

ACEC-IOWA CALL TO EXCELLENCE ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS - 2026

ACEC-Iowa Call to Excellence

The overall goal of the Engineering Excellence Awards program remains the same: to recognize outstanding engineering achievements in Iowa, and to provide an opportunity for recognition for your firm, your employees and your clients.

Entries will compete in five project categories (see Categories of Entry). To correlate with ACEC national competition requirements, the percentages under Criteria for Judging shown match those of ACEC.

Winners and their clients will be honored at an awards banquet in Spring of 2026 in West Des Moines during the American Council of Engineering Companies of Iowa's annual conference.

Awards to be Presented

The following awards will be presented:

1. A single Grand Conceptor Award will be presented to the one project that stands out above all the other entries, regardless of project category.
2. A Grand Place Award will be presented to at least one project in all five categories.
3. An Honor Award will be presented to at least one project in all five categories.
4. Grand Place Award Winners will receive a short project video feature to be used for marketing.

Both the consulting engineering firm and their owner/client will receive awards. Plaques for the Grand Conceptor Award, Grand Place Awards and Honor Awards will be presented at the ACEC/Iowa Awards Banquet on May 20, 2026.

Firms may purchase additional plaques for themselves or their clients by contacting the ACEC/Iowa office.

Criteria for Judging

Entries will be judged equally on the criteria below-

- Uniqueness &/or Innovative Application of New or Existing Techniques
- Future Value to the Engineering Profession & Perception by the Public
- Social, Economic, and Sustainable Development Considerations
- Complexity
- Successful Fulfillment of Client/Owner Needs



Notification of Winners

All award winners will be notified by December 5, 2025. Winners will be given the opportunity to invite their employees and clients to attend the Awards Banquet that will be held in the Spring, 2026 at the American Council of Engineering Companies of Iowa's annual meeting. Banquet RSVP forms are sent in early 2026.

Note: Firms are responsible for inviting client representatives to the Banquet, and for paying their meal costs. The Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board has advised ACEC/Iowa this type expenditure is allowed under Iowa law for public officials attending an award ceremony. Public officials attending the award ceremony will be given an opportunity to comment on the project.



ENTRY FEE: \$495 for ACEC/Iowa member firms, or \$990 for non-member firms. Payment must be made online at time of entry.

**ACEC-Iowa
1080 Jordan Creek Parkway, Suite 106 C
West Des Moines, IA 50266
515-284-7055**

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Entry Deadlines:

October 3, 2025	Submit the Intent to Enter form
October 24, 2025	Submit Entry Fee and Online Application with Appropriate Files
December 5, 2025	Notification of ACEC/Iowa Winners
January 7, 2026	ACEC national competition entry deadline
May 5, 2026	ACEC Awards Gala, Washington, DC (Honoring national entries)
May 20, 2026	ACEC/Iowa Annual Meeting Awards Banquet (Honoring Iowa entries)

To Enter- **ALL Entries will be submitted online!**

To participate in the Engineering Excellence Awards competition, entrants must submit the items below. See Entry Requirements for specifics.

1. Submit the Intent to Enter form online. Please include the project's main Category. Note: Returning this form does not obligate a firm to enter. The purpose is to help ACEC/Iowa select appropriate judges for the competition based on the types of projects mentioned. The Intent to Enter form must be received by ACEC/Iowa by October 3, 2025.
 2. Submit Online Application meeting the specifications listed in the Entry Requirements. The submittals must include a file with a completed signed Entry Form, along with photographs and/or graphics with captions, and various written descriptions of the project. Also include a separate "Publicity File" on the submission to include the project press release.
 3. Submit payment of the Entry Fee of \$495 for ACEC/Iowa members, or \$990 for non-members. Only online submittal will be accepted.
- The completed Online Application and Entry Fee must be RECEIVED by 5:00 pm Central Time at ACEC/Iowa by Friday, October 24, 2025.

Entry Requirements

Projects may have been executed anywhere in the world. The entering firm must have an office in Iowa, but does not have to be a member of ACEC/Iowa. ~ Studies (submitted under Special Projects) must have been publicly disclosed by the client between November 1, 2023 and October 31, 2025. Construction of all other projects must have been substantially completed and ready for use between November 1, 2023 and October 31, 2025.

The following items must be submitted online for all entries. All items must be RECEIVED by October 24, 2025.

