

## NEWH TopID Award Nomination Guide

NEWH TopID Program is committed to recognizing the Interior Design firms as the “elite” who find the perfect balance of delivering exceptional design and generous support of NEWH in the regions they are within.

The TopID list will represent the top qualifying design firms within NEWH’s extensive network of over 6,000 members throughout the US, UK, Canada, France, and Italy. These design members inspire others to exceed the creative standards and reach for excellence while giving back to the industry with their involvement with NEWH. This is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a design firm within the NEWH, Inc.’s awards programs.

### Award Program Eligibility

The 2026 NEWH TopID program recognizes hospitality custom design work and the firm’s commitment to NEWH within the months of June 2023 to May 2025.

The nomination process begins by the chapter/regional board looking within their membership and nominating firms they believe meet the minimum requirements:

#### Minimum Criteria - required

- **Current Membership** (one person within the local firm must be a current voting member in good standing with NEWH – (NEWH, Inc. will confirm membership status from the online submissions before forwarding the nomination form to your board)
- **ONE (1) custom Hospitality design project\*** completed by local firm within the **24-month period** prior to nomination (June 2023 to May 2025) with 150-word written narrative describing the projects’ **unique design elements/attributes** that make the project distinct in the industry today (\*custom Hospitality projects are non-program work where designs are not pre-determined by a brand.) **This project should represent “the best” of the firm as it will be judged on elements of design. NEW FOR 2026: The submitted project will be judged by the Committee for well-articulated design elements, aesthetics, and purpose.** Hospitality projects can include any one of the following types of projects: Guest rooms (no model rooms), hotel or casino public area space, bar, restaurant, spa, meeting space, etc. This applies to new construction and renovations. Please do not include previously submitted TopID projects. (see Note below for more information regarding definition of Hospitality projects)
- **PHOTO Requirement:** To qualify as a TopID nominee, the firm **must** provide a minimum of 3 (maximum of 6) photographs of the ONE project submitted. Photographs submitted must be a minimum 300 dpi resolution jpeg or tif file format. Renderings will NOT be accepted. (\*Chapter/Regional boards will be required to acquire the images from the nominated firms for use during judging process – the images will be required to be sent in with your chapter/regional group’s final 3 TopID recipients to NEWH, Inc. with signed photo release.) Nomination submissions that do not include all of the above should be considered an **incomplete** submission.
- Firm must have an **accessible website** for qualification purposes.

**NOTE:** For purposes of the TopID award, **NEWH defines Hospitality** as a property in which its facilities can be enjoyed by the general public. Properties such as multi-family, student housing, senior living, private clubs, private/member golf facilities, or a medical-related facility where the facility is utilized mainly by members/patients only (even if a specific project area within these types of facilities is open to the public), would not fit NEWH’s definition of Hospitality for this award.

Past Top ID honorees can be considered for current years. There is no limit to how many years a firm can hold the title of Top ID.

## Point Assignment (required for ALL qualified submissions)

**\*See Wild Card Option on bottom of page**

- Number of NEWH members employed by the firm (1 member = 0 points; 2-3 members = 1 point; 3+ members = 2 points)
- Company involvement/support of local chapter/region (distribute nominees based on 4 levels of support and assign these points: no support = 0 points; minimal support = 1 point; average support = 2 points; exceptional involvement/support = 3 points) – take into consideration volunteer support, event/annual sponsorships, event attendance, participation in panels, hosting event space
- Active local BOARD or NEWH Inc. BOARD member (point for each board member from firm) *max 1 bonus point for voting board position, max 1 bonus point for NEWH Inc. board (2 total max points)*
- Active local COMMITTEE or NEWH, Inc. COMMITTEE member (point for each committee member from firm) *max 1 bonus point for local committee position, max 1 bonus point for NEWH Inc. committee (2 total max points)*
- Chapter Business Membership (Chapter Level Business = 1 point; Top Tier membership = 2 points)
- List up to 6 custom Hospitality projects\* completed by **local** firm in the past 24 months (1-3 projects = 1 point; 4-6 projects = 2 points) (\*custom projects are non-program work where designs are not pre-determined by a brand) *(2 total max points)*
- List up to 8 industry design related publications or awards received by local firm related to hospitality projects (excluding any NEWH TopID awards) within 24 months – June 2023 to May 2025 – noted on nomination form (1-4 publications/awards = 1 point; 5-8 publications/awards = 2 points) *(2 total max points)*
- Is the submitted project posted on NEWH's designLINQ (yes = 1 point)

## Design Criteria Points:

**Point assignment:**      **1 point = Average**      **2 points = Above Average**      **3 points = Exceptional**

- Does the project reflect a true design expectation of firm or considered a showcase project for the design firm?
- Does project reflect a current aesthetic, expectation, and trend of the hospitality industry?
- Is the design compelling and well-articulated?
- Is design appropriate for space/locale?
- Does the project utilize unique products and materials in the design?
- Does the project utilize unique and creative design elements in the design?
- Does the design effectively address its intended purpose?
- Does the design enhance the overall experience for its intended user?
- Has the specific project submitted won other design awards?

