



Association
of Registered
Interior Designers
of Ontario



ARIDO AWARDS

SUBMISSION GUIDE 2026

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IMPORTANT DATES & ENTRY FEES

Submissions open

Wednesday, May 1, 2026

Early Bird Entry Deadline

Friday, June 5, 2026, Midnight
\$150 + HST (per entry)

Final Entry Deadline

Friday, June 12, 2026, Midnight
\$250 + HST (per entry)

ARIDO Awards Gala

September 17, 2026
Meridian Hall, Toronto

Questions?

Please contact gbantoc@arido.ca

Late entries will not be accepted. No exceptions.

Good Luck!

To submit for the IMPACT Award [click here](#)

To submit for any of the other categories, [click here](#)



AWARDS GALA

The ARIDO Awards Gala will be held on September 17th, 2026 at Meridian Hall in downtown Toronto.

The winners will be announced at the ceremony. You are encouraged to engage clients and team members in the ceremony.

ARIDO provides framed certificates to all Designated Entrants who win awards. An additional two framed certificates are provided, one for the design firm, and one for the client.

All ARIDO Registered and Intern members on the project team will be recognized on the award certificate.



ELIGIBILITY

The maximum number of entries per design firm is:

- 3 entries per category
- 4 entries per year total

Please note: previously submitted projects are not eligible for resubmission.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, and INCLUSION

As part of this refreshed awards program, ARIDO has incorporated new criteria which recognizes projects designed by members that support or addresses equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion.

This new criteria accounts for 15% of a project's overall score and is detailed on [page 22](#).

CATEGORIES BY YEAR

| Submission by year | Project completion/ occupancy | Categories |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2023 | January 1, 2021 – January 1, 2023 | WORK, EAT+STAY, LEARN, CARE PRESERVE+RESTORE, DISTINCT, CRAFT |
| 2024 | January 1, 2022 – January 1, 2024 | SHOP, GATHER+PLAY, LIVE, LIVE TOGETHER, PRESERVE+RESTORE, DISTINCT, CRAFT |
| 2025 | January 1, 2023 - January 1, 2025 | WORK, EAT+STAY, LEARN, CARE PRESERVE+RESTORE, DISTINCT, CRAFT |
| 2026 | January, 2024 - January 2026 | SHOP, GATHER+PLAY, LIVE, LIVE TOGETHER, WORK, EAT+STAY, LEARN, CARE PRESERVE+RESTORE, DISTINCT, CRAFT |

CATEGORIES and SUB-CATEGORIES for 2026

Projects must have been completed between **January 1, 2024 - January 1, 2026**

SHOP

- a.** Boutique:
 - i. Standalone or street front store; or
 - ii. A boutique or area within a large store, such as a department store
- b.** Storefront: located within a shopping centre or strip mall
- c.** Flagship store
- d.** Innovative retail environments:
 - i. Experiential
 - ii. Tradeshow
 - iii. Pop-up
 - iv. Kiosk
 - v. Exhibit (sales)

GATHER+PLAY

- a.** Museums, art galleries, exhibits (not for sales) and theatres or cinemas
- b.** Community centres and related facilities
- c.** Fitness facilities, golf clubs and similar private clubs and venues
- d.** Spas



CATEGORIES and SUB-CATEGORIES for 2026 (continued)

LIVE

- a.** Small: design of an entire house, condo or apartment, either renovation or new construction, under 2000 sq.ft. (185 sq.m.)
- b.** Large: design of an entire house, condo or apartment, either renovation or new construction, over 2001 sq.ft. (186 sq.m.)
- c.** Specialty Spaces: An area within a house, condominium or apartment, such as a single room or area, a kitchen, home office, master suite, etc.
- d.** Refresh/FFE: Projects where there is no construction involved, focusing on furnishings and accessories
- e.** Aging in Place: Renovation or new construction of a room(s) to enable an owner with special needs to remain in their own home
- f.** Alternative Living: Specialty living scenarios such as tiny homes

LIVE TOGETHER

- a.** Lobbies, Corridors & Public Spaces, Common Areas within a Multifamily Living Space: (condominium, apartment, townhouse, residential development or retirement community)
- b.** Amenity Spaces: (condominium, apartment, townhouse, residential development or retirement community)
- c.** Sales Centres & Model Suites: (condominium, apartment, townhouse, residential development or retirement community) * Client to be a developer rather than a home owner



CATEGORIES and SUB-CATEGORIES for 2026 (continued)

WORK

- a. under 5,000 sq ft (under 464 sq.m.)
- b. 5,001 – 20,000 sq ft (465 – 1,858 sq.m.)
- c. 20,000–50,000 sq ft (1,859 – 4,645 sq.m.)
- d. Over 50,000 sq ft (over 4,646 sq.m.)

