interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and judgment—skills only possible when we are in touch, deeply in touch with everyone who is and who should be served by design thinking. To be that kind of profession, we must be a mirror of the rich human tapestry we serve. Empathy and judgment are key.

Where do we stand today? Is our profession as diverse as the many lives we touch? When we gaze in the mirror, what is the reflection that looks back at us?

There is plenty of anecdotal information that suggests there has been progress in building a more diverse and inclusive profession. Yet, the information is just that—anecdotal.

We need data, not anecdotes. We need reliable, quantifiable, and verifiable data. Without it, we cannot gain a credible picture of how far we've come in the past 10 years. Why the past 10 years? Because it was nearly a decade ago that we last conducted a comprehensive survey under the leadership of the AIA's Diversity Committee and Demographic Data Task Force.

A lot has happened since then that demands a clear, unambiguous snapshot of who is entering the profession, who does and does not prosper, and why. In short, as we move forward to develop the programs and actions that have as their goal a more diverse, inclusive profession, we need an updated baseline. Without it, without a clear sense of the direction we must take to move forward, we risk our credibility as a profession relevant to the needs of all people.

Finding a reliable, quantifiable benchmark has to be the work of organizations whose training and reputation have been earned in the highly demanding field of data gathering and analysis. By retaining Shugoll Research, the AIA has partnered in this endeavor with the very best.

If we are successful in applying thoughtfully and with purpose the information surfaced by this study, perhaps a decade from now my successor will be writing a foreword to a glowing report describing a profession that welcomes everyone with the talent and passion to make a positive difference in their communities. We will be better for it, as well as those whose lives are touched by our work—which means everyone.



**Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA**  
2015 AIA President



## Foreword

### **Report organization**

Industry data show that, while improving, women and people of color are underrepresented in the field of architecture. In 2015, industry membership organizations worked together to create a study examining what architects believe is causing this underrepresentation, how significant they feel it is, and suggestions of what could be done to address it. The result was the study, Diversity in the Profession of Architecture.

Specific data from the study can be found in the Key Findings section; for ease of use, key findings are highlighted at the start of each section within the Key Findings. The Key Insights section pulls together the study's major implications and suggests actions architects might take in light of this information.

This report also offers the more personal and unique perspectives of Elizabeth Chu Richter, President of AIA. Her contribution highlights the significance of the study and helps shed additional light on issues of gender and racial underrepresentation within the profession.

AIA hopes that this report helps to further the conversation about issues of gender and racial representation among firms, individual architects, architecture schools, and allied associations.

## Introduction

### AIA Purpose Statement

The American Institute of Architects serves architects and their clients by promoting ethical, educational, and practice standards for the profession and by advocating for design excellence. With over 85,000 architect, associate, and allied members, as well as over 250 components or chapters in the United States and internationally, the AIA is dedicated to advancing the value of architecture and improving the quality of the built environment.

Recognizing that demographic data on all aspects of the profession were scarce, delegates at the AIA 2004 National Convention demonstrated overwhelming support for a resolution “To Strengthen the Demographic Diversity of the Design Profession.” This resolution—sponsored and supported by members of the Board of Directors, numerous components, and AIA committees and later ratified by the Board—provided a directive and funding for the original 2005 Diversity Survey.

In part as a result of that resolution, the AIA has acknowledged and embraced the value of human diversity and set out to:

- Develop a comprehensive data collection and analysis system to track the diversity of the profession over time.
- Provide funding for an audit of existing data within the profession; and
- Collaborate with related architectural organizations to research and collect data that will lead to a better understanding of who enters and succeeds in the profession and why; and who leaves the profession and why.

It has been nearly 10 years since members of the AIA Diversity Committee and Demographic Data Task Force conducted the comprehensive survey. Representatives of the Diversity and Inclusion Council and the newly formed Diversity Survey Working Group have greatly contributed to this project.

The AIA retained the services of Shugoll Research to conduct a demographic data audit and assist in data collection for purposes of determining the profile of the profession of architecture. A comprehensive analysis of the profession will provide much-needed data to assist in benchmarking the profession, to create the ability to generate and test assumptions about why the profession’s profile is what it is today, and to establish appropriate programs to foster diversity.

This diversity scan seeks to create a stable and repeatable data set that will allow for periodic assessments and improved trend analysis. The survey will examine basic demographics (quantitative) such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. The secondary focus is to investigate the careers of diverse architects (qualitative) beginning in college, how firm culture affects their career objectives, and what type of practices female architects and architects of color are working in.

As suggested in the 2005 AIA Diversity Survey, the 2015 version included collaboration with collateral organizations to create a more dynamic picture of both the path and practice of architecture. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) worked in collaboration with the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), the American Institute

of Architecture Students (AIAS), the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), and the Coalition of Community College Architecture Programs to form a broader scope of inquiry and analyze any gaps left in previous surveys.

This project contains three separate phases, some of which were carried out concurrently.

Phase I — Assess the quantity and relative value of information and knowledge residing within the AIA and its “collateral organizations,” related professional organizations, and other stakeholders that collect data on the profession or have an interest in such information. The main collateral organizations are the ACSA, NAAB, NOMA, AIAS, and NCARB.

Phase II — Collect, synthesize, and analyze the data from the sources identified and extend the research through targeted data collection methods to: 1) complete the information needs as identified in the Phase I gap analysis; and 2) further understand the demographics of the profession.

Phase III — Using the information from Phases I and II, the report will be provided to the Equity in Architecture Commission to develop recommendations for a comprehensive data collection and analysis system to track the diversity of the profession. The recommendations should reflect the resources of the various organizations and should be both as comprehensive and easy to implement as possible.

## Introduction

### **AIA Diversity Statement**

“Diversity is a cultural ethos embraced by AIA membership to foster inclusion, service, and a quality of life in celebration of all communities in our society. This is regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, physical ability, sexual orientation or identity, age, geography, intellectual or practice area.”

### **AIA Gateway Commitment, April 16, 2008**

We, the participants of the multiFORMity 2008 AIA Diversity Plenary, are committed to significantly improving the representation and management of diversity in architecture education and practice.

We believe this requires a cultural shift in the Institute, in our workplaces, and in ourselves.

We envision a continuing conversation to articulate a specific action agenda concerning:

- Using our members’ expertise to expand our diversity with creative career mentoring opportunities from kindergarten to retirement.
- Learning from other colleagues and related organizations that have successfully addressed diversity issues.
- Focusing on a series of coordinated action items and ideas to promote diversity, with comprehensive oversight.
- Asking our membership to initiate conversations and actions on the local level.
- Sharing and celebrating best practices in promoting diversity.
- Recruiting and retaining the best and brightest in our profession.
- Employing the appropriate resources to implement these initiatives.

Our purpose in setting forth this commitment is to develop a profession that reflects the diversity of the communities, users, and the clients we serve.

## Introduction

### Survey History and Progress in the Profession

On June 12, 2004, delegates at the American Institute of Architects National Convention approved Resolution 04-02: “To Strengthen the Demographic Diversity of the Design Profession.” This resolution called for the Institute to “collaborate with related architectural organizations and support research initiatives and ongoing data collection that will lead the profession to a better understanding of who enters and succeeds in the profession and why.”

In response to the resolution, working with AIA Diversity Committee and collateral organizations’ representatives, the AIA National developed an action plan to implement the research called for in the resolution. The results of that research—an industry benchmark—were presented in the October 18, 2005, final report.

Based on recommendations in 2005, progress has been made in several areas, from the collection of demographic data to engagement tactics:

- National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) conducts annual demographic surveys on race and gender within its annual report since 2008.
- Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) publishes demographic data on its “ACSA Atlas” web pages.

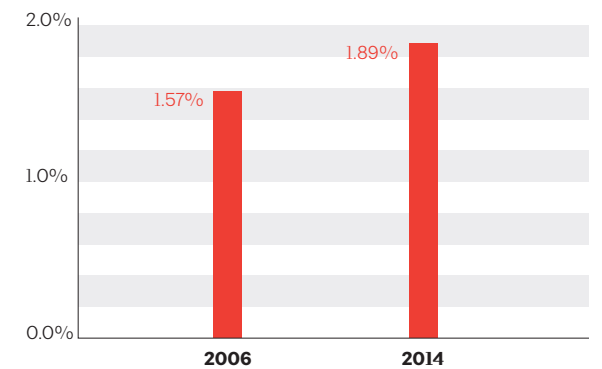
- National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) continues to track gender demographics in its understanding of architecture graduates on the path to licensure, and in 2014 identified race and ethnicity numbers in its “2015 NCARB by the Numbers” report.
- AIA continues to track membership ethnicity and gender demographics.
- AIA continues its support for National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) in its convention and K-12 Pipeline projects.
- The AIA Women’s Leadership Summit has grown from dozens in 2009 to an attendance of over 300 in 2015.

During the last 10 years, since the first 2005 survey, AIA demographics continue to show moderate but steady growth. In 2014, women architects and associates were nearly 22 percent of AIA membership.

At the end of 2014, licensed women architects were 18 percent of AIA membership, while women associate members make up 35 percent. The growth of members has realized an increase of over 30 percent in the past eight years.

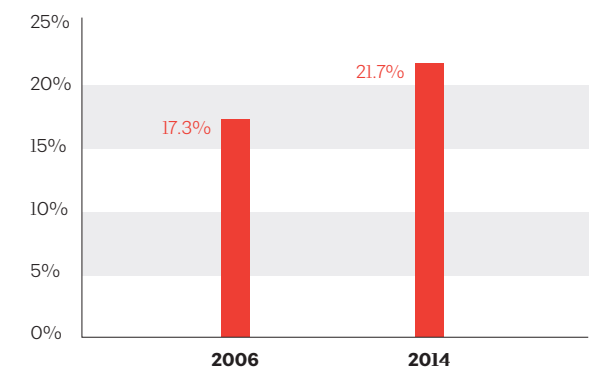
African American licensed and associate members have also increased during the same time period, although modestly.

African American AIA and Associate Members



Women AIA and Associate Members

33% growth in 8 years



# Key insights

**Insights regarding diversity  
in the field of architecture**

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**1. While there is agreement on the perceived underrepresentation of people of color in the industry, recognition of the underrepresentation of women is not as definitive.**

Women strongly believe that there is not gender equity in the industry, but men are divided on the issue—half believe women are underrepresented and half perceive them to be well represented.