## \*TopID: Wild Card Recipient for third TopID recipient (Optional)

After determining your top 2 TopID recipients, the judging committee has the opportunity to select one firm for the third slot as their 'Wild Card'. Wild Cards can be chosen based on **minimum criteria must still be met and points must still be assigned.**

The Wild Card selection should be chosen if your chapter/regional group wants to highlight an up-and-coming hospitality firm (i.e. a firm that has completed a notable hospitality project, or a firm who may not be as large or have as many hospitality projects/awards/members in the judging process to earn points).

Please remember the Wild Card option is not mandatory and you do not need to select a Wild Card if you are comfortable with your top 3 recipients based on the judging results. Please be thoughtful and purposeful if you are replacing a qualified third place firm with your Wild Card selection.

The Wild Card recipient will not know they are a Wild Card selection. Please do not disclose this to any of your nominees.

## Nomination Process

TopID Nominations can be made as follows:

1. Any firm with a current NEWH Member can nominate themselves.
2. Chapter members should encourage eligible firms (who meet the minimum required criteria) to complete the nomination form or assist them in the process.
3. All nominations should be completed online at <https://newh.org/resources/top-interior-designers/topid-nominations/> - the NEWH office will receive and forward to the chapter/region's TopID committee members.

Nominations forms/photography:

- The nomination form must be complete and all minimum eligibility requirements must be met to be considered for the final TopID list.
- Chapter/Regional board judging committee will be required to acquire the photographs from each nominated firm (minimum of 3 photograph – maximum of 6 photographs for the ONE project submitted by the firm), along with a signed photo release <https://newh.org/app/uploads/TopID/2026/PhotoReleaseForm.pdf>
- Chapters/Regions can accept as many nominations as they like to consider for their final top three choices to be submitted to NEWH, Inc. NEWH encourages chapters/regions to seek out the best within their local area to assure submittal of three Top ID firms.\*

*\*Chapters/regions may submit less than three finalists if some nominees do not meet the minimum criteria. Firms that meet the minimum criteria must be considered. No chapter/region can choose not to recognize a firm that qualifies within the top three spots (with exception of the Wild Card criteria above).*

***Nominations due to chapters/regions for consideration and review: June 13, 2025***

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## Review Process/Judging

- Completed nomination forms are compiled and reviewed by chapter/regional voting board members for consensus of the top three firms chosen for the Top ID honor.
- Chapter/Regional board judging committee will be required to acquire the images from the nominated firms - To qualify as a TopID nominee, the firm **must** provide a minimum of 3 photographs (maximum of 6) for the project submission that best depicts the project narrative provided. The Project photographs submitted must be a minimum 300 dpi resolution jpeg or tif file format, along with a signed photo release (<https://newh.org/app/uploads/TopID/2026/PhotoReleaseForm.pdf>)
- The review process will be conducted using the Nomination Form, Judging Form, and submitted photographs. The Judging Form includes Minimum Required Criteria, as well as Point Assignments, to help narrow down the selection process.
- Nomination submissions that do not include all of the above should be considered an **incomplete** submission.
- **The completed Judging Form, original Nomination Form, and the photographs must be submitted for each of the final 3 nominees to NEWH, Inc. by August 1, 2025.**
- Only voting board members are eligible to participate in the review and final vote of the three firms (standard motion voting procedure must be applied). ***NOTE: If a voting board member is an employee of a firm being considered for a TopID, he/she must remove himself/herself from the judging process. We suggest/recommend that your judging committee is made of 3 voting board members with at least one from your EC (past president, VPs, secretary, treasurer) – regional groups can choose any voting board member.***
- A vote will only be needed if there is a tie of points for 1 of the three finalist spots. If there is a “tie” (where more than one firm accrues the same amount of points), the voting board members must consider all the criteria and points assigned, and make the decision of which firm exceeds the minimum requirements and points more than the other. (***\*see Wild Card notes above***)
- All voting board members involved in the review and nomination process must be held to the highest level of professionalism and integrity while participating and conversing with the other review members. There will be

no “favoritism” allowed in this process other than when discussing tied finalists in the specific criteria. No incomplete or late submittals should be considered.

