



Association  
of Registered  
Interior Designers  
of Ontario

# Annual Report 2025



# Contents

Message from the President	3
Financial Report	6
Message from the Leadership and Governance Consultant	8
Message from the Registrar	10
Regulatory vs. Non-regulatory	12
The Bold Statement	13
Fostering Community	14
Reinforcing Value	17
Inclusive Engagement	28
Life Members	39
New Registered members	40
Gary Hewson Award Receipients	41
ARIDO Communities	42
ARIDO Committees and Members	43
ARIDO Board	46
ARIDO Staff	47
2025 Sponsors	48



# Message from the President

It's a bit crazy to me that by the time this is published, I will have already completed the first year of my second-year term as ARIDO President. When I signed up to serve, it was in response to the culture I had experienced within the organization, and I was enticed to step up and contribute to the organization of the profession at a higher level.

As I look back on my first year, I am keenly aware of the personal and professional growth this opportunity has provided me, while simultaneously building my business from the ground up. As a sole proprietor, serving as President has given me exposure to several areas of business that have provided a learning curve to me. When I started my business in 2023, I knew I'd have to quickly move from a practice focused mindset to an executive level position, and the parallels between the duties of President and running your own firm created unexpected and wonderful synergies. Amidst running the day-to-day functions of my small firm, the President essentially also runs a small team of two individuals – the Executive Director and the Registrar. This also includes meeting with management and other Board members on an ongoing basis and being aware of everything that happens both operationally and strategically in the background. Another great learning experience through this process was navigating and managing matters related to Human Resources related to staff.

When I took this role on, I was not expecting this personal and professional development. My experiences this year enabled me to reflect upon the running of my own business and provided me with a unique opportunity to take what I have learned and been exposed to and apply it to my day-to-day methods in how I run my own design firm now. More importantly, while there have been many parallels, this experience has also taught me so much about the differences in how a Not-for-profit such as

ARIDO develops its strategic direction and daily operations compared to the innerworkings of a design firm. As I further reflected on my last year, I feel very grateful that not only have I been learning how to run a design firm, but a Not-for-profit organization at the same time.

This has all been an unexpected learning journey for me, to which I'm forever grateful. I've done my best to participate in as much as I can while balancing the needs of the association and my own design firm, CLIQ Interior Design.

This past year brought other first moments for ARIDO such as the separation of regulatory and non-regulatory functions in preparation for our future in the Direct Regulation model. In fall 2024, ARIDO hired a new Registrar, Obi Uzoka, to enable the separation of management oversight for both regulatory and non-regulatory functions. This separation of interests enables everything regulatory, which is in the public's interest, to remain separate from non-regulatory interests, which are primarily member and profession interests, to never cause conflict with one another at the decision-making level.

This separation of interests will be essential when we step into or our role as the qualifying agency



in the Direct Regulation Model with the OAA. ARIDO's role today will not change, but it will have a bigger impact. Anyone wishing to become a Licensed Interior Designer will need to come through ARIDO's front gates to become qualified. As a result, ARIDO's role in protecting the public will be increased to ensure that only those individuals who meet the competencies to be licensed to practice move onto receiving one.

This past year has meant constant and ongoing reflection around the daily operations to ensure we become specialists in mitigating any bias and conflicts as leaders and between regulatory and non-regulatory interests. This could not be possible without the strength of the ARIDO Board and our management team, the Registrar and Executive Director, as they each lead their own distinct areas of ARIDO.

It has been a pleasure to see Obi, our new Registrar, step in and take ownership of her new role while navigating a steep learning curve in a new industry. Obi and I have, over the past year, learned together simultaneously as partners. It's been very rewarding to see Obi flourish in the position of Registrar, and I

am very grateful that I've had the opportunity to get to know her on a personal level as well.

This past year also saw the departure of Sharon Portelli, ARIDO's Executive Director and former Registrar for 14 years to enable her to follow a new personal journey. With Sharon departing ARIDO, the Executive was tasked with starting the search for ARIDO's next Executive Director.

Ushering new individuals into ARIDO's two important management roles was not a mandate I ever anticipated, but it's a mandate I've really enjoyed. I look forward to welcoming our new Executive Director into the ARIDO family and teaching them all that I have learned thus far.

Most notable of our work for 2025 is the launch of the Registered Interior Designer Assessment, also known as RIDA. It's initial launch for English candidates in spring 2025, demonstrated steady and consistent results with the intention of the model. As with everything in business and life, the launch of RIDA came with learning lessons that only make the first ever Canadian interior design exam requirement stronger and more relevant to the local market.

RIDA has expanded with the first offering to French candidates, APDIQ members, in November 2025. The relationship with our Quebec partners, L'Association professionnelle des designers d'intérieur du Québec (APDIQ), continues to grow and flourish with constant collaboration.



This is a refreshing state of being as we constantly observe the occurrences taking place globally and within the United States. This collaboration with APDIQ demonstrates the strength of Canadian leaders; carving our own path that is intended to elevate and modernize regulation for this amazing profession of ours. Rather than following blindly what has always been in place, Ontario and Quebec have broken the mold together by envisioning what is possible outside the confines of antiquated paths.

Together, we hold each other accountable by staying true to what matters most; the human beings (the public) that require and engage in our qualified profession for interior spaces and along with the human beings (our members) that rely on ARIDO and APDIQ to lead the profession towards the best path forward. Together, amidst social chaos, we are building bridges to a stronger collective that is united and not segregated.

I think we are at a very pivotal time in humanity where we will start to clearly see those who are ready for transformative progress. I am looking forward to the work ahead of us and can't wait to see ARIDO continue being thought leaders across Canada and the US.



**2025/27 President  
Jeremy Cheff**



# Financial Report



The 2025 audited statements reflect a year of new beginnings with the launch of RIDA, ARIDO's recent competency development project in preparation for a future with Direct Regulation. As always, the daily operations of the organization are supported by the hard work of the Board, staff and committees as we continue to work closely together towards the goals outlined in our strategic plan.

## 2025 Audited Financial Statements

Here are important highlights related to ARIDO's revenue for 2025:

- For the year ending December 31, 2025, even with the withdrawal of investments ARIDO gained \$124,090 in investment income.
- Membership fees collected for 2025 totalled \$869,881.
- \$139,647 was raised in total sponsorship for the 2025 year.
- ARIDO's rental income for 2025 was \$85,515.
- ARIDO received \$149,473.23 in Awards submission fees and gala ticket sales.
- Cash from investing activities (cash withdrawn from investments) is at \$246,246.

Here are important highlights related to ARIDO's expenses for 2025:

- The amortization amount for 2025 is \$100,372. While it is a book entry on ARIDO's financial statements, it is not a cash entry or real operating expense.
- The completion of the development RIDA, translation costs for RIDA to provide APDIQ members a french version of RIDA totalling \$109,555.
- the Recruitment costs for the Executive Director position at \$20,000.
- \$49,519 increase in Employee benefits and salaries that represents growth in management with the separation of the Registrar and Executive Director roles



which are now carried out by two different individuals.

- \$13,028 in unexpected legal fees related to trademark filing for RIDA and reviewing Infrastructure Ontario's new consultant contracts.

In addition to these expenses, ARIDO experienced cash flow needs in relation to supporting Community events in the inaugural year of the model. This was the first time that regional community event expenses, along with revenue received, were managed through ARIDO's overall financial statements. Previously, chapters had their own accounts. Therefore, the timing of a larger number of events which required advance deposits and expenses prior to receiving all sponsorship and ticket sales resulted in moments of cash flow deficits.

At the 2025 AGM, a budget forecasting a surplus of \$50,394 was presented. The 2025 audited financial statements currently reflect a \$423,178 deficit. You must remember that the amortization amount listed is a book entry on ARIDO's financial statements, and not a cash entry.

The Competency Development costs represent the Examination Alternative Project (EAP). While these development costs are reflected within our expenses, the EAP was a 2-year special project and does not represent regular operating costs. This rule also applies to the recruitment costs related to recruiting for a new Executive Director following the departure of Sharon Portelli. Therefore, the development costs for the EAP and the recruitment fees are not supplemented by normal revenue streams, but are covered by ARIDO's regulatory fund which is a dedicated set of investments to be used for costs related to the Direct Regulation Model.

Therefore, the actual bottom line for 2025 when you deduct the Amortization amount of \$100,372, and take into consideration the investments used to offset these costs in the amount of \$246, 246 there is a deficit in operations of \$76,560.

## 2026 Proposed Budget

Here are important highlights related to the 2026 Budget:

- Competency development costs for 2026 will total \$30,000.
- ARIDO Communities at \$76,487 represents the Communities Fund that has been held in trust by ARIDO on behalf of the Communities. This full amount will be transferred from ARIDO's financial statements to the newly established Communities account which is separate and independent from ARIDO. We are therefore highlighting this as not being a direct operating expense but a transfer of cash out of ARIDO's holdings.

The audited statements will reflect a deficit for 2026 in the amount of \$175, 542. Therefore, when you deduct the Amortization in the amount of \$118,000, final Competency Development Costs in the amount of \$30,000 and the transfer of Communities funds in the amount of \$76, 487, we are left with a surplus of \$53,945.

As I close my report, I want to reiterate to the membership ARIDO's continued financial sustainability strategy that the ARIDO Finance Committee has undertaken. This strategy focuses on additional revenue and funding streams to grow the organization and sustain it outside of membership dues. This will carry increasing regulatory costs while safeguarding our investments for future years to come.

Our existing rental tenant has extended their lease for another year to March 2027. And we will be announcing soon, the addition of a new tenant

who will co-share space with ARIDO. We will also continue looking for additional rental tenants with the goal of expanding our rental income even farther for 2027.

We have also reached out to the Interior Designers of Canada (IDC) in relation to the IIDEX Sale Funds that are available to ARIDO. You may remember the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that existed between ARIDO and IDC with the restructuring in 2010.

Within that MOU was the transfer of IIDEX from ARIDO's ownership to IDC's ownership. Terms existed within the MOU surrounding the sale of IIDEX and were intended to protect ARIDO's 26-year investment in the show.