Unlike with gender, both whites and people of color clearly agree that people of color are underrepresented in the industry.

Therefore, architects, industry leaders, and member associations could support a strategy for attracting people of color to the profession. As for bolstering representation of women architects in the industry, a strong commitment and strategy will be required to overcome possible resistance from those that don't believe it to be an issue.

**2. There are some attitudinal differences by gender and race on challenges faced by women and people of color in the industry.**

Both women and people of color say (more often than men and whites) that they are less likely to be promoted to more senior positions. Women, more than men, also feel that they are often encouraged to pursue interior design and other design fields rather than architecture. These are cultural issues in the field that might be addressed by industry leadership.

**3. Those who believe women are unequally represented in the field give reasons why this might be so, including:**

- Concern about work-life balance
- Long work hours and lack of job flexibility that make starting a family difficult and thereby encourage some women to leave the field

The leading strategies that both men and women in the field believe could attract and retain more women directly address these possible causes of underrepresentation. These strategies include promoting a change in office culture that allows better work-life balance, or increasing job flexibility—including the option to work remotely, job share, or work flexible hours. Industry leaders, member firms, and collateral organizations should support these strategies and help to facilitate change in the workplace culture.

**4. There are several other often-mentioned hypotheses for underrepresentation of women in architecture:**

- Women not being given significant opportunities upon returning to the industry after having left to start a family
- Lack of women role models
- Lower pay and less likelihood of being promoted than men
- Difficulties catching up with technology changes upon returning to the industry after having left to start a family

Architects feel they could retain current female architects and attract future ones to the field if firms, industry leaders, membership associations, and schools of architecture would work together to support a variety of other strategies such as:

- Develop a mentorship program for women in firms.
- Offer credentials for architects who wish to return to the profession after taking an extended leave of absence.
- Provide clear written criteria for promotion.
- Offer industry-funded college scholarships for women interested in studying architecture.
- Attract more women professors to teach in accredited architecture programs.
- Increase community outreach by university architectural programs in middle and high schools.
- Promote awareness of architecture to K-12 students through school curricula, weekend summer programs, and extracurricular clubs and activities.

**5. Architects suggest several likely reasons for the lack of minority representation in the field:**

- People of color, especially those from inner cities, may have difficulty affording the costs associated with a degree in architecture.
- There are few role models for people of color in architecture.
- To help support their families, first- or second-generation college students and their parents may be predisposed towards other careers with greater earning potential.
- Minority students have little knowledge of architecture as a career option.

**6. Architects endorse a number of strategies to address underrepresentation of non-whites in the field. These include:**

- Offer industry-funded college scholarships for people of color to study architecture.
- Increase community outreach into middle and high schools by university architectural programs.
- Attract more professors of color to teach in accredited architecture programs.
- Expand industry support for the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA).
- Increase industry outreach to K-12 students through school curricula, extracurricular clubs, and weekend summer programs.
- Provide clear written criteria for promotion.
- Develop a mentorship program for people of color in firms.
- Create a support system for people of color at architecture schools.

**7. To attract more women and minorities to the field, architects recommend exposing more students in middle and high school to architecture—what it means to be an architect and how to launch a career.**

The importance of this strategy is supported by findings in the expanded full report. Many current architects grew interested in the profession while in school, recognizing at the time that their skills in math, science, or drawing matched the job requirements well. Others attended a class that sparked an interest in architecture. School interventions are additionally appropriate because architects believe that most middle and high schools students don't know what an architect does, how to become an architect, or the admission requirements to study architecture.

**8. Work-life balance was identified as a main reason women are underrepresented in the industry. But changes in this area could benefit the field as a whole.**

While all groups consider work-life balance important, many have low satisfaction with their ability to achieve it. The majority of architects feel that managing work-life balance is more difficult for them compared to other professionals and wish for greater job flexibility in the industry. This is one of the most important areas where architects, industry leaders, and member associations could lead an effort to change the professional culture. Not only would it address one of the primary concerns of women in the industry, but it would benefit the field as a whole.

**9. Uninfluenced by gender or race, about one in five architects has left the field at some point.**

While some lose their jobs, those who leave voluntarily usually do so for a higher-paying job in an outside or related industry—where salary is more in line with hours worked, and there is more room for growth. The one significant reason more women than men leave the profession is the lack of work-life balance.

Additionally, people of color are more likely than whites to leave due to dissatisfaction with their growth within the firm, lack of recognition for their work, and (for men of color) earning lower income than their peers. Data show that work culture can be responsible for architects leaving the field and they reinforce the need to address these issues.

**10. Architects who return after having left the industry face new challenges.**

Those attempting to re-enter the field, regardless of gender or race, often find it difficult to get interviews and job offers, and have to accept a decrease in salary. Leaders, membership organizations, and schools of architecture could benefit the industry by creating opportunities for education or support for those interested in rejoining the field.

**11. Overall job satisfaction in the industry is, at best, moderate—with lower satisfaction for women and people of color.**

Only about half of architects are highly satisfied with their jobs. Specific areas where job satisfaction is the lowest include:

- Work-life balance
- Recognition of their work
- The opportunity to work on meaningful projects
- Fair and transparent promotion and compensation practices
- Working for an innovative firm
- Good salary

Industry associations should communicate to members the need to address these areas, since they can impact hiring and retaining talent at their firms, and then identify best practices that can influence job satisfaction in these areas.

# Key findings

**Findings regarding diversity  
in the field of architecture**

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# Representation by gender and race

## Summary

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- ① Men are far less likely than women to acknowledge the underrepresentation of women in architecture.
- ② There are several commonly held views explaining the lack of women in the field: Women have difficulty achieving work-life balance, and they are neither paid as well nor promoted as often as their male peers. Women also suffer from a lack of female role models and face many challenges when they return to work after starting a family.
- ③ In contrast with perceptions of gender representation, most professionals agree that there are not enough people of color in the field.
- ④ The leading perceptions of why people of color are not well represented in architecture include: Minority students are generally unaware of architecture as a potential career and lack role models in the field. And those with reduced resources may not be able to afford a degree in architecture, or may be encouraged by peers and family to pursue more lucrative careers.

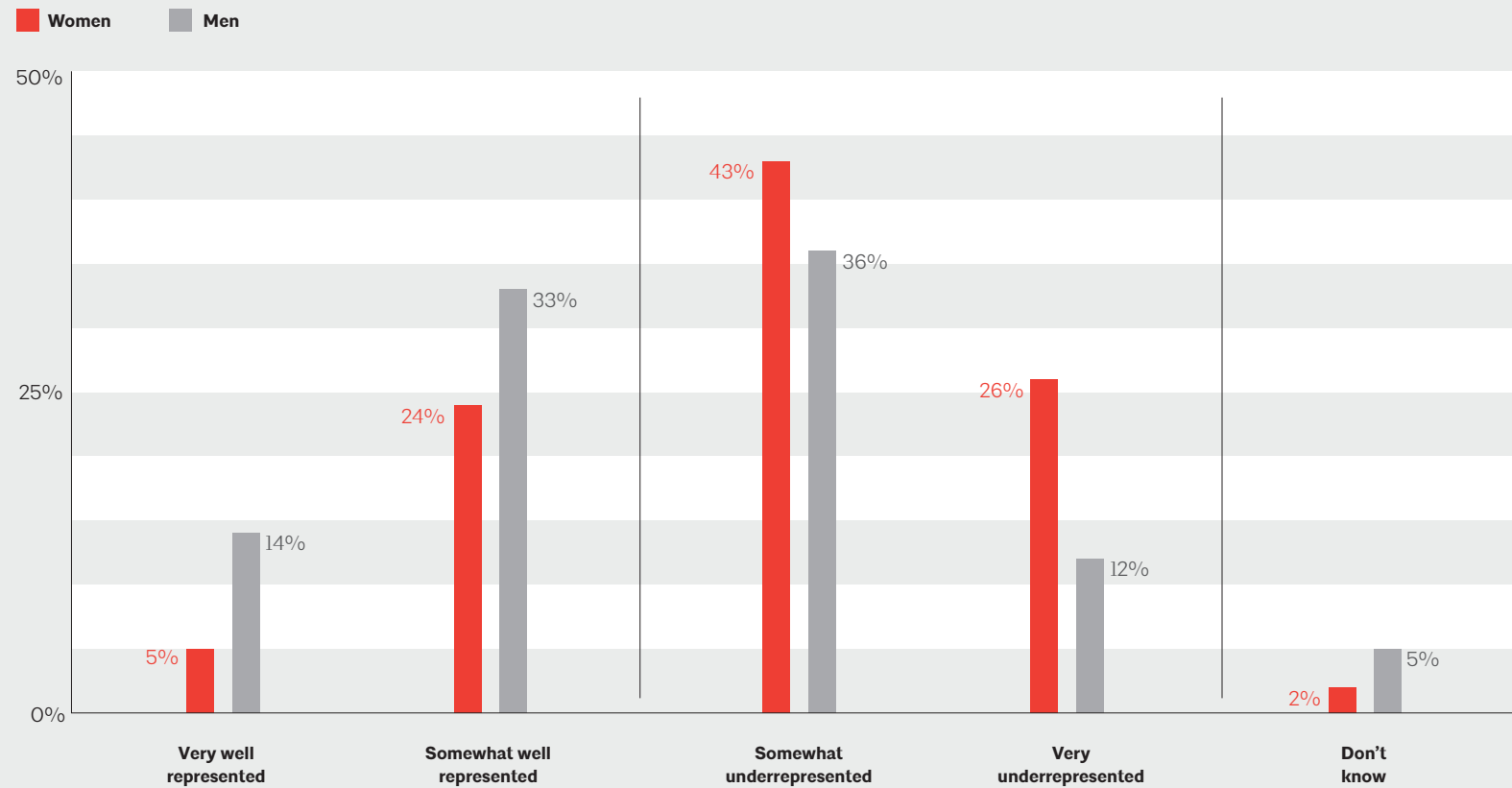
## Representation of women in the workforce

Men and women have different opinions about gender representation among architects.

