

2025 National Headliner Awards Contest Categories

REGISTRATION

Go to www.headlinerawards.org/entry to enter.

THE ASSOCIATION CODE TO ENTER IS NHA (all capital letters)

ELIGIBILITY

The 2025 National Headliner Awards competition is open to all material appearing in publications distributed or broadcast in the United States between January 1, 2024 and Dec. 31, 2024. There is no limit on the number of entries that may be submitted. However, each entry may be entered in only one category.

JUDGING

All Headliner entries are judged by a panel of journalists representing newspapers and radio and television stations from around the country. The judges are distinguished professionals who are selected on the basis of the journalistic contributions they have made during their careers.

DEADLINE

All nominations must be submitted to our website -- www.headlinerawards.org -- no later than 11:59 p.m. on Friday, February 14, 2025. **ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE.**

FEES

There is a registration fee of \$75 per entry. Our tax-exempt IRS number is 22-213-8237 (Press Club of Atlantic City). **IT IS PREFERRED THAT YOU PAY THROUGH OUR WEBSITE.** You may mail checks made payable to National Headliner Awards and mailed to the following address: National Headliner Awards, 14 Colgate Road, Somers Point, NJ 08244.

CATEGORY LIST (Note several changes to this year's categories)

RADIO STATIONS

These categories are for local radio stations.

R01. Local newscast, breaking news or continuing coverage. Not to exceed 45 minutes.

R02. Feature and human interest story. Not to exceed 10 minutes.

R03. Documentary or Public Affairs. For Public Affairs, submit three complete regularly scheduled shows that focus on addressing issues of the day. For documentary, submit one show. No time limits.

R04. News series. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

BROADCAST RADIO NETWORKS AND SYNDICATORS

These categories are for national radio networks, NPR, CBS Radio, ESPN radio, for example.

R05. Network newscast, breaking news or continuing coverage. Not to exceed 45 minutes.

R06. Network feature, human interest or documentary (single instance or series). Not to exceed 45 minutes.

BROADCAST TV STATIONS

These categories are for local TV stations.

TV01. Newscast. Submit best newscast from one particular day in 2024. Not to exceed 45 minutes.

TV02. Coverage of a live breaking news event. May include, but is not limited to, website and social media postings, news alerts, email blasts. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV03. Continuing coverage of a single news event. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV04. Feature or human interest story. Not to exceed 10 minutes

TV05. Sports story. Not to exceed 10 minutes.

TV06. Public service. No time limits.

TV07. Documentary or series of reports on the same subject. No time limits.

TV08. Investigative reporting. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV09. Business & consumer reporting. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV10. Local health, science or environmental reporting. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV11. Local severe weather or natural disasters reporting. Breaking coverage of a severe weather or natural disasters event. Can be continuous coverage or a series of hits showcasing presentation skills, use of graphics and technology and value to viewer. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

BROADCAST TELEVISION NETWORKS, CABLE NETWORKS AND SYNDICATORS

These categories are for national TV networks - Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, for example.

TV12. Newscast. Submit best newscast from one particular day in 2024. Not to exceed 45 minutes.

TV13. Coverage of a breaking news event. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV14. Continuing coverage of a major news event. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV15. Feature or human interest story. Not to exceed 10 minutes.

TV16. Sports story. Not to exceed 10 minutes.

TV17. Documentary or series of reports on the same subject. No time limits.

TV18. Investigative report. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV19. News magazine program. No time limits.

TV20. Business & consumer reporting. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV21. Health, science or environmental reporting. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

TV22. Profile. A report focusing on a single individual in any run of life including but not limited to sports, culture and politics providing an in-depth profile. Not to exceed 20 minutes.

NEWSPAPERS & NEWS ORGANIZATIONS WRITING AND REPORTING

These categories are for newspapers and news syndicates, such as the Associated Press and Reuters, for example.

N01. Breaking News, all sizes. Coverage of the first 36 hours of a news event. May include, but is not limited to, website and social media postings, news alerts, email blasts and the printed edition. Please include a timeline outlining the major points and a letter describing the circumstances.

N02. Local news beat coverage or continuing story in top 20 media market (see list below). NOT a series. Send three samples.

N03. Local news beat coverage or continuing story NOT in top 20 media market. Send three samples.

N04. International news beat coverage or continuing story by an individual or team. NOT a series. Send three samples.

N05 News series (one series) in newspapers in top 20 media market.

N06. News series (one series) in newspapers NOT in top 20 media market.

N07. Local interest column on variety of subjects. Send three samples.

N08. Special or feature column on one subject by an individual. (examples: food, fashion, radio-TV, music, etc.) Send three samples.

