

IIDA STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION

Rural Northwest
Montana Primary
Care Clinic

2026



IIDA

SPONSORED BY



carolina

Table of Contents

3	Introduction	7	Timeline
3	Design Problem	7	Entry fees
3	Design Challenge	7	Eligibility
4	Program Requirements	8	Awards
6	Submission Requirements	8	Judging
7	General Notes and Clarifications	8	Floor Plans
7	Requests for Clarification	8	Healthcare Design Terminology
		8	Additional Resources



INTRODUCTION

The IIDA Student Design Competition (SDC) celebrates the talent and fresh design ideas of design students throughout the world who are currently enrolled in an interior design or interior architecture program or institution. The competition provides emerging professionals the opportunity to showcase their work and gain exposure in the interior design industry.

DESIGN PROBLEM

Students are invited to develop a design concept for a new primary care clinic located in a U.S. rural community of Northwest Montana facing significant challenges such as limited healthcare access, provider shortages, and clinic closures. The primary care clinic focuses on preventative care and sees patients of all ages by appointment only. The doctors know the patient's family histories and manage their wellness. The proposed facility will provide services including wellness visits, physicals, vaccinations, screenings for illness, and acute illness and/or injury care (from the flu to a broken arm or leg).

Successful designs must reflect the values, identity, and input of the local community while addressing geographic, cultural, and economic challenges unique to rural life. This design competition challenges students to respond to the complex realities of rural healthcare and design a welcoming built environment that fosters healing, trust, and long-term well-being for the community.

DESIGN CHALLENGE

The 2026 IIDA Student Design Competition invites you to space plan and design a primary care clinic in a rural community of Northwest Montana. The clinic is located on the second floor of a small rural hospital and should include all required programs as outlined in the Program Requirements.

The design should enable physicians to work efficiently while supporting a seamless, dignified patient experience through thoughtful spatial organization and architectural design. Emphasis should be placed on creating a welcoming atmosphere, drawing inspiration from hospitality environments to foster a sense of “home” and well-being. In addition, the space should accommodate a wide range of physical, sensory, and cognitive needs, supporting neurodiverse individuals through inclusive design strategies that offer flexibility and choice, reduce anxiety, support focus, and encourage comfort and autonomy.

At least 50% of the furniture products included in each submission must be from OFS, Carolina, and ROOM. Consider healthcare solutions such as: [Element](#), [Lasata](#), [Offshore](#), [Mile Marker](#), [Elara](#), [Noé](#), [Stray](#), and [Staks](#). OFS and Carolina, in addition to its standard product offering, provide clients with custom and modified solutions. The primary care clinic is an ideal setting to take advantage of those capabilities. Revit families and CAD blocks can be found on the [ofs.com](https://www.ofs.com) website within product web pages under “Product Resources” and “Related Typicals”.

Healthcare facilities such as this should take into consideration the ADA Standards for Accessible Design, the HIPAA Privacy Rule, make seating accommodations for the bariatric population, parents with small children, and design for neurodiversity.



PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Public Spaces

Check-in: The check-in area of the clinic drives the patient experience and sets the tone for the visit. The area will need to support two to three (2-3) staff members. Explore new and emerging technologies that can support needs and consider the removal or minimization of a “check-in” desk.

Waiting Area: The waiting area plays a vital role in the overall patient experience. This space should evoke a sense of home as well as comfort and hospitality. Patients will often bring a book, laptop, or tablet with them to create a positive distraction, as wait times will vary. A variety of seating styles and table options allow for autonomy and choice of work and waiting style. Allow for the adaptation of new and emerging technology.

Sensory Room: A sensory waiting room offers an inclusive environment that supports a diverse range of needs, providing patients the opportunity to choose a setting aligned with their sensory and neurodiverse preferences. It should feature flexible seating, controlled lighting, calming colors, and sound mitigation to promote comfort and reduce overstimulation.

Check Out: Check out will require a two-sided desk that will support patients and two (2) staff. Patients will sit briefly to schedule appointments, discuss insurance coverage, and address billing questions. Design must comply with HIPAA and ADA requirements. HIPAA and ADA requirements should be taken into consideration.



