

# EXCELLENCE IN CONSTRUCTION – PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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Your company can compete for honors in the Iowa construction industry's premier annual awards program—the **ABC of Iowa Excellence in Construction Awards competition**—that recognizes the outstanding merit shop projects of the year. Use the online application form and the information below to enter your company's best project(s).

**All award winners will be recognized at the Iowa Events Center on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

The ceremony will feature a multimedia presentation highlighting the project entries and winners, and an elegant, printed program highlighting each award-winning project.

## 1. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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***Each entry must follow the entry requirements outlined in the application.***

***You may email questions to [greg.spenner@abciowa.org](mailto:greg.spenner@abciowa.org) or call 515-985-1171.***

### ABC MEMBERSHIP

Only ABC of Iowa contractor members are eligible to enter. Projects completed through a joint venture must include a document outlining the ownership percentage and responsibilities of each partner. Include this document in the Project Information section.

If the majority partner is an ABC of Iowa member, but not all partners are ABC of Iowa members, only the majority contractor is eligible to enter. If your project was completed by a joint venture and not all parties are ABC of Iowa members, email [eic@abc.org](mailto:eic@abc.org) for additional eligibility requirements.

### SAFETY POLICY

- A company that experiences a safety-related fatality of a direct employee in the United States within the current program year\* is NOT eligible for an Excellence in Construction Award. If a subsidiary is a direct ABC of Iowa member versus part of a larger holding company member, then the subsidiary with a safety-related fatality is not eligible, but another subsidiary of the same holding company may be.
- A company that experienced a safety-related fatality of a direct employee in the United States within two or three years of the current program year\* is required to provide additional information regarding action that has been taken following the fatality.
- No project that involves prime, multi-prime or sub-trade contractors with a safety-related fatality is eligible to be considered for an award.

***\*See Safety Requirements for additional details and program dates.***

### PROJECT ENTRY DEADLINES

**Completion of Project:** Projects you plan to submit must have been completed between Wednesday, November 1, 2024 and Saturday, January 4, 2026.

**Competition Open Date:** Projects may be submitted online starting on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

**Competition Close Date:** Entries must be completed online no later than Friday, February 6, 2026.

## ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Projects taking home Excellence (1<sup>st</sup> Place) or Distinction (2<sup>nd</sup> Place) awards at ABC of Iowa's Excellence in Construction 2026 are eligible to compete at the [National Level](#).

## 2. OVERVIEW OF AWARDS

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### SCORING

The panel of judges represents a cross section of construction industry experts, including owners, architects, engineers and other industry leaders. The competition is comparative, using a point system to assist in the comparisons. A project entry can earn a total possible score of 100 points.

**The different evaluative sections and their point values are in the subsequent sections below.** Answers to questions should be clear and succinct, as directed; be sure to read each section carefully. The applying company's ability to follow the guidelines will have a great impact on its opportunity to win.

### REQUIREMENTS: INTENT-TO-COMPETE/REGISTRATION

- Company
- Project title
- Project location (city, state if in the United States)
- Final contract amount (ABC of Iowa will keep the information confidential, if required)
- Project category
- Applicant name, job title, phone and email
- Project classification

### REQUIREMENTS: OVERALL PRESENTATION (5 POINTS)

#### Overall Presentation and Conformance to Entry Requirements

Uploaded documents should be pleasing to the eye and legible. Points will be deducted for font that is too small to easily read, as well as grammatical/typographical errors.

### REQUIREMENTS: PROJECT INFORMATION

- Contractor name, principal, title, mailing address and phone
- Business ownership: women-owned / minority-owned / both / neither
- Primary award contact name, title, phone and email
- Is this project in the United States? Provide the project address.
- Contract value (indicate if this is confidential)
- Starting date of construction
- Substantial completion date of construction
- Did any prime, multi-prime, or sub-trade contractor on this project have a safety-related fatality on this project? **If yes, the project is not eligible.**
- Did the applying member company have a safety-related fatality in the United States with the current program year— **June 5, 2025 – April 16, 2026?** **If yes, the company is not eligible.**
- Architect firm, contact name, title and email
- Engineer firm, contact name, title and email
- General contractor firm, contact name, title and email (if the applicant is a subcontractor)
- Client/owner firm, contact name, title and email
- Was this project completed by a joint venture? If yes, are all parties of the joint venture members of ABC? On a one-page document, outline the ownership percentage and responsibilities of each partner.
- Was this a design-build project, with design and construction services under one contract with a single point of responsibility?
- Was this a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) project through the U.S.

Green Building Council? If yes, indicate the status of the LEED certification and what level was achieved.

