



2026 Design Competition

Minnesota State Chapter

The Minnesota State Chapter of the NKBA (National Kitchen and Bath Association) is pleased to announce the details of our 2026 Design Competition. This competition is open exclusively to NKBA members. The purpose of this competition is to give members an opportunity to showcase residential projects that exemplify the quality of Minnesota's finest designers in the field of kitchen and bath design. The projects must be completed within the last two years and fall into categories like kitchens, bathrooms, and specialty categories for unique applications.

Entrant Qualifications

- Entrants must be an individual NKBA MN member or an employee of an NKBA MN member firm in good standing as of April 2026.
- Co-designer entrants are not required to be members of the NKBA (maximum of one co-designer per project).
- Builders/Contractors/Architects are not required to be members of the NKBA (trade partners will be listed on all project information but names will not be printed on trophies due to lack of wordage space).
- NKBA Certification is not required to enter the competition and does not factor into score.

Project Eligibility

- Projects entered must have been completed between June 1, 2024 and May 1, 2026.
- Submissions must be for residential projects only; no commercial projects will be accepted.
- Number of submissions are limited to two (2) projects per design firm per category.
- The project entrant or team, as indicated on the entry form, must have completed the design work for the project entered.
- Past entries that did not receive an award may be re-submitted if the project is within the eligibility requirements listed on this page.

Submissions & Entry Fee

Entries MUST be fully complete in the online portal (CPJAM) no later than Friday, June 26th, 2026.

- All documents for each entry will be submitted in the online portal.
- All payments for submissions must be made through the online portal. NO CHECKS.

The entry fee is \$150.00 per entry in the main categories. Sub-categories entries are FREE, but the project must be entered in a main category to be considered for a sub-category award.



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Awards

Beautifully engraved trophies will be presented at the Annual Gala & Design Awards on November 5th, 2026. Awarded Projects will be featured on the MN Chapter NKBA Website and social media (as determined by the board).

Main Categories

Projects must be entered into one of the following main categories.

- Category A: Small Kitchen (185 square feet or less – total room square footage)
- Category B: Medium Kitchen (186-250 square feet – total room square footage)
- Category C: Large Kitchen (251-325 square feet – total room square footage)
- Category D: Grand Kitchen (326 square feet or more – total room square footage)
- Category E: Powder Room (must contain only a sink and toilet, no tub or shower)
- Category F: Small Bathroom (55 square feet or less – total room, square footage)
- Category G: Medium Bathroom (56-100 square feet – total room, square footage)
- Category H: Large Bathroom (101 square feet or more – total room square footage)
- Category I: Other Residential Rooms (that contain related elements to kitchens or baths, including but not limited to: mudrooms, laundry rooms, home offices, libraries, bars, butlers' pantries, guest house kitchens, outdoor kitchens, pets bathing rooms, pool houses, ADUs, etc.)

Special Sub-Categories (*add to any entry!*)

Any projects submitted in a Main Category can also be considered for the following special sub-categories. No additional entry fee is needed to submit for any of these Sub-Categories:

- Use of local artisan materials
- Green/Sustainable design focus
- Universal Design focus
- Budget-friendly projects (\$100K or less for kitchen, and \$80K or less for bath)

Consideration for the above Sub-Categories require an additional design statement of 150 words or less. This design statement should describe how the project incorporates one of these Sub-Category elements. The design statement submitted with the main entry is not included in the judging documentation.

For the Budget-Friendly Sub-Category, the total project costs must include all design fees, labor, products, and materials, and the submission must include an additional document with these costs shown.

Competition Guidelines



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All required materials must be submitted through the CPJAM competition online platform. This platform guides entrants through all required documentation, and requires an order for the category and payment to be made prior to submitting documentation. Enter the project into the category for which it is best suited, based on room type and room size.

The Designer of Record on each project must be the person entering the contest. If the entrant is not the owner of the business that billed the project, then owner approval is required for eligibility.

A separate entry and documentation are required for each project submitted, and each entry requires a separate fee. Entries that are incomplete at the time of the submission deadline on June 26th, 2026 will be automatically disqualified. *Entries that do not adhere to guidelines, qualifications, eligibility, or have any names, client names, addresses, or business names on the design statement, drawings, or photography are subject to automatic disqualification.*

Entry Requirements Checklist

The following documents are to be uploaded through the online CPJAM portal, with NO identifying information appearing on Drawings, Design Statement, Project Statement, Vendor List or in file names.

Give your project a name. Your entry will be tracked, judged and presented by that name (*do not include any identifying designer, co-designer, company, contractor, or client information*). **The Project Name** must be noted on EVERY document submitted.

Required documents include:

1. Design Statement: Two Required Statements

Project Overview Statement:

- 100-word maximum statement “in your own words” in a narrative essay or bulleted format.
- Describe the project as you would like it to be announced at the Gala, if it is a winner.
- Highlight your favorite design details

Design Statement Narrative:

- 200-to-400-word statement explaining your project in a descriptive or bulleted statement
- This clearly, but briefly, outlines the client needs, objectives, design philosophy, challenges, solution and special features (think of the design statement as you would your pitch to a magazine).