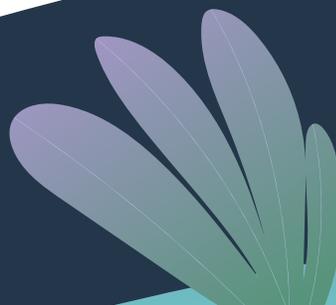
Within the MOU, it was agreed that should IIDEX be sold, proceeds would be available to ARIDO for its own use and purposes. The funds are held in investments managed by IDC.

ARIDO has reached out to IDC to open discussions about utilizing funding from this investment source, as accessible to ARIDO, to offset some Advocacy costs for 2026 to further support the Credentials Matter campaign.

It has been a rewarding experience contributing to ARIDO, spearheading new revenue strategies and to work collectively with my talented and dedicated peers on the Board and with the ARIDO staff. A big thank you to the staff and Board for their contributions in keeping the organization moving forward.



**ARIDO Treasurer  
Joanne Chan**



# Message from the Leadership and Governance Consultant

It is a humbling moment to author my last report and message to the members of ARIDO. 2025 provided for many of us to be a year that challenged us to move outside our comfort zones and turn inward to reflect on the impacts we make daily in both business and personal life; while maintaining identity and some form of business continuity.

For the non-regulatory side of ARIDO, two large initiatives launched; the Credentials Matter advocacy campaign and the new ARIDO Communities model.

The Credentials Matter Campaign was designed to invoke emotion by telling the stories of real clients who have called ARIDO to report misconduct and poor design by unqualified designers in Ontario. Real stories told and experienced by real clients. The campaign highlights 6 case studies as reported by members of the public who unknowingly chose a designer who was not qualified in Ontario and who experienced mistrust, frustration, compliance issues and financial loss. The hard truth around the practice of interior design in Ontario is that it is a free-for-all. Anyone not using the title interior designer can publicly market and promote themselves as offering interior design services.

The emotions the campaign stirs are not just reflective of the clients they impacted, but it mimics the frustrations faced by our members, the profession and the association. We have long told the story of the negative impact of the unqualified during an age of “celebrity designers and influencers” who proudly claim they carry no proper training or qualifications.

2025 marked the steady launch and growth of the campaign with the campaign delivered strong reach among Ontario adults ages 25 to 54. Our YouTube Pre Roll carried the majority

of impressions and engagements. Delivery was strongest on mobile devices and connected TV with engagement peaked in evening hours. Total impressions delivered reached 75,203 with total engagements generating 10,353.

The transition to the ARIDO Communities Model represents a more unified Ontario. Communities worked regionally to amplify belonging locally and build a stronger profession at the grass roots level. The model was developed over 2 ½ years under the direction of former ARIDO Chapter leaders and volunteers. Their vision for a brighter future regionally for our members paired with a stronger working relationship between the regions and head office is infused in the model itself.

The launch of the new model successfully reached all four corners of the province with the intent of growing stronger and bolder over the next several years. This model was impossible without the strength and commitment of the ARIDO volunteers locally, and the PCLC steering and overseeing to ensure implementation of the model in alignment with its intent.

Two initiatives intended to grow identity of the real profession of interior design while building community that has a path of inclusion for many across Ontario.

What a privilege it has been to be a part of the great work of the association. For me, the last



14 years as Executive Director, and formerly Registrar, have been the pinnacle of my career and years of practicing in the Not-For-Profit sector. My time at ARIDO stirred emotions in me around a profession that was not mine at the time of entering ARIDO in 2011. Learning all about the profession of interior design enabled me to fully understand all the misunderstandings of the profession that our members experience daily. It helped me to emotionally connect to the frustrations of our members and the profession as a whole in relation to how the world undervalues who they are and what they provide as a qualified practice of interior design. It in turn bolstered the mandate and purpose of ARIDO to amplify the voice of the profession in Ontario.

During my tenure, my role has enabled me to speak with members daily, both one-on-one and in groups of members across the entire Province of Ontario. Even amidst frustrations around unqualified designers being glorified on media or permit submissions being denied based upon a scope that members are legally allowed to practice; our members have constantly embodied the professionalism and courage to persevere and design spaces that transcend the interior human experience.

For my last message, I wish the membership to know my gratitude for the past 14 years. The ability to get to know so many of you individually, not just as professionals but fellow humans. My conversations with you during wins and losses always provided a path for me to better understand your experiences as well as the opportunity to lean harder on your behalf. I've watched some of you grow into your own as young juniors to now leaders carving your own path forward. What an honour it has been to cheer you own and witness your journey. Since my arrival in 2011, these experiences have made me feel welcomed, seen, heard, and a part of ARIDO.

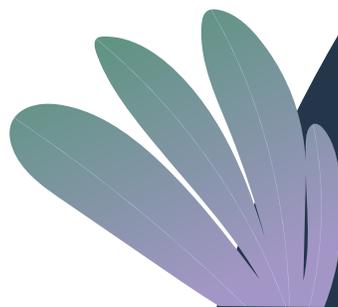
Your leadership as a membership in relation to the direction of the organization has always been and will continue to be paramount to its future. As members, you are the heartbeat of the organization that keeps it relevant, thriving and staying the course of progression amidst havoc at varying levels.

As ARIDO prepares to welcome the next Executive Director, I ask that you welcome them as you welcomed me. Tell them your stories. Share your experiences and hopes for the profession and ARIDO. The new Executive Director needs to understand your experiences to fully show up as a leader for you and on your behalf.

As I exit, I am beyond grateful for the opportunities of personal growth into leadership my time at ARIDO has afforded me. While I am exiting to pursue a personal journey, I leave my heart with this profession. Know that I'm still cheering you all on from across the pond.



**Leadership and  
Governance  
Consultant  
Sharon Portelli**



# Message from the Registrar



As we gather at the 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM), I want to extend my sincere appreciation to each of you for your ongoing commitment to the highest standards of professional practice in interior design across Ontario. This meeting offers an important opportunity to reflect on our achievements over the past year and to consider how we will continue strengthening a modern, accountable, and resilient regulatory framework for our profession

Throughout 2025, ARIDO advanced its mandate to protect the public interest while supporting a responsible, ethical, and innovative professional community. The continued implementation of ARIDO's revised operational structure via the separation of Regulatory and non-regulatory functions required renewed focus on clarity, consistency, and accountability across qualifications, professional development compliance, standards, and professional conduct. The work of the Registrar's office has been guided by these priorities based on the ARIDO 2024-26 Strategic Plan.

A significant achievement this year was the launch of field testing for the Registered Interior Designer Assessment (RIDA). Both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 were fully enrolled, demonstrating strong confidence in this competency based entry-to-practice model. Collaboration with APDIQ was strengthened as well, with the introduction of their bilingual RIDA field testing and ongoing efforts to ensure assessor readiness and alignment across both organizations.

Pathways to registration continued to strengthen through the Intern Competencies Review System (ICRS), which experienced a record year with 43 new enrollments and 31 completions. Support for students and emerging designers also expanded through initiatives such as the Gary Hewson Awards and the Career Xpress Portfolio Review, delivered in partnership with Mohawk Group and the Career Express Committee.

Throughout the year, ARIDO broadened its outreach through presentations at academic institutions, firms, and community programs, significantly contributing to the growth of Student Membership. The revitalized mentorship program via the Mentor City platform created new opportunities for mentorship, now pairing Students with Interns alongside pairing Intern members with Registered Members.

Enforcement of title protection under Bill Pr6 remained a key priority. ARIDO implemented a progressive strategy that balances education with escalating measures. In 2025, the team completed 157 investigations and issued more than 30 cease-and-desist letters, resulting in extensive remediation and renewed understanding of the value of proper registration.

Several new engagement initiatives were also introduced. The Registered Member Recognition Program, which acknowledges members who have reached key consecutive membership milestones, was approved for rollout in April 2026. The new "Meet the President" series offered members a direct and informal avenue to connect with ARIDO leadership and share their perspectives.

Our connection to academic partners deepened through the annual Educators and Coordinators Meeting, alongside new initiatives such as publicly listing ARIDO Educators and launching the "Meet Our Educators" campaign. The new Educator Reg category, approved by the Board and presented for ratification at this AGM, formalizes our commitment to recognizing educators' contributions. Retired and Life Members also received updated commu-

nications and enhanced acknowledgment of their continued importance to ARIDO.

None of this progress would have been possible without the dedication of our volunteer committees. Their time, insight, and commitment underpinned many of the year's regulatory advancements, from developing resources to evaluating candidates and supporting events. Their contributions remain essential to a modern and member-focused regulatory framework.

As Registrar, I remain committed to strengthening the integrity and relevance of ARIDO's regulatory systems. Looking ahead to 2026, our priorities include continued modernization of regulatory processes, expanded support for emerging professionals, and an ongoing commitment to ensuring our standards reflect the realities of contemporary practice and the communities we serve.



**Registrar  
Obiageli Uzoka**



## MEMBERSHIP

### QUALIFICATIONS PATH

- Education Requirement: CIDA BID or ICERS
- Experience Requirement: IDER or hours-based
- Examination Requirement: RIDA or NCIDQ
- Communities - regulatory functions
- ED&I - inclusive pathways into ARIDO

### INCLUSION (RECRUITMENT)

- High school visits
- BID visits
- Scholarships
- Design firm visits
- Non-member presentations
- Alternate pathways
- Communities - regulatory functions

### BELONGING (RETENTION)

- Mentorship
- Career counselling
- Qualifications path counselling
- Membership benefits
- Communities - regulatory functions

## COMPLIANCE

### MEMBERSHIP CONTINUATION

- Professional development
- Insurance requirements

### PRACTICE OF INTERIOR DESIGN

- Practice guides
  - Ethics
  - Accessibility
  - Sustainability
  - OBC guide

### PRACTICE STANDARDS

- Code of ethics
- Practice standards

## ENFORCEMENT

### COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINE

- Complaints process
- Disciplinary process
- Enforcement of misconduct

### TITLE ENFORCEMENT

- Monitoring/investigating misuse of the title
- Enforcement of misuse of the title

## AWARENESS & COMMUNITY

### PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Public awareness campaign targeting
  - clients
  - business owners
  - value of interior design
  - awareness of scope of work
  - both residential and commercial sectors

### RESOURCES

- Fee guide
- Pitch deck
- Consumer guide
- Marketing assets for ARIDO and members

### COMMUNICATIONS

- Website
- Social media
- Membership and industry emails
- Newsletter
- Marketing and branding

### GATHERING

- Trade shows - public awareness opportunities
- Non-regulatory ARIDO events: AGM, Gala, webinars
- Business of interior design education

### COMMUNITIES

- ARIDO communities across Regions
  - Non-regulatory functions only

## STAKEHOLDERS & PARTNERSHIPS

### GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- Legislative lobbying
  - Attorney general
  - Premier's Offices
  - MMAH

### EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

- APDIQ Agreement
- CIDRAC
- OAA
- CDAO

### SPONSORSHIP

- Industry partnerships and external partnerships

## GOVERNANCE

### BOARD OPERATIONS

- Accounting/Finances
- Nominations
- Board operations, meetings, voting, etc.

