AIA Vermont

EMERGING PROFESSIONALS NETWORK · DESIGN COMPETITION & REFERENCE BRIEF

Destination Colombia

Design the Vision. Win the Experience.

An open ideas competition for Vermont architecture students and emerging professionals

SITE	Equipamiento de Educación Inicial, Plazuela de los Álamos, Engativá, Bogotá D.C., Colombia
AWARD	A fully funded* seat on the AIA Vermont 2027 Colombia Study Trip (Bogotá & Medellín)*, Underwritten by Windows & Doors by Brownell / Marvin. See Section 13.

- Design brief announced September 10, 2026
- Submissions due October 23, 2026
- Award ceremony November 7, 2026

Issued September 10, 2026

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Introduction & Purpose

SECTION 1

Introduction & Purpose

AIA Vermont (AIAVT) is sending a Vermont emerging professional to Colombia in 2027, with stops in Bogotá and Medellín, for an immersive architectural study trip. This design competition is how AIAVT is selecting who earns that seat.

The competition is organized by the AIAVT Emerging Professionals Network (EPN) as an educational design competition: an open call for ideas that lets a Vermont architecture student or emerging professional engage with a real site and a real civic program in Colombia, while building the cross-cultural relationship at the heart of the trip itself.

Entrants are asked to develop a conceptual design response to an early-childhood education facility on a real, undeveloped public site in Bogotá: the same site used in a 2022 public architecture competition organized by Bogotá's Secretaría de Educación del Distrito (SED). Working from that site and program gives entrants a grounded, real-world design problem, a sense of the scale and ambition of Bogotá's public investment in early education, and a first point of connection to the place they may travel to as a result.

This is deliberately not a paper exercise invented for the occasion. The site, the enrollment numbers, the area requirements, the climate, and the zoning constraints below are all drawn from an actual municipal competition brief. Entrants are asked to treat the problem with the same seriousness a Bogotá-based firm would, while using the freedom of an ideas competition, rather than a construction commission, to explore ideas that a live procurement process would not allow.

Important: This AIAVT competition is an independent educational exercise. It is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or a submission to SED Bogotá, the Sociedad Colombiana de Arquitectos (SCA), or any official Colombian procurement process. Site and program data are drawn from public competition documents (Concurso de Méritos No. SED-CM-A-DCCEE-016-2022, “Ambientes Innovadores y Sostenibles para Educación Inicial”) for design-study purposes only. Entries will not be forwarded to, or represented as part of, the original Bogotá process, and no entrant may represent their proposal as an official submission to that competition.

SECTION

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About AIA Vermont, the EPN & Destination Colombia

SECTION 2

About AIA Vermont, the EPN & Destination Colombia

AIA Vermont is the Vermont chapter of the American Institute of Architects, representing architects and allied professionals across the state. The AIAVT Emerging Professionals Network (EPN) supports architecture students, associate members, and newly licensed architects through mentorship, professional development, and opportunities to engage with practice beyond Vermont's borders.

Destination Colombia is AIAVT's plan to send a Vermont emerging professional to Bogotá and Medellín in 2027 for an immersive study trip. The goal is to expose that entrant to Colombian architecture, urbanism, and public-interest design practice at a formative moment in their career, and to begin an exchange of ideas between Vermont's design community and its counterparts in Colombia.

This competition is how AIAVT will determine who goes. Rather than choose a trip participant by application alone, AIAVT wanted the selection process itself to be a design experience: an opportunity to research a Colombian city, grapple with a program shaped by different social priorities and constraints than a typical Vermont project, and arrive at a considered point of view before ever setting foot in Bogotá.

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Eligibility

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Eligibility

Eligible participants include:

- Students currently enrolled in an architecture, design, or pre-professional design program in Vermont, at any level (college, university, or technical/vocational center);
- Vermont residents currently enrolled in an architecture, design, or pre-professional design program outside the state of Vermont, at any level (college, university, or technical/vocational center);
- AIAVT Associate Members with up to ten years of practice;
- AIAVT Members (architect, associate, or allied) who are emerging professionals working in architecture or a related field and are within ten years of completing their academic studies or achieving initial licensure.

This is an individual competition. Team, partnership, and group entries are not accepted; each proposal must be the work of one person.

Each entrant may submit only one entry. Members of the jury, AIAVT staff and board members directly involved in organizing the competition, and their immediate family members, are not eligible to enter.

Entrants do not need prior experience with Colombia, fluency in Spanish, or any professional licensure. This is an ideas competition aimed at growth and curiosity as much as technical polish.

Entrants must be 18 years or older.

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04

The Site

SECTION 4

The Site

Participants will design for a real, vacant public lot in the Santa Mónica neighborhood of Engativá, in northwestern Bogotá, a site originally set aside by the City of Bogotá for a new early-childhood education facility.

Address	Carrera 96 No. 70-35 IN 4, Urbanización Plazuela de los Álamos
Neighborhood / District	Barrio Santa Mónica, Localidad de Engativá (UPL 11), Bogotá D.C., Colombia
Approximate coordinates	4.700634° N, -74.116635° W
Lot area	2,683.14 m² (per Acta de Recibo No. 077, 18 Nov 2015)
Current condition	Vacant public cession lot (“cesión comunal”), undeveloped
Zoning use	Dotacional Tipo 1 (educational-use equipment), per Bogotá's Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial (Decreto Distrital 555 de 2021)
Boundaries	N: Río Juan Amarillo · S: Av. José Celestino Mutis / UPL Fontibón · E: Av. Longitudinal de Occidente / UPL Tábora · W: Río Bogotá / Municipio de Cota

Bogotá's early-childhood facilities are conceived as more than classrooms: the competition documents that inspired this brief describe them as community nodes intended to become meeting points for families and residents of different ages and backgrounds, not just enclosed school buildings. Entrants are encouraged to think about the site's relationship to its surrounding blocks, and not only to the building program, for that reason.

4.1 Where this land came from

Nobody bought this lot for a school. It exists because Bogotá makes developers pay for the city they build in.

In 2004 a developer got approval for Plazuela de los Álamos, a residential development in Santa Mónica. Under Colombian planning rules, that approval came with a condition: a share of the land had to be handed to the city, free, for public use. On the urbanization's plans that share appears with no ceremony at all, labeled simply "Servicio Comunal No. 1." The apartments went up around it. The corner stayed empty.

In November 2015 the city's public-space authority formally took possession, and a public deed recorded the transfer in 2018. By the time the education department began looking for somewhere to put an early-childhood center, the paperwork was still catching up: the handover from the public-space authority to the education department had not yet been registered. The city, in effect, went looking for a site and found one it had already owned for years.

