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Leading by example in sustainable design: Page's leadership in the AIA Materials Pledge

by [America Alva](#)



Every material choice in Page's Austin office reflects the AIA Materials Pledge, prioritizing sustainability, human health and circular economy. Photo/Lisa Petrole.

The future of architecture transcends mere form and function; it beautifully intertwines with the materials that define our environments and enhance our well-being. By championing the AIA Materials Pledge, firms are leading a transformative movement toward healthier and more sustainable choices. With well-defined action plans, continuous education, and transparent reporting, this pledge serves as an inspiring catalyst for establishing new benchmarks in responsible design.

Among architecture firms, Page has taken significant steps towards achieving the goals of the AIA Materials Pledge, established in 2018. As one of only a few dozen firms with an action plan to implement the Pledge, Page stands by its commitment to healthier materials. Page is also a leader in educating staff about healthy materials and reporting progress as those principles are put into practice by the Pledge.

According to AIA's latest report, *Materials Pledge by the Numbers: The 2023 Summary of the AIA Materials Pledge* (released in 2024), more than 300 architecture firms have signed the Pledge.¹

These firms are committed to continually specifying healthier materials in the projects they design. When selecting materials, these architecture firms consider the five impact categories specified in the Pledge: human health, circular economy, climate health, social health/equity, and ecosystem health. The AIA Materials Pledge is the second AIA climate action pledge program, alongside the AIA 2030 Commitment.

Page is one of just 92 firms that reported on their progress in meeting the Materials Pledge for the AIA's latest report. Since reporting for the Pledge is still in its infancy, AIA has not yet provided hard metrics or guidelines for the program. "It is up to each firm to set those internal goals," says America Alva, LEED AP BD+C, LEED AP ID+C, WELL AP, Associate Principal and Senior Sustainability Specialist for Page. Additionally, Page is one of only 33 firms that reported having their own action plan aligned with the broad goals set out by the Materials Pledge. See the details of our action plan in [Design for Impact: 2024 Environmental and Social Responsibility Report](#) (page 32).

Page is also one of the largest architecture firms that reported progress on the AIA Materials Pledge, with only nine of the 92 survey respondents having more than 1,000 employees. The majority of firms reported between one and 500 employees.

Educating our designers on healthy materials

Page is investing in education to help its architects meet the goals of the AIA Materials Pledge. Its Materials coLAB team equips our designers with in-depth knowledge of healthy materials, with the focus on guiding informed decision-making.

“We are investing in internal education to support continuous improvement through the Materials coLAB,” Alva says. The Materials coLAB includes more than a half-dozen experts who have a passion for ensuring that the product and material selections they make for Page projects are aligned with its commitment to the Pledge.



Page’s Austin office showcases how sustainable materials can be used to create a high performance, healthy workspace, aligning with the AIA Materials Pledge and fostering design innovation. Photo/Lisa Petrole.

To stay informed, designers can access *Materials Mondays* presentations twice a month on Page's firm-wide intranet system. These presentations help introduce designers to new sustainable products and technologies from Page's partners in the fields of architecture, engineering, and construction. Page has also launched Material Moves, to accommodate long-form posts or videos, as an opportunity to dive deeper into a specific material or impact category or to share a case study of a project that leaned into one of the impact categories. Not only that, but Page has also produced its own written guides to help its architects evaluate new materials, document the selection process, and support architects as they use these new materials in construction. All of this is done with the goal of reinforcing Page's commitment to sustainability and the AIA Materials Pledge.

Page's leadership team is well-versed in the five impact categories of the AIA Material Pledge: human health, circular economy, climate health, social health/equity, and ecosystem health. "We are par with our peers, in term of the knowledge of our leadership," Alva says.

Creating a Materials Library

To uphold the Materials Pledge, nearly all (91 of 92) of the firms that responded to the AIA survey have created a library of materials and products that architects can access when they specify materials for their projects. The vast majority (80 of 92) verify or collect sustainability data on the library's products. However, fewer than half (31 of 92) clearly document and enforce sustainable criteria for what products and materials they include in their materials library.

Each of Page's 20 offices enforces different policies on acceptable products and materials in their libraries. Page is actively working toward standardizing sustainability criteria across all the materials used in its projects. Like many architecture firms, Page assesses the materials and products used in its projects through the mindfulMaterial's Common Material Framework, an industry benchmark championed by AIA and other organizations to provide a common language around materials.

Reporting Page's progress on specific projects

To document its success in practice, Page provided in-depth reporting to AIA on how many specific design projects it completed met the goals of the AIA Materials Pledge. Two-thirds (59 of 92) of firms submitted similar project-based reporting.

In 2023, Page completed 136 projects and reported on two that exemplified our sustainability efforts. One such project was the design of its own office in the new Indeed Tower in Austin, Texas. Notably, the carpeting specified for the office received certification from the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute. The certification addressed all five impact categories specified in the Materials Pledge: human health, circular economy, climate health, social health/equity, and ecosystem health.



Every square foot of floor space was analyzed to determine the

best placement for carpeting, prioritizing optimal acoustic performance while minimizing material use in Page's Austin office. Photo/Lisa Petrole.

"The takeaway for us is to strive to specify and install flooring products that, at a minimum, are Cradle to Cradle certified as this program evaluates products on all five impact categories," Alva says.

Page is the first-generation tenant of its 39,000-square-foot space in the new Indeed Tower, providing a unique opportunity to implement sustainable design strategies. The team leveraged unblemished concrete floors to minimize the areas for carpeting, using it only in areas where acoustics required it while leaving concrete exposed where appropriate. This approach strategically minimized the amount of carpet needed.

Looking ahead, Page plans to report on its compliance with the AIA Materials Pledge for ten design projects completed in 2024. Each project report will touch on at least three of the Materials Pledge impact categories and cover at least two material categories per project. For these ten projects, Page plans to report on categories beyond the relatively easy category of flooring.

"Flooring leads all other categories of materials in the availability of sustainable products on the market, so it's a no-brainer," Alva says. "We plan to challenge our teams to research another category."

Page remains dedicated to advancing the AIA Materials Pledge through education, material innovation, and transparent reporting. As efforts expand in 2025 and beyond, Page will continue to refine its approach, explore new material categories, and set higher sustainability benchmarks. By integrating healthy materials into designs and fostering industry-wide collaboration, Page aims to drive meaningful progress toward a more responsible and resilient environment.

References:

- [1. Materials Pledge By the Numbers: The 2023 Summary of the AIA Materials Pledge. \(September 2024.\) *American Institute of Architects*.](#)