



Association
of Registered
Interior Designers
of Ontario

Strategic Plan

2026-2028



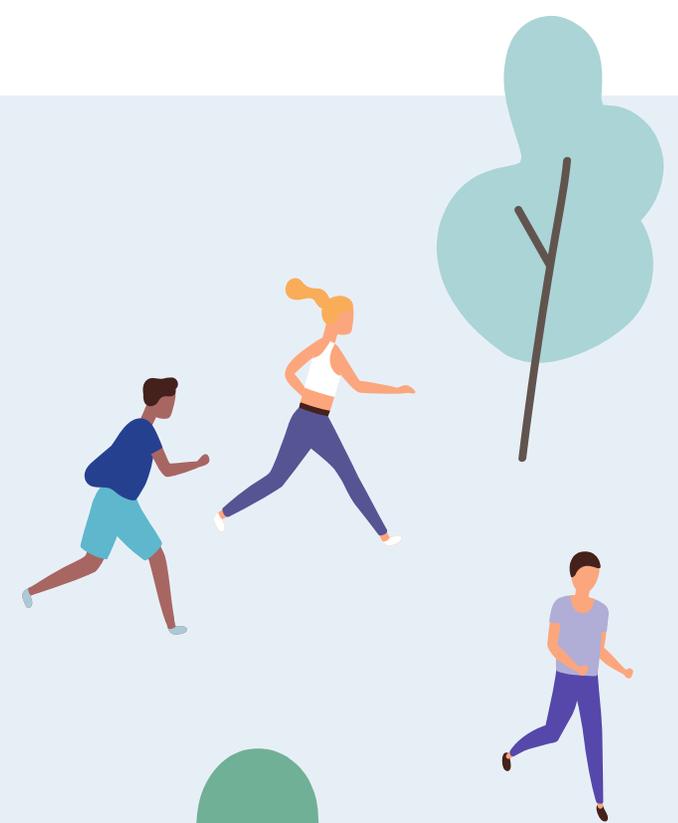
Background

An annual strategic planning process has been a necessary governance practice for the Board of Directors and staff to identify a roadmap, and guide ARIDO to its future as a vibrant, rejuvenated, diverse, and inclusive professional organization. It has also served to keep the strategic focus and momentum of the Board and staff moving forward from year to year.

In 2021, ARIDO centred its focus on advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within the organization, profession, and the broader interior design community. The journey related to this work reflects a transformation within the organization to evolve beyond our history as a membership association pursuing a regulatory future; to one that also thrives as a community which is diverse, inclusive, equitable, and accessible.

In its efforts, ARIDO recognizes there is room for improvement for access to opportunities for diverse equity seeking groups. As the leader for interior design in Ontario, ARIDO is in a position of influence to lead, by example, the progression of diverse and equitable practices.

The leadership also recognizes that there is a significant underrepresentation of members who identify as Black, Indigenous, people of colour, newcomers and LGBTQI2S+ persons, ARIDO is therefore committed to prioritizing the transformation to an inclusive and equitable association where members feel valued and respected because of their differences – an association where every member feels included and has access and support so they can reach their potential to achieve and thrive.



The 2026-2028 Strategic Plan builds upon the priorities and work of the last 3 years and focuses on the continuation of our commitment to advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

This strategic plan continues to incorporate the recommendations stemming from The Chandy Principle™ Diversity and Equity Workplace Audit (DEWA) which is designed and executed by Matrix360, our partners on this journey. The DEWA audit was undertaken in Phase II of ARIDO's work and uncovers insights through an examination of the organization's culture, demographics, leadership teams, employee, and member perspectives, and policies and procedures.

The DEWA audit has revealed that ARIDO's current state is similar to many

other organizations in relation to diversity, equity, and accessibility: improvements are needed to its existing infrastructure and culture, and these improvements must be a priority in order to truly advance the current state for the entire ARIDO community.

By continuing with a multi-year Strategic Plan, ARIDO's Board, Staff, and Committees have greater runway to deeply engage with the tasks and initiatives outlined in this plan. It underscores the importance of integrating these goals within ARIDO's daily work and provides space for careful, sustained work to be completed on these long term objectives.