2. Comprehensive Project Design Drawings:



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- Before Plan, After Plan, and walls Elevations
 - Dimensions must be scaled in 1/2", 3/8", or 1/4" scale
 - **MUST** include overall dimensions of the room
 - Detailed Dimensions are not required on before plans
 - CLEANLY & CLEARLY labeled including dimensions LARGE ENOUGH TO READ.
- Uploaded Drawings **MUST be a PDF** – No JPEGS are allowed.
- *They can be either hand drawn or computer generated and should abide by NKBA Presentation Standards and Guidelines. Additional renderings or perspectives can also be included but are not required.*
- **Remember: the project plans CANNOT include your name, your company's name or your client/contractor's name.**

3. Vendor/Product List:

- List of products/manufacturers used in your project (PDF File), including but not limited to: appliances, cabinets, countertops, tile, hardware, plumbing, lighting, etc. *Information not used for judging; it will be used for sponsorship opportunities for future competitions.*

4. Project Photos

- Up to 10 high-resolution color photos of the completed project. Including at least 3 photos is highly recommended to properly show the space.
- At least one "before" picture is required (unless the project is new construction, which should be included in your Design Statement.)
- Professional photography is highly recommended, but not required.
- Avoid using photos that identify the project location, clients, children, pet, or site workers.

5. Designer Head-Shot Photo

- High resolution (300 dpi) JPEG
- For Designer of Record and each Co-Designer on the entry.

6. Release Form

- 2026 Design Competition Consent Form (downloaded from competition portal)



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Judging

All judges are approved by The MN Chapter Board and Competition Committee, are experts in their field, and are not members of the MN Chapter. Judging is completed online via CPJAM by a panel of impartial judges evaluating the entries. A point system is used for scoring. Actual scoring results will not be released. Judges reserve the right to determine if the category has a winning entry. There is no guarantee that each category will have all possible placements. ** All decisions of the judges are final. **

Entries for the **main categories** will be judged on the following criteria and prompts, with a total potential score of 50 points.

Creativity and Design Solutions (10 points)

How well did the design statement describe the design and acknowledge any obstacles addressed? To what degree were the wants and needs of the client met? How well does the design appropriately address practical and unique solutions for any challenges faced?

Elements and Principles of Design (10 points)

How well are the elements and principles of design used? Elements of design: line, form, shape, texture, pattern, color, space, light Principles of design: balance, rhythm, scale, proportion, emphasis/focal point, harmony/unity.

Presentation (10 points)

To what degree were the Graphic & Presentation Standards (see separate document) accurately used on the drawings (construction, floor plans, elevations)? Scale must be 1/4", 3/8", 1/2" and noted. The plans, symbols, and notes must be CLEANLY & CLEARLY labeled including dimensions, and large enough to read. What is the quality of the floor plans for communicating the design to all parties? The quality of the perspectives if included?

Basic Safety and Ergonomics (10 points)

To what degree were the NKBA Planning Guidelines followed? View the fourth edition here: <https://kb.nkba.org/kitchen-bath-planning-guidelines/>. Do the designs optimize function? Do the designs adhere to building and life safety codes? Do the designs take into account proper space planning methodology?

Visual Appeal (10 points)

How would you rate the visual appeal of the project? Were there any special materials used or materials used in a creative way to set it apart from other projects? This includes use of textures and colors, attention to detail, balanced proportions, and a "Wow Factor!"



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Entries for the **sub-categories** will be judged on the following criteria and prompts, with a total potential score of 20 points.

Design Solutions, in particular regards to Sub-Category Type (10 points)

Fits the focus, goals, budgets, or materials into the design using creativity, knowledge, and resources. This section is based on the sub-category description provided with sub-entry.

Presentation (5 points)

To what degree were the Graphic & Presentation Standards (see separate document) accurately used on the drawings? What is the quality of the floor plans for communicating the design to all parties? The quality of the perspectives if included?

Visual Appeal (5 points)

How would you rate the visual appeal of the project? Were there any special materials used or materials used in a creative way to set it apart from other projects? This includes use of textures and colors, attention to detail, balanced proportions, and a “Wow Factor!”

Award Details

Awards will use information taken directly from the data supplied online in the entry submission by the Designer of Record. **Be sure to proofread all Designer of Record and Co-Designer names, companies, and Certifications when submitting your entry information.**

Awards engraved with the information submitted in CPJAM but deemed in need of correction/adjustment by the winner(s), will be re-made by the Design Committee. Any additional costs will be prepaid in advance by the Designer of Record.

Disqualification

Failure to meet or observe any of the previously stated eligibility or required criteria are grounds for disqualification of an entry. False or misleading information intentionally provided by the entrant will result in disqualification. NKBA MN Chapter reserves the right to disqualify an entry before, during or after competition judging.

Your membership in the NKBA MN Chapter will be verified. Certification is not required in order to enter. Non-member must gain NKBA membership *prior* to entering the competition.

Your submission must be received by 11:59 PM (Central Time) on June 26th, 2026. Incomplete entries will be disqualified. No refunds will be offered.

Thank You and Good Luck!