

# 2026 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The American Council of Engineering Companies of New York (ACEC New York) invites you to participate in its 59th annual Engineering Excellence Awards competition. The annual EEA program celebrates, with pride and elegance, the most outstanding project achievements of the engineering profession.

## THE PROGRAM

The goal of the program is to convey to the engineering and construction industry, government officials and the general public the contributions that consulting engineering firms make to society and to their local communities through exceptional design. In addition, member firms have an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of enlightened clients and to recognize individuals who have provided the innovative thinking and leadership that make a project successful. An ancillary but important benefit to the award winners is the considerable publicity they garner within the engineering community and the general public.

## ELIGIBILITY

Any private sector engineering or surveying firm is eligible to enter the awards program, whether or not the firm is a member of ACEC New York.

- A project may be entered only once by the entering firm in any category. The same project may be entered in a different category by a different entering firm. However, after a project has been entered in Category A, and the project has been constructed, the project may be entered by the same firm in a different category - B through L - in the year when eligible.

## TWO-STEP ENTRY PROCESS

### 1: Preliminary Application

Projects entered in the competition may have been executed anywhere in the world. Studies and Research (Category A) or Surveying and Mapping projects (Category D) must have been publicly disclosed by the client between Nov. 1, 2023, and Oct. 31, 2025. Construction of projects (Categories B through L with the exception of D) must have been substantially completed and ready for use between Nov. 1, 2023, and Oct. 31, 2025. Firms may submit up to two (2) projects per category. The preliminary entry form and entry fee of \$450 (\$1,300 for non-members) per project is due by July 31, 2025. An additional \$100 fee will be assessed for entries submitted after July 31; **no entries will be accepted after August 7**. Upon review by ACEC New York staff, firms with projects being advanced to the finals will be emailed a final entry form and submission instructions. **If you would like another firm(s) to be recognized on your award as part of the project team, please list them on your form as a joint venture.**

### 2: Final Submission\* – Electronic File Submissions; please label all files accordingly.

The final submission is due September 18, 2025. Information will be sent by August 21, 2025. Firms will be required to electronically submit the following:

- a) Final Entry Form/checklist
- b) Client Endorsement/Release Letter
- c) Project Description, 1500 words
- d) Executive Summary, 500 words
- e) Entry panel and 6 other project images (Photo 1, Caption, Photo 2, Caption, etc.) in standard PowerPoint
- f) Final entry fee of \$475 (\$700 for non-members)
- g) (Category A projects only): an electronic copy of the study must accompany Entries
- h) Panel Requirements for Electronic File: Each project requires a file in a separate folder for a 30x30 Panel illustrating the project. \*Reminder: we will require firms to submit final entry materials electronically. **Detailed instructions will be issued to the firms with the final entry form.\*Final Entries may be submitted after September 18 and through September 25, but are subject to a \$100 late processing fee.**

## **\*CATEGORIES OF ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE:**

**\*CATEGORIES CANNOT BE CHANGED WITHOUT NOTIFYING ACEC NEW YORK PRIOR TO THE FINAL SUBMISSION.**

### **Category A: Studies, Research and Consulting Engineering Services**

Non-design services, projects not involving the preparation of construction documents.

Consisting of but not limited to the following types of projects:

- New products, materials and technologies
- Expert testimony
- Basic research and studies
- Computer/software technology
- Technical papers
- Public outreach/involvement
- Water conservation
- Security plans
- Project feasibility studies/economic/ risk
- Value engineering

### **Category B: Building/Technology Systems**

- Mechanical/electrical/plumbing
- Computer/technology
- Communications
- Acoustics
- Software systems
- Sustainability or carbon neutrality
- Efficiency certification standards, e.g. LEED
- Energy efficiency-new and retrofit
- Secure facilities (military, research, correctional)

### **Category C: Structural Systems**

- Foundations
- Tunnels
- Buildings
- Seismic design
- Towers
- Bridges
- Stadiums

### **Category D: Surveying and Mapping Technology**

- Geometrics, ALTA, land title and rights surveys
- Control, GPS, monitoring or construction surveying
- Survey Mapping, GIS/LIS, photogrammetry

### **Category E: Environmental**

- Hazardous waste
- Solid waste
- Restoration/reclamation/remediation
- Air quality
- Noise
- Recycling
- Waste pond management
- Carbon sequestration and trading
- Mitigation

### **Category F: Waste and Storm Water**

- Wastewater collection/treatment and disposal
- Residuals management and reuse
- Graywater systems
- CSO's

### **Category F: Waste and Storm Water (cont'd)**

- Mine tailings
- Agricultural
- Storm water management
- Erosion control

### **Category G: Water Resources**

- Hydraulics/hydrology
- Surface and groundwater supply development
- Treatment
- Transmission, distribution & storage
- Watershed management
- Water use reduction
- Flood risk management
- Climate adaptation
- Coastal and eco-system restoration
- Locks/dams/water control structures
- Irrigation

### **Category H: Transportation**

- Highways
- Rail
- Airports
- Marine/ports
- Public transit
- Intermodal facilities

**Category I: Special Projects**

- Safety and security
- Corrosion protection/cathodic protection
- Program and construction management
- Land development
- Trenchless technologies/directional boring
- Recreational facilities
- Subsurface engineering

**Category J: Small Projects**

- Total project construction budget does not exceed \$5 million. At the entrant's discretion, except for entries in Category A, projects under \$5 million are not limited to this category.

