



Engineering Excellence Awards

ACEC Colorado 2027 Official Rules

ACEC Colorado's Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA) program annually recognizes consulting engineering firms for projects that demonstrate an exceptional degree of innovation, complexity, achievement, and value. For more than 65 years, Colorado firms have entered their most innovative projects and studies into this competition.

All submissions are recognized as award-winning projects, underscoring the prestige and distinction associated with participation in this premier program. Regardless of award level, each entry represents a commitment to advancing the engineering profession and showcasing excellence within the industry. A distinguished panel of judges carefully reviews every submission, evaluating projects against established criteria.

ACEC Colorado's entry guidelines generally align with those established for the ACEC National EEA competition, to which Colorado Grand Conceptor and Grand Award recipients may advance. Projects advancing to ACEC National receive broader recognition and must submit additional materials, with possible updates to meet national standards.

Awards will be presented to Colorado recipients at the EEA Luncheon on Friday, Nov. 6, 2026.

IMPORTANT DATES

ACEC Colorado Program

Nov. 1, 2024 – Oct. 31, 2026	Substantial Construction/Completion of Project Work to be Entered (Colorado-specific dates)
June 30, 2026	Registration opens for EEA 2027 Project Entry
June 30, 2026	Online Submission Portal opens for uploading project entry materials
Aug. 7, 2026	Last day to submit EEA 2027 Project Entry registration
Aug. 14, 2026	Last day to upload materials to online Submission Portal
September 2026	Colorado Judging Period (project videos are not part of the review process)
September 2026	Video recordings for project entries will be scheduled during this period.
September 2026	Voting for People's Choice Awards (conducted via social media)
Oct. 30, 2026	Deadline to register your team, client and partners to attend the Awards Luncheon
Nov. 6, 2026	Awards Luncheon & Formal Presentation of EEA Honorees

ACEC National Program

Jan. 6, 2027	Final deadline for entries advancing to the ACEC National Competition
Feb. 19-21, 2027	National Judging Period
April 20, 2027	ACEC National EEA Gala Dinner & Awards Program (Washington, D.C.)

PROJECT REGISTRATION & ENTRY FEE

ACEC Colorado requires each project to complete a 2027 Project Registration and pay the associated entry fee. The fee is non-refundable and non-transferable, regardless of whether submission materials are ultimately provided.

- ACEC Colorado Member Firm Rate: \$749
- Non-member Firm Rate: \$1,449
- \$100 discount available for registrants who attend the How to Enter Workshop held live on June 30 (Request priority code from ACEC Colorado staff; this code must be entered at time of payment. Limit 1 discount per entry)

COLORADO PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

- A. Any Colorado engineering or land surveying firm is eligible to enter the EEA program, regardless of whether the firm is an ACEC Colorado member.
- B. While projects may be executed anywhere globally, eligibility requires that a minimum of 50 percent of the work be performed by the entering firm's Colorado office.
- C. Construction of projects entered in the competition must have been substantially completed and ready for use between Nov. 1, 2024, and Oct. 31, 2026.

Noncompliance with the Colorado Official Rules may disqualify an entry; ACEC Colorado staff reserves the right to determine the eligibility for all entries.

LEVELS OF RECOGNITION & DISTINCTION

Grand Conceptor Award: The program's highest distinction, presented to the Engineering Excellence Award winner with the top overall score. This prestigious honor celebrates the pinnacle of engineering achievement. The recipient is eligible to advance to the ACEC National 2027 Engineering Excellence Awards competition and will be featured as a luncheon speaker at the next ACEC Colorado Annual Conference.

Grand Award (formerly Excellence Award): Recognizing projects that set a remarkable standard for innovation, this award honors groundbreaking engineering solutions that push the profession forward. Recipients are eligible to advance to the ACEC National 2027 Engineering Excellence Awards competition.

Honor Award: Celebrating excellence in engineering, this award highlights projects that demonstrate exceptional skill, ingenuity and technical mastery in meeting complex challenges.