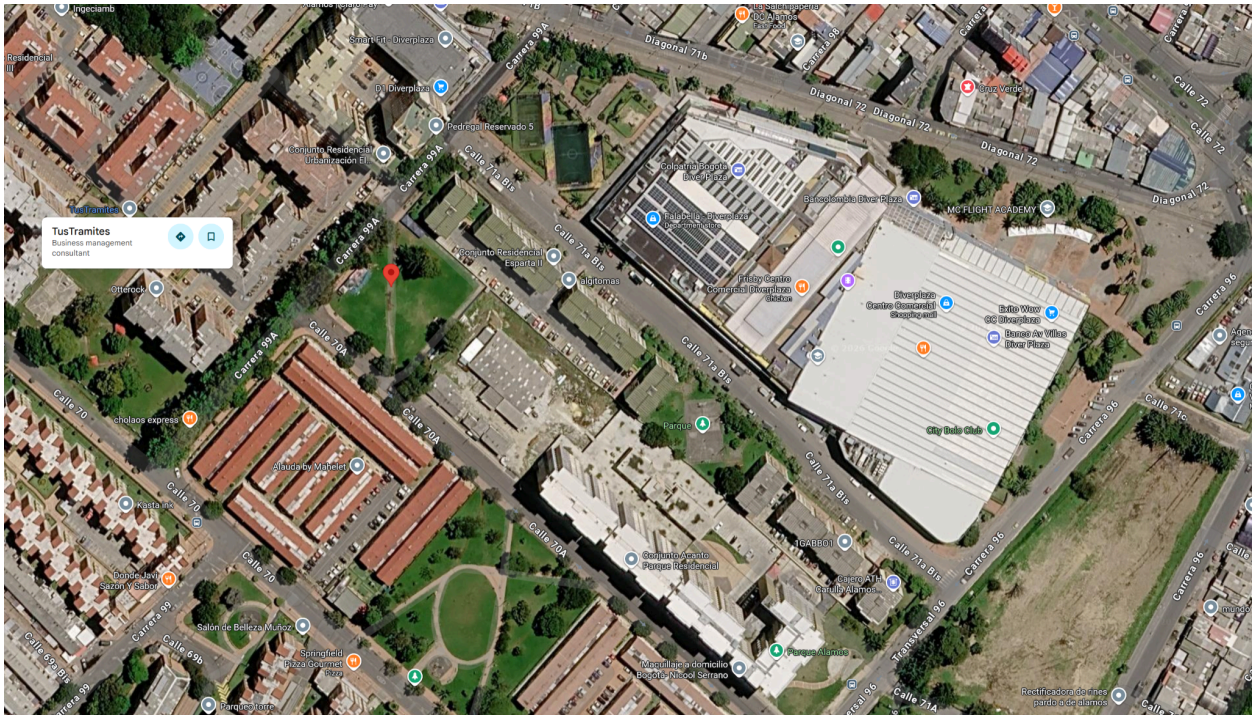
That history is worth carrying into a design. This is not a leftover parcel that happened to be cheap. It is land the neighborhood was owed — set aside as the price of the housing around it, and left vacant long enough that residents began using it as an unofficial commons. A design that reads the site as a debt finally being paid to the block, rather than as a plot to be filled, is

closer to what the site actually is. It also explains the program's insistence that this be a meeting point for the neighborhood and not only a school: the land was public before it was educational.

The lot measures 2,683.14 m² — the certified area, and the figure to design against.

4.2 What is on the site today

https://maps.app.goo.gl/juy8orofXEt95dJw7



It is a corner lot, vacant, with no occupants and no buildings. It has no fencing, and in the absence of any enclosure the neighborhood has taken it over informally.

- **Informal use.** Food vending, informal sport and recreation, and dog walking all happen on the lot. Street vendors have occupied part of the public space and part of the lot along its southern edge.
- **Trees.** Three trees stand on the southern side. The original documents call for a forest inventory to establish species, quantity and position, and to determine what may be done with each individual tree in coordination with the district environment authority.
- **Edges.** Sidewalks and public space around the lot are already built out and in reasonable condition.
- **Security.** Residents report thefts in the adjacent undeveloped areas — one reason the site's relationship to the street, and how much of it is passively watched, matters here.

Its four immediate neighbors are all residential complexes: El Pedregal to the north, Acanto to the south, Plazuela de los Álamos II to the east and Esparta II to the west. (The river and avenue boundaries given at the head of this section describe the wider planning district, not this parcel.)

4.3 The neighborhood around it

Santa Mónica and the barrios around it — Álamos Norte and Sur, Zarzamora, Salinas, Santa Rosita, Los Ángeles, Tierra Grata — read as a mixed, consolidated residential fabric: apartment buildings up to twelve stories alongside clusters of houses up to three stories with shared common areas, with lot-by-lot neighborhood commerce and a few shopping centers. Socioeconomic strata 2 and 3 predominate. There is no social-housing construction in the immediate surroundings.

The area is well served by facilities, and by schools in particular: public and private schools, kindergartens, technical institutions, religious, health, cultural and recreational buildings. Health services nearby include the CAMI and UPA Garcés Navas and the Engativá hospital. Most green space belongs to the residential complexes themselves; the public parks in walking distance are pocket parks plus Parque Garcés Navas, Parque Infantil Álamos, Parque Los Ángeles and Parque El Carmelo.

In the city's planning framework the lot sits within a proximity area intended to receive urban support facilities, next to a structuring area that receives economic activity. The intent, in other words, is exactly what this program is: a local civic facility placed where daily life already is.

4.4 Getting there

The main access corridors to the sector are Calle 80, Avenida 63 (José Celestino Mutis), Avenida Cali, Calle 72, Carrera 96 and Carrera 99. TransMilenio and SITP bus routes serve the area, along with bicitaxis and the city's ciclorruta network. Pedestrian sidewalks are in good condition, though some internal streets are somewhat deteriorated.

Where parking is shown, the original documents set these dimensions. Accessible spaces are not counted toward the minimum percentage calculations.

SPACE OR AISLE	CLEAR DIMENSION
Car, van or SUV space	**5.00 × 2.40 m**
Accessible space	**5.00 × 3.70 m**
Motorcycle space (+0.15 m against a wall)	**1.00 × 2.50 m**
Aisle, spaces at 90°, two-way	**2.50 m**
Aisle, spaces at 60°	**1.75 m**
Aisle, spaces at 45°	**1.50 m**
Aisle, parallel parking	**1.20 m**

4.5 Environmental status

The lot carries no stream-buffer, watershed or water-capture restriction; it is not a discharge point and it does not occupy a channel. What it does carry are process obligations: a forest inventory for the three trees, soil stability analysis, and permits covering visual pollution, urban forestry and construction and demolition waste. None of this needs resolving in a competition entry, but it tells you the environmental argument here is about resource use and the trees, not about a protected watercourse on the parcel itself.