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.

ARIDO's 2026-2028 Strategic Plan continues to centre around the

Bold Statement which confirms the organization's commitment to honouring its responsibility as an industry leader to forge a new pathway to advance equity and diverse representation through actionable programs and policies.

While ARIDO continues its journey and work, we recognize the audit results reflect that we are in the early stages of our work, but we remain committed and invested to reinforcing value, fostering community, and inclusive engagement. We have much work ahead of us and are excited to continue our journey of growth and pave a pathway for others to join us.

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Contributors to the 2026-28 strategic plan include:

2025/2026 Board of Directors

Jeremy Cheff, President
Sabrina Carinci, Past-President
Bryan Wiens, Secretary
Joanne Chan, Treasurer
Jordan Fang, Educator Director
Farzan Farnaghi, Intern Director
Robin Fraser, Director
Serina Fraser, Director
Lisa Fulford-Roy, Director
Jessica Juvet, Director
Melissa Munroe, Director
Erica Pelletier, Director
Neal Prabhu, Director
Vanessa Tantalo, Director

Board of Governor

Jennifer Warling, Board of Governors Chair

Staff

Gia Bantoc, Events Coordinator
Sandra Noble, Manager, Membership
Jose Tanabe, Regulatory Coordinator
Maia Stamatov, Marketing and Content Development Coordinator
Obi Uzoka, Registrar
Maya Vnukovsky, Membership Coordinator
Harrison Zhang, Manager, Accounting

Consultants

Sharon Portelli, Governance and Leadership Consultant



2026 Operating Year

Fostering Community

Goal: The ARIDO Community is a diverse, inclusive, and safe space for all existing members, new members, staff, volunteers, 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:

a. Conducting annual reviews and updates to our:

i. values and goals for their connectivity to diversity, equity, and accessibility which reflects and is connected to our diversity statement.

ii. vision and mission statements to reflect broader sustainability and diversity goals.

b. Expanding leadership knowledge and training by:

i. Holding quarterly lunch and learn educational series for leadership teams.

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:

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

3. As leaders within the organization, we will be champions by:

a. Encouraging leadership teams to lead by example for championing changes to drive education, increased representation, and discussing diversity and equity issues openly.



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:

- a. Updating any ARIDO application to include and welcome diversity and accessibility.
- b. Increasing event frequency in regions outside of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

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

- a. Hosting webinars and presentations on practice related matters, i.e., OBC, HR, financial management, succession planning, running a practice.
- b. Launch resources such as:
 - i. Ontario Building Code Reference Guide

