

NAIOP Design of the Year Award

Submission Guide & Evaluation Criteria

Overview

The **NAIOP Design of the Year Award** recognizes exceptional built projects that demonstrate outstanding design quality, innovation, and impact within commercial real estate. This award honors projects that push boundaries in architecture, interior design, space planning, and redevelopment.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for consideration:

- Submissions must be submitted by a qualified design professional (e.g., architect, interior designer, space planner, or redevelopment consultant).
 - Projects may include:
 - Interior commercial space design (e.g., office, industrial, mixed-use, retail)
 - New building design
 - Redevelopment, repositioning, or adaptive reuse of existing properties
 - The "Award Period" is defined as July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026.
 - Projects must have been completed and received a Certificate of Occupancy (if applicable) during the Award Period.
 - Projects must be located within the Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky region.
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Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated on the following five weighted criteria:

1. Design Excellence & Aesthetic Impact (25%)

- Cohesive architectural vision
- Quality of materials and detailing
- Visual impact and design originality

2. Functionality & Efficiency (20%)

- Effective space planning and layout
- User-focused design solutions
- Flexibility and long-term usability

3. Innovation & Problem Solving (20%)

- Creative responses to project challenges
- Integration of new technologies or systems
- Unique approaches to spatial or functional requirements

4. Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship (15%)

- Use of green materials and energy-efficient systems
- Design strategies that promote wellness and ESG alignment
- Certifications (LEED, WELL, etc.) or equivalent achievements

5. Community & Market Impact (20%)

- Contribution to neighborhood or district revitalization
- Positive reception from tenants or community
- Demonstrated market success or industry recognition

Submission Requirements

All submissions must include the following:

- **Project Title and Location**
- **Design Firm Name and Contact Information**
- **Project Summary** (max. 500 words)
Describe the project's purpose, design goals, context, and outcome.
- **Response to Evaluation Criteria**
Briefly address how your project meets each of the five judging categories above (max. 250 words per section).

- **Graphic Materials**
 - 5–10 high-resolution images (photos, renderings, or diagrams as applicable)
 - Floor plans, site plans, or marketing materials (optional, but encouraged)
 - Images associated with each nomination must be in a JPEG format with minimum resolution of 300 dpi.

- **Certificate of Occupancy** (PDF upload)

- **Project Team Credits**
Include names of key individuals or firms involved in the design and execution.

- **Submissions must be emailed to naiopcincinnati@gmail.com by July 1, 2026.**