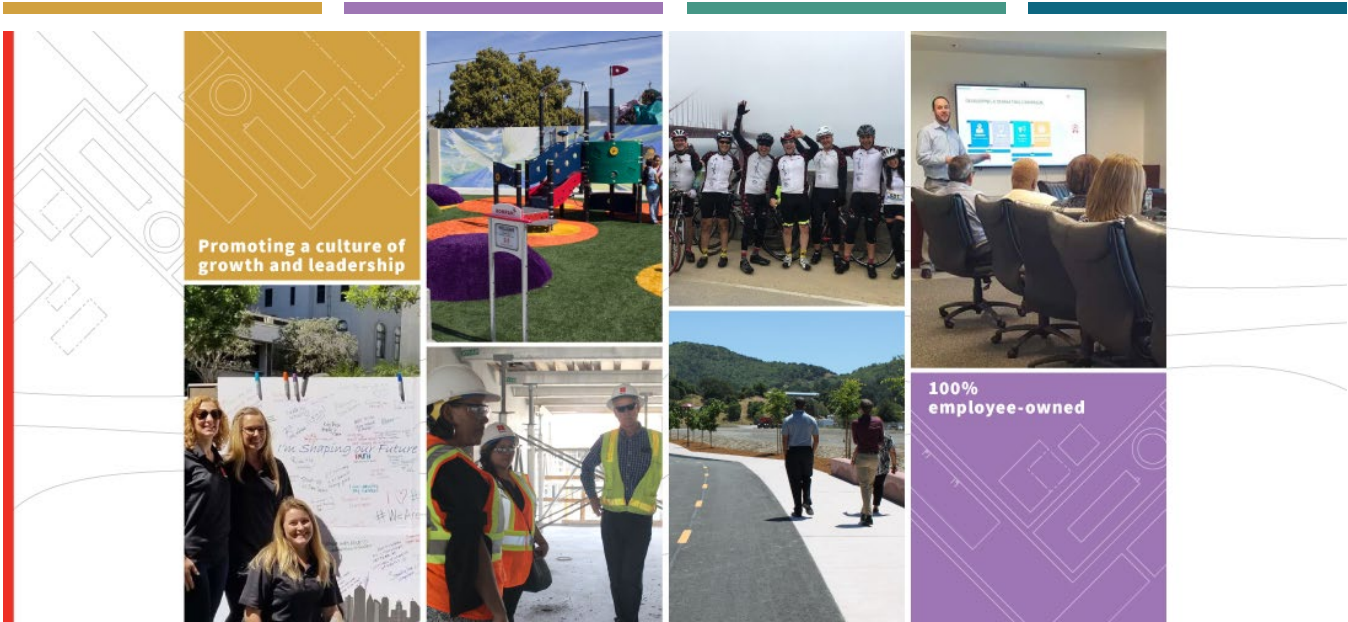




Harris & Associates



# MEDIA KIT

April 10, 2026



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## HARRIS & ASSOCIATES BACKGROUND

In 1974, Carl Harris, Dave Newton, and a few colleagues left a national design firm to start their own venture. Over the next several decades, the firm grew steadily into a leading western-based construction management and engineering firm.

Harris recruited a world-class team of designers, engineers, construction managers, architects, and public finance specialists to serve a diverse roster of public-sector and institutional clients. In 2010, as the entire industry sought to rebound from the economic downturn, Harris' board opted to shift course under the direction of then President and CEO, Lisa Larrabee. The company transitioned its ownership entirely to employees, becoming a [100% employee stock ownership plan \(ESOP\)](#), S-corporation.

On January 1, 2024, Harris appointed [Michelle White](#) as the firm's new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The most recent chapters in the Harris story tell of a firm adopting new technology and innovative practices, giving back to local communities, and investing heavily in team members through enhanced [professional development programs](#).

Headquartered in Concord, California, Harris & Associates focuses on solving today's complex challenges in construction and design. Driven to improve the communities where we live and work, Harris delivers results for clients across the West Coast in four key markets: [municipal](#), [education](#), [transportation](#), and [water](#). Our services include [community planning](#), [municipal finance](#), [environmental planning and compliance](#), [civil design and engineering](#), and [construction management](#) (including [program management](#)).