Merit Award: This award applauds projects that reflect creativity, strong performance and meaningful contributions to the built environment through thoughtful engineering solutions.

Outstanding Graphics Award: Recognizing the art of visual storytelling, this award honors the project with the most compelling and impactful digital display panel, as selected by the judges.

People's Choice Award: A celebration of community engagement, this award is determined by public vote. Audiences are invited to explore the entries and select their favorite project through ACEC Colorado's social media channels.

THE JUDGING PROCESS

Projects are evaluated for overall engineering excellence based solely on the work of the submitting firm and in accordance with established rating guidelines. Judges assess each project across five key criteria. At the state level, each entry is judged on its own merits, independent of national category classifications, to ensure a fair and focused review of its unique achievements.

Each year, a diverse panel of judges is assembled, including leaders from allied industry organizations, professionals from the public and private sectors, and representatives from education and the media. Using a standardized scoring process, judges evaluate each entry to select recipients of the Merit, Honor, Grand (formerly Excellence), and Grand Conceptor awards.

Judging is based on a comprehensive review of each project's submitted materials and digital display panel. From these entries, judges also select the Outstanding Graphics Award, which recognizes excellence in visual presentation.

Award results remain confidential and will be revealed during the Engineering Excellence Awards Luncheon on Friday, Nov. 6, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center. Individual project scores are not released; however, entrants may request anonymous feedback and comments from the judges through ACEC Colorado following the awards announcement.

SCORING CRITERIA & GUIDELINES

Each project entry is evaluated using five criteria, with weighted percentages tied to key elements of the submitted Project Description.

Uniqueness and/or Innovative Application of Techniques

- Demonstrates a new science, breakthrough, or advancement in engineering knowledge
- Applies new or existing technology, techniques, materials, or equipment in a unique way

Future Value to the Engineering Profession & Public Awareness

- Advances or redefines current engineering thinking
- Increases public awareness and enthusiasm for the role of engineering in everyday life

Social, Economic & Sustainable Development

- Provides secondary benefits to the community or environment
- Delivers social, economic, or sustainable outcomes
- Enhances public health, safety, or welfare

Complexity

- Successfully addresses complex or unique challenges
- Involves difficult site conditions, constraints, or project requirements
- Requires innovative or unconventional approaches to achieve project goals

Fulfillment of Client/Owner Needs

- Effectively engages the client/owner throughout the project
- Delivers a cost-effective solution aligned with the original budget
- Meets project goals and schedule
- Demonstrates measurable results (e.g., energy savings, number of people impacted)

ONLINE PROJECT SUBMISSION PORTAL & REQUIRED ENTRY MATERIALS

All project-related materials must be uploaded directly to the EEA Project Submission Portal no later than Aug. 14, 2026.

Note: QR codes, embedded links, or external references are not permitted in any portion of the submission. Judges do not seek additional information or conduct independent research; only the materials provided will be used in the evaluation process.

Official Entry Form

The Project Submission Portal begins with completion of the Official Entry Form, which collects key information about the project, submitting firm, client, and project category. The Project Name is limited to 45 characters. The Firm Name is limited to 80 characters.

Executive Summary (one page maximum)

Overview of project. Describe the problem and solution; project title and entry category must appear at the top of the page. Specifications: 8.5"x11" with 1" side margins; single-spaced text; 12 pt. minimum size font; PDF format. No photos are permitted in the summary.

Project Description (maximum of six pages)

Tell the story of the project. Address items a, b, c, and d as listed below; project title, entry category, and page number must appear at the top of each page. Entrants may use text, photos, graphics (including icons and symbols) or charts as needed.