Women are more than twice as likely to report that they are underrepresented in the field rather than well represented. Men, on the other hand, are just as likely to say that women are well represented as underrepresented.

There are no differences in attitudes about gender underrepresentation by race or income level.

Figure 1: Perceived representation of women in the field of architecture

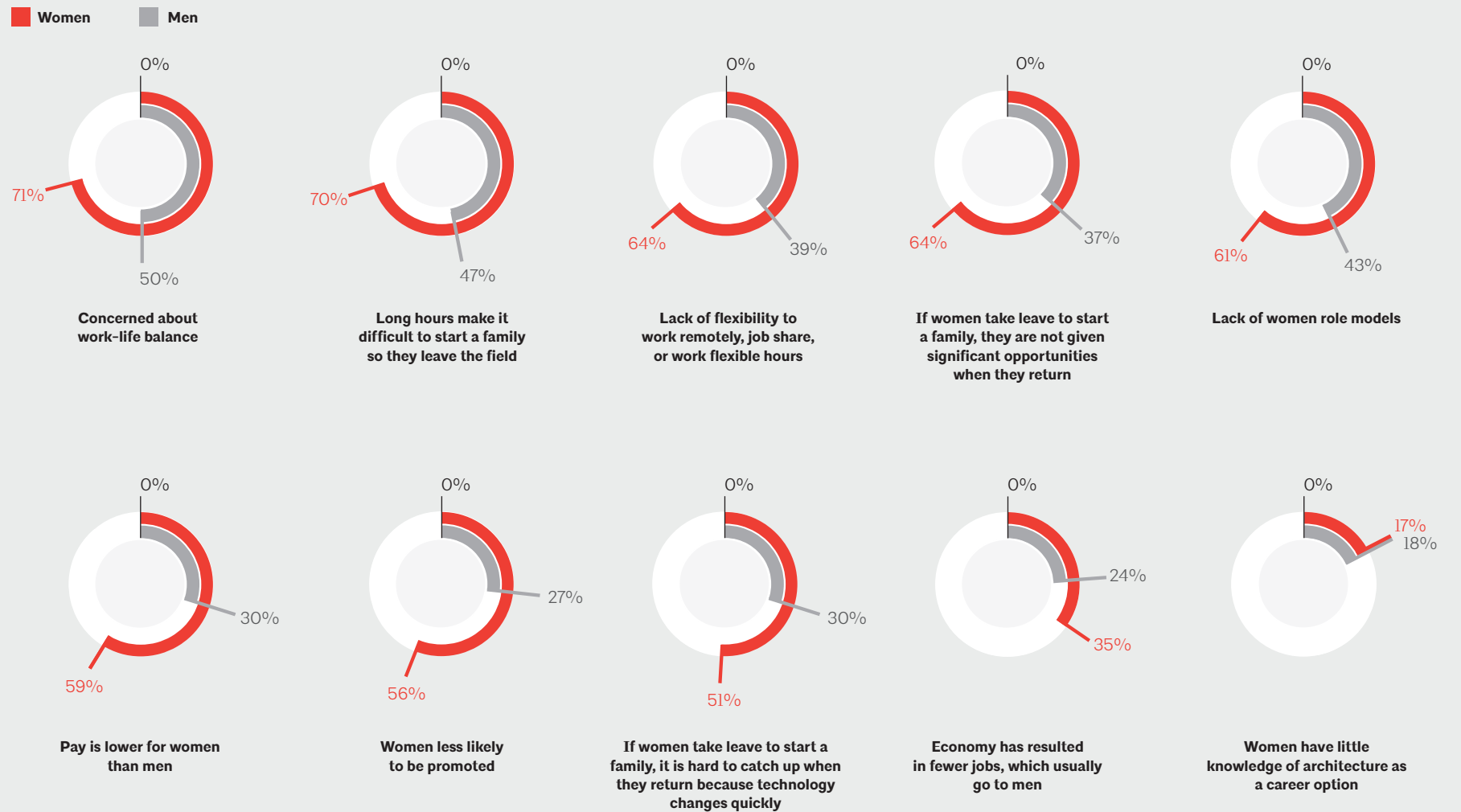


## Representation of women in the workforce

When it comes to determining why women are underrepresented, both men and women are most likely to describe the difficulty architects have balancing their personal lives and professional workloads, given long hours. Additionally, there are few opportunities to work remotely, job share, or work flexible hours. And the pressure to work long hours leaves little time to start or take care of a family. They also worry that those who do leave to raise families face tough challenges when they return, such as learning new skills to stay current with technology or being passed over for significant work opportunities.

They also feel that women are less likely to receive equal pay than men and less likely to be promoted. This, combined with a lack of role models in the industry, discourages women from continuing in the profession.

Figure 2: Perceived factors contributing to an underrepresentation of women in the field of architecture



Percentages represent response of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 7 equals "Extremely Relevant" and 1 equals "Not at All Relevant." Only the scale endpoints, 1 and 7, have a verbal description.

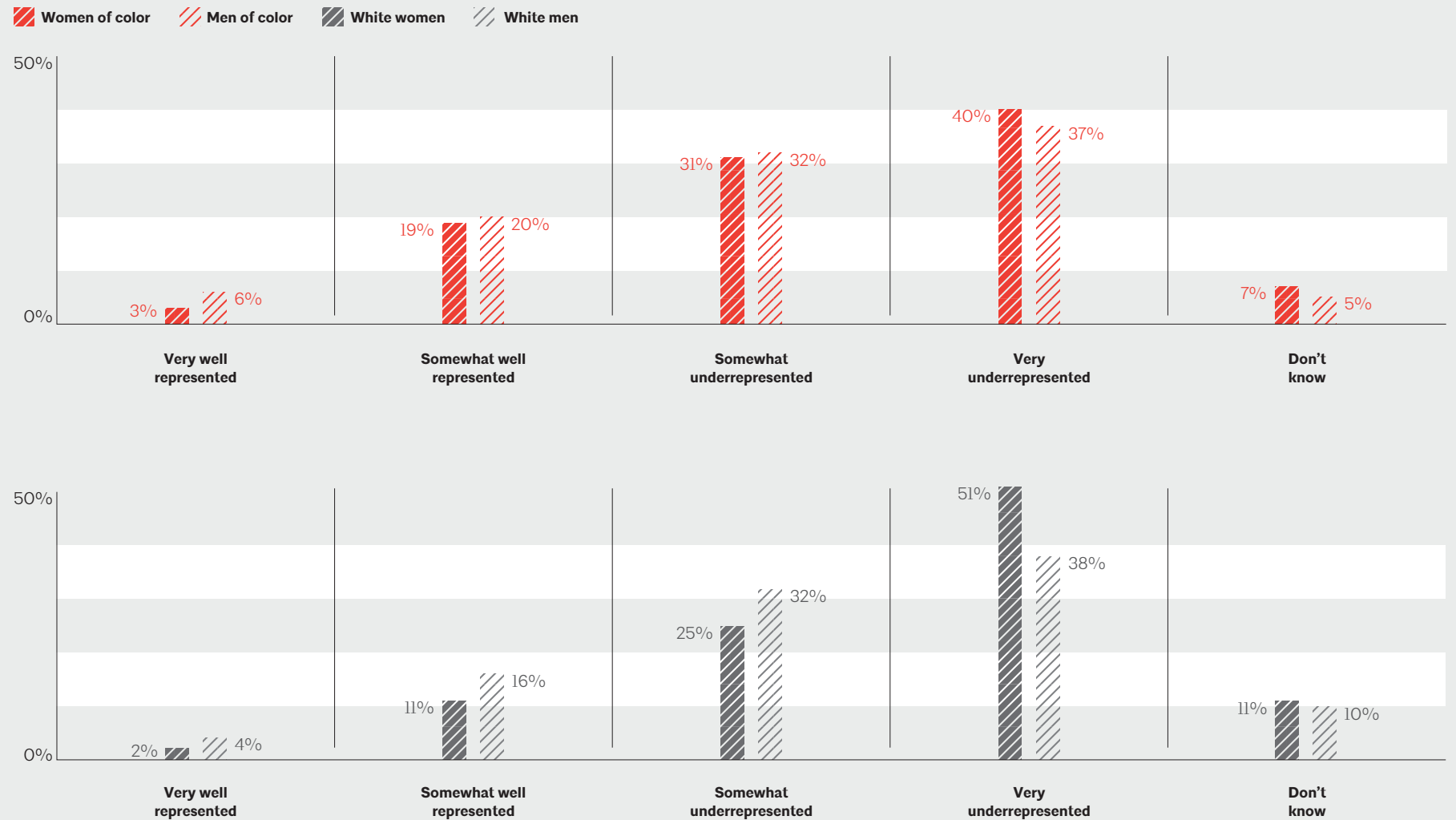
## Representation of people of color in the workforce

Both whites and people of color strongly believe that people of color are underrepresented in the field of architecture.

Roughly seven of every 10 people asked believe this to be the case.

The data also reveal that white women are most attuned to the underrepresentation of people of color in the profession.

Figure 3: Perceived representation of people of color in the field of architecture





## Representation of people of color in the workforce

Both whites and people of color agree on the top four obstacles to racial diversity in architecture: there are few role models for people of color; there is a lack of awareness of architecture as a career option; some families can't afford the expenses associated with attending architecture school; and first- and second-generation college students and their parents may favor careers with greater earning potential to better support their families. These latter two factors are cited more often by people of color than whites.

People of color also feel that the current weakened economy supports fewer available jobs, which go disproportionately to white architects. And, where people of color do obtain positions, they are less likely to be promoted.

**Figure 4: Perceived factors contributing to an underrepresentation of people of color in the field of architecture**



Percentages represent response of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 7 equals "Extremely Relevant" and 1 equals "Not at All Relevant." Only the scale endpoints, 1 and 7, have a verbal description.