4.6 Why this facility, here

Bogotá's 2020–2024 district development plan named early-childhood education a priority, citing a shortfall of more than 13,000 children in the city without access to quality early education at the time the original competition was issued. The “Bogotá Ciudad Educadora” program that grew out of that plan called for 35 new or rebuilt schools and more than 700 additional school improvements. The site given to entrants here was one lot within that larger public effort: a small, ordinary piece of the city given an outsized civic purpose.

Engativá is among the planning districts running a deficit against city-wide demand for school places, and Bogotá's insufficiency study for 2021–2022 identified early-childhood provision as a specific gap, aggravated by the shift from an afternoon session to a single full-day session. The 240 places are distributed 80 to each of the three levels — pre-jardín, jardín and transición — in a single daily session.

There is no institution in the sector dedicated exclusively to early childhood; the public and private schools nearby serve primary grades and up. The community, according to the original documents, welcomed the project for that reason.

SECTION

05

Glossary: Key Terms in Bogotá's Urban Planning

SECTION 5

Glossary: Key Terms in Bogotá's Urban Planning

The site and regulatory information in this brief use planning terms specific to Bogotá's Spanish-language regulatory system. Plain-English equivalents are given below for reference; they describe the general idea, not an exact legal translation.

POT (Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial)

Bogotá's territorial master plan: the city's comprehensive land-use and zoning framework, roughly equivalent to a US city's zoning code and comprehensive plan combined.

Dotacional

A zoning-use category for civic and institutional facilities (schools, health centers, government buildings), as opposed to residential or commercial use. This site is zoned “Dotacional Tipo 1,” the sub-category for smaller local facilities like this one.

Tratamiento de consolidación

One of several “urban treatments” the POT assigns to different parts of the city. Consolidation areas are already largely built out and meant to fill in modestly within the existing block pattern, rather than be redeveloped at a larger scale.

Tipología continua

A “continuous” building form that shares party walls with its neighbors along the property line, similar to a rowhouse or attached urban building, rather than standing free on all sides.

Antejardín

A required front setback between the building and the public sidewalk, comparable to a front-yard setback in a US zoning code.

Aislamiento

A required side or rear setback between buildings, comparable to a side- or rear-yard setback.

Cesión comunal

Land a developer must hand over to the city, at no cost, as a condition of approving a new development, typically for public space, parks, or civic facilities. This site exists because of exactly that kind of cession.

UPL (Unidad de Planeamiento Local)

A local planning unit: Bogotá's neighborhood-scale planning district, smaller than a full “localidad” (borough).

Índice de ocupación / de construcción

The maximum share of the lot a building's footprint may cover (occupation index), and the maximum total floor area allowed relative to lot size (construction index); similar to lot coverage and floor-area ratio (FAR) in a US zoning code.

SED (Secretaría de Educación del Distrito)

Bogotá's district Department of Education, the public agency that commissioned the real 2022 competition this site and program are drawn from.

SECTION

06

Site Context: Climate & Urban Regulations

SECTION 6

Site Context: Climate & Urban Regulations

Climate

Engativá sits in a “semi-seco” (semi-dry) microclimate relative to the rest of Bogotá, with a bimodal rainfall pattern, two wet seasons rather than one. Prevailing winds descend from the eastern hills, generally from the northeast.

Average annual temperature	13.5°C
Average annual high	19.5°C
Average annual low	8.6°C
Average annual humidity	80%
Average wind speed	10.5 km/h, predominantly from the northeast
Average annual precipitation	819 mm, in two wet seasons (March–June and September–November)
Daylight / cloud cover	Roughly 12 hours of daylight year-round (near the equator), but consistently high cloud cover, averaging about 7 hours of cloud per day

Urban regulations

The site falls under Bogotá's “tratamiento de consolidación” (consolidation treatment) and a continuous building typology (“tipología continua”); see the glossary in Section 5 for plain-English definitions of these terms. The figures below are drawn from the original competition's zoning analysis (Decreto Distrital 555 de 2021) and are provided as design context; this AIAVT competition does not require strict code compliance, but entrants should design in a way that plausibly respects these constraints.

Building typology	Continuous (“tipología continua”), per plano CU-5.4.10
Maximum height (zone-wide)	Up to 3 stories under the applicable urban treatment
Maximum height (this lot)	2 stories, per the site-specific application of the norm
Occupation & construction indices	Resultant from the applicable volumetric norms rather than a fixed ratio (Decreto 555 de 2021, Art. 310)
Front setback (antejardín)	3.50 m
Minimum rear/side isolation (aislamiento)	3.00 m for buildings up to 3 stories, measured from grade or the top of any basement slab
Rooftop elements	Any non-structural rooftop volumes or equipment must set back a minimum of 3.00 m from the façade
Environmental mitigation	Noise standards per Resolución 627 de 2006; landscape buffers required where the site adjoins ecological structure (Decreto 555 de 2021, Arts. 245 & 248)

Parking & site access (design context)

- 1 vehicle space per 200 m² of administrative area, and 1 per 300 m² of classroom area, with a minimum of 7 total spaces

- At least 1 accessible space and 1 electric-vehicle space, in addition to the minimum above
- A loading/unloading bay and a passenger drop-off area sized for at least one bus
- Bicycle parking for 12 bikes (staff and visitors), in a secure, covered location

For reference only, the original 2022 competition budgeted construction at roughly COP $4,050,000 per built square meter (about USD $1,000/m² at 2022 exchange rates). This AIAVT competition has no construction budget or cost requirement; the figure is included only to give entrants a sense of the economic context Bogotá's public design and construction sector operates in.

SECTION

07

Construction Methods in Bogotá

SECTION 7

Construction Methods in Bogotá

Entrants are not required to specify a structural system, and this is not a structural design exercise. But knowing roughly how buildings of this type actually get built in Bogotá is useful design context, and it differs from Vermont's construction culture in a few notable ways.

Structural systems

Two structural systems dominate low-rise construction in Bogotá and across Colombia: reinforced concrete frame construction (“pórticos de concreto reforzado”) and confined masonry (“mampostería confinada”), in which masonry walls are braced by a light cast-in-place concrete frame poured around them. Confined masonry in particular is common for school buildings at this scale. Colombia's national seismic code, known as NSR-10, governs which system is permitted and how it must be detailed, since Bogotá sits in a seismically active part of the Andes.

Material culture

Bogotá also has a distinctive material tradition worth knowing: locally made clay brick, left exposed rather than plastered or painted. This “arquitectura en ladrillo” (brick architecture) is closely associated with Colombian architects like Rogelio Salmona, and it shows up widely on public and civic buildings, including schools, where the brick serves as both structure and finish at once. Entrants are not required to use brick, but it is a materially and culturally grounded choice for this site.