- Write a brief project description between 30 and 40 words highlighting the most impressive/unique aspects of the job. If the project is an Eagle Award recipient, the project description (subject to editing by ABC) will appear in the onsite event program.

#### **REQUIREMENTS: CONTRACTED SCOPE (10 POINTS)**

Ensuring legibility when selecting font design and size, provide a description (no more than one full page) of the scope for this project with the following information:

##### **PDF format is required.**

- Type of construction (i.e. Lump Sum, Time & Materials, Construction Management at Risk, Cost Plus, etc.)
- Size of project
- Contract value
- Duration of project
- Percentage of labor that is self-performed
- Any subcontracted work performed by fellow ABC members, suppliers or associates/industry professionals, if applicable.
- Describe the opportunities you provided to the construction community to participate based on merit.

#### **REQUIREMENTS: PROJECT NARRATIVE (30 POINTS)**

Ensuring legibility when selecting font design and size, provide a written narrative (no more than four pages\*) indicating why this project is special and why it qualifies for an award. The focus of the narrative should be the construction (i.e. erection, installation, modification, grade footprint, etc.) of the project.

**Four pages are highly recommended and photos/images may be incorporated.**

##### **PDF format is required.**

**Be sure to include the following items:**

- Describe any innovative programs relating to quality control
- Describe any innovative programs relating to scheduling
- Describe any value analysis/engineering process used on the project
- Indicate any special obstacles you overcame in completing the project
- Describe any difficulties or extenuating circumstances encountered in completing the project
- Describe any innovative programs or methods relating to productivity

*\*Projects entered into the **Community/Public Service** categories are allowed one additional page (for a total of five pages) dedicated to describing why the project qualifies for the category. This will be uploaded separately following the project narrative and should include a detailed description of the resources your company donated.*

#### **REQUIREMENTS: PHOTOGRAPHS (8 POINTS)**

Submit up to 10 high-quality photographs in **jpg or png format only**. It is recommended to include photos that are relevant to the challenges and solutions outlined in the narrative. To obtain maximum points, all projects should include “in progress” photos in addition to the completed project.

- Single .jpg files may include up to two photographs, but no more than four files should include split images.
- Provide a descriptive caption for each file in the text box provided, but keep the photograph free of any labels, captions and borders/framing. Each caption should not

- exceed 50 words.
- Ensure the photographs are free of any safety violations.
- Ten photographs are strongly recommended. Files should be a minimum of 300 DPI resolution and in jpg format. **No PDFs are allowed.**

Occasionally, entrants have asked that certain photos not be used in programs or on public sites, due to certain sensitivities, such as the exterior layout of an embassy. Indicate if any of the photos submitted above meet this condition and specify which ones must remain private.

Restoration and Renovation projects should also include “before and after” images.

If any photos being submitted were taken by a third-party photographer, the photographer’s written authorization to use the photos is required. In order to comply, you must upload a copy of the signed [licensing agreement](#) with the photographer's signature. No changes are allowed to this document.

### **REQUIREMENTS: SAFETY (31 POINTS)**

A company that experiences a safety-related fatality of a direct employee in the United States within the current program year— **June 5, 2025 – April 16, 2026** —is NOT eligible for an Excellence in Construction Award. If a subsidiary is a direct ABC member versus part of a larger holding company member, then the subsidiary with a safety-related fatality is not eligible, but another subsidiary of the same holding company may be.

A company that experienced a safety-related fatality of a direct employee in the United States within two or three years of the current program year is required to provide additional information regarding action that has been taken following the fatality (details on the next page).

No project that involves a prime, multi-prime, subcontractor or any trade-related work (regardless of the type of contract) with a safety-related fatality is eligible for an Excellence in Construction Award.

- ❖ Did the applying company have a safety-related fatality within the current program year— **June 5, 2025 – April 16, 2026**? **If yes, your company is not eligible.**
- ❖ Did your company have a safety-related fatality within two or three years of the current program year? If yes, answer the questions below.
  - What was the violation type as determined by OSHA (i.e. Willful, Serious, Repeated, Other-than-serious, No violation was cited)?
  - Date and location of incident
  - Were there any fines, citations or penalties issued? If so, by whom (i.e. OSHA, Police, DOT, etc.)?
  - Provide a written report up to five pages that details the following:
    - A full account of the incident and the investigation
    - What corrective actions were taken immediately?
    - What corrective actions were taken culturally?
    - How was accountability addressed?
    - What procedural changes were made?
    - Was an overall evaluation of the company’s safety policies, and if so, what changes were made?
    - If the fatality occurred three years out from this program year, provide details as to how your company has implemented the changes discussed above and how it has affected the overall safety performance.
- ❖ Did this project have a safety-related fatality?  
**If yes, this project is not eligible.**
- ❖ Include copies of the project-specific OSHA Form 300 and OSHA Form 300A for your

company. If project-specific forms are not available, you may include completed forms for all the year(s) the project was under construction, including a year-to-date form if the contract was completed in the current program year. If you are submitting annual forms, they must be specific to the office location that completed the work and all recordables specific to the project being submitted must be highlighted. **All personal information must be redacted.**

If omitted, your company is **not eligible**.

