



# 2026 ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Call for Entries and Guidebook

  
**ACEC**

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES  
*of Virginia*

**Entry Deadline: November 6, 2025 | 2026 EEA: February 5, 2026**



# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- All engineering or surveying firms are eligible to submit entries.
- Projects may have been executed anywhere in the world.
- Firms based in Virginia may enter any project, provided it was substantially completed by a Virginia office.
- Non-member firms are eligible to participate in Virginia-based projects, even if they do not have an office in Virginia.
- A single firm may submit multiple entries.

A completed entry form must be signed by both the entrant and the client/owner (senior executives, officials), verifying the project was substantially completed and ready for use between November 1, 2023, and October 31, 2025.

## Each entry must consist of three components:

1. Intent to Enter letter submitted
2. The materials through our EEA Portal (information provided after submitting the letter of intent to submit)
3. Photographic display panel

\*\*Non-compliance with the rules may disqualify an entry. Please read the requirements thoroughly. ACEC Virginia is not responsible for any damages to or loss of an entrant's official electronic entry or photographic display panel. The ACEC Virginia Engineering Excellence Awards Judges reserve the right to determine, and change if necessary, the eligibility and category classification of any entry.

# PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

Honored projects will receive recognition through statewide news releases, the ACEC Virginia website, social media pages, special edition newsletter, and project display showcased at the EEA Gala.



# ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

## INTENT TO ENTER

Complete an Intent to Enter notification via [www.acecva.org/entry](http://www.acecva.org/entry) by September 19, 2025. You will receive a confirmation message for all submissions along with the EEA Portal information provided. ALL submission materials are due online by **November 6, 2025**.

The Intent to Enter is an application along with a letter that should include the following:

- Firm logo
- Category
- Title of project
- Project Overview, including the program and solution
- Contact Name and Email
- Project Lead Name and Email

## SUBMISSION OF PROJECT MATERIALS VIA ACEC VIRGINIA EEA PORTAL

### ENTRY FORM

Copy of the completed entry form signed by both the entrant and the client/owner (Senior Executives/Officials)

### CLIENT/OWNER LETTER

Letter addressed to the ACEC Virginia EEA Judging Committee. The client should describe the relationship between the client/owner and the entrant in the development of the project and how the entrant exceeded client expectations.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of the project. Please describe the problem and solution, including the project title and entry category at the top of the page. The executive summary should not exceed more than 1 page, single-spaced, 12-point minimum size font.



# ENTRY REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION (SIX PAGE MAX)

Tell the story of the project. Address items a, b, c, d, and e as listed in an organized manner. Project title, entry category, and page number must appear at the top of each page. Entrants may use text, photos, graphics, or charts as needed. Provide images and a caption, no more than 50 words, that accurately reflect the photograph or graphic shown.

- a. Role of the entrant firm in the project.
- b. Role of other consultants participating in the project.
- c. Entrant firm's contribution to the project.

A description of the entrant's contribution addressing each of the following Rating Guideline (refer to page 7 for details, rating, judging, and weighting information):

- Uniqueness and/or innovative application of new or existing techniques.
- Future value to the engineering profession and perception by the public.
- Social, economic, and sustainable development considerations.
- Complexity
- Successful fulfillment of client/owner needs.

d. Include total project cost figures for the following categories of this project:

- Completion, use scheduled.
- Actual costs of the project.
- Category A&D budgeted/actual costs.
- Construction budgeted/actual costs.
- Entrants portion of the total construction budget and actual costs.

e. Summary - This summary will be used to present your award during the presentation.

Explain all factors that comprise of the project's uniqueness and complexity, such as innovative engineering, challenges faced and over all social impact. Max 500 word count.

## KEY PARTICIPANTS AND CONSULTANTS ON THE PROJECT

List the key participants on the project, including firm name, address, phone number, website, and e-mail address of each participant. Include contractors, subcontractors, other engineers, architects, and designers significantly involved in the project.

Specifications: 8.5" x 11"; Excel file



# ENTRY REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

## SIX PROJECT PHOTOGRAPHS

Submit six high-resolution photographs or graphics with captions of the project. Captions shall begin with: Photo 1, Photo 2, etc. Six photos or graphics are required: three showing the completed project and three depicting the project development in progress. Specifications: JPEG file; RGB format; High Resolution (300 dpi). Photo Captions: 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.

