

# Small Firm Exchange

 AIA Member group

## Small Firms: Making the Pivot to a Sustainability-Focused Practice

Some real talk:

- Most firms are NOT signatories (1,110+ of 19,000+ are).
- Two-thirds of signatories do NOT have a Sustainable Action Plan.
- Most signatories do NOT report any projects in the DDx.
- Few signatories report ALL projects.

The goal is to move the needle. The commitment, the plan, the DDx, is all about helping you help us to push the profession to meet the imperative for our work to be carbon-neutral by 2030.

Here are some comments we hear a lot and some resources to help you say YES!

### **My firm is NOT an [AIA 2030 Commitment](#) Signatory**

*It's easy to sign on – it starts with a commitment letter*

*Find a "mentor firm" in your network – [Signatory Directory](#) (sortable by firm size!)*

### **My firm does NOT have a sustainability / climate action plan**

*Look at [the guide](#) and examples of other firms' [SAPs online](#)*

*Start with a working doc – doesn't need to be "polished" on day 1!*

*Check out the [AIA Framework for Design Excellence](#) measures (High Impact tab for each measure)*

### **My firm is an AIA 2030 Commitment Signatory but does NOT report projects to the Design Data Exchange (DDx)**

*Did you know that [the DDx](#) takes 5 minutes for data entry per project. Setup an account today!*

*An energy model is NOT required. Just know what energy code you are working towards!*

*Not all projects are the same -- you can enter renos and [interior-only](#) projects.*

*Have questions or need help using the DDx? Set up a time to talk to one of our staff members. [Book a time >](#)*

*Find a "mentor firm" in your network – Look at the back of any [2030 By the Numbers Report](#) to see reporting firms by size.*

### **My firm does NOT discuss environmental impacts with clients.**

*Check out the "[ROI talking points](#)" > It is eight short webpages to help you start or strengthen your message.*

*Wonder why this was specifically added to the [AIA Code of Ethics](#) (Rule 6.501)? [Understand the Ethical Imperative](#)*

**My firm does NOT consider the environmental/social/health impacts of materials in our projects**

Start by focusing on the biggest elements / one criteria at a time – [12 Product Rules](#)

Use [BuildingGreen.com](#) as a resource

**My firm is NOT an AIA Materials Pledge signatory.**

[Signing up](#) is the first step to [additional resources](#) and dialogue with other committed firms

**My firm does NOT have minimum sustainability expectations for all projects**

Look at "High Impact" tab on each [Framework for Design Excellence](#) measure

Know the best passive strategies for your site with [Climate Consultant](#)

**My clients canNOT afford this.**

Resources for finding incentives to help offset costs:

<https://www.dsireusa.org/>

<http://www.incentifind.com/>

<https://www.rewiringamerica.org/policy/high-efficiency-electric-home-rebate-act>

<https://www.blocpower.io/#>

**My firm does NOT perform energy modeling early in the process.**

Start with freely available tools, and partner with systems designers early:

> <https://energy-design-tools.sbse.org/heed/>

Set a performance goal ... don't just model for the sake of modeling