- ❖ Has your company signed the Construction Coalition for a Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace's pledge at [drugfreeconstruction.org](http://drugfreeconstruction.org)?

If no, your company is **not eligible**.

- ❖ Does your company have a written substance abuse policy? If yes, provide a copy of the table of contents and explain how it was implemented on the project.
  - ❖ Does your company have a written Safety and Health Policy Manual? If yes, include its table of contents or provide a one-page summary.
- If no, your company is **not eligible**.
- ❖ Was a site-specific Safety and Health Policy Manual developed for this project? If yes, include its table of contents or provide a one-page summary.
  - ❖ Provide the project's organizational chart identifying the person responsible for safety.
  - ❖ Does your company conduct a new employee safety orientation? If yes, include a copy of the agenda.
  - ❖ Were toolbox safety meetings held with employees? If yes, were these meetings documented and what was the frequency of meetings? Include a one-page summary or an example up to two pages.
  - ❖ Did your company regularly establish pre-task safety planning prior to beginning work on this project? If yes, provide at least one example.
  - ❖ Did your company have a process in place to record near-miss cases on this project? If yes, provide supporting documentation of this process and how your company uses this information. Note this does not indicate near-misses occurred.
  - ❖ Was specialized training conducted on this project? If yes, indicate types on a separate page.
  - ❖ Provide additional information regarding any innovative safety and health programs used on this project or the company's overall safety program.
  - ❖ Calculate your company's Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR) = Number of recordable accidents x200,000 / total manhours for the project
    - Total work hours for all disciplines included in your contract on this project
    - Company NAICS and SIC codes
    - Number of OSHA-recordable accidents on this project
    - Number of OSHA job transfer or restriction cases on this project
    - Number of OSHA days away from work cases on this project
- \*General contractors and construction managers also must include all specialty contractors' hours and recordables on this project.
- ❖ For general contractors or construction managers: Do you require accident reports from specialty contractors? If yes, provide information on the process.
  - ❖ Provide the name, title, phone, email and signature for the person responsible for safety on this project and attesting to these accident rates.

## REQUIREMENTS: REFERENCES (10 POINTS)

Include up to 10 letters of recommendation from third parties involved with the project, such as the owner and design team. If the owner is unable to provide a letter of recommendation due to company policy, upload a letter from the owner on their letterhead stating they are unable to provide a reference (this letter will qualify for only five points). **PDF format is required.**

**General contractors** *must* submit letters from at least the owner (or the general contractor's prime contracting entity, if not the owner) and the architect. If submitting in an industrial category, general contractors must submit letters from at least the owner (or the general contractor's prime contracting entity).

**Specialty contractors** *must* submit a letter from at least the general contractor. If not working under a general contractor, specialty contractors must submit a letter from at least the owner. Second- and third-tier subcontractors must at least submit a letter from their prime contracting entity.

Letters will be assessed for their level of quality (content and position of author). In some cases, a single letter could earn the maximum number of points; however, **additional letters are highly recommended.**

#### **OPPORTUNITIES: SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS (2 POINTS)**

Provide any miscellaneous supporting materials, such as diagrams and other graphics, media coverage, other awards and promotion, aerial or drone footage, BIM, 3D scans and/or CAD drawings.

You may upload up to five single pages. The five pages may be in one file, or up to five separate files. Video files should not exceed two minutes.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES: ACCREDITED QUALITY CONTRACTOR (AQC) (2 POINTS)**

If your company has achieved ABC's Accredited Quality Contractor (AQC) credential in the current program year, upload a PDF copy of the company certificate. The certificate must indicate the chapter that you are submitting your project through because the AQC credential is chapter specific.

If necessary, a copy of the certificate may be requested by emailing [aqc@abc.org](mailto:aqc@abc.org). Please note that requests will be processed in the order in which they are received; be sure to put your request in early.

The AQC credential is not required to submit for an Excellence in Construction award.

To apply, visit [abc.org/aqc](http://abc.org/aqc).