N09. Editorial writing by an individual or team. Send three samples.

N10. Sports opinion by an individual. Entry must be framed around opinion and have point of view. Send three samples.

N11. Sports news writing by an individual or team. Send three samples.

N12. Sports feature by an individual or team. Send three samples. A column may be entered here.

- N13. Feature writing by an individual in top 20 media market.** Send three samples.
- N14. Feature writing by an individual NOT in top 20 media market.** Send three samples.
- N15. Business news coverage, commentary and/or columns.** Send three samples by an individual or team.
- N16. Education writing.** Send three samples of news stories, feature stories or columns by an individual or team.
- N17. Health or science reporting.** Send three samples by an individual or team.
- N18. Environmental writing in newspapers in top 20 media market.** Send three samples of news, features or columns by an individual or team.
- N19. Environmental writing in newspapers NOT in top 20 media market.** Send three samples of news, features or columns by an individual or team.
- N20. Investigative reporting in newspapers in top 20 media market.** The entry may include, but is not limited to, stories, photographs, editorials, social media campaigns, videos, community reaction and supplemental material addressing the investigation. Include a letter outlining the background and results, if any.
- N21. Investigative reporting in newspapers NOT in top 20 media market.**
- N22. Public service in newspapers in top 20 media market.** Entries must be accompanied by a letter outlining background and results. The entry may include stories, photographs, editorials, social media campaigns, videos, community reaction and supplemental material addressing the issue.
- N23. Public service in newspapers NOT in top 20 media market.**
- N24 Editorial Cartoons.** Send seven samples in one PDF.
- N25. Journalistic Innovation.** An experimental or unconventional reader service, design, feature or news and online package that connects newspapers to their communities. Must include letter explaining the effort and its impact on readers and community.
- N26. Best political coverage.** Send three samples by an individual or team

MAGAZINES

- M01. Coverage of a major news event or topic.** One sample per entry.
- M02. Feature writing by an individual.** Send one sample.
- M03. Specialty news coverage.** Includes but is not limited to business, sports, medical, lifestyle coverage. Send one sample.
- M04. In-depth story or series on a major news event.** Send one sample.
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PHOTOGRAPHY

Any news organization or news website can enter in this category. Must be staff-generated or first-use work. Images must include caption information as originally published. On multiple-image entries, please include story headline and brief description.

PG01. Spot news photography. Single photo, not a series.

PG02. Feature photography. Single photo, not a series.

PG03. Sports action or feature photography. Single photo.

PG04. Individual Photo Portfolio. This is a collection of 10-15 images from a single staff photographer. Entries that have less than 10 will be disqualified.

PG05. Staff Photo Portfolio. This is a collection of 10-15 images from a photography staff.

PG06. Single Day Photo Story. 10-15 images from a single photographer or staff that covers a single topic event published on one day.

PG07. Multiple Day Photo Story. 10-15 images from a single photographer or staff that covers a single topic or event published on no more than seven days.

PG08. Portrait. A single photo that reveals the essence of the subject.

PG09. Pictorial. A single photo that succeeds on its light, composition or geometry.

DIGITAL JOURNALISM COMPANIES THAT PUBLISH PRIMARILY ONLINE

D01. Online investigation reporting for digital website on a national issue. This entry may include, but is not limited to, stories, photographs, editorials, social media campaigns, videos and supplemental material addressing the project. **This category is specifically for web-only journalism outlets.**

D02. Online investigation reporting for digital website on a local issue. This entry may include, but is not limited to, stories, photographs, editorials, social media campaigns, videos and supplemental material addressing the project. **This category is specifically for web-only journalism outlets.**

D03. Online investigative reporting for digital partnerships with other news outlets. This entry may include, but is not limited to, stories, photographs, editorials, social media campaigns, videos, community reaction and supplemental material addressing the investigation. This category is for web-only journalism outlets that partner with TV, radio, newspapers or other media companies. Please include a letter outlining the background and results.

D04. Online beat reporting. The entry demonstrates excellence in ongoing coverage of a specific topic. Send up to three samples by an individual or team. **This category is specifically for web-only journalism outlets.**

D05. Online beat reporting health and science. Send up to three samples by an individual or team. **This category is specifically for web-only journalism outlets.**

D06. Online beat reporting government and political coverage. Send up to three samples by an individual or team. **This category is specifically for web-only journalism outlets.**

D07. Online breaking news. Coverage of the first 36 hours of a news event. May include, but is not limited to, social media postings, news alerts, email blasts. Please include a timeline outlining the major points and a letter describing the circumstances. **This category is specifically for web-only journalism outlets.**

DIGITAL JOURNALISM OPEN TO ALL NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

D08. Best news video up to 3 minutes. Entries will be judged on news value, storytelling, cinematography and relevance. Can be part of a larger package or a standalone feature. Must be original content. Please include URL.

