



2025 EP Friendly Firm Certification

SUBMITTAL GUIDE



IMPORTANT DATES:

Applications Available	July 16, 2025
Submittal Deadline	September 1, 2025
Notification of Winners	Early October
Awards Presentation	November 13, 2025

2025 AIA WASHINGTON COUNCIL EMERGING PROFESSIONAL FRIENDLY FIRM (EPFF) CERTIFICATION

Submittal Guide

AIA Washington Council is now accepting submissions for the 2025 Emerging Professional Friendly Firm Certification. This is the inaugural year of this program in the state of Washington, which builds on similar programs at other AIA components across the country, including the former AIA Pacific and Northwest Region.

Benefits of Certification

An Emerging Professional (EP) is defined by the AIA as an early career professional who has completed their academic studies up to the point of licensure or up to 10 years after the completion of their academic studies. The AIA Washington Council EP Friendly Firm certification program aims to identify firm initiatives that promote the advancement of EPs through professional development and personal growth opportunities. This program can attract and retain employees by sending a message to current employees, future employees, and the professional community that the firm has evaluated its policies from an emerging professional lens and supports the future of our profession.

Jury and Principles

This certification is being sponsored by Washington's Young Architects Forum State Representative (YAR), and National Associated Committee State/Territory Associates Representative (STAR), who will select a jury to review survey responses. An award of 'Emerging Professional Friendly Firm' status will go to firms that display a commitment to the following guiding principles:

- Licensing Support
- Support & Compensation
- Leadership & Professional Development
- Firm Culture & EDI

Application Survey

To apply, an 80-question survey that covers the firm's EP-related policies and practices must be jointly completed and signed by a firm Principal and an Emerging Professional representative who are an AIA Member and AIA Associate, respectively. In recognition of your commitment to advancing emerging professionals in our field, there is no application fee for this award.

Recognition

Awarded firms will be recognized with a certificate at the AIA Washington Council Civic Design Awards on November 13th, 2025, in Tacoma, Washington. In addition, the AIA Washington Council website will list the 2025 Emerging Professional Friendly Firms. The Emerging Professional Friendly Firm Certification will be valid for a period of two (2) years, after which a reapplication is required for continued designation. Should the jury feel one firm deserves notable distinction, the jury may decide to award one (1) "Outstanding EP Friendly Firm" award.

Instructions for Applicants

All questions in the survey must be responded to, and answers must keep the firm's identity anonymous. Please allow at least an hour to complete the survey. Firms with offices in more than one location should reference their Washington locations only. The applications are due no later than September 1, 2025. No extensions will be given. Awarded firms will be notified via email and will receive their certificate at the 2025 AIAWA Civic Design Awards program on November 13, 2025.

Questions?

AIAWA Executive Director Tammie Sueirro
tsueirro@AIAWA.org
(206) 957-1925

EMERGING PROFESSIONAL FRIENDLY FIRM (EPFF) Applicant Survey

All applications are to be submitted without identifying the firm. Please name your application as follows: use the first, middle, and last initial of the principal providing the final signature followed by the last 4 digits of your phone number. Your applicant ID can be no more than 7 characters long. For example, Jane Marie Doe would enter JMD1234. Please use this ID to name your application file when you submit it.

Application ID: _____

FIRM INFORMATION

Responses to this section are not scored.