#### **OPPORTUNITIES: STEP SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (2 POINTS)**

If your company is a STEP participant, upload a PDF copy of the company certificate(s) from the current program year, as well as any year(s) the project was performed.

If your company does not have an electronic copy of your STEP certificate(s), contact Tom VanderLinden at [tom.vanderlinden@abciowa.org](mailto:tom.vanderlinden@abciowa.org). Please note, requests will be processed in the order in which they are received; be sure to submit your request early.

STEP participation is not required to submit a project for an Excellence in Construction Award.

For more information about STEP, visit [abc.org/step](http://abc.org/step).

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA & ENTRY SAMPLES**

##### **Social Media**

ABC promotes EIC winners on social media (e.g. Facebook and LinkedIn). A photo from the entry is typically included, with the company name, project name and category.

If your project is awarded, your company and project will be featured on ABC's social media accounts, unless requested otherwise to [Greg Spenner](#).

##### **Entry Sample Release**

Members often request samples of EIC applications. To assist those applying for the first time in future years, we would like to have winning samples available. If your project is awarded, can ABC share your project narrative and/or contracted scope with future year applicants and on the EIC webpage?

If you indicated the use of innovative safety programs and your project was awarded, may these programs be included in a list of best practices posted on the EIC webpage?

**PROJECT ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS, RIGHTS AND AGREEMENTS**

All applicants are required to sign off on the following releases.

**Property**

All entries become the property of Associated Builders and Contractors of Iowa (ABC of Iowa).

**Entry Category Reassignment**

ABC of Iowa reserves the right to change an entry’s original category if it determines that a project’s opportunity to win will be enhanced with a different category. ABC of Iowa also reserves the right to redistribute the contract volume levels within a category.

**Grant of Rights**

The applicant hereby grants to ABC the following non-exclusive rights: the right to reproduce and distribute copies of the work throughout the year as part of the competition materials described above, including the right to reprint the work, or any part thereof, whenever necessary and to license the use of the work, or any part thereof, in any medium or form of communication; and the right to use the applicant’s name, photographs and biography in connection with the work. The applicant reserves all rights not specifically granted herein.

**Safety Provision**

No project that involves a prime, multi-prime, subcontractor or any trade-related work (regardless of the type of contract) with a safety-related fatality is eligible for an award.

**Warranty**

The applicant warrants that the work is original, that its publication will not infringe on the rights of others, and that it has the full power to make this grant.

**3. PROJECT CATEGORIES**

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You may select only ONE category indicating the dollar amount of the contract for the project.

ABC of Iowa reserves the right to change an entry’s original category if it determines that a project’s opportunity to win will be enhanced in a different category. ABC also reserves the right to redistribute the contract volume levels within a category.

***Project categories are as follows:***

**CATEGORY 1: GENERAL CONTRACTOR**

projects with members performing as general contractors or construction managers.

**COMMERCIAL**

*includes office buildings, banks, retail facilities, hotels or mixed-use buildings.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million

- Over \$10 Million

**COMMUNITY/PUBLIC SERVICE**

*includes philanthropic projects, regardless of type, that enhanced the community, using substantial resources donated by the contractor. Entries should*

*include information detailing the donated resources.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT/MILITARY

*includes all projects owned by the Federal Government, with the exception of transportation infrastructure and utilities.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

## HEALTH CARE

*hospitals, assisted living, nursing homes and other licensed medical facilities.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

## HISTORICAL RESTORATION/RENOVATION

*restoration of buildings that are registered as historical, or are eligible to be registered as historical, on a state or the national registry of historic places.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million

## RESIDENTIAL

*covers single-family homes and multi-family projects and condominiums, including independent living retirement communities.*

- \$0 - \$1 Million
- Over \$1 Million

- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

## INDUSTRIAL

*category covers manufacturing plants and facilities, refineries and similar types of construction.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

## INFRASTRUCTURE: HEAVY

*covers projects streets or highways, dams, bridges and parks.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

## INSTITUTIONAL

*covers buildings built for colleges, elementary or secondary schools, churches, local government structures; with the exception of healthcare facilities.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

## PUBLIC WORKS/ENVIRONMENTAL

*covers water treatment plants and wastewater treatment plants.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

## RENOVATION

*includes the renovation or restoration of non-historical, existing buildings with more than 50 percent of square footage that has been renovated or restored.*

- Non-Historical: \$0 - \$2 Million
- Non-Historical: \$2 - \$5 Million
- Non-Historical: \$5 - \$10 Million
- Non-Historical: Over \$10 Million

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## CATEGORY 2: SPECIALTY CONTRACTOR