**Category K: Energy**

- Transmission and distribution
- Power generation
- Renewable energy
- Cogeneration
- Energy storage technologies
- Energy usage reduction programs
- Demand side management

**Category L: Industrial and Manufacturing Processes and Facilities**

- Petrochemical
- Biotech
- Manufacturing
- Heavy industry
- Industrial waste
- Materials handling
- Mining, metallurgy, mineralogy

***JUDGING PROCESS***

A distinguished panel of judges – including military and/or government officials, presidents of related organizations, members of the engineering press and educators – is selected from the professional engineering community and construction industry. These judges will assess each project based on the criteria specified in the application. The judges' names are kept confidential until after the judging.

Licensed design professional experienced in the particular area of engineering (excluding entrants), act as moderators and present the projects to the Judges. In advance of the judging, the Moderator receives copies of the entrant's written and visual materials. **Entrants are advised that the strongest entries are the ones in which the text and the panel work together to describe and illustrate the project.** The moderators use the description, panel and photographs during their presentation, and can answer questions posed by the judges solely based on the material submitted.

In this competition, each project is judged against **itself** and not against all entries within a given category. After the entry has been presented, each judge is asked to vote on a scale of 1-10 using the criteria listed below:

## **RATING GUIDELINES DEFINITIONS**

## **WEIGHT**

### **Uniqueness and/or Innovative Application of New or Existing Techniques: 20%**

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

### **Future Value to the Engineering Profession and Perception by the Public: 20%**

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

### **Social, Economic and Sustainable Design Considerations: 20%**

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

### **Complexity: 20%**

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

### **Successful Fulfillment of Client/Owner Needs: 20%**

- Did the engineer or entrant successfully engage the client/owner in the overall project development process?
- Was it an economical and cost-effective solution?
- How did the final cost relate to original budget estimate?
- How closely does the entrant's solution meet the total goals of the client/owner?
- Did the entrant meet the client's time schedule?

## **AWARD NOTIFICATION and NATIONAL COMPETITION**

After the judging, ACEC New York will issue formal award letters to each entrant. ACEC New York has four levels of awards (in descending order): 1) Diamond 2) Platinum 3) Gold and 4) Silver.

Top-rated projects in each category will be advanced to the national competition. *If you are a national finalist, it will be noted in your ACEC New York award notification letter, and you will have the opportunity to submit your project to ACEC. **Note: the submission and entry fee for ACEC National's EEA is the sole responsibility of the Applicant. If you do not win a Diamond Award, you are NOT eligible for the National competition.*** The ACEC National Awards Gala will be held on May 5, 2026, in Washington, D.C. If you decide not to enter the national competition, please inform the ACEC New York office.

## **EMPIRE AWARD**

Announced at the gala event, the Empire Award is presented to the highest-rated project in New York State based on contributions to the economic health of an area, sustainability innovation and creativity. All eligible firms should be prepared to accept this award.

## **AWARDS AND PLAQUES**

As part of the entry fee, ACEC New York will provide one (1) firm\* and one (1) client award/plaque for each project. If member firms are interested in purchasing additional firm and/or client awards, this can be arranged through ACEC New York. An order form will be sent to each firm before the gala. *Note: for JV/collaborative projects – only one firm plaque is included per entry.*

## **AWARDS GALA**

Awards will be presented at a black-tie awards gala at the Midtown Hilton in NYC on **April 18, 2026**. Diamond awards will be presented live on stage to the winner and the client. Platinum, Gold and Silver winners will be recognized in a video presentation. All EEA 2026 entry panels will be on display during the cocktail reception.

## **PUBLICITY**

The public relations and marketing value is considerable for both the local and national award winners. ACEC New York will issue a press release after the gala event. Member firms are asked to take advantage of the recognition by issuing their own press releases and related marketing materials in advance of the gala event. We also recommend providing a marketing contact to facilitate communication on public relations with our office. ***Please note: in your PR outreach, this program should be referred to as the ACEC New York Engineering Excellence, not to be confused with the ACEC Engineering Excellence, which is a separate program and event.***

## **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

Preliminary Application Forms due	July 31, 2025 (deadline August 7 w/late fee)
Final Application Form and Instructions issued	August 21, 2025
Final Entries and Panel File due	Sept. 18, 2025 (deadline Sept. 25 w/late fee)
Engineering Excellence Judging	October 24, 2025
ACEC New York Awards Gala, NYC	April 18, 2026
ACEC Awards Gala, Washington, D.C.	May 5, 2026

## **PRINTED PANELS**

Panels will be printed by ACEC New York for the gala. Firms who wish to keep their panels must take them from the Awards Gala; otherwise, they will be discarded.