- **Firm size:**
The AIA categorizes architecture firms by small (1-10 professional employees), medium (11-49 professional employees), and large (50+ professional employees). Select one.
 - Small
 - Medium
 - Large

- **Firm employees are members of the following AIA Washington component(s):**
If the firm has more than one office in Washington, please select all that apply.
 - AIA Central Washington
 - AIA Seattle
 - AIA Southwest Washington
 - AIA Spokane

- **The firm offers the following in-house professional services:**
Select all that apply.
 - Architecture
 - Interior Design
 - Landscape Architecture
 - Urban Planning
 - Other

- **Please confirm the firm's survey respondents understand that the AIA has updated their definition of Emerging Professionals by retyping the new definition here:**

- **Please confirm the firm used AIA's updated definition for Emerging Professionals to complete this survey.**
 - Yes
 - No

- **Does the firm wish to be considered for the Outstanding Emerging Professional Friendly Firm Award?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - **Total number of firm employees at ALL locations:**
Include full-time and part-time employees in the response.
 - **Total number of firm employees working in Washington:**
Include all part-time and full-time employees working in Washington, regardless of title and position.
 - **Total number of Emerging Professionals working in Washington:**
Include all part-time and full-time employees working in Washington who meet the AIA definition of Emerging Professional.
-

FIRM MAKEUP

Responses to this section are not scored. Note that individuals may identify with more than one group listed below, and these categories are not mutually exclusive.

- **% of Emerging Professionals working in Washington:**
The total number of EPs working in Washington divided by the total number of firm employees working in Washington.
- **% of Emerging Professionals in Washington who have established an NCARB Record and are registered with the Architectural Experience Program (AXP)?**
- **% of Emerging Professionals who are Associate AIA:**
- **% of Emerging Professionals who belong to other organizations (such as NOMA, USGBC, ACE, etc.):**
- **% of firm leadership working in Washington who are Emerging Professionals:**
For this question, leadership constitutes an individual with the following titles: Partner, Principal, Associate Principal, Senior Associate, Senior Staff, Associate, or equivalent.
- **% of firm Emerging Professionals working in Washington who identify as a gender other than male:**
(e.g. women, nonbinary, genderqueer, agender, etc.)

- **% of firm leadership working in Washington who identify as a gender other than male:**
(e.g. women, nonbinary, genderqueer, agender, etc.) For this question, leadership constitutes an individual with the following titles: Partner, Principal, Associate Principal, Senior Associate, Senior Staff, Associate, or equivalent.
- **% of Emerging Professionals in Washington who are racial or ethnic minorities:**
- **% of firm leadership in Washington who are racial or ethnic minorities:**
For this question, leadership constitutes an individual with the following titles: Partner, Principal, Associate Principal, Senior Associate, Senior Staff, Associate, or equivalent.
- **% of Emerging Professionals in Washington who identify with any underrepresented or marginalized identity:**
(e.g. LGBTQIA+, individuals with access challenges, religious minorities, etc.)
- **% of firm leadership in Washington who identify with any underrepresented or marginalized identity:**
(e.g. LGBTQIA+, individuals with access challenges, religious minorities, etc.) For this question, leadership constitutes an individual with the following titles: Partner, Principal, Associate Principal, Senior Associate, Senior Staff, Associate, or equivalent.

SCORED SURVEY PORTION

SUPPORT & COMPENSATION

1. **Is the starting salary for an EP 'Recent College Graduate (Non-licensed)' above the median of \$59,000?**
This salary median is set by the AIA Compensation Survey Salary Calculator, using the Pacific Region as a baseline. <https://salarycalculator.aia.org/salary.aspx>
 - No
 - Yes (2 points)
2. **Is the starting salary for an EP 'Architectural Staff Level 1 (Non-licensed)' above the median of \$72,800?**
This salary median is set by the AIA Compensation Survey Salary Calculator, using the Pacific Region as a baseline. <https://salarycalculator.aia.org/salary.aspx>
 - No
 - Yes (2 points)

