

# 2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

## ADVERTISING/CIRCULATION/PROMOTION DIVISION

Welcome to the 2025 Better Newspaper Competition - New England's largest and most comprehensive journalism recognition program. NENPA members from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont are invited to enter.

In this packet you will find all of the information necessary to prepare your **advertising, circulation and promotion** entries, including a list of competitive categories, complete rules and guidelines, and the criteria that each contest category will be judged upon. **You can find additional information on preparing entries - such as how to make PDF files smaller, extract particular pages, and how to combine several PDF files - in the [Frequently Asked Questions page at the end of this packet.](#)**

Work published by news organizations during the **August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025** contest year is eligible for this competition.

The Better Newspaper Competition includes three divisions:

- Editorial/Multimedia/Photography
- **Advertising/Circulation/Promotion**
- **College/University Division**

There is a separate packet of information for each division with specific rules that you can refer to when preparing your entries.

The deadline to submit entries is **Friday, October 31, 2025.**

Awards will be presented during the annual New England Newspaper Convention (date and location to be announced.)

We wish you the very best of luck in this year's competition! If questions come up while preparing your entries please call (781) 281-7648 or email [l.conway@nenpa.com](mailto:l.conway@nenpa.com).

## 2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

**ADVERTISING/CIRCULATION/PROMOTION RULES AND GUIDELINES**

To submit entries, go to [www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa](http://www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa) to register.  
*Please enter association code: NENPA*

**1. COMPETITION YEAR**

The competition is open to all NENPA members. Work published between August 1, 2024 and July 31, 2025 is eligible. An initiative or campaign that started before the cut off date but continued beyond that date is eligible in its entirety.

**2. DEADLINES**

Entries should be uploaded by **October 31, 2025**.

**3. ELIGIBILITY**

All NENPA member newspapers in good standing are eligible to enter the competition. ***Please be sure that your NENPA dues are up to date in order to enter. It's not too late to join—call us!***

**4. NEWSPAPER GROUPS**

Newspaper groups entering an item that appeared in more than one of its newspapers may enter it only once. If the item ran in newspapers in different circulation classes, it should be entered by the newspaper in the highest circulation class.

**5. CIRCULATION CLASSES**

Circulation class is determined by your most recently published circulation figure.

Circulation classes are defined as:

**Daily 1** - up to 12,999 weekday circulation

**Daily 2** - 13,000+ weekday circulation

**Weekly 1** - up to 4,999 weekly circulation

**Weekly 2** - 5,000+ weekly circulation

**Specialty and Niche** publications

**News Services and Online News Sites**

**6. INDIVIDUAL ENTRIES**

Individuals whose work was published in a NENPA member publication may submit their own additional entries if the newspaper has not already submitted the work.

**7. COST**

- An overall competition entry fee of \$25 per newspaper is required, plus \$22 for each entry.
- If your publication is entering multiple divisions the \$25 newspaper entry fee only has to be paid once.

NENPA will generate and send an invoice after the final contest deadline.

**8. INSUFFICIENT ENTRIES**

If not enough entries are received in any category, the staff reserves the right to combine circulation classes and/or change the number of awards given.

***NOTE: All ads submitted must have been prepared by the paper submitting them. Mats, artwork, or other previously prepared parts may be used as long as the advertisement is written and composed by the newspaper. Awards in this category will be made in the newspaper's name; therefore, individual names are not required on the entries.***

**Questions? Send email to: [L.Conway@nenpa.com](mailto:L.Conway@nenpa.com).**

2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION  
**ADVERTISING/CIRCULATION/PROMOTION DIVISION**

The Advertising/Circulation/Promotion division consists of **32** competitive categories.  
Newspapers are eligible to compete in six classes:

- ◆ Dailies with circulation under 13k;
- ◆ Weeklies with circulation under 5k;
- ◆ Specialty and niche publications
- ◆ Dailies with circulation more than 13k
- ◆ Weeklies with circulation more than 5k
- ◆ News Services and Online News Sites

### **ADVERTISING**

Local Display Ad, Black and White  
Local Display Ad, Color  
Local Online Ad  
Most Creative Use of Small Print Space  
Advertiser Campaign  
Themed Multiple Advertiser Page(s)

Best Sponsored Content

Automotive Display Ad  
Real Estate Display Ad  
Best Holiday Ad  
Best Health Ad