Practical implications for design

- Foundations typically respond to Bogotá's variable Andean soils; reinforced concrete strip or slab foundations are common.
- Because the site's zoning limits it to 2 stories in a continuous, party-wall typology, at least one side of the building is likely to abut, or be designed to eventually abut, a neighboring structure.
- Heavy timber construction, common in Vermont, is much less typical in Bogotá, where concrete, clay brick, and steel roof framing are the more available, familiar materials.

SECTION

08

Design Brief & Program

SECTION 8

Design Brief & Program

The design task is adapted from SED Bogotá's original program for a new early-childhood education center serving 240 children across three grade levels: Pre-jardín (age 3), Jardín (age 4), and Transición (age 5). Entrants are not required to replicate every technical requirement of the original program; the intent is a conceptual response, not a construction-ready set. The detailed summary below is provided as a design provocation grounded in the real numbers, not a checklist to be satisfied line by line.

A note on units: every measurement in this brief is given in square meters (m²) and other metric units, matching how this site is actually measured and regulated in Colombia. We've deliberately left it in metric rather than converting to square feet, since getting comfortable working in the site's native units is a small but useful part of preparing for the trip. As a rough reference, 1 m² ≈ 10.76 sq ft, so a 40 m² classroom is roughly the size of a 430 sq ft room.

Design philosophy behind the program

The original brief describes the architecture of early-childhood spaces in explicitly qualitative terms, not just square meters: simple and practical at a child's scale, easy to read and move through, and, in its own words, “moving, harmonious, calm, and safe.” A few ideas worth carrying into a conceptual proposal:

- **Interior–exterior relationships:** spaces that let children learn through direct contact with the outdoors, not just visually but through touch, sound, and movement.
- **Legible circulation:** routes through the building that reveal texture, color, and material change as children move through them, turning circulation itself into a form of discovery.
- **Meeting points:** shared spaces, indoor and outdoor, where children, teachers, and families from different parts of the community naturally gather.

Program summary

Total built area ≈ 2,430 m² · ≈ 10.1 m² per student

A: TEACHING & LEARNING SPACES	
Learning environments (Ambientes de Aprendizaje)	12 classrooms, 40 m² each = 480 m², capacity 20 students each
Classroom outdoor extensions	Covered outdoor terraces attached to each classroom, 10 m² each = 120 m². Required Marvin product callout — see Section 13.
Multipurpose playroom (Ludoteca)	128 m², for movement, performance, and shared activities across grade levels; includes a protected mirror wall and materials storage
Restrooms & handwashing	1 handwashing station per 15 students and 1 child-height toilet per 15 students, located immediately adjacent to (not inside) each classroom
Accessible restroom	1 dedicated restroom for students with disabilities
Outdoor play & recreation	Playground and recreation area, minimum 60 m², plus a school garden (“huerta escolar”) for hands-on environmental learning
Subtotal A	**≈ 924 m²**

C: SOCIAL & WELLBEING SPACES	
Multipurpose hall / dining room	200 m², used as cafeteria, and flexible event or gathering space
Kitchen & food service	Cold and hot kitchen, receiving, dry/refrigerated/frozen storage, dishwashing, and a dedicated waste room, all with exterior access at grade
Staff & children's restrooms (this zone)	Separate facilities for children and adults, plus one accessible restroom
Subtotal C	**≈ 307 m²**

E: ADMINISTRATION & PEDAGOGY	
Staff room / teachers' lounge	27 m²
Meeting room	25 m²
Family reception room	4 m², for meetings with parents and caregivers
Coordinators' offices, registrar, records, copy room	Approx. 32 m² combined
First-aid room	16 m², with an accessible sink and shower
Subtotal E	**≈ 119 m²**

F: GENERAL SERVICES	
Maintenance workshop & storage	35 m² combined
Custodial, equipment & waste rooms	40 m² combined
Staff facilities (restroom, lockers)	10 m² combined
Security post (portería)	4 m², at the main entrance
Entry vestibule	50 m²
Electrical substation	30 m²
Subtotal F	**≈ 169 m²**

TOTALS	
Net program area (A + C + E + F)	≈ 1,519 m²
Circulation (+15%)	≈ 228 m²
Walls, structure & transition spaces (+45%)	≈ 683 m²
Total built area	**≈ 2,430 m² (≈ 10.1 m² per student)**

Accessibility requirements

- Universal accessibility throughout, including at least three water-dispenser stations (not drinking fountains)
- Inclusive wayfinding, including Braille signage

The program's sustainability requirements, and what they mean on a Bogotá site, are in Section 11.

[Note: the figures above are condensed and reorganized from Anexo 21, Cuadro de Áreas y Programa Primera Infancia, for readability. The full room-by-room schedule is in Section 9, and the design notes drawn from the same source are in Section 10.]

SECTION

09

Detailed Area Schedule

SECTION 9

Detailed Area Schedule

Section 8 gives the program in summary. This section is the fuller, room-by-room version of the same program, for entrants who want to work out a plan at a more granular level. For each space you will find its design capacity, the area allotted per student where that applies, the resulting area, how many of that space the program calls for, and the subtotal it contributes to its group.

These are minimums, not a floor plan. Treat the figures as a sense check for scale and proportion as you develop your own design, not a checklist to satisfy line by line.

9.1 Teaching & learning spaces

SPACE	CAP.	M² / STUDENT	AREA (M²)	NO.	SUBTOTAL (M²)
Learning environments (classrooms)	**20**	**2.0**	**40.0**	**12**	**480.0**
Materials & sleeping-mat storage niche, built into each classroom	**–**	**–**	**–**	**12**	**included above**
Covered outdoor extension per classroom — location of the required window/door section detail	**20**	**0.5**	**10.0**	**12**	**120.0**
Toy library / multi-purpose room	**80**	**1.6**	**128.0**	**1**	**128.0**
General storage	**–**	**–**	**20.0**	**1**	**20.0**
Hand-washing area, adjacent to classrooms	**16**	**1.8**	**28.8**	**1**	**28.8**
Restrooms (mixed)	**16**	**2.4**	**38.4**	**1**	**38.4**
Shower cubicles, one per grade level	**1**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**4**	**4.0**
Accessible restroom	**1**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**1**	**4.4**
Recreational-equipment storage	**–**	**–**	**20.0**	**2**	**40.0**
Playground & outdoor recreation area	**–**	**–**	**60.0**	**1**	**60.0**
School garden (pedagogical planting area;	**–**	**–**	**–**	**1**	**not counted**

SPACE	CAP.	M² / STUDENT	AREA (M²)	NO.	SUBTOTAL (M²)
not counted toward built area)					
Group A total (teaching & learning, 240 students)					**924.0**

