

ETHICAL and EQUITABLE  
MATERIALITY  
to end forced labor

PROGRAM

design for FREEDOM  
| student  
| competition



## 2025 Design for Freedom Student Competition

# Ethical & Equitable Materiality: To End Forced Labor

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### ABOUT

[Grace Farms](#) leads [Design for Freedom](#), the global movement to eliminate forced labor from the building materials supply chain. Grace Farms is partnering with the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) to announce a student Design Competition for the 2024-2025 academic year. The competition is intended to challenge students, working individually or in teams, to explore how architectural materials research and design can eliminate forced labor in the building materials supply chain – to explore and propose how architects can work to eradicate forced and child labor from the built environment.

### THE OPPORTUNITIES

Ethical & Equitable Materiality: To End Forced Labor is a student competition that will offer architecture students the opportunity to compete in two separate categories:

#### Category I: Design Project

Offers architecture students the opportunity to select a site and building program using Design for Freedom Principles and Toolkit to design more ethically and equitably.

#### Category II: Materials Research

Allows architecture students to research material sourcing to existing and new industry-wide practices and material transparency measurements and adopt shorter material supply chain methods to create a more ethical and equitable future.

### AWARDS

The design jury will meet in Summer 2025 to select winning projects and honorable mentions. Winners and their faculty sponsors will be notified of the competition results directly. A list of winning projects will be posted on the ACSA web site at [acsa-arch.org](http://acsa-arch.org) and the Grace Farms Foundation website at [gracefarms.org](http://gracefarms.org).

Winning students and their faculty sponsors will receive cash prizes totaling \$18,000 with distribution as follows:

#### Category I: Design Project

##### *First Prize*

Student	\$3,000
Faculty Sponsor	\$1,500

##### *Second Prize*

Student	\$2,000
Faculty Sponsor	\$1,000

##### *Third Prize*

Student	\$1,000
Faculty Sponsor	\$500

#### Category II: Materials Research

##### *First Prize*

Student	\$3,000
Faculty Sponsor	\$1,500

##### *Second Prize*

Student	\$2,000
Faculty Sponsor	\$1,000

##### *Third Prize*

Student	\$1,000
Faculty Sponsor	\$500

A limited number of honorable mentions may also be awarded at the jury's discretion. Prize-winning submissions will be exhibited at the 2026 ACSA Annual Meeting and the 2026 AIA National Convention as well as published in a competition summary publication.

## **DESIGN FOR FREEDOM**

Design for Freedom is a global movement led by Grace Farms to raise awareness and initialize responses to disrupt forced labor in the building materials supply chain. Some 28 million people worldwide are held in forced labor—many of them in the building materials supply chain of extraction, manufacture, and construction. Design for Freedom has mobilized industry leaders through the Design for Freedom Working Group, which is comprised of more than 100 industry leaders and experts in the built environment. Together, they raise global awareness about the hidden humanitarian crisis through pilot projects, the media, exhibitions, reports, symposiums, and partnerships with leading universities. This competition seeks to raise awareness among architecture students and faculty about forced labor in the creation of the built environment, and to demonstrate how student design and research can recognize and help eliminate forced labor in architecture and construction.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

The Competition is open to students from all ACSA member schools around the world. Students may work individually or in teams and must work with a faculty sponsor on the submission. There will be no fee for eligible students to participate in the Competition.

## **CRITERIA FOR JUDGING**

Criteria for the judging of submissions to Category I: Design Project:

- Successful response of the design to materials research and selection that mitigates the use of materials produced through the forced-labor supply chain.
- Documentation of materials and processes used in the architectural design that disrupt the forced-labor supply chain.
- A strong conceptual strategy to address the elimination of materials and processes produced by forced labor in a coherent, integrated design proposal;
- A compelling response to the physical and cultural context of the scheme;
- A mature awareness of and an innovative approach to sustainability as a convergence of social, economic, and environmental issues that mitigate the use of materials and processes produced by forced labor;
- A thorough appreciation of human needs and social responsibilities, particularly as they guide ethical and equitable material selection and documentation.

