



Design Pittsburgh 2025 CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Design Pittsburgh is a signature program of AIA Pittsburgh, celebrating excellence in architecture and design, and honoring those who create it. It is our opportunity as a community to publicly promote architects as critical resources and industry experts, and demonstrate the importance of great design in the Pittsburgh region. This program provides an opportunity for AIA Pittsburgh members, sponsors, partners, and the public to support and acknowledge the value of architecture and design in the places where they live, work, and play.

The 2025 Design Pittsburgh Awards program is accepting eligible project submissions through 11:59 PM Sunday, September 28, 2025.

CHANGES TO DESIGN PITTSBURGH SUBMISSIONS IN 2025

1. **New for 2025:** Firms/Practitioners will have the option of producing their own (non-mounted) project board for their submission or have AIA Pittsburgh produce the board for you for a nominal fee of \$25.00. Regardless of who is preparing the board all boards will align to the following specifications for uniformity in display.
 - a. Each submission shall be presented on 40" x 40" x ½" matte finish board. Projects will be judged from the electronic submission materials; boards will be used for exhibition purposes only.
2. Please note that the submission form will need to be completed in one sitting as **you can not save and return**. Please have your submission information ready before you begin working on the form. Likewise, once you complete your submission and pay for it, it is considered finalized and cannot be edited further.
3. Submissions for Small, Medium, and Large projects now require the project Contractor to be specified in the submission details. This is not required for Conceptual / Unbuilt entries.
4. Project submissions now have the option of including Price per Square Foot in submission information. This detail can help a jury contextualize the project's scope and constraints. This information is optional and may be omitted if the client / owner prefers not to disclose costs.
5. The Conceptual / Unbuilt category has been renamed to Conceptual to help clarify the type of projects to be included in this category. Projects expected to be built, but have not yet begun construction, are not eligible. Project concepts which were proposed but ultimately not selected for construction must wait for the construction of the selected project to be completed before submitting the concept for award consideration.

ELIGIBILITY

A project, located in any geographical location, may be submitted to the Design Pittsburgh Awards program provided it adheres to the following criteria:

1. The project's "Architect of Record"* is a current member of AIA Pittsburgh or;
2. The architecture firm recorded as the project's "Architect of Record" has at least one principal owner that is a current AIA Pittsburgh architect member and the respective firm can demonstrate substantial design authorship of the project;

3. In the case of multi-office firms, eligible projects are limited to work done primarily by the Pittsburgh based firm, and;
4. All eligible projects in any of the built categories must be completed no more than five (5) years ago.
5. A project that previously received an AIA Pittsburgh Design Award is not eligible for re-submission.

* 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. It can be a corporation, partnership or an individual architect.

ENTRY FEE

\$175 - Firms of 5 or less individuals or Solo Practitioners

\$200 - Firms of more than 5

AIA Pittsburgh Fee to Produce Project Board for You **(Optional)**

\$25

JURY & AWARDS CRITERIA

Each year AIA Pittsburgh engages a notable AIA chapter to assemble a diverse jury of peers.

Architecture Award entries will be judged by measuring the architect's performance against each project's potential and the design criteria, and not in competition with each other. Thus, projects of any type or budget can receive an award based on the architect's skill in realizing the design opportunity.

Award Criteria:

- Concept for the project
- Detailing and execution of the design concept
- Achievement of difficult or unusual program goals or constraints
- Originality of design
- Sustainability of project

PROJECT CATEGORIES

Projects may only be submitted in one category. Please use your discretion to submit the project in the category that you feel best represents the project. The jury has the discretion to re-categorize projects if they deem the project more worthy of assessment or recognition in another category.

- Architecture Small (< 5,000 SF)
- Architecture Medium (5,000 – 50,000 SF)
- Architecture Large (> 50,000 SF)
- Architecture / Unbuilt (ex: Theoretical Projects, Projects with no expected build date)

AWARDS

Silver Medal - AIA Pittsburgh's highest award celebrates an extraordinary work of architecture. The decision to bestow or not bestow this award in any given year rests solely with the jury.