Specifications: 8.5"x11" with 1" side margins; single-spaced text; minimum 12 pt. font size. Text must include:

- a. Role of entrant's firm in the project
- b. Role of other consultants participating in the project
- c. Entrant's contribution to the project (i.e., address each of the five areas under "Rating Guideline Definitions" section)
- d. Total project budgeted cost, total project actual cost, entrant's portion of the budgeted cost, entrant's portion of the actual cost, and scheduled and actual dates of completion

Project descriptions should anticipate and address potential judge questions, avoiding gaps or unanswered issues (e.g., budget variances or management of project byproducts).

Include measurable results wherever possible to clearly demonstrate the project's impact, such as energy savings, cost efficiencies, or population served.

- e. Closing summary of project in layman's terms about why this project is worthy of special recognition (minimum 100 words, maximum 500). Explain all factors that comprise the project's uniqueness and complexity, such as innovative engineering, challenges faced and overall social impact. (NOTE: This summary will provide the basis for all publicity on the project.)

Photos, Captions & Graphics

Up to six (6) different photos or graphics (one image per file) with captions describing the subject matter. Each must adhere to these guidelines:

- JPG file at 300 dpi (1920x1080 pixels) in RGB with landscape orientation (max. 1.2 MB each)
- Three (3) images must show the completed project and provide the highest level of visual impact for publicity.
- Three (3) high-resolution images depicting project development in process (planning, startup, and/or construction phases).
- Once photos are uploaded, type in the captions in the small box under each photo on the online submittal site. No text is permitted on the photos other than the cover slide.

Photographs will be displayed on a large screen during the awards ceremony. Please ensure submitted images are sharp, high-quality and high resolution.

Photo Release Form

ACEC Colorado requires a completed photo release form granting full permission to use submitted project images in all electronic and print materials. The release form must be duly executed by both the submitting firm and the client. All submissions must also include any applicable photography credits and copyright attributions (e.g., © 2025 Photography Company) to ensure proper acknowledgment and compliance with licensing requirements.

Photographic Digital Display Panel

Each entry must submit a 30"x30" photographic digital display file to be showcased on digital monitors. The Photographic Digital Panel File is a key part of project entry and must be submitted in both PDF and high-resolution JPEG (300 DPI).

Prepare your entry's digital display panel with text, photos and graphics that demonstrate the challenges, solutions and unique innovations of the key project elements. The panel should be prepared using high-resolution images of your project, as well as your company logo, the [downloadable ACEC Colorado EEA composite logo](#) (NOTE: this is the only available and acceptable version of this logo for use. It is not part of the scoring factors.)

- Title and location of the study or project
- Client's/owner's name(s) and location(s)
- Entering firm's name and location (firm name is limited to 80 characters)
- Maximum of six photos and/or graphics per panel (NOTE: Background graphic is not counted as a photo)
- Each image must be a minimum 35 sq. in. (e.g., minimum 7"x5") in size
- Text on panel limited to 250 words (excludes captions, project title and location, and client and firm's names and locations)
- Minimum 32 pt. font size on text and descriptions | Minimum 28 pt. font size on captions and graphics with text
- [Downloadable ACEC Colorado EEA composite logo](#) (NOTE: this is the only available and acceptable version of this logo for use. It is not part of the scoring factors; however, it may be printed over only a white or screened/transparent background.)

Download the ACEC Colorado EEA composite logo



Powerpoint Presentation

Each project submission should include a Powerpoint (PPT or PPTX file) containing 8 slides including: one (1) title slide with EEA logo, firm name, project name, project location, city and state; six (6) slides with photos and captions; and one (1) slide that contains the photographic display panel. Do not include sound, animations, timing or transition effects. This presentation will be used by the judges as part of their evaluation.

ACEC NATIONAL COMPETITION & ADDITIONAL RESOURCE MATERIAL

- Details: <https://www.acec.org/awards-programs/engineering-excellence-awards/>
- The following additional resources, among others, are described in the ACEC National guidelines but are required only if your firm selects to submit a Colorado-award eligible project to the ACEC National EEA competition. *These items are not required for the Colorado competition.*
 - List of Key Participants & Clients
 - Client Letter
 - Media List
 - Press Release
 - Supplemental Report