9.2 Socialization & wellbeing (incl. food service)

SPACE	CAP.	M² / STUDENT	AREA (M²)	NO.	SUBTOTAL (M²)
Multi-purpose room / dining hall	–	–	**200.0**	**1**	**200.0**
Insulated food-cart storage	–	–	**4.0**	**1**	**4.0**
Receiving area	–	–	**4.0**	**1**	**4.0**
Crate storage	–	–	**3.0**	**1**	**3.0**
Dry storage	–	–	**6.0**	**1**	**6.0**
Refrigerated storage	–	–	**6.0**	**1**	**6.0**
Frozen storage	–	–	**5.0**	**1**	**5.0**
Chemical storage	–	–	**1.5**	**1**	**1.5**
Cold-prep kitchen	–	–	**10.0**	**1**	**10.0**
Hot kitchen (cooking)	–	–	**10.0**	**1**	**10.0**
Food service / delivery window	–	–	**8.0**	**1**	**8.0**
Dishwashing	–	–	**8.0**	**1**	**8.0**
Kitchenware storage	–	–	**3.0**	**1**	**3.0**
Trash room	–	–	**4.0**	**1**	**4.0**
Kitchen office / workstation	–	–	**1.5**	**1**	**1.5**
Staff restrooms	–	–	**4.0**	**2**	**8.0**
Staff locker room	–	–	**3.0**	**1**	**3.0**
Children's restroom (mixed)	**4**	**2.4**	**9.6**	**1**	**9.6**
Adult restrooms	**2**	**4.0**	**8.0**	**1**	**8.0**
Accessible restroom	**1**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**1**	**4.4**
Group C total (socialization & wellbeing)					**307.0**

9.3 Administration & management

SPACE	CAP.	M² / STUDENT	AREA (M²)	NO.	SUBTOTAL (M²)
Teachers' lounge	**18**	**1.5**	**27.0**	**1**	**27.0**
Meeting room	**–**	**–**	**25.0**	**1**	**25.0**
Parent meeting room	**–**	**–**	**4.0**	**1**	**4.0**
Coordinators' office (open-plan recommended)	**–**	**–**	**6.0**	**2**	**12.0**
Administrative assistant desk	**–**	**–**	**6.0**	**1**	**6.0**
Records / filing room, naturally ventilated	**–**	**–**	**8.0**	**1**	**8.0**
Copy room	**–**	**–**	**6.0**	**1**	**6.0**
Teaching-aids storage	**–**	**–**	**3.0**	**2**	**6.0**
Adult restrooms	**2**	**4.5**	**9.0**	**1**	**9.0**
First-aid room (exam table, accessible restroom)	**–**	**–**	**16.0**	**1**	**16.0**
Group E total (administration & management)					**119.0**

9.4 General building services

SPACE	CAP.	M² / STUDENT	AREA (M²)	NO.	SUBTOTAL (M²)
Maintenance workshop / storage	**–**	**–**	**20.0**	**1**	**20.0**
General storage (supplies & paper goods)	**–**	**–**	**15.0**	**1**	**15.0**
Janitor closet, one per floor	**–**	**–**	**2.0**	**2**	**4.0**
Equipment room	**–**	**–**	**30.0**	**1**	**30.0**
Trash room	**–**	**–**	**6.0**	**1**	**6.0**
Staff restroom (security & custodial staff)	**–**	**–**	**2.0**	**2**	**4.0**
Staff locker room	**–**	**–**	**3.0**	**2**	**6.0**
Guard post	**–**	**–**	**2.0**	**1**	**2.0**
Guard restroom	**–**	**–**	**2.0**	**1**	**2.0**

SPACE	CAP.	M² / STUDENT	AREA (M²)	NO.	SUBTOTAL (M²)
Main lobby / vestibule, with covered space near the entrance for information boards	–	–	**50.0**	**1**	**50.0**
Electrical substation	–	–	**30.0**	**1**	**30.0**
Group F total (general services)					**169.0**

9.5 Program totals

COMPONENT	AREA (M²)
Net program area (Groups A + C + E + F)	**1,519**
Walls, structure & transition areas (+15%)	**228**
Circulation (+45%)	**683**
Total built area	**2,430**
Built area per student	**10**
Total students	**240**
Outdoor recreational area on the flat lot (4.5 m² / student)	**1,080**

SECTION

10

Design Notes by Space

SECTION 10

Design Notes by Space

The original program comes with a much longer set of construction-level notes for each space, fixture counts, door widths, equipment clearances, and similar detail meant for a construction-ready set at a much larger scale than this competition calls for. This is an ideas competition, not a design-development deliverable: entrants aren't expected to place outlets, specify drains, or resolve equipment layouts. The notes below are only the spatial and organizational ideas worth carrying into a conceptual entry, grouped by theme.

10.1 Learning environments

- Every classroom benefits from a covered outdoor extension it can open directly onto, ideally at ground level. This is also the condition every entry must detail: the required window/door section detail on Panel 3 is drawn here, so it is worth resolving how the classroom opens to its terrace early rather than late.
- Design classrooms for flexible use: group work, solo work, art, a reading corner, and storage for teaching materials, rather than one fixed layout.
- A small storage niche for teaching materials and nap mats belongs inside each classroom, not as a separate room.
- Restrooms sized for children work best located just outside the classroom door rather than inside it.
- The toy library / multi-purpose room should function as another kind of classroom (puppet shows, movement, games), sized to hold at least four classes at once.
- Treat the playground itself as a learning environment, with room for exploring the outdoors, gardens, and planting, not just swings and slides.

10.2 Food service

- You don't need to design a full working kitchen. A simpler warming and serving space is a reasonable assumption, since food can arrive pre-prepared.
- If you do include a kitchen, giving it its own delivery access, separate from the main entrance, is a useful planning move.
- A visual and spatial connection between the kitchen or serving area and the dining hall, without merging the two into one open room, keeps food service efficient.

10.3 Administration & accessibility

- Locate teacher workspaces adjacent to, and visually connected with, classrooms, so staff can supervise directly rather than working from a separate wing.
- A ground-floor location for the first-aid and administrative spaces makes them easier to reach for staff, parents, and anyone with limited mobility.
- The original program's specific fixture counts and clearances follow Colombian accessibility standards; for this competition, general U.S. accessibility thinking (clear paths, ground-floor access to key spaces) is the right level of consideration, not code-level compliance.

10.4 Building services & site

- Keep service and trash areas near the parking or service access, separate from the main entrance.
- A covered area near the main entrance, viewable without having to step inside, works well for posting information for families.
- Plan for bicycle parking for at least 12 bikes for staff and visitors, set out in Section 6.