# Reported obstacles to career advancement

## Summary

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- ① **Both women and people of color feel they do not receive equal treatment compared to their male, white counterparts, respectively—and, as a result, are paid less and are less likely to be promoted.**
- ② **Women also point out that they are encouraged to pursue work in design-related fields other than architecture.**
- ③ **Architects of color also report they are less likely to be hired directly out of school compared to their white counterparts.**

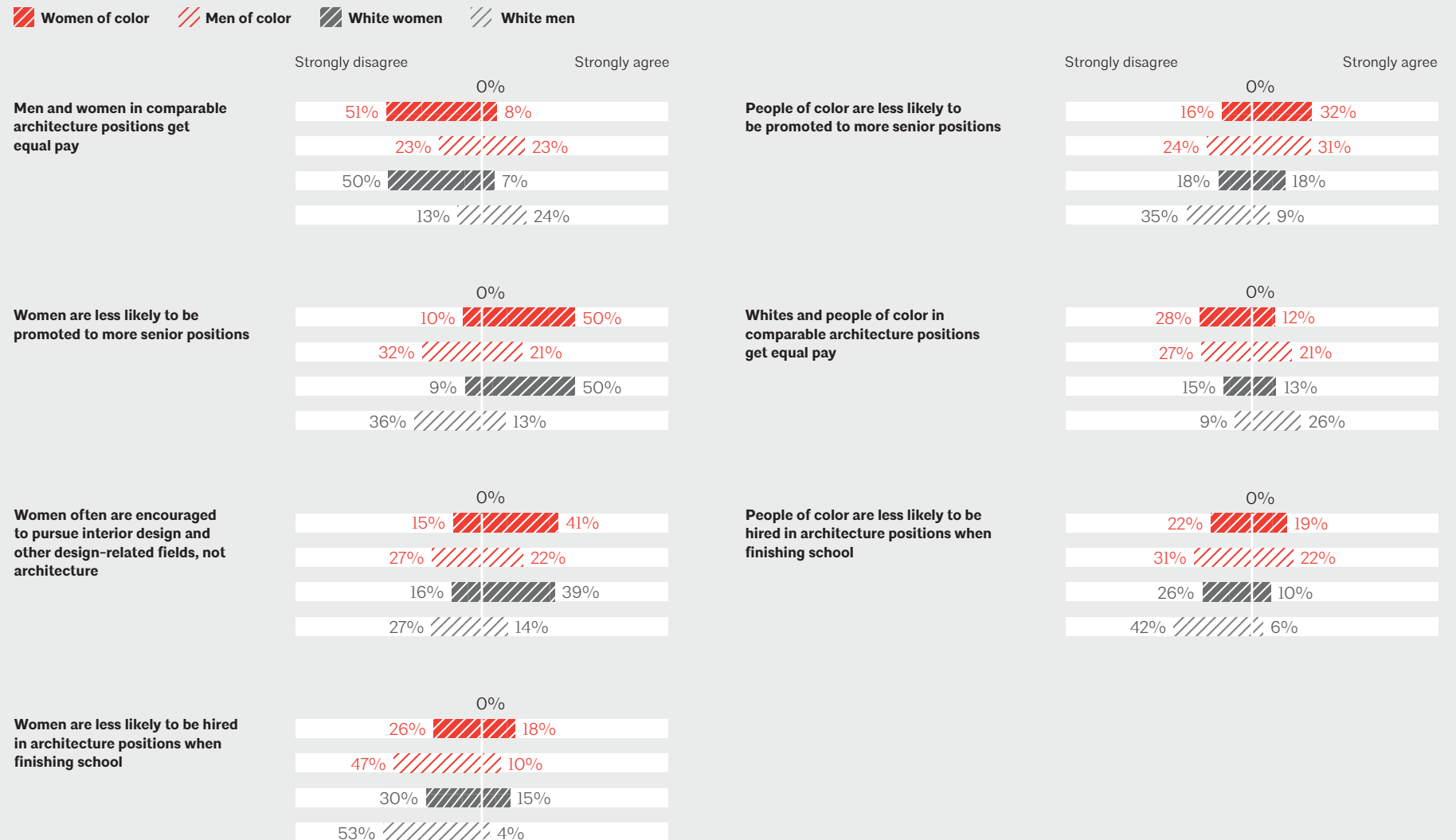
## Perception of career opportunities

Most women strongly believe that they are less likely than men to receive equal pay or be awarded promotions to senior positions. Women also say they are often encouraged to pursue interior design or other design-related careers instead of architecture. To the contrary, men aren't as aware of these obstacles and don't express as strong a lack of opportunity for women in the industry.

More people of color strongly feel that they don't receive equal pay compared with white peers and say that they are less likely to receive promotions to more senior positions. In general, white architects don't perceive these obstacles to opportunity for people of color to the same degree. Some people of color also strongly believe that they are less likely to receive job offers when completing school.

Interestingly enough, opinions about the underrepresentation of women are more strongly expressed than are those around lack of racial/ethnic diversity, perhaps pointing to more acute attention on these issues in the industry to date.

Figure 5: Perception of career opportunities in architecture



Percentages represent response of 6 or 7 or 1 or 2 on a 7-point scale where 7 equals "Agree Strongly" and 1 equals "Disagree Strongly." Only the scale endpoints, 1 and 7, have a verbal description.

# Job satisfaction findings

## Summary

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- ① Only half of all architects report a high level of satisfaction with their jobs.
- ② Women and people of color are less satisfied with their jobs than white male architects.
- ③ Less than half of architects claim high levels of satisfaction with their work-life balance.
- ④ Around four in 10 architects feel that they work for a firm with fair and transparent promotion and compensation practices.
- ⑤ All respondents report the lowest levels of satisfaction when asked about salary.

## Job satisfaction by gender and race

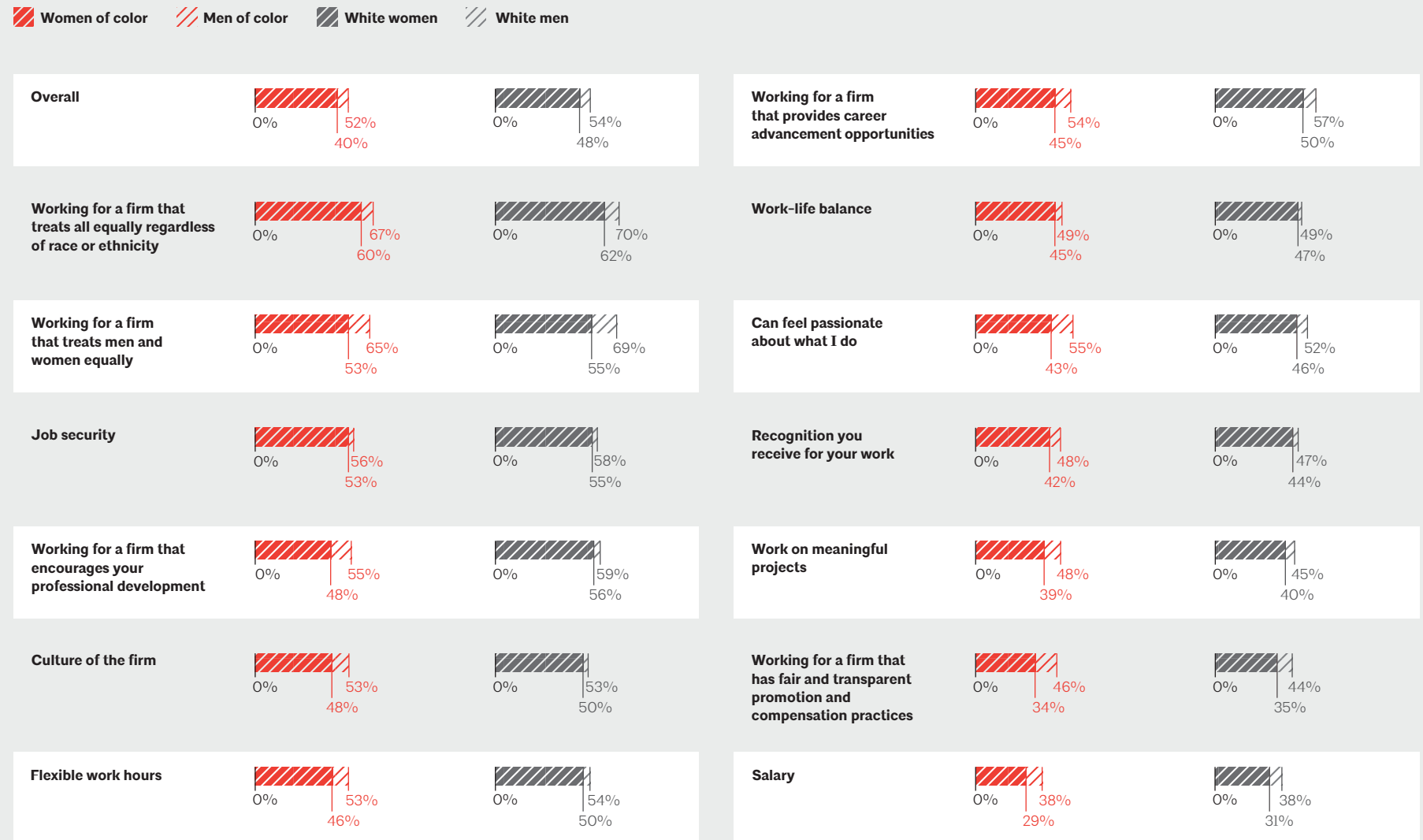
Job satisfaction in the field is moderate: About half of respondents report high satisfaction with their jobs overall, though few are highly dissatisfied. When looking at the demographics of the respondents, satisfaction is highest among males, with white men and men of color reporting higher satisfaction compared to white women and women of color.

Women (both white and non-white) rate their job satisfaction lower than men in many areas, including: salary, career advancement opportunities, and gender equality on the job. Women are not satisfied that their employers' promotion and compensation practices are fair and transparent.

Women of color and men of color are less satisfied than white women and white men, respectively, with career advancement opportunities and working for a firm that encourages their professional development. The difference in job satisfaction across these areas tends to be smaller between people of color and whites than women and men.

Less than half of all architects report being satisfied with their work-life balance. Less than half also feel that they receive adequate recognition for work accomplished or feel that they are working on meaningful projects. Satisfaction is lowest on salary and fairness and transparency of their employers' promotion and compensation practices.

