

# Student Design 2024 Challenge

## The Challenge

**Fiber-based packaging is sustainable and recyclable. To increase its use, this year's Design Challenge asks students to design new paperboard packaging for an original fresh produce product that is typically not packaged primarily in fiber-based packaging.**

## Background

You've been asked by a new organic grower, with the goal of entering into larger retail, to create paperboard packaging for their produce. The goal of this year's challenge is to create an original fresh produce package concept that isn't typically packaged in fiber-based packaging and design a new paper-based solution.

**Two weeks into the challenge, your client will have a meeting with a large retail customer that may give you additional information to complete your product packaging.**

This challenge calls for a real-world innovative packaging solution that encourages customers to pick sustainable, fiber-based packaging instead of single-use plastics. The new package should also be widely accepted in residential recycling programs.

## Optional Resources

[AF&PA's Design Guidance for Recyclability](#)

Designs from standard style in [PPC's Ideas & Innovation Book](#), sections 1 - 4

PPC's [Annual Paperboard Packaging Competition Book](#)

## Design Criteria

The design needs to be:

1. 100% paper-based;
2. Widely acceptable in residential recycling streams;
3. The package should have innovative, functional distinctions that enhance the recipient's unboxing experience and set it apart from other packaging;
4. It should be optimally designed to protect and secure its intended contents during shipping and handling; and
5. The structural and functional design must enhance brand recognition and encourage consumers to opt out of single-use packaging.

In supporting documentation, designers should include recommendations for ways an organization can take the packaging concept even further.

Designers must address how the package would be converted and assembled in mass quantity. The package must be commercially producible on standard machinery.

Any hand assembly should be minimal and purposeful. Decorations like magnets, ribbons, etc. that need to be attached to the package make it difficult to mass produce.

The package should communicate its recyclability and highlight paperboard packaging as a preferred substrate. The package must also reflect its desirability, feasibility, and viability.





## Package Requirements:

- 100% paper-based, and made of at least 70% paperboard (cannot be more than 30% fluted or corrugated)
- Must be widely accepted in residential recycling systems
- Include any other material that would enhance the experience of sustainability of paper and paperboard packaging
- Visually appealing and enhances brand awareness
- Include an innovative functional feature that distinguishes itself from other packaging
- Feature the renewability, recyclability, versatility and innovative qualities of paperboard
- Non-fiber components should be identified as easier to recycle, according to the [AF&PA Design Guidance for Recyclability](#)
- Also considers paperboard replacement for plastic fastening solutions

## Submission Requirements

The judges will evaluate each entry based upon the following submission requirements:

### 1. Prototype (50 points)

- One complete mock-up of package (**note: a physical prototype is required for consideration**)
- Product protection
- Distinctive functionality
- Structurally sound
- Full graphics
- (Sponsor companies will provide

paperboard samples for the design execution phase)

### 2. Design Elements (30 points)

- Plain, unglued carton blank
- Detailed production die drawing
- Design concept and execution (Sketches, various iteration and representative prototypes leading to final execution)
- Initial testing and validation with intended audience.

### 3. Marketing Plan (10 points)

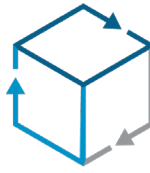
- One-page executive summary that explains how design meets necessary requirements; explains the design concept and functionality; identifies the organizations mission, the brand and dimensions; and describes how the packaging can be used to help the organization achieve its goal
- Explain the design process from concept to execution
- Explanation of benefits of the design functionality
- **Does not exceed 5 pages (PPT Format Preferred)**

### 4. Final Video of Design (10 points)

A file or link to the video must be provided in order to display the functionality of the packaging.

### 5. Permission from Brand (if applicable)

If redesigning an existing product, permission from the brand is required in order for AF&PA to showcase photos of the prototypes on the Paperboard Packaging website. Creating a faux brand (derived from an existing brand's current package) is acceptable.



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## 6. Required Forms

Acknowledgment of Intent

- Student and School Contact Information
- Certification of Originality
- Graduate Student Advisors Form (if applicable)

**Submission Deadline: Friday, June 7, 2024**

All entries with supporting forms and materials must be received no later than **Friday, June 7, 2024**. Send materials to [ppa@afandpa.org](mailto:ppa@afandpa.org) or mail to:

**Paperboard Packaging Alliance**  
**ATTN: Gabriell Maupin**  
**1101 K Street, NW, Suite 700**  
**Washington, D.C. 20005**

## Prizes and Judging

Winning student teams and their academic programs will receive monetary awards. If applicable, advisor(s) will receive 10 percent (equally split between advisors) of the cash award:

- 1st place: \$5,500 to the team/\$5,000 to the school
- 2nd place: \$3,300 to the team/\$3,000 to the school
- 3rd place: \$1,650 to the team/\$1,500 to the school
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The top three finalist teams are invited and expected to present their designs at the Paperboard Packaging Council's (PPC) Fall Meeting.

PPC's annual Fall Meeting is an association conference that brings together over 200 paperboard packaging and processing professionals, providing students with access to future potential employers, networking opportunities, and much more.

Previous student designers received internships and jobs at consumer brand companies as a direct result of their participation in the meeting.