## PHOTO RELEASE FORM

Complete and sign the photo copyright release form authorizing the use of the photographs by ACEC Virginia.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC DISPLAY PANEL

- One photographic panel, 30"x 30", with matte finish. The panel must be mounted with foam board, and lamination is optional.
- A maximum of six photographs or graphic images may be used on the panel. Each image must be a minimum of 7"x5" or 35 square inches.
- Panel text may not exceed 250 words, not including captions. Use a minimum 32-point font for text or descriptions and a minimum 28-point type for captions and graphics.
- Title and location of entry, owner's and/or client's name and location (minimum 32-point type) should be shown on the front of the panel.
- ACEC Virginia logo from Marchelle Albertson displayed on the front of the panel.
- Place a label on the back of the panel that includes: firm name, address, project name, and category.

## SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

Include a supplementary report containing the findings portrayed with text, graphs, or photos, as needed. NOTE: This report is ONLY required for Category A submittals.



# ENTRY REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

## PRESS RELEASE (OPTIONAL)

Press release that clearly and concisely describes the project and the entrant's participation, based on information presented in the Project Description. Additionally, describe the project's value to the community, including details such as the number of people served and cost savings. Do not reference other awards the project has won. Specifications: double-spaced; 8.5" x 11"; PDF format. Provide a list of media outlets with email addresses (Excel spreadsheet) for ACEC Virginia to send a news release on your behalf.

## VIDEO/DRONE FOOTAGE (OPTIONAL)

Include a link to video or drone footage of the project.

## ENTRY FEES AND PAYMENT

- ACEC Virginia Members: \$795; each additional entry: \$550
- Prospective Members: \$3050; each additional entry: \$2550

Entry fees are non-refundable and must be submitted with your entry materials. All entries must be completed no later than **November 6, 2025**.

## KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

- September 19, 2025: ACEC Virginia, Intent to Enter Deadline
- November 6, 2025: ACEC Virginia, Deadline for Entries
- November 19, 2025: ACEC Virginia Judging Panel
- Early December: ACEC Virginia Award Announcement
- January 7, 2026: ACEC National, Deadline for Entries
- February 5, 2026: ACEC Virginia Engineering Excellence Awards Gala
- May 5, 2026: ACEC National Engineering Excellence Awards Gala, Washington, DC

Please send the display panel and entry fee (checks payable to ACEC Virginia) to the address below.

ACEC Virginia, Attention: Marchelle Albertson, 8600 Mayland Drive, Richmond, VA 23294





# RATING GUIDELINES FOR JUDGING

Each entrant's contribution will be evaluated based on the following five categories, which are key elements of the project description text required in the electronic submittal.

## **Uniqueness and/or Innovative Applications of New or Existing Techniques:**

- Include as many measurable results as possible to tell the story of the project. For example, data points related to energy savings, number of people impacted by the project, etc.
- Does the entrant's contribution to the project demonstrate the use of a new science or a breakthrough in the general knowledge of engineering?
- Does the entrant's contribution to the project represent a unique application of new or existing technology, techniques, materials or equipment?

## **Future Value to the Engineering Profession and 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, and Sustainable Development Considerations:**

- 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?



# RATING GUIDELINES FOR JUDGING

Each entrant's contribution will be evaluated based on the following five categories, which are key elements of the project description text required in the electronic submittal.

## Complexity:

- Did the entrant's efforts successfully address highly complex criteria or unique problems?
- Were extraordinary problems of site, location, hazardous conditions, project requirements, or similar elements present?
- Did the entrant's solutions 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 entrant introduce an economical and cost-effective solution?
- How did the final cost compare to the 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?

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ENTRANTS** In conjunction with an ACEC goal to promote the essentialness of engineering, we strongly encourage that all project entries, no matter the category, also highlight an emphasis on the project's direct benefits to the public. Examples include: Water Resources: The number of gallons of clean water that will result from the project and the potential impact. Resiliency: Efforts to protect X number of people from the impact of rising sea levels and floods. Climate Change: Examples of how much the project will reduce tons of carbon into the atmosphere, thus also reducing a project's footprint. Transportation: Examples of reduced congestion and improved safety; improved previously restricted community access; and reduced commuting time.





