

NEAA Guidelines & Criteria



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NACWA's National Environmental Achievement Awards (NEAA) program recognizes individuals and Member Agencies that make outstanding contributions to environmental protection and the clean water community.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Awards are presented annually and governed by the following policies:

- Member agencies may submit no more than one *NEAA* nomination per category. For the Public Information & Education Award, only one nomination may be submitted from among the four categories: Video, Printed Publication, Educational Program, e-Media.
- The Awards Committee shall accept and consider Individual Awards nominations from Member Agencies and/or the National Office staff. Nominators shall provide a rationale on the appropriate form. All staff nominations for the Individual Awards must receive the endorsement of one or more Member Agencies directly familiar with the nominee's contributions and achievements.
- *NEAA* nominations involving multiple Association Member Agencies working collaboratively must be endorsed by each participating Member Agency for each to receive an award.
- The Awards Committee and/or the Association's current President may present a Special Recognition Award to an individual or Member Agency that has made a significant impact on NACWA, the water sector, and/or the environment but does not fit in another category.

Resubmittals

- Utilities that receive recognition for a program or initiative in any category may not reapply for recognition for five years. Any resubmittal must note the year and category in which they originally received recognition and must demonstrate significant, and substantive changes and evolution in the program, citing new measurable outcomes or expanded impact metrics. A winning initiative may not be resubmitted more than once.

- Utilities that do not receive recognition for their award submission may resubmit for recognition the following year. Resubmittals must address any feedback provided by the Committee in the award letter and should demonstrate significant and substantive changes from the original submission.

Individual NEAA Awards

INDIVIDUAL GUIDELINES

The NACWA National Environmental Individual Achievement Award honors individuals whose outstanding advocacy and environmental stewardship have made a significant positive impact on the environment, their utility, their community, NACWA, and/or the clean water industry.

INDIVIDUAL NOMINATION GUIDELINES

Applications Must Include:

1. Completed Nomination Form with NACWA representative endorsement.
 - If you do not know who your Agency's NACWA Representative is, contact membership@nacwa.org with the subject line: "Who is Our NACWA Primary Contact for the NEAA application?"
2. Individual Nominee Narrative (PDF)
3. Nominee's full contact information, including street address, email, and phone number.

Individual Narrative Guidelines (PDF)

Include the nominee's name and award category at the top of the submission. Narratives are limited to 4 pages (1,000 words), double-spaced, in 12-point font, and should include:

1. A concise introductory paragraph describing the nominee and why they are being nominated for a *National Environmental Achievement Award*;
2. Subsequent paragraphs addressing:
 - ▶ Significant career accomplishments.
 - ▶ Specific contributions to the clean water industry and/or environment;
 - ▶ Specific work or activities that meet the criteria for the selected award category.
3. A concluding paragraph describing how the nominee has positively impacted the environment, their utility, their community, and/or NACWA based on the criteria for the selected award.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS AND CRITERIA

Distinguished Service Award

- Eligibility: Individuals formerly serving as the designated representative of a NACWA Member Agency who maintained an active role in the Association during their tenure.
- Criteria: Efforts and dedication to the clean water community while representing their agency.

Environment Award

- Eligibility: Open; *however*, Member Agency general managers and executive directors (or equivalent positions), as well as department heads and utility staff members are excluded.
- Criteria: Outstanding environmental leadership and service.

Public Service Awards (Local & Federal – based on population size) - The Awards Committee shall accept and consider nominations for two categories of Public Service Local Awards. An award may be given to current elected or appointed officials serving Member Agencies with service areas of more than 250,000; and a second award may be given to current elected or appointed officials that serve Member Agencies with service area populations of less than 250,000.

- Eligibility: Former or current elected public officials or individuals appointed by a governing body at the local, state, and federal level of government (Member Agency general managers and executive directors (or equivalent positions), as well as department heads and utility staff members are excluded from eligibility).
- Criteria: Outstanding public service exhibiting a particular and continuing awareness of the challenges faced by NACWA Member Agencies.

Utility Leadership Award

- Eligibility: NACWA Member Agency general managers, executive directors, and department heads (or equivalent positions), as well as exemplary utility staff members with four or more years of service at their current utility. **(Application must include an organizational chart)**
- Criteria: Outstanding environmental leadership and commitment within their utility and at the local, state, or national level with a significant impact on the water sector's success and reputation. **A signature from a deputy or senior staff member is required if the nominee is the current NACWA primary contact person.*

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Member Agency NEAA Awards

AGENCY GUIDELINES

NACWA's National Environmental Achievement Awards (NEAA) program recognizes Member Agencies that make outstanding contributions to environmental protection and the clean water community.

AGENCY NOMINATION GUIDELINES

Nominations Must Include:

1. Completed Nomination Form with NACWA representative endorsement
 - If you do not know who your Agency's NACWA Representative is, contact membership@nacwa.org with the subject line: "Who is Our NACWA Primary Contact for the NEAA application?"
2. Project Summary, 100-200 words
3. Project/Program Narrative, 4 pages / 1,000 words (PDF)
4. Project/Program Supporting Material, if desired/relevant (PDF or images)

Program/Project Narrative Guidelines

Narratives (PDF) are limited to 4 pages (1,000 words), double-spaced, in 12-point font, and should include:

1. A concise introductory paragraph describing the project/program and its goals or objectives.
2. Subsequent paragraphs that fully address the criteria for the selected award category.
3. A concluding paragraph describing the program/project results and its positive impact on the environment, the utility, and the community.

