NKBA | KBIS

Student Design Competition

2026-2027 | Official Rules & Entry Requirements



About the NKBA | KBIS Student Design Competition

Participating in this prestigious competition accelerates your career by expanding your knowledge, practicing your skills through real-world application, and identifying additional opportunities for exposure at your regional chapter level. Your challenge is to create spaces that seamlessly blend safety, functionality, and distinctive aesthetics while meeting the requirements of the design scenario. NKBA Student Members from the U.S. and Canada are invited to compete in the kitchen category, the bath category, or both.

All design submissions must be based on the client's requests and the provided plans.

Who Can Enter

Entrants must be NKBA Student Members from the U.S. and Canada and enrolled in an accredited, post-secondary institution on the date of submission. There is no cost for students to join NKBA. **Visit here** to register as an NKBA Student Member. Except for experience derived from an internship, entrants must neither have worked in a professional residential or commercial design capacity (including interior design, architecture and related fields), nor have been paid for any design services rendered. This includes professional experience gained outside the U.S. and Canada. Projects entered must be completed individually by the student designer; co-designers are not permitted. Additionally, all floor plans and design concepts must be the original work of the student and may not be AI-generated.



How to Enter

NKBA uses Award Force, an awards management software program, to manage the student design competition entries. Students can create an account, submit a portion of the project, and return to make final revisions before submitting the completed project by the deadline date.
Once a project is submitted, it cannot be revised.

Please review the Award Force entry form for full submission file requirements. The deadline for all entries is **Friday, June 4, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. ET.**

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN YOUR ENTRY

Winning Entries

The top winners in both the kitchen and the bath competitions will be recognized by their peers and industry professionals at the Design Competition Awards ceremony held during the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS) 2026.

The winning designs will also be featured in an NKBA newsletter article, and awarded the following:

First Place . . . . . $5,000 Scholarship
Second Place . . . . . $2,500 Scholarship
Third Place . . . . . $1,000 Scholarship

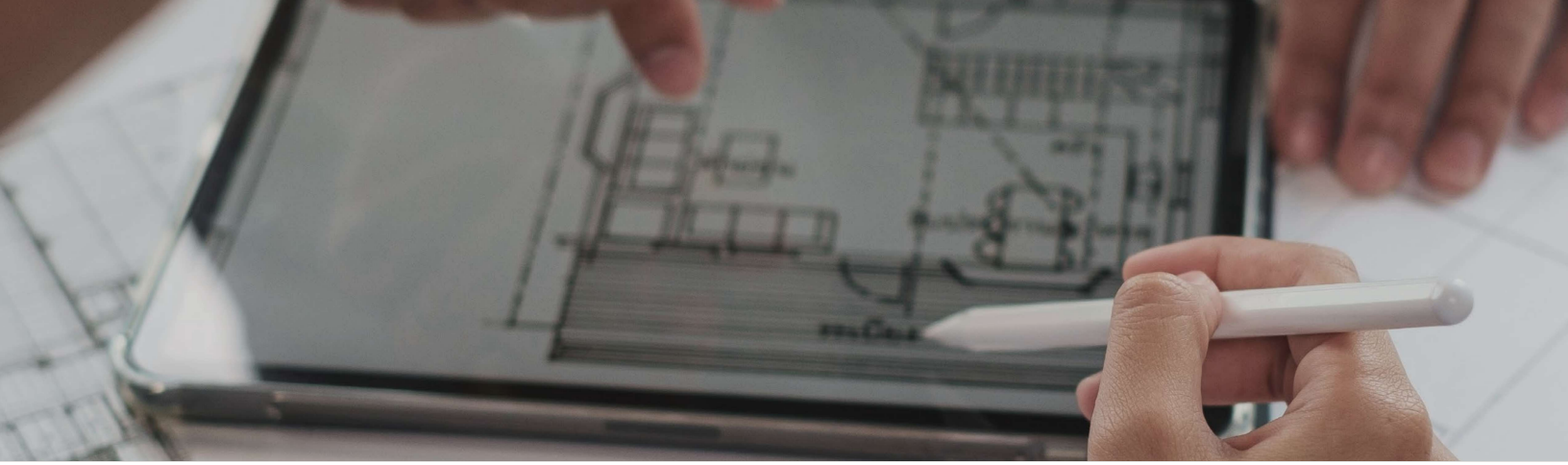
Award winners will receive a travel package to attend KBIS 2028, including one expo floor pass, conference registration, admission to special events, hotel accommodations, and airfare.