### ED&I

- non-regulatory functions

Regulatory

Non-Regulatory



# The Bold Statement

Our work throughout 2025 was guided by the 2023/25 Strategic Plan which centered around our Bold Statement:

**ARIDO is committed to creating a welcoming and respectful community that is dedicated to building meaningful, progressive change towards diversity and belonging.**

**We will boldly advocate and champion the growth of our members and stakeholders during various stages of their professional and personal journeys.**

**We will honour our responsibility as an industry leader to forge a new pathway to advance equity and diverse representation through actionable programs and policies.**

Our Bold Statement is supported by the following three areas of focus which were essential priorities to our continued journey throughout the past year, and continue to be central to our focus:

## **Fostering Community Reinforcing Value Inclusive Engagement**

As ARIDO's work was based on the Bold Statement and our Strategic Plan for 2023/25 the Annual Report has been structured in a way to walk through the three areas of focus Community, Value and Engagement to share ARIDO's work and our collective accomplishments through this framework.



# Fostering Community



**Goal: The ARIDO Community is a diverse, inclusive, and safe space for all existing members, new members, industry partners, and stakeholders to participate authentically.**

**1. We will be leaders in the advancement of equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion, by clearly expressing our commitment for change by:**

**b. Expanding leadership knowledge and training by:**

**ii. Implement educational workshops for ARIDO leadership teams to understand inclusive language and behaviour.**

The ARIDO board participated in the Leadership training sessions with two coaches and also sessions with Lisa MacVicar.

**c. Engaging Chapters in redesigning the current chapter model to align regional activities and focus to ARIDO's strategic direction, offer value-based programming, and create inclusive communities for local members**

In 2025, ARIDO introduced the transition from chapters to communities, strengthening local activities while building a more inclusive network across Ontario. Each community embraced this shift by organizing initiatives that promoted

public awareness, professional development, student engagement, and valuable networking opportunities.

**The Central ARIDO Community** is led by Isabelle Talbot, ARIDO member, with Joanna Lucente, ARIDO member and Dayna Bradley, ARIDO Ambassador, serving as Co-Leads. Throughout the year, the community brought members together through some of its most anticipated initiatives. The Gutterball Tournament and Charity Golf Tournament returned with strong participation from both members and industry partners, with the latter successfully raising more than \$40,000 for ARIDO's ROI beneficiary — Ontario Employment Education and Research Centre (OEERC) and the Workers' Action Centre (WAC).

The community also hosted a Tabletop Tradeshow, providing students with the opportunity to engage with industry partners and gain valuable insight into the profession. The year concluded with a Volunteer Appreciation event recognizing the volunteers and partners whose support helped make these initiatives possible.

Led by Samantha Derosier, Intern ARIDO Member, with Helga Bastiaan, Intern ARIDO Member, as Co-Lead, **the Eastern ARIDO Community** delivered a number of initiatives that supported members and increased local



engagement throughout the year. The community hosted its annual Tabletop event at Algonquin College, where students had the opportunity to meet industry partners. During the Algonquin College BID Graduate Show, the community awarded a bursary to Brianna Zeidan, an outstanding ARIDO student member recognized for her strong volunteer involvement.

The community further promoted public awareness through partnering with the Ottawa Fall Home Show for its stage design, and Designer Quest, a friendly competition that brought members and industry partners together in Ottawa for a morning of fun. The year concluded with the Holiday Gala, welcoming more than 160 attendees for an evening of celebration, networking, and a silent auction. The event also served as an opportunity to recognize the volunteers whose dedication and support helped make the community's 2025 events and initiatives possible.

**The Western ARIDO Community** continued to create opportunities for members across Western Ontario led by Penny Fobler-Cressy,

ARIDO Member and Co-Lead, Amanda Ens, ARIDO Member. The community hosted its Annual Charity Golf Tournament in support of ARIDO's ROI initiative. They also introduced a new initiative, Women Supporting Women, which highlighted the achievements of women not only in interior design but across the whole industry. The community also partnered with the Fanshawe College to host its event "Evolve" in support of emerging professionals. To close the year, the community recognized the volunteers and industry partners whose continued support helped bring these events to life.

**The Northern ARIDO Community** with Terry Ledger as its Lead, while serving a large geographic region, continued to bring members together through accessible initiatives. The community hosted a CEU Day featuring Designing from a Trauma-Informed Lens, presented by Erin Jenner. Given the distance between many members in the region, the Northern Community continues to rely on virtual platforms to connect members and provide opportunities for professional learning and engagement.



ARIDO Communities events, from tabletop events for students to golf tournaments and CEU events throughout Ontario

**2. We will prioritize centralizing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility by creating inclusive policies that embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion learning and accountability with ARIDO in our governance and frameworks by:**

**e. Curating scorecards and measurement tools**

The Diverse Supplier List will include this and is currently under development by the Foundation Committee.

**i. Maintaining the Matrix Affinity Groups for the organization that represent diverse voices and experiences, and contribute as leaders in ARIDO's work.**

We maintained the Foundation Committee, Education Committee, Community Outreach Committee and Awareness Committee which are all Affinity Groups.



# Reinforcing Value

**Goal: We will strive for cultural betterment of the interior design industry with the end goal of increased value within the community, and increased awareness by the public and end users of the value of interior designers.**

**1. We will create a more welcoming and inclusive membership community where everyone belongs and is heard by:**

## **Annual Educators and School Coordinators Meeting**

ARIDO hosted the Annual Educators and School Coordinators Meeting on June 11, 2025. The session provided a valuable forum for discussing key priorities affecting our Educator members and resulted in several actionable outcomes designed to strengthen support for this important stakeholder group.

Key initiatives arising from the meeting included:

1. Clarification of Educator Member Categories  
Work began on refining and clearly defining Educator member categories to ensure consistency and transparency across all institutions. The new Educator Reg category is one example.

2. Enhanced Online Visibility for Educators  
ARIDO committed to improving the online presence of Educator members by publishing their names and credentials on the ARIDO website. This will include listings under their respective schools as well as a new "Meet Our Educators" section.

3. Resumption of In-Person Student Engagement  
ARIDO reinstated in person student presentations and strengthened outreach through welcome emails and digital certificates for new student members.

**a. Updating any ARIDO application to include and welcome diversity and accessibility.**

Work is in progress to audit and update all ARIDO applications to include statements that welcome diversity and accessibility.

**b. Implementing and committing to conducting annual engagement surveys that capture demographics, perspectives, and engagement for members, suppliers, and vendors.**

## **Insurance survey**

The ARIDO Member Continuation Committee developed two insurance satisfaction surveys, which were distributed to members in December. One survey was sent to members insured with PROLINK, while the other was directed to those using different insurance providers. The Committee reviewed the results and shared feedback with PROLINK to help enhance service delivery for our members.



**c. Updating the criteria for scholarships to include ARIDO's commitment to diverse and underrepresented students and newcomers.**

As part of ARIDO's ongoing commitment to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), the newly established Scholarship Committee, in collaboration with the Regulatory team, undertook a comprehensive review and refinement of the eligibility criteria for ARIDO's existing scholarships. This initiative ensured that ARIDO's dedication to supporting diverse, underrepresented students and newcomers is consistently reflected in all aspects of scholarship administration. The revised criteria were communicated to each scholarship sponsor, who were asked to formally endorse the updated standards as a requirement for continuing their partnership with ARIDO.

With the revised framework in place, the Scholarship Committee proceeded with the selection process for the Gary Hewson Scholarship. Program coordinators and instructors across accredited institutions nominated students who demonstrated notable peer mentorship, volunteerism, and leadership within their academic communities. From these nominations, the Committee selected eight recipients who exemplified the values and intent of the award.

Each award recipient was granted complimentary admission to the 2025 ARIDO Awards Gala, an opportunity made possible through the generous support of inspirED Learning Lab.

**e. Increasing event frequency in regions outside of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).**

The establishment of the Eastern and Northern ARIDO Communities (EAC and NAC) has proven successful, reflected in the dedication of community volunteers and leaders who worked to plan, coordinate, and host events and initiatives in the year 2025. Through local



**Mark Sanchez, ARIDO, Candice Wei, ARIDO and Ellen Lee, ARIDO** held sessions at the 2025 Ottawa Fall Home Show

NAC hosted a CEU Day featuring Designing from a Trauma-Informed Lens, presented by **Erin Jenner, ARIDO**



networking events, educational sessions, and public awareness initiatives, the EAC and NAC continue to strengthen regional representation and ensure that interior designers outside the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area have equal opportunities to participate and contribute to the growth of the profession.

**2. We will develop value-added programs, education, and best practices tools by:**

**a. Working with third parties as needed to curate educational curriculum and pro-grams:**

**i. for diversity, equity, and accessibility learning for members and industry partners. -**

The Education Committee actively recruiting third parties who are speakers and content developers.

**ii. on accessibility in design and spaces for all members to participate**

Accessibility Requirements in Ontario and Going Beyond presented by **Vanessa Tantalo, ARIDO.**

This session outlined the current accessibility requirements in Ontario and dispelled any misinformation around this. It also explored detail around the Accessibility Canada Act,



accessibility requirements of CMHC, detail of RHFAC and how interior designers can help their clients “go beyond”.

