2024 Wage Equity Impact Award Winner

Case Study: DiMella Shaffer

DiMella Shaffer is an architectural firm of about 75 staff located in Boston, MA.
Challenge

DiMella Shaffer made a commitment to its employees that it would be a different kind of architectural firm in regard to diversity. According to The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) in 2020, approximately 83% of NCARB Certificate holders identified as white and 85% male. DiMella Shaffer's numbers were a bit better - 73% white and 56% male - but still had a long way to go. Leadership saw an opportunity to diversify the makeup of those in more senior roles as a means of more quickly closing their internal gender and race wage gap.

Action

DiMella Shaffer implemented a variety of strategies to close gender and racial wage gaps. Implemented diverse recruitment practices
- Fostered relationships with various colleges and universities to provide internship opportunities to a diverse group of students with the potential for full-time roles
  - Ensured a diverse candidate pool before beginning interview processes
- Included diverse representation on all hiring panels
- Created leadership development opportunities and training
  - Developed a new leadership criteria document, outlining the skillsets leadership looks for when making decisions about promotions
- Conducted training programs including soft skills development, conflict management, and effective team management
- Instituted mentorship program
- Instituted flexible work arrangements
- Established two employee resource groups: an Allyship Group and an LGBTQ/Gender Identity group
Results

- From the first year of their efforts (2021-2022) they saw a 3% increase in the number of female employees, and no change in the number of employees of color. The women in leadership positions, however, increased by 6%.
- In their second year of efforts (2022-2023), the number of staff of color grew by 3% and the number of staff of color in leadership positions grew by another 2%.