

CAPIO Awards of Excellence Entry Tips



The CAPIO Awards of Excellence recognize the “best of the best” in government communications throughout the state. Strong award entries clearly demonstrate insightful research, planning, implementation, results, effective use of budget and overall evaluation. The tips below have been created to help you when preparing your entry(ies) in order for them to stand out during the judges review process. Here are several tips to review prior to submitting your entry(ies):

General Submittal Information

Entries Guidelines

- Formatting: Each entry must include a written narrative that is no more than two pages, single spaced, in no smaller than 11 point font and a minimum of .5 margins all around.
- Each entry must include the agency’s name, award title and award category in the top right corner.
- An online entry form must be completed and submitted with each PDF.
- Each entry must be uploaded as one PDF document.
- An entry for the same project/program may be submitted in multiple categories that it applies to, however, each entry must have its own online entry form, a separate narrative and entry fee.
- The narrative should address the following items:
 - Research/Planning
 - Implementation Overview
 - Results and Evaluation
 - Budget Information (External costs, In-kind donations, in-house staff hours/soft costs, if available – See more detail/explanation on page 2 of this document.)
- If possible, please include samples of the work/program/project with your entry:
 - Newsletters, bill stuffers, social media analytics, surveys, links to video.
 - This is YOUR opportunity to show the judges what your program was all about in an effort to have it chosen as the top winner!

Judging Process

- CAPIO Award of Excellence entries are judged by communication professionals at various agencies throughout the state who have more than five years of experience in the field.
- Categories are typically judged by two or more judges.
- The CAPIO Awards are determined based on the judges’ numerical scores. At times, some categories may not have a winner(s) in all three award levels due to the scores received.

Awards Levels

- Each category has three levels of awards:
 - CAPIO Award of Excellence – 1st
 - CAPIO Award of Distinction – 2nd
 - CAPIO Award of Merit – 3rd
 - The awards are announced at the Awards Gala Dinner on the last night of the CAPIO Annual Conference.

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Award Entry Narratives – Guidelines/Tips

Research /Planning

- **Research** helps you define the problem/opportunity and the audience:
 - WHO do you want to reach?
 - WHAT do you want them to do?
 - WHAT messages do we want to communicate to our audience?
 - WHAT were some research considerations?
 - Time/Budget Constraints.
 - Available Resources?
 - HOW will data be collected (phone, survey, interview)?
 - WHAT type of research did you use for this project?
 - Primary – Survey, Focus Groups, Interviews, Communications Audit, etc.
 - Secondary – Historical Research, Internet Research, etc.
 - Formal – Survey, Content Analysis, etc.
 - Informal – Phone Interviews, Tracking Calls, Observations, etc.
 - Qualitative and/or Quantitative.
 - Scientific Method.

- **Planning** includes your goals, audience objectives, strategies and tactics:
 - **Goals** – Typically long-term, big picture perspective.
 - **Ex:** To be the recognized regional leader in transportation OR to foster public support for the upcoming ballot measure
 - **Objectives** – These tend to be more focused and shorter term; focuses and defines what behavior, attitude or opinion you would like to achieve. Objectives should be specific, measurable, audience/result and time specific.
 - **Ex:** Increase by 25 percent the number of riders on public transportation by the end of the year.
 - **Strategies** – Describe how to reach your objectives.
 - **Ex:** Enlist community stakeholders to gain buy-in on upcoming program.
 - **Tactics** – The “how to” elements of the strategy.
 - **Ex:** Community events, news releases, social media posts, video
 - **Budget** – The project budget should clearly outline the external and internal costs, including staff hours (if available, and can be approximate hours, no need to include compensation breakdown), hard costs for outside consultants or production fees (if any), and sponsorships/in-kind contributions. For items, such as a newsletter, it’s best to try to list the per piece cost.
 - **Ex:** “The City of ShangraLa” produced 50,000 newsletters in the month of December. The newsletters cost \$2,000 to print, and they were distributed to each of the City’s 50,000 residents by 8 volunteers over a period of 80 hours (10 hours per person), no postage or mailing cost was incurred. Therefore, the per piece hard cost was 0.04 cents (\$2,000 cost divided by 50,000 pieces = 0.04 cents cost per piece).

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Implementation

- Discusses the execution of the project or communicating the project.
- How was the project developed?
- How did you reach the target audience; how many reached?
- Did you use any monitoring tools for execution? If so, which ones?
- Were outside consultants involved and what was their role? Be sure to also include any costs in the budget portion, or note if they were in-kind consultants.

Results /Evaluation

- Results should measure the effectiveness of your program against the objectives noted in the planning portion of your entry.
 - **Ex:** Comparing a pre-survey with a post survey OR comparing customer complaints before and after a program.
- If possible, metrics are ideal to include, especially compared to your goals, or perhaps other historical figures if you have those available.
 - **Ex:** If you are illustrating the effectiveness of a social media campaign, you can indicate growth in web traffic during the time of the campaign, comparison and growth numbers of your social media audience, and perhaps total viewers/readers/followers for a particular post. There are also best practice numbers available online if you'd like to understand comparison figures, or you can gauge it for your community and what your agency deems as a success for a particular program or endeavor.