



## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of **ASSESSING OFFICERS**

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### **IAAO Awards Program Nomination Tips**

by Jeffery W. Spelman, CAE

Questions from members or jurisdictions about what makes a strong nomination for the IAAO Awards Program are common for the IAAO Membership Recognition Sub-Committee (MRC). It's not surprising since the award process can be very competitive, especially in award categories covering jurisdictions or Chapters and Affiliates. The following tips and suggestions should help members as they prepare their submissions.

“First, the nomination should follow the submission guidelines of the Awards Program in the current [Awards Brochure](#),” said Terry Taylor, CAE, RES, MRC Chair. “Be sure and clearly describe the project with adequate detail for the MRC to make a fair evaluation. In addition, it's certainly worth the time to review [Vision 2020](#), IAAO's Strategic Plan.”

#### **What Judges Look For**

“There's an element in these awards that, for lack of a better word, is the ‘wow’ factor,” said Taylor. “We look for a nomination that provides value for IAAO members. As a long-time committee member put it, we're looking for projects an IAAO member will hear about and say, ‘What a great idea, we've got to try that.’ Or maybe a member will think, ‘This is a new development that addresses a problem we've faced for years.’ The committee, in a nutshell, is always looking for something that creates value for IAAO members to help them grow professionally and do their jobs well.”

It is important to note that amazing ideas can come from an organization of any size. Large offices often have more resources, but they don't have a monopoly on innovation or creativity. A small jurisdiction doing more with less can be just as impressive, if not more so, than a larger office with lots of staff and a bigger budget.

“One size doesn't fit everything. We look at nominations from both large jurisdictions and small offices,” Taylor said.

This principle also applies to IAAO Chapters and Affiliates submitting award nominations. Any Chapter or Affiliate can be doing significant work worthy of notice, and all are encouraged to participate in the Awards Program.

## **Different Matters, Content Matters Most**

The MRC doesn't look for a specific format other than requirements listed in the [Awards Brochure](#) and on the [Nomination Form](#). Feel free to make submissions look any way you want.

"Don't be afraid to do something different," Taylor said.

Submissions can be the maximum size or fairly short, a basic report or an eye-catching booklet. Do whatever fits that particular nomination. There is no single submission style that will win an award. It is truly the content that matters most, and decisions on winners will be made based on what a person or organization accomplished.

As you think about the content of an award nomination for your office or organization, keep in mind that many of the items the MRC reviews are part of an overall strategy. The committee rarely sees one public relations brochure, one web page with information for taxpayers or a recap from a single event. The best nominations are often for programs where several different components are presented to show how together they benefit an audience. Chapters and Affiliates typically talk about a variety of items they do to meet the needs of professionals in their local area. Make sure you communicate to the MRC how everything in a submission fits together and benefits your constituents.

## **Stay Relevant**

Finally, the MRC is sensitive to issues of general application and self-promotion. All states, provinces and countries are different, but many share the same overall concerns. The MRC will consider what award submissions are potentially of interest to all IAAO members. A long discussion of the intricacies of an issue that applies to only one location may not be helpful to members elsewhere. It may be worthy of recognition, but might not win an award if another equally deserving nomination could be beneficial to more members.

Similarly, the committee is always interested in improvements and enhancements to the assessment profession, but will not be as interested by a nomination that looks like purely self-promotion. Be clear about how your submission offers added value to the industry and IAAO members.

**[Award nominations are due May 1, 2017!](#)**

**The MRC looks forward to hearing from you.**

*If you have questions about the IAAO Awards Program or any of these tips, please contact Kate Smith, MRC staff liaison, at [smith@iaao.org](mailto:smith@iaao.org) or 816-701-8132.*