EAT + STAY

- a. Hotel Lobbies
- b. Hotel Rooms
- c. Hotel Amenity Spaces
- d. Restaurants, Bars and Nightclubs

LEARN

- a. Schools: K-12; including classrooms, admin areas, libraries, etc.
- b. Higher Education: Colleges & Universities, including classrooms, admin areas, libraries, dormitories, amenity areas, welcome centres, etc.

- c. Childcare: Stand-alone or in a larger facility
- d. Other.

CARE

- a. Clinics and private practices: dental offices, physio clinics, private doctor's offices, etc.
- b. Public and private healthcare facilities: such as hospitals, urgent care centres, orthopedic and similar rehabilitation centres, mental health and addiction treatment centres.
- c. Specialty care and amenity spaces: hospital rooms, surgical suites, birthing centres, recovery rooms, examination rooms, cafes, welcome centres, family waiting areas, retail area, chapels and worship areas (multi-denominational), complex areas/rooms
- d. Assisted living: nursing homes, extended care (non-residential)



CATEGORIES and SUB-CATEGORIES for 2026 (continued)

PRESERVE + RESTORE

Historic preservation, restoration of adaptive re-use, all disciplines:

- a.** under 5,000 sq ft (under 464 sq.m.)
- b.** 5,001 – 20,000 sq ft (465 - 1,858 sq.m.)
- c.** 20,000–50,000 sq ft (1,859 - 4,645 sq.m.)
- d.** Over 50,000 sq ft (over 4,646 sq.m.)

DISTINCT

- a.** Outdoor spaces -applicable to any category
- b.** Boats, planes, other atypical interiors environments
- c.** Innovative spaces: open-ended category for projects difficult to classify

CRAFT

a. Applicable to any discipline/category. Exceptional details can include custom hardware, millwork, furniture, lighting, textiles, ironwork, etc.

DESIGNATED ENTRANTS

Only ARIDO Registered members in good standing are eligible to submit projects, and only ARIDO Registered members will receive awards.

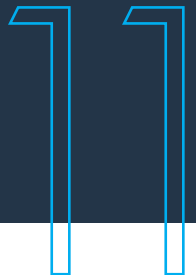
When project responsibilities are equally shared among several ARIDO members, up to 3 Registered members can be listed as the Designated Entrant.

Designated Entrant(s) must:

- be the lead Interior Designer(s) on the project and the one(s) who had primary responsibility, and influence on the creative design direction, project process, and final outcome.
- have been a Registered Member in good standing with ARIDO at the time of project completion and occupancy as well as at the time of the Awards submission.
- must accept responsibility for the accuracy of all information submitted.
- certify that their work was completed and ready for occupancy after this year's occupancy deadline.
- acknowledge(s) that the work submitted is their own, or was completed under their direct supervision by employees of the Designated Entrant(s).

Retired members who were a Registered Member in good standing at the time of the project's completion will be accepted as Designated Entrants.

Non-resident Registered members are not eligible to submit projects to the Awards. **(continued on next page)**



Company Team

All individuals, having made a significant contribution to the project as employees of the design firm part of the design team, must be listed.

This includes those individuals who are no longer employed with the design firm but may hold the rights to the project, and non-members who are employed by the design firm and made a significant contribution to the project.

Joint Venture/ Co-Design Partnership

If the project was a joint venture or partnership in co-design, please list the joint venture or co-design partner(s).

To be eligible, the ARIDO Registered Member(s) of the joint venture/co- design

partnership must have been the lead Interior Designer(s) or an equal Designer in all respects on the project. The non-member of the joint venture/co-design partnership cannot be the lead designer of the project.

Project Team

All companies and/or individuals who made a significant contribution to the project as part of the project team, but not as employees of the design firm, may be listed.

Scope of Work

The submission categories encompass the complete scope of work of interior design professionals.

If the project is a chain store or branch office, the designer who developed the original corporate or retail standard is the only person permitted to submit the entry.

The JUDGING PROCESS

Each entry is judged on its own merit by a panel of representatives from the profession and industry. Judging is based primarily on three main categories: Design Concept, Design Solution, and Project Results.

Each category is worth the following amount:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Overall design and team statement | 10% |
| Design concept, plans, budget information | 30% |
| Project visuals (photos, renderings, etc.) | 30% |
| Equity, diversity, and inclusion | 15% |
| Sustainability and/or wellness approach | 15% |
| Total | 100% |

Bonus Points

Project success statement: team/client/facility/users/etc. 5%

Winner of category must achieve 85% or higher.

