

AIA NJ DESIGN AWARDS 2026

Submission Portal Opens: **Monday, June 29, 2026**

Submission Portal Closes: **Friday, September 4, 2026 – 11:59PM ET**

The AIA New Jersey Design Awards program celebrates the exceptional work of New Jersey architects and recognizes projects that demonstrate design excellence, innovation, and a commitment to improving the built environment.

Open to projects of all scales, budgets, styles, and building types, the program highlights the diverse range of work created by New Jersey architects and showcases the many ways architecture shapes our communities, enhances daily life, and responds to the evolving needs of society.

Through thoughtful design, collaboration, and a commitment to the values of the profession, these projects exemplify the impact architects have in creating meaningful spaces, strengthening communities, and advancing a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable future.

2026 Tri-State Design Awards Call for Submissions

It is also a **Tristate Design Award Competition year**, providing additional recognition opportunities for outstanding projects across the region. Projects submitted to the **AIA New Jersey Design Awards program between 2023 and 2026** are eligible to be submitted for consideration in the **Tristate Design Awards Competition**, which recognizes design excellence across participating AIA chapters in the region. There is a separate Submission portal and fees to participate in the TriState Design Awards – for more details, [click here](#).

ELIGIBILITY

A project may be submitted, provided the project and its submitting firm/architect adhere to the following criteria.

SUBMITTING FIRM

The submitting firm must be the Architect of Record* and/or the Design Architect. In the case of multi-office firms, eligible projects are limited to work done primarily by the NJ-based office as the Architect of Record and/or Design Architect.

* The AIA National Ethics Council typically views the Architect of Record as the legal entity that has contracted for and completed the work in question. This entity can be a corporation, partnership, or individual architect.

AIA MEMBERSHIP

The submitting firm, as Architect of Record and/or Design Architect, must have at least one Principal who is a current AIA New Jersey architect member in good standing.

AIA FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

Each submission will be required to demonstrate how the project meets a minimum of three of the ten defining principles of AIA Framework for Design Excellence. Each project will have up to 750 words to explain a minimum of three design excellence principles incorporated into the project. [Link to AIA Framework for Design Excellence](#).

Criteria 1

In order to be eligible, submissions must comply with all of the following items

Credit must be given to:

- Contributing architectural firms
- A list of contributing consultants can also be included.

Are you the lead architect on this project? *

'Lead Architect' is defined as the main client contact.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Was the project completed after June 30, 2022? *

"Completed" is defined as "substantial completion" in accordance with standard AIA documents.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Has the project previously received an AIA NJ Award in any category? *

Projects that have previously received an AIA NJ Award in any category are not eligible.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Criteria 2

In order to be eligible, submissions must comply with at least one of the following items

- An AIA New Jersey member whose practice is located in New Jersey may submit projects from any location.
- An AIA New Jersey member who practices outside of New Jersey may submit projects from any location.
- An AIA member from any state may submit projects located within New Jersey.
- Only AIA and Associate AIA New Jersey members are eligible for the Unbuilt category. "Unbuilt" is defined as competitions or projects that are not intended to be built. If your project wins in this category and at some point, is built, it cannot be submitted for consideration in any other category in the future.

Is your practice located in New Jersey? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

ENTRY FEE

The cost per project entry is \$150 for the first entry and \$100 for each additional category you submit the project in. Please note that your project can only win in one category.

Firms are permitted to enter as many projects as they want.

PROJECT CATEGORIES

All projects submitted must be blind. There will be no mention of the submitting firm, project team members, consultants, clients, or any identifying information within the submission materials.

BUILT PROJECTS

Built Project categories recognize design excellence in various kinds of built architectural projects. Submissions may be a single building, a related group of buildings, interior architecture, additions, restorations, or adaptive use projects. Entries may be eligible in more than one category; however, a separate fee is required for each category submission made, per fee information listed above.

1. Open

Eligibility: Public and private projects: single buildings, a related group of buildings forming a single project, and additions/renovations including but not limited to commercial, institutional, mixed-use, multi-family, and educational projects.

2. Residential Design

Eligibility: Single-family residences, accessory buildings or Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADUs), new or remodeled, or any addition.

3. Preservation

Eligibility: Projects including historic preservation, historic restoration, historic rehabilitation, reconstruction, and/or adaptive reuse.

4. Interior Architecture

Eligibility: projects of any scope that may be new construction, renovation, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or reconstruction, that focus on interior space only.