Figure 6: Percentage with high job satisfaction overall and in selected areas



Percentages represent response of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 7 equals "Extremely Satisfied" and 1 equals "Not at All Satisfied." Only the scale endpoints, 1 and 7, have a verbal description.

# Attracting and retaining diverse staff

## Summary

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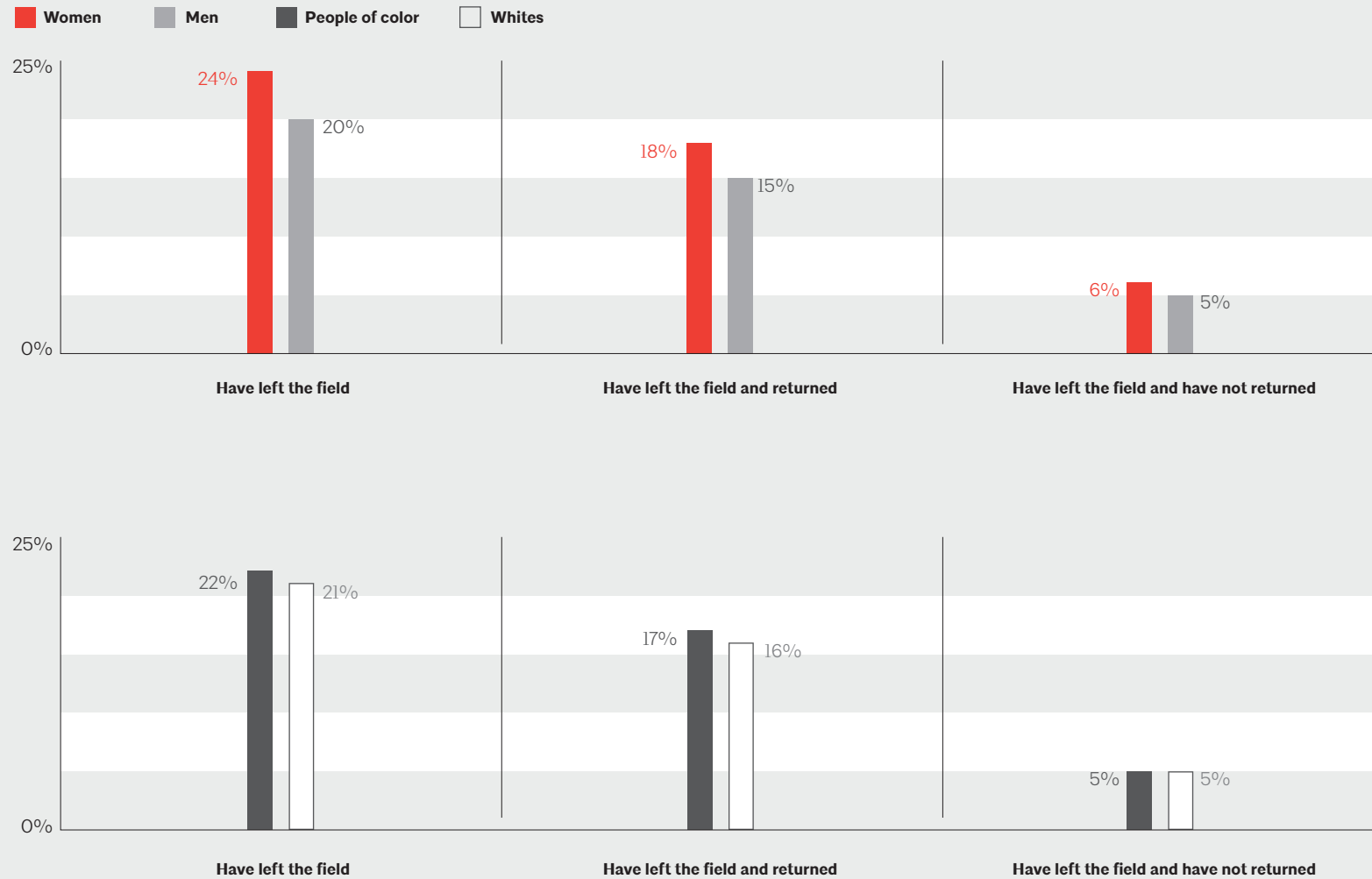
- ① While more women than men leave the field, they are also more likely to return later. Women cite unhappiness with work-life balance as one of the leading reasons for leaving the field, along with salary not being commensurate with the hours worked and being unhappy with growth in the organization.
- ② Whites and people of color leave the field in similar numbers and for similar reasons. However, people of color are more likely to leave because they are dissatisfied with their professional growth. Men of color, compared to white men, also leave because of lack of recognition for the work they do and compensation as compared to their peers.
- ③ The top suggestions—from both men and women—for attracting and retaining women in the profession include acknowledging the need for improved work-life balance and allowing employees to work remotely, job share, or work flexible hours.
- ④ Whites and people of color agree on the best strategies for attracting and retaining more non-white architects: improving awareness of architectural careers in middle and high schools, and providing people of color with industry-funded college scholarships for the study of architecture.

## Frequency of leaving the field by gender and race

There is no overall difference between the percentage of men and women that leave the field permanently. However, although more women than men leave the field of architecture at some point during their careers, they are also more likely to return to the field than men.

There is no difference between whites and people of color with regard to how often they leave the profession permanently, or leave and then return. Therefore, there is no overall difference in turnover by race.

Figure 7: Percentage leaving the field of architecture



## Reasons for leaving the field

Men and women share many reasons for leaving the field of architecture. Some lose their jobs due to layoffs or termination, but more often they seek better opportunities elsewhere.

There are some variations along gender lines. One of the most important reasons that women give for leaving the field is dissatisfaction with work-life balance, while men are less likely to say the same. Many more women than men also leave to start a family or leave because they need to care for a child at home. However, these percentages may be impacted by the high percentage of women respondents who are in the younger age demographic, when women would be most likely to start a family and/or take on child-rearing responsibilities. Men, on the other hand, are far more likely to leave their jobs in architecture in order to pursue a more lucrative career.

For the most part, both whites and people of color leave the profession for similar reasons. While some lose their job, those that don't generally leave for better opportunities in other fields.

Though they share motivations for leaving the field, people of color give some reasons more often than whites: They are dissatisfied with their professional growth and they aren't recognized for the work they do. Men of color also leave more than white men because they perceive that their salaries are not commensurate to the workload, their pay is not equal to others in their position, and they are unable to achieve work-life balance.

Figure 8: Reasons for leaving the field of architecture



Percentages represent response of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 7 equals "Extremely Important" and 1 equals "Not at All Important." Only the scale endpoints, 1 and 7, have a verbal description.



## Attracting and retaining women in the field

In order to attract and retain women, male and female architects agree that work-life balance should be more important to the culture of the profession and specifically call out the need for architects to work remotely, job share, and work flexible hours. Both advocate for these changes to improve the situation for women, although these solutions can benefit men as well.

In addition, women in particular believe a number of other initiatives could attract and retain more female architects. They recommend that firms develop a mentorship program for women and that the industry establish a credentialing program for architects who re-enter the profession after taking an extended leave of absence, allowing them to renew or refresh their skills. They also suggest that employers develop a system of clear, written criteria for promotion, that the industry fund and establish architectural scholarships for women, and that universities attract more female professors to teach in accredited architecture programs. Finally, they point out the need to increase community outreach by university architectural programs into middle and high schools and to increase industry outreach to K-12 students through school curricula, extracurricular clubs, and weekend summer activities. Men agree with the latter two points.

Figure 9: Effective ways of attracting and retaining women in the field



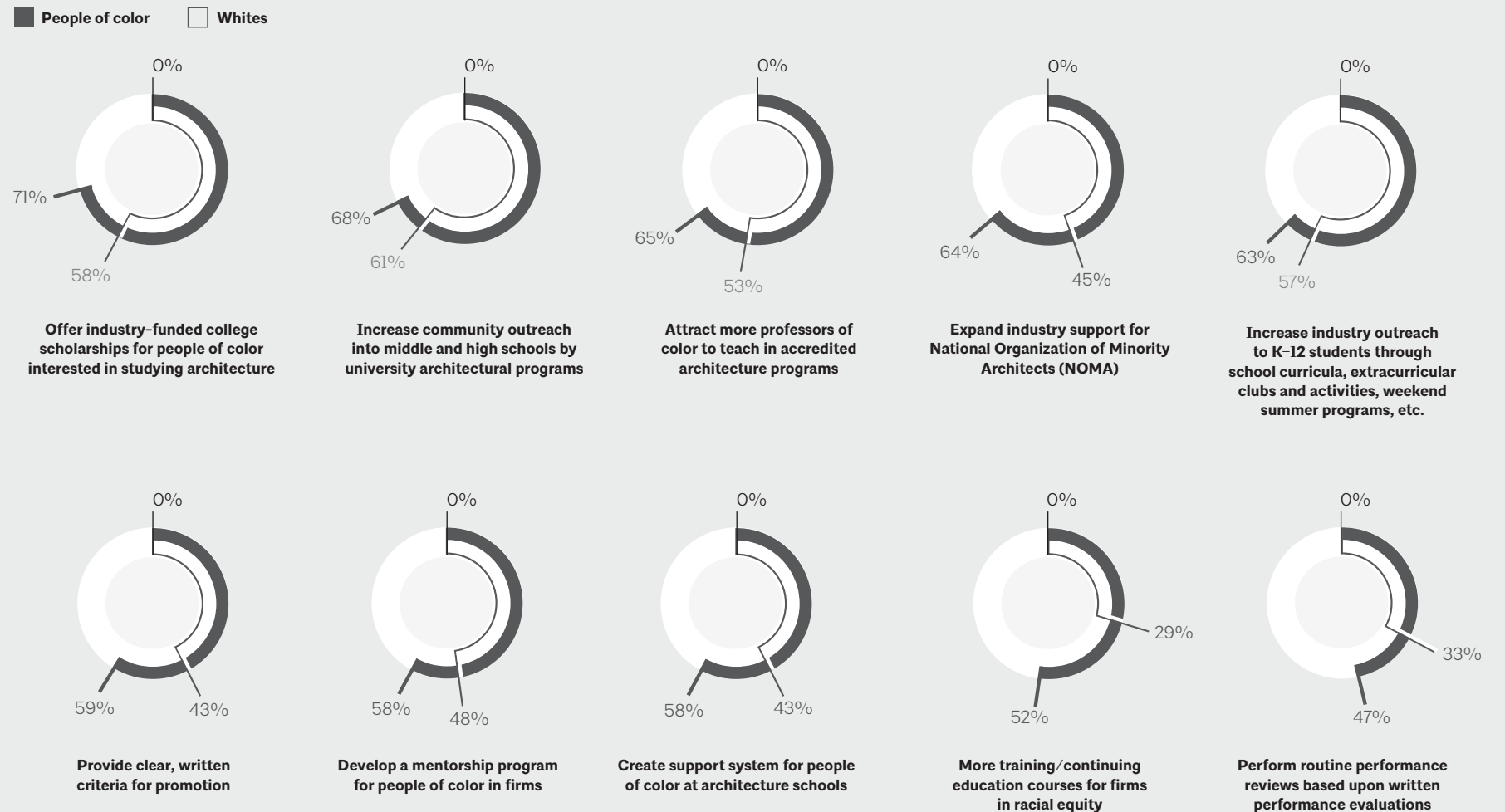
Percentages represent response of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 7 equals "Extremely Effective" and 1 equals "Not at All Effective." Only the scale endpoints, 1 and 7, have a verbal description.

