



2024 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

GROWING TOGETHER



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WELCOME

In the spirit of design that shapes our world, we are honored to share our 2024 report of community engagement and impact. This report continues to serve as a blueprint for change, reaffirming our core belief that the power of design lies in the well-being it nurtures, the barriers it dissolves, and the future it inspires.

Over the past year, we have deepened our commitment to transforming spaces into stories and challenges into opportunities for meaningful connection. From championing diversity within our team to expanding our sustainability practices, we have embraced these values not as trends but as the pillars of a purpose-driven culture. Each initiative and milestone we celebrate reflects our dedication to making a tangible, lasting difference in the communities we serve.

This report is both a tribute to the collective efforts that have shaped our achievements and an open invitation to join us in advancing a design industry rooted in inclusivity, innovation, and accountability. Through our shared purpose, we aim to empower individuals, strengthen connections, and create spaces where creativity and opportunity thrive.

With profound gratitude for your continued partnership, we look forward to building on these accomplishments in the year ahead. Together, we are not just creating physical spaces; we are shaping a more vibrant, equitable, and sustainable future for our region and beyond.

With Hope,

Shelby E. Russ, Jr.
President + CEO

AREAS OF IMPACT

OUR APPROACH

As AOS Interior Environments continues our steadfast commitment to community and industry advancement, 2024 marks another transformative year in our journey of purposeful impact. Building on the successes of the past, we have expanded our efforts to create lasting change that uplifts our communities, strengthens the design industry, and empowers the leaders of tomorrow. Our team's dedication to innovation and collaboration has fueled meaningful programs that foster prosperity, inclusivity, and sustainability.

This year, we have deepened our investments and broadened our scope, further strengthening the foundation of a thriving community, a forward-thinking industry, and a resilient team. This report highlights not just our achievements but also our ongoing dedication to fostering a future built on shared purpose and collective success. Through the continued focus of our time, talents, and resources, we remain devoted to four key areas of impact:

01 DESIGNING A THRIVING COMMUNITY

AOS remains a cornerstone of regional prosperity, actively investing in initiatives that uplift our neighbors and inspire meaningful change. Through partnerships with local organizations and programs that amplify diverse voices, we are proud to champion social and economic well-being, ensuring everyone has a place in our shared future.

02 BUILDING A STRONGER INDUSTRY

In 2024, we continued to lead efforts to reshape the design industry by fostering diversity and innovation. Scholarships, enhanced mentorship programs, and reimagined internships are creating pathways for underrepresented talent to thrive, ensuring the next generation of design leaders reflects the richness and vibrancy of our communities.

03 HOLDING OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE

Accountability remains central to our mission. We've advanced internal initiatives, including comprehensive training programs and partnerships with external experts, to ensure our workplace reflects the highest standards of equity, inclusion, and belonging. These efforts affirm our commitment to building a culture where everyone can thrive.

04 INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Our focus on supplier diversity and environmental responsibility continues to grow as we aim to make a broader impact. By fostering partnerships that align with these priorities and reducing our environmental footprint, we are ensuring the design industry remains not only economically strong but also socially and ecologically sustainable.

STAKEHOLDER SNAPSHOT

EXPANDING OUR REACH

At the heart of AOS Interior Environments' community initiatives lies a diverse constellation of stakeholders, each playing a pivotal role in our collective success.

Our efforts ripple through the vibrant tapestry of architects and designers, whose visionary designs lay the blueprint for our future. Clients, the vital partners in our journey, drive our mission forward with their unique needs and aspirations. Community partners anchor our endeavors, ensuring that our actions resonate within the neighborhoods we cherish.

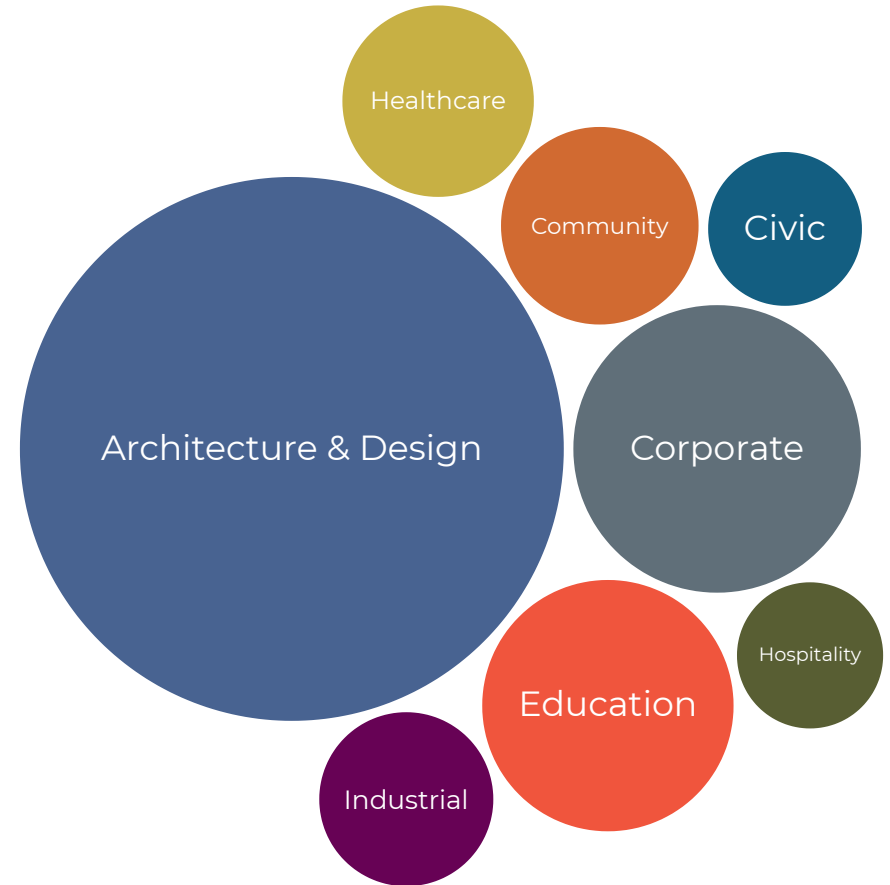
General contractors and subcontractors, the backbone of our projects, turn our plans into reality, while industry partners and representatives keep us at the vanguard of innovation with their insights and expertise. Interior designers bring spaces to life with creativity and precision, reflecting the community's spirit in every layout.

Interns infuse our teams with fresh perspectives, ensuring that our practices continue to evolve and adapt. Manufacturer partners provide the high-quality materials that make our designs durable and sustainable. Potential new hires stand at the threshold of our initiatives, ready to contribute their skills and grow with us.

Real estate professionals guide our understanding of the spaces we inhabit, offering invaluable advice on the markets we serve. And, at the core of all our endeavors, our dedicated team members embody the values and mission of AOS, driving every project toward excellence.

