



AIA Honors & Awards
Integrating the Framework for Design Excellence
July 2021

In 2019, AIA adopted the Framework for Design Excellence as the set of guidelines and requirements to assess project performance. It offers a holistic approach to address the interdependence among people, buildings, infrastructure, and the environment. The Framework for Design Excellence provides the elements that support this vision during submittal evaluation across the portfolio of AIA Honors & Awards.

For a detailed breakdown of the different measures included in the Framework, please visit: aia.org/resources/6077668-framework-for-design-excellence

Integrating the Framework

While both people-based and project-based Honors & Awards benefit from contextualizing a submittal in relationship to the Framework, it is with projects where requirements are extensive and detailed to help support a thorough evaluation and best support the strategic goals of AIA that the Framework upholds.

Different awards are specifically aligned with the Framework so that the characteristics of the submitted project can be addressed flexibly and holistically.

For specific details of the requirements applicable to each award, please visit: aia.org/pages/6153986-aia-honors—awards.

Typically, submitted projects do not need to address all the measures included in the Framework, but they do need to highlight how they perform in its context and highlight relevant narratives and metrics when applicable.

Typical submission requirements

A baseline of technical requirements has been identified for projects across different awards programs. This technical report is used as an indicator to help support the jury assessment of the program. The technical baselines derive from the 2030 Commitment, COTE Top Ten Awards technical assessment tools, and other resources.

This **baseline of metrics** helps provide a technical report that supports the evaluation of the submitted project.

Projects are also required to provide narratives, including an overview; specific award requirements; and contextualization of the project across key elements of the Framework for Design Excellence.

The requirements are reviewed annually based on feedback, pertinent topic updates, and consultation across AIA staff.

Framework narrative

Project address *	Street Address
Project address *	
	Line 2
	City
	Country
	State/Province
	ZIP/Postal Code
Completion date *	
Project area	What is the gross conditioned floor area (sq. ft.) of the project? (express as sq. ft.)
Project use/type	What is the primary use type of the project? • Bank/financial institution

- Courthouse
- Data center
- Education – college/university (campus-level)
- Education – general
- Education – K-12 school
- Food sales – convenience store (w/ or w/out gas station)
- Food sales – general
- Food sales – supermarket/grocery
- Food service – fast food
- Food service – general
- Food service – restaurant/cafeteria
- Health care – clinic
- Health care – hospital inpatient
- Health care – medical office
- Health care – nursing/assisted living
- Health care – outpatient – general
- Laboratory – recommend use of Labs21
- Lodging – general
- Lodging – hotel/motel
- Lodging – residence hall/dormitory
- Mixed-use
- Office – small (< 10,000 sf)
- Office – medium (< 100,000 sf)
- Office – large
- Other
- Parking
- Public assembly – entertainment/culture
- Public assembly – general
- Public assembly – library
- Public assembly – recreation
- Public assembly – social/meeting
- Public safety – fire/police station
- Public safety – general
- Religious worship
- Residential – mobile homes
- Residential – multifamily, 2 to 4 units
- Residential – multifamily, 5 or more units
- Residential – single-family attached
- Residential – single-family detached
- Residential – mid-rise/high-rise
- Retail – mall
- Retail – non-mall, vehicle dealerships, misc.
- Retail store
- Service (vehicle repair/service, postal service)
- Storage – distribution/shipping center
- Storage – general
- Storage – nonrefrigerated warehouse
- Storage – refrigerated warehouse
- Warehouse – self-storage