Criteria for the judging of submissions to Category II: Materials Research:

- Successful response to materials research and selection that mitigates the use of materials produced through the forced-labor supply chain.
- Documentation of research into materials sourcing to existing and/or new industry-wide practices potentially disrupt the forced-labor supply chain.
- Approaches to measuring material transparency to uncover material processes produced by forced labor;
- Approaches to the adoption and documentation of shorter material supply chain methods resulting in a more ethical and equitable future;
- Documentation of innovative approaches to sustainability in response to social, economic, and environmental issues to mitigate the use of materials and processes produced by forced labor;
- Documentation of materials research making it easier for practitioners to achieve the goal of ethical and equitable material selection.

## **REGISTRATION**

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### **Faculty Sponsor Online Registration**

One Registration for Each Entry

An ACSA member school, faculty sponsor is required to enroll students online (available at [www.acsa-arch.org](http://www.acsa-arch.org)) by April 9, 2025. Registration can be done for your entire studio or for each individual student or team of students participating. Students or teams wishing to enter the competition on their own must have a faculty sponsor, who should complete the online registration. Teams must be limited to a maximum of five students. There is no entry or submission fee to participate in the competition. Each registered student and faculty sponsor will receive a confirmation email that will include information on how the student(s) will upload final submissions online. Please add the email address [competitions@acsa-arch.org](mailto:competitions@acsa-arch.org) to your address book to ensure that you receive all emails regarding your submission.

During registration the faculty will have the ability to add students, add teams, assign students to teams, and add additional faculty sponsors. Registration is required by April 9, 2025, but can be changed, edited, and added to until a student starts a final submission; then the registration is no longer editable.

### **FACULTY REGISTRATION STEPS**

1. Faculty log into the ACSA website,
2. Click the “Register your Students” button,
3. Select the 2025 Design for Freedom Competition from the submission type dropdown menu, select category & Click “Enter”,
4. Select “Individual Registration” to add individual student. Click “Save and Continue”. You will need to know each student’s first & last names, email, & institution, which are all required fields for each student,
5. Select “Team Registration” if this is a team registration, you may add additional students by clicking “Add Student” to the same submission to this team, teams must be limited to a maximum of five students,
6. Once the individual student or team is complete, Click “Submit”,
7. Repeat steps 3 – 6 for each individual or team registration.

### **FACULTY RESPONSIBILITY**

The administration of the competition at each institution is left to the discretion of the faculty within the guidelines set forth in this document. Work on the competition should be structured over the course of one semester during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Each faculty sponsor is expected to develop a system to evaluate the students’ work using the criteria set forth in this program. The evaluation process should be an integral part of the design process, encouraging students to scrutinize their work in a manner similar to that of the jury.

### **DIGITAL SUBMISSION FORMAT**

Submissions must be presented on four 20” x 20” digital boards. All boards are required to be uploaded through the ACSA website as Portable Document Format (PDF) or image (JPEG) files. The names of student participants, their schools, or faculty sponsors, must NOT appear on the boards, or in the project title or project title file name(s).

## **DESIGN ESSAY or ABSTRACT**

A brief essay, 300 words maximum, is required as part of the submission describing the most important concepts in the Design Project or Materials Research as they address ethical and equitable materiality. Submissions should graphically convey the design solution and materials research and selection and not rely on the design essay to convey a basic understanding of the project. The names of student participants, their schools, or faculty sponsors, must NOT appear in the design essay. This abstract is included in the final online submission, completed by the student(s) in a simple copy/paste text box.

## **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

A program summary, 300 words maximum, of spaces and areas is required as part of the submission for Category I: Design Project. All interior and exterior spaces are to be included; total net and gross areas are required.

## **REQUIRED SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS**

Submissions must include (but are not limited to) the following required documentation:

### **Category I: DESIGN PROJECT**

- Three-dimensional representations - in the form of axonometrics and perspectives showing the proposal in its context, montages and/or physical model photographs – to illustrate the character of the project;
- Site plan showing proposal in its context of surrounding buildings and topography, together with details of access/circulation, north arrow, graphic scale;
- Building/site sections sufficient to show site context and major spatial and program elements, including graphic scale;
- Floor plans to show program elements, spatial adjacencies and navigation strategies;
- Large scale drawing(s), either orthographic or three dimensional, illustrating integrated design.
- Documentation of how materials and processes selected for the project demonstrate adherence to Design for Freedom Principles.