Entries Must Be Submitted No Later Than Friday, June 4, 2027, 5:00 PM (Eastern Time).

The NKBA is not responsible for those entries that are not submitted by the deadline.

Submission Requirements

- Review the attached rubric for the full list of expectations.
- Separate entry forms are required for each project submission: one entry for the kitchen and one entry for the bath.
- Drawings should be clean, easy to understand, and professionally presented. Entries must be submitted digitally using an 11” x 17” page size or larger, such as 18” x 24”.
- Drawings may be hand-drafted in pen or computer-generated, and must be submitted as black-line originals or scans.
- Required files for each entry include a fully dimensioned floor plan, construction plan, mechanical plan, and elevations (of every wall with cabinets and/or appliances) following NKBA Graphics and Presentation Standards, as well as a concept/mood board, renderings, and a design statement. It is not necessary to include the existing/as built floor plan with the entry.
- No color may be used on drawings other than on perspectives and renderings.
- Design statements must be typed and should not exceed 500-1000 words in length. They may be in narrative or bulleted format.
- This concept board should include images and may include a material legend or labels for each product..
- **Personal identification and school identification must not appear anywhere on any component of the entry, including within file names or the project name. Inclusion of personal identification information on any of the previously mentioned items will result in disqualification**



Entry Checklist

Please review this checklist before submitting your entry:

- [ ] Separate entry form for each submission: one for kitchen and one for bath.
- [ ] Separate design statements detailing the creative solution for the kitchen and/or bath projects.
- [ ] All submission requirements listed on page 4. Drawings must follow NKBA's Graphics and Presentation Standards.

Judging

Entries will be judged on visual appeal, creativity, the elements and principles of design, the NKBA's 5th Edition Kitchen & Bath Planning Guidelines and NKBA Graphics & Presentation Standards. These topics can be found in the Kitchen & Bath Design Presentation and Kitchen & Bath Design Principles volumes of the NKBA Professional Resource Library or Knowledge Base. Students should refer to these resources when designing their projects. The NKBA reserves the right to disqualify an entry before, during, or after the contest judging. In the case of disqualification after an awards ceremony, the entrant will be required to return the award, and the Association may make a public announcement. The NKBA reserves the right to determine the number of entries that will be recognized with an award. Individuals selected to judge the NKBA Student Design Competition are practicing, NKBA-certified professionals. **The judges' decision is final.**

Competition Scenario

The following story provides details about a fictional client and describes their requests for upgrading the kitchen and bathroom in their home. Exterior home images are provided for style inspiration and are not intended to represent the actual scenario home.

Form & Function Atlanta: A Kitchen and Bath Transformation

Meet Julian and Maribel Whitaker, Atlanta-based empty-nesters who crave the simple comforts of home after busy days dedicated to their professional pursuits. Julian, a civil engineer by day and devoted weekend baker, finds joy in perfecting sourdough starters and French pastries, while Maribel, a travel agent and local TV host of a popular travel series, collects stories, spices, and cookbooks from her travels around the world. The Whitakers reside in a stately two-story brick home nestled in the Atlanta suburbs, where they embrace a traditional décor style throughout.

Kitchen Remodel: Catering to Comfort and Convenience

For this remodel, the Whitakers envision a warm, traditional kitchen that opens seamlessly into the family room, allowing conversation and connection to flow freely. Walls may be removed to create an open-concept layout, and additional square footage can be borrowed from the adjacent garage to expand functionality. At the center, the couple would like a generously sized island to anchor the space, complete with a mixer lift to aid Julian's baking projects. Julian and Maribel would like an eye-catching hood vent to serve as a focal point, blending timeless design with modern performance. The couple also desires a dedicated coffee station, where Maribel can begin her mornings while reviewing notes for her next episode. Thoughtful additions like a microwave drawer and pot filler will enhance efficiency, while a built-in bookcase visible from the family room will proudly display their curated collection of cookbooks, travel mementos, and family photographs.







Form & Function Atlanta: A Kitchen & Bath Transformation

Primary Bath Remodel: A Space That's Refreshed and Functional

While the kitchen takes priority in both budget and scope, the Whitakers seek a refreshed primary bath that delivers comfort, efficiency, and understated elegance. Their current bathroom feels dated and cramped, lacking the sense of calm retreat they crave at the start and end of their busy days. With a practical mindset, they are open to reconfiguring the layout, including relocating the toilet and expanding into a portion of the adjacent bedroom to improve flow and usability. However, they wish to keep their existing primary closet untouched.