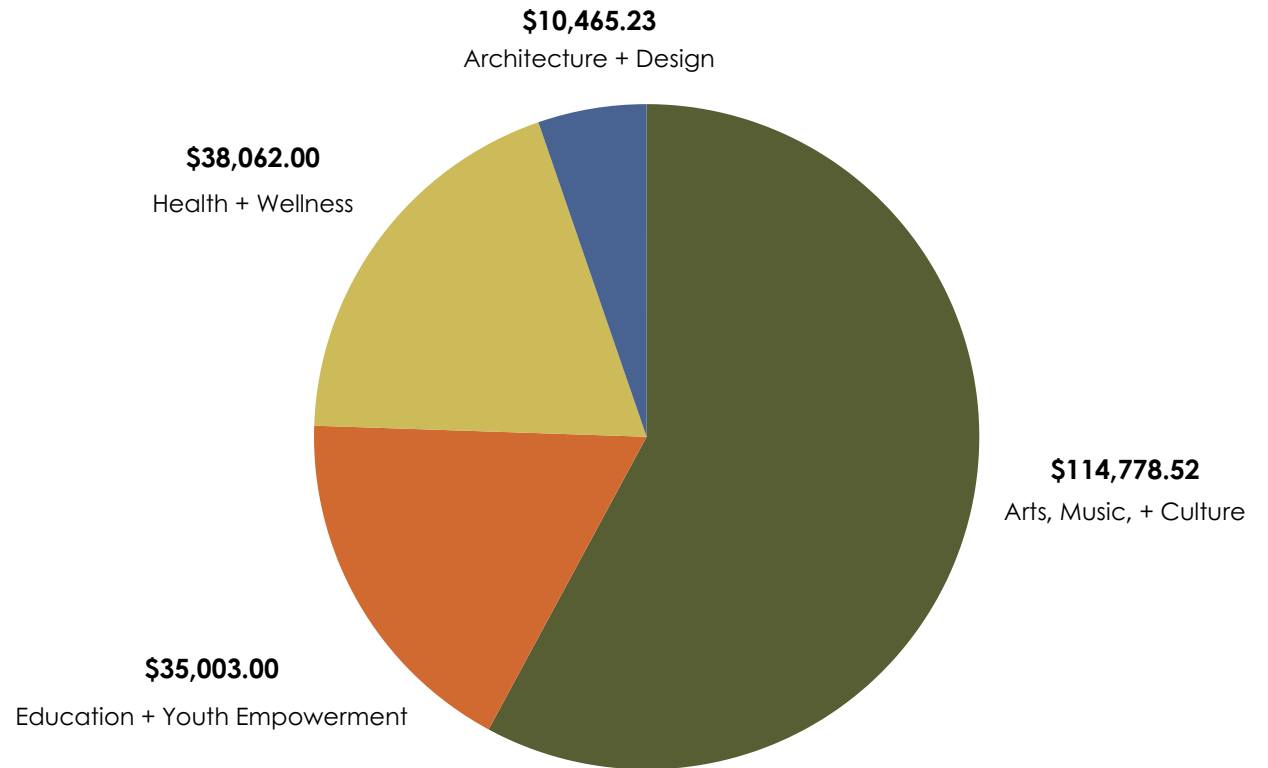
Together, these stakeholders form the vibrant ecosystem that powers AOS Interior Environments' commitment to building a more connected, sustainable, and aesthetically enriching world.

In 2024, we have had meaningful interactions with 2,127 direct stakeholders across our community. The figure above highlights the diverse makeup of those who we count among our nearest and dearest relationships.



DESIGNING A THRIVING COMMUNITY

2024 has been a year of deepened commitment and expanded impact for AOS Interior Environments as we continue to strengthen the fabric of our region's social and cultural landscape. With a total donation of **\$198,308** we have championed initiatives that foster diversity, support professional development, and celebrate the arts. These investments have amplified underrepresented voices, transforming once-muted echoes into powerful narratives that shape our shared future.



Our vision remains steadfast: to cultivate a community where the arts, design, and diversity are not only appreciated but serve as fundamental pillars of regional identity and growth. AOS is proud to lead by example, demonstrating that intentional action fuels meaningful progress. By partnering with organizations that share our commitment, we continue to shape an environment where every individual has the opportunity to thrive, contribute, and take part in a more inclusive, innovative, and dynamic future.

STRONGER TOGETHER

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our dedication to fostering a more vibrant community was not just about financial support; it was about creating platforms for inclusive growth and expression. Through partnerships with key organizations, we supported programs that addressed critical gaps in opportunity and access. Our involvement ranged from sponsoring local art exhibitions that showcased the diverse talent within our community to funding workshops and seminars that provided professionals with the skills necessary for growth in a rapidly evolving industry.

ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

- AIA WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE
- AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS (AIA)
- COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE WOMEN (CREW)
- INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FACILITY MANAGERS (IFMA)
- INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERIOR DESIGN (IIDA)
- LEAN CORE INSTITUTE (LCI)
- LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF INTERIOR DESIGNERS (LSBID)
- NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY ARCHITECTS
- PALMISANO FOUNDATION
- PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER
- SOCIETY FOR MARKETING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (SMPS)
- STIRLING FOUNDATION

EDUCATION + YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

- 504WARD
- GREATER NEW ORLEANS INC. (GNO, INC.)
- KIDSMART
- LSU CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SCHOOL
- LSU INTERIOR DESIGN SCHOOL
- NEW ORLEANS CAREER CENTER (NOCC)
- NEW ORLEANS ENTREPRENEUR WEEK (NOEW)
- NEW ORLEANS REGIONAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (NORLI)
- NUNEZ FOUNDATION
- PROJECT PIPELINE
- SON OF A SAINT
- TULANE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
- UNCOMMON CONSTRUCTION

HEALTH + WELLNESS

- AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION
- BATON ROUGE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
- LCMC HEALTH
- MAKE GOOD
- MANNING FAMILY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
- OCHSNER HEALTH

ARTS, MUSIC, + CULTURE

- CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER
- FRENCH QUARTER FESTIVALS, INC.
- THE GREEN PROJECT
- LONGUE VUE HOUSE + GARDENS
- LOUISIANA MUSIC + HERITAGE EXPERIENCE
- NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM



LEADING FROM WITHIN

Strong leadership is the foundation of meaningful change, and at AOS, we believe in driving impact from the inside out. Across our firm, team members actively serve on **18 advisory boards** and committees throughout the region, dedicating their time, expertise, and passion to building a more diverse, sustainable, and socially responsible industry. These leadership roles enhance our collective understanding, expand our influence, and drive thoughtful decision-making beyond the walls of our own business.

By engaging directly in industry-shaping conversations and community-driven initiatives, our team is helping to shape the future of design, economic development, and social progress—one leadership role at a time.



LOOKING FORWARD

As we embrace 2025, AOS Interior Environments remains dedicated to deepening our community engagement and expanding our impact. This year, we have set an ambitious goal to increase our contributions by 25%, prioritizing initiatives that drive economic development, sustainability, and social equity. Our focus is on fostering long-term transformation—supporting programs that create job opportunities, revitalize urban spaces, and empower underrepresented entrepreneurs and organizations.

We envision a future where the arts, design, and diversity are woven into the very identity and progress of our region. AOS continues to lead this charge, demonstrating that intentional investment in our community yields lasting change. Through strong partnerships and shared vision, we strive to cultivate an environment where every individual has the opportunity to thrive, contribute, and shape a future that is dynamic, inclusive, and innovative. Our work extends beyond designing spaces—we are committed to designing a community that flourishes in collaboration, creativity, and opportunity.



IMPACT STORY

ART, ARCHITECTURE + IDEAS: FRANK GEHRY AND ROBERT TANNEN

In July 2024, AOS proudly sponsored *Art, Architecture, and Ideas: Frank Gehry and Robert Tannen* at the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi, Mississippi. This compelling exhibition brought together over five decades of work from two visionaries—world-renowned architect Frank Gehry and multidisciplinary artist and urban planner Robert Tannen—highlighting their lasting impact on the Gulf Coast and beyond. Through an extensive collection of models, sculptures, paintings, and conceptual works, the exhibition offered an intimate look at their creative processes and enduring influence.

At the heart of *Art, Architecture, and Ideas* was the deep creative relationship between Gehry and Tannen, whose collaborations span nearly 50 years. Long before Gehry became a global icon for projects like the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, California, their friendship began in New Orleans in the 1970s when Gehry was designing a small stage for Lafayette Park and Tannen was working for the New Orleans Mayor's office. While the project never came to fruition, it solidified their mutual respect and set the foundation for future collaborations.

