



# **New York News Publishers Association 2024 Awards for Excellence**

**Official Rules and Entry Booklet**

**Entry Deadline: Monday, March 17, 2025**

# 2024 Awards for Excellence

## CONTEST RULES & GUIDELINES

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND KEEP THIS BOOKLET  
HANDY WHEN SUBMITTING ENTRIES ONLINE!**

### **CONTEST ELIGIBILITY**

All member newspapers of the New York News Publishers Association are eligible to enter.

### **SPONSORSHIP**

The contest is sponsored by the New York News Publishers Association.

### **PURPOSE**

The contest is designed to: encourage continuing excellence in newspaper service; suitably reward excellence in various categories of news, editorial, photographic presentation, advertising (print and online) and innovative ideas.

### **CONTEST DESCRIPTION**

First place will be awarded in each of 23 categories in five circulation classes to the NYNPA member newspapers whose entries have demonstrated editorial, creative and/or photographic excellence. First place awards will also be awarded in an additional 15 categories to members whose entries have demonstrated advertising/marketing excellence.

### **ENTRY FEE (per piece submitted)**

- |                               |      |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. Under 10,000 circulation:  | \$15 |
| 2. 10,000-24,999 circulation: | \$20 |
| 3. 25,000-49,999 circulation: | \$25 |
| 4. 50,000-75,000 circulation: | \$30 |
| 5. Over 75,000 circulation:   | \$35 |

Fees collected are used to defray costs associated with administering the contest. Where the rules of a category require, or present the option of, submitting more than one piece (Ex. Distinguished Community Service), all pieces submitted in that category will count as a single entry. Fees may be paid by mailing a check or paying with credit card via PayPal at [www.nynpa.com/awards.html#pay](http://www.nynpa.com/awards.html#pay).

### **CIRCULATION CLASSES**

Entries will be placed into one of five circulation classes according to each newspaper's daily 12-month average circulation as reported by our members. Newspapers that publish a Sunday edition as well as a daily edition will be classified according to the average of all editions published by that newspaper. Circulation classes for the 2024 competition are as follows:

1. Under 10,000 circulation
2. 10,000-24,999 circulation
3. 25,000-49,999 circulation
4. 50,000-75,000 circulation
5. Over 75,000 circulation

## **ENTRIES**

Each newspaper is allowed to enter a maximum of four (4) entries per category, and may enter a given entry in any or all of the listed categories for which it qualifies.

In order for an entry to be eligible for this competition, the following criteria must be met:

- The entry must have been originally published either in print or online during the contest eligibility period of January 1 to December 31, 2024, or be part of a series that either began or ended during that period.
- The entry must not have been entered in a previous incarnation of this competition (Ex. the 2023 contest), either individually or as part of a series.
- The entry must meet any additional criteria of a given category as outlined in that category's description.

## **PRESENTATION**

Each newspaper must designate a "Contest Manager" who will be responsible for managing all entries and adding other "Authorized Entrants" for that paper.

If your paper participated in last year's contest, please use the same Contest Manager password from that contest. (To retrieve lost login information for your Contest Manager click "Forgot password" at login and it will be e-mailed to the Contest Manager on file or contact Margaret McDermott at 518-449-1667 or [mmcdermott@nynpa.com](mailto:mmcdermott@nynpa.com).)

If your paper did not participate in last year's contest, the first person who logs in to the contest website from your newspaper should be your paper's Contest Manager, as they will have full control over all entries and adding additional users for your paper. After that person has uploaded two entries they will be recognized by the website as the Contest Manager and asked to verify their role via e-mail. Once the Contest Manager has been verified they will be able to add Authorized Entrants who can also upload, edit, and delete entries for your paper.

To get started, your paper's designated Contest Manager should follow these steps:

1. Log on to [www.BetterBNC.com/nynpa2024](http://www.BetterBNC.com/nynpa2024)
2. Click on "Login to this Contest" in the upper right corner of the page
3. Select "Contest Manager"
4. Select your newspaper under "Media Organization"
5. Enter either your existing password (if registered last year) or the temporary password of "bnc" (if new to the contest).
6. Enter or confirm your information, then submit your entries online as PDFs, JPEGs, URLs, or Microsoft Word documents.