Special Section / Advertising Supplement  
Events  
Online/Virtual Events

Business Innovation  
Excellence in Revenue Collaboration and Partnerships  
Best Idea for Generating Revenue

### **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

Best Ad Designer  
Advertising Director/Manager of the Year  
Advertising General Excellence  
Fundraising Strategy

### **NEWSPAPER MARKETING, CIRCULATION AND PROMOTION**

Advertising Sales Media Kit  
Audience Building Promotion  
Classified Promotion  
Specialty Publication Promotion  
Niche Publication  
Pure Ad Niche Publication  
NIE Program / Promotion  
Newspaper-Sponsored Event Promotion

Subscription Promotion  
Subscriber Retention Program  
Subscriber/Audience Contests

**PLEASE NOTE: There is no limit on number of entries per category, except in Advertising General Excellence**

## 2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

**ADVERTISING/CIRCULATION/PROMOTION COMPETITIVE CRITERIA****ADVERTISING**

**Local Display Ad, Black and White** - Entries should be paid print ads created by your newspaper for one of its advertisers. Black & white ads are eligible. Judges will be asked to consider the basic idea, layout (including typography, art work, organization), copy and originality.

**Local Display Ad, Color** - Entries should be paid ads created by your newspaper for one of its advertisers. Color ads are eligible. Judges will be asked to consider the basic idea, layout (including typography, art work, organization), copy, use of color and originality.

**Local Online Ad** - Entries can be a single ad or campaign that the paper developed for one of its advertisers. Judges will be asked to consider the basic idea, layout (including typography, art work, organization), copy, use of color and unique capabilities the digital format offers, as well as originality. Please submit any evidence that's available regarding the response generated (i.e., click-through rate, coupon redemption, advertiser testimonial, etc.)

**Most Creative Use of Small Print Space** - Judging will be based on creativity and effectiveness of the advertiser message in an ad that is 10" or smaller.

**Advertiser Campaign** - Recognizing an outstanding advertising campaign that the paper developed for one of its advertisers. The campaign must consist of at least three ads. Ads may appear in a single issue or over several issues and/or on multiple platforms. Judges will be asked to consider content, design, impact, originality and development of a powerful theme or value proposition. NOTE: Individual ads from this series may also be entered into the single ad categories.

**Themed Multiple Advertiser Page(s)** - Entries should consist of multiple ads grouped in print and/or online to focus on a single shopping area, concept or theme, such as graduation, Happy New Year, homecoming, drunk driving awareness, etc. Judges will be asked to consider originality, design, clarity, organization, audience and advertiser appeal, and effectiveness.

**Automotive Display Ad** - Newspaper-generated print or digital ads promoting a local dealership are eligible. Judges will be asked to consider layout (including typography, art work, organization), copy, impact and originality.

**Real Estate Display Ad** - Newspaper-generated print or digital ads promoting homes for sale or rent by a realtor, builder or complex are eligible. Judges will be asked to consider layout (including typography, art work, organization), copy, impact and originality.

**Best Holiday Ad** - This award celebrates a holiday ad (or series of ads) of your choice. Judging will be based on originality, creativity in the use of typeface and artwork and reader appeal. No house ads. Paid advertising only.

**Best Health Ad** - Any ad pertaining to health or healthcare. Judges will consider content, design and impact.

**Best Sponsored Content** - Entries can be a single article or a series of articles that draw the reader in with a commercial destination in mind. Delivering content that is informative, relevant and entertaining that it is part of readers' consumption of editorial content.

**Special Section / Advertising Supplement** - Please submit the entire section. Entries should be an insert with a theme or environment designed to encourage consumer purchases. The supplement may cover any subject as long as it is run as an addition to the usual edition of the newspaper, but yet still a part of the newspaper (publications that are not run as a part of the newspaper are not eligible). The entry may or may not have editorial copy. Judges will be asked to consider the basic idea, originality, design (including the cover, overall presentation and individual ads), impact and ad volume.

**Events** - Entries should consist of a description of an event that the newspaper produced in an effort to generate revenue. Judges will be asked to consider the success of the event in generating revenue, as well as its strategic orientation, originality, size and scope. Please include supporting materials and promotion that will help the judges fully understand the event and how it fits into the new organization's marketing mission.