D09. Best news video 3 to 10 minutes. Entries will be judged on news value, storytelling, cinematography and relevance. Can be part of a larger package or a standalone feature. Must be original content. Please include URL.

D10. Best news video 10 to 30 minutes. Entries will be judged on news value, storytelling, cinematography and relevance. Can be part of a larger package or a standalone feature. Must be original content. Please include URL.

D11. Digital presentation of a single news topic. Involves revelatory news reporting that is presented in a compelling manner for digital audiences. Must be a single project and should include a combination of digital storytelling tools not limited to video, photography, graphics, social media, written narrative. Must be original work. Judges will be looking for creativity and originality including excellence in user experience and design. Print and/or broadcast may accompany entry. Please include URLs for all parts to be judged. Must submit a letter outlining the project and its impact.

D12. Digital presentation of a single features topic. Involves explanatory, human-interest features or behind-the-headlines projects that are presented in a compelling manner for digital audiences. Must be a single project and should include a combination of digital storytelling tools not limited to video, photography, graphics, social media, written narrative. Must be original work. Judges will be looking for creativity and originality including excellence in user experience and design. Print and/or broadcast may accompany entry. Please include URLs for all parts to be judged. Must submit a letter outlining the project and its impact.

D13. Social media. This award is for excellence in social media strategy and execution. This can include Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest or any other social network. Emphasis will be placed on best use of emerging digital techniques on creative and alternative platforms to tell a story and serve a community. Please include URLs and/or screen shots for all parts to be judged. Please include letter explaining vision, strategy, significance and reach.

D14. Best civic/political affairs podcast. Focus should be on public policy, governance or civic affairs. It can include reported, opinion or interview episodes. Submit up to 3 URLs.

D15. Best narrative podcast. For a podcast that is based on a serial narrative in recounting closely related topics. Typically, this involves extensive reporting and brings a new angle or information. Please include a letter introducing the podcast. Submit up to 3 URLs.

D16. Best narrative podcast focused on a single incident, person or time. For a podcast that is based on a serial narrative in recounting a single historical incident, a reporter in pursuit of a single person's story or a point in time. Please include a letter introducing the podcast. Submit up to 3 URLs.

D17. Best information podcast. For a podcast that brings insight, background and news to help public understanding. Typically, this involves a host or hosts of a regularly scheduled podcast. Please include a letter introducing the podcast. Submit up to 3 URLs.

D18. Best criminal justice and/or crime podcast. For a podcast that involves crime or criminal justice. Please include a letter introducing the podcast. Submit up to 3 URLs.

D19. Best sports podcast. For a podcast that can be personality driven/hosted, can cover a single sport or league or can cover teams in a region city/state. Submit 3 URLs.

D20. Best conversational podcast episode. Podcast episode consists primarily of monologues, interviews or panel discussions. These usually are recorded in studio and make minimal use of field material. Entry may be 30 minutes in total, either in one episode or two episodes of 15 minutes each.

D21. Best investigative podcast. For an investigative podcast that uncovers new information. Please include a letter introducing the podcast and outlining the background and results of the investigation. Submit up to 3 URLs.

D22. Best newsletter. The newsletter should not primarily consist of material published elsewhere. Recognizes an outstanding/ongoing newsletter produced by a news outlet. Entries may span the wide array of newsletter formats, such as providing a digest of news or events, curating resources, sharing ideas or opinions from individual columnists, providing insight on topical issues or containing original reporting and exclusive content. Submit 3 entries.

D23. Best independent community/local news site. This category recognizes overall journalistic excellence in an **independent** community or local news site. **This does not include sites affiliated with other news organizations.** This includes sites dedicated to covering a single community, group of communities, region or local special-interest issues.

Submissions must include:

- A letter describing the site's mission/goals and how those goals are being met.
- Send four examples of the site's best coverage from different categories. Categories can include, but are not limited to:
 - Breaking news
 - Enterprise reporting
 - Watchdog reporting
 - Election coverage
 - Government/education coverage
 - Community engagement

- Multimedia
- Features
- Sports

TOP 20 MEDIA MARKETS

New York

Los Angeles

Chicago

Dallas-Fort Worth

Philadelphia

Houston

Atlanta

Washington, D.C.

Boston

San Francisco / Oakland / San Jose

Tampa-St. Petersburg

Phoenix

Seattle-Tacoma

Detroit

Orlando

Minneapolis-St. Paul

Denver

Miami-Ft. Lauderdale

Cleveland

Sacramento

Source: Nielsen Research, 2024