## Attracting and retaining people of color in the field

Whites and people of color agree on the top strategies for attracting and retaining more people of color to the profession: University architectural programs should increase outreach into middle and high schools to improve awareness of careers in architecture, and professional organizations should create industry-funded college scholarships available to people of color to help lessen the expense involved in obtaining a degree.

Beyond the top two suggestions, architects propose a number of other strategies to reduce racial imbalance. Employers are encouraged to establish transparency in their firms through clear and written criteria for promotions. The industry as a whole should expand its support for the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), develop a mentorship program for people of color in the industry, and establish a support system for minority students still obtaining their degrees. Finally, the industry should take steps to attract more minority professors to teach in accredited architecture programs and increase industry outreach to K-12 students via school curricula, extracurricular clubs or activities, and weekend summer programs.

Figure 10: Effective ways of attracting and retaining people of color in the field



Percentages represent response of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale where 7 equals "Extremely Effective" and 1 equals "Not at All Effective." Only the scale endpoints, 1 and 7, have a verbal description.

# Survey demographics

**Detailed respondent  
profile information**

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## Respondent Profile

This is a profile of respondents in the study. Since women and people of color were intentionally overrepresented to ensure their views are statistically valid, it is not a profile of the profession. Of working architects participating in the study, approximately 49 percent are licensed and 51 percent are non-licensed.

|                                                                    | Total         | Women         | Men           | People of color | White         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Degree status</b>                                               | <b>n=7522</b> | <b>n=3117</b> | <b>n=4223</b> | <b>n=1518</b>   | <b>n=5763</b> |
| Have a degree in architecture                                      | 89%           | 87%           | 90%           | 85%             | 89%           |
| Currently pursuing a degree in architecture                        | 9%            | 10%           | 7%            | 12%             | 8%            |
| Started a degree in architecture but did not finish                | 2%            | 3%            | 3%            | 3%              | 3%            |
| <b>Current job situation</b>                                       | <b>n=7519</b> | <b>n=3116</b> | <b>n=4223</b> | <b>n=1581</b>   | <b>n=5762</b> |
| Working in any aspect of the field of architecture                 | 87%           | 85%           | 89%           | 82%             | 88%           |
| Working but outside the field of architecture                      | 5%            | 5%            | 4%            | 6%              | 4%            |
| Not working                                                        | 8%            | 10%           | 7%            | 12%             | 8%            |
| <b>Type of employment</b>                                          | <b>n=7511</b> | <b>n=3116</b> | <b>n=4219</b> | <b>n=1577</b>   | <b>n=5759</b> |
| Work in an architectural firm but not an intern (not pursuing IDP) | 19%           | 17%           | 22%           | 16%             | 21%           |
| Intern in an architectural firm (pursuing IDP)                     | 26%           | 30%           | 23%           | 28%             | 26%           |
| On leave from an architectural firm                                | 1%            | 1%            | 0%            | 0%              | 0%            |
| Work as an architect for local, state, or federal government       | 2%            | 2%            | 2%            | 3%              | 2%            |
| Work as an architect for a corporation                             | 16%           | 13%           | 18%           | 13%             | 17%           |
| Work at a university or college as architectural faculty           | 4%            | 4%            | 4%            | 3%              | 4%            |
| Work at a university or college in facilities or planning          | 1%            | 2%            | 1%            | 1%              | 1%            |
| Work in architecture as a sole practitioner                        | 9%            | 7%            | 11%           | 9%              | 9%            |
| Work in a related field to architecture                            | 6%            | 6%            | 5%            | 7%              | 5%            |
| Work in a field not related to architecture                        | 1%            | 1%            | 1%            | 2%              | 1%            |
| Architecture student                                               | 9%            | 10%           | 7%            | 12%             | 8%            |
| Student in another discipline                                      | 1%            | 1%            | 0%            | 0%              | 0%            |
| Retired                                                            | 1%            | 1%            | 2%            | 1%              | 2%            |
| Not currently working or not a student                             | 1%            | 2%            | 1%            | 2%              | 1%            |
| Other                                                              | 3%            | 3%            | 3%            | 3%              | 3%            |

## Respondent Profile

|                                                        | Total         | Women         | Men           | People of color | White         |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Firm type</b>                                       | <b>n=4614</b> | <b>n=1908</b> | <b>n=2606</b> | <b>n=943</b>    | <b>n=3575</b> |
| Architecture (only)                                    | 74%           | 75%           | 73%           | 70%             | 75%           |
| Engineering (only)                                     | 1%            | 1%            | 1%            | 0%              | 1%            |
| Architecture Engineering (AE)                          | 12%           | 11%           | 13%           | 14%             | 12%           |
| Engineering Architecture (EA)                          | 3%            | 2%            | 3%            | 3%              | 3%            |
| None of these                                          | 10%           | 11%           | 10%           | 13%             | 9%            |
| <b>Firm owner*</b>                                     | <b>n=5889</b> | <b>n=2631</b> | <b>n=3387</b> | <b>n=1169</b>   | <b>n=4565</b> |
| Woman-owned                                            | 16%           | 24%           | 10%           | 14%             | 16%           |
| Minority-owned                                         | 10%           | 8%            | 11%           | 26%             | 6%            |
| None of these                                          | 78%           | 72%           | 82%           | 67%             | 81%           |
| <b>Total architecture employees in office location</b> | <b>n=2263</b> | <b>n=890</b>  | <b>n=1306</b> | <b>n=457</b>    | <b>n=1709</b> |
| Fewer than 5                                           | 27%           | 30%           | 28%           | 28%             | 29%           |
| 5-9                                                    | 15%           | 14%           | 16%           | 15%             | 15%           |
| 10-19                                                  | 15%           | 13%           | 16%           | 14%             | 15%           |
| 20-49                                                  | 19%           | 19%           | 19%           | 17%             | 19%           |
| 50-99                                                  | 8%            | 8%            | 8%            | 8%              | 9%            |
| 100-499                                                | 6%            | 5%            | 5%            | 5%              | 4%            |
| 500 or more                                            | 3%            | 3%            | 2%            | 4%              | 3%            |
| Not applicable                                         | 6%            | 7%            | 5%            | 7%              | 5%            |
| Not sure                                               | 1%            | 1%            | 1%            | 2%              | 1%            |
| Mean                                                   | 54.6          | 53.4          | 54.5          | 59.5            | 54            |

\* Percentages may not add to 100 percent because multiple answers were accepted.

## Respondent Profile

|                                            | Total         | Women         | Men           | People of color | White         |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Working region</b>                      | <b>n=7467</b> | <b>n=3094</b> | <b>n=4203</b> | <b>n=1564</b>   | <b>n=5734</b> |
| Northeast                                  | 23%           | 24%           | 22%           | 21%             | 23%           |
| South                                      | 30%           | 29%           | 29%           | 33%             | 29%           |
| Midwest                                    | 20%           | 18%           | 22%           | 12%             | 22%           |
| West                                       | 25%           | 26%           | 24%           | 28%             | 24%           |
| Work outside the U.S.                      | 2%            | 3%            | 3%            | 6%              | 2%            |
| <b>Years of post-graduation experience</b> | <b>n=6663</b> | <b>n=2691</b> | <b>n=3821</b> | <b>n=1336</b>   | <b>n=5155</b> |
| Less than 1 year                           | 6%            | 8%            | 5%            | 8%              | 6%            |
| 1 to 2 years                               | 11%           | 12%           | 10%           | 12%             | 11%           |
| 3 to 4 years                               | 13%           | 15%           | 11%           | 13%             | 13%           |
| 5 to 7 years                               | 12%           | 15%           | 10%           | 14%             | 12%           |
| 8 to 10 years                              | 12%           | 14%           | 10%           | 11%             | 12%           |
| 11 to 15 years                             | 11%           | 12%           | 11%           | 12%             | 11%           |
| 16 to 19 years                             | 6%            | 5%            | 6%            | 7%              | 5%            |
| 20 or more years                           | 29%           | 19%           | 37%           | 23%             | 30%           |
| Mean                                       | 12            | 9.8           | 13.5          | 10.9            | 12.2          |