SECTION

11

Sustainability

SECTION 11

Sustainability

A handful of building-wide requirements round out the program:

- **Water efficiency:** rainwater reuse is worth building into your concept as a strategy, whether or not you resolve the specific storage system.
- **Energy efficiency:** plan for solar panels alongside a bioclimatic approach that brings natural light and cross-ventilation to every block of the building.

What sustainability means on this site

Sustainability in Bogotá is not the same design problem it is in Vermont, and the difference is worth understanding before setting a strategy. The city sits at roughly 2,600 m in the Andes, and its climate barely moves through the year: an average high of 19.5 °C, an average low of 8.6 °C, and about twelve hours of daylight every day. There is no heating season and no cooling season. Buildings of this type are generally neither heated nor mechanically cooled, so comfort is a question of envelope, daylight and air movement rather than equipment and fuel.

- **Water is the seasonal variable, not temperature.** Engativá receives about 819 mm of rain a year in two wet seasons rather than one, which means rainwater capture on this site is a twice-yearly cycle with dry stretches between. Sizing storage against that bimodal pattern, and pairing potable and reclaimed systems as the program requires, is a more useful move than a generic cistern.
- **Daylight has to be worked for.** Daylength is constant, but cloud cover averages around seven hours a day, so overcast sky is the design condition. Deep plans go dark; shallow bays, clerestories, courtyards and light from two sides carry more weight here than shading devices do.
- **Ventilation, humidity and noise pull against each other.** Average humidity is around 80% and prevailing winds come off the eastern hills from the northeast. Cross-ventilation is the intended strategy, and it has to be reconciled with the noise standards the site carries and with keeping small children comfortable in 8–19 °C air.
- **Low-carbon here means local mass.** Bogotá builds in concrete frame and confined masonry with locally made clay brick, often left exposed as both structure and finish. Choosing that palette well, and letting its thermal mass moderate a narrow daily temperature swing, is a more credible sustainability argument on this site than importing a Vermont timber-and-insulation logic.
- **Seismic and environmental structure are part of the picture.** Colombia's NSR-10 seismic code governs how this building can be framed, and the site adjoins the city's ecological structure along the Río Juan Amarillo, which brings landscape buffer requirements with it. Both shape a scheme as much as any energy strategy does.

None of this needs to be resolved technically. What the jury is looking for is a proposal whose sustainability logic clearly belongs to Bogotá rather than to anywhere else.

The site and program background in this brief draws on the public area program and technical addenda behind the real Engativá site.

SECTION

12

Competition Theme: Designing the Threshold

SECTION 12

Competition Theme: Designing the Threshold

Early-childhood education is, at its core, a story of thresholds: the move from home to school, from one caregiver's arms to a classroom of twenty, from a single family to a wider community. This site adds another threshold on top of that: a public lot handed over specifically so a neighborhood could have a place where different households and generations meet. And there's a threshold in this competition itself, since its winner is about to cross one: from Vermont to Bogotá.

For this competition, choose one threshold in your proposal, a specific moment where two different conditions meet, and treat it as the generative idea for your entire design, not just a detail. That threshold could be spatial (indoors meeting outdoors, a classroom meeting a shared courtyard), social (the school meeting its surrounding neighborhood), or programmatic (a child's world meeting an adult's). Whatever you choose, it should shape more than one part of the building: how you organize the plan, how light and material change as someone moves through the space, or how the building presents itself to the street.

This site's own thresholds

What AIAVT wants to see is a proposal that could only have been made for this corner: a scheme that reads the block, the informal use, the trees, the sidewalks and the strata-2-and-3 fabric around it, and answers them.

This site is full of thresholds already. Land that was public before it was educational, currently crossed by dog walkers and food vendors, about to become a gated institution for 240 small children. A neighborhood of twelve-story apartments and three-story house clusters meeting a two-story building. A block where families are the users and the community is the neighbor. Pick one of those meetings and let it shape the plan, the section, the material and the way the building meets the street.

What we're looking for

Five things carry weight:

- **A threshold that does real work.** Not a labeled entry sequence, but an idea that visibly organizes the building — where the plan opens, where light and material change, what a child passes through between the street and their classroom.
- **Evidence that the idea shaped decisions.** Plan organization, section, material or sequence — not just a sentence in the project statement.
- **A building composed of parts.** Patios, planted ground, gardens and outdoor rooms woven between the pieces, rather than one mass with rooms inside it. Flexible, multipurpose spaces that hold more than one kind of activity.
- **An argument that belongs to Bogotá.** Climate, water, daylight, materials and structure answered the way this city answers them, not imported from Vermont.
- **Generosity to the block.** The program calls this a meeting point. Show what the neighborhood gets — sightlines, shade, a place to wait, a reason to walk past — not only what the school encloses.

This is intentionally open. There is no required diagram type, no mandated before-and-after pair, and no single correct answer. None of it has to be resolved technically: a clear idea, well drawn and honestly argued, counts for more than a complete set.

SECTION

13

Deliverables & Submission Format

SECTION 13

Deliverables & Submission Format

Each entrant must submit:

- Three (3) digital panels, 36″ × 24″ (ARCH D) landscape — A1, 841 × 594 mm is equally acceptable — each as a single PDF:
  - **Panel 1, Site & Concept:** site analysis, concept diagrams, your overall design concept including your threshold idea, a roof plan with urban context, and at least one building section, with a 250-word narrative.
  - **Panel 2, Proposal:** floor plans and supporting renderings of your design proposal.
  - **Panel 3, Program & Details:** your architectural program, a functional and structural character diagram, and the required window/door section detail described below.
- A one-page project statement (max. 400 words) connecting your proposal to the competition theme in Section 12 and to your interest in the Colombia trip.

Required window/door section detail

Every entry must include one window or door section detail on Panel 3, drawn at 1″ = 1′-0″ (≈ 1:12) or larger. Locate it at a **classroom outdoor extension** — the covered terrace attached to each classroom in the program — so that every submission details the same condition and the jury can compare them directly.

The detail should show how the unit is set into the wall and how the assembly performs: fastening and structural attachment, air and water sealing, flashing and water management at the head, jamb and sill, and the interior and exterior finish conditions. Bogotá's climate needs no thermal insulation, so the detail is about attachment and keeping water out, not about an insulated envelope. Specify a **Marvin** window or door product in the detail and label it, using the manufacturer's published details and specifications as your reference.

Entrants are not expected to arrive knowing how to draw this. AIAVT and the competition's prize Sponsor, Windows & Doors by Brownell / Marvin Windows, will hold office hours during the competition period where entrants can bring questions about the detail, the products, and the assembly. Registered entrants will receive the office hours schedule by email.

The detail is evaluated as part of Communication in Section 15: what matters is that the assembly is drawn clearly and understood, not that it is specification-perfect.