*projects with members performing as specialty contractors.*

### ELECTRICAL: COMMERCIAL

*contracts for electrical systems in a facility built for the benefit of people comfort and occupancy such as: office buildings, hospitals, schools, shopping centers, call centers, multi-family residential, hotels, convention centers, fountain features in a commercial facility, sports arena and stadium, fire or security*

*alarms, parking lots, medical laboratories or renovation in an existing facility.*

- \$0 - \$250,000
- \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

**For Electrical: Residential,**  
choose the category:

Local Only: Specialty Contractor:  
Electrical: Residential

### ELECTRICAL: INDUSTRIAL

*contracts including electrical systems built for the purpose of facilitating processes or manufacturing. Examples are manufacturing plants, processing plants, clean rooms, data centers, printing and*

*processing centers, airports, animal facilities or electrical renovation in an existing industrial facility.*

- \$0 - \$250,000
- \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

**For Electrical: Public Works/Environmental,** choose the category:  
Local Only: Specialty Contractor:  
Electrical: Public Works/Environmental

**MECHANICAL: COMMERCIAL**  
*contracts for mechanical systems in a facility built for the benefit of people comfort and occupancy such as office buildings, hospitals, schools, shopping centers, call centers, multi-family residential, hotels, convention centers, fountain features in a commercial facility, sports arenas and stadiums, medical laboratories or mechanical renovation in an existing commercial facility.*

- HVAC: \$0 - \$250,000
- HVAC: \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- HVAC: \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- HVAC: \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- HVAC: Over \$10 Million
- Plumbing: \$0 - \$250,000
- Plumbing: \$250,000 - \$1 Million

- Plumbing: \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- Plumbing: \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Plumbing: Over \$10 Million

**For Mechanical: Residential,** choose the category:  
Local Only: Specialty Contractor:  
Mechanical: Residential

**MECHANICAL: INDUSTRIAL**  
*contracts for mechanical systems built for the purpose of facilitating processes or manufacturing. Examples are manufacturing plants, processing plants, clean rooms, data centers, printing and processing centers, animal facilities or mechanical renovation in an existing industrial facility.*

- HVAC: \$0 - \$250,000
- HVAC: \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- HVAC: \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- HVAC: \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- HVAC: Over \$10 Million
- Plumbing: \$0 - \$250,000
- Plumbing: \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- Plumbing: \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- Plumbing: \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Plumbing: Over \$10 Million

**For Mechanical: Public Works/Environmental,** choose the category:  
Local Only: Specialty Contractor:  
Mechanical: Public Works/Environmental.

**SITework/LANDSCAPE/HARDSCAPE**  
*covers interior or exterior landscaping and parking lots.*

- \$0 - \$2 Million
- \$2 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

**SPECIALTY CONSTRUCTION: COMMERCIAL**  
*covers construction not specifically referred to in the above specialty categories, such as roofing, flooring, fountain features or artistic scaffolding.*

- \$0 - \$250,000
- \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

**SPECIALTY CONSTRUCTION: INDUSTRIAL**  
*covers construction not specifically referred to in the above specialty categories, such as roofing, flooring, fountain features or artistic scaffolding.*

- \$0 - \$250,000
- \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

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## **CATEGORY 3: LOCAL ONLY**

categories unique to ABC of Iowa.

**SPECIALTY CONTRACTOR:**  
**ELECTRICAL: PUBLIC WORKS/ENVIRONMENTAL**  
*includes water treatment plants*

*and wastewater treatment plants.*

- \$0 - \$250,000

- \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Over \$10 Million

**SPECIALTY CONTRACTOR:**  
**ELECTRICAL: RESIDENTIAL**

*single family residential.*

- \$0 - \$50,000
- Over \$50,000

**SPECIALTY CONTRACTOR:**  
**MECHANICAL: PUBLIC**

**WORKS/ENVIRONMENTAL**

*includes water treatment plants  
and wastewater treatment  
plants.*

- HVAC: \$0 - \$250,000
- HVAC: \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- HVAC: \$1 Million - \$5 Million
- HVAC: \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- HVAC: Over \$10 Million
- Plumbing: \$0 - \$250,000
- Plumbing: \$250,000 - \$1 Million
- Plumbing: \$1 Million - \$5 Million

- Plumbing: \$5 Million - \$10 Million
- Plumbing: Over \$10 Million

**SPECIALTY CONTRACTOR:**  
**MECHANICAL: RESIDENTIAL**

*single family residential.*

- HVAC: \$0 - \$50,000
- HVAC: Over \$50,000
- Plumbing: \$0 - \$50,000
- Plumbing: Over \$50,000