



2027 Remodeler of the Year Competition

Enter your best remodeling project!

Every NARI Milwaukee contractor has projects to be particularly proud of, whether it's a residential kitchen or bath, a damaged home that was restored to its former beauty, a spacious deck and landscaping project, or a state-of-the-art home theater system.

Show off your best work of the past year by entering the 2027 Remodeler of the Year (RotY) competition! You can submit projects on behalf of your firm or as a team, with the general contractor submitting. Projects are evaluated and scored individually by an impartial panel of judges. Gold, Silver, and Bronze awards are given based on the project's final score.

Winners will be announced in January 2027 at the Awards Gala!

NARI Milwaukee showcases these amazing projects in our member magazine *Renovate*, on social media, online, in print publications, and at events throughout the year.

Eligibility:

- Project/s was completed between December 1, 2024 – September 27, 2026.
- Project/s was not entered into a previous Remodeler of the Year competition.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

- **Submissions are due Monday, September 28th, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. CT. Each project entry: \$275 each**
- **Late submissions: September 29th - October 5th. Deadline October 5th at 5:00 p.m. CT. Each late project entry: \$375 each**
- **Entry cost:**
 - **Project entry: \$275 each**
 - **Team entries are \$95 per team member**
 - **Late entries are \$375 per project entry**

Remodeling Categories

- ***Residential Kitchen***

- Under \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$100,000
- \$100,000 to \$150,000
- \$150,000 to \$200,000
- Over \$200,000

Best residential kitchen remodel with a total project cost. Kitchen projects that include remodeling of any other adjacent space such as a family room, dining room, mudroom, etc., should be entered into a Residential Interior category. Only interior photos may be used.

- ***Residential Bath***

- Under \$40,000
- \$40,000 to \$70,000
- \$70,000 to \$100,000
- Over \$100,000

Best Residential Bath remodel projects that include remodeling of any other adjacent space such as master (clothing) closet, dressing area, make-up room, etc. should be entered into a Residential Interior category. Only interior photos may be used.

- ***Residential Interior***

- Under \$100,000
- \$100,000 to \$250,000
- \$250,000 to \$500,000
- Over \$500,000

Best Residential Interior remodel that includes, but is not limited to, such projects as family or recreation room remodeling, bath or kitchen with adjacent space, home theater or media rooms, attic conversions, etc. Work must be done with the existing wall of a residential structure. This category does not include room additions or basements. Only interior photos may be used.

- ***Residential Interior Feature***

- Under \$50,000
- \$50,000 and over

This category represents one special interior feature of a project with a cost* under \$50,000. It includes but is not limited to projects such as railings and columns; brick, stone and masonry work; tiling; air conditioning and heating; fireplaces; vestibules; insulation; kitchen hoods; glass block; wall finishes such as plaster; flooring; best use of lighting or lighting control systems, or home automation. Work must have been done to the interior of an existing residential structure, and only interior photos may be used. The residential interior feature must be specified in the entry materials and in the descriptive text to qualify.

- ***Residential Addition***

- Under \$250,000
- \$250,000 to \$500,000
- Over \$500,000

Best Residential Addition that includes, but is not limited to, additions, add-a-levels, or attic buildouts, which increases the livable space of the existing home. The project is limited to one addition per structure. Interior and exterior photos may be used.

- ***Residential Exterior***

- Under \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$100,000

- \$100,000 to \$200,000
- Over \$200,000

Best Exterior project that includes, but is not limited to, alterations to the exterior of a residential building such as porticos, porches, glass or screen enclosures or greenhouse rooms (unconditioned spaces), windows, dormers, and exterior resurfacings like siding, stucco, etc. Which enhances the overall appearance of the exterior. Exterior photos may be used, and interior photos at attached unconditioned spaces may also be used.

- ***Residential Detached Structure***

Structures such as garages, pool houses, studios, sheds, gazebos, pavilions, etc. Remodeled or added to an existing residential property. Interior and exterior photos may be used.

- ***Entire House***

- Under \$250,000
- \$250,000 to \$500,000
- \$500,000 to \$750,000
- \$750,000 to \$1,000,000
- Over \$1,000,000

A project that remodeled or renovated a substantial portion of the entire residential house, inside and outside, or where multiple additions and/or style changes in footprint or elevation have been made in more than one location. The entry must include a description of the existing structure portions incorporated into the finished project. Pictures and plans submitted with the entry must highlight those portions of the home retained in the new design.