# ENTRY CATEGORIES

## CATEGORY A:

### Studies, Research and Consulting Engineering Services

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



# ENTRY CATEGORIES

## CATEGORY F:

### Waste and Stormwater

- Wastewater collection/treatment, and disposal
- Residuals management and reuse
- Graywater systems
- CSOs
- Mine tailings
- Agricultural
- Stormwater management
- Erosion control

## CATEGORY G:

### Water Resources

- Hydraulics, hydrology
- Surface and groundwater supply development
- Treatment
- Transmission, distribution, and storage
- Watershed management
- Water use reduction
- Flood risk management
- Climate adaptation
- Coastal and ecosystem 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:

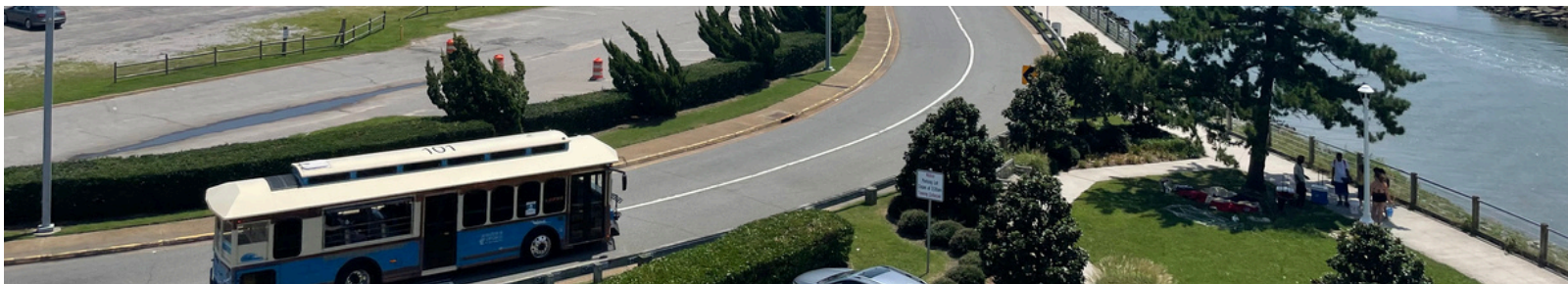
### Energy

- 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





# ENTRY CHECKLIST

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## Submit Intent to Enter

Complete the Intent to Enter submission by visiting [www.acecva.org/entry](http://www.acecva.org/entry) by September 19, 2025. You will receive a confirmation once the Intent to Enter is completed with information on submitting your full project via the ACEC VA EEA Online Portal.

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## Complete Official Online Entry Form

- Complete your project entry via the ACEC VA EEA Online Portal by November 6, 2025. The following items will need to be uploaded:

- ☐ Construction of projects must have been substantially completed and ready for use between November 1, 2022, and October 31, 2024.
- ☐ Project name, client/owner name, city, and engineering firm names are spelled correctly. These items will be used as they appear on the Entry Form.
- ☐ The primary contact listed on the entry form for your firm understands the project and is available to answer questions during the judging.
- ☐ Entry Form is signed by the client/owner and a principal of the firm.
- ☐ The following documents will need to be uploaded to the online portal in a PDF format:
  1. Entry Form
  2. Client/Owner Letter
  3. Executive Summary
  4. Project Description
  5. Key Participants/Consultants
  6. Six Photographs (High-Resolution PNG Files)
  7. Photo Release Form
  8. Supplemental Form (Category A Only)
  9. Press Release (Optional)
  10. Video/Drone Footage



# ENTRY CHECKLIST

## Display Panel and Entry Fees

- ☐ Submit one panel to the ACEC Virginia Offices no later than November 6, 2025.

Entry fees payable to ACEC Virginia no later than November 6, 2025.

-Members, \$795 for the first entry, \$550 for any additional entries

-Prospective Members, \$3050 for the first entry, \$2550 for additional entries

Checks are payable to ACEC Virginia and must be submitted no later than November 6, 2025; ACEC Virginia, 8600 Mayland Drive, Richmond, VA 23294.

- ☐ Panel is 30"x 30", with a matte finish, and is mounted for display.
- ☐ Each image displayed on the panel is a minimum of 7"x 5" or 35 square inches.
- ☐ Title and location of entry, owner's and/or client's name and location, and entering firm's name and location (minimum 32-point type) are displayed on the front of the panel.
- ☐ ACEC Virginia logo is displayed on the front of the panel.
- ☐ Label is affixed to the back of the panel, including the firm name, address, project name, and category.

**For questions during the EEA Entry Process, please contact:**

**Marchelle Albertson, [malbertson@acecva.org](mailto:malbertson@acecva.org) or 703-400-6568**

