



Guidance for Judging (and Entering) the Power of A Awards

What is a Power of A Award?

The Power of A awards recognize association programs and activities that are advancing society and improving the economy (at all levels). It is the highest recognition an association can receive for any program they conduct with their members. The Power of A awards are connected to the larger Power of A campaign.

There are five entry categories for the Power of A awards:

- **The Power to Create a Competitive Workforce:** Has the program created a widely adopted set of best practices for the profession or industry? Is it using a new technology (or existing technology in a new way) to improve society or the economy? Examples of this type of activity include creating a widely-adopted set of best practices for an industry or profession; developing a new credential or certificate that enhances a profession; or developing a new recruitment campaign for an industry or profession. Past Gold and Silver winners include:
 - **National Volunteer Fire Council** “National Junior Firefighter Program”
 - **BOMA International** “Foundation of Real Estate Management”
- **The Power to Prepare for the Future:** Is the association conducting research that is vital to society? Is it developing new strategies to make an important process more efficient or effective? Examples of this type of activity include conducting an environmental scan to assist in planning a future course of action; surveying an industry or profession to reduce uncertainty about market needs, behaviors and demographics; or introducing new branding that better reflects a business strategy. Past Gold and Silver winners include:
 - **American College of Rheumatology** “Within Our Reach: Finding A Cure for Rheumatoid Arthritis”
 - **Sigma Nu Fraternity** “LEAD Program Evaluation with George Mason University”
- **The Power to Innovate:** Is the association developing new products or services benefiting communities and enrich society? Examples of this type of activity include improving or replacing business processes to increase efficiency and productivity; developing new products or services to meet rapidly changing customer needs; or adding value to existing products or services to differentiate from competitors. Past Gold and Silver winners include:
 - **Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind** “America’s VetDogs”
 - **Botanical Society of America** “Planting Science”
- **The Power to Make a Better World:** Is the program improving the world economy? Is it making the world a better place? Is the association based outside of the U.S. and making their home country better? Examples of this type of activity include conducting activities to help address challenges outside the U.S.; leveraging industry expertise to better world conditions; or growing the international profile of an industry or profession. Past Gold and Silver winners include:
 - **Quota International** “Club-to-Club World Service Program”

- **International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care** “ATLIS+”
- **The Power to Enrich Lives:** Is the program educating the public on an important policy issue? Is the program promoting social responsibility? Examples of this type of activity include helping to provide immediate relief or long-term recovery for areas affected by natural disasters; organizing and applying resources to assist the disadvantaged; or working to solve a societal crisis. Past Gold winners include:
 - **School Nutrition Association** “School Breakfast Detectives”
 - **American Society of Transplant Surgeons** “National Living Donor Assistance Program”

There are three award levels for the Power of A, two of which are given based on category. An entry may receive a Power of A Gold or Power of A Silver award within its category. The Gold award is the highest recognition given within a category while the silver is the next highest; imagine the gold and silver medals for an Olympic event. There is no limit on the number of Gold or Silver awards that can be given. Beginning in 2018 applications for the same program under multiple categories will not be permitted.

Judging the Awards Prior to the Committee Meeting

When you are judging the entries, it is critical that you keep in mind the three judging criteria. These are the three areas which all entries, regardless of category, must be judged.

Here are the criteria in more detail:

Reach of Project or Program: Award-winning entries offer original or effective solutions to today’s societal or business problems. Such programs often involve the association’s members and/or volunteers and have a broad impact on an industry, profession, or affected community. These programs may be local, national, or international in scope. When judging a program, it is important to consider programs and projects large and small based on the scope and achievements of the entry; judge the reach based on the association’s type and resources.

Embodying the Power of Associations: Award-winning entries effectively showcase how associations strengthen society through volunteerism, education, social responsibility, innovation, research and problem solving.

Objectives and Outcomes: Award-winning entries generate results that achieve the association’s defined and measurable objectives. Results could demonstrate how the program or project, for example, illustrates an association’s vision for success, elevates their profession’s or industry’s image, protects the interests of their members, can be an easily replicated model for other organizations and/or showcases the important work of associations. If an objective is unachieved or unclear, grade the program lower.

Ratings:

10 – The program is a superior fit against these judging criteria

7-9 – The program is an excellent fit against the description of the criteria

4-6 – The program fits the criteria for this category

2-3 – The program measures poorly against the criteria for this category

1 – The program does not meet the criteria for this category

Power of A Awards Application Breakdown

The first step of the application asks the association to list contact information, along with all of the information about itself and its program.

The second page of the application gives more general information about the association. This is the type of information that is useful in determining how the reach of the program should be judged.

Association Name: Please list the name of the organization submitting the program. If you are a consultant submitting on behalf of an organization, please list the association's name.

Organization Mission Statement: This is where an association should share its board-approved mission statement. Why is this important to include? To see if the program fits within the organization's mission or if the program itself is part of the association's mission.

Total association membership: This information again is useful to determine how the reach of the project should be judged. A larger association may expect to have more members involved, while a smaller one would logically have a smaller number. However, this is just a factor in judging reach of project, not a determining factor.