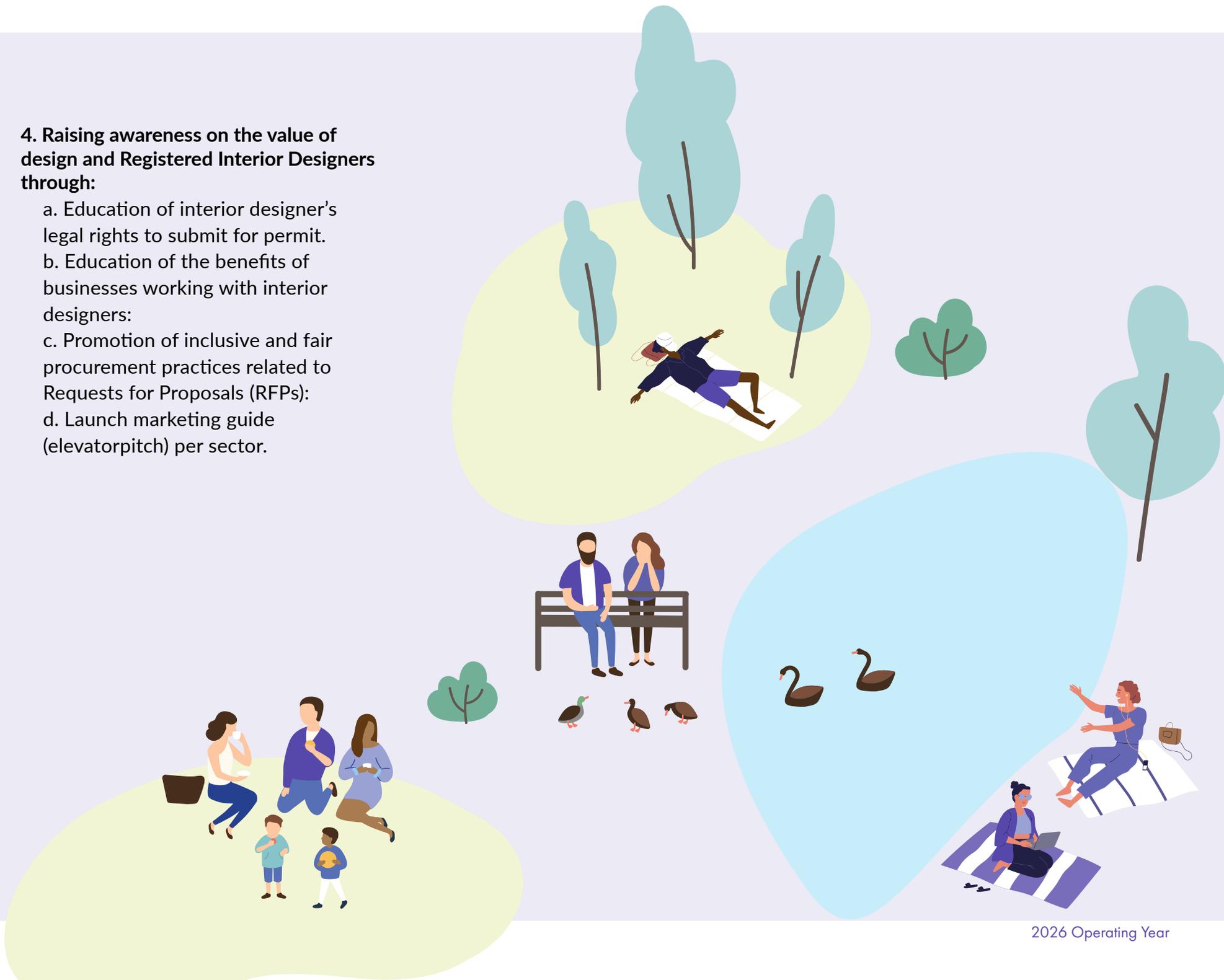
- ii. Accessibility Practice Guide
- iii. Sustainability Practice Guide

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. Updating and expanding the mentorship program to include:
 - i. peer to peer practice support.
 - ii. importance of diversity and accessibility along with two-way learning, where the Mentee and Mentor are on learning journeys together.
 - iii. Cross firm mentorship led and supported by principals/owners.
 - iv. qualified sign off for their supervised experience requirement

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

- a. Education of interior designer's legal rights to submit for permit.
- b. Education of the benefits of businesses working with interior designers:
- c. Promotion of inclusive and fair procurement practices related to Requests for Proposals (RFPs):
- d. Launch marketing guide (elevatorpitch) per sector.



Inclusive Engagement

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

1. Facilitating more inclusive communication methods that include:

- a. Providing and formalize language options for member communication.

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+.
 - ii. students enrolled in an ARIDO-recognized education program.
 - iii. Career Xpress Committee Ambassadors within the interior design programs; and
 - iv. faculty and Educator members of ARIDO

b. Empowering our community members to be advocates by holding:

- i. Collecting real life experiences and sharing client stories from an end user of space and human experience perspective.
- ii. Sharing member knowledge and journeys with each other; and
- iii. Creating emotional story connections and facilitate discussion about real life experiences in the firms.

3. Reporting on an annual basis any actions related to community outreach and employee volunteer involvement.

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



a. communicating ARIDO's involvement and progress on social media and with third-party partners.

5. We will increase design firm and industry partner commitments and engagement to support ARIDO's commitment to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion by:

a. Encouraging design firms and industry partners to create scholarships for diverse and underrepresented students and newcomers.

b. Reviewing sponsorships and partnerships agreements and updating to include collaboration with diverse and underrepresented organizations and communities.