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### Submittal Process to NEWH, Inc. - *Top ID Submittals due to NEWH Inc: August 1, 2025*

It will be the chapter/regional board’s responsibility to submit the TopID three (3) finalists to the NEWH, Inc. office – to include: (*\*Chapters/regions may submit less than three finalists if nominees do not meet the minimum criteria*)

- Completed Nomination Form for each firm
- Judging Form for each firm including Point assignment
- Photographs (3-6 total) from each winning firm, along with a signed photo release (<https://newh.org/app/uploads/TopID/2026/PhotoReleaseForm.pdf>)
- Notes related to decisions made as a result of a tie situation

### Announcement of Top ID Winners

- The chapter/regional board members involved in the review and nomination process are to not discuss or release the names of the firms selected until NEWH, Inc. has received all firm names and confirmed eligibility.
- If there are any issues or concerns of a nominee submitted, the NEWH, Inc. office will notify the chapter/region before September 1, 2025 to discuss options for replacing the disqualified firm with another nominee who was in the consideration process. If there are no other nominees, the chapter/region may submit less than three finalists.
- **Once the chapter/region has been notified by NEWH, Inc. that nominees have been approved, chapters/regions can announce 2026 winners during a TopID event held between October 15 and December 19, 2025. If the chapter/region chooses not to notify finalists and present the award during a fundraiser/TopID event during this time, they will have the opportunity to notify the TopID recipients in whatever manner they feel best suits this great honor. The chapters/regions must notify their recipients no later than December 22, 2025.**
- **REMEMBER: Build up the excitement and anticipation - keep your winners SECRET until your award presentation! (whether that’s at an event, or in person!)**
- TopID 2026 recipients will be posted on the NEWH website on December 29, 2025.
- TopID banners will be printed and shipped to all chapter/regions in January 2026 for display at the 2026 events.

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### Chapters/Regions Responsibility to Award/Honor the TopID

The items listed below will be supplied to the chapter/region. These items are to support the acknowledgement of the firms’ participation in your chapter/region and their dedication to design excellence. These items should be awarded to the finalists at an event or ceremony the chapter/region feels provides the best opportunity to celebrate their local TopID firms. Chapters/Regions should consider an event worthy of announcing/honoring TopID recipients with high attendance expected.

Chapters/Regions should display the TopID banners at all their events and seek ways to utilize the TopID firms to support their activities and events throughout the year.

### What NEWH Inc. Provides to the Chapter/Region

- Award with TopID firm name engraved on plaque (Chapter is responsible for \$150/per award\*) – shipped to chapter/region by October 15, 2025 (\*final amount for 2026 to be determined)
- Note from the NEWH, Inc. President to the TopID Winners
- Certificate for the TopID Winners (on request)
- TopID Banner



In addition to the above list, the TopID firms will receive a high-res logo for use on their website with the current year of award.

### TopID Benefits

TopID firms will be asked to sign a consent form that allows NEWH to post their photography on the NEWH website for promotional purposes. They may also be contacted by media related to speaking opportunities, editorial comment and or participation in events as a highly-respected design professional.

By accepting the honor of NEWH TopID, NEWH will present the list on the NEWH website and at all international events they participate in with the intent of presenting the TopID firms as the “elite” and most exceptional design firms in the regions they are within. NEWH encourages members and industry professionals to utilize this list when in need of a design leader for their projects or expert advice within their companies or events.

Some of the things a TopID may expect from being honored by NEWH:

- TopID firms are listed on the NEWH website with their featured hospitality project photos and a link to their websites
- A banner listing the year’s TopID recipients is provided to all NEWH chapters/regions to display at their programming/fundraising events
- TopID logo is furnished to firms for use for one year on their stationery and email signatures
- TopID firms are provided an award and honored at a local chapter/regional event
- Upon request from the chapter/region board, NEWH, Inc. can also provide a certificate to be presented to the winning firms at the TopID event
- TopID list will be published in NEWH Magazine
- TopID list will be shared with media for potential inclusion in upcoming editorials
- TopID will receive early invitations to the President’s Dinner at the NEWH Leadership Conference
- TopID may receive an invitation to be a speaker or panelist at hospitality shows or events through a NEWH referral list
- TopID may receive an invitation to be a speaker on the TopID panel at the NEWH Leadership Conference (there is now a dedicated panel for the TopID scheduled for future conferences)
- TopID firms may be requested to participate on the local level with chapter/regional events
- TopID firms may be honored or promoted with the local chapter/regional activities and events

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### Future Development of TopID Program

It is NEWH’s intent to strengthen and grow this program to create more value to the recipient and the awarding chapters/regions. The goal is to create loyalty and respect between the local chapters/regions, its members, and the leading design firms that are integral to the future of the industry. Building these strong relationships and membership alliances we will assure stability of the chapters/regions and enhance networking for business development.