5. Built Sustainability

Eligibility: Recognizes excellence in ecological stewardship, including reduced environmental impact and reduced energy consumption, as well as attention to quality-of-life issues, resiliency, and community engagement within the environment. Must demonstrate adherence to a sustainability standard LEED, Green Globes, Passive house or similar. Ideal projects have also met the AIA Design 2030 Commitment Criteria.

6. Small Project // Object

Object, artwork installation, work of environmental art, furniture etc.

7. Small Project // Under \$500,000

Small project construction, or architectural design under \$500,000 in construction cost.

8. Small Project // Under \$1.5 Million

Small project construction under 1.5 million in construction cost.

9. Small Project // Under 3,000 Square Feet

REGIONAL AND URBAN DESIGN (Built and Unbuilt Projects)

Eligibility: urban design projects, planning programs, civic improvements, campus plans, Master plans, environmental programs or redevelopment projects. Examples might be research, policy development and implementation, community initiatives or charrettes, and input and assessment tools

Projects may be submitted in one of two subcategories:

10. Built Regional and Urban Design Projects

Eligibility: Completed projects that demonstrate the successful implementation of regional or urban design strategies. Eligible work may include built urban design projects, civic improvements, campus plans, redevelopment projects, environmental initiatives, and other realized planning effort

11. Unbuilt Regional and Urban Design Projects

Eligibility: Planning, research, policy, and design initiatives that have not yet been fully implemented but demonstrate a compelling vision for future communities and environments.

12. Unbuilt Projects

Design proposals that have not yet been constructed, but demonstrate a compelling architectural vision and thoughtful response to their context, program, and purpose. Projects may include speculative, conceptual, commissioned, or proposed designs and should showcase the potential of architecture to explore new ideas, address emerging challenges, and shape the future of the built environment.

AIA New Jersey Design Award Submitter & Project Information

After creating an account and logging in on OpenWater, you may view the entire submission form and save your submission as you work to complete it. You may log back in at any time to finalize your submission before the submission cutoff date. You will not be asked to process payment until your submission is complete.

Please note; all submission materials must be blind including narratives, file names, photo/rendering and plan captions, and all copy/content included in file uploads. Please double-check your materials. Submissions whose materials indicate a firm affiliation will be disqualified.

Preview the required and optional fields for the submitter information, project information, and project images in the table below. Asterisks in the table below denote a required field.

Criteria 1

In order to be eligible, submissions must comply with all of the following items

Credit must be given to:

- Contributing architectural firms
- A list of contributing consultants can also be included.

Are you the lead architect on this project? *

'Lead Architect' is defined as the main client contact.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Was the project completed after June 30, 2022? *

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Has the project previously received an AIA NJ Award in any category? *

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Criteria 2

In order to be eligible, submissions must comply with at least one of the following items

- An AIA New Jersey member whose practice is located in New Jersey may submit projects from any location.
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Is your practice located in New Jersey? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Project Information

Project Category

You may submit a project in multiple categories; HOWEVER, you can only win in ONE category with that particular project. There is an additional charge for each extra category.

Built Projects

Built Open
Resident Design
Preservation
Interior Architecture
Built Sustainability
Small Project/Object
Small Project/Under \$500,000
Small Project/Under \$1.5 Million
Small Project/Under 3,000 Square Feet

Regional & Urban Design

Built
Unbuilt

Unbuilt Projects

Project Title

Project Budget

The total project cost includes all architectural budget items such as design fees, consultant fees, permits, and construction costs.

Project Location

Street Address
Street Address Line 2
City
State
Zip Code
Country

Provide 70-word project synopsis

Up to 70 words, Standard Text

What were the agreed upon goals of the project?

Up to 150 words, Standard Text

Provide 400-word project narrative.

Up to 400 words, Standard Text

How did the completed project address these goals?

Up to 400 words, Standard Text

AIA Framework For Design Excellence

The AIA Framework for Design Excellence outlines 10 key principles representing the values of 21st-century architecture. These principles aim to guide the profession toward a zero-carbon, equitable, resilient, and healthy built environment and should be considered from project conception through completion. [Click here for details on the AIA's Framework for Design Excellence](#) for category descriptions and guiding questions. In this section, please **select up to three (3) principles** of the Framework for Design Excellence that your project meets.