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

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

i. Promoting the design profession and industry to:

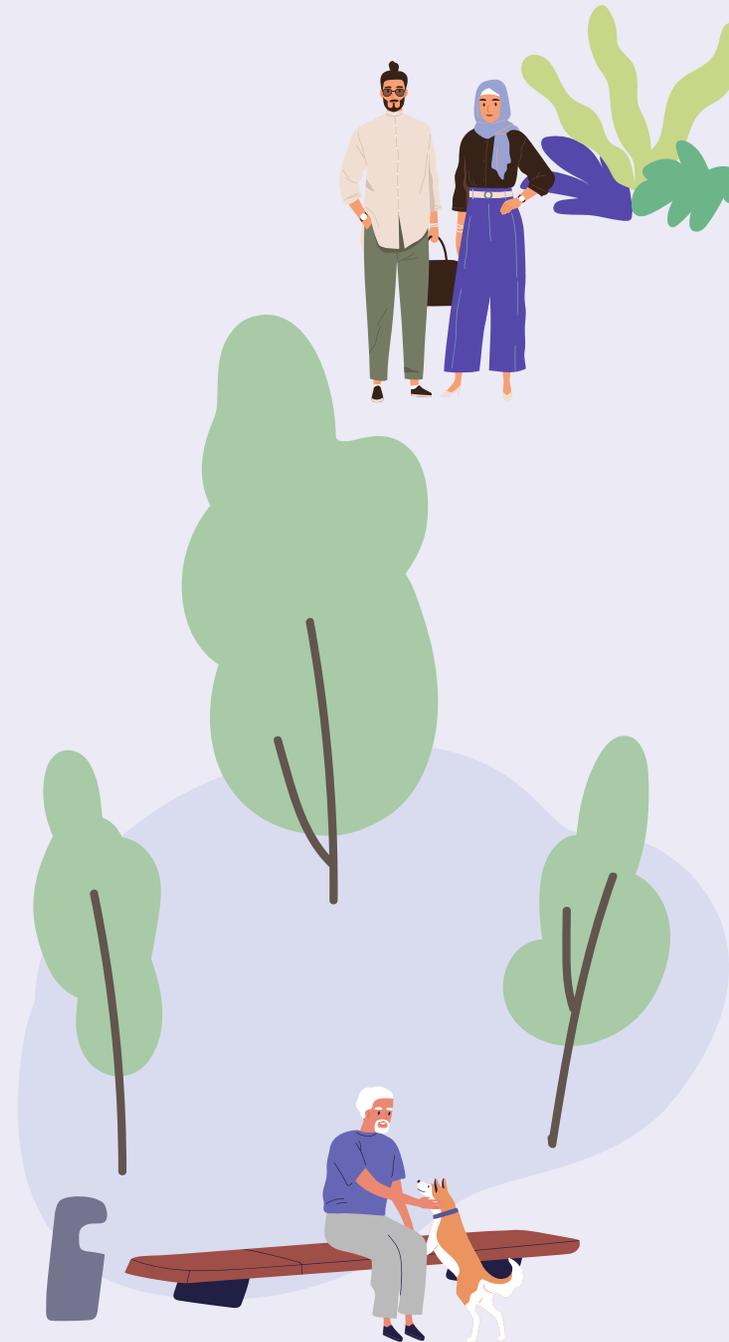
1. underrepresented communities, newcomers, and diverse professionals; and;
2. high school student populations.

ii. Reaching out to past and prospective members of ARIDO to engage their input into how to best bring about the recognition and professionalization of interior design in Ontario.

iii. Launching a community outreach campaign focused on building relationships with diverse and underrepresented groups, specifically Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour communities, professionals, and associations across Ontario.

7. Keeping relevant stakeholders informed and garner their support for regulation.

8. 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.



