

CALL FOR ENTRIES

AIA Austin Design Awards 2026



ABOUT THE AIA AUSTIN DESIGN AWARDS

The AIA Austin Design Awards program recognizes outstanding architectural projects completed by AIA Austin members. Winning work spans a diverse spectrum of project sizes, types, locations, and clients.

Each year, an invited jury of respected design professionals reviews submissions and selects exceptional projects. Compelling submissions are commended for their architectural design, technical ability, environmental response, and/or social impact. Innovation is recognized at multiple scales, from urban strategies down to detail resolution. We will also highlight the importance of sustainable design—the jury may select award winners to also receive a commendation for sustainable design at their discretion.

The jury's selections are announced at the annual Awards Celebration. Winning projects are promoted within the Austin community, cultivating an ongoing public interest in architectural excellence.

2026 SUBMISSION DEADLINE: THURSDAY MARCH 26 @ 11:59PM

IMPORTANT DATES

February 2 – Submissions open with Early Bird submission fee

February 13, 5:00pm; Zoom – Design Awards Common App Clinic, hosted by AIA Austin COTE, Zoom

February 27 and 28 and March 3, 12:00-2:00pm – Submission Coaching Sessions with Design Award winners Burton Baldridge, AIA, and Jes Deaver, AIA, at AIA Austin

March 12, 11:59PM – Early Bird submission deadline

March 26, 11:59PM – Final submission deadline. All submission requirements and payment(s) must be completed online by this deadline. No exceptions will be made.

April 16, 6:00-7:30PM – Jury Conversations, location TBD

May 13, 6:00-9:00PM – Design Awards Celebration, Austin PBS

SUBMISSION FEES (NON-REFUNDABLE)

February 3 – March 12, 2026: \$175

March 12 – March 26, 2026: \$225

Payment shall be made online via the Submittable platform. Each transaction must be made separately, as the submission format is specific to each entry. Fees are non-refundable.

SUBMISSION ASSISTANCE

- This Call for Entries contains full guidelines through the submission process.
- A complete submission includes the Common App – download [here](#).
- Created a login at aiaaustin.submittable.com/submit first. You can save draft submissions until you submit.
- If having issues with Submittable, please refer to its help resources and email support@submittable.com prior to contacting AIA Austin.
- For Awards submissions questions, please refer first to the Call for Entries and then contact ingrid@aiaaustin.org.

AWARD LEVELS | JURORS | CELEBRATION

DESIGN AWARDS LEVELS

The AIA Austin Design Awards program recognizes three levels of achievement and one community award:

Award of Excellence

Project demonstrates the highest level of design, performance, and sustainability.

Award of Merit

Project demonstrates exceptional design and performance and above-average sustainability.

Award of Commendation

Project demonstrates exemplary design and performance as determined by the Jury. A project may also receive a Sustainability Commendation if it demonstrates best-in-class sustainability measures.

Community Impact Award

The Community Impact Award is awarded to a project that has a positive impact on the Austin community. This award can be given in addition to awards of excellence, merit, or commendation.

AI POLICY

Text

- The use of AI tools to assist with writing or editing text is permitted.
- Clarity, brevity, and direct communication are prioritized over length or embellishment

Images

- AI-generated or AI-edited images are not permitted.
- Photographs must accurately represent the project and may not be substantially altered by any editing software.
- Collages, composite images, or digitally combined representations are not allowed.
- Image adjustments should not modify or remove architectural elements or volumes.
- Any changes made using editing software or AI must be disclosed

2026 DESIGN AWARDS JURORS

- **Rauzia Ally, AIA** Vice President, Studio Leader, LEO A DALY (Washington, DC)
- **Javier Arizmendi, FAIA**, Design Principal, SOM (San Francisco, CA)
- **Julie Snow, FAIA**, Founding Principal, Snow Kreilich Architects (Minneapolis, MN)

2026 DESIGN AWARDS CELEBRATION

Winning awards are embargoed and undisclosed—even to recipients—until the annual Awards Celebration.

This year's awards will be announced and presented to architects of winning projects at the annual Awards Celebration:

Wednesday, May 13, 6:00–9:00pm
Austin PBS
6101 Highland Campus Drive #3000
Austin 78752

bit.ly/atxdesignawards26

AWARD ELIGIBILITY

All Submissions:

1. Projects must be submitted in the name of the firm that executed the commission. If that firm has been dissolved or its name has been changed, an individual or successor firm may enter projects under the name of the firm at the time the project was executed.
2. Multiple entries of the same project by successor individuals or firms will not be accepted.
3. For projects that involve multiple buildings, the architect submitting the project (or a portion thereof) must designate authorship of each portion of the project.

ELIGIBILITY CHART

	BUILT	UNBUILT
PROJECT	Project can be sited anywhere, but submitting architect/firm Member must be based in Austin, TX. Projects completed on or after January 1, 2020 are eligible for submission.	Project can be sited anywhere, but submitting Member must be based in Austin, TX. Concepts developed on or after January 1, 2020 are eligible for submission.
SUBMITTER	AIA Austin Architect Members in good standing are eligible to enter projects in every category. All projects submitted must have been executed by an eligible, licensed Architect Member acting as the design architect <i>or</i> architect of record for an Austin-based firm that executed the commission.	AIA Austin Architect Members and AIA Austin Associate Members in good standing are eligible to enter projects in the Unbuilt category.
AWARD	Eligible for Commendation, Merit, and Excellence Awards. Projects that have received an AIA Austin award are not eligible for another award.	Eligible for Commendation, Merit, and Excellence Awards. If submitted in the Unbuilt category and awarded, the project will not be eligible for future Design Award consideration if realized.

DISCLAIMERS

- AIA Austin reserves the right to disqualify entries or projects not submitted in accordance with the stated rules.
- AIA Austin is not responsible for errors in submissions.
- Submission of an entry is your authorization for AIA Austin to publish your project. Awarded projects may be submitted for publication by the AIA in professional journals and newspapers.

PROJECT CATEGORIES

AIA Austin welcomes submissions of many project types; however, projects are not awarded based on categories. The category you select will only be used within AIA Austin to organize projects for review and to gather information about the submissions.

AIA Austin does not require an award to be given in every category and relies on the expertise of the jury for winning selections. We reserve the right to reassign the selected category.

CATEGORY CHART

	BUILT	UNBUILT
BUILT/ UNBUILT DEFINITION	Completed built works <ul style="list-style-type: none">Urban Planning projects must have an active client. Portions of the project must be under implementation; however, the entire project need not be complete at submission.	Unbuilt works - proposed or theoretical
CRITERIA	The criteria for awards includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Innovation, originality and/or vision (design and/or construction methods)Conceptual clarityContextual responsivenessThoughtful materialization (economy of means, material selection and detailing, craftsmanship)Incorporation and communication of principles of sustainability	The criteria for awards includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Innovation, originality and/or visionConceptual clarityContextual responsivenessThoughtful material visualizationIncorporation and communication of principles of sustainability
CATEGORIES (BUILT) EXAMPLES (UNBUILT)	1. Urban Design/Cityscapes 2. Commercial, Small Scale (up to 5,000 square feet) 3. Commercial, Large Scale (over 5,000 square feet) 4. Historic Rehabilitation, Restoration, or Preservation 5. Civic/Institutional 6. Interior Architecture 7. Multi-Family Residential 8. Single-Family Residential, Small Scale (up to 3,000 square feet) 9. Single-Family Residential, Large Scale (over 3,000 square feet) 10. Small Scale Pavilions, Installations, Exhibits, Public Art, Furniture, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Building designSustainable technologiesProductsOriginal researchCompetition entriesInstallationsArtStudent thesis or studio project

SUBMISSION OVERVIEW

Each entry will be judged solely on the basis of a written narrative, submitted graphic presentation, and the AIA Common App spreadsheet. These items, designated in **RED**, are the only items that jurors will see and must be anonymous.

All components are required. The additional information is used to promote the Awards program. All submission material must be properly uploaded online via Submittable prior to the deadline. You may submit multiple projects.

COMPLETE SUBMISSION LIST

1) NARRATIVE

- **Anonymous for jury use**
- Use reference on Page 7
- One (1) page
- Portrait orientation
- Single .pdf file



2) COMMON APP

- **Anonymous for jury use**
- Use references on Pages 7 and 9
- Download here (.xls)
- Single .pdf file



3) GRAPHIC PRESENTATION

- **Anonymous for jury use**
- Use reference on Page 7
- Up to 17 pages
- Landscape orientation
- Page 1=Title; Page 2 =Plans
- Single .pdf file



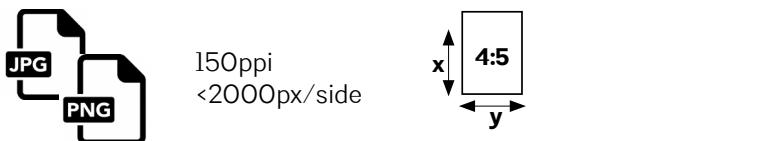
4) TEAM LIST

- Use reference on Page 7
- Include contact information for all listed
- Single .xls or .xlsx file



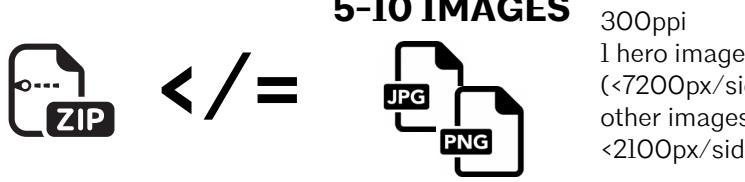
5) SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGE

- Use reference on Page 8
- One (1) 4:5 image, 1080x1350 @ 150ppi
- Copyrighted and cleared for use
- No watermarks
- Single .jpg or .png file



6) PUBLICATION IMAGES

- Use reference on Page 8
- 5-10 images of varied orientation @300ppi
- Copyrighted and cleared for use
- No watermarks
- Single .zip file



7) IMAGE LIST

- Use reference on Page 8
- Include all photographer/copyright info
- Include photographer and firm IG handle
- Single .xls or .xlsx file



SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS (1-4)

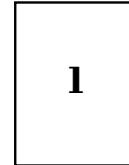
All Submission Components:

- 1. Do not show any individual's name, the firm's name, or any other identifying information on any submission materials, except as required in Submittable fields and on the Team List.***
2. Name all files to match the name entered in the Submittable Project Name field and first/title page of the graphic presentation.
3. Do not insert spaces into the file name; fill spaces with underscores, e.g. Austin_Housing_Project.pdf.

1) NARRATIVE

- Tell the abbreviated story of the project. Discuss critical issues such as site constraints, design and detail innovations, environmental considerations, context, and history.
- Portrait orientation
- 11-point font minimum
- 150 words maximum
- Project Name at top of page, matching all other materials
- Include one (1) representative image no larger than 5"x7"
- <10MB
- Single .pdf file

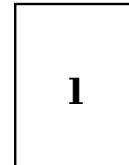
Project_Name_01.pdf
10MB MAX
PDF



2) COMMON APP (See page 9)

- [DOWNLOAD HERE](#)
- Save as PDF and upload
- <10MB
- Single .pdf file

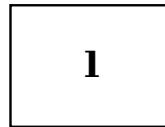
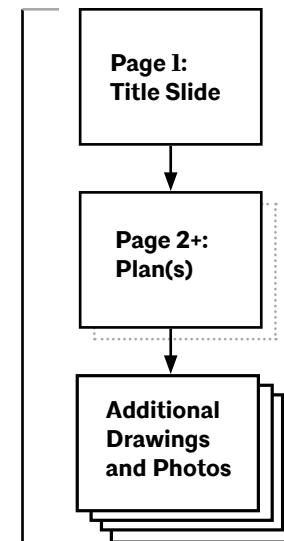
Project_Name_02.pdf
PDF



3) GRAPHIC PRESENTATION

- Landscape orientation, letter-size (11"x8.5")
- 11-point font minimum
- 17-page maximum
- First page must be a title page with the Project Name matching all other materials
- First/title page may include additional text or images.
- Do not include the category.
- Plans must immediately follow the title page. Include, as applicable, a Site Plan and Building Plan.
- Site Plan requirement does not apply to interior projects.
- Include the building plan(s) necessary to describe the building arrangement and envelope.
- Additional drawings may include elevations, sections, wall sections, details, diagrams, or renderings.
- If including section or elevation drawings, indicate their location on the plans.
- Include photos to adequately describe the site/building.
- If the project is a restoration or adaptive reuse project, include at least one image that describes conditions before work began.
- Graphic presentations shall not contain any sound, animation, video, interactive graphics, or links to other files.
- <20MB
- Single .pdf file

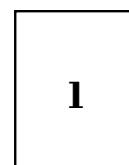
Project_Name_03.pdf
40MB MAX
PDF



4) TEAM LIST

- Include all major design team members, project consultants, builders, and special product suppliers **with contact information and IG handles**.
- Single .xls or .xlsx file

Project_Name_04.xls or .xlsx
XLS or XSLX



SUBMISSION IMAGE REQUIREMENTS (5-7)

All Submission Images:

1. These images will be used for publication purposes. All images submitted must be copyrighted and cleared for use by the submitter.
2. Photo credit must be included for all images.
3. Name the images to match the name of the submitted project and, where possible, in an explanatory sequential order as to match the graphic presentation; e.g. Austin_Housing_Project.jpg.

5) SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGE

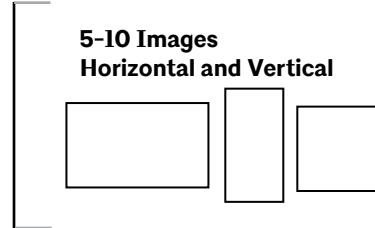
- One (1) non-collage image
- Must not contain text or watermarks
- 4:5 ratio (1080px wide x 1350px high)
- RGB
- 150ppi
- <2000px/side
- <1MB
- Single .jpg or .png file



**Project_Name_05.jpg or .png
1MB MAX
JPG or PNG**

6) PUBLICATION IMAGES

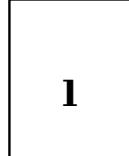
- Minimum 5/maximum 10 .jpg or .png images, zipped
- Must not contain text or watermarks
- Vary orientations
- 300ppi
- One (1) image as “hero image” <7200px/side
- Additional images <2100px/side
- RGB
- Single .zip file. You will not be able to upload other file types.



**Project_Name_06.zip
ZIP**

7) IMAGE LIST

- Match image number/naming sequence
- All images must have a photo credit
- All images must be cleared for use
- Include photographer credit and IG handle
- Single .xls or .xlsx file



**Project_Name_07.xls or .xlsx
XLS or XSLX**

PHOTO/IMAGE RELEASE

The entrant's submission of the entry form implies that submitting firm has the rights to use the submitted photographs and images and constitutes written permission for AIA Austin to use them for the AIA Austin Design Awards program and related publications. **Include photo credit for all photos.**

COMMON APP OVERVIEW | REQUIREMENTS

DOWNLOAD THE COMMON APP HERE (.XLSX)

The AIA Austin Design Awards program recognizes architecture and interior architecture of exceptional design and sustainable solutions. It celebrates projects that demonstrate real innovation and commitment on the part of the owner and design team to protect and sustain Austin's past, present, and future environment and resources. Therefore, the AIA Austin Design Awards requires the AIA Common Application for Design Excellence worksheet for all submissions.

The AIA's Framework for Design Excellence represents the defining principles of good design in the 21st century. This Framework is a living document managed by the AIA's Committee on the Environment (COTE) with considerable input and leadership from AIA Austin COTE. Comprised of 10 principles and accompanied by searching questions, the Framework seeks to inform progress toward a zero-carbon, equitable, resilient, and healthy built environment.

All Common App Uploads:

1. In the Project Information section, along with identifying information, please include whether or not your firm is a 2030 Commitment signatory and list any relevant certifications or awards (LEED, Austin Energy Green Building, Living Building Challenge, COTE Top Ten, etc.)
2. In the Design for Integration Project Summary Statement, please summarize how your team executed the Measures of Design Excellence in your project.
3. Not all 10 Measures are required; however, they are encouraged to demonstrate project performance.

Submitters are encouraged to provide more than the minimum Common App requirements, particularly how the project addresses any or all of the Principles below. Suggested questions for each Principle can be found [here](#).

10 PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE

- 1. Design for Integration** Sustainability is essential to design excellence, and vice versa. Give examples of how individual design strategies provide multiple benefits across the full triple bottom line of social, economic, and environmental value.
- 2. Design for Equitable Communities** Sustainability is inextricably tied to the wellness of communities. How does this project contribute to creating a walkable, human-scaled community inside and outside the property lines?
- 3. Design for Ecosystems** Sustainable design protects and benefits natural ecosystems and habitat in the presence of human development.
- 4. Design for Water** Sustainable design conserves and improves the quality of water as a precious resource.
- 5. Design for Economy** Providing abundance while living within our means is a fundamental challenge of sustainability.
- 6. Design for Energy** The burning of fossil fuels to provide energy for buildings is a major component of global GHG emissions, driving climate change. Sustainable design conserves energy while improving building performance, function, comfort, and enjoyment.
- 7. Design for Wellbeing** Sustainable design supports comfort, health, and wellness for the people who inhabit or visit buildings.
- 8. Design for Resources** Sustainable design includes the informed selection of materials and products to reduce product-cycle environmental impacts while enhancing building performance.
- 9. Design for Change** Reuse, adaptability, and resilience are essential to sustainable design, which seeks to maintain and enhance usability, functionality, and value over time.
- 10. Design for Discovery** Sustainable design strategies and best practices evolve over time through documented performance and shared knowledge of lessons learned.

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

PROJECT NAME

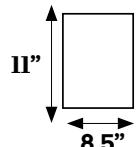
1) NARRATIVE



Anonymous for jury use
Project_Name_01.pdf
10MB MAX
PDF



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2) COMMON APP



Anonymous for jury use
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10MB MAX
PDF



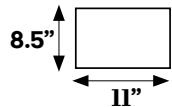
3) GRAPHIC PRESENTATION



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20MB MAX
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4) TEAM LIST



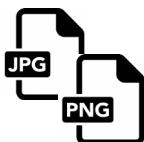
Project_Name_04.xls or .xlsx
XLS or XSLX



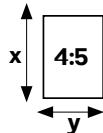
5) SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGE



Project_Name_05.jpg or .png
1MB MAX
JPG or PNG



150ppi
<2000px/side



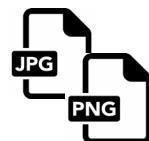
6) PUBLICATION IMAGES



Project_Name_06.zip
ZIP



5-10 IMAGES



300ppi
1 hero image
(<7200px/side)
other images
<2100px/side

7) IMAGE LIST



Project_Name_07.xls or .xlsx
XLS or XSLX
INCLUDE PHOTOGRAPHER IG

