



Engineering Excellence Awards

ACEC Colorado 2026 Official Rules

All Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA) submissions are considered ACEC Colorado award winners, regardless of which level of award received. A panel of judges review all submittals and evaluates them based on the judging categories, as described under "Rating Guidelines." One copy of an award is presented for each entered project. Additional material and changes to the digital display panel artwork will be necessary for projects advancing to the national competition.

IMPORTANT DATES

ACEC Colorado

Sept. 1, 2023 - Sept. 15, 2025	Substantial Construction/Completion of Project Work to be Entered (Colorado-specific dates)
June 20, 2025	2026 EEA Project Registration opens
July 2025	Online Submittal Portal Opens for Required and Optional Entry Material
Aug. 1, 2025	Deadline to Submit 2026 Project Registration & Entry Fee
Aug. 8, 2025 (11:59 p.m.)	Online Submittal Portal Closes for Required & Optional Entry Material
September 2025	Video Interviews of Project Manager(s)/Principal(s)
September 2025	Judging (NOTE: judges to do not view videos as part of review)
Nov. 7, 2025	Registration deadline for ACEC Colorado EEA Awards Luncheon
Nov. 14, 2025	ACEC Colorado EEA Awards Luncheon & Announcement of Winners at Hyatt Regency Center Tech Center

ACEC National

Jan. 7, 2026	Deadline to Submit to ACEC National Competition (if eligible from ACEC Colorado competition)
Feb. 20-22, 2026	ACEC National Judging
May 5, 2026	ACEC National EEA Dinner & Gala Awards Program (Washington, D.C.)

EEA PROJECT REGISTRATION & ENTRY FEE

Each project requires a 2026 Project Registration and payment of entry fee. The entry fee is non-refundable and non-transferable, regardless of whether entry material is submitted for a project.

- ACEC Colorado Firm Rate: \$749
- Non-member Firm Rate: \$1,449
- \$100 discount available for registrants at How to Enter Workshop on June 19 (Request priority code from ACEC Colorado staff; this code must be entered at time of payment. Limit 1 discount per entry)

ELIGIBILITY

Any Colorado engineering or land surveying firm is eligible to enter the EEA program, regardless of whether the firm is an ACEC Colorado member. Projects entered in the ACEC Colorado competition may have been executed anywhere in the world; however, to be eligible, at least 50 percent of the project work must have been done by the entering firm's Colorado office. Construction of projects entered in the competition must have been substantially completed and ready for use between Sept. 1, 2023, and Sept. 15, 2025. Noncompliance with the Colorado Official Rules may disqualify an entry. ACEC Colorado staff reserves the right to determine the eligibility for all entries. Entries must meet the judges' rating guidelines found in the Official Rules.

AWARD DESCRIPTIONS

- Outstanding Graphics Award offers recognition to the best project digital display panel graphics, based on the judges' recommendations.
- Merit Award recognizes projects for their extraordinary engineering solutions, based upon the award criteria.
- Honor Award recognizes projects with outstanding engineering solutions, based upon the award criteria.
- Excellence Award recognizes projects for innovative engineering solutions, based upon the award criteria, and recipients are eligible to advance to the ACEC National 2026 EEA competition.
- Grand Conceptor Award recognizes the Engineering Excellence Award winner with the highest score, and recipient is eligible to advance to the ACEC National 2026 EEA competition. The recipient is also invited to present a luncheon talk during the ACEC Colorado 2026 Conference.
- *New this Year!* The People's Choice Award will be available for viewing and voting by the public via ACEC Colorado's social media channels.