The judging process is confidential and facilitated by ARIDO staff. Judges will not know the identity of the entrants.

Individuals or firms who submit projects for consideration are not permitted to sit on the ARIDO Awards jury.

IMPACT AWARD

Launched in 2021, the Impact Award is an exciting new component of the ARIDO Awards.

It replaces Project of the Year and will have a broad spectrum of considerations, with its own criteria.

The winning project must demonstrate a significant impact on an occupant or end user, neighbourhood, community, project team etc. It need not be built space.

The project submission must clearly explain how it has shaped or will shape an outcome or direct benefits, and address issues such as equity, diversity, or inclusion, advocacy, sustainability, economic considerations or several interrelated issues.

To submit for the IMPACT Award
[click here.](#)



IMPACT AWARD SUBMISSION CRITERIA

HOW DOES A FIRM ENTER? (10%)

1. Self – nomination, but validated by a third party who must attest that it meets with the following guidelines:

DESIGN INNOVATION (30%)

2. Does the entry advance the design profession and push the boundaries of:

- Innovation
- Design thinking

3. Is the entry:

- Unique
- Imaginative
- Does it offer a totally new and ground-breaking value proposition with world-first features?

4. Does the entry use new systems, materials, processes, ideologies, and/or technologies in a clever, imaginative, and original manner?

DESIGN IMPACT (30%)

1. Social/ Community Impact: Does the entry have the potential to make a significant positive impact on society/ community? Will it improve the quality of life for people and our planet and help contribute to a better, safer, and more prosperous world?

2. Commercial Impact: Does the entry have the potential to make a significant positive impact on business performance? Will the investment in design result in a significant increase in market share, sales, and/or customer loyalty?

3. Environmental Impact: Does the entry have the potential to make a significant positive impact on the environment? Will the design set a new benchmark for sustainable design and help contribute to a better and more sustainable future?

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IMPACT AWARD SUBMISSION CRITERIA (continued)

SUPPORTING MATERIALS (30%)

can include, but is not limited to:

- photos
- renderings
- sketches
- whitepapers
- etc.

ONLINE SUBMISSION FORM

All submissions must be made through the online forms on ARIDO website.

Photos and sketches are uploaded directly at the end of the forms. You may select and attach multiple files at once.

To avoid complications, don't start multiple, concurrent submissions.

Finish one; then begin another.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the data entered within the online form is factual and accurate.

All supporting documentation and photos must be uploaded at the time of submission.

IMPORTANT

Please ensure all the information is correct before submitting as there is no option to edit.

ARIDO will not issue refunds for submissions including those which contain errors, incorrect documentation, or any other incorrect information.

PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

PROJECT INFORMATION

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

ARIDO Awards are judged anonymously and only staff see the identification information provided. Please ensure the accuracy of the information provided.

The identification information is the only place where the firm name or employee names should be mentioned.

STEP 2: PROJECT INFORMATION

Provide information on the project in the following areas:

- Project name
- Project location (city/country)
- Project photographer
- Client/company name

- Identify if the client wishes to remain anonymous or if their identity can be published on the ARIDO website and in the Awards Magazine.

- Project completion date
- Project occupancy date
- Project square footage
- Construction cost per square foot (see note)

Note: Construction cost per square foot is provided in confidence and will not be shared publicly.

The ARIDO Judging Panel will use this information to assess the project against the criteria.

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PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM CATEGORIES

STEP 3: SELECT A CATEGORY AND SUB-CATEGORY

Select one category and sub-category which best reflects your project's scope of work.

You can divide your project into stand-alone components and submit these to a maximum of two other categories in addition to the main category.

Each component requires a separate submission.

Example:

If you recently completed a full-service restaurant which also includes a millwork

counter component, divide your entry into two submissions.

Submit one to EAT + STAY, option d. Restaurants, Bars and Nightclubs.

Submit the second, the restaurant's millwork counter component, separately under CRAFT.



PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

PROJECT DETAILS

STEP 4: PROVIDE PROJECT DETAILS

Overall Design and Team Statement (10%)

- Team Statement - Describe your overall design strategy for the project.
- What were the client's five main goals or directives? (list in bullet points)

Design Concept, plans, budget information (30%)

- Provide specific examples of the effectiveness of the design solution, based on the client's five stated goals and objectives as listed above.
- Describe how you incorporated any existing elements or fixtures in the new design (if applicable).
- Describe any key elements or special

features you wish to highlight, which contribute to the overall design solution.

- Describe your strategy to the layout and planning of the space, how the space provided was utilized to meet the client's objectives, and describe any unique physical aspects of the space.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (15%)

- Identify how your project supported or addressed equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion as indicated in the criteria on page 23.

