

NEAFCS Awards Program Changes

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Affiliate Vice Presidents for Awards

Q. What are the primary responsibilities of Affiliate Vice Presidents for Awards and/or awards chairs under the new process?

A. Affiliate Vice Presidents for Awards and/or awards chairs will play a larger role in coordinating, reviewing, and advancing award applications to the national level.

Key responsibilities include:

- Communicating award deadlines and requirements to affiliate members.
- Establishing an affiliate review process and timeline.
- Recruiting and training affiliate reviewers, as needed.
- Ensuring all applications are reviewed and finalized before members submit them through the National Awards Portal.
- Reviewing and scoring affiliate submissions between February 15 and March 1 for regional and national advancement.
- Determining which applications meet the affiliate minimum score requirement of 80 points.
- Submitting qualifying State Winners through the National State Winner Form by March 1.

Q. Why is NEAFCS making changes to the Awards Program?

A. NEAFCS is committed to continually improving the Awards Program to ensure it remains meaningful, accessible, and aligned with the needs of members and affiliates. These updates are intended to:

- Streamline the awards process.
 - Enhance the member experience.
 - Strengthen affiliate involvement in the review process.
 - Ensure a consistent approach to award advancement and national judging.
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Q. When will these changes take effect?

A. The updated Awards Program procedures will take effect beginning with the 2027 awards cycle.

Q. What changes are being made to the Awards Program?

A. Several important updates will be implemented:

- The deadline for members to submit award applications through the National Awards Portal is **February 15**.
 - The deadline for affiliates to submit National State Winner Forms is **March 1**.
 - The National Awards Application Form will open in mid-January 2027.
 - The National Awards Portal will only be used to collect **final submissions**.
 - Affiliate should review affiliate award submissions and provide feedback for members to submit their final award application in the national awards form by February 15.
 - Affiliates are responsible for reviewing and scoring award applications submitted through the national portal between February 15 and March 1.
 - Only applications that meet the affiliate minimum score requirement of 80 points may advance to national judging.
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Q. What should affiliates do differently for the 2027 awards cycle?

A. Affiliates should begin planning their review process early to ensure members receive adequate support and feedback before the national submission deadline.

Affiliates are encouraged to:

- Develop an internal affiliate awards timeline (example available from NEAFCS).
- Recruit affiliate reviewers during the fall (nationwide reviewer list available from NEAFCS).
- Communicate expectations and deadlines to affiliate members.
- Communicate the affiliate's minimum score requirement for advancement (80 points).
- Provide guidance and support to applicants before February 15.

- Establish a process for completing and submitting the National State Winner Form by March 1.
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Q. Can affiliates set their own internal deadlines?

A. Yes. Affiliates are strongly encouraged to establish internal deadlines that allow sufficient time for local review, feedback, and revisions before members submit their final applications through the National Awards Portal. A sample/suggested timeline is available on the NEAFCS website.

Q. Will award categories or award criteria change?

A. No. These updates do not change award categories or award criteria for National. The Awards Manual will continue to be posted by November 15 each year so affiliates and members have ample time to review eligibility requirements and submission guidelines.

The changes could affect Affiliates and how they have advanced applications for National Judging given the required 80-point minimum score at the affiliate level.

Q. Are the award deadlines changing?

A. Yes. The updated timeline is as follows:

- **November 15:** Awards Manual and updated award information available.
- **Mid-January:** National Awards Application Form opens.
- **February 15:** Deadline for members to submit applications through the National Awards Portal.
- **February 15–March 1:** Affiliate review and scoring period.
- **March 1:** Deadline for submission of the National State Winner Form.
- **March:** National judging of advanced submissions.
- **April:** Award notifications distributed.

Updated deadlines and resources will be shared through NEAFCS communications, including email announcements, the NEAFCS website, and member resources.

Q. What is the role of the National State Winner Form?

A. The National State Winner Form serves as the official mechanism for affiliates to identify and advance award applications to the national level for both regional and national award consideration.

Affiliate Vice Presidents for Awards and/or awards chairs are responsible for ensuring:

- Only qualifying applications are submitted.
 - Award categories and applicant information are accurate.
 - The National State Winner Form is completed and submitted by March 1.
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Q. How should affiliates determine which applications advance to national judging?

A. Each affiliate is responsible for establishing its own review process. Affiliates should use the national judging sheets to help score affiliate awards and use the 80-point minimum score to advance to national judging. Affiliates should communicate these expectations clearly to reviewers and applicants.

Q. Will the online submission process change?

A. The process for members submitting award applications through the National Awards Portal has not changed. However, affiliates will now have greater responsibility for ensuring applications are reviewed and finalized before submission.

Applications submitted through the National Awards Portal should be considered final submissions.

The National Awards Application Form will now open in mid-January.

Q. Where can Affiliate Vice Presidents for Awards find updated guidelines and resources?

A. Updated timelines, guidelines, instructions, and supporting resources will be available on the NEAFCS Awards website:

[NEAFCS Awards Documents and Application Instructions](#)

Affiliate leaders are encouraged to review these materials and share them with members.

Q. How will these changes benefit affiliates and members?

A. The goal of these updates is to strengthen the awards process by encouraging earlier review, increasing affiliate engagement, and ensuring that applications submitted for national judging represent polished, high-quality submissions.

These changes will help create a more consistent and meaningful recognition experience for all NEAFCS members.

Q. Who should Affiliate Vice Presidents for Awards contact with questions?

A. Questions regarding the Awards Program may be directed to awards@neafcs.org.