After submitting all entries for the contest online the Contest Manager must fill out the contest entry form on the back cover of this booklet (also available for download at [www.nynpa.com/docs/entryform2024.pdf](http://www.nynpa.com/docs/entryform2024.pdf)) and mail it or email a scanned copy of it to NYNPA ([mmcdermott@nynpa.com](mailto:mmcdermott@nynpa.com)) with one check to cover the full amount of all entries being submitted by that newspaper, or with a copy of a payment receipt from PayPal.

### **ENTRY DEADLINE**

All entries must be received no later than **Monday, March 17, 2025 at 5 p.m.**  
No entries will be accepted after the deadline.

### **ENTRY FEE DEADLINE**

Corresponding entry form and accompanying payment (or proof of payment from PayPal) must be received by NYNPA no later than **Friday, March 21, 2025 at 5 p.m.**

### **WINNING ENTRIES**

Winners will be notified in May and invited to attend the annual awards ceremony. **Location and date to be determined.**

### **HELPFUL TIPS**

- When indicating publication dates for an entry, be sure to enter both the first and last dates a series was published. If the entry was only published one day, select the same date for both the first and last publication dates.
- Avoid submitting a URL leading to general coverage of a topic (Ex. [www.yourpaper.com/StateGovernment](http://www.yourpaper.com/StateGovernment)) or an entire blog (Ex. [www.yourpaper.com/PoliticsBlog](http://www.yourpaper.com/PoliticsBlog)).
- Do not double-up content by submitting multiple versions of an article or photograph in a single entry (Ex. uploading a PDF of a printed article and also submitting a URL to the same article on the paper's website).
- Make sure you provide a brief explanation of circumstances surrounding your entry in the Comments field for judging. (No special formatting is allowed in this field.)
- If submitting URLs for a website with a paywall, be sure to provide login and password information in the Comments field of an entry for judging.
- Do not include staff titles when listing staff names under credits of an entry.

### **CONTEST SUPPORT**

For questions regarding contest rules or lost login credentials contact:

Margaret McDermott, Development Director  
New York News Publishers Association  
252 Hudson Ave  
Albany, New York 12210  
(518) 449-1667  
[mmcdermott@nynpa.com](mailto:mmcdermott@nynpa.com)

### **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

For issues with the contest website please visit [betterbnccsupport.com](http://betterbnccsupport.com) or contact:

Cody France  
SmallTownPapers, Inc.  
217 W. Cota Street  
Shelton, WA 98584  
(360) 427-6300  
[cody@smalltownpapers.com](mailto:cody@smalltownpapers.com)

# Category Descriptions

## **CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS—NEWS**

*(Note: Print and digital content is eligible for entry in all categories, except where noted.)*

### **1. Distinguished Breaking News Coverage**

Submissions should demonstrate effective newspaper response to deadline demands. Submissions may consist of a single story or a group of stories by one or more reporters relating to the same event. Submissions should demonstrate clarity, thoroughness, balance, and aggressiveness in the coverage of local spot news.

### **2. Distinguished Live Sports Coverage**

Submissions should demonstrate effective newspaper response to deadline demands as related to live sporting events. Submissions may consist of a single story or a group of stories by one or more reporters relating to the same event. Submissions should demonstrate clarity, thoroughness, balance, and aggressiveness in the coverage of local live sports.

### **3. Distinguished Investigative Reporting**

Submissions should demonstrate thorough, thoughtful, fair, and resourceful reporting of local stories that reveal corruption or malfeasance or inherent flaws in the functioning of society's institutions, and/or stories that effectively measure the performance of those institutions against their stated missions. Submissions may consist of a single story or a group of stories by one or more reporters relating to the same event.