### **Category II: MATERIALS RESEARCH**

- Graphic and written documentation demonstrating research and communicating conclusions regarding materials research and selection.
- Graphic and written documentation explaining supply chains for materials that reflect Design for Freedom Principles.
- Graphic and written documentation and communication through devices such as matrices, charts, graphs, images, and other illustrative devices of how materials research demonstrates potential realization of ethical and equitable materiality.

Incomplete or undocumented entries will be disqualified.

## **ONLINE PROJECT SUBMISSION**

The student is required to submit the final entries that must be uploaded through the ACSA Competition website at [www.acsa-arch.org](http://www.acsa-arch.org) by 11:59 pm, Pacific Time, on June 7, 2025. If the submission is from a team of students, all student team members will have the ability to upload the digital files. Once the final submit button is pressed no additional edits, uploads, or changes can be made. You may “save” your submission and return to complete. Please note: The submission is not complete until the “complete this submission” button has been pressed. For team projects, each member of team projects may submit the final project, but each project should be submitted only once. Once the final submission is uploaded and submitted, each student will receive a confirmation email notification.

The final submission upload must contain the following:

- Completed online registration including all team members and faculty sponsors,
- Each of the four 20”x20” boards uploaded individually as a high-resolution Portable Document Format (PDF) or image (JPEG) file,
- A design essay or abstract (300 words maximum),
- A program summary diagram/text of spaces and areas (300 words maximum),
- All other required drawing and documentation as outlined in the Required Submission Documents (stated above).

**The names of student participants, their schools and faculty sponsors must NOT appear on the boards, abstract, program summary, or in the file name.**

*Winning projects will be required to submit high-resolution original files/images for use in competition publications and exhibit materials. By uploading your files, you agree that the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) has the rights to use your winning submission, images and materials in a summary publication, online and in promotional and exhibition resources. ACSA will attribute authorship of the winning design to you, your team, faculty and affiliation. Additionally, you hereby warrant that the submission is original and that you are the author(s) of the submission.*

## **PROGRAM & PRINCIPLES**

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Ethical & Equitable Materiality: To End Forced Labor is a student competition that will offer architecture students to design a project using these principles. Following are the Design for Freedom Principles to guide your Design Project or Materials Research:

- To acknowledge that the choices made in the sourcing of building materials have environmental, social, and ethical repercussions
- To have a moral and ethical obligation to end exploitation that subsidizes the bottom line of residential and commercial construction projects globally
- To understand that ethical business models reduce risk and improve long-term results
- To recognize that cheap and exploitable labor stifles the modernization of the industry by reducing the need for innovation
- To embrace emerging technologies that can improve supply chain transparency
- To embrace material circularity that eliminates material extraction where forced labor is the most prevalent, including harvesting, mining, processing, and shipping of raw materials
- To commit to adopting internal ethical sourcing policies
- To engage with federal and local government agencies and advocate for systemic change through policy, law, and enforcement of human rights violations
- To replicate learning journeys for colleagues and peers

Design for Freedom seeks to mobilize the full ecosystem of the global architectural, engineering, and construction professions to create institutional responses that add fair-labor material sourcing to existing and new industry-wide practices and material transparency measurements and adopt shorter material supply chain methods to create a more humane and equitable future.

### **Category I: DESIGN PROJECT**

Offers architecture students the opportunity to select a site and building program using Design for Freedom Principles to design and build more ethically and equitably.

#### **Program**

The design program for the project is the prerogative of the student and/or faculty advisor, but needs to reflect the ethical and equitable spirit in the Design for Freedom Principles. Adaptive re-use design projects are encouraged to accentuate material circularity to promote ethical and equitable materiality. The design ideally synthesizes site, program and material selections.

#### **Site**

The site for the competition is the choice of the student and/or faculty sponsor. However, the site should be accessible by alternative modes of transportation such as public transportation, biking, or walking. Submissions will be required to explain the site selection, strategy, and access graphically, and how it responds to Design for Freedom Principles.

