



July 1, 2020

Re: The DEI Challenge: SoCalNOMA’s call to action for the Los Angeles Architecture Industry

Dear Colleagues,

The mission of the Southern California Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (SoCalNOMA) is to “to foster justice and equity in communities of color through outreach, community advocacy, professional development and design excellence.” To that end our Chapter is leading the charge for increasing the diversity of the local architecture industry and building a more inclusive environment for African Americans and underrepresented people of color to learn, work, and flourish. Today, The African American population of Los Angeles County is approximately 9%, yet less than 2% of the local architecture industry is made up of African American architects. A change in the systems and institutions of our profession is required to realize the results that we desire. We cannot make this change alone. We are asking for you to join us.

SoCalNOMA is launching the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Challenge (**DEI Challenge**), as an initiative for architecture, engineering, construction, and related firms to voluntarily support the following measures to transform the diversity of their firms and the AEC community in a way that is holistic, firm-wide, and data-driven. By prioritizing metrics, accountability, and actionable responses, participating firms can more easily work toward creating a professional environment and a built environment that supports racial justice, social responsibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Your engagement will amplify SoCalNOMA’s resolve to transforming the design profession to foster more representation and equity for Black and underrepresented people of color.

In committing to the SoCalNOMA DEI Challenge, participating firms acknowledge their commitment to voluntarily provide the following information, on an annual basis, for the purposes of gathering and collecting data and statistics that may be used by our organization as well as partner organizations to develop programs and policies on diversity, equity, and inclusion going forward.

The DEI Challenge outlined below consists of ten (10) actions that firms can undertake. Each action will have a scoring threshold with a total of 100 potential points to be achieved across all measures. Participating firms must score a minimum of 70 points each year to be recognized as a SoCalNOMA “DEI Challenge Ally” on the chapter website, social media, events, and other public forums. SoCalNOMA will provide support and resources to all Challenge participants to help them implement each of the 10 DEI action items.

SoCalNOMA is asking all DEI Challenge participants to pledge to do the following actions on an ongoing basis:

Chapter President Lance Collins, AIA, NOMA	Vice President Eletrice Harris	Secretary Janiece Williams	Treasurer Dawn Hicks	Parliamentarian Matthew Trotter	Historian Joshua Foster	Public Relations Genelle Brooks-Petty	Student Representative Khan Muhammad	Past President Drake Dillard, AIA, NOMA
Southern California Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (SoCalNOMA) 645 West 9 th Street #110-334 Los Angeles, CA. 90015 www.socalnoma.org								



The SoCalNOMA DEI Challenge

We _____, in support of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the profession of architecture, engineering, and construction, pledge to take the following actions as a part of the SoCalNOMA DEI Challenge:

Action Item	Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an annual diversity survey, of Southern California office locations, detailing current size of firm, employee ethnicity, employee gender, and employee age. Report to SoCalNOMA annual diversity statistics of the firm including all staff, design professionals, and leadership levels. 	Mandatory
1. Partner and/or collaborate on projects with architecture firms that are Black owned or owned by underrepresented people of color.	10 points per project, max 50 pts
2. Create project teams that include Black owned or underrepresented persons of color in a prime, partner, or sub-consultant roles.	10 pts per project, max 50 pts
3. Provide paid internships for architecture students from historically Black design schools (HBCUs), or for Black and underrepresented people of color from local architecture schools in Southern California.	5 points per intern hired
4. Increase recruitment of Black and underrepresented people of color for design staff, leadership, and total number of professionals at the firm.	5 pts for each new hire
5. Develop a mentorship program within firm or participate in outside mentoring program to connect and support Black and underrepresented people of color in their career development within the profession.	20 points
6. Increase career advancement of Black and underrepresented people of color to management and leadership positions.	10 points per person

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7. Include Black & underrepresented people of color in company-wide marketing materials, social media, and publications to increase representation and recognition of employee contributions to projects and to the firm.	10 points
8. Conduct diversity training for all staff at the firm.	5 pts per session, max. 10 pts
9. Provide pro-bono design services and hands-on contributions to underserved communities (Black and underrepresented people of color) by partnering up with local grass-roots organizations.	5 points per project, max 20 pts
10. Join SoCalNOMA as an annual Chapter Partner to support all the chapter initiatives including Project Pipeline (Summer Camp & HS Boot Camp), local college NOMAS Chapters, Young Professionals licensure programs, and Senior Practitioners continuing education programs.	Max 10 pts

We acknowledge that by committing to the SoCalNOMA DEI Challenge, our firm will make good faith efforts to achieve all of the action items listed above and voluntarily report progress on each item to SoCalNOMA as requested. Furthermore, we acknowledge that our firm name, logo, and program statistics may be shared with the SoCalNOMA membership, NOMA National, and outside entities for marketing, media, and research purposes.

Firm Name

Firm Representative / Phone Number / Email

Date

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All participating firms in the SoCalNOMA DEI Challenge will be required to self-report their results at the end of each calendar year. Participating firms will be scored based on the documentation provided to SoCalNOMA that demonstrates accomplishments in each targeted area. The maximum score for any firm shall be 100 points, with a minimum of 70 points required for recognition (40 points for small firms, less than 20 people). Results will be published to the SoCalNOMA Chapter website.

Upon initial commitment, each firm will be assigned a DEI Coordinator from SoCalNOMA to conduct an “intake” interview and to collect baseline documentation. Resources for implementing each action item above will be available from SoCalNOMA, NOMA National, the AIA and additional partners.

We hope that you will accept this challenge to show your commitment to fighting against racism and racial inequality within the profession of architecture and beyond. SoCalNOMA will connect with you following your initial pledge to support you with the implementation and tracking of each item listed above. We thank you for your action towards increasing the diversity of the profession and making it a more equitable and inclusive industry for all of us!

For more information, please visit our website, www.socalnoma.org and the NOMA National website (www.noma.net). Also, please follow our social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn) for the most up to date news. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us directly.

Please stay safe and healthy and let’s continue the fight for equality together!

Regards,

Lance A. Collins, AIA, NOMA
Chapter President
president@socalnoma.org

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