**b. Curating a formal online resource for members and industry partners that includes a resource library, education workshops, and lunch & learns focused on equity, diversity and inclusion learning, knowledge, and experiences for members and industry partners; and,**

This is the Education Committees mandate for 2025/2026 and beyond

### **NCIDQ Preparation Sessions for Intern Members**

As part of ARIDO’s Mentorship Program, six live NCIDQ preparation sessions were delivered in 2025 by experienced Registered Interior Designers. These sessions were designed to support Intern members in building confidence,

deepening their understanding of exam content, and preparing effectively for the NCIDQ examination process. The interactive format allowed Interns to ask questions, review exam strategies, and learn directly from seasoned practitioners who shared their real world insights and professional expertise.

Looking ahead to 2026, the ARIDO Belonging Committee, in collaboration with the Regulatory team, will update the session materials and presentations to reflect the newly introduced NCIDQ exam format for that year. This ongoing refinement ensures that ARIDO’s Intern members continue to receive timely, relevant, and high quality support as they progress toward registration and professional certification.



**c. Hosting webinars and presentations on practice related matters, i.e., OBC, HR, financial management, succession planning, running a practice.**

### **PROLINK Professional Liability Insurance Webinar**

As part of ARIDO’s ongoing commitment to supporting members in managing professional risk and safeguarding their practice, the Regulatory Team partnered with PROLINK to deliver the Annual Professional Liability Insurance Information Session. This webinar plays an important role in helping members make informed, strategic decisions about their insurance coverage—an essential component of responsible, ethical, and compliant interior design practice.



The session offered members clear and practical guidance on the Professional Practice Insurance program available through PROLINK, ensuring that they understand not only the coverage itself but also its significance in managing professional exposure. PROLINK specialists walked participants through what Professional Practice Insurance includes, highlighting how it differs from other forms of insurance and why it is a critical safeguard for design professionals.

Attendees gained insight into the common risks interior designers encounter, such as errors and omissions, project delays, documentation issues, miscommunication with clients, and challenges arising during construction or collaboration with contractors. The presenters explained how appropriate liability coverage mitigates these risks, reduces financial vulnerability, and supports continuity of practice when unexpected issues arise.

The webinar also explored the specific insurance options tailored for ARIDO members, outlining available coverage levels, supplementary protections, and advisory services. To help members make confident, needs based decisions, PROLINK provided guidance on evaluating insurance requirements based on factors such as project scale, role within a firm, business structure, and areas of specialization.

By offering this annual session, ARIDO ensures that members have access to up to date, relevant information that strengthens their professional risk management practices. These efforts reinforce ARIDO's commitment to supporting safe, informed, and resilient interior design practices across the province.

## Professional development

The Professional Development (PD) cycle for this reporting period ran from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2025. During this cycle, Registered, Intern, and Educator members were required to complete a total of 12 PD credits, including four in Health & Safety and eight in General Education. To ensure compliance with these requirements, ARIDO conducted a formal audit on June 30, 2025, randomly selecting 10% of members obligated to report on their professional development activities. Members who did not meet the reporting requirements were subject to potential consequences, including membership termination or a non-compliance fine.

Of the 145 members selected for audit, 77 fully reported their credits through the ARIDO dashboard, while 11 submitted partial information. A total of 57 members did not report any credits, and 30 members paid the Professional Development non-compliance fine. These results underscore ARIDO's commitment to maintaining high professional standards and ensuring that members continue to engage in ongoing learning and development.



## ARIDO Job Board for members

Like in previous years, the [ARIDO Job Board](#) continued to be a popular benefit of membership throughout 2025, with 95 submitted posts. Posts originated from municipalities, design and architecture firms, as well as large and small companies. This demonstrates that ARIDO continues to be a go-to resource to find qualified Interior Designers.

### Co-Op/Student Job Board

You can post your Student position on the ARIDO Job Board, and it's free to post.

We're helping to make it easy for employers/business owners to connect with ARIDO Student

members through the ARIDO Career Xpress Student Co-op/Internship job posting platform.

ARIDO student members can view any active posting and respond to you directly.

Looking for work? Visit the Job Board in ARIDOaccess.

## d. Creating resources such as:

### i. Building Code Reference Guide.

#### Ontario Building Code (OBC) Subcommittee Progress

In 2025, the OBC Subcommittee of the Practice Advisory Committee dedicated significant effort to developing ARIDO's Ontario Building Code (OBC) Application Guide for the 2024 edition of the Code. This guide is intended to support members in understanding and applying the updated regulatory requirements that impact interior design practice, ensuring greater clarity, consistency, and compliance across the profession.

Throughout the year, the subcommittee worked diligently to interpret the changes introduced in the 2024 OBC and translate them into practical, designer focused guidance. The completed resource will serve as a valuable tool for both seasoned practitioners and emerging professionals navigating code obligations within their projects.

The guide is expected to be finalized and formally launched in 2026, marking an important milestone in ARIDO's ongoing commitment to supporting members with high quality professional practice resources.



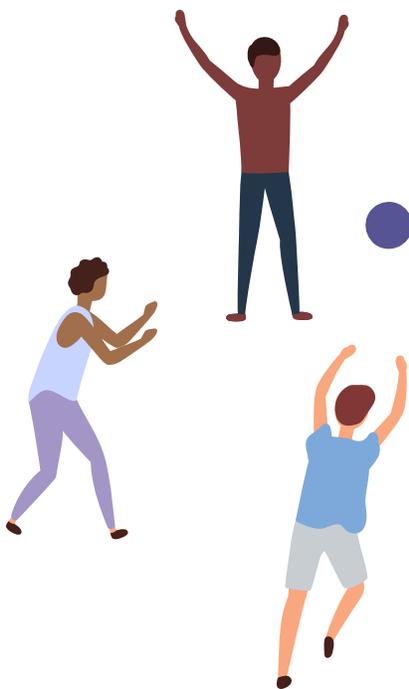
**ii. Guide to ethics and practice standards related to the practice of interior design;**

**Ethics and Practice Standards Guide Development**

The Ethics Subcommittee of the Practice Advisory Committee continued its important work in 2025 on the development of a comprehensive ARIDO Guide to Ethics and Practice Standards. This forthcoming resource is being designed to offer clear, practical guidance to members on upholding professional ethics while navigating the evolving realities of contemporary interior design practice.

In addition to outlining foundational ethical principles, the guide will incorporate commentary and direction on emerging and increasingly complex issues such as artificial intelligence (AI), sustainability, and accessibility. By addressing these topics, the subcommittee aims to ensure that ARIDO members are equipped with the knowledge and frameworks needed to make informed, responsible decisions in a rapidly changing professional landscape.

Work on the guide is ongoing, with further development and consultation planned for 2026 as ARIDO continues to strengthen its resources supporting ethical and professional excellence.



**iii. Interior design master class training programs.**

This is in progress by the Education Committee

**e. Developing templates and best practices for inclusive policies for adoption by de-sign firms and community organizations.**

**Work by the Awareness Committee**

After taking a step back during the previous 2024/25 cycle to reevaluate the committee goals, the committee has continued the work by creating an Awareness day calendar that will mark important dates throughout the year as it relates to ARIDO's work on EDI, with relevance to the interior design profession.

Below are some of the days that were highlighted during the 2025/26 cycle:

[March 8th - International Women's Day](#)

[February 16th - 22nd - Heritage Week](#)

[February - Black History Month](#)

[December 3rd - International Day for Persons with Disabilities](#)

**3. We will focus on value-added programs and initiatives that enable thriving careers for interior designers and that prioritize the inclusion of underrepresented designers and companies, by:**

**a. Reviewing and updating Intern membership requirements to ensure diversity and accessibility is represented in its framework.**

Work is ongoing by the regulatory team to review and update the Intern membership requirements to ensure diversity and accessibility representation in its framework



**b. Exploring the hiring a third party to manage the mentorship program to maintain the integrity of ARIDO's educational mandate.**

The final report for the **Star Leadership Program** was delivered by **Matrix 360** in December 2025. The findings indicate that the program delivered meaningful value to its participants, as highlighted in the following excerpt:

"The program had a remarkable impact. Participants noted significant gains in their confidence, communication abilities, and overall leadership presence. Both mentors and mentees embraced the reciprocal learning model, which shifted traditional mentorship into a dynamic, two way exchange of ideas and skills. This approach not only supported individual development but also strengthened ARIDO's community by fostering collaboration and shared accountability."

**ARIDO Mentorship program**

In 2025, the ARIDO run Mentorship program administered via the mentor city platform was revived by the regulatory team to support our emerging professionals with professional career support. 99 members registered to participate in the mentorship program in 2025, benefiting both Intern and Student members. ARIDO staff administered the program to offer custom matches including Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and accessibility considerations to meet the various mentorship needs of our emerging professionals

**c. Connecting students to co-op opportunities**

**Co-Op/Student Job Board**

Student positions can be posted on the ARIDO Job Board, and it's free to post.

We're helping to make it easy for employers/ business owners to connect with ARIDO Student members through the ARIDO Career Xpress

Student Co-op/Internship job posting platform.

ARIDO student members can view any active posting and respond to you directly.

Looking for work? Visit the Job Board in ARIDOaccess.



**d. Updating and expanding the mentorship program to include**

- i. opportunities for diverse and/or un-represented individuals.**
- ii. connecting different generations with one another.**
- iii. Including Students.**
- iv. peer to peer practice support.**
- v. importance of diversity and accessibility along with two-way learning, where the Mentee and Mentor are on learning journeys together.**
- vi. Cross firm mentorship led and supported by principals/owners.**
- vii. qualified sign off for their supervised experience requirement**

The ARIDO mentorship program featured a unique, customized matching process that connects designers across generations, ensuring participants gain the greatest value from their experience. In 2025, we were pleased to expand the program to include more students, pairing them with interns for mentorship. With increased capacity, we can welcome additional participants and introduce peer-to-peer practice support as well as cross-firm mentorship opportunities in 2026.

**4. Raising awareness on the value of design and Registered Interior Designers through:**

**Pr6 Title Enforcement**

Under Bill Pr6, An Act respecting the Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario, only Registered Members of ARIDO are permitted to use the protected titles “Interior Designer” and “A.R.I.D.O.” ARIDO continued its title enforcement activities throughout 2025 to uphold this legislative requirement and protect the integrity of the profession.

