DEADLINES

Registration Deadline: December 16, 2026
Submission Package Deadline: January 6, 2027

FEES

There is a **non-refundable** $395 nomination fee for the Firm Award. This fee must be paid online at the time of submission. Late, disqualified, or incomplete packages will not be refunded and credits for next year will not be granted. $0 entry fee for all other awards.

NOMINATION PACKAGE GUIDELINES

Each completed nomination package must follow these guidelines:

- 8 ½ x 11 paper size
- Not to exceed 8MB and/or 12 pages
- Font 12 point or larger
- Portrait layout
- Page 1: Nomination Letter
- Page 2: Statement of Contributions
- Page 3: Biography of firm or resume (if an individual)
- Pages 4 – 5: Two letters of recommendation that are explicit in their recommendation
- Pages 6 – 12: Supporting materials and documentation which can include a portfolio, articles, or photographs that support the nomination. Supporting materials are unique to the award category and should be thoroughly reviewed.
- **Educator Award only** - Page 13: titles of courses taught, and programs administered by the nominee with brief descriptions of each.

AWARDS

- Associates Award
- Distinguished Practice Award
- Educator Award
- Firm Award
- Honorary Membership
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award for Healthcare Facility Design
- Mentorship Award
- Norma Sklarek Humanitarian Award
- Student Leader Award
- Young Architects Award

Each award category has its own rules for eligibility. Please click on or scroll to the category you are submitting under for more information.

ELIGIBILITY

Associates Award

The highest award given by the AIA CA to an individual Associate AIA member in California, who best exemplifies the highest qualities of leadership and has demonstrated unparalleled commitment to their chapter or region's membership, the community, professional organizations, and/or design and construction industries.

- Must be nominated by a chapter president, member of AIA California's Board of Directors, an Educator or a member of the College of Fellows.
- Exhibits exceptional skill and leadership

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Built Environment**: Demonstrate a growing impact on the built environment through contributions to firm projects or independent initiatives. Showcase involvement in projects that reflect an understanding of regional, cultural, or technological contexts.
2. **Achievements and Service**: Highlight personal achievements and service to the architecture community, including participation in AIA activities, volunteering, or contributing to significant projects.
3. **Innovation**: Showcase innovative approaches to design and problem-solving within projects or firm initiatives, emphasizing contributions that push the boundaries of traditional practice.
4. **Practice and Leadership**: Demonstrate leadership in professional practice through involvement in projects, team leadership, or participation in professional organizations. Showcase a commitment to professional growth.
5. **Advocacy and Values**: Demonstrate a commitment to advocating for the profession through participation in AIA initiatives, community projects, or promotion of sustainable and ethical practices.

ELIGIBILITY

Distinguished Practice Award

The Distinguished Practice Award is presented to an individual with significant contributions and accomplishments toward a specific building type or practice area. This award recognizes an individual architect's work, their responses to the challenges of an individual building type, innovations within the design and construction process, design excellence, and a collaborate spirit.

- Individuals may be nominated by an AIA member or local chapter

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Built Environment:** Impact the candidate has had on a specific building or practice type through their body of work. This can be regional, geographic, educational, within the design culture, specialty, etc.
2. **Achievements and Service:** A history of service to the design community and achievements that have significantly impacted the profession.
3. **Innovation:** Consistently created unique and creative solutions to the design field. The candidate has strived for innovation, impactful solutions, and the betterment of client outcomes through design.
4. **Practice and Leadership:** Candidate demonstrates leadership within their practice and in the build environment. Commitment to the growth of the design profession and the support of young professionals.
5. **Advocacy and Values:** Commitment to the advancement of the field. Consistent advocacy to improve design processes and efficiencies. Maintained high moral values and qualities throughout career. Shown dedication to the profession through the integration of relevant cultural, environmental, and technological practices.

ELIGIBILITY

Educator Award

The highest award given by the AIA CA to an Educator in California, for their outstanding contribution to the formal education of architecture students.

- Must be nominated by a chapter president, member of AIA California's Board of Directors, an Educator or a member of the College of Fellows.
- Exhibits exceptional skill and leadership
- Educator Award: AIA members who are educators at a post-secondary Architectural Program in California.

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Built Environment**: Focus on the influence of educational programs on the built environment through the work of students and research, highlighting the impact of teaching on design culture.
2. **Achievements and Service**: Emphasize contributions to the profession through teaching, mentorship, and service to academic institutions and the architectural community, including awards or recognition.
3. **Innovation**: Focus on innovative teaching methods, curriculum development, and research that inspire creativity in students, contributing to the advancement of architectural education.
4. **Practice and Leadership**: Emphasize leadership in the academic and professional community, highlighting roles in shaping curriculum, guiding research, and mentoring students.
5. **Advocacy and Values**: Focus on advocacy for educational excellence, diversity, and inclusion, highlighting efforts to integrate cultural, environmental, and technological values into teaching.