	<p>Which of the following best describes your project site?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownfield • Not previously developed • Previously developed
Project overview *	<p>Please describe your project, emphasizing elements of design achievement, including project intentions, programming requirements, cost data, and the distinguishing aspects of your resolution.</p> <p>Word limit: 500</p>
Project history *	<p>Provide a timeline and summary on how the project came to be, including the client's perspective from the start and what impact the project has made on the client and the community.</p> <p>Word limit: 500</p>
Framework for Design Excellence overview	<p>In 2019, AIA adopted the Framework for Design Excellence as the set of guidelines and requirements to assess project performance. Climate change requires a holistic approach, addressing the interdependencies among people, buildings, infrastructure, and the environment. The Framework for Design Excellence provides the elements that support this vision during project evaluation. While projects submitted do not need to address all the measures included in the Framework, they need to highlight how they perform in this context and highlight relevant narratives and metrics when applicable.</p> <p>In the following sections, please provide narratives and relevant metrics to the specific measures that apply to your submission. Add N/A when not applicable or when information is not available; where relevant explain why this is the case. Submitters are expected to provide as much accurate data as possible.</p>
Design for integration*	<p>1. Design for integration (500 words) Good design elevates any project, no matter how small, with a thoughtful process that delivers both beauty and function in balance. It is the element that binds all the principles together with a big idea. Describe how the project demonstrates design for integration. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the concept or purpose behind this project, and how did the priorities within the nine other principles inform the unique approach to this project? • How does the project engage the senses and connect people to place? • What makes the project one that people will fight to preserve? • What design strategies can provide multiple benefits across the triple bottom line of social, economic, and environmental value?
<p>Design for equitable communities*</p>	<p>2. <u>Design for equitable communities</u> (200 words) Design solutions affect more than the client and current occupants. Good design positively impacts future occupants and the larger community. Describe how the project demonstrates design for equitable communities. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the project's greater reach? How does this project contribute to creating a diverse, accessible, walkable, just, human-scaled community? • Who might this project be forgetting? How did the design process and outcome remove barriers and promote inclusion and social equity, particularly with respect to vulnerable communities? • What opportunities exist in this project to include, engage, and promote human connection? • How does the design support health and resilience for the community during times of need or during emergencies?
<p>Design for ecosystem*</p>	<p>3. <u>Design for ecosystem</u> (200 words) Good design mutually benefits human and nonhuman inhabitants. Describe how the project demonstrates design for ecosystems. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the design support the ecological health of its place over time? • How does the design help users become more aware and connected with the project's place and regional ecosystem? • How does the design build resilience while reducing maintenance?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the project support regional habitat restoration?
Design for water*	<p>4. <u>Design for water</u> (200 words) Good design conserves and improves the quality of water as a precious resource. Describe how the project demonstrates design for water. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the project use water wisely, addressing efficiency and consumption while matching water quality to appropriate use? • How does the project's water system maintain function during emergencies or disruptions? • How does the project handle rainfall and stormwater responsibly? • How does the project contribute to a healthy regional watershed?
Design for economy*	<p>5. <u>Design for economy</u> (200 words) Good design adds value for owners, occupants, the community, and the planet, regardless of project size and budget. Describe how the project demonstrates design for economy. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we provide abundance while living within our means? • How did the design choices balance first cost with long-term value? • How was the performance of this project improved in ways that are cost and design neutral?
Design for energy*	<p>6. <u>Design for energy</u> (200 words) Good design reduces energy use and eliminates dependence on fossil fuels while improving building performance, function, comfort, and enjoyment. Describe how the project demonstrates design for energy. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did passive design strategies contribute to the project's performance and form?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the project exceed building code efficiency standards to approach net zero energy and net zero carbon? • Was the project powered by clean, renewable energy sources? • How does the project provide for continuous performance improvements over its lifetime?
Design for well-being*	<p>7. <u>Design for well-being</u> (200 words) Good design supports health and well-being for all people, considering physical, mental, and emotional effects on building occupants and the surrounding community. Describe how the project demonstrates design for well-being. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the design encourage a healthy lifestyle? • How does the project provide for greater occupant comfort? • How is the project welcoming and inclusive for all? • How does the project connect people with place and nature? • How did material selection reduce hazards to occupants?
Design for resources*	<p>8. <u>Design for resources</u> (200 words) Good design depends on informed material selection that balances priorities to achieve durable, safe, and healthy projects with an equitable, sustainable supply chain to minimize possible negative impacts to the planet. Describe how the project demonstrates design for resources. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What factors (priorities) were considered in making material selection decisions? • How were materials and products selected and designed to reduce embodied carbon and environmental impacts while enhancing building performance? • How did material selection reduce hazards and support equitable labor practices in the supply chain? • How does the project promote zero waste throughout its life cycle? • How does the project celebrate local materials and craft?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long will the project last, and how did that affect your material?
Design for change*	<p>9. <u>Design for change</u> (200 words) Adaptability, resilience, and reuse are essential to good design, which seeks to enhance usability, functionality, and value over time. Describe how the project demonstrates design for change. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the project address future risks and vulnerabilities from social, economic, and environmental change? • How was the project designed for adaptation to anticipate future uses or changing markets? How does the project address passive survivability and/or livability?
Design for discovery*	<p>10. <u>Design for discovery</u> (200 words) Every project presents a unique opportunity to apply lessons learned from previous projects and gather information to refine the design process. Describe how the project demonstrates design for discovery. These guiding questions are a starting point for thinking about your project's performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the design process foster a long-term relationship between designers, users, and operators to ensure design intentions are realized and the building project performance can improve over time? • How are performance data and experiential stories shared, even if the findings fall short of the vision? • What strategies promote a sense of discovery and delight?

Framework for Design Excellence metrics

Years of substantial completion*	
*	What is the gross conditioned floor area (in sq. ft.) of the project?