In 2025, 157 title enforcement investigations were completed. These efforts ensure that the use of professional titles remains accurate, transparent, and consistent with regulatory standards. The Bill Pr6 Committee met regularly during

the year to review and strengthen enforcement processes. Key areas of focus included refining enforcement procedures, improving cease and desist communications, and ensuring that all actions reflect an inclusive and fair approach. The Committee also updated ARIDO’s progressive enforcement framework and initiated a second round of title enforcement activities. Additionally, the Committee addressed ongoing challenges related to title misuse on third party platforms such as Houzz and Google Business categories.

**Lemonade – Credentials Matter campaign**

The title “Interior Designer” is protected in Ontario for a reason. It requires a commitment and passion to a rigorous path of education and training that is highly regarded. It holds a right to associate credentials to your title and to your work. Any person in Ontario who chooses to use the designation Interior Designer or ARIDO without being a member is also choosing to practice illegally.

ARIDO is committed to protecting its members and the industry and holding those accountable that take shortcuts. It’s a big undertaking, but as a



community of Interior Designers, we will continue to band together to become a stronger force in the industry and to protect our profession and all the clients that rely on us and your talent.

This is at the heart of our Credentials Matter Campaign that launched during 2025. A public facing campaign aimed at educating consumers in Ontario of the importance of qualified interior designers and the harm that is incurred when the public engages in the services offered by one who is not Registered with ARIDO.

The campaign began on the [ARIDO website](#) and social media channels and featured real Registered Members in stories we have heard from real clients about projects gone wrong when a non-qualified interior designer was hired.

The next part of the campaign launched at the end of 2025 with an ad campaign on social, as well as reaching out to media outlets across Ontario.

As we grow this campaign over the next year, there will be more opportunities for ARIDO Registered members to jump in, so keep an eye out for announcement.

### Canadian Interiors – expanded partnership

ARIDO has entered into a broader collaboration agreement with Canadian Interiors that provides collaboration opportunities beyond the annual ARIDO Awards Magazine. In addition to continuing to develop the annual ARIDO Awards Magazine, Canadian Interiors is now serving as the Official Magazine of ARIDO during the agreement term. This agreement will provide ARIDO with a two-page editorial in upcoming issues of Canadian Interiors.

Our first editorial issue can be found in May/June issue of the magazine ([access the digital version](#)).



Credentials Matter campaign featuring:  
Michael London, ARIDO  
Dyonne Fashina, ARIDO  
Michelle Mawby, ARIDO  
Johnson Chou, ARIDO  
Adriana Mot, ARIDO  
Robin Fraser, ARIDO



**a. Education of interior designer’s legal rights to submit for permit.**

Lobbying with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to address ongoing issues of permit denial of members with a Large BCIN.

**b. Education of the benefits of businesses working with interior designers:**

BLOG//ARIDO is a cornerstone of our promotion strategy. We worked with Registered members to create content for the posted projects and articles.

We also promoted the ARIDO Award winners as well as the finalist projects.

Visit [BLOG//ARIDO](#) to read about amazing projects by Registered Interior Designers.

**e. Showcasing what the profession does.**

**Awards Gala 2025**

On September 17, 2025, the interior design community gathered at Grand Bizarre in Toronto for the ARIDO Awards Gala 2025, an evening inspired by the theme “A Night Born From Stardust.” Drawing from the idea that everything begins from the same cosmic origins, the night reflected on evolution and the shared purpose that brings interior designers together. Just as interstellar dust once gathered to form our planet in perfect balance with its star, the Gala celebrated how ideas, creativity, and collective energy come together to shape spaces where life unfolds.

ARIDO honoured 19 winning projects by Registered Interior Designers across the categories CRAFT, DISTINCT, EAT + STAY, LEARN, and WORK, along with the IMPACT Award. Each recognized project demonstrated not only excellence in design, but also the ability to create spaces that foster connection, purpose, and alignment within the built environment. These projects reflect how interior design continues to evolve, responding thoughtfully to the way people live, work, learn, and gather. Special thanks to our 2025 Awards Gala judges — Ashwin Raman, Erin Jenner, Nadia Cannataro,



**ARIDO Awards 2025 Magazine cover**

and Vera Gisarov — who meticulously reviewed 69 submissions.

The Gala was a vibrant celebration of creativity, community, and shared vision, bringing together designers, industry partners, volunteers, judges, and supporters of the profession. ARIDO extends its heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making the evening a memorable celebration of design and the remarkable individuals whose work continues to elevate the industry.

**g. Advocating for the design of interior spaces that exceed minimum accessibility standards.**

This is part of the ongoing scope of the Accessibility Committee

**h. Expand the scope and reach of Interior Design Week by collaborating with the other provinces, and by developing a unified, collective voice for the profession in all in all jurisdictions**

We are in active collaboration with APDIQ as a result of the Mutual Recognition Agreement.



**The signing of the Mutual Recognition Agreement between ARIDO and APDIQ at the 2025 AGM in Ottawa**

## ROI project

On the ARIDO Awards Gala 2024 night, we were pleased to announce that our next ROI Project is with the Ontario Employment Education and Research (OEERC) and The Workers' Action Centre (WAC). The OEERC and WAC are committed to improving public education and awareness of employment rights, as well as supporting workers who have experienced violations of their rights.

The objective of the ARIDO ROI (Renew-Originate-Implement) initiative is to assist an Ontario-based organization or charity through the improvement of their interior environment where essential services and support are provided.

The project was completed during summer of 2025, thanks to the amazing support of donors and sponsors. This initiative is solely volunteer driven and requires a significant commitment from an ARIDO planning committee made up of ARIDO members and industry suppliers, and the ROI chairs Dayna Bradley, Mahesh Babooram and Sharon Portelli.

A huge thank you goes out to all the sponsors and donors for making this year's project a success.

More details and photos on the [ROI page](#) on the ARIDO website.



Photography: Yranni Tong



# Inclusive Engagement

**Goal:** Create safe and inclusive spaces where the community feels engaged and inspired to become an ARIDO Ambassador in this work.



## 1. Facilitating more inclusive communication methods that include:

**a. Two-way communication between ARIDO and the members, and the members with each other to connect and discuss issues together.**

### **Meet the President: A New Grassroots Member Engagement Initiative**

New for 2026, ARIDO’s Regulatory team launched an exciting grassroots engagement initiative titled “Meet the President.” This informal drop in networking event was designed to give members across all categories—Registered, Intern, Educator, and Student—direct access to the Association’s highest level of leadership. The goal of this initiative is to foster open dialogue, strengthen transparency, and create a welcoming space where members can share ideas, raise concerns, and contribute to the future direction of ARIDO.

The inaugural session was held on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at the ARIDO offices. The event created a warm and collaborative atmosphere, encouraging conversations between members and Jeremy Cheff, President of ARIDO. Attendees were able to speak candidly about emerging issues within the profession, regulatory challenges, opportunities for innovation, and ways ARIDO can further support its membership.



**Meet the President event in 2025**

This first gathering underscored the value of accessible leadership and reinforced ARIDO’s commitment to meaningful member engagement. Based on the enthusiasm and positive feedback received, “Meet the President” is expected to become a recurring touchpoint for ongoing dialogue and relationship building within the ARIDO community.

### **ARIDO’s Membership team presence at trade shows and events**

Throughout 2025, the ARIDO Membership and Regulatory teams actively participated in industry events, including the Interior Design Show (IDS) and Living Luxe, to strengthen public awareness of ARIDO and engage directly with members. These events provided an important platform for ARIDO to showcase the value of professional registration, connect with industry partners, and offer on the spot support to members.

Working collaboratively with the non-regulatory team, the Regulatory team was present at both events to answer membership related questions, clarify requirements, and provide detailed information on ARIDO's Registration Pathways. Their presence ensured that members and prospective applicants had direct access to knowledgeable staff who could guide them through eligibility, documentation, and next steps toward Registration.

At IDS 2025, the Regulatory team also hosted a panel discussion focused on the Intern Competency Review System (ICRS), ARIDO's alternative pathway for meeting the education requirement for Registration. This session generated significant interest from attendees, offering clarity on the program's structure, expectations, and benefits for applicants with non traditional educational backgrounds. These in person engagements were invaluable in promoting ARIDO within the design community and strengthening relationships with members in a more informal and approachable setting.

The success of these events underscored the continued importance of face to face outreach as a complement to ARIDO's digital communication channels.

**b. Gathering and obtaining feedback from members, in a transparent way, on their needs and how they wish to be engaged; and,**

**Post ARIDO Awards Gala survey**

The ARIDO Awards Gala 2025 brought the interior design community together for an evening dedicated to recognizing excellence and celebrating the work shaping the profession today. The energy in the room reflected a shared sense of pride in the work being recognized and the community that continues to shape the future of interior design in Ontario.

Survey responses highlighted the elements that made the evening memorable: the opportunity to celebrate award recipients, the vibrant atmosphere of the venue, and the informal networking that unfolded throughout the night.

Many attendees shared that the Awards Gala provided a valuable moment to step away from day-to-day work and come together as a profession — to recognize excellence, reconnect with colleagues, and welcome new voices into the community.

Feedback from attendees will continue to inform the evolution of the event. Suggestions around program flow and additional opportunities for engagement will help shape future Awards Gala experiences. What remains clear from this year's responses is that the ARIDO Awards Gala continues to serve as a key moment each year for the interior design community to gather, reflect on its achievements, and celebrate the people and ideas shaping the spaces of tomorrow.

**PEQAB Survey**

Last year ARIDO was gathering research and data from relevant ARIDO stakeholders around the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) Standards.

ARIDO reached out to stakeholders with an anonymous and confidential survey in fall of 2025 for their input and assistance via participation in a brief questionnaire regarding PEQAB standards and their application to Bachelor of Interior Design programs in Ontario. The intention of this research was to conduct an environmental scan of relevant stakeholders (current areas of strengths found in entry-to-practice professionals) across the province. The survey centered around the relevance of Registered Interior Designers, with Canadian in-the-field training, as faculty in ARIDO recognized BID programs instructing ARIDO students.

This research will be used to propose changes to PEQAB standards.



**c. Members informing ARIDO of issues facing them both individually and the profession.**

The [Virtual suggestion box](#) for members is still available on the ARIDO website.