- ***Residential Historical Renovation/Restoration***

- Under \$250,000
- \$250,000 and over

The renovation/restoration of the interior and/or exterior of a residential structure, or addition to a residential structure, originally built at least 75 years ago. All changes are to have closely matched the architectural style and building type. All products used are to be of a material authentic in style to the area in which the building was originally built, paying special attention to period trim detail and period coloring. Restoration of missing historic features and added structures are to respect the essential historic character and architectural style of the original building design.

- ***Commercial Exterior***

Remodeling performed on the exterior of an existing commercial structure. Clearly define the type of client and the client's needs in the project description. Only exterior photos may be used.

- ***Commercial Interior***

Remodeling performed within the existing walls of a previously occupied commercial space. Clearly define the type of client and the client's needs in the project description. Only interior photos may be used.

- ***Residential Landscape Design/Outdoor Living***

- Under \$100,000
- \$100,000 to \$250,000
- Over \$250,000

Best residential landscape design/outdoor project that includes, but is not limited to, landscaping, pathways, driveways, patios, pergolas, outdoor kitchens, decks, terraces, pools, spas, etc. Work is not exclusive to existing structures. Only exterior photos may be used.

- **Basement**
 - Under \$100,000
 - \$100,000 to \$250,000
 - Over \$250,000

Best basement conversion. Work must be done within the existing walls of a residential structure. Additions are excluded from this category. Only interior photos may be used.

- **Universal Design – Kitchen**

Kitchen remodeling projects utilizing Universal Design standards and practices. Projects entered in this category must meet RotY criteria for Residential Kitchens (any price point). Projects entered in this category may also be entered into the appropriate Kitchen category separately with an additional fee. All Universal Design entries will be judged by NARI Universal Design Certified Professionals. Entries for commercial projects are not eligible at this time.

- **Universal Design – Bath**

Bathroom remodeling projects utilizing Universal Design standards and practices. Projects entered in this category must meet RotY criteria for Residential Bath (any price point). Projects entered in this category may also be entered into the appropriate Bath category separately with an additional fee. All Universal Design entries will be judged by NARI Universal Design Certified Professionals. Entries for commercial projects are not eligible currently.

- **Universal Design – Other**

Remodeling projects utilizing Universal Design standards and practices that are not a kitchen or bathroom. All Universal Design entries will be judged by NARI Universal Design Certified Professionals. Entries for commercial projects are not eligible at this time.

- **Residential Architectural Design under 500 sq. Ft.**

Residential remodeling projects focusing on architectural design under 500 square feet. Submissions should include full design plans which may contain site plans, floor plans, elevations and rendering including a minimum of one scaled drawing. Project does not need to be built. Do not include any pictures of the completed project.

- **Residential Architectural Design over 500 sq. Ft.**

Residential remodeling projects focusing on architectural design over 500 square feet. Submissions should include full design plans which may contain site plans, floor plans, elevations and rendering including a minimum of one scaled drawing. Project does not need to be built. Do not include any pictures of the completed project.

- **Disaster Restoration – Fire and/or Water (NARI Milwaukee Only)**

This category will include any residential/commercial property that has had fire or water damage (i.e., sewerage backup, flooded basement, pipe bursts in the wall) resulting in damage of \$10,000 or more. The damage is to be completely repaired and before and after photos are required (best if taken from the same angle). The repair can be on a portion of the home or an entire house. Proof of project cost must be included. Work must be done on an existing residential/commercial property.

- **Disaster Restoration – Structure (NARI Milwaukee Only)**

This category will include any residential/commercial property that has had structural damage (i.e. tree falls on a structure, vehicle strikes a building) of \$10,000 or more. This damage is to be completely repaired and before and after photos are required (best if taken from the same angle).

Proof of project cost must be included. Work must be done to an existing residential/commercial property.

