

SEAoNY Self-Identification Campaign Q&A

As part of SEAoNY's mission to advance the art of structural engineering by building a community of colleagues, the Diversity Committee seeks to practice intentional inclusion and equity by identifying the myriad ways our membership is diverse. Our self-identification (self-ID) campaign begins a long-term journey of assessing our members' needs and providing responsive programs and services to better serve the needs and perspectives of our increasingly diverse population. The following is information about the self-identification campaign, how the information will be used, and additional information for further reading.

What is a Self-identification (Self ID) campaign?

Self-ID campaigns encourage members of an organization to provide their demographic data (such as race/ethnicity, gender, LGBTQIA, veteran status, and age) to help organizations better serve their members. The survey is optional, but we highly encourage all members to complete it so that we have an inclusive representation of our membership.

Why is it important for SEAoNY to know about the demographics of members?

Such information provides useful data to create more inclusive and equitable programs towards people-centered efforts such as:

- Providing disability accommodations
- Developing networks and communities for groups such as parents and guardians, gender, race and ethnicity, and veterans
- Recruiting and retaining talent within the field more reflective of the communities we serve
- Developing leadership and performance management programs for historically underrepresented groups (such as women and people of color)
- Creating cultures of belonging within SEAoNY and individual firms
- Coordinating with other SEAoNY Committees

This not only creates a baseline for setting diversity, equity, and inclusion goals to address inequities in access and representation; it provides more opportunities for SEAoNY to create a sense of belonging for all its members, including those whose identities may be hidden (such as sexual orientation and disability). More intentionally inclusive organizations encourage everyone to bring the full range of their identity-based perspectives to bear towards the goal of building a community.

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I don't see how this information impacts our profession.

Knowing the demographics of membership can provide a framework for SEAO NY to encourage member firms to assess their own demographics. SEAO NY can serve as the Knowledge Leader to communicate best practices in creating employee populations more reflective of the communities and clients we serve. Increasingly, both potential clients and employees are interested in firm representation as a driver for innovation and excellence; it can potentially make or break a decision to engage. There is an opportunity now to create pipeline programs through SEAO NY or your own firm that provide both awareness and access to those underrepresented in the engineering field. Many firms find that creating diverse employee populations yields innovation, better client experiences, and a broader client base. Representation of women and people of color at the C-Suite level and firm ownership has not kept up with the increasing diversity our country's population. Such efforts can help to address representation and pay disparities across genders and races.

What will SEAO NY do with the data? Will the data be anonymous? Confidential?

All survey data will be anonymous and confidential. Only the Diversity Committee Chair, Jaffe staff, and our DEIB consultant will have access to the raw data. The Diversity Committee's first event on October 31 will summarize key demographic data with potential implications for SEAO NY and our member firms. Register for this event here: <https://seaony.org/event-5413015>

Is SEAO NY going to start setting diversity/gender goals and metrics for committees and leadership?

Collecting the data is not about quotas; it helps the field and SEAO NY keep pace with changing demographics by attracting and retaining the best talent and creating a baseline for diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. Without this information, opportunities are missed to affirm differences that can lead to innovation, accessibility, and excellence in the field of engineering.

Will this be our overall industry data, or just SEAO NY Membership?

This data will focus on SEAO NY membership, however, its aggregate indications may potentially be shared with other associations or used for broader research in the field.

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For further information:

NCSEA SE3 Committee Publications

<https://www.se3committee.com/publications>

Inclusive Recruitment and Hiring Practices Structure Magazine Article

<https://www.structuremag.org/?p=24570>

SEA of Northern California (SEAO NC) SE3 Committee

<http://www.se3project.org/seaonc-se3-publications.html>

Why Should I Care About Diversity in Engineering? Provides answers to similar questions from other engineering professionals.

<https://www.nspe.org/resources/topics/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>