### **4. Distinguished Business Reporting**

Submissions should demonstrate effective newspaper coverage of business and the economy, skillful investigative reporting and excellence in writing style, editing, display and other pertinent criteria. The subject matter should deal primarily with how business and economic events relate to individuals and the newspaper's community. In this category, a submission may be one or more articles from the same edition relating to the same story, or a series of articles on a common subject running on different days.

### **5. Distinguished Beat Reporting**

Submissions should demonstrate sustained and knowledgeable coverage of a particular subject or activity of local interest. Submissions should be a series of no more than five reports on the same subject or activity by the same writer.

### **6. Distinguished Editorial Writing**

Submissions should demonstrate a genuine concern for local community problems; courage in taking a position regardless of the popular view and/or against own self-interest; originality of viewpoint and style; and other pertinent criteria. Each submission must be a local editorial. One or more editorials by the same writer on the same subject may be submitted to this category.

### **7. Distinguished Feature Writing**

Submissions should showcase good writing in non-deadline situations. Submissions may include personality profiles, trend stories, narratives and general features. Submissions should demonstrate style, originality and the ability to make readers laugh, cry or feel. Submissions may consist of a single story or a series of stories from one or more editions relating to the same subject.

### **8. Distinguished Sports Writing**

Submissions should demonstrate effective coverage of the people, institutions or trends in the local sports community employing thorough, thoughtful, fair, and resourceful reporting as well as quality writing. Submissions may consist of a single story or a group of stories by one or more reporters relating to the same topic.

**9. Distinguished Column Writing**

Submissions should demonstrate originality, insight, wit, the capacity to illuminate character, and the capacity to enhance the reader's understanding of persons and events in the community served by the newspaper. Submissions may be a single column or a body of work by the same writer up to a maximum of five columns.

**10. Distinguished Sports Column Writing**

Submissions should demonstrate originality, insight, wit, the capacity to illuminate character, and the capacity to enhance the reader's understanding of persons and events in local or national sports. Submissions may be a single body of work by the same writer up to a maximum of five columns.

**11. Distinguished Headline Writing**

Submissions should demonstrate clarity, creativity, and the capacity to distill and capture the essence of the story. Single submissions only will be accepted in this category.

**12. Distinguished Community Service**

Submissions (in this category a submission may be a series of articles and/or editorials on a common subject) should demonstrate effort and effect on the part of the local newspaper toward the improvement of the community served, as well as an effort on the newspaper's part to engage the community through both traditional and new media.

**13. Distinguished State Government Coverage**

Submissions should demonstrate effective newspaper coverage of state government as manifested in service to the community; skillful investigative reporting and excellence in writing style, editing, display, and other pertinent criteria. The subject matter should deal primarily with an aspect of state government - the legislature, executive branch, a specific state agency, etc. - and how it relates to the community. In this category, a submission may be one or more articles from the same edition relating to the same story, or a series of articles on a common subject running on different days.

**14. Distinguished Page Design/Presentation**

Submissions should demonstrate strong visual appeal, style and originality; and should enhance the written content, making it easy to understand or navigate. Submissions may be a single page or a body of work designed by the same person, up to a maximum of three examples. If submitting a series, up to three days' editions may be included.

**15. Distinguished News Photography**

Submissions should demonstrate news value, timeliness, communicative effectiveness, and skill as shown in composition and technical quality. A submission may be one or more photographs from one or more editions relating to the same news event.

**16. Distinguished Feature Photography**

Submissions should demonstrate imagination in the handling of feature subjects; communicative effectiveness; appeal to reader interest; and skill in composition, technical quality, and cropping. A submission may be one or more photographs from one or more editions relating to the same feature subject.

**17. Distinguished Sports Photography**

Submissions should sharply capture the drama inherent in human athletic competition and draw the reader's eye to peak action, capturing the moment and communicating it on an emotional level with a high degree of technical skill, composition and quality. A submission may be one or more photographs from one or more editions relating to the same subject.

