



**capX**

**CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTURAL  
PRACTICE EXPERIENCE**

**2024 PILOT PROGRAM**

## THE CHALLENGE

The architectural pipeline is fragile and there is a significant need to bolster the pool of skilled professionals to sustain the future health of the profession. Architectural education starts in school, but the skills gained from hands-on experience in an architectural firm are invaluable to ensure success.

## HOW capX HELPS

The California Architectural Practice Experience (**capX**) is a new program developed by the California Architectural Foundation (CAF) intended to provide a framework for architectural hands-on, practical experience for individuals who have *not yet graduated or are very early on the experience-only path to becoming licensed architects*. The program is outwardly focused, creating a community of architecture firms, emerging professionals, and educational institutions working collaboratively to build a stronger architectural profession in California.

In the spirit of developing the next generation of architects, firms are encouraged to host emerging professionals of all educational backgrounds and skill levels for job shadowing or internships--adjusting work tasks or experiences based on a self-assessment of skills they provide.

*“Today’s job shadowing candidate will become tomorrow’s senior associate. The value of a firm’s engagement with individual students is incredibly meaningful and can change the trajectory of their careers and the profession at large.” Lisa Sachs, FAIA*

**capX** is intended to be a flexible resource that may be utilized to its fullest capacity; serve as a supplement to a firm’s existing internships, or simply as a means of connection to the architectural pipeline. The program is “rolling,” allowing participants to define a timeframe and structure that works best: spring / summer / on-going and paid internship / academic credit or unpaid job shadowing.

Emerging professionals participating in **capX** will be connected to an AIA Chapter near them and are encouraged to seek valuable networking opportunities and resources available within the AIA.

CAF is launching a closed pilot-test of the program in the Spring of 2024 to test its usability and to collect feedback. A full program launch is planned in early 2025. Over time the **capX** community itself will refine and evolve the program to maximize its relevance and impact to all participants.

## WHAT capX OFFERS

- **Centralized Structure:** **capX** serves as a “central hub” bringing AIA firms, emerging professionals, and educational institutions together in support of job shadowing and internship experience, as well as a resource to share best practices in California.
- **Flexibility:** **capX** is focused on inspiring more firms (especially small and medium size firms) to actively engage in growing the architectural pipeline by providing emerging professionals with increased opportunities to have hands-on experiences within firms. With that in mind, the program features a flexible “rolling” format to meet the specific needs and schedules all participants.

- **Valuable Connectivity:** **capX** supports the architectural profession by forming a statewide community to provide increased insight on trends and issues--enabling identification and a cohort to share, discuss and address challenges proactively.
- **Accountability & DEI:** **capX** gives disadvantaged and experience-only emerging professionals an equitable opportunity to gain access to architectural firms. Architects may assure their clients they are part of a DEI-centric program focused on developing a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce.
- **Quantifiable Skills:** Once fully launched, **capX** will provide two virtual courses to prepare emerging professionals on what to expect and how to gain the most benefit from a firm's generosity in hosting/hiring them. A key long-term goal of the program is to develop an educational series focused on essential workforce readiness skills to ensure success in the architectural profession.
- **Legacy & Recognition:** **capX** provides the architectural professional with a tangible way to "pay it forward." Through direct engagement, firms demonstrate their support of emerging professionals as they explore the profession of architecture, and make a tangible commitment to inspiring and developing the next generation. Firms are recognized and celebrated for their generosity and engagement through CAF and AIA California channels.

## HOW **capX** WORKS (in 5 Easy Steps)

At its core, **capX** serves as a statewide hub, bringing architecture firms, emerging professionals, and educational institutions together to provide a platform and structure for interaction and hands-on learning. To participate:

- 1) All participants complete online enrollment forms located on the CAF website: <https://calarchfoundation.org/>. Emerging professionals also complete a skills assessment. Enrollment takes place over three weeks, opening on March 18th and closing on April 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm, Pacific time.
- 2) CAF posts a list of emerging professionals, their resumes, and skills assessments to the CAF website on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Firms may access the information any time after this date via a password emailed to the firm's primary contact. The information provided by emerging professionals may be sorted by location, type of experience, and other parameters. Additionally, CAF will post a list of participating firms on April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- 3) From April 15<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup> Firms contact emerging professionals directly, schedule interviews, and define details such as internship or shadowing, time frame, hours, and pay.
- 4) As soon as an EP is selected and details are confirmed, both the firm and the emerging professional complete and submit a **capX** agreement letter. CAF will remove the emerging professional from the website list. Once available, EP's will be given access to the AIA CA

Architecture 101 and 102 courses to take in advance of their internship or job shadowing experience.

- 5) At the end of the year, all participants will be asked to respond to an experience survey to provide feedback and offer suggestions to implement before the full statewide release of the program in early 2025.

**2024 capX Pilot Program: Dates / Deadlines**

March 15	All pilot participants invited.
March 18	Enrollment portal opens (3 weeks)
April 5	Deadline for firms and emerging professionals to enroll in pilot.
April 12	List of 2024 participants released on CAF website.
April 15-May 10	Interview period (four weeks)
May 13	Deadline to return <b>capX</b> agreement form to CAF <i>Note: This is the final deadline, please return form as soon as internship / shadow details are confirmed.</i>
TBD	Community Welcome
TBD	Community Meetup
Dec 12	Deadline for feedback surveys for 2024 pilot program.

For full program details, please reference the **capX** Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet (attached).