(Photo right) As part of the exhibit *Art, Architecture and Ideas: Frank Gehry and Robert Tannen*, a detailed architectural model showcases Frank Gehry's signature organic forms.



A decade later, Tannen saw another opportunity to bring Gehry's groundbreaking work to the Gulf Coast. As part of the 1984 Louisiana World Exposition, Gehry was selected to design a riverfront amphitheater. However, budget constraints forced the project to be heavily revised, stripping away much of his original vision. After the fair, the amphitheater was demolished, erasing what could have been Gehry's first permanent structure in New Orleans. However, Tannen, whose urban planning efforts helped shape the city's Warehouse District and the second span of the Mississippi River Bridge, continued to advocate for Gehry's presence in the region.

Tannen and his wife Jeanne Nathan's persistence eventually paid off. Recognizing the synergy between George Ohr, the eccentric "Mad Potter of Biloxi" known for his experimental ceramics, and Gehry's sculptural architectural style, Tannen championed him as the ideal architect for the museum when he was on the fundraising team. OOMA is Gehry's only museum in the Southeast, a striking composition of fragmented, pod-like structures that appear to "dance" among the site's massive live oaks along with a few other galleries and buildings on the campus. The museum embodies the rebellious spirit of Ohr himself, embracing fluidity, innovation, and resilience.

Like Ohr's unconventional artistry, the museum's journey has been anything but ordinary. OOMA's construction faced significant setbacks, including funding, zoning, and damage from Hurricane Katrina when a casino barge crashed into one of its buildings when it was under construction. Yet, after nearly two decades of challenges and determination, the museum is now nearing completion. In April 2025, its final phase will be realized, fulfilling Gehry's original vision and cementing the museum's role as a cultural landmark on the Gulf Coast.



(Photos from top to bottom)

The exhibit featured a model of Frank Gehry's plans for OOMA.

Check out more of the *Art, Architecture and Ideas* exhibit on OOMA's YouTube.

Jeanne Nathan, Robert Tannen's wife, joined AOS for the field trip and spoke about his work. The couple was instrumental in recommending Frank Gehry as the architect for OOMA.



To further engage our design community, AOS hosted a special day trip for architects and interior designers from across southeast Louisiana to experience this inspiring exhibition firsthand. Guests were treated to a private tour of the museum, an intimate lunch, and a thought-provoking discussion led by the museum's Executive Director, David Houston, along with Jeanne Nathan, Tannen's wife and longtime collaborator. This exclusive event provided a rare opportunity to explore the intersection of art, architecture, and urban planning while celebrating the creative forces that continue to shape our built environment.

As the museum prepares to celebrate its long-awaited completion in April 2025, *Art, Architecture, and Ideas* served as a powerful prelude to the momentous occasion. By honoring the legacies of Frank Gehry and Robert Tannen, the exhibition reinforced the museum's role as a beacon of artistic and architectural innovation in the region, encouraging the creative spirit for generations to come.

(Photo below) AOS hosted architects and interior designers from across southeast Louisiana for an inspiring field trip to the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art (OOMA) and experience the *Art, Architecture, and Ideas* exhibit.



IMPACT STORY

ANCESTRAL ARTISTRY: THE INFLUENCE OF AFRICANS + CREOLES OF COLOR IN LOUISIANA ARCHITECTURE

For centuries, Louisiana's architecture has stood as a testament to the craftsmanship, ingenuity, and resilience of the people who built it. *Ancestral Artistry: The Influence of Africans & Creoles of Color in Louisiana Architecture* brings this story to life, exploring the deep-rooted traditions of African and Creole artisans whose skills have shaped the state's distinct built environment for over 300 years. Passed down within families, skills in carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, and plasterwork became synonymous with Louisiana's architectural identity and also critical to the livelihoods of those who practiced them. The documentary film examines how these artisans blended Old World techniques with new methods suited to Louisiana's climate.

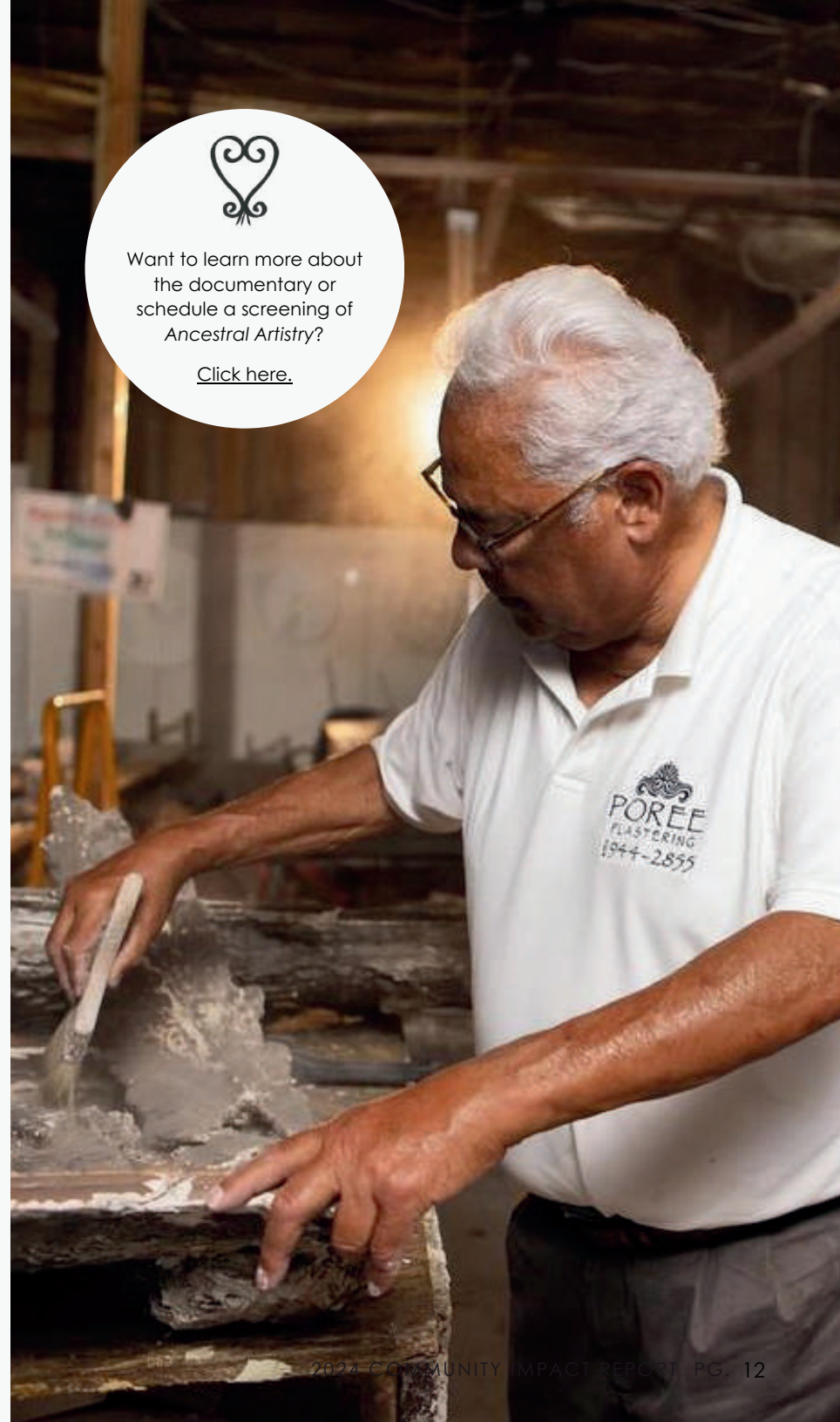
Yet *Ancestral Artistry* is not just a historical account; it also highlights the master craftsmen of today who are working tirelessly to preserve the legacy of their ancestors. Their dedication to restoring and maintaining historic structures ensures that these time-honored traditions continue to be passed down for generations to come. Rather than simply documenting historic buildings, the film weaves together the stories of contemporary craftsmen, such as fourth generational master plasterer Jeffrey M. Poreé, renowned blacksmith and metal artist Darryl A. Reeves, and third-generation Master Mason and preservationist Theodore "Teddy" Matthew Pierre Jr.

