NAHB National Association of Home Builders | Student Chapters

NAHB Student Competition
Secondary Programs
Rules and Guidelines

Introduction

The competition was established to offer students a real-life residential construction experience. The competition does this by giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their problem-solving skills by preparing a solution through documents that include the development of working drawings, a labor and materials estimate and a construction schedule. The proposals are then submitted to a group of construction company executives who act as judges.

Eligibility

Any NAHB Student Chapter in good standing from a high school or career technical institution that grants secondary diplomas may have one or more teams compete.

For resources on **How To Start a Student Chapter*
***If unsure of your Student Chapter's status, please reach out to Becca Wray (RWray@nahb.org), or reach out to your local Home Builders Association.*

Location

The International Builders' Show, Las Vegas, Nevada www.buildersshow.com

Timeline

September 1, 2026	**Competition Problem Posted**
October 13, 2026	Registration Due ($200) https://awards.nahb.org/
October 22, 2026	Live Q&A Webinar @ 3PM ET
November 17, 2026	Team Member List Due https://awards.nahb.org/
December 1, 2026	Last Day to Withdraw from Competition
December 15, 2026	**Projects Due* Submit via this Dropbox File Request Link**
February 1-2, 2027	Presentation Dates
February 3, 2027	Judges' Debriefing (morning, time TBD)
February 3, 2027	Awards Ceremony (afternoon, time TBD)

Projects must be submitted by 11:59 P.M. EDT December 15, 2026, or the team will incur a scoring penalty.

COMPETITION VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS

Vision

The NAHB high school/secondary programs student competition will be a vehicle for students interested in residential construction and design to prepare for and get excited about a career in the homebuilding industry by interacting with and learning from industry professionals.

Mission

The mission of the NAHB high school/secondary programs student competition is to expose students to a real-life residential construction project. Student teams compete to display their problem-solving abilities by preparing solution documents that include the development of working drawings, a labor and materials estimate and a construction schedule.

Goals

- Expose students to projects that stretch their knowledge and force them to learn independently.
- Use a new project each year from a different geographic location.
- Develop student's written communication skills by creating a written proposal.
- Develop student's critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the creation of a proposal that encompasses both architecture and construction.
- Offer two tracks – one which emphasizes architectural drawing and the other, construction management
- Develop student's oral communication skills as they work in teams and present to a panel of industry professionals.
- Facilitate student interaction with HBAs, and other design and homebuilding professionals.
- Get students excited about and committed to residential construction.

COMPETITION ENTRY

1. **September 1, 2026**: Project description, including project documentation, and other pertinent information available posted on nahb.org/Competition.

2. **October 13, 2026**: Entry Form due: teams must register an NAHB Awards account through https://awards.nahb.org/. *From the drop menus select Student Chapters Awards-Competition Entry and corresponding program.*
    a. *$200 Entry fee (per team), paid by credit card at the time of registration through your NAHB Awards Competition Entry application*

3. **November 17, 2026**: Team member list due: log into your NAHB Awards Competition Entry application on https://awards.nahb.org/ and enter each team member's information.
    a. Alternates and substitutes are permitted after this date**, but the names of these students will not appear in the Program Guide**. Contact Sarah Weber at sweber@nahb.org or 202-266-8654/StudentChapters@nahb.org to make adjustments to your team roster.

4. In an effort to make the competition as real-life as possible, each team may spend as much time as necessary to prepare its package between the date it is posted online and the date it's due.

5. **Each chapter may enter up to two teams in the NAHB Student Competition. If a school has multiple teams, please establish a "Team One" and "Team Two".**

6. **December 1, 2026:** If the team finds it cannot complete the project on time, it must submit its withdrawal before this date. If the team does not notify NAHB Student Chapters by this date, the team will not be permitted to participate in the following year's competition. No refunds are given.

TEAM MAKE-UP

1. Each team member must be a member of the same officially recognized NAHB Student Chapter for the current school year.

2. Teams will consist of not more than five students who will participate in the presentation. Additional students can assist with the preparation of the written proposal. Note: All five students in the presentation should be able to answer questions on all sections of the written proposal. Teams may be made up of students from one school or from multiple schools, provided all team members belong to the same NAHB Student Chapter.