**Online/Virtual Events** - Entries should consist of a description of a revenue-generating event that the newspaper produced and executed with a virtual audience. Judges will be asked to consider the success of the event in generating revenue, as well as its strategic orientation, originality and audience. Include supporting material and promotion that will help judges fully understand the event and how it fits into the news organization's marketing mission.

**Business Innovation** - This category highlights new approaches to traditional business practices (i.e., a new twist on an old idea) or a completely new business model or idea. Entries should be accompanied by a cover letter that outlines the business objective and financial results of the innovation. Supporting materials, such as URLs to relevant web pages, tear sheets, ads, series, sections, special publications, etc., must be included with entry. Judges will consider originality, scope and the effectiveness of the new initiative.

**Excellence in Revenue Collaboration and Partnerships** - This award honors news organizations who have formed partnerships or collaborations to generate revenue and better serve customers. A winning entry should show creativity and innovation through a partnership that resulted in new or increased revenue opportunities.

**Best Idea for Generating Revenue** - All revenue programs are eligible for this award whether they include new print or digital products, sales incentives, promotional activities, events, digital services, alternate forms of distribution, or any other strategies. The bottom line is that the program successfully generated more revenue. Include a cover note that outlines the program, results and key components that made it so successful. Judges will be asked to consider originality, scope of the program, and incremental revenue generated.

## **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

**Best Ad Designer** - Judging will be based on a minimum of 6 pieces by a single designer that shows work for a variety of clients, creativity, and truly effective presentation of advertiser messages.

**Advertising Director/Manager of the Year** - The purpose of this award is to recognize an exceptional advertising director who fully embraces the challenges newspapers face in today's competitive media environment, and finds ways to truly help his/her customers grow their business while generating substantial revenue for the newspaper. The **New England Advertising Manager/Director of the Year** will be chosen based on outstanding accomplishments during the course of the past year. Please submit a letter of nomination that describes the extraordinary contribution the nominee made to the success of the newspaper this year. Please be specific, including for example yr/yr revenue increases, digital sales progress, new revenue initiatives, leadership style, new sales strategies, etc.

**Advertising General Excellence** - Entry should consist of **two (2)** issues from the contest year, no two of which can be from the same month, plus your website URL. Judges will be asked to consider quantity of advertising (both print and online), structure and format of ad pages and classified section, originality and quality of locally-produced copywriting and ad design.

**Fundraising Strategy** - Philanthropy is an increasingly common revenue source for both nonprofit and for profit newsrooms. Support for news organizations is now coming from a variety of sources including donations from individuals and foundations in the form of donations and grants. Judges will be asked to consider originality, scope of the program, revenue generated and the potential effectiveness of the strategy.

## **MARKETING, CIRCULATION, AND PROMOTION**

**Advertising Sales Media Kit** - Recognizes the quality of promotional piece(s) used to support the sale of advertising in any or all of the newspaper's advertising products. Judges will be asked to consider the potential effectiveness of the material as sales ammunition that positions the paper for success.

**Audience Building Promotion** - Entries should consist of marketing/activities that promote newspaper sales and readership of the paper's print or digital products. Examples might include advertising that directly solicits newspaper purchases and digital product usage/subscriptions, newspaper-sponsored events, contests, public relations, etc. Judges will be asked to consider originality of the message strategy and presentation, as well as results obtained.

**Classified Promotion** - Recognizing newspaper promotions that encourage the use of classified ads that run in the paper or online (promoting buying from or selling with the classified ads). Please provide examples and evidence of results.

**Specialty Publication Promotion** - This category recognizes promotional ads or material that encourages the growth of a newspaper's niche/specialty publication audience. Please provide examples.

**Niche Publication** - Recognizing a publication (print and/or online) that is distributed outside the newspaper and whose target audience may be different than the regular newspaper audience (i.e. college guide, phone directory, tourism guide, service directory, etc.) Along with copies of the product, the entry should include a letter with a brief description of the target audience, the frequency and method of distribution, audience response and amount of advertising generated. Judges will be asked to consider the value of content, advertising ratio (profitability), uniqueness, and overall presentation.

**Pure Ad Niche Publication** - Recognizing a publication (print and/or online) that specifically targets shoppers and is distributed outside the newspaper (i.e. coupon books, free shoppers, auto traders, classified publications, service directory, etc.) Along with copies of the product, the entry should include a letter with a brief description of the strategy, the target audience, the frequency and method of distribution, audience response and amount of advertising generated. Judges will be asked to consider the value of content, profitability, uniqueness, and overall presentation.