3. **Does the firm match cost-of-living data from trusted and accessible sources like the [C2ER Cost of Living Index \(COLI\)](#) to determine fair and competitive wages for its employees?**
 - No
 - Yes (2 points)
 - Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):
4. **Does the firm cover the cost of an Associate AIA membership for Emerging Professionals?**
 - No
 - Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
 - Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
 - Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)
5. **Does the firm cover the annual cost of NCARB fees for Emerging Professionals?**
 - No
 - Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
 - Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
 - Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)
6. **Does the firm cover the cost of licensure fees?**
 - No
 - Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
 - Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
 - Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)
7. **Does the firm cover the cost of all passed ARE exams?**
 - No
 - Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
 - Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
 - Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)
8. **Does the firm cover the cost of any failed ARE exams?**
 - No
 - Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
 - Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
 - Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)
9. **Does the firm provide Emerging Professionals with non-vacation paid time off to take the ARE exams?**
 - No
 - Yes (2 point)
 - Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):

- 10. Does the firm provide Emerging Professionals with non-vacation paid time off to study for ARE exams?**
- No
 - Yes (2 points)
 - Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):
- 11. Does the firm recognize the completion of ARE and licensure with additional compensation, including bonuses or increases in salary?**
- No
 - Yes (2 points)
 - Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):
- 12. Does the firm have written standards that outline the bonuses or salary increases associated with completion of licensure?**
- No
 - Yes (2 points)
 - Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):
- 13. Does the firm cover the cost of ARE classes, online training courses, or preparation books for Emerging Professionals?**
- No
 - Yes (2 points)
 - Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):
- 14. Does the firm offer weeks of paid maternity leave beyond a Short-Term Disability policy/practice?**
- No
 - Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- 15. Does the firm offer paid partner leave?**
- No
 - Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- 16. How does the firm provide a flexible work environment, recognizing the importance of time spent outside the office, that is equally available to Emerging Professionals and all staff? Provide examples of the flexible work environment and scheduling offered. (Up to 3 possible points at jury discretion)**
-

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

- 17. Does the firm provide diversity training or similar programming for the firm and its Emerging Professional staff?**
- No
 - Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):

18. Does the firm encourage the use of pronouns during introductions or within email signatures?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):

19. Does the firm provide reimbursement for Emerging Professionals to engage with and attend EDI events, seminars, or workshops?

- No
- Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
- Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
- Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)

20. Does the firm provide non-vacation paid time off for Emerging Professionals to engage with and attend EDI events, seminars, or workshops?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):

21. Does the firm have an internal EDI committee or champion to provide diversity awareness and programming that includes a firm leader and an Emerging Professional employee?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):

22. Does the firm encourage all staff to read the AIA Guides for Equitable Practice?

- No
- Yes (1 point)

23. Does the firm cover the cost of NOMA membership?

- No
- Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
- Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
- Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)

24. Does the firm have outline strategies for recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting women, minorities, people with disabilities, and veterans to ensure that all individuals have equal opportunities in employment?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):

25. Does the firm track progress on firm diversity (gender, ethnic, racial, etc.)?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):

26. Does the firm sponsor or support local/regional EDI committees, groups, or events?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):

27. How does the firm intentionally recruit, develop leaders, and engage diverse Emerging Professionals within the firm? (Up to 3 possible points at jury discretion)

28. What steps does your firm take to ensure layoff decisions are made with equity and inclusion in mind? (Up to 3 possible points at jury discretion)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

29. Does the firm provide reimbursement or cover the registration for Emerging Professionals to attend conventions, conferences, or other continuing education events (excluding the AIA Conference on Architecture)?

- No
- Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
- Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
- Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)

30. Does the firm provide reimbursement or cover the registration for Emerging Professionals to attend the AIA Conference on Architecture?

- No
- Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
- Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
- Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)

31. Does the firm provide non-vacation paid time off for Emerging Professionals to attend conventions, conferences, or other continuing education events?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):

32. Does the firm provide reimbursement or cover the registration for Emerging Professionals to attend daily AIA or industry-related events?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):

33. Does the firm provide non-vacation paid time off for Emerging Professionals to volunteer with the AIA or related field opportunities?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):

34. Does the firm encourage and provide funding and/or training for additional certifications (such as LEED, WELL, Fitwel, etc.) for Emerging Professionals, based on individual interest?

