



Awards: The Reflections of Extension

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This is a great time to look forward to the year 2021, as we wrap up the awards submission time for 2020. Awards can be intimidating, especially when we are under time stress to get our day-to-day work done and submitting awards. If you are not submitting an award this year or you decided not to because you feel like you do not have enough time, you do not need to worry. Many awards listed, if not all of them, will be there next year. You can set that stress aside and focus on 2021. This will give you a year to work on the award and have it ready to submit when the registration opens later this year.

If you are new to NEAFCS or never applied, you have time to talk with your colleagues to find an award that fits your interest or maybe inspire you to try something new.

Awards are more than self-accolades and your Curriculum Vitae (CV) or Non-Tenure Track (NTT). Awards are an opportunity to showcase the impact your state is making. Many states struggle with some of the same issues across this nation, and awards are a way to communicate how extension is meeting those needs to reach our communities.

Think of applying for awards as a way of expressing your desire to make a difference. Marianne Williamson stated "In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it." There are awards named after people. Those individuals expressed a passion for the work. The work we submit for those awards is a reflection of the work before us. Another way to look at awards is knowing that on the other side of that award, lives have been touched and enriched because someone cared enough to provide the programming that matters to them. Our work matters and we celebrate those accomplishments through the awards system.

From a marketing standpoint, programs that win can now reassure the participants are engaging in a regional or national award winner. Can you imagine going back to your communities or them reading in some form of media that they took an award-winning class? Even if those communities are in some of the smallest rural areas in our country. This is an example of why the work of extension was created.

Submit those awards in 2021 and share the knowledge you have gained. We would also encourage you to be aware of each other's work. Many are not comfortable self-nominating, but they are appreciative of when others see the value in their efforts. Recognizing can be just as powerful as receiving. If you do not apply this year, we look forward to your application next year.