1) Project Forms should include:

- a) A completed ACEC/Iowa Entry Form- signed
- b) Client Release Letter

2) Project Description Document to include the four separate documents, as follows:

- a) Project description (may include graphs & photos if relevant to the description)
- b) Role of your firm in the project
- c) Role of other engineers or architects
- d) Description of how your project addresses Judging Criteria A-E. (may include graphs & photos if relevant to the description)

3) Key Participants Document: A PDF with the list of key participants on the project including fields with firm name, address, phone number, website and email address for each participant.

4) Project Photographs or Graphics Document: Please provide up to six different photographs and/or graphics with captions, to give an initial overview of the project.

- a) Name the files Image 1, Image 2, etc. and provide a caption that corresponds to it. Must be typed separately, not on the photo. These overview images should be of high enough resolution so they may be shown in a presentation or possible publication. Image file formats can be PNG, JPE, JPG, or JPEG.

5) Publicity Document:

- a) Include a project Press Release in a PDF format that should not exceed 500 words and clearly and concisely describe the project, your firm's role in the project, and focus on the five factors listed in the Judging Criteria. Include the value of the project to the community and identify the number of people served, cost savings, etc. Write the press release for a non-engineer audience. Award specifics will be added by ACEC/Iowa once final results are available.

6) PowerPoint Presentation:

- a) One Title Page Slide with Firm Name, Project Name, Project Location: city and state, followed by:
- b) Six slides which include photos 1 through 6 (same as the above 6) along with captions. The accepted format is PPT or PPTX only.

Definition of Judging Criteria

A. Uniqueness &/or Innovative Application of New or Existing Techniques (20%):

1. Does the entry demonstrate use of a new science or a breakthrough in the general knowledge of engineering?
2. Does the entry represent a unique application of new or existing technology, techniques, materials or equipment?

B. Future Value to the Engineering Profession and Perception by the Public (20%):

1. Will the entry redefine current engineering thinking?
2. Does the entry advance a positive public image of engineering excellence?

C. Social, Economic, and Sustainable Design Considerations (20%):

1. Do the solutions identified produce secondary benefits of value to the community environment?
2. Does the entrant's approach provide society with social, economic, or sustainable development benefits?
3. Does the entrant's contribution to the project improve the health, safety or welfare of the public or affected environment?

D. Complexity (20%):

1. Did the entry successfully address very complex criteria or unique problems?
2. Were extraordinary problems of site, location, hazardous conditions, project requirements or similar elements present?
3. Did the entry require the use of out-of-the-ordinary technology or ingenuity for achievement of projects' goals?

E. Successful Fulfillment of Client/Owner Needs (20%):

1. Did the engineer or entrant successfully engage the client/owner in the overall project development process?
2. What was the entrant's role in the project?
3. Was it an economical and cost-effective solution?
4. How did final cost compare to original budget estimate?
5. How closely does the entrant's solution meet the total goals of the client/owner?
6. Did the entrant meet the client's time schedule?

Categories of Entry

Applicants will identify the category in which their project belongs, but judges will have the prerogative of moving the entry to a more appropriate category if necessary. Select the one Category you think most appropriate to the best features of each project. If a single project is of a scope to warrant entry in more than one Category, each entry must sufficiently focus on the distinguishing features of its specific Category, with little if any overlap between entries.

All entries will be judged in one of the following five categories:

Transportation

- Railroads
- Highways
- Airports
- Marine
- Public transit
- Freight
- Intermodal facilities
- Bridges

Special Projects

- Air quality
- Dams
- Erosion control
- Hazardous waste
- Hydraulics & hydrology
- Irrigation
- Noise
- Recreational facilities
- Site development
- Studies
- Solid waste
- Storm water management
- Trails

Energy Production

- Alternative energy
- Oil
- Gas
- Nuclear
- Coal
- Energy distribution

Water & Wastewater

- Water supply/ distribution/ treatment
- Wastewater collection/ treatment & disposal
- Industrial waste
- Residuals Management

Buildings & Systems

- Acoustics
- Buildings
- Communications
- Computer Technology
- Energy conservation
- Foundations
- Industrial processes/ materials handling
- Software systems
- Sports facilities
- Towers

Client Release Letter

A signed Client's Release Letter must be scanned and included in the file download for each project entered. Retain the original letter for your records.

Suggested wording for this letter is shown below:

"As client (owner), I (we) believe the work of (name of firm) meets the intended uses and expectations of the project. I (we) hereby grant permission to enter this project in the American Council of Engineering Companies of Iowa's 2026 Engineering Excellence Awards competition. I (we) authorize publication of its outstanding features, unique aspects or innovations, and confirm that the project was substantially completed and ready for use between November 1, 2023 and October 31, 2025."