(Photo right, Courtesy of LAF) The film follows master artisans dedicated to preserving Louisiana's rich architectural heritage, including Jeffrey M. Poreé, a celebrated fourth-generation master plasterer whose craftsmanship has played a vital role in restoring and maintaining the historic splendor of New Orleans.



Want to learn more about the documentary or schedule a screening of *Ancestral Artistry*?

[Click here.](#)



It also documents the restoration of the Craftsmen's Tomb in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2, a project that serves as both a physical preservation effort and a tribute to the artisans who shaped New Orleans. In an era of rapid modernization, these traditional building trades face an uncertain future, making efforts to practice and sustain them all the more urgent.

Produced by the Louisiana Architecture Foundation (LAF), the documentary premiered in Lake Charles, Louisiana, in September 2024 before screening in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Lafayette. The New Orleans celebration, held on November 7, 2024, at the Historic BK House & Gardens, was a particularly special event, bringing together architects, historians, preservationists, and community members to honor the craftsmanship and cultural legacy showcased in the film. The evening began with a sponsor reception followed by the screening in the courtyard of the historic home. After the documentary concluded, the filmmakers, master craftsmen, and other featured subjects took part in a compelling panel, sharing their personal journeys, challenges, and hopes for the future of their trades. The discussion sparked a meaningful dialogue on how to encourage younger generations to carry forward these time-honored traditions, ensuring that Louisiana's architectural identity remains strong for years to come.

AOS' support of *Ancestral Artistry* reflects a longstanding partnership with LAF, which works to strengthen public awareness of the built environment and its impact. Over the years, AOS has contributed to numerous LAF initiatives, including sponsoring the Architecture & Design Film Festival when it was hosted in New Orleans. Shelby Russ, Jr., President and CEO of AOS, was even recognized with the Louisiana Patron of Architecture Award in 2018 as a testament to his dedication to supporting architecture across the region.



(Photos from top to bottom)

The New Orleans screening concluded with an engaging discussion featuring the filmmakers and master artisans, offering insights into the craftsmanship, history, and preservation efforts highlighted in the film.

Click [here](#) or play to watch the official trailer for *Ancestral Artistry* on Vimeo.

In a still from the documentary, master mason/preservationist Theodore "Teddy" Matthew Pierre, Jr., and master plasterer Jeffrey M. Poreé discuss the restoration of the Craftsmen's Tomb in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2. Photo courtesy of LAF.



Ancestral Artistry is the second documentary film produced by LAF, part of the organization's growing commitment to storytelling as a tool for architectural preservation and education. The foundation first recognized the power of film in engaging a broader audience when it partnered with the national Architecture & Design Film Festival, making New Orleans one of only six North American host cities. Working with the festival's New York-based organizers, LAF saw firsthand how documentary filmmaking could spark meaningful conversations about architecture, history, and culture beyond traditional lectures and exhibitions. Inspired by this success, LAF began producing its own films, focusing on the rich architectural legacy of Louisiana and the individuals who have shaped it.

By showcasing the stories of the craftsmen behind Louisiana's most iconic buildings, *Ancestral Artistry* serves as both a historical record and a call to action. The preservation of these architectural traditions is not just about maintaining historic buildings—it is about ensuring that the diversity, artistry, and expertise that shaped them continue to thrive. The film underscores the importance of not only preserving structures but also investing in the people and practices that sustain them. It is a reminder that diversity and inclusion are essential not only in architecture but in all aspects of the design industry. By continuing to support and uplift the voices of historically underrepresented communities, we strengthen the foundation of the built environment and ensure that it reflects the richness of the cultures that create it.

(Photo below) From left to right, master plasterer Jeffrey M. Porée, historian and New Orleans Master Crafts Guild co-founder John E. Hankins, and master blacksmith Darryl A. Reeves examine the preservation efforts at the Craftsmen's Tomb in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 in the film. Photo courtesy of LAF.



BUILDING A STRONGER INDUSTRY



Caroline Morgan, Sean Chaney, and Tiffany Devezin present to students participating in the National Organization of Minority Architects' Project Pipeline camp in July 2024.

At AOS, we are not just participants in the design industry—we are actively shaping its future. Through strategic investments, industry partnerships, and workforce development initiatives, we ensure that our team members and the next generation of professionals are equipped to meet the evolving demands of the built environment.

2024 has been a year of expanding opportunities and removing barriers, reinforcing our commitment to fostering innovation, championing diversity, and elevating industry leadership. We believe that a progressive, forward-thinking industry is built on education, licensing, and professional development, which is why we have maintained strong partnerships with the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), the Louisiana State Board of Interior Design (LSBID), and other key organizations. These collaborations ensure that professionals in architecture and design have access to essential resources, mentorship, and accreditation, strengthening the industry's foundation and future.

At the same time, AOS continues to lead by example in diversifying access to education and career opportunities. Our \$40,000 scholarship at the LSU School of Interior Design provides direct financial support to underrepresented students, reducing barriers to entry into the field. We also support pipeline programs that introduce young students to careers in architecture, engineering, construction, and design, such as NOMA's Project Pipeline, Uncommon Construction, and GNO, Inc.'s Women in STEM Economy (W.I.S.E. Women). These initiatives provide hands-on learning, exposure to career pathways, and mentorship opportunities, ensuring that more students from diverse backgrounds can explore, engage, and succeed in the industry.

We recognize the importance of bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world experience, and in 2024, our team engaged in guest lectures, panel discussions, and interactive workshops at Louisiana State University (LSU), the University of New Orleans (UNO), and other regional institutions. AOS also hosted six industry-focused interactive sessions, reinforcing our commitment to educating and mentoring the next generation of professionals while providing them with practical insights into industry challenges and trends.

Internships and apprenticeships remain a key priority in our workforce development strategy. In 2024, we increased our internship program by 10%, welcoming Nayah, Paige, Anna, and Olivia to the AOS team. Beyond traditional internships, we have expanded pathways for non-traditional hires, offering apprenticeship opportunities for individuals who demonstrate exceptional creativity, problem-solving skills, and a passion for design, regardless of whether they hold a formal degree. This approach is not just about filling positions - it's about creating meaningful career opportunities, fostering talent, and ensuring the industry remains accessible, diverse, and forward-thinking.

As we move into 2025, we are committed to strengthening our impact in education, professional development, and industry innovation. We will continue to expand our outreach, increase mentorship opportunities, and further diversify our talent pipeline, ensuring that the future of architecture and design is shaped by a broad range of voices, perspectives, and experiences.

(Photos from top to bottom)

Caroline Morgan, Sean Chaney, and Tiffany Devezin toured Project Pipeline participants through AOS' Showroom, offering students an inside look at the industry and the impact of thoughtful interior environments.

On October 16, 2024, AOS hosted SMPS SeLA's third Engage & Exchange panel, featuring Kevin Morris (Holly & Smith Architects), Julie Babin (practis), and Paula Peer (Trapolin-Peer Architects). The discussion explored how marketers and business developers can better understand architectural workflows, from project delivery methods to contractor collaboration and budget-scope reconciliation.