**2. We will increase engagement within our community by:**

**a. Finding ways to further connect and engage with:**

**i. underrepresented and diverse members such as Black, Indigenous, people of colour, newcomers and LGBTQI2S+.**

ARIDO's Regulatory team collaborated with JVS Toronto's to host two presentations in 2025 for their BUILD Program, an employment initiative designed to support internationally trained professionals as they transition into the Canadian workforce. The session introduced internationally trained interior design professionals to the alternative pathways available for obtaining ARIDO membership. The 2nd session was co-hosted by Members of the ARIDO Inclusion Committee.

These presentation served as an important touchpoint for newcomers with interior design experience, many of whom arrive with strong professional backgrounds but face challenges navigating credential recognition in Ontario. The presentation provided an

overview of ARIDO's Registration Pathways—particularly the Intern Competency Review System (ICRS)—and explained how applicants with non-CIDA-accredited education can demonstrate their competencies and progress toward Intern and ultimately Registered membership.

Participants also received practical guidance on preparing documentation, accessing supports, and understanding the expectations of the Ontario interior design profession. By engaging directly with newcomers, ARIDO helped reduce barriers to entry, promoted equity within the profession, and reinforced its commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive membership.

This collaboration with JVS Toronto strengthens ARIDO's ongoing efforts to ensure that internationally trained designers have clear, accessible routes to professional recognition and can contribute their expertise to Ontario's design community.

**Capital Pride Parade 2025**

ARIDO president Jeremy Cheff invited ARIDO members to join him at the Capital Pride Parade in Ottawa to march with multiple groups who are focused on building equity for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and organizations as professionals who work in the built environment.





**A few highlights from 2025 BID grad shows**

The entire ARIDO community and extended community was invited to be part of recognizing and celebrating 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals within ARIDO’s community, in Ottawa, and across Ontario for their contributions to the built environment.

**ii. students enrolled in an ARIDO-recognized education program.**

**BID Graduate Shows**

The ARIDO Regulatory team demonstrated the Association’s ongoing commitment to supporting emerging professionals by attending the 2025 graduate exhibitions across Ontario’s accredited interior design programs. Representatives were present at the graduation shows of Georgian College, Algonquin College, Yorkville University, Conestoga College, Toronto Metropolitan University, Humber College, and Sheridan College.

Through their participation, the Regulatory team provided encouragement to graduating students, reinforced ARIDO’s connection to academic partners, and highlighted the Association’s continued investment in the next generation of Registered Interior Designers.

The ARIDO Regulatory team in collaboration with the Inclusion Committee coordinated Registered members to volunteer at schools, where they delivered presentations on a range of topics to support professional practice development.

The Regulatory team also attended the Annual Sheridan College Industry and Association showcase and supported the non-regulatory team at the Fanshawe London industry show case.

**BID 4th-year grad thesis projects showcased on ARIDO social media**

ARIDO showcased the 4th year BID thesis projects by students from ARIDO recognized schools across Ontario in a social media campaign, which attracted a lot of attention from the ARIDO community.



**ARIDO membership team at the annual Sheridan Industry and Association showcase**



## Fanshawe ID and ARIDO Industry Night

On November 19th, 2025, the Western ARIDO Community came together with interior design students from Fanshawe College and Conestoga College, along with industry professionals, for an evening of learning and connection.

With an incredible lineup of panelists including Dayna Bradley, Leah Lasani, ARIDO, Melissa Munroe, ARIDO, Vanessa Tantalo, ARIDO, Melanie Scott, ARIDO, and together with the moderator, Natalie Rowe, ARIDO Registered Educator, the discussion gave students a real look into what life is like in the industry.

The panelists shared honest stories about their career paths, the challenges they have faced, and the lessons that shaped them. They talked about collaboration, staying adaptable, and finding your voice as a designer, encouraging students to stay curious, keep learning, and continue evolving.

### Table top events for students

The Central ARIDO Community (CAC) introduced a new initiative to its 2025 calendar with the launch of the Tabletop Tradeshow, held at Toronto Metropolitan University. Designed to bridge the gap between education and practice, the event created an interactive space where interior design students could experience products firsthand, explore the materials and solutions they will one day specify, and build meaningful relationships with industry representatives who shape the profession. This initiative was made possible through the support of Joan Shaw, Educator ARIDO and Internship Coordinator at TMU, the participation of industry partners, and the dedication of volunteers Lucy Traetto and Michael Turner. Special thanks also go to CAC Executive Sponsor Dayna Bradley, whose support helped bring this valuable learning opportunity to life.



**Fanshawe ID and ARIDO Industry Night panelists**

The Eastern ARIDO Community (EAC) opened its 2025 with a Tabletop Show initiative held at the Algonquin College. The event offered students an opportunity to engage with industry partners, learn about products and materials used in practice, and gain insight into the professional landscape of interior design. Numerous industry partners participated in the event, contributing their expertise and support throughout the evening. The success of the event would not be possible without the volunteers, Simran Potnis, Student ARIDO, and Brianna Abou-Zeidan, Intern ARIDO, with leadership from EAC Lead Sam Derosier, Intern ARIDO, and Co-Lead Helga Bastiaan, Intern ARIDO, whose efforts helped bring the event to fruition.

### Student Charrette at IDS 2026

Over two days at the ARIDO booth at the Interior Design Show 2026, the Design Justice Charrette invited 50 BID ARIDO student members across Ontario to imagine what a more equitable and thoughtful built environment could look like. Hosted in partnership with Inspired Learning Lab, Erin Jenner and Ojibik, Mahesh Babooram,



the charrette challenged students to create design installations that addressed pressing themes in the profession today, including accessibility and universal design, cultural identity and representation, economic justice and affordability, and environmental responsibility. The result was a dynamic exchange of ideas where creativity met purpose, and emerging designers demonstrated how design can be a powerful tool for advocacy and change.

Throughout the challenge, Intern ARIDO member volunteers played an essential role as coaches and technical advisors, supporting students as they navigated complex ideas, refined their concepts, and pushed their thinking beyond obvious solutions. Their guidance helped transform early sketches into creative design responses that reflected both imagination and critical thinking. ARIDO extends its sincere thanks to all participants, mentors, and judges who contributed their time and expertise to the initiative. The winners of the two-day charrette will be announced at a special gathering at the Ojibik showroom in early May of 2026.

**Group image of Design Charrette participants and the Intern mentors**



### **iii. Career Xpress Committee Ambassadors within the interior design programs; and**

#### **Portfolio Review**

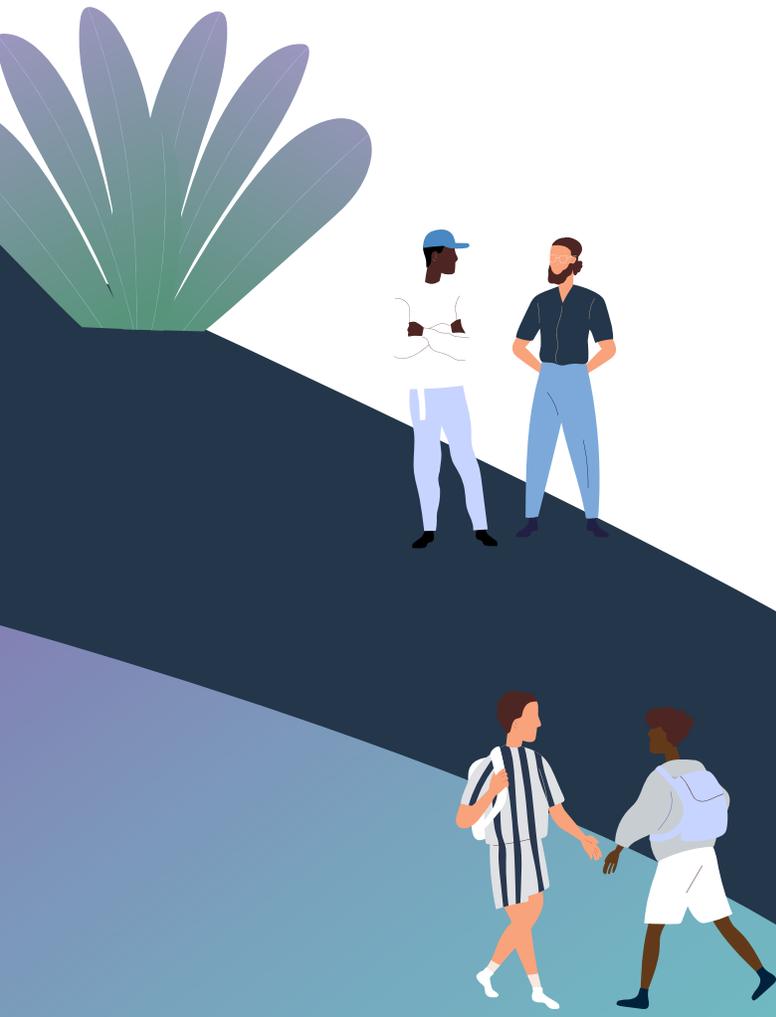
The Career Xpress Committee held its annual Portfolio Review in April 2025, generously hosted by Mohawk Group at their downtown Toronto showroom. The event featured one-on-one review sessions led by Registered Members of ARIDO, providing students and Intern members with constructive feedback, professional guidance, and insight into industry expectations.

In addition to the individualized reviews, attendees benefited from opportunities to network with peers, Registered Members, and the Mohawk team while engaging with the showroom environment.

Looking ahead, the Career Xpress Sub-Committee will coordinate the next Portfolio Review session in April 2026.

#### **Portfolio Preparation Session**

In November 2025, the Career Xpress Sub-Committee hosted a virtual panel discussion and Q&A session focused on



preparing emerging professionals for job-seeking success. The session covered interview techniques as well as best practices for developing effective cover letters, résumés, and portfolios.

Student and Intern members reported that the session was highly informative and valuable in strengthening their readiness for professional opportunities.

#### **iv. faculty and Educator members of ARIDO.**

##### **Showcasing Educator Excellence**

In 2025, ARIDO strengthened its commitment to supporting and elevating the role of interior design Educators across the province. The names of qualified Educator members from ARIDO-recognized schools are now prominently featured on the ARIDO website, increasing visibility and ensuring that students, employers, and the public can more easily identify instructors who meet ARIDO's professional standards.