- Design for Integration
- Design for Water
- Design for Resources
- Design for Equitable Communities
- Design for Economy
- Design for Energy
- Design for Change
- Design for Ecosystems
- Design for Well-Being
- Design for Discovery

AIA Framework for Design Excellence – Project Narrative

Your narrative may address strategies, performance, innovations, or challenges met through the design process

Up to 750 words, Standard Text

Additional Team Members

Do you have additional team members? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

Add a team member *

Items

Action

No Items have been added. Click on Add Item below.

Add item

Adding Additional Team Members

If you have additional team members, select Yes here and include the following information. You can add as many team members as you like.

Additional Team Members					
Do you have additional team members? *	☒ Yes ☐ No				
Add a team member *	<table><tr><td>Items</td><td>Action</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">No Items have been added. Click on Add Item below.</td></tr></table>	Items	Action	No Items have been added. Click on Add Item below.	
Items	Action				
No Items have been added. Click on Add Item below.					
First Name *					
Last Name *					
Company *					
Job Title *					
Project Role *					
Email *					
Phone Number *					
CANCEL ADD					
	PREV SAVE SAVE AND NEXT NEXT				

Primary Contact

First Name *

Last Name *

Are you an AIA or AIA New Jersey member? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Please provide your AIA Number

Phone Number *

Company *

Job Title *

Address *

Street Address

Line 2

City

Country

State / Province

Zip / Postal Code

Email Address *

Project Upload

Project PDF *

The PDF dimensions should be 8.5 x 11

This PDF should be a maximum of 11 pages (25 MB) and include the following:

- One page project information sheet stating project name, project address, and date of completion and main image.
- Do not include the design firm's name or logo.
- Include applicable photographs, plans or images such as Site Plans and context. Include graphics scale and North Arrow.
- Before/After Photos
- Building Sections and/or details (where informative)
- Photographs showing all exterior elevations which may reasonably be seen by a viewer circumnavigating the project.
- Concept Sketches
- Interior/Exterior Photographs

Pages can be composed with multiple images or individual images on page. Captions are helpful.

No file chosen

High Resolution Image *

Please upload a primary image of the nominated project.

Supported File Types: jpg, jpeg, and png

No file chosen

AIA New Jersey Photo & Video Release

I grant AIA New Jersey permission to use my likeness in a photograph ("photo"), video, audio, or other digital media or other photographs and information provided in any and all of its publications, including web-based publications, website, social media, etc. without payment or other consideration.

I further certify that I have obtained all permissions necessary to permit AIA-NJ to use, without financial or other obligation, any information, photograph or other materials submitted by the signee, including any permissions required from any individual, architect, contractor, owner or photographer, and such grant will include the necessary permissions to include the same in the AIA-NJ's designated periodical(s), website & archives, social media or communications for purposes of any announcements for this event. I also certify that the AIA-NJ is authorized to use all such materials as they deem appropriate in connection with this event or other reason.

I hereby irrevocably authorize AIA New Jersey to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish, or distribute these photos for any lawful purpose including authorized use by other entities. In addition, I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product wherein my likeness appears. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of the photo.

I hereby agree to indemnify and defend (including counsel fees and/or licensing fees) and to hold harmless, release, and forever discharge AIA New Jersey and its authorized publishing entities from and all claims, demands, and causes of action, which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have or may have by reason of this authorization.

Signature *

[Clear](#)

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THE JURY

Each year, the AIA New Jersey Design Award Committee assembles a jury of distinguished architects selected for their breadth of experience, commitment to design excellence, and unique perspectives on architectural practice. Jury members are invited based on their leadership and contributions to the profession, ensuring a range of voices and viewpoints.

The jury is intentionally composed of professionals from outside the AIA New Jersey region, allowing for an independent and unbiased review of submissions. This external perspective helps ensure that projects are evaluated solely on the strength of their design quality, innovation, and impact.

DESIGN AWARD HONORS

The jury will have sole discretion to determine whether to select a recipient for an award and how many awards to present. All projects that reach the final round of jurying will be considered for the following awards.

HONOR AWARD

May be granted, at the jury's discretion to projects that exemplify distinguished achievement in any category.

MERIT AWARD

May be granted, at the jury's discretion to any project that either lies outside of the other categories or bears an exceptional aspect that the jury feels represents excellence which deserves recognition.

QUESTIONS

Email or call Christina Goldstein - Cgoldstein@njpsi.com or (609) 393-5690