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PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

PROJECT DETAILS

Sustainability and/or Wellness Approach (15%)

- Describe the sustainability and/or wellness approach to this project.

Bonus Point: Project Success Statement (Team/Client/Facility/ Users/etc) (5%)

- Please provide a statement on the success of the project which can be from client; team, facility group, end-users, etc.

IMPORTANT

**If the design firm, employer
or collaborator names
are mentioned in these
descriptions, the project will
be disqualified.**

EQUITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION

Identify how your project supported, addressed or advanced equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in any of the following areas:

Project design, the design and components of the project:

- a. Expanded or enhanced your client's organizational capacity that supports or serves underrepresented groups. i.e. Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour;
- b. Focused on inclusive and universally accessible design that went above and beyond minimum standards;
- c. Met the needs of end users with disabilities;
- d. Expanded or enhanced your client's sense of community or access to community for underrepresented or underserved groups;
- e. Enabled a diverse business to start or enhance their participation in the marketplace;

- f. Enabled the client to become a community leader in the area of advancing equity, diversity, accessibility or inclusion;
- g. Advocated for supplier diversity through the specification of services and materials by diverse owned or led businesses;

Project team and/or collaborators included;

- a. Diversity on the project team with a focus on Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour, women in leadership or regional representation;
- b. Enabled for the mentorship or internship of underrepresented individuals, newcomers or diverse professionals.
- c. Engaged in small to medium sized businesses in regions outside the GTA.



PROJECT VISUALS PLANS

Project Visuals (30%)

Submit plans, drawings and/or sketches:

- Submit one (1) fully developed furniture plan AND
- Up to three (3) concept sketches, drawings, or plans leading up to the final design solution (8 ½" x 11" or 11" x 17").

The plans must represent the entire area submitted for judging.

For projects with multiple levels, you may submit plans for each unique floor. Submit only one plan for each typical floor.

The total number of plans should be relative to the size of your project.

Clearly indicate the views of the plans represented in the photographs by marking the images with appropriate locations in the plans.

Example: view from main entrance

Ensure the project's name and category are indicated on the plans.

Ensure the name(s) of the Designated Entrant(s) or the design firm DO NOT appear on any submitted document.

PROJECT VISUALS

PHOTOGRAPHY

IMPORTANT:

The awards program **prohibits design firm employees from appearing in submission photos.**

Any submissions which contain images of design firm employees will be flagged and firms will have an opportunity to submit corrected photos by the timeline provided.

Submit a maximum of 10 BEFORE images, if applicable, and a maximum of 10 AFTER images that reflect your scope of work.

Images must:

- reflect the project's total scope of work, as described in your project description
- not contain ANY employees of the firm
- reflect only your involvement in the project
- be high resolution and colour accurate
- Images should be print quality, between 150-300 dpi

- Images size should be 10 MB or smaller
- be named with the project name, category, and image number in this order:
Project X_SHOP_1.jpg
(Project X is entered in the SHOP Category and is the first image).

Before images must include the word before at the end of the file name.

Project X_SHOP_1_before.jpg

Use the Project Information and Copyright section to credit your photographer.



PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

STEP 5: COMPLETE COPYRIGHT CONSENT FORMS

Read carefully, then complete, sign and date Section I and/or II (whichever applies) of the Copyright Consent form.

Please note: You may need to have this form completed and signed by others.

STEP 6: AGREE TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Read carefully, then sign and date the Terms and Conditions form. If there are two or more Designated Entrants, all Designated Entrants must sign and date the Terms and Conditions form.

STEP 7: COMPLETE PAYMENT FORM

Please submit payment via the Stripe

payment processor in the form. ARIDO will provide receipts after the submissions close.

STEP 8: CLICK SUBMIT

Note: ARIDO will retain all submissions. The information in the submission including photographs, will be used for promotional purposes in association with ARIDO.

Please ensure that your client(s) and any third-party copyright owners are made aware of this in advance.

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

- Have you removed ALL references to the project's interior designer and design firm, except on the Identification section?

Leaving the interior designer's or the firm name on the Project Description form, images, or plans submitted will result in the immediate disqualification of your entry.

- Have you ensured no design firm employees are pictured in photos?
- Do the images reflect your scope of work?
- Are your photos and documents labeled with the project name and category?

Your online submission should contain the following:

- Completed Submission Form via JotForm
- One (1) fully developed furniture plan
- Up to three (3) concept sketches, drawings or plans
- Up to ten (10) "before" photos (required for PRESERVE + RESTORE submissions, optional for others)
- Up to ten (10) "after" photos

Questions? Please contact gbantoc@arido.ca