Program/Project Supporting Material Guidelines (PDF or images)

Supporting materials are ***optional*** and limited additional materials will be accepted.

1. Supporting materials such as reports, photographs, sample marketing materials, and videos, should supplement the Program/Project Narrative. ***The narrative should fully describe the nomination without relying on additional materials.***
2. Applicants for the Public Information & Education Award category are expected to submit a sample of the applicable video, printed publication, e-Media, or educational program material.

MEMBER AGENCY AWARDS AND CRITERIA

Community Leadership Award (based on population size)

The Awards Committee shall accept and consider Community Leadership Award nominations in two categories. Awards shall be considered for Member Agencies with service areas populations greater than 250,000; and separately for Member Agencies with service area populations less than 250,000. Association Member Agencies receiving NACWA's Community Leadership Award are ineligible to reapply for the five years following their receipt of the award.

- Eligibility: Agency, district, utility, or authority that best exemplifies the qualities, characteristics, and practices of a community leader.
- Criteria: Demonstrated bold, transformational community leadership and stewardship in managing valuable resources, partnering in local economic development, correcting perpetuating injustice and/or engaging stakeholders in their watershed resulting in environmental, economic, and social benefits.

Examples of such leadership/stewardship include but are not limited to sustainable solutions and activities or initiatives that:

- Support affordability;
- Promote environmental justice;
- Promote climate and economic justice;
- Utilize reclaimed and reuse water;
- Extract and identify commercial uses for nutrients and other constituents;
- Capture waste heat and latent energy in biosolids and liquid streams;
- Generate renewable energy using land and other horizontal assets, or
- Use green infrastructure not only to manage stormwater but also to improve urban quality of life.

Operations & Environmental Performance Award

- Eligibility: Outstanding project, system or method relating to wastewater treatment, wastewater conveyance, stormwater management, and/or environmental enhancement.
- Criteria: Innovative and effective project, system or method relating to environmental compliance or environmental restoration developed and successfully implemented by a Member Agency in a cost-effective manner while achieving environmental compliance objectives.

Public Information & Education Awards *(one nomination per Member Agency in all categories)*

Video/Printed Publication/Educational Program

- Eligibility: Outstanding or innovative video, printed publication, and/or educational program related to pollution prevention or control.
- Criteria: Program, publication or video must have been produced by the Member Agency staff or by an outside vendor at the express direction of the agency. Program, publication, or video must encompass some aspect of the agency's operations, benefit the public educationally and have been produced for general use or distribution. Annual Reports are not accepted in this category.

e-Media

- Eligibility: Outstanding Member Agency website, social media presence or campaign, or downloadable, web-based program that relates to wastewater treatment, wastewater conveyance, or pollution prevention and control.
- Criteria: Website, social media presence or campaign, or downloadable, web-based program content must have been developed and produced by agency staff or by an outside vendor at the express direction of the agency. Nominations will be judged based upon 1) the timeliness of the content; 2) the quality of graphic design elements; 3) organization and/or searchability; 4) innovation and originality; and 5) ease of use.

Public Service Award

- Eligibility: Significant contribution during the past year in local, state, or national public service related to public utility operation or environmental protection.
- Criteria: Involvement must be by Member Agency staff or commissioners (directors, chairs). Public Service shall not be required by regulation or law.

Research & Technology Award

- Eligibility: Development of a technological innovation related to wastewater treatment, wastewater conveyance, stormwater management or biosolids/sludge use and disposal.
- Criteria: Research project or technological innovation must directly relate to the processes of collection, treatment or reuse of wastewater, stormwater, or use or disposal of biosolids/sludge. Project must have been conducted in-house, or by consultant under direction of the Member Agency. Project results must have practical application.

Watershed Collaboration Award

- Eligibility: Outstanding watershed-based collaborative management initiative or program focused on cost-effective solutions to environmental challenges.
- Criteria: Documented collaborative initiative or program, inclusive of water, wastewater, and/or stormwater management and stakeholder involvement, and endorsed by the approval of the governing bodies of the participating entities. Nominations will be judged on the maturity and complexity of the collaborative initiative with or without fully achieving the stated environmental goals.
Narratives should include examples of efficient management, planning, sustainability of the program/initiative, and cost saving.

Workforce Development Award

- Eligibility: Outstanding Member Agency workforce development project or program.
- Criteria: Outstanding project or program must embody effective, sustainable solutions that address the need for a qualified, diverse, and knowledgeable utility workforce. Projects or programs should be able to demonstrate results in at least one of the following areas: 1) expanding opportunities for underserved populations; 2) “growing” specialized expertise from within the utility or through development of new unskilled talent; 3) collaborating with other utilities and/or educational institutions.