To further highlight the expertise and contributions of these leaders in design education, ARIDO launched the new "Meet the Educator" program. This initiative profiles individual Educators, showcasing their credentials, areas of specialization, and impact within the academic and professional communities. By celebrating their achievements, ARIDO is helping to raise public awareness of the critical role Educators play in shaping the next generation of interior designers.

In addition, ARIDO is moving forward with formally recognizing Registered Educator as its own distinct membership category. This designation acknowledges the qualifications, professional standing, and educational influence of these members, reinforcing their importance within both the Association and the broader design industry. Together, these initiatives demonstrate ARIDO's commitment to enhancing the visibility, credibility, and professional identity of Educators across Ontario.

#### **c. Empowering our community members to be advocates by holding:**

- i. Member story telling town halls; and**
- ii. Round table discussions with all levels of membership.**

At the 'Meet the President' event introduced last year, all levels of membership were invited to have an open discussion with the ARIDO president.

- iii. Collecting real life experiences and sharing client stories from an end user of space and human experience perspective.**

As part of the renewal campaign for the 2026 annual year, the membership team highlighted real stories from ARIDO members as part of the campaign.

#### **3. We will develop and formalize a more inclusive outreach plan to attract and support diverse and underrepresented members, industry partners and collaborators by:**

##### **Intern Competency Review System (ICRS)**

The Intern Competency Review System (ICRS) is ARIDO's competency based assessment designed to provide fair and equitable access for non traditional Intern applicants who have not graduated from a CIDA accredited Interior Design program but possess competencies equivalent to the learning outcomes of such programs. Through this process, ARIDO ensures that applicants from diverse educational backgrounds can demonstrate their readiness for Intern membership based on measurable, industry aligned standards. Interest and participation in the program remained strong throughout the year. A total of 153 individuals requested information about joining the ICRS, and 43 applicants formally enrolled. Of those, 31 successfully completed the program, while 23 continue to assemble and submit their Book of Evidence as part of the assessment requirements.



## ICRS Collaboration in Other Provinces

ARIDO also continues to support the implementation of the ICRS in other jurisdictions. Applicants with non CIDA accredited degrees who are seeking registration with the Interior Designers of New Brunswick (IDNB) and the Professional Interior Designers Institute of Manitoba (PIDIM) had the option to enroll in the ICRS as part of their pathway to membership. ARIDO served as an impartial third party assessor, providing applicants with the necessary guidance and information throughout the process. Upon completion, ARIDO communicated the results directly to both the applicant and their respective association, ensuring a consistent and transparent assessment experience across provinces.

## Registered Interior Designer Assessment (RIDA)

The Registered Interior Designer Assessment (RIDA) was established to create a fair, transparent, and competency based pathway for individuals seeking Registered status in Ontario. Rooted in the protection of the public interest, RIDA allows applicants to demonstrate their professional readiness through performance based assessment rather than relying solely on traditional academic or examination routes. This approach ensures that all candidates—regardless of background—are evaluated consistently against the competencies required for safe and effective interior design practice.

The first field testing cohort launched in June 2025 and included seven applicants. Their interviews were conducted in September 2025, marking an important milestone for the program as ARIDO tested the assessment structure in a real world setting. Results from this initial cohort provided valuable insight into both the strengths of the process and opportunities for refinement. Three applicants were deemed fully “ready,” having demonstrated competency across all eight required areas. Another three were assessed as “partially ready,” meeting the threshold in at least six competencies but requiring further development in the remaining areas. One applicant was determined to be “not ready,” having met competency expectations in fewer than six areas. These outcomes offered meaningful data to help strengthen the integrity and consistency of the RIDA framework.



Following the success of the first cycle, a second field testing cohort began in October 2025, again with seven participants. Interviews for this group were scheduled for January 2026. The findings from this second cohort will further support ARIDO’s ongoing effort to validate the assessment and prepare for full program implementation. Together, these early phases reflect ARIDO’s commitment to building a fair, equitable, and robust pathway to Registered Interior Designer status in Ontario.

### e. Highlighting and being intentional with ARIDO’s commitment to diversity, equity and accessibility on marketing brand collateral.

ARIDO’s communications and branded collateral materials aim to use diverse and inclusive imagery, and accessible design practices (colours, contrast, accessible PDFs, etc)

### ARIDO updated the website with accessibility features

Over the past few months, ARIDO has been updating our website to make it easier for more people to use it in the ways that work best for them. These updates support screen readers, keyboard navigation, and stronger visual accessibility. Some of the improvements include: higher contrast for text and buttons, clear visual focus indicators, structured headings for screen readers, alt text on images and descriptive link language.

These changes bring us closer to an inclusive profession where every member and every Ontarian seeking interior design knowledge can participate fully.





**5. We will expand our commitments to increasing diverse representation in the Interior Design sector by:**

**c. Increasing supplier diversity by creating and developing an online portal for diverse businesses and support the advancement of diversity and accessibility in the design industry.**

Foundation Subcommittee Development continued in 2025 to identify a framework and strategy for the development of a diverse supplier system.

**k. Increasing ARIDO’s presence with diverse and underrepresented community groups and associations across Ontario through partnerships and educational promotional opportunities by:**

**iv. Strengthening stakeholder relations and collaborating with other organizations to build awareness of the value of design.**

**Interior Design Show 2026**

ARIDO’s involvement with the show was to continue educating the public on the importance of consumers hiring and working with a Registered Interior Designer.

ARIDO spent four exciting days at the 2026 Interior Design Show Toronto. The ARIDO booth was the place to be for connecting with members and networking, witnessing students’ collaborative design process while they created their installations during the Design Justice Charrette, connecting the public with Registered members during ‘Meet the Interior Designers’ program, Credentials Matter photo-booth, and more.

During days 1 and 2 the ARIDO booth hosted the Design Justice Charrette in partnership with Inspired Learning Lab and Ojibik. The charrette was a wonderful opportunity for 50 BID ARIDO student members to showcase their unique designs/ installations with a focus on accessibility and universal design, cultural identity and representation, economic justice and affordability, and environmental justice.

Thank you to all the participants and their Intern mentor volunteers who provided support and mentorship to the students during this two-day challenge. They served as coaches and technical advisors throughout the two days as they helped the students navigate challenges, refine ideas, and push their thinking beyond the obvious solutions.

We would like to thank the judges for their careful considerations. The winners of the two-day charrette will be announced sometime in February or March at the Ojibik showroom.

On days 3 and 4, during the ‘Meet the Interior Designers’ program, Registered Interior Designers connected with the public, answered questions related to ARIDO and the profession and also provided design consultations.

We would like to thank all the Registered members for volunteering and donating their time during the ‘Meet the Interior Designers’ program, and for advocating for the profession and the importance of being a qualified Interior Designer and credentials.

Thank you to **Ashwin Raman, ARIDO, Brenda Bjarnason, ARIDO, Daria Romanovska, ARIDO, Dianne Berman, ARIDO, Ellen Lee, ARIDO, Golnar Raissi-Dehkordi, ARIDO, Jenny Yan Shi, ARIDO, Jude Kamal, ARIDO, Lana Pihut, ARIDO, Meghan DuChene, ARIDO, Michael London, ARIDO, Mimi Pineau, ARIDO, Nadia Cannataro, ARIDO, Natalya Ness, ARIDO, Roxann Brown, ARIDO, Sarah Bilicki, ARIDO, Sojung Yoo, ARIDO, Suwan Mak-Mancuso, ARIDO, Zinnia Bookwala, ARIDO.**

The Credentials Matter photo booth by OVL Booth was available during days 2 and 3 at the ARIDO booth, to provide the opportunity for Registered members to get their assets.

See next page for some highlights from the ARIDO stage.





### Canada Light Expo

Through real project case studies, our panelists showed how early partnership, shared vision, and integrated decision-making lead to stronger, more impactful spaces. The conversation highlighted how thoughtful collaboration leads to better outcomes for both designers and clients. A big thank-you to our speakers and to everyone who attended and contributed to the discussion.

#### Panelists:

- Alan Mcintosh, IAID Toronto
- Marcel Dion, Marcel Dion Lighting Design Inc.
- Michel Arcand, ARIDO, IN8 Design Inc
- Sarah Taylor, ARIDO, Gensler
- Shaghayegh (Shaya) Riazi, Mullvey & Banani Lighting
- Moderator: Dayna Bradley, Dayna Bradley Consulting

### Ottawa Fall Home Show

The Eastern ARIDO Community proudly partnered once again with the Ottawa Fall Home Show!

### Highlights from the ARIDO booth at IDS 2026

A huge thank you to Ellen Lee, ARIDO of Ellen Lee Design, who led “Why AI Can’t Replace Registered Interior Designers,” exploring how AI may assist creativity but can never replicate the human insight, empathy, and expertise of real designers.

Our next session, led by Candice Wei, ARIDO and Mark Sanchez, ARIDO of Wei Sanchez Design Studio Inc., dove into “An Investment, Not an Expense: The Value of a Registered Interior Designer,” reminding everyone that working with a Registered Interior Designer ensures safety, functionality, and long-term value — a true investment in quality.

Thanks to our moderators Samantha Derosier (EAC Lead) and Katarina Yannouloupoulos (Fall Home Show Event Lead), and to the Algonquin College BID students for their amazing help with the stage setup and tear down.

**6. Collaborate with the Ontario Association of Architects to develop a series of resources to assist in educating and engaging ARIDO members, provincial government, and stakeholders on the future of regulation.**

### **ARIDO & OAA Direct Regulation Update**

#### **What is the Status of the Direct Regulation Model?**

As reported at the 2025 Town Hall meeting and AGM, in 2023, the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) had a legal application filed against them in the Supreme Ontario Court of Justice. This legal application challenged OAA's authority to issue practice licenses for technologists via an OAA Council Policy.

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice issued an Order that the OAA had no lawful authority to issue licenses via the Licensed Technologist OAA policy.

With the Court decision, OAA worked with the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) for ways to reinstate public protection in relation to a license class for the technologist members.

This priority for the OAA put a pause on the work between OAA and ARIDO, and the Direct Regulation Order.