2027 Operating Year

Fostering Community

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

1. 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:

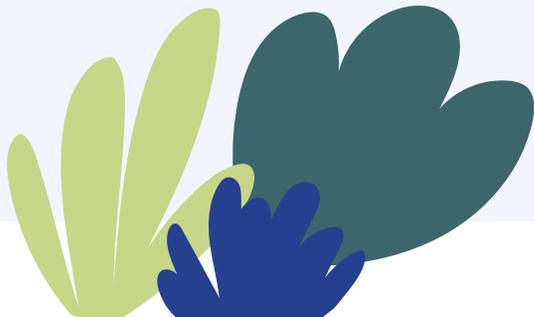
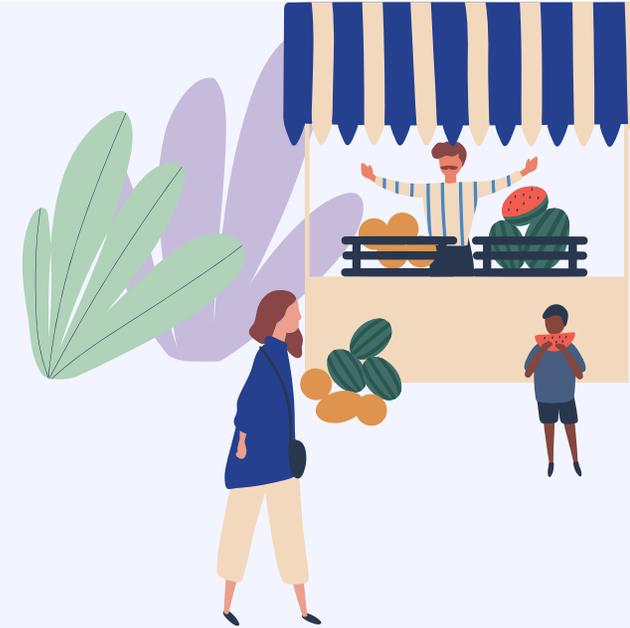
- a. Expanding Employee Handbook policies to include coverage of diversity and equity related matters.
- b. Updating ARIDO By-Laws to reflect equity and accessibility focus.
- c. Setting targets to create points of reference and support goal creation

for diversity, equity, and accessibility impact.

d. Creating targets for milestones and goals, related to advancing diversity and equity within ARIDO and how it will be measured.

2. As leaders within the organization, we will be champions by:

- a. Curating and implementing monthly spotlight on internal leadership team and its commitment to diversity, equity, and accessibility.



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.

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 programs:
 - i. for diversity, equity, and accessibility learning for members and industry partners.
 - ii. on accessibility in design and spaces for all members to participate

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,

- c. Launch resources such as:
 - i. Building Code Reference Guide.

- ii. Guide to ethics and practice standards related to the practice of interior design;
- iii. Interior design master class training programs.
- iv. Accessibility Reference Guide
- d. Developing templates and best practices for inclusive policies for adoption by design firms and community organizations.

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

- a. Advocating for the design of interior spaces that exceed minimum accessibility standards.
- b. 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 jurisdictions.



Inclusive Engagement

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

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

- a. Connecting with Interior Design organizations and market the importance of ARIDO to attract diverse professionals.
- b. Actively encouraging and recruiting the participation of diverse representation on panels, programming, committees, and Board (i.e. creating a database of diverse leaders, outreach to diverse and underrepresented communities, schools across Ontario)
- c. Formalizing and increasing outreach and partnerships with diverse and underrepresented community groups and associations across Ontario.
- d. Formalizing outreach processes for member participation with community outreach.

- e. Increasing ARIDO's presence with diverse and underrepresented community groups and associations across Ontario through partnerships and educational promotional opportunities by:
 - i. Strengthening stakeholder relations and collaborating with other organizations to build awareness of the value of design.

2. Create and implement a recruitment strategy to attract and retain the participation of diverse and underrepresented professionals through outreach and marketing initiatives.

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

- a. Curating a marketing campaign to attract diverse speakers to participate on panels and contribute to programs.



b. Creating formal policies and processes to foster outreach to diverse and underrepresented communities (through schools, community organizations, non-profits, newcomers, and youth groups).

c. Survey the membership as a follow up to the 2021 Dive In survey to conduct a pulse check with the membership and community at large.

4. Keeping relevant stakeholders informed and garner their support for regulation.

5. 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.



