

Tips & Tricks for Award Submissions

PHOTOS

- Use high-quality, professional photos.
- Include diagrams and/or sketches, especially for site context.
- Avoid mashing several photos into a collage to “get past” the photo submission limit. Carefully choose the photos that best represent the story your project narrative is telling. It’s okay to include two photos as one file upload but be selective and avoid doing this for the entire submission.
- Restoration, rehabilitation, and reuse: use Before and After photos to show jurors a clear story of what has been changed/updated. Consider labelling Before photos.
- Include real people in the photos (not computer generated).
- Deemphasize parking lots, particularly big empty parking lots.

ASK YOURSELF:

Do the photos I am including support the project story/narrative?

NARRATIVE

- Keep as concise as possible. There is a word limit for a reason!
- Address the judging criteria listed on the award page, including sustainability components.
- Have a clear story but avoid just using “fluff”.

ASK YOURSELF:

- How did this project address social/climate/equity problems in addition to design?
- Did this project engage the public during the design process? If so, does the narrative address this?
- If the project is a single-family house, what value/delight/contribution does it make to public realm/passersby?

TRY...

- Taking notes from past award winners.
- Referring to AIA National’s [Framework for Design Excellence](#) as a starting point.