

Writing Your 2024 Award Application: Plan, Persevere, and Win

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As the 2023 awards season ends, now is the time to start planning for next year's awards. Perhaps you have already decided which award you will apply for and have begun developing your timeline for gathering impact data and other critical information needed to write a successful application. Many educators incorporate this aspect into their program development or strategic plan for the upcoming programming year.



Within Family and Consumer Sciences, we are committed to connecting our local communities with evidence-based education and promoting the health and well-being of individuals through our programming efforts. **Highlighting our work through awards is an integral part of our profession.**

PLAN: When developing our programs, we employ many resources, many requiring a multi-step process. This is important in program planning and critical to writing award applications. Each step we take, from completing a needs assessment, developing learning and programming objectives, determining the best evaluation design for a program, utilizing learning theories, creating a research-based curriculum with supplemental and marketing materials to implementing the program, will need to be detailed in our award application.

PERSEVERE: Of course, we cannot forget the culmination of our efforts as we analyze data, assess impact, and review our programming efforts to strengthen our program further. Although these steps may seem tedious, they are essential to developing quality programs and writing a successful award application because they encompass the key elements of our NEAFCS Award outlines. This is the perseverance part; it can be challenging but worthwhile.

WIN: When writing your application, have the materials used to create your program easily accessible, and the data used for composing your impact will make the writing process much more manageable. The final aspect is winning. **Remember that you may not win an award the first time you apply, which is okay.** Disappointing, yes, but it's still okay. You can always apply the following year, which allows you time to gather more impact data and strengthen your application.

The other thing I want to share is that just because you didn't win an award doesn't mean YOU didn't WIN. **Winning means different things to different people and YOUR impact on your community and the people you serve within your community - that's where the real winning comes in.** With that, I encourage you to plan, persevere, and win.