On March 7, 2024, we welcomed the Loyola University New Orleans Center for Entrepreneurship for a showroom tour and discussion with Shelby Russ, Jr., Caroline Morgan, and Rebecca Cooley, highlighting the intersection of business and design.



EVOLVING TOGETHER

OUR INDUSTRY PARTNERS

PARTNER ORGANIZATION	MISSION	CONTRIBUTION
The GNO, Inc. Innovation Internship Program	Designed exclusively for minority students enrolled at a Historically Black College/ University (HBCU) or Minority Serving Institution (MSI) 4- year colleges/universities in the state of Louisiana or who have permanent residency in the Greater New Orleans Area. GIIP is an eight-week, paid internship program that allows students to cultivate marketable skills and build a standout resume. With five distinct tracks to choose from – Startup Track (Entrepreneurship), STEM Track, Engineering Track, Energy Track, and Venture Capital/Private Equity – GIIP opens doors to a world of innovation and professional growth.	For the second year, AOS hosted a Culture Index workshop focused on resume writing, interview skills, and career development. Through personalized insights, one-on-one coaching, and industry perspectives, AOS helped students identify their strengths, refine their professional narratives, and build confidence for the job market.
American Institute of Architects, New Orleans (AIA NO)	To promote excellence in the practice of architecture, with a particular focus on sustainability and equity, and to ensure that all in the community value architecture as essential to the quality of life in New Orleans.	AOS has been a platinum-level sustaining sponsor of the local chapter since 2007. In 2024, AOS donated over \$12,000 to support organizational programming and events. We also hosted a quarterly CEUniversity day-long education series to provide members continuing education credits.
National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) Project Pipeline	(1) To empower young people to affect change in their community through design. Using the city as the classroom and connecting young people to real world architects and planners to foster the next generation of design professionals, civic leaders, and change-makers. (2) To advocate for fellowship, equity, and excellence in design.	AOS has supported the Project Pipeline Summer Camp since it was established in New Orleans. AOS contributes with a monetary sponsorship each year, has served in an advisory capacity, and most recently, has invited 20 students to a special Showroom tour and product showcase during the camp dates to introduce participants to the world of FF&E.
International Interior Design Association (IIDA) Delta Regional Chapter	Advocates for the advancement in education, design excellence, legislation, leadership, accreditation, and community outreach to increase the value and understanding of interior design as a profession that enhances business value and positively impacts the health and well-being of people's lives every day.	Having supported the IIDA Delta Regional Chapter since its inception in 1994, AOS is proud to have contributed as an annual Sustaining Sponsor and the Event Sponsor of the IDEA Gala in 2024. In addition to providing financial support, AOS has three members lending their talents and serving on the 2023/24 Board of Directors, including the President of the organization.

PARTNER ORGANIZATION	MISSION	CONTRIBUTION
Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Interior Designers (LSBID)	To regulate the profession of Interior Design in Louisiana in order to protect the public Health, Safety, and Welfare by maintaining the qualifications of Interior Designers through standards in Education, Experience, and Examination.	AOS' Director of Design sits on the Board as Vice Chair for LSBID. Additionally, AOS supports the license certification of our clients and employees and hosts several CEU opportunities throughout the year. We also have 3 CEUs created in-house by our team that are certified by LSBID.
American Institute of Architects Louisiana (AIA LA)	Serves the architectural profession, encourages design excellence, and works to improve society through a concern for the quality of the built and natural environments. Members commit themselves to the highest standards of practice and code of ethics that addresses responsibilities to the public, clients, the building industry, and the art and science of architecture.	As an Annual Sponsor of AIA Louisiana, AOS Interior Environments was honored to support the 2024 AIA Louisiana Conference on Architecture and the Celebrate Architecture event. Through this partnership, AOS contributed to advancing design excellence, industry education, and the architectural profession, reinforcing our commitment to the built environment and the professionals shaping its future.
UnCommon Construction	Uses the build process to empower youth with the skills, network, experience, and resources to lead the workforce. Through apprenticeship programming, students apply to join a diverse team to earn hourly pay and school credit for building a house or other projects together.	<p>AOS signed on as an inaugural member of the UnCommon Construction Industry Circle, made up of local and national partners who believe in the mission of directly interacting and influencing the next generation of construction professionals, exposing them to the possibilities of the industry.</p> <p>To directly provide exposure to FF&E career opportunities and access to entry-level job openings, AOS consistently participates in the seasonal job fairs for students who have graduated from the program.</p>
LSU School of Interior Design	The LSU School of Interior Design is a CIDA accredited program emphasizing design that brings meaning and identity, function and purpose, health and safety to interior spaces. The program teaches specialized knowledge in creative problem solving, research and analysis, and professional preparedness. Interior designers give life to interior spaces. They shape, organize, furnish, and adorn the insides of buildings to reflect our personal and cultural aspirations.	In addition to the \$40,000 AOS Scholarship and Summer internship program, we are continuing to enhance how we can support students with additional programming that deepens students' educational experiences. Representatives from AOS present in both the Career Development and Materials courses.

IMPACT STORY

GNO, INC. HBCU STEM CONNECT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

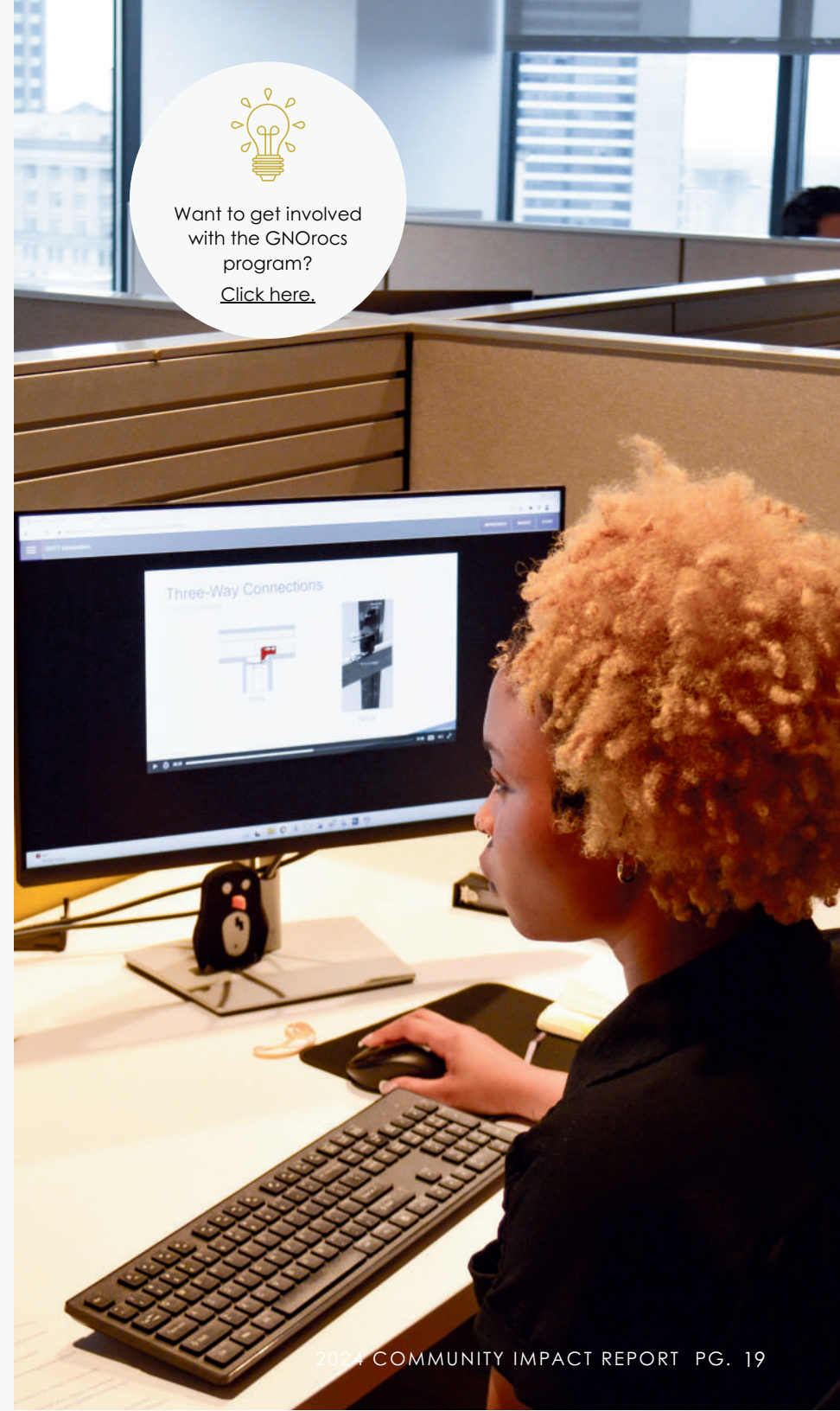
STEM fields drive innovation, yet many underrepresented minority groups continue to face barriers to entry. GNO, Inc.'s HBCU STEM Connect Internship is changing that by forging direct connections between STEM businesses and talented undergraduates from historically Black colleges and universities in the Greater New Orleans region. Through partnerships with Xavier University of Louisiana, Dillard University, and Southern University at New Orleans, the program provides students with real-world experience, mentorship, and industry exposure, helping them transition from the classroom to meaningful careers.