2028 Operating Year

Fostering Community

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

1. As leaders within the organization, we will be champions by advocating for:

a. accessibility and equity through the design industry: academia (school boards, institutions), government relations (provincial, federal); and

b. accessibility and people with disabilities in the design industry

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:

a. Curating scorecards and measurement tools

i. Sponsors

ii. Members

iii. Supply chain (supplier diversity)

b. Streamlining an action plan with key targets based of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will showcase ARIDO's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and building better communities.



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:

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

b. Working with a third-party partner to support accessibility requirements for all online and in-person events.

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

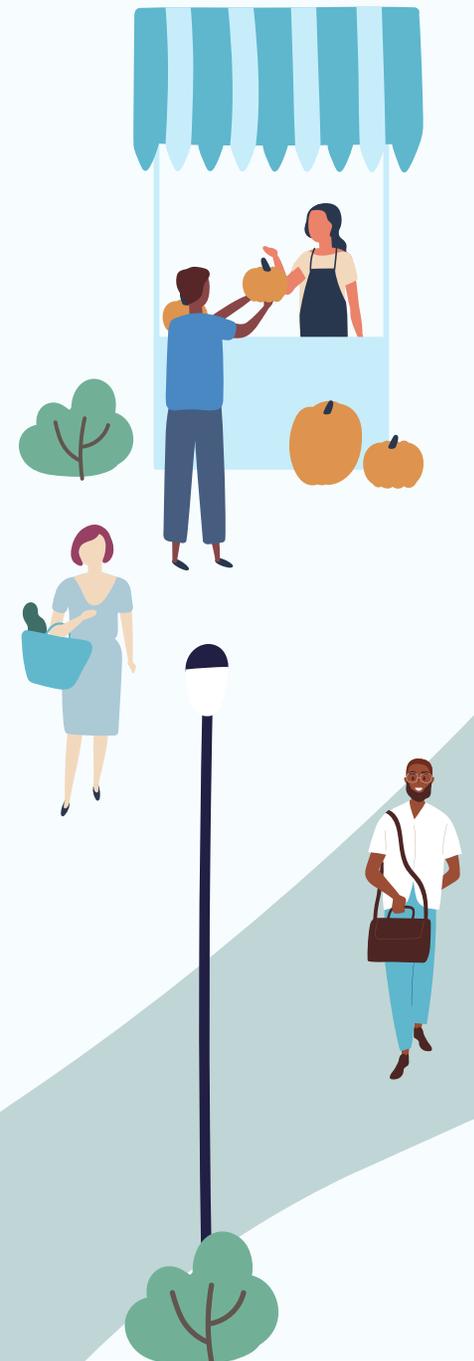
a. Educating industry stakeholders

such as real estate brokers, facility managers, and project management groups.

b. Showcasing what the profession does.

5. 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. Education seminars and tools on employee rights for members working in design firms.





Inclusive Engagement

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



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

- a. Joining Commercial Real Estate Equity and Diversity Council (CREED Council)
- b. Actively recruiting and building formal processes to attract the participation of a broader spectrum of diverse representation (Regional, Black, Indigenous, People with Disabilities, and youth) within external leadership positions.
- c. Hiring a third-party partner to assess and curate formal processes for advocacy and outreach which are regionally focused and mindful of diversity and accessibility.

d. 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.

2. Facilitating more inclusive communication methods that include:

- a. Gathering and obtaining feedback from members, in a transparent way, on their needs and how they wish to be engaged; and,
- b. Members informing ARIDO of issues facing them both individually and the profession.
- c. Enabling ARIDO to communicate directly and share valuable information to the membership.



3. Create a measurement and reporting tool for the mentorship program.

4. Provide and formalize language options for member communication.

5. Work with academic institutions to create formal educational curriculums that supports and fosters non-Eurocentric design.

6. Empowering our community members to be advocates by holding:

a. Member story telling town halls;
and

b. Round table discussions with all levels of membership.

7. Keeping relevant stakeholders informed and garner their support for regulation.

8. 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 Strategic Plan 2026-28

reinforcing value

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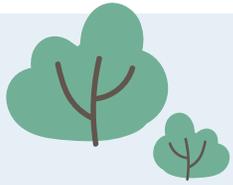
fostering community

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inclusive engagement

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





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