The new design will focus on a streamlined, shower-only layout—no tub required—featuring a spacious, well-appointed shower that feels luxurious without excess. Budget-conscious material selections should still evoke a sense of warmth and cohesion with the home's traditional style, perhaps through classic tile patterns, timeless finishes, and smart storage solutions. The goal is to create a serene, efficient space that supports their daily routines while subtly echoing the character and charm found throughout the rest of their home.

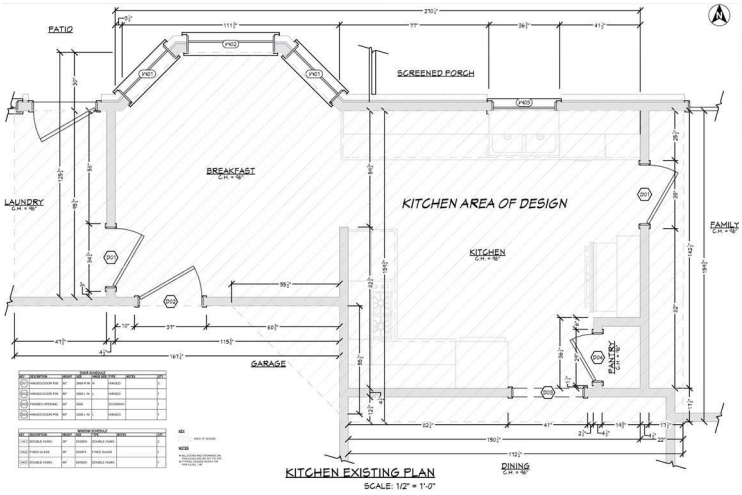
Key Considerations

- The couple's style is "traditional."
- For the kitchen remodel, it is ok to remove walls and/or use space from the living room and/or garage.
- For the bath remodel, the couple does not want to reduce the size of the primary closet. It is ok to change or reimagine the door to the closet.
- For the bath remodel, it is ok to take space from the bedroom or hallway.

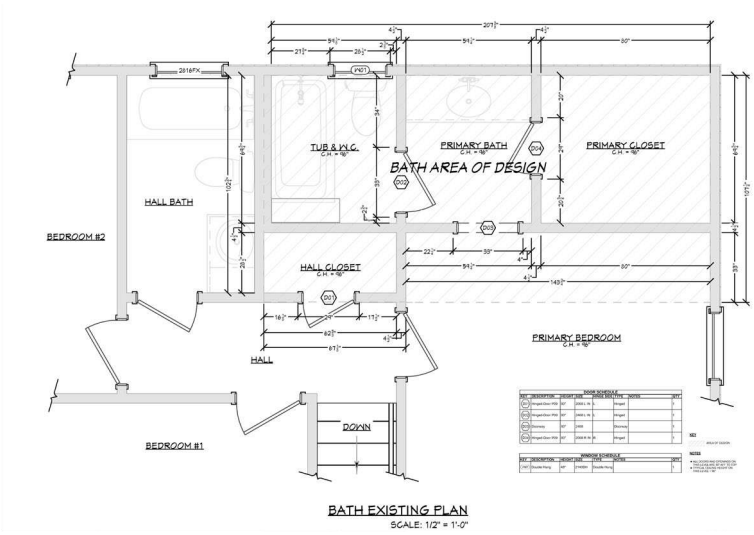
The Floor Plans

The floor plans below are for reference only and are NOT to scale.

Please click here to view full 11”x17” floor plans built to scale on nkba.org.



KITCHEN EXISTING PLAN
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



BATH EXISTING PLAN
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"



EXISTING HOUSE PLANS
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Submission Scoring Rubric

This rubric is designed to assess multiple aspects of a design submission, balancing creative, technical, and practical considerations. Each category includes guidance bullet points for context, though these should not be interpreted as equally weighted criteria within their sections.

Category	Value
Overall Design Impact • Addresses client requests • Demonstrates functional use of space, including effective appliance integration. • Is executable and possesses real-world "sales potential"	20
Design Statement • Clearly articulates design concept • Explains connection between concept and execution • Expresses innovative, user-centered solutions	10
Integration of NKBA Kitchen & Bath Planning Guidelines • Egress and passageways • Fixture and equipment planning • Mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and safety • Activity centers and adjacencies	30
NKBA Graphic and Presentation Standards • Use of title block, scale, and text • Inclusion of legends, specifications, notes, and details • Dimensioned floor, construction, mechanical, and elevation plans	20
Aesthetics and Creativity • Visual appeal • Creative problem solving • Use of materials, including appliances	20


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