

Kicking Off Awards Season: What should I be doing?

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We've made it through 2020 and here's hoping 2021 is a better year. It's time to do all those things that we have put off until the first of the year. Add applying for an NEAFCS Award on that list of things. The national award submission deadline is March 15. That may seem like you have plenty of time, but there is a lot to do before that deadline. Here are some things to do now so that you can be successful this 2021 NEAFCS awards season.



1. **Confirm you state affiliate award deadline and submission process.** March 15 is the final date that your state affiliate has to submit your affiliate award winners to NEAFCS for regional and national consideration. However, each affiliate has its own process for award submissions and affiliate deadlines will be much earlier than March 15.
2. **Review the 2021 Awards Manual/Guidelines.** (<https://neafcs.memberclicks.net/assets/awards/2021-awards/2021-Awards-Manual.pdf>) Even if you have been applying for awards for years, there are usually changes to this document every December. If you have never submitted an award application, this document is a valuable resource to understand eligibility requirements and judging. Do not skip the general eligibility requirements on page 6.
3. **Identify the award(s) for which you plan to apply.** You might start by scanning the 2021 Awards-at-a-glance to get some ideas <https://neafcs.memberclicks.net/assets/awards/2021-awards/2021-NEAFCS-Awards-At-A-Glance.pdf>. Then check the Awards Manual / Guidelines to see if you or your program meet the specific eligibility requirements for the award you are considering. Take a moment to consider awards that might not be the immediately obvious choice. Is there another award that might fit as well?
4. **Look at application requirements for each award when developing your timeline for completing your applications.** Some awards may require letters of support which will need to be requested soon so that you will have them by your affiliate deadline.
5. **Spend some time reviewing the NEAFCS Awards page on the NEAFCS website.** <https://neafcs.memberclicks.net/awards> There are many helpful resources, tips and videos to help you prepare for this awards season. You can see past award winners and award statistics. New resources are added frequently, so check back regularly.