Formatting guidance

- Plans and sections should be drawn at a legible, consistent scale, with the scale lettered beneath each drawing. Reference scales: site plan 1″ = 20′-0″ (≈ 1:240), floor plans and sections 1/8″ = 1′-0″ (≈ 1:96), construction details 1″ = 1′-0″ (≈ 1:12). Metric scales (1:250, 1:100, 1:10) are equally acceptable; entrants may choose what best communicates their idea, so long as the scale is stated.
- Renderings, hand drawings, diagrams, or any combination are welcome. What matters is clarity and correspondence between the plans, sections, and any perspective views, so the jury can tell where each view is taken from.

- Include a north arrow and scale bar on all plans.

Anonymity & entry codes

On September 10, 2026, the day the design brief is released, AIAVT will publish a short Google Form for entrants to register. Registering will give you a unique entry code. Use that code, not your name, to identify your panels and project statement: place it in the same location on every file (for example, the bottom right corner of each panel) instead of any name, initials, or firm/school identifier.

AIAVT will keep the list matching codes to names separately from the jury, so the jury reviews and scores every entry by code only, preserving anonymity. Entries that include a name, initials, or other identifying information on the panels themselves will be disqualified (see Section 17). This includes identifying information embedded in a file's metadata or file name, not just what appears on the panels themselves: check your PDF's document properties and remove your name and any institutional affiliation, and use only your entry code, not your name, in every file name.

Submission instructions, including where to upload your final files, will be sent along with your entry code after you register, ahead of the October 23 deadline.

SECTION

14

Calendar

SECTION 14

Calendar

Design brief announced & registration opens (Google Form)	September 10, 2026
Registration Deadline	September 23, 2026
Questions due	September 25, 2026
All answers published	October 2, 2026
Submission deadline	October 23, 2026, 5:00 PM ET
Jury review	October 24 – November 6, 2026
Winner announced / Award Ceremony	November 7, 2026

The winning entrant will join the AIA Vermont Colombia Study Trip to Bogotá and Medellín in 2027; trip dates will be announced separately.

Updates & corrections

If AIAVT needs to correct or update this brief after it's released, for example a date change or a factual correction, every registered entrant will be notified directly by email, and the change will be summarized in a short addendum posted alongside the brief. No substantive changes will be made after the September 25, 2026 questions deadline, except in extraordinary circumstances.

SECTION

15

Evaluation Criteria & Jury

SECTION 15

Evaluation Criteria & Jury

Jury

The jury is convened by AIA Vermont and includes EPN and AIAVT Board leadership together with architects experienced in Latin American design and practice. Jury members will be announced before the submission deadline. The jury deliberates as a group and reaches its decision by majority; its decision is final.

Evaluation criteria

Entries will be evaluated against five criteria, weighted as shown. This structure is adapted from the urban-design and integral-quality criteria the original Bogotá competition's jury used to evaluate professional submissions, scaled down for a conceptual student and emerging-professional competition.

Site & urban response (25%)

Does the proposal engage the site as a piece of the surrounding neighborhood, not just a building footprint? Does it create a legible, welcoming point of connection between the school and its community, in the spirit of the site's role as a civic “meeting point”?

Program & functionality (20%)

Does the proposal demonstrate a credible, thoughtful response to the early-childhood program: circulation, daylighting, indoor-outdoor relationships, and a plausible fit within the site's area and height constraints?

Concept & theme response (20%)

Does the proposal build around a clear, well-developed threshold idea, as described in Section 12, and does that idea meaningfully shape the design rather than sit only in the project statement?

Sustainability response (15%)

Does the proposal meaningfully engage water, energy, daylighting, and ventilation strategies suited to Bogotá's climate, rather than treating sustainability as an afterthought?

Communication (20%)

Is the proposal clearly and compellingly communicated across the three panels and the project statement? Would a reader unfamiliar with the site understand the idea from the panels alone?

The jury may decline to award first place if, in its judgment, no entry meets a reasonable standard of quality; in that case, honorable mentions may still be recognized. In the case of a tie, the jury will first compare the tied entries on Site & Urban Response, the criterion weighted most heavily; if the tie persists, the jury chair casts the deciding vote.

SECTION

16

Award

SECTION 16

Award

The winning entrant will be awarded a fully funded* seat on the 2027 Colombia Study Trip to Bogotá and Medellín, including round-trip airfare from Vermont (or the nearest major airport) to Colombia, ground transportation, lodging, meals, and admission fees for organized program activities during the trip. The jury may also recognize one or more honorable mentions.

The winning and honorable-mention entries will be exhibited at the November 7 Award Ceremony and featured in AIAVT communications, including the AIAVT website and newsletter.

*The award is made possible by the competition's prize Sponsor, **Windows & Doors by Brownell / Marvin Windows**, whose support underwrites the winning entrant's place on the study trip.

If the winning entrant is unable to accept the trip seat for any reason, or if the trip is cancelled for any reason the prize Sponsor, Windows & Doors by Brownell/ Marvin Windows, will work with the winner to identify an alternative prize consisting of a professional or academic development opportunity.

Because the award is international travel, the winning entrant is responsible for holding a valid passport, ideally with at least six months of validity remaining beyond the trip dates and at least one blank visa page. As of 2026, US citizens do not need a visa for short tourist stays in Colombia (up to 90 days), but entry requirements can change, and AIAVT recommends confirming current requirements close to the trip dates. AIAVT will work with the winning entrant on trip logistics once dates are confirmed.

SECTION

17

Disqualification & General Rules

SECTION 17

Disqualification & General Rules

To keep the competition fair for everyone entering, AIAVT reserves the right to disqualify an entry for any of the following reasons:

- Submission received after the October 23, 2026, 5:00 PM ET deadline
- Panels that identify the entrant, in violation of the anonymity requirement in Section 13
- Entries that do not meet the eligibility requirements in Section 3
- Plagiarism, or presenting substantially another person's design work as one's own
- Submissions materially exceeding the three-panel, one-statement format in Section 13, or omitting the required window/door section detail

By entering, participants confirm that their submission is their own original work, and that they have not previously published or entered the same design concept in another competition. If any part of an entry, including images, renderings, or the project statement, was created or substantially assisted by generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, entrants must disclose that use in their project statement, including which tool(s) were used and how; undisclosed use of generative AI will be treated as a violation of this originality requirement.

Researching the real 2022 SED Bogotá competition for this site, including proposals that were submitted or won that competition, is encouraged, and can be a genuinely useful way to understand the design problem. However, incorporating specific design elements, drawings, or ideas from those submitted or winning proposals into your own entry, rather than using them purely as background research, will be treated as a violation of the originality requirement above and is grounds for disqualification.

AIAVT will make reasonable efforts to notify an entrant before disqualifying an entry on a technicality (for example, a misplaced entry code), but the jury's judgment on anonymity, originality, and eligibility is final.