Harris is consistently ranked in [Engineering News-Record's Top 100 Construction Management Firms](#) and Trenchless Technology's Top 50 Design Firms. The firm is led by an executive leadership team consisting of President and CEO, [Michelle White](#), Division President of Program + Construction Management and Engineering, [Ehab Gerges](#), Division President of Consulting, [Diane Sandman](#), Chief Financial Officer, [Karen Freeman](#), and Chief Growth Officer & CM Education Lead, [Rueben Smith](#).

Harris has more than 280+ employee-owners in offices and project sites throughout California, Nevada, and Washington.

# HARRIS & ASSOCIATES FACT SHEET

## Company Overview

Harris is a 100% employee-owned company focused on solving today's complex challenges in planning, construction, and design. Driven to improve the communities where we live and work, Harris delivers results for clients across the West Coast in four key markets: municipal, education, transportation, and water.

## History

In 1974, Carl Harris, Dave Newton and a few colleagues left a national design firm to start their own venture. Over the next several decades, the firm grew steadily into a leading western-based construction management and engineering firm. In 2010, as the entire industry sought to rebound from the economic downturn, Harris' board opted to shift course under the direction of then President and CEO Lisa Larrabee. The company transitioned its ownership entirely to employees, becoming a 100% employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), S corporation. Larrabee then reorganized the firm's leadership structure to enhance collaboration and, along with her executive team, mapped a strategic plan focused on four markets.

## General Information

- 100% ESOP, S corporation
- Headquartered in Concord, California
- Offices in California, Nevada, and Washington
- 280+ employee-owners

## Purpose + Vision

**Purpose:** Build equitable, resilient, and sustainable communities.

**Vision:** Align in passion, purpose, and values with our stakeholders and be trusted advisors to community leaders.

## Service Offerings

- [Advisory Services](#)
- [Asset Management](#)
- [Civil Design](#)
- [Climate Change + Sustainability](#)
- [Community Development + Housing](#)
- [Community Planning](#)
- [Construction Management](#)
- [Environmental Planning + Compliance](#)
- [Grants and Funding](#)
- [Municipal Engineering](#)
- [Municipal Finance](#)
- [Program Management](#)
- [Risk + Resilience](#)
- [Special District Services](#)
- [Water Consulting](#)

## Markets

- [Municipal](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Water](#)

## Executive Leadership

- [Michelle White](#), Chief Executive Officer / President
- [Ehab Gerges](#), Division President / Program + Construction Management and Engineering
- [Diane Sandman](#), Division President / Consulting
- [Karen Freeman](#), Chief Financial Officer
- [Rueben Smith](#), Chief Growth Officer & CM Education Lead

## Awards

Harris is consistently ranked in Engineering News-Record's Top 100 Construction Management Firms and is one of the Top 50 Design Firms in Trenchless Technology.

Harris & Associates has been honored annually with Top Workplace honors by USA Today, the San Diego Union-Tribune, Bay Area News Group, San Francisco Chronicle, and the Orange County Register.

We have also won Culture Excellence Awards from Top Workplaces for Compensation & Benefits, DE&I Practices, Employee Appreciation, Employee Well-Being, Innovation, Leadership, Professional Development, Purpose & Values, and Work-Life Flexibility.

# HARRIS & ASSOCIATES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What does Harris do?

Harris is a professional services firm focused on construction management, engineering, public finance, environmental planning and compliance, and community planning services.

## What markets does Harris provide services for?

We operate in four key markets: municipal, education, transportation, and water.

## How long has Harris been in business?

Harris has been in business for 50 years. The company was originally founded in 1974 by Carl Harris.

## Who leads Harris & Associates?

On January 1, 2024, Harris appointed [Michelle White](#) as the firm's new Chief Executive Officer. Since 2018, she has successfully led various aspects of Harris' business operations and built strong internal relationships across the firm. Michelle possesses strong business acumen, industry knowledge, and years of experience and has the knowledge, experience, and relationships needed to maintain continuity and stability during this transition and to elevate Harris. You can read more about Michelle in the bio we have included in this media kit.