## **ONLINE CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS**

*(Note: Only content that appeared on a newspaper's website is eligible to be entered in these categories.)*

**18. Distinguished Online Photo Gallery** Submissions should consist of a series of photographs which appeared on a newspaper's website in a single gallery. Submissions should enhance the story to which the gallery is attached, while demonstrating the highest standards of photojournalism.

**19. Distinguished Online Blog** Submissions should demonstrate timeliness, originality, insight, reader interaction and the capacity to enhance the reader's understanding of persons and events in the community served by the newspaper. Submissions may be a single day's blog entry or entries, or a series of blog entries over the course of the year by the same writer, with a maximum of ten entries.

**20. Distinguished Multi-Media Presentation** Submissions should demonstrate work that incorporates distinguished journalistic storytelling via media other than the print format. Submissions may consist of web-based interactive graphics and displays, videos, photo galleries and audio slideshows, or any combination of all of these elements. Creativity, ease -of-use for the website visitor, impact on the community and overall technical execution will be among factors considered by the judges.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS**

*(Note: Only content that appeared in a newspaper supplement or specialty publication of a newspaper is eligible to be entered in these categories.)*

### **21. Distinguished News Supplement**

Submissions should demonstrate imaginative layout and design; creative use of headlines; solid, staff-written articles; and high-quality photos relating to a breaking news event. Submissions should also demonstrate knowledge of and connection with the newspaper's community, and must contain primarily locally-produced content. Submissions may be one example of a regularly-produced weekly supplement, or a one-time supplement or publication.

### **22. Distinguished Sports Supplement**

Submissions should demonstrate imaginative layout and design; creative use of headlines; solid, staff-written articles; and high-quality photos relating to a local or national sporting event. Submissions should also demonstrate knowledge of and connection with the newspaper's community, and must contain primarily locally-produced content. Submissions may be one example of a regularly-produced weekly supplement, or a one-time supplement or publication.

### **23. Distinguished Feature Supplement**

Submissions should demonstrate imaginative layout and design; creative use of headlines; solid, staff-written articles; and high-quality photos relating to a common feature. Submissions should also demonstrate knowledge of and connection with the newspaper's community, and must contain primarily locally-produced content. Submissions may be one example of a regularly-produced weekly supplement, or a one-time supplement or publication.

## **NEW! ADVERTISING CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS**

### **24. Best Black and White Ad**

Submissions can be any ad size. Submission may include an explanation of why entry is a winning entry.

### **25. Best Color Ad**

Submissions can be any ad size. Submission may include an explanation of why entry is a winning entry.

### **26. Most Effective Use of Paid Small Space**

Judges will consider the creativity of copy, along with originality and impact. Ad must be conceptualized and executed solely by the newspaper. All ads must be generated by the newspaper. Ads must be less than a half page.

### **27. Most Effective Use of Paid Large space**

Judges will consider the creativity of copy, along with originality and impact. Ad must be conceptualized and executed solely by the newspaper. All ads must be generated by the newspaper. Ads must be a half page or larger.

### **28. Best Special Section Newsprint Distributed In Paper**

Multi-advertiser section involving a single theme. Ad must be produced solely by the newspaper. Judges will consider the uniqueness of idea, content both editorial and ads and overall layout. If an entry runs in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the COMBINED CIRCULATION of those newspapers

### **29. Best Online Ad (Static)**

Ad must be fixed, with no moving parts. All sizes are eligible. Ads must be generated by the newspaper (not camera-ready client produced). Can be paid or a house ad. Creativity and effectiveness of design and message will be criteria for judging

### **30. Best Online Ad (Animated)**

Ad may be .jpg, .gif or Flash. Must have an animated or dynamic element. All sizes are eligible. Ads must be generated by the newspaper (not camera-ready client produced). Can be paid or a house ad. Creativity and effectiveness of design and message will be criteria for judging.

### **31. Best Classified Section**

Submit classified page(s) from any one issue during the contest 2022 year. Judged on organization, design, readability, and in-house promotion.

