

2025 DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Now is the time to enter the 2025 Design Excellence Awards Competition, sponsored by the International Casual Furnishings Association. This highly prestigious, annual awards event is the only recognition program focused exclusively on outdoor living and casual furnishings products.

The competition is open to all ICFA Manufacturer and Solution Partner members in good standing AS WELL AS NON-MEMBERS that are exhibiting at Casual Market Atlanta. The entry fee is \$100 for each product entered by an ICFA member and \$500 for each product entered by a non-member, payable to the ICFA. There is no limitation on the number of entries submitted. All entered products will be presented to judges in a private space at AmericasMart without company identification.

All participating companies will enjoy special promotion of their Design Excellence product entries in an online portfolio created by the ICFA and showcased on the ICFA website. A link to the product showcase will be promoted to all ICFA members as well as through industry publications and social media.

Entries are invited in 12 product categories: Dining/Bar Tables, Dining/Bar Chairs, Chaise Lounges, Lounge Seating – Cushion, Lounge Seating – Non-Cushion, Shade Products, Outdoor Lighting, Heating/Firepits, Outdoor Carpeting, Rugs & Flooring, Fabric, Complementary Casual Products – Accents and Complementary Casual Products – Furnishings.

For each entry, please submit the “Entry Form” and the “Contact Sheet” (typed or neatly hand-written), as individually scanned documents, along with no more than four hi-res digital images of the product (300 dpi, sized 4” x 6”) and the entry fee no later than 5 p.m. EST on Friday, July 11, 2025. ABSOLUTELY NO ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE POSTED DEADLINE.

2025 DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARDS – Competition Rules

- A. All entrants certify that their product submission is an original design developed as a proprietary asset of their company and that it upholds the highest integrity of artistry and creativity.
- B. The competition is open to all manufacturers and importers of outdoor living and casual furnishings products who are exhibiting at Casual Market Atlanta at AmericasMart in July and/or September 2025.
- C. The entry fee is \$100 per product for ICFA members and \$500 per product for non-members. Payments can be made online at www.ICFAnet.org/payments or by check payable to the International Casual Furnishings Association and mailed to 1912 Eastchester Drive, Suite 100, High Point, NC 27265. *If paying online, please note “Design Excellence” in the Payment field.* Payment for multiple entries can be submitted in one online transaction. No refunds shall be given after submission of forms and all payments are non-refundable.
- D. The 12 product categories in which manufacturers may submit product are as follows:

1. Dining/Bar Table

A dining/bar table designed for outdoor use. It may be made of any material or combination thereof. Accessory tables are to be entered in the Complementary Casual Products-Furnishings category.

2. Dining/Bar Chair

A dining/bar chair designed for outdoor use. It may be made of any material or combination thereof.

3. Chaise Lounge

A chaise lounge designed for outdoor use. It may be made of any material or combination thereof. The entry may contain a shade component, but the product must meet the other category requirements as specified.

4. Lounge Seating - Cushion

Lounge seating designed for outdoor use with cushions included. The seating may be made of any material or combination thereof. The entry may contain a shade component, but the product must meet the other category requirements as specified.

5. Lounge Seating – Non-Cushion

Lounge seating designed for outdoor use with no cushions included. The seating may be made of any material or combination thereof. The entry may contain a shade component, but the product must meet the other category requirements as specified.

6. Shade Products

Umbrellas, pavilions and other shade products designed for protection from the sun and natural elements. The shade products should be designed for outdoor use.

7. Outdoor Lighting

Portable lighting (such as table lamps, floor lamps, garden and accessory lighting) that are Underwriters Laboratory-listed for outdoor wet locations or using the twelve (12) volt system.

8. Heating/Firepits

Heating units and firepits designed for outdoor use.

9. Outdoor Carpeting, Rugs & Flooring

Carpeting, rugs and flooring designed specifically for outdoor use. Entries should not exceed 6' x 8'.