AOS Interior Environments has participated in the STEM Connect Internship since its inaugural year in 2022, providing students with hands-on experience in our Manufactured Interior Construction and Marketing teams. Each summer, we have matched with an intern, giving them the opportunity to shadow project managers and installers, engage in commercial design projects from planning through installation, participate in client presentations, and explore industry resources.

(Photo right) Dillard University student Taylen Roberts interned on AOS' Manufactured Interior Construction team as part of GNO Inc.'s STEM Connect Internship.



Want to get involved
with the GNOrocs
program?
[Click here.](#)



Working alongside our team, interns gain marketable skills and mentorship that set them up for success. This initiative plays a key role in strengthening the graduation-to-employment pipeline, ensuring that students—particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds—have the support they need to enter the workforce with confidence.

Beyond our involvement with STEM Connect, AOS has also supported GNO, Inc.'s Women in the STEM Economy (WISE Woman) Program, which is dedicated to fostering a stronger network of women in STEM careers. As part of this initiative, we have hosted a Women in Architecture and Construction panel to highlight diverse career paths and professional experiences, as well as Culture Index workshops to help participants better understand their strengths, how to communicate in professional settings, and bring out their best selves.

At AOS, we recognize the impact that these programs have on expanding access, fostering mentorship, and creating opportunities for professional growth. By investing in initiatives that support diversity and inclusion, we are not only shaping the future of STEM but also ensuring that the next generation of industry leaders reflects the diverse talent of our region. Our collaboration with GNO, Inc. is an ongoing commitment, and we look forward to continuing to provide meaningful experiences that help students and professionals alike build successful careers.

(Photos from top to bottom)

Xavier University student Tyrin Porter fills his sign with Shelby Russ, Jr. at the inaugural GNO, Inc. HBCU STEM Connect match day on April 1, 2022. As one of the first companies to participate in the program, AOS has continued to support the initiative by providing hands-on experience and mentorship for STEM students.

AOS hosted participants from GNO, Inc.'s WISE Women program for a panel discussion on careers in the construction industry. The event featured industry leaders sharing insights on pathways for women in architecture, engineering, and construction.

Students in GNO Inc.'s HBCU STEM Connect Internship program participated in a Culture Index workshop at our New Orleans showroom in July 2024. These sessions help interns better understand their professional strengths, personal traits, and communication styles within the workforce.



ACCOUNTABLE



In 2024, AOS Interior Environments has continued our intentional and measured approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that our workforce, leadership, and company culture reflect the values we uphold.

Our journey has been one of accountability, setting bold goals and following through with tangible action—not just in numbers but in the way we engage, hire, and foster growth within our team. One of our key commitments was to increase non-white representation in our workforce from 26% to 30% by the end of 2024 - a goal that we have successfully achieved. While we celebrate this milestone, our work is far from done.

We remain dedicated to increasing representation at all levels of the company, ensuring that our leadership, project teams, and industry presence continue to reflect the diverse communities we serve.

Our investment in professional development has also grown, with a 10% increase in AOS internships, providing minority students and emerging professionals with invaluable industry exposure. At the same time, we continue to refine our hiring and talent development strategies, prioritizing equitable access to opportunity and career advancement.

However, we acknowledge that some goals remain a work in progress. While we aimed for a 10% average income increase for hourly employees, we achieved a 4% increase - a step forward, but one that will remain a priority for 2025. Additionally, while we set out to increase diversity and inclusion training programs by 30%, this remains an active objective for the year ahead as we work to deepen the impact of our educational efforts.

AOS is committed to the long-term, ongoing work of building a company where every team member feels valued, empowered, and heard. Our leadership team remains balanced at 50% women and 50% men, a reflection of our dedication to gender parity in leadership. But we recognize that true inclusion is more than just statistics - it's about fostering an authentic culture where diverse perspectives drive innovation, creativity, and collective success.

As we look ahead, our focus in 2024 and beyond is on sustaining this momentum, ensuring that our policies, partnerships, and company culture continue to evolve in ways that create meaningful, lasting impact - not just within AOS, but in the broader design and business communities we help shape.

AOS AT HEART

OUR VALUES

At AOS Interior Environments, we are driven by a mission to enrich communities and foster well-being through sustainable, innovative design. Upholding human dignity and promoting equity, we strive to reflect the diversity of our society in our team and leadership. We invest in the next generation, championing education and development to build a strong, inclusive future for the design industry.

Our commitment to social responsibility and environmental stewardship is interwoven into our business practices, creating spaces that embody creativity, inclusivity, and sustainability at their core.

TRANSPARENCY

We encourage our team to communicate openly—sharing failures, successes, and ideas—while collaborating to grow together.

INTEGRITY

We trust one another to do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

CREATIVITY

Creativity is uniquely and distinctly human. We believe it is an intangible energy that lives within us and compounds when shared.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is an act of teamwork and a critical part of the work we execute for our clients and each other.

HOSPITALITY

We believe in creating welcoming, inclusive, and thoughtful experiences—both in the spaces we design and in the way we engage with our clients, partners, and team members.

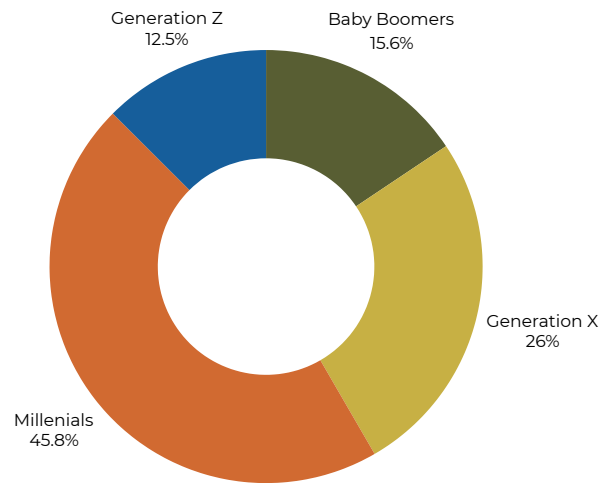


THE LANDSCAPE

OUR TEAM PROFILE

Within the dynamic ecosystem of AOS, our team - comprised of 96 talented professionals, including 36 women and a female leadership rate of 50% - reflects a rich mosaic of backgrounds and life stages. Spanning from the seasoned insights of Baby Boomers to the fresh energy of Gen Z, our employees embody a spectrum of experience across generations. These infographics offer a window into the diversity and unity that propel AOS forward, illustrating a workforce not just defined by numbers but by the shared values and bonds that make us who we are.