JUDGING

Project entries are judged for overall engineering excellence based on work performed by only the entering engineering firm and according to the rating guidelines listed. For the state competition, each project is judged and rated on its own merit, regardless of what the national category classification is for the project. Each year, a diverse panel of judges is convened and typically consists of leadership of allied industry organizations, public- and private-sector industry professionals, and educational and/or media personnel. Each of these distinguished judges evaluates entries using a standard rating process to determine Merit, Honor, Excellence and Grand Conceptor Award winners. The Colorado judging is based on (1) review of the digital display panel and (2) review of all the content submitted. Judges also recommend the Outstanding Graphics Award from digital display panels. (Judges do not review project videos/interviews.) Overall results of the judging are not disclosed until EEA Awards Luncheon on Nov. 14, 2025, at Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center. Individual project scores are confidential and will not be released following the announcement of the winners. Winners may contact ACEC Colorado to receive anonymous comments/feedback as provided by judges.

RATING GUIDELINES

Each project entry is evaluated using these weighted percentages, which are key elements of the required project description:

- Uniqueness and/or innovative applications of new or existing techniques
- Future value to the engineering profession and enhanced public awareness/enthusiasm of the role of engineering
- Social, economic, and sustainable development considerations
- Complexity
- Successful fulfillment of client/owner needs

Rating Guideline Definitions

Uniqueness and/or Innovative Applications of New or Existing Techniques

- 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 & Enhanced Public Awareness/Enthusiasm of the Role of Engineering

- Will the entrant's contribution to the project redefine current engineering thinking?
- Does the entrant's project increase public awareness/enthusiasm about the role of engineering in their everyday lives?

Social, Economic & Sustainable Development Considerations

- Do the identified solutions 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

- 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 goals?

Successful Fulfillment of Client/Owner Needs

- Did the entrant successfully engage the client/owner in the overall project development process?
- Did the project provide an economical and cost-effective solution?
- How did the final cost relate to the original budget estimate?
- How closely did the entrant's solution meet the total goals of the client/owner?
- Did the entrant meet the client's time schedule?
- Have I included as many measurable results as possible to effectively convey the story of this project?
(e.g. data points related to energy savings, number of people impacted by the project, etc.)

DELIVERABLES

Once your firm decides to enter the ACEC Colorado EEA competition, you will (1) select your firm's project(s) to enter, (2) submit an online project registration with payment for each entry, (3) prepare the submittal material, and (4) upload the required any optional material to the online portal (July). The following section describes in detail the main parts of your submission and requirements of each.

PHOTOGRAPHIC DIGITAL DISPLAY PANEL

In lieu of a 30"x30" printed project board, this year 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 submittal.

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.)

- Display panels will be projected on a large screen and digital monitors.
- JPEG and PDF file; RGB format; High Resolution (200 dpi)
- 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

Required Elements (min. 32 pt. font size):

- 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)
- 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.)

ONLINE SUBMITTAL MATERIAL

The following provides details of the text that is required to be submitted. The content order is the order that must be followed for your submission. (NOTE: no QR Codes or embedded links are permitted in any portion of the award submittal. Judges may not seek any additional information or conduct research; therefore, only the information submitted is used in the judging process.)

Project Submission Form

Both the entering firm and client must sign the official entry form. Electronic signatures are permitted.

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
- 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.)

Remember: do not leave unanswered questions for the judges (e.g., "Why did you go over budget?", "What happened to the waste stream that the project produced?") in your project description. Have I included as many measurable results as possible to effectively convey the story of this project? (e.g. data points related to energy savings, number of people impacted by the project, etc.)

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 of the images must show the completed project and provide the highest level of visual impact for publicity.
- Three of the images must display the planning, startup and/or construction phases of the project Remember: Since the photographs will be projected on a large screen during the awards ceremony, it is very important to submit sharp, high-quality, high-resolution images.
- Captions describing subject matter should be entered after images are uploaded to portal, referenced as "Photo 1", "Photo 2," etc.
- Photo release form that allows ACEC Colorado to use for electronic and print material. Photo release must be signed by firm and client. Include any credit that must be used (e.g., ©2025 Photography Company).

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. You will not submit these for the Colorado competition.
 - List of Key Participants & Clients
 - Client Letter
 - Media List
 - Press Release
 - Supplemental Report