3. If a school or NAHB Student Chapter enters more than one team, teams must work independently and may not collaborate on the solution of the problem. The intent of the guidelines regarding two teams from the same school or NAHB Student Chapter is that they function independently and that they compete to win against their classmates as keenly as they compete with all other teams. The teams should not share any files except, possibly, the template for the drawing sheets. All teams must submit complete and different solutions to the problem. Should the solutions be deemed to be too similar by the judges, all teams representing the school or NAHB Student Chapter will be disqualified.

4. Teams may use available resources during the preparation of their proposals, but under no circumstances may any work be outsourced. All work submitted/presented must be produced by the team's members. Teams may contact suppliers of engineered products (e.g. trusses and I-joists) for design and cost information. The team must still transcribe the necessary details into their drawings and estimates. Don't just put in a lump sum bid with the supplier's drawings!

COMPETITION REGISTRATION AND PROJECT SUBMISSION

1. The competition registration and team roster submission are tied to the individual/email address that registers the team. Please keep in mind that the individual (team coach/faculty advisor/student member) that registers to compete will be the only person with access to the competition portal. If you have any questions about the registration process you may contact Sarah Weber with additional questions.

2. Please ensure that every member of your competition team is a member of your NAHB Student Chapter in advance of project submission date. Students who are NAHB student members will be able to register for their FREE expo+education pass. Please reach out to *Becca Wray (RWray@nahb.org)* if your chapter is adding new student members.

3. If your team is unsuccessful uploading your final project via the Dropbox File Request Link, please contact Sarah Weber by email (sweber@nahb.org).

WRITTEN SOLUTION *(See detailed list of requirements in project description)*

1. Areas to Include: Working Drawings, Labor and Materials Estimate, and Construction Schedule in one PDF document.

2. Proposal must be submitted as one PDF with a maximum of 40 pages including appendices (Not including cover page and honor pledge). The more concise the better.

3. All material should be marked with the name of the team (if more than one team per school), the name of the school, and either "Architecture Track" or "Construction Management Track".

4. **NEW:** All proposals will be submitted electronically through this provided Dropbox File Request Link. **Points will be deducted if rules are not followed.** Ensure that **School Name, not Team Name**, is clear and visible on every page of the proposal. Insert header and/or footer in all documents, listing school name and program level. **If a school has two teams participating, please clearly designate "Team One" and "Team Two" on each page of the proposal.**

   This secure link allows teams to upload their files directly to the designated competition folder.
   Privacy: Submissions are private — uploaders cannot see other teams' files or any other folders in NAHB's Dropbox account.
   Access: When you click the link, you will be prompted to select your file and upload.
   Confirmation: Once your file is successfully uploaded, you will receive an on-screen confirmation.

5. One (1) copy of the Honor Pledge form per team (found on page 6 of this document) must be included with the proposal. The form must be signed by each team member, including alternates (if any), and the coach certifying that the solution of the problem has been the work of only the team members, alternates and other qualified students. Failure to include this document as part of the solution will be grounds for disqualification.

6. **All proposals will be submitted electronically through this provided Dropbox File Request Link.**

   ***Deadline will be strictly enforced. Penalty of 15 points per day assessed for late entry.**

7. Late entries will be penalized 15 points per day. Nothing may be added to the proposals after the due date, including substitutions, corrections, or amendments (nor may they be distributed to judges during the presentation.)

8. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools is permitted in the preparation of competition materials. Teams remain fully responsible for all submitted content, including its accuracy, completeness, and originality. Any use of AI to generate, revise, analyze, summarize, or otherwise assist with any portion of the submission must be clearly disclosed and cited. The citation must identify the AI tool used, briefly describe the nature of its contribution, and include the prompt or prompts submitted to the AI tool. Use of AI does not relieve teams of their obligations under the NAHB Student Competition Honor Pledge and these rules and guidelines. Failure to disclose AIassisted content may be considered a violation of the competition rules and academic integrity standards and may result in penalties or disqualification. The required AI disclosure must be submitted in an appendix and will not count toward the page limit.

QUESTIONS

1. Coaches are encouraged to assist the teams in their preparations. A guide to consider when determining the appropriate level of support is for the coach and any other resource to consider the competition as a test in the classroom and direct the team accordingly. Do not provide answers, rather lead the team and help the students gain the most from the competition by sharing knowledge and experience.