Honor Award - To honor the best of the submitted projects. The jury may elect to choose one or more projects for this award.

Certificate of Merit - To reward a particular design aspect of a submitted project. The jury may elect to choose one or more projects for this award.

People's Choice Award - This category reflects the public's popular vote for a favorite project. Votes are collected online at AIA Pittsburgh's digital exhibit-

Social Impact in Design - This award challenges architects to address issues of equity & social benefit. All projects are eligible for consideration with no special submission requirements other than explaining the social impact of the work in your narrative. Framework for Design Excellence measures, such as Design for Equitable Communities, Ecosystems, and Well-being, offer ways to describe the social impact of a project.

SUSTAINABILITY & DESIGN EXCELLENCE REQUIREMENTS

In response to AIA's commitment to climate action, AIA Pittsburgh is introducing new sustainability questions to Design Award submissions. Questions are drawn from the AIA's Framework for Design Excellence. We encourage submissions to address at least 5 of the 10 measures:

1. Design for Integration
2. Design for Equitable Communities
3. Design for Ecology
4. Design for Water
5. Design for Economy
6. Design for Energy
7. Design for Well-being
8. Design for Resources
9. Design for Change
10. Design for Discovery

Please reference page 9 for full definitions of each of the Framework for Design Excellence measures and their requirements.

Projects are not required to address every measure. You should only address measures that are relevant to your project. While not required, addressing sustainability measures is one of the criteria a jury looks at when making a final decision about awards.

With incorporation of the Design Excellence measures, AIA Pittsburgh aims to emphasize that the highest standards of design excellence go beyond aesthetics and programming to include building performance measures that indicate community connection, resilience, and stewardship of the natural environment.

SUBMISSION & PROJECT INFORMATION

After creating an account and logging in to the [submission site](#), applicants will be able to preview and save their draft as they work to complete the submission. Applicants may log back in at any time to complete their submission before the deadline. Applicants will not be asked to process payment until the submission is complete, added to cart, and the applicant proceeds to checkout.

All submission materials must be blind including file names for all file uploads. Double-check your jury review material content. Submissions whose materials indicate a firm affiliation will be disqualified.

A “manage collaborators” button is located in the top left corner of the submission site. The primary submitter may add collaborators to view and edit an application. Only one user can edit a submission at a time. Once a collaborator is added, the application can be transferred to a new Primary collaborator by clicking “Make Primary.” Access can also be removed from a collaborator by clicking “Remove Access.” The primary submitter/collaborator must submit or finalize the application.

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

SUBMITTER INFORMATION	
Submitter Contact	The submitter contact will be the primary contact for questions about the project submission. This contact is also linked to this submission site's user profile to allow for starting, pausing, and saving the submission as the applicant works to complete it. A “manage collaborators” button is located in the top left corner of the submission site. The primary submitter may add collaborators to view and edit an application. Only one user can edit a submission at a time. The primary submitter can submit or finalize the application.
	First Name*
	Last Name*
	Firm Name*
	Title*
	Phone #*
	Email Address*
PROJECT INFORMATION	
Award Program and Project Category Selection*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2023 Architectural Excellence DESIGN AWARDS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Select project category: Small, Medium, Large, Unbuilt
Project Title*	This is the name that will be included in all publications should this project be an award recipient. Project titles that credit a firm/architect will be disqualified.
Project Info / Project Location*	Street Address Line 2 City Country State Zip
Project Info / Project Area*	What is the gross conditioned floor area (sq. ft.) of the project? (express as sq. ft. in number only)
Project Info / Completion Date	Required for all built projects (MM/YY)

