

Welcome to the 2024 Catholic Media Awards

Established in 2019, the Communications Department Division is for Members who specialize in work related to their organization and outside of traditional news publishing. Its purpose is to recognize outstanding work developed by communications departments, independent of material developed by publication members.

Categories were developed by communications directors to focus on public and media relations work, and educational and pastoral efforts. The awards will be presented at the Catholic Media Conference, scheduled for June 18-21, 2024, in Atlanta. Winners will be announced in *The Catholic Journalist*, accompanied by comments from the judges, and will also be featured on the CMA website and social media platforms.

New for 2024

- Unless otherwise specified, entries must be the work of someone on the staff of, or a freelance contributor to, a CMA member organization.
- Hard copies are NO longer required for print submissions. You will simply upload a PDF of the work to the submission form.
- To save time, you may duplicate your submission form. Once the entry is duplicated it copies all information. Then you only need to select a new category AND make sure all files needed are appropriately updated.

General Information

Key Dates

- Open Submission Period: Nov. 1, 2023 - Jan. 31, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. CST
- Extension Period: Feb. 1-7, 2024 at 11:59 am CST
- Payment deadline: Feb. 9, 2024

Entry Fees

- Open Submission Period: \$38 per entry
- Extension Period: \$48 per entry

Additional Information

- All entries are for work published in 2023.
- All members must be in good standing as of March 31, 2024.
- Unless otherwise specified, entries must be the work of someone on the staff of, or a freelance contributor to, a CMA member organization.
- Hard copies are no longer required for print submissions. You will simply upload a PDF of the work to the submission form.
- To save time, you may duplicate your submission form. Once the entry is duplicated it copies all information. Then you only need to select a new category and make sure all files needed are appropriately updated.

Free Entry

- Each CMA Member Organization or Freelance Member is eligible for one free entry per year, when submitted by 11:59 p.m. CST on Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024.
- Free entry may be your only entry.
- If your organization also has a publication / communication office that also is a CMA member, please determine which one will redeem the free entry.
- Free entry is automatically added to your cart during the regular submission period. Please note, there is only one free entry per organization.
- If someone else on your staff has already used the free entry prior to you using it, you will be invoiced for the difference once the program closes in February.

Judging

Entries are judged by selected professionals knowledgeable about Catholic media, including faculty from prominent Catholic journalism schools. Our judges bring a wealth of experience in various media, ensuring a fair and informed evaluation of each entry, and are committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity throughout the evaluation process.

Eligibility Requirements

The Catholic Media Awards is a recognition program for CMA members. The following eligibility requirements apply:

1. Entries must be from a Member Organization or Freelance Member in good standing. Member dues must be paid by March 31, 2024 to be eligible for an award. No refunds offered after judging.
2. Entries must be the original work of a Member Organization or Freelance Member. Include bylines/credits on all submissions. Plagiarized or incorrectly credited entries are grounds for disqualification.
3. Member Organizations may submit the work of any employee or Freelance Member. The author/creator need not be a Staff Member or Freelance Member.
4. Freelance Members may enter all categories. Your work must appear in the print edition of, on the website of, or in promotion of a Member Organization.
5. To avoid duplicate entries, we ask Freelance Members to consult with the Member Organization that printed the material before submitting it. Please confirm that the Member Organization is not submitting the same work in the same category as you.
6. Only entries published in calendar year 2023 are accepted.

Reasons for Elimination or Disqualification

- Less than two submissions per category: Every category requires at least two submissions, by different entrants, to qualify for evaluation. Under this scenario we will refund your entry fee, if this was not your free entry.
- Entry does not meet submission requirements: Entries must be submitted properly and include all required components to be evaluated by the judges. Please check the category descriptions to make sure your entries are correct.

Section Overview

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Categories and Descriptions

C301: Best Diocesan Printed Fundraising Appeal – Produced by Communication Department Staff

This program highlights efforts to raise money for the diocese through the annual diocesan or bishop’s appeal. The Stewardship Appeal is an example of this promotion.