Association Budget Size and Association Staff Size: This information assists the judges in examining the reach of the program and the available resources for the organization.

Association Website: While the website is not included in the score matrix to be scored, a link to the website will help inform judges overall.

Name of program: This is the name of the program and the title by which the entry shall be known through the judging process.

Category:

Is the program ongoing: Use this information when you determine how to judge the objectives and outcomes of the program. An ongoing program (such as a public education campaign) should not be penalized because it has not reached a defined end date. A program that is not ongoing, however, or a program that has not reached its end date, should be judged accordingly.

Estimated number of people directly affected by the program: This is the area where the applicant shares how many people the program impacts.

Number of association volunteers involved: This is the number of association members involved in the project.

Did you partner with any other organization to create this program: Again, use this answer to judge the reach of the project. Partnering should lead to a larger reach of project.

Essay Section

This part of the application is where you will focus your judging attention. The answers to these questions should be about 90-95% of how you score an entry. Below with an explanation of each

question are examples of answers that would score somewhere between 1 and 10. These are fictional associations and answers. Do not consider these examples as exactly how a “10” or “2” scored entry should read, but a guide to the type of information that would merit such scores. When in doubt, feel free to get in touch with ASAE staff or committee leadership but remember, your score is your opinion on the information presented.

Brief overview of activity: This is where an applicant briefly describes their program. While there is a 300-word limit, the program’s description should be informative, accurate, and interesting. If this question does not answer what the program is, the program does not deserve award consideration. Below are a few condensed examples:

Excellent: *The Canadian Widget Association received numerous requests from members to organize a collective effort to rebuild Haiti’s infrastructure after the recent hurricane. CWA launched “Rebuilding Haiti” after our November board meeting. The association would coordinate with its state chapters to train and send members to Haiti who, when they arrived, would work with CWA volunteers and the local authorities to rebuild factories using donated widgets. The donated widgets were collected at every CWA meeting, with attendees donating their products for a discount at the meeting. **By the end of 2010, we had coordinated 40 separate group trips down to Haiti and those CWA members had helped rebuild 100 factories. [This statement addresses the three judging categories and gives a succinct description of the program’s benefits to society.]***

Good: *The Association of College Students decided to promote hiring of college students by creating “College Businesses”. The goal of the initiative would be to create a smart phone app where users could locate a local college student-run business in a variety of fields. The goal is that the app will help college students earn some spending money and keep the businesses competitive with larger businesses. The hope is that by 2016 over 200 businesses will be participating. Right now 100 association members and 20 businesses have signed up to participate in the app while we have saved local consumers hundreds of dollars. **[The program description is good, yet it lacks detail on the three judging categories. Why was it successful, and why was it necessary?]***

Poor: *The Society of Television Sellers created “Buy the Box” to inform consumers of the federal requirement to switch to digital systems. We created a line item to fund television ads that would share with viewers the need to mail in their vouchers for digital boxes by the federal deadline. By doing this via television and radio, we reached millions of seniors who would have otherwise not heard about the new requirement. Our board was actively involved in promoting the program throughout our membership. **[This is only a very basic description with no detail addressing the judging requirements.]***

Reach of Project

In this section an applicant briefly explains how the program offered an original or effective solution to today’s societal or business problems. Such programs often involve the association’s members and/or volunteers and have a broad impact on an industry, profession, or affected community. Judges should examine the reach of the program based on the association’s type and resources.

Grade 10: *Widgets are a critical part in building factories; using the newest widget technology can cut the building process by 30%. With the desperate need for factories to be rebuilt in Haiti (the U.N. estimates that they’ve lost 1.2 million productivity hours **[excellent proof of need]** since the hurricane) our membership wanted to get the best technology down there to help get factories up and running as quickly as possible. Since we didn’t want to financially burden our members, we had them*

donate their latest technology [**recognition of limits and creativity**] and in exchange, helped our meetings become more affordable to our bottom line (plus get more members to our trainings). To make the best use of our members' time, we worked with the Canadian Foreign Relief Department to identify three cities most in need of manufacturing help. Working with the Canadian government, we connected CWA staff to Haitian officials [**good demonstration of unique solution**] to take care of the travel arrangements for association volunteers.

Grade 6: College students are 40% less likely to find a stable job than post-collegiate Americans, and the average college student [**recognition of program need**] runs up \$2,000 in debt annually outside of student loan debt. The key to preventing students from graduating even more in debt is to allow them to begin building a nest egg prior to graduation. However, most people do not know about college student run businesses unless they make it big, like Facebook. The app can help people find local business to help with their moving, home repair, or home maintenance needs when they might not know these student run businesses exist. [**Demonstrates program need**] So far, 20 businesses representing 10 colleges have signed up and seen an increase in business. [**Good, yet vague outcome**]

