

AIA NEW YORK STATE HONORS 12 EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC DESIGN PROJECTS, THREE INDUSTRY LEADERS, AND SENATOR JEREMY COONEY AT 2026 EXCELSIOR & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



*Credit: AIA New York State. Paul McDonnell, AIA, 2026 AIANYS
Vice President of Government Advocacy and Senator Jeremy Cooney.
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(MAY 8, 2026) ALBANY, NY — In a ceremony held at the state’s capital, The American Institute of Architects New York State (AIANYS) officially announced the recipients of the 2026 Excelsior & Professional Service Awards. Marking the 12th anniversary of the program, the event celebrated a diverse array of 12 publicly funded architectural projects, three distinguished individuals, and a New York State legislator whose leadership has profoundly shaped the built environment across the state.

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The Excelsior Awards honor the triple mandate of “Firmness, Commodity, and Delight”—recognizing projects that utilize resources responsibly, provide significant socio-economic impact, and offer lasting beauty to the public.

“Architects and their teams shape communities,” said Georgi Ann Bailey, CAE, Hon. AIA, Executive Vice President of AIANYS, during the Albany presentation. “This program proudly highlights the very best in publicly funded buildings, outdoor areas, and public art that serve the people of the Empire State.”

“These awards represent our unwavering commitment to creating equitable learning spaces, resilient infrastructure, and high-performance environments,” concluded Jeffrey Pawlowski, 2026 AIANYS President. “From the Bronx to Buffalo, these projects and professionals serve as a testament to the power of design in public life.”

Honoring Professional Excellence and Public Leadership

A centerpiece of the Albany celebration on Wednesday, May 6, was the presentation of the Professional Service Awards, which recognize the individuals behind New York’s architectural progress. This year, AIANYS honored three leaders for their dedication to public service and design advocacy:

- **Frank J. Quatela, AIA** received the Excelsior Award for Public Awareness of Architecture for his tireless work in elevating the public’s understanding and appreciation of the profession.
- **Kristina “Kiki” Blazeovski Charpentier, AIA** was presented with the Excelsior Award for Design Excellence by a Public Architect, recognizing her exceptional leadership and design quality within the public sector.
- **Mark Ginsberg, FAIA** was honored with the Excelsior Award for a Private Sector Architect for his exemplary track record of delivering high-impact, publicly funded projects through private practice.

During the celebration, AIANYS also presented **Senator Jeremy Cooney** with the 2026 AIANYS Legislator of the Year Award, recognizing his outstanding leadership and sustained commitment to advancing the profession and practice of architecture in New York State.

Established in 1977, the AIANYS Legislator of the Year Award honors a legislator whose work demonstrates a meaningful understanding of the relationship between public policy, infrastructure, and the built environment. As Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Senator Cooney has championed efforts to modernize infrastructure, improve street safety, and advance innovative forms of mass transit, including high-speed rail.

Senator Cooney was also recognized for his leadership on economic development initiatives, including the Green CHIPS Act, and for supporting transformative public investments such as the Rochester School Modernization Project. His advocacy on legislation impacting the practice of architecture and his collaborative approach to governance have made him a valued partner to the design community across New York State.

2026 Excelsior Award Project Recipients

The following 12 projects were selected for their excellence, categorized by project type and award level:

Historic Preservation | Merit Award

The Bank Lofts, Richfield Springs, NY

Submitted by: River Architects, PLLC

New Construction | Citation

Bayard Cutting Arboretum Visitor Center, Great River, NY

Submitted by: MBB Architects

New Construction | Citation

Yonkers Public Schools,

Justice Sonia Sotomayor Community School, Yonkers, NY

Submitted by: KG+D Architects, PC

New Construction | Merit Award

**Academy for Personal Leadership
and Excellence Elementary**, Bronx, NY

Submitted by: Gran Kriegel Associates

New Construction | Merit Award

Glens Falls Events Downtown Center (The ED), Glens Falls, NY

Submitted by: Envision Architects, DPC

New Construction | Honor Award

St. Philip Neri Apartments, Bronx, NY

Submitted by: THINK! Architecture + Design PLLC

New Construction | Honor Award

**The Frederic Church Center for Art and Landscape
at The Olana State Historic Site**, Hudson, NY

Submitted by: Architecture Research Office

New Construction | Honor Award

Pan-American Square Apartments, Buffalo, NY

Submitted by: SWBR

Renovation/Addition | Citation

City Of Beacon Fire Department: A Legacy Restored Beacon, NY

Submitted by: Wendel/Mitchell Associates Architects

Renovation/Addition | Merit Award

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, New York, NY

Submitted by: MBB Architects

Renovation/Addition | Honor Award

Canal Commons Supportive Housing, Rochester, NY

Submitted by: PLAN Architectural Studio

Renovation/Addition | Honor Award

**Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation
at The American Museum Of Natural History**, New York, NY

Submitted by: Studio Gang

About AIA New York State

The American Institute of Architects New York State (AIANYS) is an organization of the American Institute of Architects, composed of 13 statewide chapters representing over 10,000 architecture professionals. AIANYS is dedicated to recognizing and celebrating excellence in architecture, advocating for the profession, and fostering a community of architects committed to advancing the built environment. For more information, visit aianys.org.

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