**CAF capX TASK FORCE TEAM MEMBERS**

- |                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Don Caskey, FAIA       | Chester Widom, FAIA            |
| Debra Gerod, FAIA      | Mandy Freeland, AIA            |
| Elizabeth Gibbons, AIA | Ginger Thompson, AIA           |
| Chris Holt, AIA        | Kimberly Anderson, Hon. AIA CA |
| Scott Gaudineer, AIA   |                                |
| Lisa Sachs, FAIA       |                                |

**Questions or Feedback?** Contact the California Architectural Foundation: [kanderson@aicalifornia.org](mailto:kanderson@aicalifornia.org)

**FAQ's for Firms**

**Q: What are the requirements?**

- Firms must have an office located in California, and at least one licensed architect who is a current member of AIA California who is available to participate as the **capX** point of contact.
- Firms agree to follow the enrollment process, to promptly contact emerging professionals for interviews after the participant list has been released, and to define the terms /timeline of their job shadowing or internship before May 13th.
- **capX** will periodically host virtual meetups to give both firms and applicants a place to ask questions, share best practices, discuss topics, and make connections. Firm participation is highly encouraged.

**Q: How to apply?**

AIA California firms of all sizes/types are invited to complete the online application form located on the CAF website: <https://calarchfoundation.org/>

**Q: What are the program dates/deadlines for the 2024 pilot program?**

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**Q. How does capX support NCARB's AXP Program?**

- The program is intended to support the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) [Architecture Experience Program \(AXP\)](#), providing experience-based hours for students working towards architectural licensure.
- Firms are encouraged to review the [Architectural Experience Program Guidelines](#) and to provide experiences that directly support students in meeting the experience criteria.
- If the intern or job shadower has an NCARB record, an architect from the firm, who meets AXP supervisor requirements, is asked to ensure that hours are added for credit.

**Q. How does capX differentiate between an internship and a job shadow experience?**

The major difference between job shadowing and an internship is that an individual performs more duties as an intern than as a job shadow participant. Interns are hired for temporary positions for pay. Most job shadowing opportunities are unpaid and primarily offer the job shadow participant a sense of the field and the specific type of work they would do if they entered the profession. However, the goal of both internships and job shadowing is to provide participants with industry experience or knowledge.

Internships are generally:

- Paid positions (and may earn academic credit).
- A set number of hours each week, up to full-time.
- A defined period (summer or long-term).
- Emerging professionals work on tasks/duties appropriate to their skill level for the firm to develop practical /hands-on skills and knowledge and to help develop a resume/portfolio.
- Hours are verified on the emerging professional's NCARB record by an assigned AXP supervisor at the firm of employment (if a record is established).
- Likely to involve a firm's Human Resources department and Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage.

Job Shadowing is generally:

- Unpaid
- Provides observation opportunities but does not require tasks or specific work to be completed. Examples include site visits, team meetings, punch walks, as-builts/site measurements, bid walks, and observing client meetings).
- Typically a shorter time frame, both in hours and length.
- May not require a firm's Human Resources department or Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage (but depends on the situation).

### Q. What is the estimated cost for my firm?

**capX** success is dependent on firm participation, especially small and medium firms. Consider the impact on emerging professionals when weighing the cost/time/value proposition. ANY experience a firm offers will be priceless to an emerging professional! If your firm cannot commit to a paid internship, consider an unpaid job shadowing opportunity.

- Costs vary widely depending on the type and length of experience a firm offers.
- The **capX** program requires firms to pay interns the [California minimum wage](#), or higher, if possible.

There is no fee due to CAF for AIA CA firms to participate. But an [optional donation](#) to CAF is appreciated to support management, outreach, and ongoing development of the program. As a 501(c)(3) organization, donations to CAF may be tax-deductible.

## FAQ's for Emerging Professionals

### Q. How to apply?

- Emerging professionals with a wide range of education, backgrounds and skills are invited to complete the online application form on the CAF website: <https://calarchfoundation.org/>. No prior work experience is required.

### Q. What are the requirements of an Emerging Professional?

- Enrolled in an architecture or related degree program at a community college or university or working on an experience-only path to architectural licensure.
- Live anywhere in the US or abroad but must be available to participate in person and reside in California for the term of the internship or job shadowing experience.
- Be legally able to work in the United States.
- Complete and upload a skills assessment and provide a resume.
- Agree to follow the enrollment process, promptly respond to requests for interviews, work directly with interested firm(s) to manage the details of their specific experience, and complete and return the Agreement Form by May 13th.
- **capX** will periodically host virtual meetups to give both firms and applicants a place to ask questions, share best practices, discuss topics, and make connections. Firm participation is highly encouraged.

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**Q. Is there a cost to participate?**

The **capX** program is free to emerging professionals.

*The mission of **capX** is to facilitate the providing of hands-on, practical experience to those interested in pursuing a career in architecture by matching intern candidates with architectural firms. **capX** is not an employment agency nor a provider of employment law advice or services.*

*By participating in **capX** program, firms agree to hold harmless the California Architectural Foundation (CAF), AIA California and its related entities and individuals to the fullest extent allowed by law from and against any and all claims or liability regarding or related to that participation, the intention being that CAF should not be at risk for its service to the architectural profession.*

*The California Architectural Foundation (CAF) and AIA California support affirmative action and equal opportunity. Participants in the **capX** program are welcome without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, protected veteran or disabled status, or genetic information.*