## Who else is on the executive team of Harris?

Division President of Program + Construction Management and Engineering, Ehab Gerges, Division President of Consulting, Diane Sandman, Chief Financial Officer, Preston Hatch, and Chief Growth Officer & CM Education Lead, Rueben Smith. You can read more about them in the bios we have included in this media kit.

## Why did Harris move to a 100% ESOP company?

Harris transitioned from a 30% ESOP to a 100% ESOP for several reasons. One reason was to ensure a successful succession plan for the company. Secondly, 100% ESOP S-Corporations enjoy significant tax benefits which can lead to a long-term financial gains and enable a company to invest more in technology and innovations. Lastly, every employee in a 100% ESOP company is an owner. We are proud of our ownership and entrepreneurial culture. Every employee-owner at Harris feels accountable for the company's performance and has a personal investment in the success of our clients and their projects.

## How many offices does Harris have?

Our offices change depending on project area needs. Currently, we have 9 offices throughout northern and southern California, Nevada, and Washington.

## **Who is on the Harris Board of Directors?**

The Harris Board of Directors includes external board members Lisa Larabee, Nancy Pridal, Dominique Shelton Leipzig, and Elisa Speranza and internal board members Michelle White and Ehab Gerges. Lisa Larabee serves as the board's chair.

## HARRIS & ASSOCIATES EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP BIOS

### MICHELLE WHITE

Chief Executive Officer / President

Michelle White is Harris & Associates CEO and President. She joined Harris in 2018 and has also served as Chief People Officer and Chief Operating Officer.

As an executive and board member, Michelle leads with over 35 years of experience in developing high-performing teams to deliver strategic results. She brings strong business acumen, deep industry knowledge, and compelling vision to her role as CEO.

“I aim to be accessible to everyone,” Michelle says. “Empowering our people to live our Purpose, Vision, and Shared Values—across Harris and in the communities we serve—remains my highest priority.”

Michelle has been a driving force in leading teams across the company. She has prioritized investing in our people by designing practices and programs, including mentoring, coaching, and leadership development. These initiatives are crafted to expand individual capabilities, support personal and professional growth, and enhance overall health and wellbeing.

Simultaneously, Michelle has played a pivotal role in nurturing our culture. She has spearheaded the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy, activated Employee Community Networks, and achieved an impressive 84% companywide inclusion rating. This success is underscored by high-performing scores across key demographics, including Women, People of Color, and LGBTQ+.

Furthermore, her influence extends to driving high performance. She has been instrumental in streamlining performance management systems, providing on-demand organizational development solutions, and leveraging human capital analytics to inform strategic planning and growth strategies.

When she’s not encouraging Harris employees to work smarter, she’s pushing her spin class students to pedal faster!



## **EHAB GERGES, PE**

### **Division President / Program + Construction Management and Engineering**

For over 25 years, Ehab Gerges has participated in the enhancement of communities as project manager and designer of countless public works projects involving transportation, water, wastewater and other infrastructure renewal efforts.

As Division President of Program and Construction Management and Engineering, Ehab leads a team in helping clients organize multiple and concurrent efforts, assess risk, leverage funding options, navigate regulatory requirements, scale available resources appropriately, manage stakeholders and contractors, and expedite project timelines.



In his extensive municipal engineering experience, with and before Harris, Ehab assisted public agencies with managing numerous capital improvements programs and overseeing end-to-end construction management for several major capital projects. He also helped various agencies with overseeing the building of new communities by managing the development review process.

Just as important, he understands the delicate dynamics that always exist within local government and the political realities involved in stewarding projects that benefit all end users. He also excels at giving persuasive presentations to community groups and various public agencies' representatives to secure stakeholder buy-in.

Ehab leverages the wisdom gained through these and other engagements in his role as Harris' Program + Construction Management and Engineering Division President. He stays on top of the latest industry trends and promotes thought leadership throughout the company.