10. Fabric

Fabric designed and produced for use in outdoor furnishings products. The fabric entry should be mounted on a display board no larger than 24" x 36" in size. The primary fabric entry should cover the entire display board. It may be presented with up to four (4) complementary fabrics, two (2) trims, or an image of the fabric in use, covering no more than 50% of the display board. Information on the design inspiration should be included on the entry form. A swatch of the primary fabric should also accompany the display board (must be a finished sample; 13" x 13" minimum size required).

11. Complementary Casual Products – Accents

This category encompasses all other non-furniture products not covered in the preceding eight categories. Examples of appropriate items are pillows, throws and decorative accessories. Also included are portable outdoor lighting (such as table lamps, floor lamps, garden and accessory lighting) that are Underwriters Laboratory-listed for outdoor wet locations or using the twelve (12) volt system, along with carpeting, rugs and flooring designed specifically for outdoor use that do not exceed 6' x 8'.

12. Complementary Casual Products – Furnishings

This category encompasses all other non-furniture products not covered in the preceding nine categories. Examples of appropriate items are benches, swings, hammocks, plant stands, accessory tables, alternative tabletops (no bases) and etageres.

- E. Manufacturers entering products in the competition may submit any number of entries per category and may enter multiple pieces from a collection. *If the committee thinks a product is more valid in another category, ICFA reserves the right to move it to its proper category.* NOTE: There must be a minimum of three entries within a category in order for the category to be judged.
- F. Product must be a new introduction after July 2024. All entrants are requested to sign off on the entry registration form that the product meets this requirement.
- G. A distinguished panel of judges will evaluate all entries for category judging. Siri Scott, Executive Director of the ICFA, will oversee the judging process.
- H. If a product entry has unique operational or functional features, it is the responsibility of the manufacturer to communicate those to the ICFA. If the producer should elect to do so, they may submit a video describing the unique operational/functional features. Videos should be submitted with the entry materials. Unique operational/functional features of a product entry must also be explained on the Product Description Form.
- I. Judges will evaluate all entries during an in-person examination of actual products without any brand identification. The criteria include imaginative use of materials; product innovation; color; construction; overall design and marketability. All decisions of judges are FINAL and shall be given in their sole discretion.
- J. The Lillian B. Winchester Award for “Best of Show” will be presented to one product selected from among the award-winning products in each of the 12 categories. Any entry from a category not judged due to the lack of entries will be considered and judged for this Award. The Lillian B. Winchester Award for the “Best of Show” will be announced at the ICFA Awards Gala on Wednesday, September 17, 2025.
- K. The Entry Form must be filled in completely and submitted as a separate attachment. If more than one item is being entered, copy the forms and fill out each form separately. The Entry Form is to include one or two descriptive paragraphs (50 words or less) highlighting the construction, materials used, operational/functional elements, content as well as suggested retail price. This form accompanies your entry in the judging process and should be typed. If you do not want images published in the ICFA online portfolio, please note that on the entry form. **Entry Identification Forms must be received by 5 p.m. EST on Friday, July 11, 2025.**
- L. Each Entry Identification Form and Contact Sheet must be accompanied by no more than four hi-res digital photographs (300 dpi, sized 4” x 6”) of the product.
- M. **Please submit three separate attachments for each product entered in the following format beginning with *your* company name:**

Naming Forms and Images

Example for Reference:

Use the following formula:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • COMPANY NAME - NAME of PRODUCT - Entry Identification | • ABC Inc - Big Blue Umbrella - Entry Identification |
| • COMPANY NAME - NAME of PRODUCT - Image Detail | • ABC Inc - Big Blue Umbrella - Side View |
| • COMPANY NAME - NAME of PRODUCT - Contact Sheet | • ABC Inc - Big Blue Umbrella - Contact Sheet |

- N. **Deadline for receipt of all forms, images and payment is 5 p.m. EST on Friday, July 11, 2025.** Please submit to mmorris@ICFAnet.org. Please call 336/881-1036 if you have any questions.

We look forward to receiving a record number of submissions in 2025 and wish all applicants the best of luck in the Design Excellence Awards Competition!