	(express number as an integer)
*	<p>What is the primary use type of the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bank/financial institution <input type="checkbox"/> Courthouse <input type="checkbox"/> Data center <input type="checkbox"/> Education – college/university (campus-level) <input type="checkbox"/> Education – general <input type="checkbox"/> Education – K-12 school <input type="checkbox"/> Food sales – convenience store (w/ or w/out gas station) <input type="checkbox"/> Food sales – general <input type="checkbox"/> Food sales – supermarket/grocery <input type="checkbox"/> Food service – fast food <input type="checkbox"/> Food service – general <input type="checkbox"/> Food service – restaurant/cafeteria <input type="checkbox"/> Health care – clinic <input type="checkbox"/> Health care – hospital inpatient <input type="checkbox"/> Health care – medical office <input type="checkbox"/> Health care – nursing/assisted living <input type="checkbox"/> Health care – outpatient – general <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory <input type="checkbox"/> Lodging – general <input type="checkbox"/> Lodging – hotel/motel <input type="checkbox"/> Lodging – residence hall/dormitory <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed-use <input type="checkbox"/> Office – small (<10,000 sf) <input type="checkbox"/> Office – medium (10,001–100,000 sf) <input type="checkbox"/> Office – large <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Parking <input type="checkbox"/> Public assembly – entertainment/culture <input type="checkbox"/> Public assembly – general <input type="checkbox"/> Public assembly – library <input type="checkbox"/> Public assembly – recreation <input type="checkbox"/> Public assembly – social/meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Public safety – fire/police station <input type="checkbox"/> Public safety – general <input type="checkbox"/> Religious worship <input type="checkbox"/> Residential – mobile homes <input type="checkbox"/> Residential – multifamily, 2 to 4 units <input type="checkbox"/> Residential – multifamily, 5 or more units <input type="checkbox"/> Residential – single-family attached <input type="checkbox"/> Residential – single-family detached <input type="checkbox"/> Residential – mid-rise/high-rise

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Retail – mall <input type="checkbox"/> Retail – non-mall, vehicle dealership, misc. <input type="checkbox"/> Retail – store <input type="checkbox"/> Service (vehicle repair/service, postal service) <input type="checkbox"/> Storage – distribution/shipping center <input type="checkbox"/> Storage – general <input type="checkbox"/> Storage – nonrefrigerated warehouse <input type="checkbox"/> Storage – refrigerated warehouse <input type="checkbox"/> Warehouse – self-storage <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
*	<p>Which of the following best describes the project site?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Brownfield <input type="checkbox"/> Previously developed <input type="checkbox"/> Not previously developed <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Design for integration*	<p>Was a design charrette or sustainability workshop conducted with owner and team?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Design for equitable communities*	<p>Which of the following levels of community engagement were used during the design process? (select all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No community engagement practices were applied for this project. <input type="checkbox"/> Inform: Potential stakeholders were informed about the project. <input type="checkbox"/> Consult: Stakeholders were provided with opportunities to provide input at predesigned points in the process. <input type="checkbox"/> Involve: Stakeholders were involved throughout most of the process. <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate: A partnership was formed with stakeholders to share in the decision-making process, including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution. <input type="checkbox"/> Empower: Stakeholders were provided with opportunities to make decisions for the project. <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown

Not applicable (please explain)

Ecosystem*

What percentage of the site area supported vegetation (landscape or green roof) pre-development?

- Unknown
- Not applicable
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Ecosystem*

What percentage of the site area supported vegetation (landscape or green roof) post-development?

- Unknown
- Not applicable
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Ecosystem*	<p>What percentage of the site area is covered by native plants that support native or migratory species and pollinators?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Unknown<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable<input type="checkbox"/> 1<input type="checkbox"/> 2<input type="checkbox"/> 3<input type="checkbox"/> 4<input type="checkbox"/> 5<input type="checkbox"/> 6<input type="checkbox"/> 7<input type="checkbox"/> 8<input type="checkbox"/> 9<input type="checkbox"/> 10<input type="checkbox"/> 11<input type="checkbox"/> 12<input type="checkbox"/> 13<input type="checkbox"/> 14<input type="checkbox"/> 15<input type="checkbox"/> 16<input type="checkbox"/> 17
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<p>Ecosystem*</p>	<p>Which of the following intentional design strategies were used to promote design for ecosystem? (select all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Dark skies <input type="checkbox"/> Bird safety <input type="checkbox"/> Soil conservation <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat conservation, flora/fauna <input type="checkbox"/> Abatement of specific regional environmental concerns <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above

	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Water*	<p>Is potable water used for irrigation?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Water*	<p>Is potable water used for cooling?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Water*	<p>Is grey/blackwater reused on-site?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Water*	<p>Is rainwater collected on-site?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Water*	<p>What percentage of stormwater is managed on-site?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8

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Cost	Unless otherwise noted, AIA and the jury will keep financial information confidential. AIA will only describe financial information in public narratives with prior consent from the submitter.