## KAREN FREEMAN, PMP

### Chief Financial Officer

As Harris' Chief Financial Officer, Karen Freeman ensures the firm's financial foundation supports our mission to build equitable, resilient, and sustainable communities.

With more than 15 years of experience, Karen's responsibilities run the gamut from financials, audits and banking to budgeting, forecasting and her personal favorite: the employee stock-ownership plan (ESOP).

In fact, she was instrumental in Harris' equity transition to a 100-percent ESOP S Corporation. Today, she's a member of the ESOP Association and the National Center for Employee Ownership.

Karen's first exposure to Harris was as a student intern in the accounting department during college breaks. Years later, when she called for a reference, she discovered Harris was hiring, and it worked out great for all parties.

When Karen isn't keeping Harris running, she's often running herself. She looks forward to participating in 5k and 10k races and then warming up to the prospect of a half marathon.



## RUEBEN SMITH

### Chief Growth Officer & CM Education Lead

Dr. Rueben Smith is a distinguished leader with 25+ years of experience in client relations, strategic growth, facilities management, and educational infrastructure development across both public and private sectors. As Chief Growth Officer & CM Education Lead at Harris, Dr. Smith drives strategic growth initiatives, ensuring Harris continues to address the industry's evolving needs with innovative solutions.

Dr. Smith joins Harris following his tenure as Chief Facilities Officer for the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), where he led the \$14.9B capital improvement

construction program for the nation's largest community college district. He spearheaded numerous initiatives to modernize and enhance the district's facilities. His visionary approach to facility management, coupled with his commitment to sustainability and operational efficiency, and student-centered learning environments has been instrumental in shaping LACCD's infrastructure and campus environments.

In addition to his role as CGO, Dr. Smith will provide strategic leadership to the company's Construction Management Education business line. He will oversee the development and execution of innovative solutions for educational institutions, ensuring projects meet the highest standards of quality and efficiency, while aligning with the latest industry trends and sustainability practices.

Dr. Smith holds undergraduate degrees in Civil Engineering and Mathematics, an MBA in Environmental Sustainability and a doctorate in Computer Science. His background in managing complex facility projects, along with his passion for advancing educational infrastructure, positions him to make a lasting impact at Harris and reflects a focused investment in the company's growth.

Outside of his professional life, Dr. Smith enjoys spending time on the golf course with lifelong friends and industry peers, as well as engaging in the competitive spirit of paintball. An avid Jordan shoe aficionado, he also appreciates the craftsmanship and culture behind the iconic brand.



## DIANE SANDMAN, AICP

### Division President / Consulting

Diane Sandman exemplifies dynamic leadership in her role as Division President of Consulting at Harris & Associates. With a proven track record of inspiring teams and delivering innovative solutions, Diane is instrumental in guiding Harris' Consulting division to address the complex challenges faced by communities today.

Throughout her career, Diane has excelled as a specialist in the environmental sciences. She has focused on planning, permitting and compliance and developed a specialty in the preparation of complex documents in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Her professional experience includes over 18 years of coordination with local, state and federal agencies on public- and private-sector projects that cover the entire spectrum of infrastructure.

At Harris, Diane led the firm's Environmental Planning + Compliance practice as Vice President and played an integral role in helping clients navigate the complex, changing landscape associated with environmental regulations for project planning, design and construction. Her transition to leading the entire Consulting division is a testament to her strategic vision and ability to deliver results. Diane oversees all operational facets of the division, which includes the Environmental Planning + Compliance, Municipal Finance, and Community Development + Housing.

Among her proudest professional accomplishments, she helped a team complete the County of San Diego's General Plan Update and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in only three years. Diane was the project manager for the Program EIR and read every word of the 1,200-page document several times. The project earned an Outstanding Environmental Analysis Document Award from the Association of Environmental Professionals.

Her commitment to sound environmental strategy extends beyond her project responsibilities. In her spare time, she's the instructor for the Environmental Assessment Practices course at the University of San Diego, where she teaches students about NEPA, CEQA and the many careers in her field. She finds it especially rewarding to teach a class she once took at her alma mater.