## Respondent Profile

|                                       | Total         | Women         | Men           | People of color | White         |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Title - Position</b>               | <b>n=2466</b> | <b>n=861</b>  | <b>n=1548</b> | <b>n=435</b>    | <b>n=1970</b> |
| Principal in Charge/Partner           | 44%           | 32%           | 51%           | 37%             | 45%           |
| Design Principal                      | 3%            | 2%            | 4%            | 4%              | 3%            |
| Senior Associate                      | 6%            | 6%            | 6%            | 5%              | 6%            |
| Associate                             | 6%            | 9%            | 5%            | 7%              | 6%            |
| Project Manager                       | 9%            | 11%           | 8%            | 10%             | 9%            |
| Project Architect or Project Designer | 15%           | 20%           | 12%           | 16%             | 15%           |
| Technical Architect                   | 2%            | 3%            | 2%            | 4%              | 2%            |
| Professor                             | 3%            | 2%            | 4%            | 2%              | 4%            |
| Associate Professor                   | 3%            | 4%            | 3%            | 4%              | 3%            |
| Assistant Professor                   | 2%            | 2%            | 1%            | 1%              | 2%            |
| Adjunct Professor                     | 2%            | 3%            | 1%            | 3%              | 1%            |
| Other                                 | 5%            | 6%            | 3%            | 7%              | 4%            |
| <b>Age</b>                            | <b>n=7452</b> | <b>n=3109</b> | <b>n=4206</b> | <b>n=1574</b>   | <b>n=5747</b> |
| Under 25                              | 12%           | 15%           | 9%            | 14%             | 11%           |
| 25-34                                 | 36%           | 45%           | 30%           | 37%             | 37%           |
| 35-44                                 | 20%           | 19%           | 21%           | 24%             | 19%           |
| 45-54                                 | 13%           | 11%           | 14%           | 12%             | 13%           |
| 55-64                                 | 13%           | 8%            | 16%           | 8%              | 13%           |
| 65-74                                 | 5%            | 2%            | 8%            | 4%              | 6%            |
| 75 or older                           | 1%            | 0%            | 2%            | 1%              | 1%            |
| Mean                                  | 39.7          | 35.5          | 42.8          | 37.5            | 40.1          |

## Respondent Profile

|                                                  | Total         | Women         | Men           | People of color | White         |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Marital status</b>                            | <b>n=7319</b> | <b>n=3060</b> | <b>n=4170</b> | <b>n=1552</b>   | <b>n=5694</b> |
| Married/Partnered                                | 61%           | 53%           | 67%           | 51%             | 63%           |
| Single/Never married                             | 34%           | 42%           | 28%           | 45%             | 32%           |
| Divorced/Separated/Widowed                       | 5%            | 5%            | 5%            | 4%              | 5%            |
| <b>Children living at home</b>                   | <b>n=7285</b> | <b>n=3064</b> | <b>n=4124</b> | <b>n=1544</b>   | <b>n=5668</b> |
| Have children (net)                              | 32%           | 27%           | 35%           | 32%             | 32%           |
| Under 5 years old                                | 14%           | 13%           | 14%           | 13%             | 14%           |
| 5-12 years old                                   | 13%           | 10%           | 15%           | 13%             | 13%           |
| 13 or older                                      | 13%           | 9%            | 15%           | 13%             | 12%           |
| Do not have children                             | 68%           | 73%           | 65%           | 68%             | 69%           |
| <b>Highest level of education</b>                | <b>n=7488</b> | <b>n=3112</b> | <b>n=4211</b> | <b>n=1575</b>   | <b>n=5754</b> |
| Less than high school                            | 0%            | 0%            | 0%            | 0%              | 0%            |
| High school graduate                             | 2%            | 2%            | 2%            | 4%              | 1%            |
| Some college                                     | 5%            | 6%            | 4%            | 5%              | 5%            |
| Associate degree                                 | 1%            | 1%            | 2%            | 2%              | 1%            |
| College graduate                                 | 22%           | 21%           | 22%           | 23%             | 22%           |
| Some graduate work                               | 4%            | 4%            | 4%            | 4%              | 4%            |
| Graduate or professional degree                  | 66%           | 66%           | 66%           | 62%             | 67%           |
| <b>Have an accredited degree in architecture</b> | <b>n=7463</b> | <b>n=3095</b> | <b>n=4401</b> | <b>n=1569</b>   | <b>n=5738</b> |
| Yes                                              | 83%           | 82%           | 83%           | 79%             | 84%           |
| No                                               | 17%           | 18%           | 17%           | 21%             | 16%           |



## Respondent Profile

|                                           | Total         | Women         | Men           | People of color | White         |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Racial or ethnic background*</b>       | <b>n=7056</b> | <b>n=3029</b> | <b>n=3976</b> | <b>n=1581</b>   | <b>n=5763</b> |
| White                                     | 82%           | 82%           | 82%           | 18%             | 100%          |
| Non-white (net)                           | 22%           | 23%           | 22%           | 100%            | 0%            |
| Black or African American                 | 4%            | 4%            | 4%            | 18%             | 0%            |
| American Indian or Alaska native          | 1%            | 1%            | 1%            | 6%              | 0%            |
| Asian                                     | 9%            | 10%           | 7%            | 38%             | 0%            |
| Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander | 1%            | 1%            | 1%            | 3%              | 0%            |
| Hispanic or Latino                        | 9%            | 8%            | 10%           | 40%             | 0%            |
| <b>Annual individual income</b>           | <b>n=6840</b> | <b>n=2886</b> | <b>n=3850</b> | <b>n=1456</b>   | <b>n=5360</b> |
| Under \$25,000                            | 10%           | 13%           | 8%            | 14%             | 9%            |
| \$25,000 to \$34,999                      | 5%            | 5%            | 4%            | 6%              | 5%            |
| \$35,000 to \$49,999                      | 18%           | 22%           | 15%           | 20%             | 17%           |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999                      | 30%           | 32%           | 28%           | 27%             | 31%           |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999                      | 16%           | 14%           | 18%           | 15%             | 16%           |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999                    | 12%           | 8%            | 16%           | 11%             | 13%           |
| \$150,000 to \$199,999                    | 4%            | 3%            | 5%            | 4%              | 4%            |
| \$200,000 or more                         | 5%            | 3%            | 6%            | 3%              | 5%            |
| Mean                                      | 77.1          | 66.5          | 85.2          | 70.6            | 78.7          |

\* Percentages may not add to 100 percent because multiple answers were accepted.

# Methodology

**Survey background, history,  
and preparation criteria**

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The 2015 study, Diversity in the Profession of Architecture, was an inclusive effort driven by practitioners. In addition to AIA, organizations collaborating on the study include:

- National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)
- Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA)
- American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS)
- National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA)
- National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS)
- Coalition of Community College Architecture Programs (CCCAP)

Members of these organizations planned the study, reviewed and edited the survey questionnaire, and provided member contact information to complete the survey.

The 2015 study was conducted online and is a follow-up to a previous study from 2005. To participate, respondents were required to either:

- Have a degree in architecture
- Be pursuing a degree in architecture
- Have started an architectural degree but didn't finish
- Have worked in the field of architecture at some time
- Had planned to pursue a degree in architecture but didn't enter the field

The goal was to include both architects and students as well as those currently in the field and those who had dropped out of the field.

A total of 75,976 email invitations were sent and data were collected from January 5 through January 27, 2015. By the survey cutoff date, 7,522 surveys had been completed. Women and people of color were oversampled to increase their participation and ensure the survey reflected their views.

Participation in the survey by segment (among those who specified a response to gender or race) was as follows:

- Men: 4,223
- Women: 3,117
- Whites: 5,763
- People of color: 1,518

To prepare for the 2015 survey, several additional steps were completed:

- Collateral organizations participated in a day-long Diversity Workshop to brainstorm on key topics the survey should include.
- Four two-hour focus groups were conducted with high school seniors and college freshmen and sophomores who are in the early stages of career decision-making, to explore their awareness and perceptions of the profession.

- Twenty-four 30-minute in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with women or people of color who were AIA or collateral organization members. These allowed women and people of color to talk about the issues of underrepresentation by gender and race in the field in an open-ended manner, using their own words. This helped the study team design questions and identify possible solutions to the challenge of gender and racial underrepresentation for testing in the quantitative study.

Topics covered in the in-depth interviews were:

- Reasons for entering the field
- Barriers to diversity in architecture and architecture schools
- Ways to work together to help diverse populations succeed in architecture as a career

Potential solutions to gender and race underrepresentation tested in the survey were generated by architects themselves during the in-depth interviews with women and people of color.

# Appendix

## Student and AIA Member Demographics

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Figure 11: Student enrollment by ethnicity\*

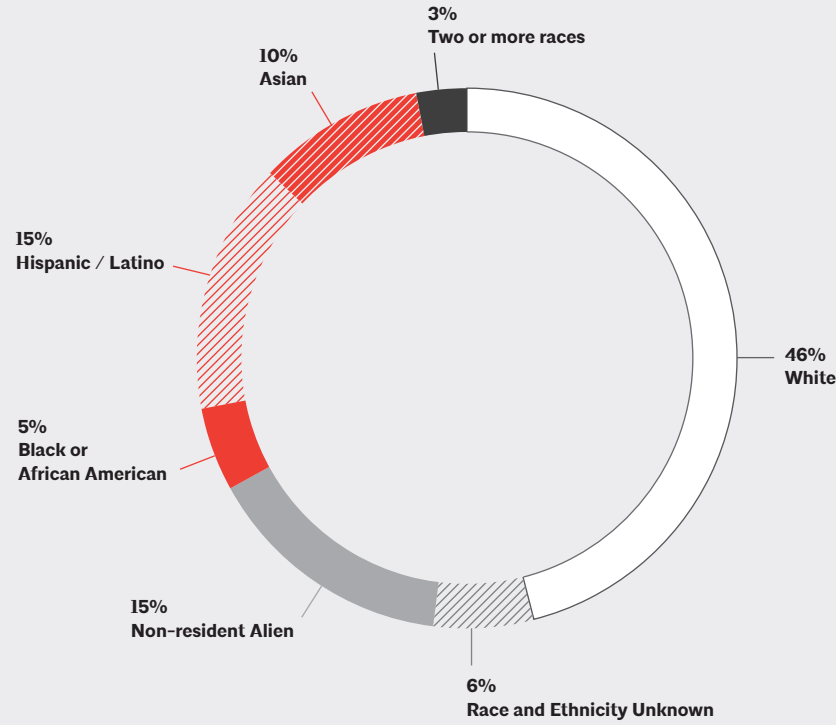
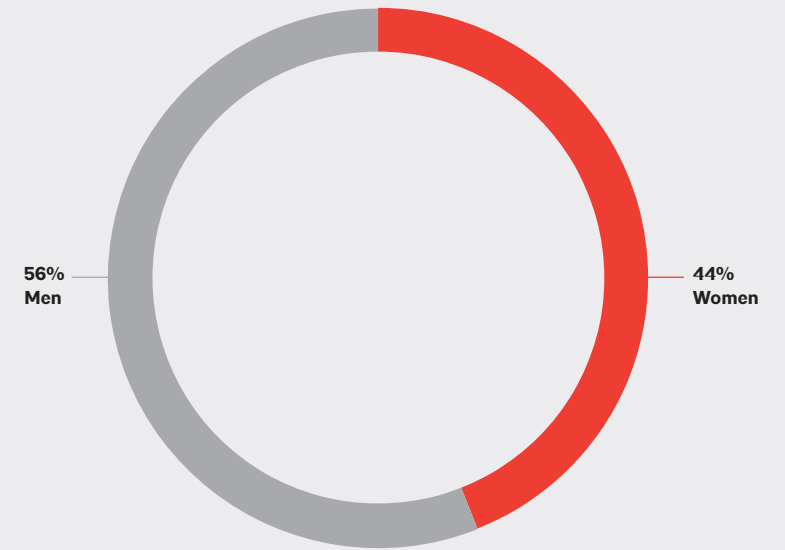