SECTION

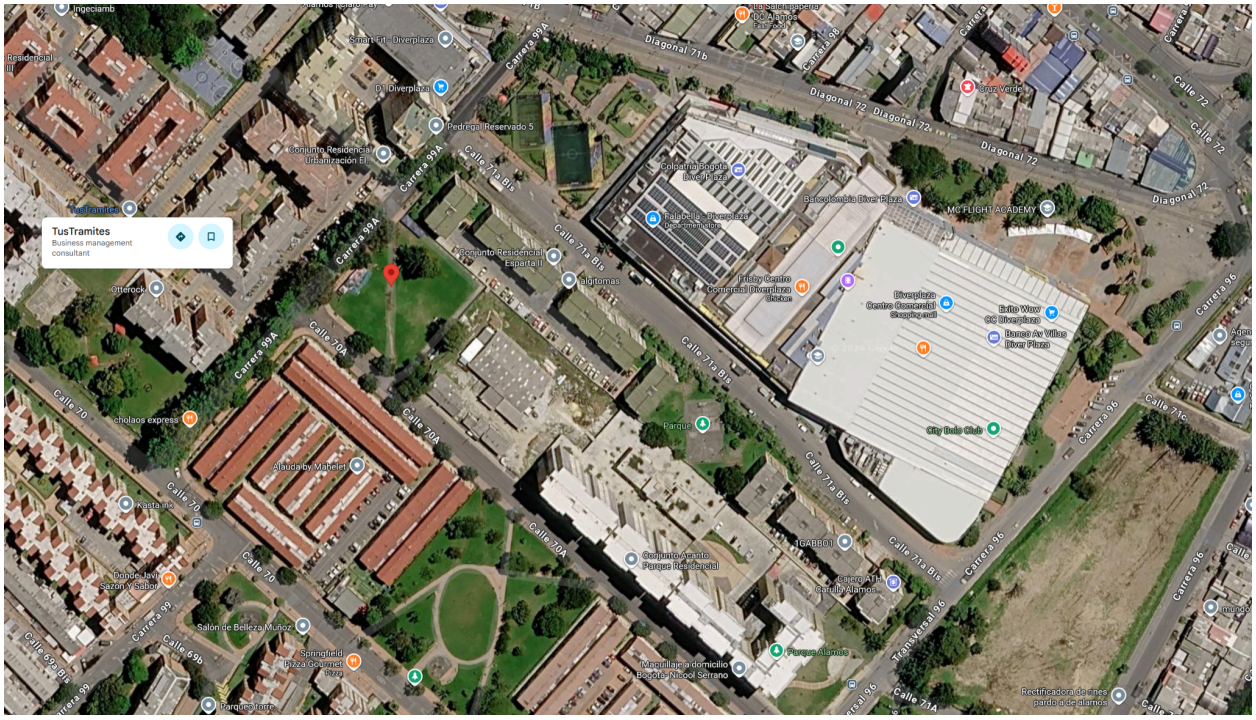
18

Entering & Reference Materials

SECTION 18

Entering & Reference Materials

On September 10, 2026, AIAVT will publish a short Google Form for entrants to register (see Section 13). Registering gives you your unique, anonymous entry code and puts you on the list of competitors.



Here is the site location: https://maps.app.goo.gl/juy8orofXEt95dJw7

Questions about the site, program, or competition logistics are welcome at any time by email to Sarah O'Donnell. Submit questions by September 25, 2026; all answers will be made public on October 2, 2026.

SECTION

19

Rights & Publicity

SECTION 19

Rights & Publicity

Entrants retain copyright in their submissions. By entering, participants grant AIA Vermont a non-exclusive right to reproduce, exhibit, and publish their entries, in print and digitally, for promotional and educational purposes related to this competition and the Destination Colombia initiative, with credit to the authors.

Entries may not be submitted, in whole or in part, to Bogotá's SED, SCA, or any official Colombian procurement process by AIAVT or by entrants under the auspices of this competition.

SECTION

20

Frequently Asked Questions

SECTION 20

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to speak Spanish or have visited Colombia?

No. All reference materials are provided in English, with key Spanish terms noted where useful (see the glossary in Section 5). No prior travel or language experience is expected or required.

Is this a real construction commission?

No. This is an independent AIAVT ideas competition. Your proposal will not be built, and it is not connected to Bogotá's actual procurement process for this site (see Section 1).

Why is the brief in square meters instead of square feet?

This site is measured, zoned, and regulated in the metric system, like the rest of Colombia. We kept the brief in its native units rather than converting it, partly because getting comfortable with metric is a small, useful part of preparing for the trip. See the unit note in Section 8 for a quick conversion reference.

Can I look at the real competition's submitted or winning designs for this site?

Yes. Researching them is encouraged and can help you understand the design problem. Just don't incorporate specific elements from those designs into your own entry; see Section 17.

Do I need a passport or visa to accept the award?

Yes, you'll need a valid passport, ideally with at least six months of validity remaining. As of 2026, Colombia doesn't require a visa for short US tourist stays, but check current requirements closer to the trip dates; see Section 16.

Can I visit the site in person before submitting?

Most entrants will design remotely from the materials provided. If you are independently traveling to Bogotá before the deadline and want to see the site, let us know and we'll share what we can, but an in-person visit is not required or expected.

What software or drawing method should I use?

Whatever best represents your idea: hand drawing, digital modeling and rendering, collage, or a mix. The jury is evaluating the design thinking and its communication, not the software used to produce it.

I've never drawn a window detail. Is that a problem?

No. The required detail at the classroom outdoor extension is there partly so entrants learn how a window or door is insulated, fastened and flashed. AIAVT and the prize Sponsor will hold office hours during the competition period to help; registered entrants get the schedule by email. See Section 13.

Can I use generative AI tools?

Yes, but you must disclose it. If you use generative AI, for example to help generate images, renderings, layouts, or text, as part of developing or presenting your entry, briefly describe that use in your project statement, including which tool(s) you used and how. Undisclosed use of generative AI will be treated as a violation of the originality requirement in Section 17.

Can I enter as a team?

No. This is an individual competition; every entry must be the work of one person (see Section 3).

What if I lose my entry code?

Email the competition contact in Section 21 right away and we'll look it up for you.

What happens if I have a question the FAQ doesn't answer?

Email the competition contact in Section 21. Questions are due September 25, 2026, and all answers will be made public on October 2, 2026, so every entrant has the same information.

SECTION

21

Contact

SECTION 21

Contact

AIA Vermont, Emerging Professionals Network

Sarah O Donnell, AIAVT Executive Director

director@aiavt.org · aiavt.org · 802-448-2169

We're looking forward to seeing what you design.