Entry Requirements

- Only NARI members in good standing are eligible to participate.
- The entrant company needs to be the NARI member that has complete oversight and supervisory responsibilities for the work completed (not applicable for specialty entries). Other NARI member companies that worked on the project may be included as Team Members (see below).
- **The project finish date must be between December 1st, 2024 – September 21st, 2026.**
- Entry fees must be paid by credit card through the entry platform. All payments must be received by the contest close date. All entry fees are non-refundable, non-transferable, and cannot be carried over to subsequent years.
- Only projects that have never been submitted into the NARI Milwaukee Remodeler of the Year contest are eligible.
- All projects entered in RotY categories must be an improvement or addition to an existing structure. Entries for new structures will not be accepted except where specifically noted in the category description.
- The same project may only be entered in one category (with one exception as noted below). If you have a large, multi-area project, and would like to enter just a portion of it, it's fine to break it down. For example, if your project includes the remodel of an entire house, you can enter an Entire House category AND enter a Kitchen category, an Interior category, and two Bathroom categories, etc. *Keep in mind you will have to break out costs for each project on each entry form.* The exception is the Universal Design category. If you enter the Universal category, you may also enter the same project in one of the other contest categories.
- The Awards Committee and Judges reserve the right to disqualify, adjust the category, or deduct points from any entry that does not follow these rules and guidelines, without prior notice.

****Cost is defined as contract price, all extras, change orders, and the fair market value of materials and products that were purchased, sweat equity and in-kind services provided, and/or any subcontract work. The cost of all homeowner-provided products, services, or labor should be included in this cost. All mark-ups and profits should be included in the cost provided. For member-owned projects, costs should include normal mark-ups as if the project was contracted to an outside client.***

Elements Needed for a Complete Remodeling Category Submission:

1. Presentation required for judging:

The presentation must be submitted in PDF format and can be up to 30 pages long. This presentation is the only file the judges will see.

- We suggest using PowerPoint, Publisher, Word, or similar program to build your entry, and then save it to a reduced size PDF file. *(Maximum file size is 20 MB)*
- Include a project statement, drawings, images, and any descriptive text or captions that will help the judges understand the details of the transformation.

- 'Before' photos are required and are best used immediately preceding 'After' photos. Present photos from the same angle if possible.
- Don't include the company name or any individual's names in your presentation or otherwise identify yourself or the client in any way.
- Don't use photos with people in them.
- Any photo enhancement is limited to brightness, contrast, or sharpness. No items may be added or removed through photo enhancement techniques. Do not add or subtract items or change the image in a way that may increase or decrease the value of the project.
- Renderings are not to be used as the only "after" image. Photographs must be used.

2. Photos required for NARI Milwaukee's Promotions:

- NARI Milwaukee needs the before and after images you included in your project presentation in .jpg, or .jpeg, format for promotional purposes.
- Each image must be a high-quality resolution of at least 300 dpi, a minimum size of 4 x 6 (1200 x 1800 pixels), and no larger than 12 MB each.
- You can upload up to 20 images, but we require a minimum of 10. If you don't have 10 photos from the project, repeat one of the images to meet the requirements.
- Do not include in-progress images.
- These images will be used in the awards gala, outside media promotions, and NARI Milwaukee promotions.
- **Please save your best horizontal and vertical images for promotional purposes as "Best Image" upon downloading, label before and after photos as "before" and "after".**
- Any photo enhancement is limited to brightness, contrast, or sharpness. No items may be added or removed through photo enhancement techniques. Do not add or subtract items or change the image in a way that may increase or decrease the value of the project.
- We recommend that all photos used in your presentation also be uploaded separately as part of your submission, both before and after photos must be a part of this upload.

3. Written project summary:

Entrants are required to provide a project summary, 100 words or less, in addition to their presentation. This summary will be collected via the online form and will be used to describe winning projects after winners are announced. Although the Judges will not see the summary included in this field, this information may be repeated in the presentation.

4. Photo and client release forms:

RotY entry and photographer's release forms must be completed and returned for each entry. These forms will not be seen by the judges and are the only area where the member's identity (or anyone involved with the project) can be revealed. Forms are available on the contest entry page.

5. Supplier Information:

Provide a list of company names and contact information for contractors, products used, and suppliers that were used in the completion of your remodel.

Photo Tips

Since your project cannot be judged in person, good quality photos are key elements in your presentation. Whether or not you use a professional photographer, please keep the following in mind:

- Take "before" photographs before the start of every project. If you make this standard practice, you will be ready when the job you anticipated to be an average remodel turns out to be a NARI National RotY contender. Take these shots from many angles.
- Take photos for work-in-progress if it will help show the complexity of the process or the obstacles encountered.