PROJECT TEAM & COLLABORATOR INFORMATION

<p>Submitting Architect</p>	<p>Submitting Architect Identification</p> <p>Please identify the "submitting architect." The identified contact must fit either of the following criteria to be eligible for submission.</p> <p>The submitting architect must be the project's "Architect of Record" * and a current member of AIA Pittsburgh</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Must be a principal owner in the architecture firm recorded as the project's "Architect of Record" and a current member of AIA Pittsburgh. The respective firm should be able to demonstrate substantial design authorship of the project.</p> <p>In the case of multi-office firms with Pennsylvania locations, eligible projects are limited to work done primarily by the Pittsburgh based firm.</p> <p><u>Please note</u> The submitting architect and submitter will be the contact(s) on file to be notified of submission status.</p>
<p>Submitting Architect / Submitting Architect Status*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project's "Architect of Record" ○ Principal Owner in Architecture Firm recorded as the project's "Architect of Record"
<p>Submitting Architect / Submitting Architect First Name*</p>	
<p>Submitting Architect / Submitting Architect Last Name*</p>	
<p>Submitting Architect / Submitting Architect Title*</p>	

Submitting Architect / Submitting Architect Firm*	
Submitting Architect / Submitting Architect Email Address*	
Submitting Architect / Submitting Architect Address*	Street Address Line 2 City Country State Zip
AIA Member ID#*	
Submitting Architect / Submitting Architect TEAM*	List names of all members of internal design team (will be used on winning certificates)
Project Team and Credits*	List all Contractors, Engineers, Interior Designers, Landscape Architects, etc., who were part of the project team in the order of your preference.
Project Team and Credits / Type of Service*	Please note the type of service or project partner i.e. Consultant, Engineer - Civil, Engineer - MEP, Engineer - Structural, General, Contractor, Landscape Architect, etc. MAX of 8 PROJECT PARTNERS MAY BE LISTED
Project Team and Credits / Firm/Company Name*	
Project Team and Credits / Type of Service*	
Project Team and Credits / Contact Name*	
Project Team and Credits / Contact Title*	
Project Team and Credits / Contact Email*	
Project Team and Credits / Contact Phone	

Client/Owner Information	
Would the client/owner like to remain anonymous? *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No, the client/owner information may be published ○ Yes, the client/owner information is CONFIDENTIAL - NOT FOR PUBLICATION
Client/Owner Company/Organization*	
Client/Owner Contact First Name	
Client/Owner Contact Last Name	
Client/Owner Contact Email	
PROJECT IMAGES	
Project Images	<p>Three (3) photographs (not to exceed 1000 x 1000 pixels at 100 dpi) of each project or digital renderings for unbuilt project categories are required. These photos/images will be used for digital promotion and awards presentation. These images may be repeated in the required DIGITAL PROJECT PRESENTATION (PDF).</p> <p>Please indicate the priority of photos in each file name and by priority upload designated here: 1 being the preferred photo, 2 the next, etc. (for example DoeResidence_1). Photo #1 will be the default first choice used in all AIA publications, promotions, etc. The project image file uploads must be blind including file names and captions. Be sure to credit your photographer in the caption. Images of each winning project will be used for unrestricted publicity.</p>
Project Image #1 Upload*	Acceptable upload formats include jpg, jpeg, png Max 25 MB upload file size
Project Image #2 Upload*	Acceptable upload formats include jpg, jpeg, png Max 25 MB upload file size
Project Image #3 Upload*	Acceptable upload formats include jpg, jpeg, png Max 25 MB upload file size
Project Info / Project Overview & Intent*	<p>Project Intent: Include 2-3 sentences about the intent behind this project. This information will be shared with the public and could answer questions like the following:</p> <p><i>How did you solve a design problem? What experience(s) did you intend to create? How does your design make an impact?</i></p> <p>It is recommended that the main points of this overview be reflected on the Digital Project Presentation (PDF) Information Page, a narrative summary of the project and the inspiration/intent</p> <p>Word Limit: 150</p>

JURY REVIEW MATERIALS

Asterisks in the table below denote a required field that will appear within the submission site.

All submission materials must be blind, including file names for all file uploads. Double-check your jury review material upload content. Submissions whose materials indicate a firm affiliation will be disqualified.