	<p>**Please note, the jury will not evaluate projects that are unwilling to disclose financial information to AIA and the jury, which means such projects will not advance to the finalist or winning stages.**</p>
Cost	<p>What is the cost per square foot for this project (report in USD/sq ft)?</p> <p>(express as an integer)</p>
Design for economy regional comparison*	<p>How does the cost to construct this project compare to similar buildings in the region?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Higher than average <input type="checkbox"/> About average <input type="checkbox"/> Lower than average <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Energy*	<p>Using ZeroTool, what is the 2030 Commitment baseline EUI (in kBtu/sf/yr) for the project?</p> <p>(express as an integer)</p>
Energy*	<p>What was the predicted EUI (in kBtu/sf/yr) of the project, including on-site renewables?</p> <p>Note: Carbon offsets should not be counted.</p> <p>(express number as kBtu/sf/yr)</p>
Energy*	<p>What was the percent reduction from the benchmark?</p> <p>To calculate, first subtract predicted EUI from baseline; then divide by baseline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 0% <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

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| | <input type="checkbox"/> Greater than 100% |

Energy*	<p>Is the project all-electric?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Well-being*	<p>What level of air filters are installed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than MERV 9 <input type="checkbox"/> MERV 9-11 <input type="checkbox"/> MERV 12-14 <input type="checkbox"/> MERV 15-16 <input type="checkbox"/> HEPA <input type="checkbox"/> ULPA <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Well-being*	<p>Do greater than 90% of occupied spaces have a direct view to the outdoors?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Well-being*	<p>Was a “chemicals of concern” list used to inform material selection?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Resources*	<p>Were embodied carbon emissions estimated for this project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)

Resources*	<p>What is the estimated embodied carbon emissions (in kgCO₂e/m²/yr) associated with the project, including the extraction and manufacturing of materials used in construction?</p> <p>(express number as kgCO₂e/m²/yr)</p>
Change*	<p>What is the estimated service life of the project (in years)?</p> <p>(express number as year)</p>
Change*	<p>Which of the following best describes the project's ability to survive without utility power?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Unknown<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable<input type="checkbox"/> 0<input type="checkbox"/> 1<input type="checkbox"/> 2<input type="checkbox"/> 3<input type="checkbox"/> 4<input type="checkbox"/> 5<input type="checkbox"/> 6<input type="checkbox"/> 7<input type="checkbox"/> 8<input type="checkbox"/> 9<input type="checkbox"/> 10<input type="checkbox"/> 11<input type="checkbox"/> 12<input type="checkbox"/> 13<input type="checkbox"/> 14<input type="checkbox"/> 15<input type="checkbox"/> 16<input type="checkbox"/> 17<input type="checkbox"/> 18<input type="checkbox"/> 19<input type="checkbox"/> 20<input type="checkbox"/> 21<input type="checkbox"/> 22<input type="checkbox"/> 23<input type="checkbox"/> 24<input type="checkbox"/> 25<input type="checkbox"/> 26<input type="checkbox"/> 27<input type="checkbox"/> 28<input type="checkbox"/> 29<input type="checkbox"/> 30

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Change*	<p>Which of the following risk assessment and resilience services were provided? (select all that apply)</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard identification <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change risk <input type="checkbox"/> Building vulnerability assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard mitigation strategies above code <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Discovery*	<p>Has a post-occupancy evaluation (POE) been conducted?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, but a POE will be conducted <input type="checkbox"/> No, and a POE will not be conducted <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
Discovery*	<p>Which of the following building performance transparency steps have been taken? (select all that apply)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Present the design, outcomes, and/or lessons learned to the office<input type="checkbox"/> Present the design, outcomes, and/or lessons learned to the profession<input type="checkbox"/> Present the design, outcomes, and/or lessons learned to the public<input type="checkbox"/> Publish post-occupancy data from the project<input type="checkbox"/> Publish lessons learned from design, construction, and/or occupancy<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (please explain)
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Next Steps

The implementation and use of the Framework for Design Excellence across Honors & Awards programs is an ongoing process aligned to support AIA's values and strategic goals. Feedback is encouraged annually as cycles are completed. Such information can help ensure its relevance, accuracy, and ease of use. For additional information, comments, or questions, reach out to honorsawards@aia.org