All questions regarding the problem and competition logistics must be posted on 2027 SECONDARY NAHB Student Competition Question Board on Google Groups. Please include your school's name in your question.

PRESENTATION

1. The 2026 Student Competition will be conducted in-person at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL. The schedule of presentations will consider team preferences that were selected through your Competition Entry application at the time of team registration. NAHB Student Chapters cannot guarantee a particular time slot. Teams will be notified of the preliminary schedule after the competition entry deadline.

2. Presentation schedules will be strictly followed. The schedule may continue to adjust and change until the date of the competition. NAHB Student Chapters will notify teams of any changes via email.

3. 2026 National Association of Home Builders Student Competition – Permission to Use Video and Waiver of Liability. Following the submission of each team's written proposal, a permission to use video and waiver of liability will be emailed to each team. Please have each team member sign and return the form via the method communicated following the project submission.

4. Each team will be allowed 10 minutes to set up. The oral presentation will last for a maximum of **10 minutes**. Following the presentation, the judges will ask questions for 10 minutes. The presentations will be judged on clarity, accuracy, participation of each team member, and overall conclusion. All presenters should be knowledgeable in all areas of the proposal.

5. Teams must bring to the competition at the International Builders' Show:
    a. Laptop computer pre-loaded with presentation software
    b. Adaptors for the projector if using a Mac.
    c. All audio/visual materials (microphone and HDMI cable provided)
    d. Teams may test equipment before the start and at the conclusion of the presentations for the day.

6. There will be practice rooms available near the Student Chapters Club Room at the Orange County Convention Center beginning 3:00 PM on Sunday, January 31 until the final presentations for all competition levels on Tuesday, February 2. These rooms will have monitors and HDMI available.

7. In the case of extreme circumstances beyond the team's control (e.g. internet failure, illness, travel delays) that negatively affect their presentation, teams may appeal to Sarah Weber (sweber@nahb.org) for a second opportunity to present before the judges.

JUDGING

- Up to six judges will be on the panel. Bios of judges will be posted online prior to the project due date.

- Each judge will score the written and oral presentations using the attached Grading Summary Report and then rank the teams from highest to lowest. Winners will be determined based on the total of the judges' rankings. The highest-ranking team receives one point, the second highest ranking two points, etc. The team with the least overall points (based on the sum of all the judges' rankings) is the winner. Although each judge may score the teams differently and each team's scores may vary widely, the ranking system, not the scores, determines the competition champion.
- A sample of the Grading Summary Report is included in these guidelines.
- A "Judges' Debriefing" session will take place in the morning (time tbd). The project sponsor will present their current plans for the project and answer questions from the audience.
- The completed Grading Summary Reports will be sent to the coaches after the competition.
- Each team's overall ranking will be provided following the Awards Ceremony. The grading summary reports and feedback from each judge will be collated and provided to the teams within two weeks following the Awards Ceremony.

AWARDS

1. Awards will be announced at the Awards Ceremony on February 18, 2026.
2. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top placing teams.
3. Teams who receive 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place will have their winning proposals posted online. (If there are fewer than FIVE teams in a track, only the first-place team will be recognized on stage.)

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Honor Pledge

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information used in my team's solution to the competition is in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the NAHB Student Chapters Competition. On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance in the completion of this project.

Team (School) Name: _____

Team Members:

Print Name	Signature

Alternate Members (Optional):

Print Name	Signature

Faculty Advisor/Coach:

Print Name	Signature

This form is REQUIRED. Submit one (1) copy per team within your proposal submission.

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NAHB Student Competition
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Grading Summary Report – Architecture Track

	Comments	Score	Possible
Working Drawings			**25**
Labor and Materials Estimate			**25**
Construction Schedule			**25**
Quality of Written Proposal			**5**
Presentation			**20**
Penalty for Late Entry			**Deduct 15 Points / Day**
TOTAL			**100**

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NAHB Student Competition
Secondary Programs
Grading Summary Report – Construction Management Track

	Comments	Score	Possible
Working Drawings			15
Labor and Materials Estimate			30
Construction Schedule			30
Quality of Written Proposal			5
Presentation			20
Penalty for Late Entry			Deduct 15 Points / Day
TOTAL			100