### **32. Best House/Newspaper Promotion Ad, Series or Section**

Ad/Series/Section produced by staff to promote an aspect of the newspaper. This may be for circulation, advertising/marketing, editorial or general image/branding. If an entry runs in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the COMBINED CIRCULATION of those newspapers.

### **33. Best Multi Advertiser Page**

Multi-advertiser page or pages (not special section –no cover and minimal editorial) involving a single theme: shopping center, seasonal merchandise, specialty stores, holiday, etc. Judges will consider the uniqueness and overall layout. If an entry runs in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the COMBINED CIRCULATION of those newspapers.

## **ADVERTISING CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS (Continued)**

### **34. Best Use of Video**

Judges will consider creativity, innovation, and impact as well as how effectively the video content delivers the intended message.

### **35. Best Custom Sponsored Content Piece**

Entries can be a single article or a series of articles that draw the reader in with commercial sales/promotion in mind. Delivering content that is informative, relevant, and entertaining that it is part of readers' consumption of editorial content.

### **36. Best Special Section Non-Newsprint Distributed In Paper**

Any section involving a special subject or theme printed on glossy stock qualifies for this category. Judges will consider the quality of editorial content and graphic design. Special consideration will be given to locally prepared editorial and ad content, as well as particular interest or importance to the community. If an entry runs in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the COMBINED CIRCULATION of those Newspapers.

### **37. Best Innovative Idea**

An innovative project or idea initiated by the newspaper's advertising department that resulted in additional revenue for the newspaper. Entries should include a short description of the project or idea, information on revenue generated and the product itself, which may have appeared online, in print or both.

### **38. The Charmaine Ushkow Award for Advertising Excellence**

The Charmaine Ushkow Award will be given for the best overall newspaper advertising. The winner of this award will be the newspaper who has accumulation the greatest number of award among all categories.

## **CONTEST SUPPORT**

For questions regarding contest rules or lost login credentials contact:

Margaret McDermott, Development Director  
New York News Publishers Association  
252 Hudson Ave  
Albany, New York 12210  
(518) 449-1667  
[mmcdermott@nynpa.com](mailto:mmcdermott@nynpa.com)

## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

For issues with the contest website please visit [betterbncsupport.com](http://betterbncsupport.com) or contact:

Cody France  
SmallTownPapers, Inc.  
217 W. Cota Street  
Shelton, WA 98584  
(360) 427-6300

## New York News Publishers Association 2024 Awards for Excellence

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### Official Entry Form

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Please read the official contest rules thoroughly before filling out this form. Registration fee or proof of payment via PayPal must accompany this form. **All entries must be received by Monday, March 17, 2025. This form and accompanying payment or proof of payment must be received by Friday, March 21, 2025.**

**IMPORTANT:** Please list only one contact person for your entire newspaper. The contact person listed below should be the same person who registers as the Contestant Manager at [www.betterbnc.com/nympa2024](http://www.betterbnc.com/nympa2024). This person will receive all correspondence relating to our contest.

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Contest Manager Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Circulation Group (based on 12-month average daily circulation - check one):

- 1) Under 10,000 - \$15 per entry
- 2) 10,000-24,999 - \$20 per entry
- 3) 25,000-49,999 - \$25 per entry
- 4) 50,000-75,000 - \$30 per entry
- 5) Over 75,000 - \$35 per entry

Number of Entries \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method (circle one):  Check  PayPal (pay online at [nympa.com/awards.html#pay](http://nympa.com/awards.html#pay))

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**Mail this form, along with payment (or payment receipt), to:**

New York News Publishers Association  
2021 Awards for Excellence  
252 Hudson Ave  
Albany, New York 12210

**Need Assistance?**

Contact Margaret McDermott at NYNPA:  
(518) 449-1667 or [mmcdermott@nympa.com](mailto:mmcdermott@nympa.com)

**Contest Information and Updates**  
Available at [www.nympa.com/awards.html](http://www.nympa.com/awards.html)