

APWA Southern California Chapter “BEST” Project of the Year Award Program

Award Program Guidelines

The APWA Southern California Chapter is proud to recognize exceptional public agencies for their outstanding public works projects and programs. This esteemed award program celebrates capital improvement initiatives that positively impact communities while sharing valuable insights with APWA members.

Award Categories

The APWA Project of the Year Awards will honor remarkable public works projects across multiple categories and population divisions.

Below are the award categories available for project submissions:

1. **Transportation Category:** Includes projects enhancing highways, freeways, capacity expansions, interchanges, road widenings, new roadways, bridges, retaining/sound walls, and congestion mitigation efforts. Projects in this category advance safety, connectivity, and efficiency in transportation networks.
2. **Traffic, Mobility, and Beautification Category:** Recognizes projects improving traffic flow, mobility, and city aesthetics, such as traffic calming, signal synchronization, ITS, bicycle and pedestrian enhancements, ADA accessibility, and beautification efforts (e.g., streetscapes, landscaped medians, hardscape improvements).
3. **Drainage, Water, and Wastewater Category:** Celebrates projects addressing infrastructure for drainage, water, and wastewater management, including storm drains, water systems, sewer pipelines, basins, treatment facilities, and pump stations, fostering resilient and efficient water management.
4. **Facilities Category:** Encompasses facility-related projects such as parking structures, transit facilities, recycling centers, fiber optic networks, energy stations, substations, and public works yards, enhancing community resources and infrastructure.
5. **Recreation and Athletic Facilities Category:** Highlights projects that expand recreational and athletic opportunities, from parks and playgrounds to sports fields, nature trails, and aquatic centers, fostering wellness and community engagement.
6. **Stormwater Quality Category:** Recognizes projects that enhance stormwater management and water quality through stormwater treatment, Green Street technologies, and NPDES compliance, contributing to cleaner, more sustainable environments.
7. **Creative and Innovative Category:** Honors projects and programs that demonstrate exceptional creativity and innovation in public works, including

resourceful solutions in energy conservation, maintenance and operational efficiency, and technological advancements.

8. Buildings Category: Celebrates public buildings (e.g., libraries, civic centers, senior centers, theaters, community centers, hospitals, fire stations, police stations) that provide essential community spaces and enhance the quality of life.

Award Divisions: Awards will be presented across five population divisions based on agency size.

- Up to 50,000
- 50,000 to 100,000
- 100,000 to 200,000
- Over 200,000
- Regional Agencies (e.g., counties, Caltrans, ports, JPAs, COGs, MPOs, utilities)

Project of the Year Awards Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Project Summary (80 word max): Success in achieving project goals, on-time delivery, cost-effectiveness, interagency collaboration, public involvement, and awareness.
- Unique Aspect(s) of Project/why it should be a BEST project (200 word max): What sets this project/program apart from others? Discuss how this project/program is unique in design, planning, process, construction, etc. and why you believe this project/program is worthy of award.
- What was a challenge when delivering this project? (150 word max): Describe any challenges and how they were overcome throughout the project delivery process.

Eligibility: To qualify, projects must have been “substantially completed” and operational for public/agency use between September 1 of the previous year and September 1 of the current year. For multi-phase projects, eligibility applies to the final completed phase. An agency may receive up to three awards annually, and only one award per category. The selection committee reserves the right to reassign projects to categories better suited to their scope.

Nomination Process: Nominations must be submitted by an APWA member. Award applications are available online at [APWA Southern California Chapter](#). Please submit a separate application for each award nomination; applications will not be returned.

Submission Requirements: To ensure consideration, all nominations must meet the following requirements below.

Complete the online nomination form in full. Incomplete or handwritten submissions will not be accepted.

Attach a single PowerPoint slide (no PDFs) containing:

- Project/Program Name

- Project/Program Image
- Agency Name
- Agency Logo
- Slide should be a 16:9 Aspect Ratio

Note: This slide will be displayed at the awards presentation if your project is selected.

Attach supporting documents (up to 5 pages, PDF format), such as photos, news articles, or other awards. This documentation is optional but encouraged.

Consultant Community Reminder: APWA acknowledges the important contributions of consultants. However, the BEST Awards are designated for public agencies. If you are submitting on behalf of an agency, please ensure coordination with the agency to reflect their primary role.

For questions, please contact the Chapter Awards Committee at melissa.demirci@transtech.org.