- Take the “after” shots from the same angle as the before photos whenever possible. This helps give the judges a good perspective of the transformation and it’s helpful if the judges can see these photos consecutively.
- Include both vertical and horizontal photos. If your project is published, it stands a better chance of being featured on a magazine cover if the editors have vertical shots from which to choose.
- Only include photos that will enhance the project entry. Although you have 30 pages to display the project, you don’t need to use them all.

Photo Tips Entry Rules and Grounds for Disqualification

Grounds for Disqualification

- If an entry is more than 30 pages.
- Failure to include the completed
 - Client/Contractor Agreement and Photographer’s release (remodeling categories)
 - Promotional Agreement (marketing & advertising)
- If a project has been entered in more than one category (example: whole house entry and a bath entry from the same house).
- If an entry is a new building.
- For Remodeling Categories – If the submission includes the company name anywhere in the entry, other than the Client Contractor Agreement and Photographer’s release. This includes project photos with job signs, uniforms, etc.; plans, blueprints, contracts, etc.; and all other references within the submission.

Presentation of Awards

- Judging will take place in October of 2026. Projects that have won an award will be notified by email.
- Awards will be announced and presented to all winners at the Awards Gala to be held in January 2027.

RotY Submission Checklist

- For all Remodeling Award categories, confirm that your company name does not appear on the entry other than the Client/Contractor Agreement and Photographer’s release. This includes photos, blueprints, renderings, customer testimonials, etc. If the name appears on the entry, it will be disqualified.
- For all Remodeling Award categories, confirm the photos in the submission do not have people in the image.
- Have you completed, signed, and included the Client/Contractor Agreement and Photographer’s release (remodeling categories) or the Promotional Agreement (marketing & advertising)
- Have you included a narrative outlining the work completed and answered the questions that relate to the judging criteria?
- Have before and after photos with captions depicting the work completed on the project been included?
- Is the entry limited to 30 pages?
- Have a total of 10 “Before”/ “After” (one of the “After” photos includes your “Best After Image” horizontal and vertical) photos been identified for use with promotional purposes?
- Have you had other company staff review the entry to ensure it is complete and that the company name does not appear within the submission?
- Is the entry being submitted by the Tuesday, September 28th, 2026 deadline?

For questions or more information, contact the NARI Milwaukee office at 414-771-4071.

Benefits of Winning a RotY

As a 2027 Remodeler of the Year Award winner, NARI Milwaukee members will receive the following benefits:

- An award to display at the award-winning company’s office and at home shows.
- Inclusion in a news release distributed to print, radio, and television media throughout southeastern Wisconsin.
- Inclusion in the award-winning projects displayed at the 2027 Spring Home Improvement Show.
- Potential inclusion of completed project photo in association television ads, magazines, and social media.
- Option to submit the same format to the NARI National RotY awards.

- ...and more!

Judging Criteria – Remodeling Categories

Judges Scoring Criteria

Judges will consider the following questions when reviewing the entries. Be sure your presentation addresses these points when applicable. Points will be awarded on a scale from 1-15.

To what degree were the expressed needs of the client met?

- Did the entry describe the client's needs and desires?
- Did the contractor show that those needs were met?

To what degree does the project enhance the existing structures functionally?

- Do the room's new floor plans function well?
- Is the counter space or work area adequate to perform necessary tasks?
- Is there good traffic flow?
- Is safety addressed adequately?
- Are the materials functional?
- Is lighting addressed – both general & task?

To what degree does the project enhance the existing structure aesthetically

- Line & rhythm, continuity & repetition, texture, color & contrast, symmetry & balance, emphasis

Is there evidence of superior craftsmanship?

- Moldings, woodwork, stairs, cabinetry, countertops, tile, glass, marble, metal, stone, masonry, etc.

Were innovative uses of material and/or methods of construction used in the project?

- Are innovative uses evident, or were any described and noted?
- Were difficult obstacles encountered and overcome, or were any described and noted?

Residential Historic Renovation/Restoration will also consider the following:

Were original uses of materials duplicated in the project?

Were methods of application used to improve or enhance the original style of the structure?