Grade 2: Millions of American seniors would lose their television service if it weren't for our campaign to educate them about the digital transition [**over simplification of the problem**]. As STS President Bob Wilmer said, "While television is not a civil right, it is a critical way for millions of seniors to receive timely news and information. For example, in Minnesota, seniors were able to evacuate before the recent flood due to the newscasters warning them to evacuate. Television has become the best way to protect the American population." Celebrity Bobcat Goldthwait volunteered to star in our commercial and anecdotally we heard his style of humor really reached our audience. [**Too much quote, not enough explanation**] Because of our commitment to the cause and our creative use of celebrity in our commercials, we helped millions of seniors switch to digital television. [**too vague**]

Embodying the Power of Associations

Applicants will use this section to share how their program showcases The Power of A by leveraging their unique resources to solve problems, advance industry/professional performance, kickstart innovation and improve world conditions. Award-winning entries effectively showcase how associations benefit society through volunteerism, education, social responsibility, innovation, research and problem solving.

Grade 10: CWA members have always been actively involved in helping the less fortunate through their products and services; in fact, it is always a top five reason for joining CWA when we send out member surveys. Because our volunteer leaders and staff recognize that the best way to coordinate a large-scale project to improve society can be done best through the association, CWA has always tried to coordinate large-scale projects with its members. During the Midwest flooding, we had a similarly successful project to rebuild Midwestern factories in the U.S. (working with U.S. associations). After attending the Summit Awards dinner a few years back and seeing the videos of last year's Power of A Award winners, we knew our program would shine as an example of associations improving the world.

Grade 6: Our association is constantly looking for ways to provide a member benefit to our members, and we recognize that financially college students are at a major disadvantage after graduation. We feel that our program fits the Power of A message because it improves the economy and changes society for the better. Economically, our members are better off financially upon graduation and can spend more money than they would if they were burdened with consumer as well as loan debt. In terms of society, people looking for quality small businesses to help with their household can find

reliable businesses and build connections within the community. **[This statement is a great example of member-benefits, yet not as strong at demonstrating specific benefits to society.]**

Grade 2: *“Buy the Box” helps seniors make the transition from analog to digital television. With the switch to digital, this population can continue to watch television programming without stressing over the switch. Our ad campaign reached a number of people who may not have otherwise known about the program and exposed them to our association, giving us credit for making an important societal change. We involved our volunteer leadership and staff in the campaign which shows how association volunteers can make a difference in society.* **[This would be better with specific examples.]**

Objectives and Outcomes

In this section applications will share the measurable outcomes along with how those outcomes were met. Results should be as tangible as possible. They could demonstrate how the program or project, for example, illustrates an association’s vision for success, elevates their profession’s or industry’s image, protects the interests of their members, can be an easily replicated model for other organizations and/or showcases the important work of associations.

Grade 10: *Obviously the idea of flying members of our association to Haiti to rebuild their country is an ambitious and risky one, so relevant CWA staff and volunteers conducted a retreat prior to the launch of the project in order to map out the goals and outcomes of the project. Below in bullet format are those goals, as well as the success in meeting them:* **[These succinct and measurable outcomes are exactly what an entry should include.]**

- *Have everyone go and return safely: so far, we have not had any serious injuries suffered by volunteers.*
- *Collect enough widgets from association members to match the CWA donation and make the project revenue neutral: by the fourth month of our project, we had exceeded our donation and were even able to donate widgets directly to Haiti.*
- *Every group trip had to build two factories: this minimum was met by every group to this point, and some have exceeded this limit. One hundred were built in all.*
- *Receive recognition for members’ contributions: CWA’s program has already received a formal citation of merit from the Canadian government, and we hope the Summit Award will be the second.*

Grade 6: *Our overall goal was to sign up as many college-student-run businesses as possible to participate in the app. While this is the program’s long term goal, for the first five years our goal is to reach over 200 businesses and have them participate through association advertising, outreach to members, and word-of-mouth. We have seen the program mentioned in a few university student-run publications and The Chronicle of High Education this past month.* **[Be as specific as possible quantifying goals and recognition.]**

Grade 2: *With the switch to digital television, our campaign has concluded. We feel that even if one senior made the switch because of our campaign, it would be a success. However, we still ran the numbers and found that we spent \$20 per person who “experienced” one of our ads, which is well under budget for what we had anticipated. We also received a total of 230 emails and letters from people who had been positively impacted by our campaign.* **[More tangible feedback needed.]**

Additional information you would like the Awards Committee to consider:

Supportive Data

Applicants will include additional any data that can help show the tangible results of the program.

Final Score

Based on the examples above, the Canadian Widget Association would receive a “30” total score for its program. This would indicate that the judge views the program as superior and award-worthy. The Association of College Student’s total score would be an “18” and be a borderline award-worthy program; maybe a Silver Award depending on the category. The Society of Television Sellers program would receive a “6” and this score indicates the judge does not view this as an award worthy program.

Once the committee completes its score sheets, staff will circulate an Excel spreadsheet of the results, which will contain the average score for each program and the median score for each program. In the past, ASAE dropped the lowest and highest scores from each program to ensure that one extreme score either way would tilt the results, but this year the median score will be used to achieve the same effect.