JURY REVIEW MATERIALS DESIGN AWARDS	
Digital Project Presentation	<p>The Digital Project Presentations (PDF) are strictly limited to nine (9) pages (8.5 x 11; landscape orientation).</p> <p>The presentation must include a "Project Information Page" followed by eight (8) pages of images and text. The "Project Information Page" is defined as a one (1) page narrative summary of the project and the inspiration behind the project. The Project Overview and Project Background/Impact narrative highlights from the "Project Information" portion of this submission may be repeated on the Project Information Page.</p> <p>Featured images can be repeats of the three project images uploaded to the "Project Images" submission entry. The remaining eight (8) pages of the presentation may include any combination of text and images that best illustrates the project's story and accomplishments.</p> <p>Reference to the firm anywhere in the presentation will result in disqualification, and no members of the firm should appear in any of the images.</p> <p>Additional images (site plans, elevations, photographs, and other descriptive drawings) are encouraged and should be reduced to fit the digital size requirements listed above.</p>
Presentation Upload*	<p>.PDF is the only acceptable upload format Max 25 MB upload file size</p>

FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

In response to AIA's commitment to climate action, AIA Pittsburgh is introducing new sustainability questions for all Design Award submissions. Questions are drawn from the AIA CoTE Top 10 Toolkit, now the [Framework for Design Excellence](#). While projects are not required to address every single measure; we encourage you to select those that are relevant to your project, striving for at least 5 of the 10 following measures: (Each question will be open-ended with a 250 word limit).

Particularly for smaller projects that may have fewer applicable measures, sustainability efforts of any scale can be cited - such as material choice, project siting, rainwater capture, conversations with clients about sustainable and energy efficient choices.

Design for Integration	Describe the sustainable design and building performance strategies that are integrated within the project's overall design goals.
Design for Equitable Communities	Note community access elements, such as public transit connectivity, walk and bike score rating, parking spaces per occupant, healthy food availability, etc.
Design for Ecology	Describe the site environment, if it had been previously developed, use of storm water, landscape design focused on native plants, or promotion of biodiversity.
Design for Water	Describe water use strategies, including storm water management and potable water use, plus metrics (ex: % precipitation managed on site, % waste water reused on site, predicted annual regulated potable water use, gallons/sf/yr, % regulated potable water reduction from baseline).
Design for Economy	Describe building efficiency (GSF / average occupant) efficiency of cost / space / materials, reuse of existing building shell/structure (or interior nonstructural components for an interior project).
Design for Energy	Describe any energy and carbon reduction strategies, plus metrics (if possible) per Energy Star Target Finder. (If the submitted building type is not listed on the Target Finder website, use the Architecture 2030 Challenge targets).
Design for Well-being	Describe information on occupied spaces (at least 75% have access to daylight, 75% have views at least 25' away, operable windows, etc.); also include information on any occupant satisfaction surveys if applicable.
Design for Resources	Note elements such as specific material choices to address the needs for indoor environmental quality, or diversion of materials from the waste stream.
Design for Change	Note the designed lifespan of the building, if designed for disassembly and/or with flexible future use, and any other resiliency strategies.
Design for Discovery	Note if there was a post occupancy evaluation conducted on this project, if any energy / water data is being collected, if any data will be compared with predicted values and shared with the public.

ACCURACY & LIABILITY AGREEMENT

Please be sure that all information is correct on all submitted materials. Verification of information is not guaranteed. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the entrant. The submitting firm may be required to indicate the substantial nature of their design role on project and identify and describe respective design contributions by other architectural firm(s) involved on the project.

Preview below the agreement required in the submission site to complete the submission.

LIABILITY AGREEMENT	
Liability Agreement	<p>AIA Pittsburgh assumes no liability for submission materials or loss or damage to any part of the submission. AIA Pittsburgh retains the right to reproduce any of the submission materials in its publications, educational programs, and website.</p> <p>Please check all information for correct spelling and accuracy since it will be used for publication. By making a submission, the entrant agrees that the information contained in this form is correct and complete, and that the entrant will hold harmless AIA Pittsburgh for any and all damage arising out of the use of the information contained herein. Any errors or omissions are the complete responsibility of the entrant.</p> <p>The entrant further certifies that permission has been obtained from the owner, developer, and photographer of the project to publish photographs, images, drawings, and other information included in the submission (and releases and authorizes AIA Pittsburgh to use all such materials).</p>

QUESTIONS

Email or call Jessica at jpfauth@aiapgh.org or 412.471.9548