#### **Material Sourcing**

Students and/or faculty advisors should take full advantage of the complement of resources available through the [Design for Freedom Toolkit](#), in selecting and documenting primary building materials and processes used in the design.

## **Category II: MATERIALS RESEARCH**

Allows architecture students to research material sourcing to existing and new industry-wide practices and material transparency measurements and to adopt shorter material supply chain methods (including materials re-use and adaptive building re-use) to create a more ethical and equitable future.

### **Documentation**

Submissions in the Materials Research category will demonstrate an innovative and informed approach to materials research and selection that mitigate the use of materials and processes produced by forced labor. Documentation should be presented primarily graphically, demonstrating research and conclusions regarding materials research and selection. Documentation should focus on graphic communication of supply chains for materials that reflect Design for Freedom Principles. Graphic communication through matrices, charts, graphs, and other illustrative devices should be a strong part of the documentation.

### **Material Sourcing**

Students and/or faculty advisors should take full advantage of the full complement of resources available through the [Design for Freedom Toolkit](#). The focus should be on graphic documentation of materials research and conclusions regarding building materials and processes that are of higher risk of forced labor.



## RESOURCES

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An intention of all ACSA competitions is to make students and/or faculty advisors aware that research is a fundamental element of any design solution. Students are encouraged to research material properties, supply chains, and opportunities for circularity.

Through this partnership with ACSA, Grace Farms Foundation will provide students with a set of tools to inform, guide, educate, and engage them in the competition design process. A list of linked resources is below. In addition to these resources, we also have curriculum, presentations, and slides for lectures that will be made freely available.

- [Design for Freedom Toolkit](#). This includes:
  - Sample Specification – Ethical Design Requirements
  - Design for Freedom Material Tracking Schedule
  - Design for Freedom Supplier Outreach Letter
  - Design for Freedom Supplier Questionnaire
- [Design for Freedom Report](#)
- [Ethical Supply Chain Workshop Insights](#)
- [Building Materials and the Climate: Constructing a New Future](#): A report with the UN Environment Program and the Yale Center for Ecosystems + Architecture
- [Design for Freedom Pilot Projects](#): This includes information on the 12 pilot projects and case studies on completed projects.

## COMPETITION ORGANIZERS

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### *Sponsor*

**Grace Farms Foundation** aspires to advance good in the world, providing a peaceful respite and porous platform to experience nature, encounter the arts, pursue justice, foster community, and explore faith.

Grace Farms Foundation's interdisciplinary humanitarian mission is to pursue peace through five initiatives — nature, arts, justice, community, and faith — and Grace Farms, a SANAA-designed site for convening people across sectors. Our stake in the ground is to end modern slavery and gender-based violence, and to create more grace and peace in our local and global communities. [www.gracefarms.org](http://www.gracefarms.org)

The Design for Freedom movement brings industry leaders together to eliminate forced labor in the building materials supply chain, create true market transformation, and build a more equitable future.

Design for Freedom can equip the next generation of students and leaders to include fair labor inputs into their new and existing means, methods, and processes in order to create transparency and a more equitable future. [www.designforfreedom.org/](http://www.designforfreedom.org/)

### *Administrative Organization*

#### **Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA)**

##### *Leading Architectural Education and Research*

ACSA is a nonprofit, membership association founded in 1912 to advance the quality of architectural education. The school membership in ACSA has grown from 10 charter members to over 250 schools in several membership categories. These include full membership for all accredited programs in the United States and government-sanctioned schools in Canada, candidate membership for schools seeking accreditation, and affiliate membership for schools for two-year and international programs. Through these schools, over 5,000 architecture faculty members are represented. In addition, over 500 supporting members composed of architecture firms, product associations and individuals add to the breadth of interest and support of ACSA goals. ACSA provides a major forum for ideas on the leading edge of architectural thought. Issues that will affect the architectural profession in the future are being examined today in ACSA member schools. [www.acsa-arch.org](http://www.acsa-arch.org)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Program updates, including information on jury members as they are confirmed, may be found on the ACSA web site at [www.acsa-arch.org/competitions](http://www.acsa-arch.org/competitions).

Additional questions on the competition program and submissions should be addressed to:

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