BY GENERATION

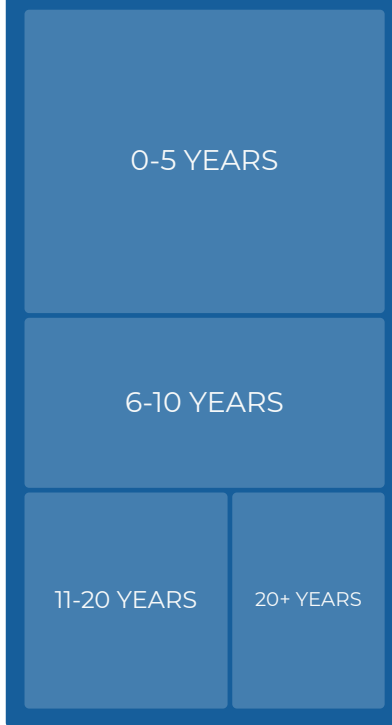


LEADERSHIP TEAM

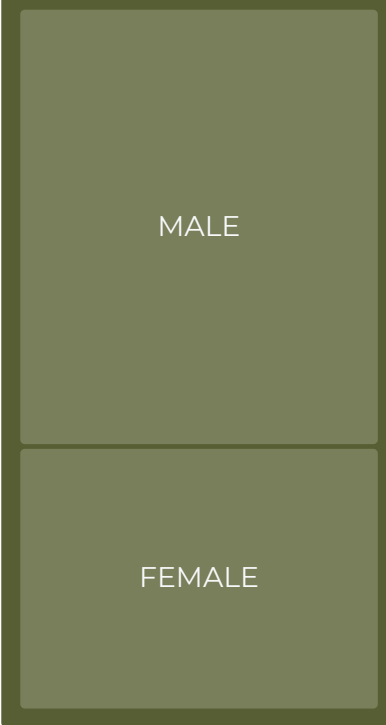
50% Female, 50% Male



BY TENURE



BY GENDER



BY RACE



HEALTH + PROSPERITY

SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

In 2024, AOS was recognized as one of *New Orleans' City Businesses Best Places to Work* for the 10th year in a row, a distinction that comes from a deep-rooted commitment to investing in our most valuable asset—our employees. This investment is not just monetary; it extends to nurturing a culture that values each individual, fosters professional growth, and promotes a healthy work-life balance.

Comprehensive Employee Development Programs: The company provides an array of training programs, workshops, and mentorship opportunities tailored to help team members expand their skill sets, stay abreast of industry trends, and advance in their careers. This commitment to continuous learning ensures that employees not only excel in their current roles but are also prepared for future challenges and growth opportunities.

Competitive Compensation and Benefits: Recognizing the importance of financial security and well-being, AOS offers competitive salaries, impressive bonus structures, and comprehensive benefits. These include substantial contributions to retirement funds, healthcare benefits, and profit-sharing initiatives, underscoring the company's dedication to the long-term prosperity and health of our employees.

A Culture of Recognition and Inclusivity: AOS fosters an inclusive environment where every employee's contribution is valued and recognized. This culture of appreciation extends beyond formal rewards, permeating daily interactions and team collaborations. Such an atmosphere not only boosts morale but also cultivates a sense of belonging and purpose among the staff.

Work-Life Balance and Employee Well-Being: Understanding the importance of a healthy work-life balance, AOS prioritizes the well-being of our team members. Flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, and supportive workplace policies reflect the company's acknowledgment that employee satisfaction and health are integral to its success.

Engaging and Supportive Work Environment: AOS has created an engaging work environment that encourages collaboration, innovation, and open communication. Regular team-building activities, celebratory events, and community initiatives contribute to a vibrant and supportive workplace where employees feel connected not just to their work but also to each other.

Strong Community and Familial Bonds: Dedicated to our roots in the local community and the importance of familial ties, AOS nurtures a workplace that extends beyond professional boundaries. The company recognizes that its success is intertwined with the community and the families of its employees, fostering a deeper connection and a sense of shared purpose.



INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE



At AOS Interior Environments, our vision for the future extends far beyond the spaces we design. We recognize that sustainability, diversity, and operational excellence are not just ideals but imperatives—essential to building a more resilient industry, a healthier planet, and a more equitable business landscape.

In 2024, we have reinforced this commitment with expanded initiatives, stronger partnerships, and measurable action that position AOS as a leader in sustainable business practices and inclusive economic growth. From reducing our carbon footprint to prioritizing supplier diversity and refining operational efficiencies, we remain focused on driving meaningful change that benefits both our industry and the communities we serve.

Our showrooms continue to set the standard for environmentally responsible design, integrating energy-efficient systems, waste reduction strategies, and wellness-focused workplace solutions. But our commitment doesn't stop at our own doors. Through ongoing education, industry advocacy, and strategic investments, we empower clients, partners, and team members to embrace sustainability as a fundamental principle in the built environment.

At the same time, we recognize that a thriving future must be an inclusive one. Our supplier diversity program has expanded significantly, ensuring that minority-, women-, LGBTQ-, and disability-owned businesses have equitable access to economic opportunities. By intentionally integrating diverse talent, voices, and perspectives into our projects, we strengthen not just our company but the entire ecosystem in which we operate.

Through our partnership with the MillerKnoll Performance System (MKPS) Last Mile Program, we have refined our operational processes, ensuring efficiency, consistency, and customer-centric service delivery. This emphasis on lean methodologies enhances our ability to meet and exceed client expectations while minimizing waste—both in terms of resources and inefficiencies.

Looking ahead, our focus remains on scaling up our impact—enhancing our support for supplier diversity by 25%, deepening our environmental commitments, and refining our operational strategies to continuously improve the way we work, build, and lead. AOS is proud to be at the forefront of a more sustainable and inclusive future, ensuring that our industry not only thrives economically but also contributes meaningfully to the health of our planet and the diversity of our society.

LASTING CHANGE

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

By intertwining our operations with sustainable practices and a commitment to diversity, we continue to invest in a future that is not only prosperous but also equitable and ecologically sound.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

AOS remains a vocal advocate for green building practices, championing sustainability beyond our own operations and into industry-wide dialogues. Our leadership actively contributes to organizations such as the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the Louisiana Clean Initiative (LCI), working alongside government agencies and environmental groups to promote policies and practices that prioritize human and environmental health.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE PROGRAMMING

Through robust reduce, reuse, and recycle programs, we have expanded our impact within the circular economy. Our AOS Warehouse Shop continues to resell and refurbish furniture, while partnerships with charitable organizations ensure donations reach communities in need. Through the MillerKnoll rePurpose program, we have successfully **diverted 85% of surplus assets from landfills**, reinforcing our commitment to sustainability at every stage of our business.

SUSTAINABLE SHOWROOMS

Our showrooms serve as a model for sustainable design, integrating energy-efficient LED lighting, recycling initiatives, and low-impact materials to reduce our ecological footprint. Beyond sustainability, we prioritize employee well-being, with dedicated Telehealth booths and sustainable food options, fostering a healthy, balanced workplace that mirrors the environments we create for our clients.