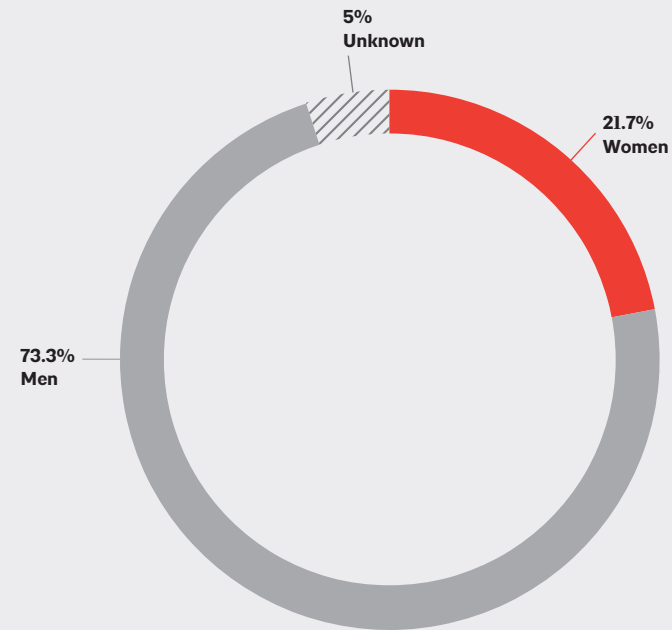
Figure 12: Student enrollment by gender\*



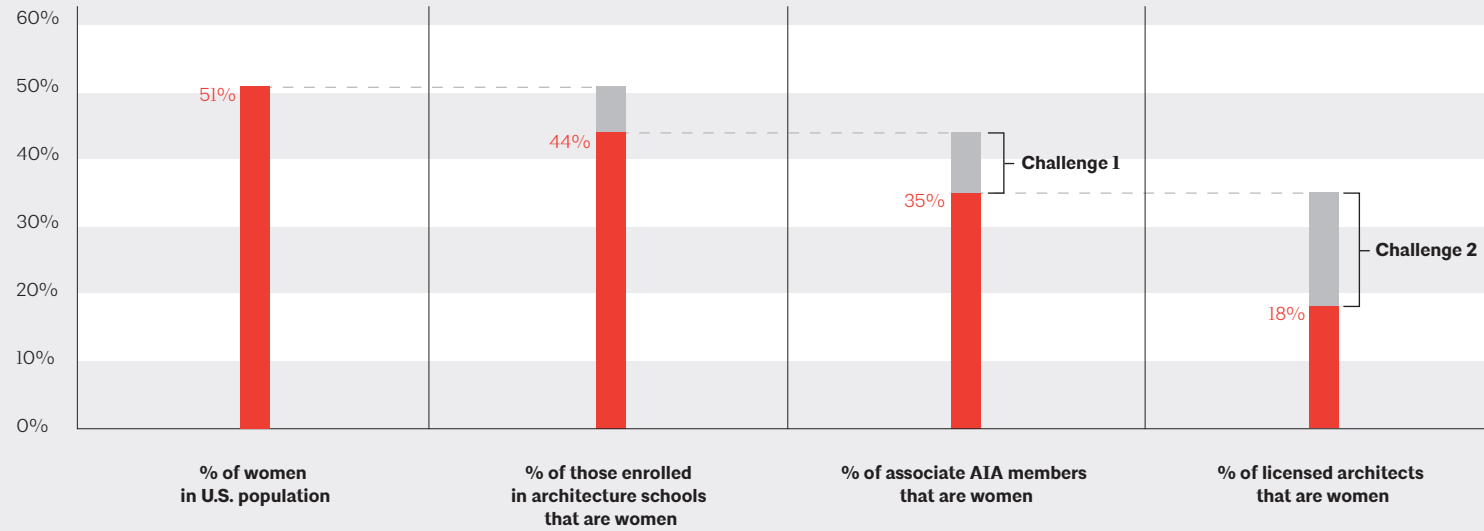
\* NAAB Annual Report 2014

**Figure 13: Women AIA and Associate Members\***

Licensed women architects make up 18 percent of AIA membership.  
Women associate members make up 35 percent of AIA membership.



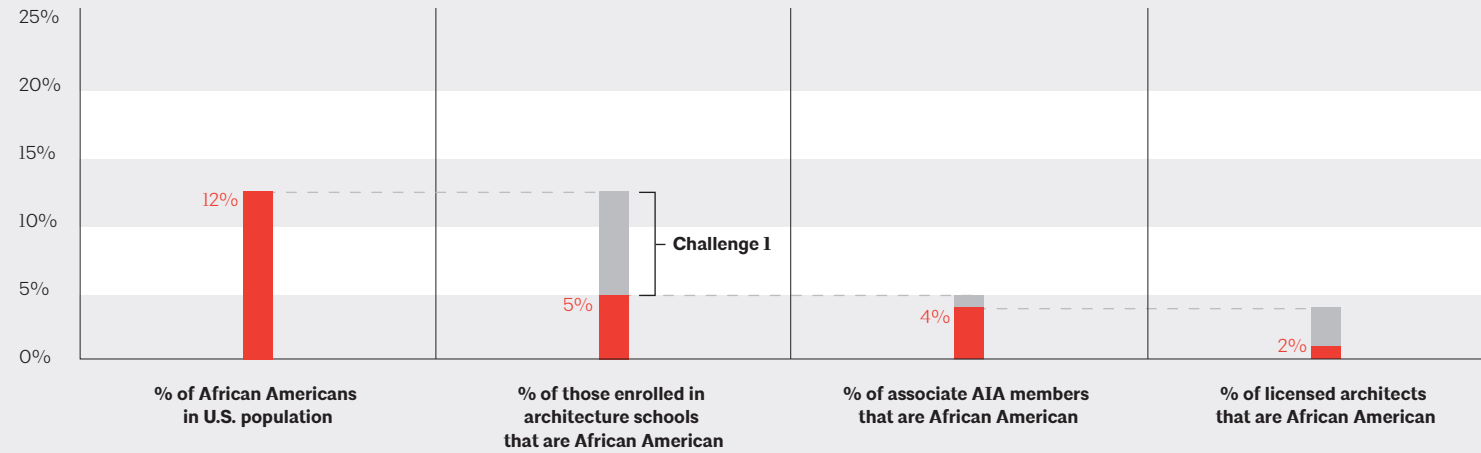
\* AIA 2014

**Figure 14: Women AIA Members**

**Challenge 1:**

Drop from college graduation to associate level

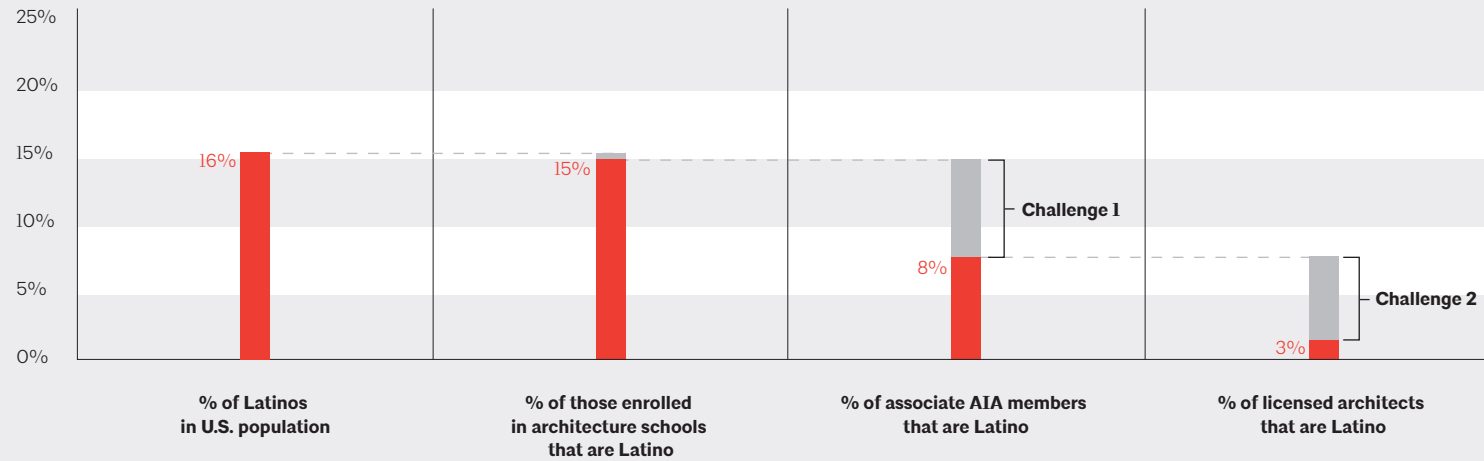
**Challenge 2:**

Drop from associate level to license level

**Figure 15: African American AIA Members**

**Challenge 1:**

Drop from population to college enrollment



**Figure 16: Latino AIA Members**

**Challenge 1:**

50 percent drop from college enrollment to pre-licensure

**Challenge 2:**

Second 50 percent drop from pre-licensure to licensure