Entry consists of a PDF or URL where judges can view the quality of the material, the clarity of the message, and the quality/effectiveness of the “ask” for financial support.

C302: Best Diocesan Video Fundraising Appeal – Produced by Communications Dept. Staff

This program highlights efforts to raise money for the diocese through the annual diocesan or bishop’s appeal. The Stewardship Appeal is an example of this promotion.

An entry consists of a URL where judges can view the quality of the material, the clarity of the message and the quality/effectiveness of the “ask” for financial support.

C305: Best Diocesan Pastoral Message

This category is different from the annual appeal and designed for occasions when an ordinary wants to deliver a specific message to the public or to parishioners.

C305a: Best Diocesan Pastoral Message – Audio or Video

An entry consists of a URL where judges can view the single audio or video submission for its clarity of message and effectiveness to produce change or action as indicated by the purpose of the message.

C305b: Best Diocesan Pastoral Message – Letter

An entry consists of a URL where judges can review a PDF version of the letter.

C315: Best Initiative or Campaign – Package

This category is for campaigns, topics, and initiatives that are seasonal or temporary. Annual Diocesan Appeal should enter Category C301.

Entry consists of a URL or PDF where judges can view 3-consecutive examples of the series for quality of production, the ability to deliver the message and fulfill the purpose of the series. All formats are eligible including video, podcast, and graphic work.

C316: Hot Topic - The Eucharistic Revival**NEW**

This category showcases an external outreach regarding a hot topic, in this case, the National Eucharistic Revival taking place from 2022 to 2025 in the U.S. you can view more information about the revival at [this website](#). An entry consists of the URL of the webpage where judges may view their work.

C317: Best Package – Political Issues

This category is for best overall package of external outreach on topics such as religious freedom, abortion, gun violence and social inequities. This includes the bishops' Faithful Citizenship information, social media postings, videos, and diocesan website updates.

An entry consists of a URL or PDF where judges can see 5-7 elements for the ability to deliver the message that fulfills the purpose of the outreach. Judges will consider creativity and social media engagement as proof of effectiveness.

C321: Best Press Release

This category recognizes the ability to deliver a concise statement and the perceived effectiveness of the release in addressing the issue at hand. Content is the major component of this category; production quality is viewed as enhancing or detracting from the intent of the message.

An entry consists of a URL or PDF where judges can view the statement made as a press release in print, audio, or video format.

C325: Best Interview

This category evaluates the overall effectiveness of a media interview of 30-minutes or less on a Church-related topic. Components evaluated include production quality, and the ability of the interviewer to solicit information that makes the interview relevant and impactful.

An entry consists of a URL where judges can view/listen to the interview in audio or video format.

- **C325a: Audio**
- **C325b: Video**

C331: Best Podcast

This category recognizes quality podcast programming produced by the Communications Department independent of the organization's publication. Entry consists of the URL of the webpage where judges may download and listen to podcast episodes. Submissions should include a letter with a podcast description along with the titles of the 1-3 episodes that the judges will consider.

C332: Best Podcast Series

This category recognizes a series of podcasts on a specific issue or topic produced by the Communications Department independent of the organization's publication.

Entry consists of the URL of the webpage where judges may download and listen to 3 of the episodes in the series. Submissions should include a letter with a description of the reason for the podcast's focus on that particular issue or topic, along with the three episode titles for judges to consider.

C341: Best External E-newsletter

Judged for design quality and content to determine if the newsletter is pleasant to the eye, appropriate for the intended reader, and delivers the message in a clear and inviting manner. Newsletter developed by the Communications Department, independent of the organization's publication.

Entry consists of 1-3 newsletters viewed through URL or attached PDF.

C351: Best Social Media Account – Diocesan Bishop**UPDATED**

This category is for a Diocesan Bishop's overall social media account, maintained by the bishop himself or by a diocese or member organization. Judges will consider creativity, engagement, and use of videos or graphics. Entry consists of the URL where judges can view the account as well as an analytics overview.