**Newspapers in Education Program/Promotion -**

Entries in this category should consist of educational projects and promotions to increase NIE circulation, including sponsorship drives, programs for teachers, and all activities and partnerships to benefit the NIE program. Entries may include ads, fliers, feature stories, newsletters and examples of teacher workshops, in-paper features, teacher guides, etc.

**Newspaper-Sponsored Event Promotion -**

Recognizing outstanding special events that a paper produces or co-sponsors to support the community and enhance public perception of the newspaper. This category can include single events and longer-term sponsorships, such as support of a sports team or school education program. Send a brief description of the event and audience, attendance, coverage of the newspaper's role, promotional material, etc. Judges will consider how the sponsorship benefitted the newspaper, including how it was leveraged editorially for the benefit of readers, brand enhancement, etc.

**Subscription Promotion** - Entries in this category may include sales promotions, pricing schemes, promotional advertising, direct marketing and other programs used to attract subscribers to your print and/or digital products. Please provide examples and evidence of results.

**Subscriber Retention Program** - Recognizing effective promotions that papers use to retain subscribers over time -- including price structures, incentives, bundling strategies, CRM, stop-saver programs, easy-pay programs, points programs and other types of rewards that build loyalty and encourage extended subscriptions.

**Subscriber/Audience Contests** - This award will recognize newspapers' exceptional use of contests as part of their strategy to increase audience and revenue. Entries will be judged on the creativity and strategy involved in the idea for the contest, as well as effective implementation and results. Please submit a description of the contest, examples of the execution and evidence of results.

# Frequently asked questions....

## How does registration work?

Go to the online contest platform -- [www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa](http://www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa). Here you will find a link to register along with specific instructions for registration. Use association code: NENPA

## What file formats are accepted for uploading?

Acceptable formats include PDFs, URL links, and JPEG (for photos and graphics). **Note that a PDF or JPEG ensures our judges will be able to view your entries.** A URL bringing the judge directly to the item, without paywalls or registration required, is also accepted. If your site does have a paywall or required registration, you must include login information in the explanation field when submitting the entry. Entries will be disqualified if there is a paywall and no login information is provided.

## How can I make my PDF smaller

For categories not pertaining to photography, graphics, or design we recommend optimizing the PDF through the PDF editor settings/tools - there is usually an "Optimize" option under File or Tools. There are also a number of online PDF compressors that allow you to quickly reduce the size of your PDF. We suggest [www.pdfcompressor.com](http://www.pdfcompressor.com). This method will effect photos and graphics so do not use where those elements are being judged. Most newspaper PDFs include high-resolution grayscale or CMYK images for printing. However, PDF contest entries will be viewed and judged on a computer monitor, which displays at low resolution (72-96 dpi) in RGB color. Changes in resolution and color mode of images are the most effective ways to reduce file size without sacrificing quality. In PDFs, the text is always clear regardless of resolution. The resolution only relates to photos and graphics. Reducing resolution by half reduces image file size by 75%. The recommended max. resolution of 96 dpi can be changed via the PDF editors settings/preferences. Color Mode: Converting from CMYK to RGB color will reduce the image file size by another 25%. This can be done in the editor settings. Before submitting be sure to check the final entry PDF against the original (prior to compressing or changing resolution/color) to make sure are satisfied with the results.

## How do I extract pages from full-issue or full-section PDFs?

Open the PDF file in Acrobat and choose "Extract Pages..." from the Document menu. This will allow you to save individual or sequential pages in separate files anywhere on your computer. Alternatively, you can extract certain pages by going to File > Print and select Print to PDF under the printer option. Simply select the pages/page range to print to PDF.

## How do I combine PDFs into a single file

Open the PDF that you want to appear first in the entry. Choose "Save As..." from the File menu and give it the name of the final entry. Choose "Insert Pages..." from the Document menu, choose the file that you want to appear next in the entry, then specify where that file should be inserted. When all insertions have been made, save & close the PDF. Make sure the final PDF is optimized for size/resolution

## How do I pay for my entries?

NENPA will send an invoice after the entry period is closed.

*Questions? Contact Linda Conway at [L.Conway@nenpa.com](mailto:L.Conway@nenpa.com) or Tara Cleary at [t.cleary@nenpa.com](mailto:t.cleary@nenpa.com)*