ELIGIBILITY

Firm Award

The Firm Award is the highest honor the AIA CA can bestow on an architectural firm. It is intended for firms that have consistently produced distinguished architecture for a period of at least 10 years. Equally important, the award recognizes mentoring, continued collaboration among individuals and significant contributions made by the firm to the profession in areas of design, research, planning, technology, practice and innovation.

- Proven cumulative effect on the profession
- Work shall be a product of a collaborative environment that has consistently directed itself toward the future while remaining respectful of the past
- Developed a culture which educates and mentors the next generation of architects
- Widely known by the quality of its products to both architects and non-architects
- Promotes ethnic and cultural diversity, gender equity, and the inclusion of marginalized groups of citizens through design and/or practice
- Firms may enter themselves for consideration or be nominated by an AIA member(s), or local chapter

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Built Environment:** Impact the firm has had on the design profession through the firms' portfolio. This can be regional, geographic, inpatient, outpatient, educational, within the design culture, etc.
2. **Achievements and Service:** A history of service to the design community and achievements that have significantly impacted the profession.
3. **Innovation:** Consistently created unique and creative solutions to the design field. The firm has strived for innovation, impactful solutions, and the betterment of client outcomes through design.
4. **Practice and Leadership:** Firm demonstrates leadership within their practice and beyond. Commitment to the growth of the design profession and the support of young professionals.
5. **Advocacy and Values:** Commitment to the advancement of the field. Consistent advocacy to improve design processes and efficiencies. Maintained high moral values and qualities throughout career. Shown dedication to the profession through the integration of relevant cultural, environmental, mentorship and technological practices.

ELIGIBILITY

Honorary Membership

This award is bestowed on a person who is not eligible for AIA membership, but who has rendered distinguished service to the profession of architecture in California or to the arts and sciences allied therewith.

- A person of esteemed character who is not eligible for membership with outstanding statewide accomplishments.
- Must be nominated by a member of the AIA California Board of Directors

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Built Environment:** Impact the candidate has had on the design profession through their body of work.
2. **Achievements and Service:** A history of service to the design community and achievements that have significantly impacted the profession.
3. **Innovation:** Consistently created unique and creative solutions to the design field. The candidate has strived for innovation, impactful solutions, and the betterment of client outcomes through design.
4. **Practice and Leadership:** Candidate demonstrates leadership within their profession and beyond. Commitment to the growth of the design field and the support of young professionals.
5. **Advocacy and Values:** Commitment to the advancement of the field. Consistent advocacy to improve design processes and efficiencies. Maintained high moral values and qualities throughout career. Shown dedication to the profession through the integration of relevant cultural, environmental, and technological practices.

ELIGIBILITY

Lifetime Achievement Award

This award is presented to an individual (or group) in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the improvement of the built environment and to the profession of architecture in California.

- Proven career of innovation within the design and construction process across the lifetime of their career
- Design excellence and a collaborative spirit
- Not a member of the AIA California Executive Committee within the last three years
- Individuals may be nominated by any AIA member or local chapter

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Built Environment:** Impact the candidate has had on the design profession through their body of work. This can be regional, geographic, educational, cultural, within advocacy, etc.
2. **Achievements and Service:** A history of service to the design community and achievements that have significantly impacted the profession.
3. **Innovation:** Consistently created unique and creative solutions to the design field. The candidate has strived for innovation, impactful solutions, and the betterment of client outcomes through design.
4. **Practice and Leadership:** Candidate demonstrates leadership within their practice and beyond. Commitment to the growth of the design profession and the support of young professionals.
5. **Advocacy and Values:** Commitment to the advancement of the field. Consistent advocacy to improve design processes and efficiencies. Maintained high moral values and qualities throughout career. Shown dedication to the profession through the integration of relevant cultural, environmental, and technological practices.

ELIGIBILITY

Lifetime Achievement Award for Healthcare Facility Design

This award is given in recognition of a career of dedicated commitment to the build environment and in recognition of significant contributions and accomplishments toward the design and development of healthcare facilities in California.

- Background in the design and delivery of healthcare facilities
- Proven career of innovation within the design and construction process
- Design excellence and a collaborative spirit
- Commitment to future generations
- Individuals may be nominated by any AIA member or local chapter

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Built Environment:** The impact the candidate has had on the healthcare design profession through their body of work. This can be regional, geographic, inpatient, outpatient, educational, within the design culture, etc.
2. **Achievements and Service:** A history of service to the healthcare design community and achievements that have significantly impacted healthcare delivery services and the profession.
3. **Innovation:** Consistently created unique and creative solutions to the process of healthcare delivery. The candidate has strived for innovation, impactful solutions, and the betterment of patient outcomes through design.
4. **Practice and Leadership:** Their commitment to the growth of improvements to the process of healthcare delivery services and patient care outcomes through their practice. Their commitment to the growth of the design profession and support of young professionals.
5. **Advocacy and Values:** Commitment to the advancement of patient care outcomes through design solutions. Consistent advocacy to improve healthcare processes and efficiencies. Maintained high moral values and qualities throughout career. Shown dedication to the profession through the integration of relevant cultural, environmental, and technological practices.