Patient Spaces

Consultation Room: The consultation room will support caregivers discussing treatment plans with patients. Technology will be integral in these discussions but should not overwhelm the space.

Exam Rooms: A minimum of nine (9) exam rooms should be flexible and support check-ups, examinations, and caregiver interactions. Create a home-like and hospitable environment to help reduce patient stress. Technology will aid caregiver and patient interactions but should not overwhelm the room. Keep cleanability and infection control in mind.

Telehealth Room: One (1) telehealth room will support one to two (1-2) physicians or nurses within the room during virtual telehealth consultations with patients. Consider acoustics, lighting, technology, HIPAA, and the use of modular phone rooms or meeting rooms.

Caregiver Spaces

Manager's Office: One (1) private office will support clinic management. The manager will communicate with patients and caregivers throughout the day and work to ensure that the clinic is running smoothly and efficiently. The manager requires space for lateral filing, wardrobe cabinet within the desk, and a high-end aesthetic.

Traveling Caregiver's Office: One (1) private office will support a flexible office design for traveling doctors with space for a laptop, small bag or backpack, and technology. The room should offer layout and furniture to accommodate a flexible meeting space when not being used by a traveling caregiver.

Staff Lounge: This space will accommodate staff, nurses, and physicians during lunch and breaks. This space should promote a sense of calm and retreat, with a variety of seating and table styles for work, privacy, and community. The users will also require a common area for fourteen to twenty (14-20) lockers. All lockers should be large enough to encourage people to bring workout gear and other personal items.

Practitioner's Workroom: The shared workroom will house three to four (3-4) physicians and nurse practitioners. Each user will need a writing surface, as well as storage for work and personal items. A common area for printing and filing, accessible to all users.

Care Desk Area: The shared care desk area serves as the operational hub for three to four (3-4) clinical staff. The area will support communication, storage, documentation, and patient flow. It should be centrally located with clear sightlines to exam rooms. The design should promote collaboration, reduce noise, and support ergonomic workflows with integrated technology and organized storage.

Administrative Workroom: The shared workroom will support four (4) employees that are responsible for billing insurance, ordering medical and office supplies, and other administrative duties. The employees will communicate and interact with staff and physicians throughout the day, both in person and through email or phone. The workroom will house sensitive patient and work-related documents.

Toilet Rooms: Minimum two (2) ADA compliant toilet rooms - one (1) staff and one (1) patient. Consider specimen pass-thru to practitioner's work area.

Storage Room: The care staff requires a dedicated lockable room to provide storage and organization for medical supplies, toiletries, equipment, etc.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Your project must be submitted digitally through the competition website. The competition website will open on Monday, January 5, 2026, and close on Friday, February 6, 2026. We recommend working on submissions prior to these dates.

Each submission must include the following:

1. Project/Contact Info (Entry Form)

- Participant name(s)
- IIDA Member IDs (if a current member)
- Project title
- Contact info
- A 500-word project description outlining why your concept demonstrates the best solution for the comprehensive primary care clinic.

2. One (1) 24" x 36" digital presentation board in PDF format between 3MB and 10MB, containing:

- One (1) dimensioned floor plan drawn to scale
- One (1) furniture and materials plan
 - i. You may combine the dimensioned floor plan and furniture plans
- One (1) reflected ceiling plan, created with the assumption that the ceiling is a blank slate
- Two to four (2-4) renderings of the completed space
- Two (2) additional drawings of the space, which can be an elevation, perspective, isometric, axonometric, or orthographic drawing
- Additional elements to convey the overall concept including, but not limited to, furniture and fixture specifications, color palettes, wall sections, electrical plans, schedules, additional renderings, etc.
- File name: SDC + initials + year_board (ex. SDCLH2026_board.pdf)

NOTE: Do not place your name or other identifying information on your board or you may be disqualified.