DIVERSE SUPPLY CHAIN PRACTICES

In 2024, AOS continued to prioritize supplier diversity, ensuring that businesses representing minority, women, LGBTQ, and disability-owned enterprises had equitable access to contracting opportunities. **This year, we invested \$2.85 million in diverse suppliers**, strengthening economic opportunities and enriching our projects with a broad range of perspectives, talents, and innovations.

As we move forward, **our goal is to increase this investment by 15%**, ensuring that our procurement strategies remain aligned with our commitment to an inclusive and resilient business ecosystem.



PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

The MillerKnoll Performance System (MKPS) – Last Mile Program

Now in our second year participating in the MillerKnoll Performance System (MKPS) Last Mile Program, AOS has continued to elevate operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. This lean methodology-driven initiative has allowed us to streamline workflows, enhance project installation processes, and eliminate inefficiencies—all while keeping the client experience at the center of our work.

As we continue into 2024 and beyond, AOS is scaling up our sustainability initiatives, deepening our supplier diversity commitments, and refining our operational performance. Our goal remains clear: to transform every investment—whether in sustainability, diversity, or operational excellence—into a lasting step toward a future where our industry is not only thriving but also actively contributing to the well-being of our communities and planet.



AOS WAREHOUSE SHOP

According to the [U.S. EPA](#), more than 80% of used furniture is sent to landfills. Through the AOS Warehouse Shop, we are able to encourage sustainability and reuse by offering contract-grade products back to the community at a highly discounted rate. Leveraging cost savings and product volume, the AOS Warehouse Shop provides a holistic approach to designing out waste. By harnessing the full power of our operations, we can extend the lifecycle of products through a combination of reselling, recycling, and donating new and gently-used items. This initiative not only diverts substantial amounts of waste from landfills and significantly reduces carbon emissions but also saves architects, designers, and clients time and money on their projects.

With an increasing shift towards creating a more circular and responsible design industry, our commitment to sustainability is a guiding principle that we share with our partners. The AOS Warehouse Shop provides our stakeholders with a safe, accessible, and practical avenue to integrate sustainability into their projects and homes.

1,389 Total products sold on the AOS Warehouse Shop and diverted from landfills since August 2020

89 Orders on the AOS Warehouse Shop in 2024

80% Average discount off, making products more accessible at every price point

\$1,810 Value of products donated to the Morgan Rae Center for Hope in 2024



Want to see what's been recently added to the AOS Warehouse Shop?

[Click here.](#)

IMPACT STORY

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL MORGAN RAE CENTER FOR HOPE

In October 2024, the Morgan Rae Center for Hope at Manning Family Children's opened its doors, marking a transformative step in expanding care for children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or human trafficking. More than just a building, this thoughtfully designed space is a vital extension of the hospital's child abuse pediatrics programs, providing Louisiana's most vulnerable children and their families with a safe, welcoming environment where healing can begin.

The program provides essential services, including medical evaluations, forensic interviews, trauma therapy, and case management—all at no cost to families. In an article for *Biz New Orleans*, Emily Wolff, Senior Director of Community Benefits at Children's Hospital, emphasized the urgent need for such a facility: "In Louisiana, one in ten children will experience physical or sexual abuse before the age of 18." With the opening of the Morgan Rae Center, Children's Hospital can now reach more children in need, providing them with the critical care and support they deserve in a space designed to promote healing and restore hope.

Located across from their former building on Calhoun Street, the new Morgan Rae Center seamlessly integrates into the surrounding residential neighborhood. Originally a craftsman-style cottage, the building underwent a strategic adaptive reuse transformation led by EskewDumezRipple (EDR). The renovation unified the layout while preserving key architectural elements, including the Calhoun Street facade and side exterior walls. The result is a cohesive, modern facility designed with privacy, security, and emotional well-being at its core.

Inside, the design embraces warmth and tranquility, drawing inspiration from Louisiana's natural landscapes to create a sense of renewal and growth. Bright colors and organic design elements contribute to a soothing atmosphere, while abundant natural light enhances the welcoming feel of the space.



Hear directly from EDR's design team in the January 2025 issue of *Biz New Orleans*, which you can read [here](#).



Private consultation rooms, a bright and airy waiting area overlooking the playground, and dedicated offices for scheduling, nursing, and forensic interviews ensure both comfort and functionality. Every detail of the facility was carefully considered to provide a safe, supportive environment where children and families can begin the healing process.

AOS was honored to play a role in bringing this vision to life. Our Designer/Project Manager Sara Woods worked with EDR and Children's Hospital's teams to furnish the Morgan Rae Center with pieces that seamlessly complemented the space's calming aesthetic. For Woods, this project was deeply meaningful. "While it's not the largest project in size, it will have one of the greatest impacts on the lives of these children," she explained. "Everyone involved understood the weight of what we were building, and we all worked with heart and purpose to bring it to life."

"Sustainability is more than just a goal—it's a responsibility," shared Shelby Russ, Jr., President and CEO of AOS. "By repurposing high-quality furnishings, we were able to support the Morgan Rae Center for Hope in a way that was both environmentally conscious and community-focused that helps create a safe environment for children and families during a critical time in their lives."

By blending thoughtful design, strategic reuse of materials, and a commitment to community well-being, the Morgan Rae Center for Hope is more than just a new facility—it's a place where healing begins.

(Photo below) Guests gathered at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Children's Hospital Morgan Rae Center for Hope on October 11, 2024.



A POSITIVE OUTLOOK

OUR 2025 GOALS

As we enter 2025, AOS Interior Environments remains steadfast in our commitment to sustainability, diversity, and operational excellence. Having achieved key milestones in 2024, we now turn our focus to scaling our impact, refining our strategies, and setting even more ambitious goals for the future.

Our 2025 objectives are built upon the momentum of the past year, with an emphasis on deepening community engagement, strengthening the design industry, fostering workplace equity, and advancing sustainable practices. These goals will serve as our guide in shaping a more inclusive, responsible, and resilient future for AOS and the broader industry.

01 DESIGNING A THRIVING COMMUNITY

- Increase community engagement funding by 15% from our 2024 contributions.
- Establish at least three new partnerships with local organizations focused on youth development and workforce training by mid-2025.
- Have at least 30% of salaried team members actively engaged in community service, mentorship, or leadership roles by the end of 2025.

02 BUILDING A STRONGER INDUSTRY

- Expand educational outreach efforts, presenting at eight interactive sessions in architecture, design, and construction management programs at regional colleges and universities.
- Increase the number of AOS internships by 15% compared to 2024, prioritizing opportunities for underrepresented students in design and construction fields.

03 HOLDING OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE

- Increase non-white representation in the AOS workforce to 32% by the end of 2025 to further strengthen diversity within our team.
- Achieve a 6% increase in average hourly income, working toward the 10% goal set in 2024 while maintaining a sustainable wage growth strategy for hourly team members.
- Implement a 30% increase in diversity and inclusion training programs to ensure ongoing education and workplace equity initiatives remain a priority.

04 INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

- Enhance supplier diversity by increasing procurement spending with minority-, women-, LGBTQ-, and disability-owned businesses by an additional 15% beyond 2024 levels.
- Reduce overall waste from AOS operations by 20% and increase recycling efforts by 25% through enhanced material recovery programs and sustainable procurement policies.
- Expand MKPS Last Mile participation, implementing at least three new sustainable practices or technologies within AOS workflows.

Reflecting on the impactful community initiatives that have defined our journey, we extend our deepest gratitude to each one of you.

Your unwavering dedication, creativity, and collaboration have been the cornerstones of our success. To our team members, your passion and commitment breathe life into our values. To our clients, your trust and engagement drive our mission forward.

To our community partners, your insights and support amplify our reach and deepen our impact. And to our manufacturers, your innovation and stewardship ensure that our efforts are not only effective but also resonate with our shared vision of a sustainable future.

THANK YOU.



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