ELIGIBILITY

Mentorship Award

This award is given by AIA CA to a firm, AIA chapter, or organizations in California that demonstrate exceptional commitment to mentoring Emerging Professionals through dedicated programs and initiatives while cultivating outstanding leadership qualities within the architectural profession.

- Must be nominated by a chapter president, member of AIA California's Board of Directors, an Educator, or a member of the College of Fellows
- Must include a support letter from an Emerging Professional
- Exhibits the development of skill and leadership in Emerging Professionals
- Open to: AIA member-led firms, local AIA chapters, organizations, or other entities located in California that actively support emerging professionals in their professional development, pursuit of licensure, and engagement in the architectural community

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. Impact on the Built Environment: Showcase how the nominee's mentorship programs and initiatives have guided emerging professionals in understanding their role in design and contributed to the advancement of the built environment within their region or community.
2. Achievements and Service: Demonstrate the nominee's history of service in supporting emerging professionals and contributing to the broader architectural community through mentorship, recognition programs, community involvement, and professional development opportunities.
3. Innovation: Highlight the nominee's commitment to fostering innovation among emerging professionals, showcasing how mentorship has led to new ideas, creative approaches, and forward-thinking initiatives within the organization or community.
4. Practice and Leadership: Showcase the nominee's leadership in creating a supportive environment for professional growth, highlighting programs and initiatives that promote leadership development, professional practice skills, networking opportunities, and career advancement for emerging professionals.
5. Advocacy and Values: Demonstrate the nominee's commitment to advocating for emerging professionals and the profession through mentorship and support, maintaining high ethical standards, promoting core values such as sustainability and inclusivity, and creating an environment that benefits both emerging professionals and the broader community.

ELIGIBILITY

Norma Sklarek Humanitarian Award

This award recognizes an architect or architecturally oriented organization for their social responsibility. The type of social issues is purposefully flexible to remain constantly relevant.

- Individuals may be nominated by any AIA member or local chapter

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Design Field:** Impact the candidate has had on the design profession through body of work.
2. **Achievements and Service:** A history of service to the design community and achievements that have significantly impacted the profession.
3. **Innovation:** Consistently created unique and creative solutions to the design field. The candidate has strived for innovation, impactful solutions, and the betterment of client outcomes through design.
4. **Practice and Leadership:** Candidate demonstrates leadership within their practice and beyond. Commitment to the growth of the design profession and the support of young professionals.
5. **Advocacy and Values:** Commitment to the advancement of the field. Consistent advocacy to improve design processes and efficiencies. Maintained high moral values and qualities throughout career. Shown dedication to the profession through the integration of relevant cultural, environmental, and technological practices.

ELIGIBILITY

Student Leader Award

The highest award given by the AIA CA to an individual student in California, for their outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment to the consistent growth and development of their AIAS chapter, school and/or community.

- Must be nominated by a chapter president, Committee Chair, member of AIA California's Board of Directors, an Educator or a member of the College of Fellows.
- Exhibits exceptional skill and leadership
- Student Leader Award: Student members of AIAS or AIA who are currently enrolled in an architectural program in California.

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Built Environment**: Highlight design projects or research with the potential to influence the built environment, focusing on work that addresses current challenges and innovations in architecture.
2. **Achievements and Service**: Recognize academic achievements, involvement in architecture student organizations, and participation in competitions or community service projects.
3. **Innovation**: Emphasize creativity and innovation in design studio work, research, or competitions, highlighting projects that explore new ideas, technologies, or methods.
4. **Practice and Leadership**: Highlight leadership roles in academic settings, student organizations, or design competitions, emphasizing a commitment to learning and contributing to the future of the profession.
5. **Advocacy and Values**: Highlight advocacy efforts in sustainability, social justice, or other areas relevant to the profession, emphasizing a commitment to values that will shape future practice.

ELIGIBILITY

Young Architects Award

The highest award given by the AIA CA to an individual Young Architect in California who has shown exceptional leadership and made significant contributions to the profession in the early stage of their architectural career.

- Must be nominated by a chapter president, member of AIA California's Board of Directors, an Educator or a member of the College of Fellows.
- Exhibits exceptional skill and leadership
- 10 years licensed or less

NOMINATION PACKAGE CONTENT: Each completed nomination package should focus on the following accomplishments:

1. **Impact on the Built Environment**: Demonstrate tangible impact on the built environment through work, showing a strong understanding of contextual, cultural, or technological factors.
2. **Achievements and Service**: Showcase personal achievements and service to the architecture community, including significant project roles, recognition by peers, and involvement in professional organizations.
3. **Innovation**: Emphasize how these architects have brought fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to their work, introducing new methodologies, technologies, or design thinking.
4. **Practice and Leadership**: Demonstrate leadership within the firm and in broader professional contexts, highlighting leadership roles in projects and mentoring colleagues.
5. **Advocacy and Values**: Showcase a commitment to advocating for the future of the profession, including involvement in sustainability initiatives, promoting diversity, and engaging in community-focused projects.