3. Individual JPG or JPEG file submissions of the 10 to 12 required drawings/renderings outlined above saved as:

- JPG or JPEG format
- RGB color mode
- 8.5-inch-by-11-inch (8.5" x 11") minimum dimensions
- 200 dpi resolution minimum, 300 dpi resolution preferred
- File size between 1MB and 10MB
- File name: SDC + initials + year number (SDCLH2026_1.jpg)

NOTE: Do not place your name or other identifying information on your JPG file submissions or you may be disqualified.

GENERAL NOTES AND CLARIFICATIONS

- This project is purely fictional. The location and image are for inspirational purposes only.
- True north is at the designer's discretion and plan north is as drawn.
- The primary care clinic is located on the second (2nd) floor of the building.
- The original floor plate has structural columns throughout the space. The structural columns were removed for this competition.
- The exterior walls and windows cannot be changed or altered.
- The square footage is approximately 5,900 square feet (SF)
- The ceiling height is 108 inches. The ceiling material can be adjusted and/or changed to meet the design intent.
- Windowsill height is 36 inches above finished floor (AFF) and the overall window height is 60 inches.
- Employees and patients enter through separate entrances as noted within the PDF floor plans.
- Medical equipment considerations are at the designer's discretion
- The primary care clinic hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Product solutions must be 50% [Carolina](#) and/or [OFS](#)
- Minimum of two (2) ADA compliant toilet rooms - one (1) staff and one (1) patient.

REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION

Competition design problem and requirements must be sent to IIDA at students@IIDA.org by Wednesday, October 1, 2025. Questions submitted after this date will not be answered. All questions received by this date will be answered and posted on IIDA.org as an FAQ, no later than October 31, 2025.

TIMELINE

Call for entry period: Monday, January 5, 2026 to Friday, February 6, 2026

Submission deadline: Friday, February 6, 2026, 11:59 PM Central Standard Time

ENTRY FEES

Individual Entries

- IIDA Student Members: \$35.00
- Non-members: \$60.00

Team Entries

- IIDA Student Member: \$50.00
 - At least one student on the team must be an IIDA Student Member
- Non-members: \$90.00

ELIGIBILITY

The 2026 IIDA Student Design Competition is open to students around the world who are currently enrolled at an interior design program or institution. Participants can enter individually or as a team with a maximum of five (5) members.

AWARDS

First Place: \$2,500.00

Second Place: \$1,500.00

Third Place: \$750.00

**Prizes will be split between team members for winning team submissions.*

JUDGING

A panel of three judges will evaluate the entries on:

- Innovation and creativity: 20%
- Coherence and functionality: 20%
- Human and environmental impact: 20%
- Fulfillment of the program requirements and additional contributions above and beyond the basic program: 20%
- Presentation: 20%

FLOOR PLANS

[Click here](#) to view the pdf and dwg floor plans.

Please note, additional plans, such as reflected ceiling plans, mechanical, electrical, or plumbing plans will not be provided for this program to allow more flexibility for design solutions. Ceiling heights are fixed and noted.

HEALTHCARE DESIGN TERMINOLOGY

[LEAN Design](#)

[HIPAA](#)

[Biophilic Design](#)

[ADA](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Articles, research, guides, and helpful links:

[Patient Safety Standards, Materials and Systems Guidelines](#)

[The Center of Health Design](#)

[Rural Communities Report](#)

[MSU Community Design Center](#)

IIDA

IIDA is the commercial interior design association with a global reach. We support design professionals, industry affiliates, educators, students, firms, and their clients through our network of 15,000+ members across 58 countries. We advocate for advancements in education, design excellence, legislation, leadership, accreditation, and community outreach to increase the value and understanding of interior design as a profession that enhances business value and positively impacts the health and well-being of people's lives every day.

IIDA.org



carolina

OFS is a family owned, community-driven company providing socially responsible furniture and logistics solutions in office, healthcare, education, government, and home office markets across the world. Established in 1937 in Huntingburg, Indiana, OFS has grown into a global leader while staying true to its local roots and core values of sustainability and craftsmanship.

OFS.com



IIDA Headquarters | 111 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 222 | Chicago, IL 60601 USA | +01 312.467.1950 | iidahq@iida.org