- No
- Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
- Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
- Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)

35. Does the firm provide or support leadership opportunities and/or training for Emerging Professionals?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):

36. Does the firm publicly recognize newly licensed architects upon successful completion of the ARE and fulfillment of state requirements?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):

37. How does the firm encourage participation in and/or provide opportunities for community engagement, professional groups, or design organizations?

(Up to 3 possible points at jury discretion)

LICENSING PROCESS

38. Does the firm allow all Emerging Professionals to request to be placed on projects that will help meet the specific criteria of AXP?

- No
- Yes (2 points)

39. Does the firm offer a mentorship program and/or provide a mentor to all Emerging Professionals?

- No
- Yes (2 points)

40. Does the firm provide a mentor to Emerging Professionals specifically to help with the AXP process?

- No
- Yes (2 points)

41. Does the firm encourage Emerging Professionals to establish an AXP Mentor outside the office as per the AXP Guidelines?

- No
- Yes (2 points)

42. Do all AXP supervisors in the firm have knowledge of current AXP Guidelines and the requirements for registration in the jurisdiction?

- No
- Yes (1 point)

43. Do all AXP supervisors in the firm verify that all records are accurate before signing each Emerging Professional's experience report?

- No
- Yes (1 point)

44. Does the firm designate a registered architect as an in-house AXP coordinator for all Emerging Professionals on the path to licensure?

- No
- Yes (1 point)

45. Does the in-house AXP coordinator meet quarterly with all the Emerging Professionals to review their progress and to help them compile Council Record updates to NCARB?

- No
- Yes (1 point)

46. Does the firm provide opportunities for licensure candidates to earn AXP experience hours in all required areas through exposure to projects at various stages?

- No
- Yes (2 points)

47. Does the firm own and/or provide ARE preparation materials for all exams?

- No
- Yes (2 points)

48. Does the firm cover the cost of ARE preparation materials that require a subscription?

- No
- Yes, 100% covered (2 points)
- Partially, more than 50% covered (1 point)
- Partially, less than 50% covered (.5 point)

49. How does the firm ensure Emerging Professionals are able to participate in all phases of design, documentation, and construction?

(Up to 3 points at jury discretion)

LEADERSHIP

- 50. Does the firm encourage Emerging Professionals to develop and lead new programs or committees within or outside of the firm?**
- No
 - Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- 51. Does the firm provide Emerging Professionals with regular and comprehensive reviews that encourage and measure growth and development at least annually?**
- No
 - Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- 52. Does the firm work to engage Emerging Professionals in the entire project duration, from conception through completion?**
- No
 - Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- 53. Does the firm provide a variety of project experiences to expose Emerging Professionals to a broad range of responsibilities and challenges?**
- No
 - Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- 54. Does the firm include Emerging Professionals in ALL areas of the firm's practice, such as design, documentation, construction, presentations, client meetings, consultant coordination meetings, job site meetings, code reviews, etc?**
- No
 - Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
- 55. How does your firm provide leadership opportunities and leadership training within your firm? And how does the firm provide opportunities for Emerging Professionals to be involved in practice management?**
(Up to 3 points at jury discretion)
-

FIRM CULTURE

- 56. Does the firm openly share its salary and benefits structure and procedures with employees?**
- No
 - Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):
 - Other, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 1 point at jury discretion):
- 57. Does the firm share information about upcoming project pursuits with all staff, including Emerging Professionals?**
- No
 - Yes (1 point)

58. Does the firm share the state of the business regularly with all staff, including Emerging Professionals?

- No
- Yes (1 point)

59. Does the firm provide opportunities for Emerging Professionals to interact and/or communicate with clients?

- No
- Yes, please describe your policy/practice (Up to 2 points at jury discretion):

60. In what ways do Emerging Professionals inform the general values and culture of the firm? (Up to 3 points at jury discretion)

Firm Principal Signature:

Firm EP Representative Signature:

Date:
