

THE GUIDE

2026 AIARI Honors & Awards Program

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July 1, 2026

**2026 Honors & Design
Awards Committee**

Rebecca L. Fletcher, AIA, -
Chair

Taylor M. Hughes, AIA

Tyler Baum, AIA

Ian Buckley, AIA

Francois Karam

Anne Fontaine, AIA,
President

Mark Male, Executive Director

Sarah Ribera

Toni Drowne

Welcome AIARI Design Awards Applicant!

AIA Rhode Island is committed to excellence in architecture and looks forward to celebrating outstanding works of architecture through its annual Honor & Design Awards Program. The purpose of the program is to recognize achievements in design by Rhode Island architects and to honor the project teams and their clients who work with them to create and enhance our built environment. The annual Design Awards Program is an excellent opportunity to recognize all the hard work of Rhode Island architects and their project teams.

Last year, we expanded the submission application year to include additional materials to shed light on the many facets that go into a successful project and allow our architects to highlight their design considerations more clearly. We know this was a challenge for some, but we were very impressed with the level of work submitted and know that the jury appreciated the additional information. The common application will still be required this year, but we have reduced the number of sections needed for each submission, so you can better focus on the things that make your project shine. As the common application is a requirement for AIA National Awards as well as with other chapters across the country, we hope that by using this framework we are providing you all with a new tool to prepare you for not only this awards program but others further afield. The support materials from last year remain available to guide you through the process if you need it.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize all the hard work of the individuals on the AIA Rhode Island Honors and Awards Committee. They have been working tirelessly to not only make this event a true celebration for everyone, but to also make the project submission, review, and award process as streamlined as possible. We really appreciate all their hard work.

We look forward to receiving your awards submissions, and to seeing you all at the celebration in November.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Fletcher, AIA
Chair, 2026 AIARI Honors and Awards Committee

AIARI Design Awards

AIA Rhode Island is committed to excellence in architecture, and looks forward to celebrating outstanding works of architecture through its annual Design Awards Program. The purpose of the program is to recognize achievements in design by Rhode Island architects and to honor the project teams and the clients who work with them to create and enhance our built environment.

Awards are juried, and the jury is encouraged to consider projects along following criteria – **where applicable**. These criteria are aligned with the [Framework for Design Excellence](#) provided by AIA National, but adjusted to relate better to Rhode Island.

- **Integration** - How do the unique conditions of this project work together to make a successful project? These conditions could include: response to client program and intended purpose, circulation, future flexibility, livability, design language, form, materiality, history and aesthetics (symbolism, spatial qualities, movement and experience, identity, sense). Will the design create a sense of enjoyment, satisfaction? What makes this project one people will want to preserve in future generations?
- **Equitable Communities** - How does the project relate to the context/site including community impact, interaction with all users and/or society? How does the project engage with or improve the community? Was the community involved in the design process?
- **Ecosystems** - What is the project's relationship to the site, the greater environment and/or local ecology? Was the site previously developed? What site improvements were made? How does the project support the ecological health of its surroundings?
- **Water** – Does the design incorporate water conservation strategies beyond code regulation? Does the project consider alternate or innovative methods for managing, treating, or using water?
- **Economy** – How does the project do more with less? How did cost saving strategies make a better project?
- **Energy** - How did the project maximize building energy efficiency or on-site generation? What strategies did the project use to improve building performance or meet energy benchmarks?
- **Well-Being** - How does the building support the health and wellness of the users? How does the project allow interaction with human behavior? Does it improve operations, ease of use, or safety?
- **Resources** – How were resources conserved or reused in the project?
- **Change** – Does the project consider how the project will live on in the future? How does the project address resiliency, longevity, maintenance and future adaptability and flexibility?
- **Discovery** - Are users enriched through contact with this project? Does the design stand out, provide something new to the market or supplement/improve an existing product or service? How does this building help the practice of architecture improve?

Questions

Email at info@aia-ri.org

Eligibility

- Submission
 - **AIARI Member architects** may submit projects located worldwide for any Design Award category (listed below), as well as for the Object Award and/or the Unbuilt Design & Development Award. The project must be submitted by the project's licensed architect of record. AIARI Member architects include Members and Reciprocal Members.
 - **Non-AIARI members licensed to practice in the state of Rhode Island** may only submit projects located in Rhode Island for any Design Award category (listed below), as well as for the Object Award. The project must be submitted by the project's licensed architect of record.
 - Submissions by nonarchitects, including contractors, engineers, developers etc.. will be returned.
 - **AIARI Associate Members** may submit for the Associate Design Award, the Object Award, and/or the Unbuilt Design & Development Award.
 - **AIARI Student Affiliate Members** may submit for the Student Design Award, and/or the Object Award.
- Completion
 - Built projects applying within any of the *Design Award Categories* must have been substantially completed after December 31, 2021, in the last five (5) calendar years (2022-2026).
 - Projects applying for *Other Award Types* are to be from the past 3 years (since December 31, 2023).

Categories / Recognition

- **All Awards will be presented at the AIARI Honor and Design Awards Celebration in November.**
- **Design Awards** will be submitted, judged, and bestowed in categories (listed below), with three (3) potential levels of recognition:
 - Honor Awards - for projects that show outstanding achievement in architectural design
 - Merit Awards - for projects with noteworthy achievement in architectural design
 - Citation Awards - for projects that deserve honorable mention
- **Object Awards** and **Unbuilt Design & Development Awards** have three (3) potential levels of recognition: Honor, Merit, and Citation.
- **Associate Design Awards** and **Student Design Awards** have two (2) potential levels of recognition: Merit and Citation.
- The entrant must specify the category that the project is being submitted for in each project submission. The Jury will have authority to move a submitted project to another category if they deem appropriate.
- All built architecture projects will be included in the People's Choice Award Program.

List of Design Award Categories

Residential Architecture	<i>Celebration of design excellence in architecture regulated by the Residential Building Code.</i>
Commercial Architecture: <i>Higher Education</i>	<i>Celebration of design excellence in architecture regulated by the Commercial Building Code for Higher Education projects</i>
Commercial Architecture: <i>Multifamily Residential</i>	<i>Celebration of design excellence in architecture regulated by the Commercial Building Code for Multifamily Residential projects</i>
Commercial Architecture: <i>K-12</i>	<i>Celebration of design excellence in architecture regulated by the Commercial Building Code for K-12 projects</i>
Commercial Architecture: <i>Institutional</i>	<i>Celebration of design excellence in architecture regulated by the Commercial Building Code for Institutional projects</i>
Commercial Architecture: <i>Retail & Hospitality</i>	<i>Celebration of design excellence in architecture regulated by the Commercial Building Code for Retail & Hospitality projects</i>
Interior Architecture	<i>Celebration of the most innovative and spectacular interior spaces and buildings interiors.</i>
Sustainable Architecture	<i>Celebration of the implementation of Sustainable/Resilient Practices.</i>
Architecture of Rehabilitation	<i>Celebration of design excellence in an existing building having been rehabilitated to include renovation and/or adaptive reuse, with or without addition or new uses.</i>
Historic Preservation	<i>Celebration of the responsible protection of architectural heritage.</i>
Architecture of Urban Places & Spaces	<i>Celebration of Architectural Design that: generates positive community impact, and/or creates and/or activates Public Space, and/or engages and/or includes Public Art.</i>
Regional/ Urban Design & Master planning	<i>Celebration of holistic regional or urban design solutions.</i>

Other Award Types

Object Award	<i>Celebration of the design of an ‘object’ related to enhancing the built environment/community, which demonstrates a level of invention, creativity, and craftsmanship beyond the constraints of space or cost restrictions, as well as excellence in design. Entries will be judged for the success with which it meets the individual project program, intent, and requirements.</i> <i>Open to all R.I. residents (including designers/artists/students), R.I. based firms, individuals, or firms outside of R.I. for R.I. projects</i>
Unbuilt Design & Development Award <i>This was formerly the two separate R&D and Unbuit Architecture & Planning Awards.</i>	<i>Celebration of research and development that advances the art and/or science of the profession, as well as proposed solutions for unbuilt work, post DD phase, on-hold and/or canceled in the past two- years. Entries will be judged for the success with which it meets the project’s program (where applicable), and potential design impact</i>
Associate Design Award	<i>Open to all AIAri Associate Members</i> <i>Celebration of Associate Members design efforts. Must have responsible control over Work of submission (not for employer). For built and unbuilt work in the last three years. Built work must be exempt practice of architecture.</i>
Student Design Award	<i>Open to all AIAri Student Affiliate Members.</i> <i>Celebration of student design efforts. Must have responsible control over Work of submission (not for employer). For built and unbuilt work in last three years. Built work must be exempt practice of architecture.</i>

Design Awards Jury

The Design Awards Jury is being formed by nominees from several AIA Chapters across the country. The jury will be announced via social media and email leading up to the event.

Communicating with or attempting to communicate with the jury or individual jurors from the time of submission to completion of the jury process by the submitter or anyone acting on their behalf will be grounds for permanent disqualification from any future Honor & Design Awards.

People's Choice Awards

All built architecture projects will be included in the People's Choice Award Program. People's Choice Voting will take place in person at the Design Awards. The project with the most votes will be selected for the award!

Project Registration & Submission

Deadlines

Awards entries have two parts: Registration and Submission.

- Part 1: Registration
 - **Early-Bird registration opens:** July 10, 2026
 - **Early-Bird registration closes:** August 14, 2026, before 5pm Eastern
 - **Registration closes:** September 11, 2026, before 5pm Eastern
- Part 2: Submission
 - **Submission deadline:** September 11, 2026, before 5pm Eastern

Note: All deadlines will be strictly observed, there will be no deadline extensions this year.

Fees

	Early Bird 07/10/2026- 8/14/2026)	Standard 8/15/2026- 9/11/2026
AIARI Member - 1 st submission	\$175	\$225
AIARI Member - ea. additional submission	\$125	\$175
Non-Member - 1 st submission	\$225	\$275
Non-Member - ea. Additional submission	\$175	\$225
AIARI Associate Member each submission	\$30	\$50
AIARI Student Affiliate Member each submission	\$25	\$25

*All fees are nonrefundable. Payment is required to complete submission.

Part 1: Register your project

[Start your submission here](#)

Registration and submission must be digital and are to be entered through the OpenWater website platform. No binders or printed material will be accepted.

OpenWater will provide you with a 3-digit application number at registration. All submission materials listed below shall be named with the project name and this unique 3-digit applicant number (i.e. "PublicLibrary123")

For initial registration you will need:

- Project Name – Identify
- Award Category – Identify
- Submitter Name/Contact Info. – Identify
- Company Name/Contact Info. – Identify
- Company Logo (Optional but recommended) – For AIARI Website & Event Presentation

Part 2: Submit your project

Note: All references to the architecture firm must be concealed on all materials that will be reviewed by the jury. Submissions will be disqualified if materials include the firm name; fees will not be returned.

Submission Material Checklist

☐ <u>Submission Component</u>	<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Link</u>
☐ Submission File	Submission package should be in a single portable document format (PDF), limited to 8 pages at 8-1/2" x 11". The file size shall not exceed 16MB. This file should include but is not limited to: ● Multiple high-quality photographs ● Narrative descriptions of project site, client, scope, program, challenges, opportunities and design process ● Plans, sections, diagrams, or details to best communicate design intent and process	
☐ Common Application	Upload Excel file (.xls) with Project Information section and a minimum of 5 of the 10 Measures below completed including narrative portion. This document works best in Excel, not Google sheets or other spreadsheet applications, download as .xls.	<u>Common Application</u>

The 10 sections (see page 3 for more information on each):

- Measure 1: Design for Integration
- Measure 2: Design for Equitable Communities
- Measure 3: Design for Ecosystems
- Measure 4: Design for Water
- Measure 5: Design for Economy
- Measure 6: Design for Energy
- Measure 7: Design for Well-Being
- Measure 8: Design for Resources
- Measure 9: Design for Change
- Measure 10: Design for Discovery

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|---|---|
| ☐ Project Photos – For Slide Show and People’s Choice | Up to 5 project photos; High quality .jpg, .jpeg, or .png (1 required, more recommended). The first photo will be used as the primary image for the event slideshow and People’s Choice. Horizontal orientation is preferred. |
| ☐ Intern/Licensure Candidate Declaration | Provide a .pdf file of the following linked form certifying compliance with the Intern & Licensure Candidate Declaration Policy. Intern & Licensure Candidate Declaration |
| ☐ Copyright Image Page | Provide a .pdf file showing the appropriate copyright credits to be identified with all images being uploaded for the Jury, Slideshow and AIAri marketing, including website. You can provide this information on your firm’s letterhead, or utilize the following linked document AIAri Design Awards Photo Release Form |
| ☐ Greater Rights | Identify if the entrant has or has not secured greater rights to copyright material. See General Certification section of AIAri Design Awards Standard Terms for additional information. |
| ☐ Permissions and Indemnification | Acknowledge information is correct |
| ☐ Project Photo – for AIAri website (optional) | The intention of this image is to update the AIAri website. Horizontal images are preferred. The jury will not have access to this image, so a firm watermark can be included on the image. |
| ☐ Project Video (optional) | The intention of this video is to better activate the AIAri website and any presentation at the Design Awards Event. Do not include firm information in videos. The jury will not have access to videos, so a firm watermark or branding can be included in the video. |

File naming convention

Name all files with 1. Project Name, 2. Applicant's unique 3-digit application number 3. identifying marker (i.e. "PublicLibrary123-Image1"). Application number is visible in the OpenWater main menu after registering.

AIARI Honors & Awards Celebration!

Announcement and presentation of the Awards will be made during the AIA Rhode Island Honors & Awards Celebration!

Save the Date!

Thursday, November 12, 2026

The Towers

35 Ocean Rd, Narragansett, RI 02882

AIARI DESIGN AWARDS STANDARD TERMS

Last updated 2021-08-15

General Certification

Information and illustrations for any project receiving an award or chosen for inclusion in any award citation will be taken from the information and materials submitted by Submitter. There may be no further communication with a submitter prior to announcement of an award. Accuracy, therefore, is essential.

By making a submission, the submitter certifies that the information contained in its concealed identification form and any other information or materials submitted by the submitter are complete and accurate. The submitter and the submitting company further agrees that it shall indemnify, hold harmless and defend The American Institute of Architects Rhode Island, Inc. ('AIA Rhode Island'), and OpenWater against all claims or damages arising out of the use of any information or other materials supplied by the submitter. All errors or omissions are the sole responsibility of the submitter.

The submitter further certifies that the submitter has obtained all permissions necessary to permit AIA Rhode Island to publish, without financial or other obligation, any information, photograph or other materials submitted by the Submitter, 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's designated marketing, newsletter or social media for purposes of any announcements for this awards program. The submitter certifies that AIA Rhode Island is authorized to use all such materials as they deem appropriate in connection with this awards program, including publicizing the program itself.

Permissions and Indemnifications

By submitting the Copyright Permission Form for Textual and Visual Works, submitter/applicant represent that they have obtained all permissions that they believe are necessary to grant the limited rights granted by these terms and that the use of or reproduction of the Work by AIA Rhode Island as permitted shall not, to the best of their knowledge, information and belief, infringe or violate any other person's copyrights.

SUBMITTER/APPLICANT AGREE TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS AIA RHODE ISLAND FROM AND AGAINST ALL CLAIMS OR DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF ANY BREACH OF THESE REPRESENTATIONS. AIA RHODE ISLAND AGREES TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD APPLICANT/SUBMITTER HARMLESS FROM AND AGAINST ALL CLAIMS OR DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF ITS USE OF THE WORK.

Greater Rights

For good and valuable consideration, the exchange of which is hereby acknowledged, submitter/applicant grant AIA Rhode Island ('AIARI') a non-exclusive license to use their copyrighted Work, including any text, brochures, drawings, photographs, graphics, plans, slides, books, transparencies or other copyrightable material, (the "Work") identified on the application form and submitted in connection with this submission as follows:

This license shall permit limited rights to use, reproduce, crop or resize, publicly display, distribute and transmit worldwide the Work during the full term of the copyright in all media, now known or hereafter devised, including the internet, without payment of any royalty or license fee, as follows: in connection with efforts to educate architects through different media, in which AIA members, only, have access to view the Work; provided, however, that AIARI shall implement reasonable technological measures to ensure that access is limited to AIA members, shall provide written notice accompanying each access to the Work specifying the conditions under which the Works may be used and that any other use requires additional permissions from applicant/submitter, and shall provide the written contact information supplied below so that the AIA member can contact me for permission for further use.

This license applies when the entrant has not secured greater rights to copyrighted material by a license or other agreement. If the entrant has previously secured greater rights to the copyrighted material, this option: 'Entrant has secured greater rights to copyrighted material' will be selected on the application material.

Thank you to our 2026 Chapter Partners – Patron Level!



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