However, in response to the court ruling, the OAA amended the Architects Act. These amendments were included in Bill 157 which passed and received royal assent on March 6, 2024. ARIDO expressed support, in writing, for these amendments and for the OAA to move forward with reissuing licenses to their technologist membership base.

#### **How Do these Amendments Impact the Direct Regulation Model?**

While this matter had nothing to do with ARIDO or the Direct Regulation Model, this new class of Limited License would have been required for ARIDO members in the new Direct Regulation Model.

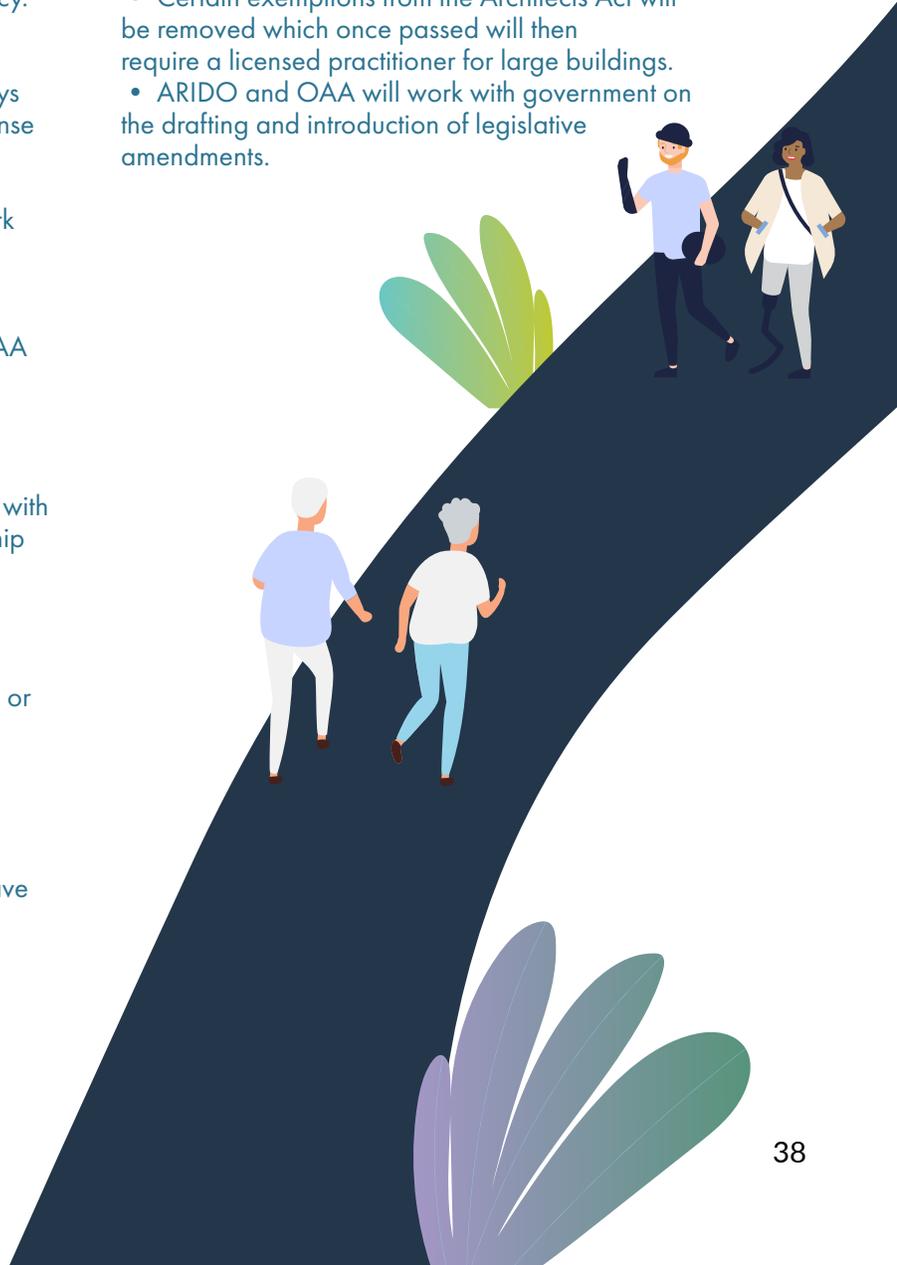
Therefore these amendments to the Architects have resolved some of the legislated amendments that would have been required for the Direct Regulation Model.

#### **What Work Remains for the Direct Regulation Model to Move forward?**

Ontario has a renewed Provincial Leadership with the Conservatives and Doug Ford. Doug Downey continues as the Attorney General and this means our work can continue with the same political leadership.

Next immediate priorities will include:

- Stakeholder consultations with those that may be impacted in their ability to practice interior design in large buildings.
- The ARIDO/OAA Joint Task Force will begin working on the remaining legislated amendments related to the exemption for Part 3 (Large) Buildings. This amendment secures a protected scope of practice of interior design for large buildings.
- Certain exemptions from the Architects Act will be removed which once passed will then require a licensed practitioner for large buildings.
- ARIDO and OAA will work with government on the drafting and introduction of legislative amendments.



# Life Members

Logue Alison  
McGeary Wendy  
Ellman Irving  
Sinnott Paul  
Walker Kimberley  
Link Christine  
Johnston Carla  
Grant Brenda  
Warren Jillian  
Comtois Denis  
Tanner Kim  
Johnstone Beverly  
Hooper David  
Pyc Julia  
Legault Tracey  
Newcombe Judy  
Glenat Leonie  
Kercz Jon J.  
Jones Anita  
Letellier Marc  
Gerhardt Darlene



# New Registered Members

Lin Chuhan  
Cockwell Lisa  
Long Emma  
Munroe Katrina  
Stuart Sheree  
Tse Tiffany  
Raison Jill  
Taptugyan Marine  
Morton Jennifer  
Bada Crema Ann  
Choi Evelyn  
Romanovska Daria  
Hannaford Emma  
Santuico Mai-Rim Nollaine  
Franchuk Kateryna  
Ortiz Trujillo Julian  
Kuemper Nancy  
Merry Erica  
McNeil Heather  
Chachula Ivanka  
Hough Melissa

Pham Nhan  
Vanderkamp-Merritt Kathleen  
Nicolas Juliana  
Pihut Svetlana  
Raman Ashwin  
Kapoor Sakshi  
James Ashley  
Delorme Brianne  
Richmond Sylvia  
Hacking Mia  
Chiasson Mikayla  
Uprichard Stephanie  
Della Savia Leigh  
Dawkins Kristin  
Fajardo Joshua  
McLaughlin Laura  
Alves Laura  
Bradley Lucas  
Kell Katelynn  
Costanzo Rosa



# Gary Hewson Award Receptipients

Saachi Kaur Bedi – Humber College

Caroline Kelly – Algonquin College

Trinity Griese – Toronto Metropolitan University

Amanda Moreira – Conestoga College

Jaspauline Lubambu – Yorkville University

Jenna Waller – Georgian College

Anna Tran – OCAD University

Francesca Mak – Sheridan College



# ARIDO Communities and Co-Leads

## NAC

Terry Ledger

## WAC

Lead: Penny Fobler-Cressy

Co-Lead: Amanda Ens (2025)

Dana McLean (2026)

## CAC

Lead: Isabelle Talbot

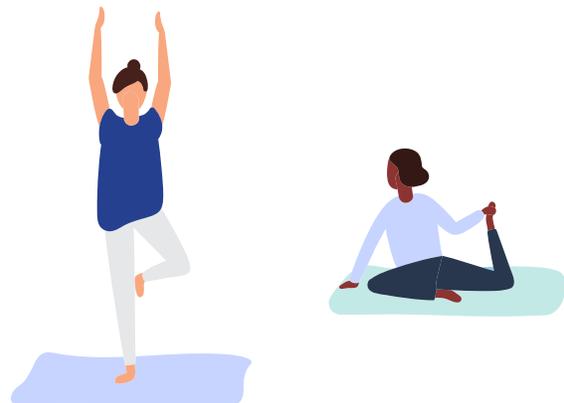
Co-Leads: Dayna Bradley and

Joanna Lucente

## EAC

Lead: Samantha Derosier

Co-Lead: Helga Bastiaan



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Meghan DuChene

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Cassandra Richardson

Mary Mininni Poci

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Lisa Sandham

Jessica Juvet

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Camille Ganuelas

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Heather Woods

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Lana Pihut

Lucia Toffoli De Biasio

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Laura Fyles

Mahsa Saeedi

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Ioana Ionescu

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Alexander Callisto

Tiwa Oshikoya

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Farzan Farnaghi - Co-Chair

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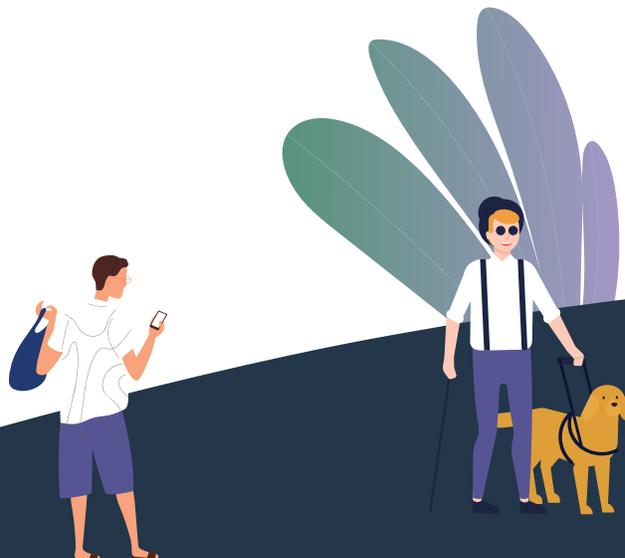
Sanaya Chaze

Mariam Wifi

Lucy Traetto

Ian Hung Tien Nguyen

Jaenelle Murrell



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Ivy Thompson  
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ASHWIN RAMAN  
Zinnia Bookwala  
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Golnar Raissi-Dehkordi  
Ioana Ionescu

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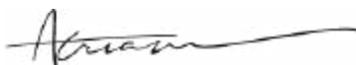
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# 2025 Annual Report

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