

DIAMOND AWARD 2026 DESIGN COMPETITION

ENTRY PACKET

Competition Guidelines,
Categories & Specialty Awards
Information, Judging Criteria,
and Entry Checklist

CALLING FOR ENTRIES

Open to NKBA Members and
Non-Members.

First project: \$150
Any additional Project: \$100

Non-Members
First project: \$200
Any additional Project: \$150

GO HERE TO ENTER THE DESIGN COMPETITION

Entry Deadline:
September 18, 2026



Design: Kacie Atkinson
Photo: Fred Donham

C A T E G O R I E S

Kitchens

Large (more than 300 square feet)

Small (under 300 square feet)

Specialty Kitchen: i.e.: dirty kitchen/caterer's kitchen, scullery kitchen, Kosher kitchen, guest house kitchen or outdoor kitchen, home bar (must have at least one appliance).

Bathrooms

Large (more than 70 square feet)

Small (under 70 square feet)

Kitchen Refresh or Remodel under \$75,000

- This category recognizes outstanding kitchen designs that achieve significant transformation with a budget of \$75,000 or less. Entries should include cosmetic upgrades (painting, new countertops, backsplashes, lighting, hardware) or more extensive changes (reconfiguring layout, replacing cabinetry, updating appliances, improving storage solutions) that demonstrate creativity and functionality within budget constraints.



ENTRY FEE

NKBA Members

First project: \$150

Any additional project: \$100

Non - NKBA Members

First project: \$200

Any additional project: \$150

Team Members: \$100 per entry.

(NKBA Members and Non-Members).

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Design: AS Architecture Inc.
Photo: Nicole Dianne

WINNER RECOGNITION

Awarded projects will be announced at the Diamond Awards Gala on November 20, 2026 and will be showcased and included in the Annual NKBA Industry Directory, on the NKBA California Capital Chapter website and social media sites.

COMPETITION PRIZES

All Categories

First Place - Diamond Award

Second Place - Diamond Award

Third Place - Diamond Award

Judges' Choice Award

The winners of the Judges' Choice Awards will receive a Diamond Award

Best Transformation (before & after)

The winners of the Best Transformation will receive a Diamond Award

SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships are available!

\$350 per sponsorship, including one FREE entry (\$150 Discount)!

Purchase a Design Competition Sponsorship [HERE](#)



Design: Marosi White
Photo: Janine Mapurunga

C O M P E T I T I O N G U I D E L I N E S

Entries, including entry fees must be received by September 18, 2026, at 11:59 pm.

- Open to ALL Industry participants servicing Kitchen and Bath Spaces.
- Each NKBA Member Entrant will pay \$150 for the first project and \$100 for each additional project.
- Each Non-Member Entrant will pay \$200 for the first project and \$150 for each additional project.
- The registration fee is non-refundable. Therefore, should a participant change their mind, refuse, or fail to submit an entry after registering, the registration amount will not be refunded.
- **All Design Competition Entrants** will receive (2) tickets to the Diamond Awards Gala at a discounted rate.
- Projects must have been completed and installed during the period of **September 18, 2024– September 18, 2026.**
 - Past entries that were not awarded may be re-entered but must adhere to the 2026 submittal requirements.
- The same project may not be entered in more than one category but may be considered for a Specialty award in addition to the general category.
- A new entry form is required for each project submitted and is to be completed in full. Each entry requires a separate fee.
- **Team entries** (one project completed by multiple firms) are permitted.
 - In case of team entries, each member will submit a separate entry fee.
 - Each **team member** will receive an award with their name on it in case of a placement.
- **Co-Design entries** (multiple designers from one firm) are permitted.
 - Only one entry is required.
 - Co-designers will receive **one award** with both names on it in case of a placement.
- All identifying design and firm information must be omitted, removed, or blacked out from photographs, floor plans, elevations and design statements. (Note: Judges will make decisions on the projects without knowing who designed them).

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JUDGING CRITERIA

Projects submitted will be judged by an impartial panel of judges, comprised of NKBA Certified designers of an outside NKBA Chapter.

What Judges will be looking for:

The competition entries will be scored based on the following core areas:

Presentation - 25%

- This area considers the design statement, dimensioned floor plans, interpretive drawings and mechanical plans, and photographs.

Basic Safety and Ergonomic Standards - 30%

- This area considers the compliance with [NKBA Kitchen and Bath Planning Guidelines](#). Review the [Kitchen & Bath](#) Guidelines for more information. *Updated to reflect the 4th Edition, copyright 2022.*

Elements and Principles of Design - 15%

- Elements include space, line, form, and texture.
- Principles include balance, rhythm, emphasis, scale, proportion, and harmony.

Creativity and Visual Appeal - 30%

- 'THE 'WOW''. This area considers the overall aesthetic appeal of the project and the use of innovative solutions, products, and materials. For consideration: How will the project appear in publication, staging, quality of photography, lighting, and color rendering.

Placement is based on points. The project receiving the highest score in each category receives the award. Each category might not receive all possible awards. If there is only one entrant in a category, they are not guaranteed placement.

To place in a category, an entry must have a minimum average score of 70.



REQUIRED MATERIALS CHECKLIST

1. Register for an account on the awards platform and complete the online entry form.
Please be sure to include any co-designers or team entry information.
 - *Team entries require separate entry fees (one project completed by multiple firms - designer + contractor, architect, etc.) Each team member will receive their individual award with their name on it in case of a placement.
 - Co-designers will receive **one award** with both names on it in case of a placement.
2. Complete the **designer and client release form**.
3. **Plans:** No company identification or individual identification is to appear anywhere on the design drawings, including phone numbers. Plans must be drawn to 1/4", 3/8" or 1/2" scale and according to NKBA Graphic Presentation Standards.
4. **Design Statement:** limited to one 8½ x 11" letter size page (200-400 maximum words suggested), bullet points are recommended. Judges will be reviewing this as part of the presentation, check spelling and grammar, be clear and concise.
5. **Photographs:** Submit up to 10 high-resolution photographs suitable for publication.
 - Include vertical, as well as horizontal photographs.
 - Maximum file size: **8MB**
 - Include before photos if possible. If included you will be eligible for the Best Transformation award.
 - Professional photography is helpful, but not required.
 - Photo names need to be generic (i.e.: Kitchen 1, Kitchen 2, etc.)
6. Do not include any identifying designer and firm information.

DESIGN STATEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Please use this as a guide when preparing your design statement.

All design statements must be typed.

The design statement is limited to one 8½ x 11" letter size page (200-400 maximum words suggested). Judges will be reviewing this as part of the presentation, check spelling and grammar, be clear and concise.

DO NOT include: Any identifying member information, such as:

- Client name
- Client address
- Business name
- Business address
- Phone number

200-to-400 word statement

that outlines client needs, objectives, design philosophy, challenges, solution and special features (think of the design statement as you would pitch to a magazine).

Objectives:

Outlines criteria to be met by your design solution, for example:

- Create casual dining for large family
- Update to contemporary tastes of clients
- Provide healing options for a sick family
- Create multigenerational kitchen

Design Challenges:

Describe fixed elements or special circumstances, for example:

- Design space around support posts, air ducts, plumbing, etc.
- Include client's sports souvenirs collection.

Design Solutions:

Describe how you creatively solved the challenges, for example:

- Used negative space between air ducts and created storage space.

Special Features:

Highlight design elements that are unique or notable, for example:

- Technology and voice activation
- Repurposed wood from the dance studio where client danced as a child

**DOWNLOAD A DESIGN
STATEMENT TEMPLATE HERE**

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Good Luck
to Everyone!

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California Capital Chapter

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