- **C351a. X (formerly known as Twitter)**
- **C351b. Instagram**
- **C351c. Facebook**
- **C351d. TikTok**
- **C351e. Youtube**
- **C351f. Threads**

C352: Best Use of Social Media

This category is for the overall use of diocesan Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, Tiktok, Youtube, and Threads, etc., by a Communications Department. Criteria may include quality of information as well as commitment to engaging followers.

Entries consist of the URL where judges can view social media accounts.

C361: Best New Website

The purpose of this category is to recognize updates in website development produced by and for the organization's Communications Department. This category is separate from the All-Member Best Website category in that it specifically highlights launches or redesigns within the 2023 calendar year. Judging focuses on the overall quality of site content and graphics, as well as effectiveness in meeting site objectives as stated by the entrant.

Entry consists of the URL of the website and a written description of site objectives.

Submission Instructions

Getting Started

Submit all entries digitally through the CMA awards website beginning Nov. 1, 2023.

- Please use [the link here](#) to submit your applications.
- The website allows you to view categories, make submissions, and pay in the same place.

Please read category descriptions to determine submission requirements for each category. If you have questions about eligibility, submissions, or payment, please [visit our website](#) then click on the awards tab. If you need further assistance, please email the awards team at Awards@CatholicMediaAssociation.org.

Create a Profile First

For simplicity's sake, we recommend creating **one PROFILE account** for your publication.

- **Returning Entrants:** You can use the same login information you used last year. If you do not remember your password you may go to the login page and click "Forgot My Password" to reset and make a new one.
- **New Entrants:** Click "Enter the Catholic Media Awards" on the homepage and follow prompts to create a username and password for your account.
- **New Format:** You will now select your membership type at the beginning of the submission form. After you select a membership type, you will see a box labeled "Publisher Name," this box is where you will select your publication or Communications Department name from a list. The address will auto-populate.
- **Video/PDF:** instructions may be viewed by clicking this [link](#) or a PDF file by clicking this [link](#).

Creating a New Submission

1. Once logged in to your Profile account, click "Make Another Application" then "Enter Catholic Press Awards." You will be prompted to review your past submissions or to begin a new submission.
2. If you have any unfinished submissions from prior years, we suggest deleting them because they will not upload in the current contest.
3. Select, "Click Here to Begin a New Submission." Fill out the form as prompted and click "Save And Next" to continue. You can return to the previous form at any time.
 - a. All entries are marked "Incomplete" until paid.
4. Options after making submissions:

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- a. **Save your work:** Click “Save” to save your work and leave the form. You can return and edit it at any time, until you pay for it, by clicking on “My Applications” and clicking “Edit”.
 - b. **Prepare to Pay:** Click “Add To Cart” to move your saved submission to your cart.
 - i. You can return and edit by clicking “Make Changes” prior to paying.
 - ii. You can also remove it from your cart.
 - iii. Click “Checkout” to pay.
5. **Paid entries are marked “Complete” and cannot be edited.** We suggest you proof all submissions for duplicates, accuracy and attachments prior to paying.
- a. To fix mistakes after completion, contact Awards@CatholicMediaAssociation.org on or before Feb. 9, 2024.
6. To save time, you may duplicate your submission form. Once the entry is duplicated it copies all information. Then you only need to select a new category AND make sure all files needed are appropriately updated.

Entry Fee and Payment Process

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Additional Entries

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- \$48 for all entries between Feb. 1 and Feb. 7, 2024 at 11:59 a.m. CST.

Payment Instructions

Ready for Checkout

1. When items are in your cart, a direct link to your cart will appear under “My Applications.” Click the link to edit submissions or pay for your entries.
2. When ready, click the “Checkout” button to select your method of payment, then click “Process.”
3. The next screen allows you to print your invoice and submission forms.

Payment Options

- A. Online Credit Card: Enter the information and complete the transaction
- B. Pay by Check: Please include a copy of your invoice with your payment

Mail Payment To:

CMA Awards Program
Catholic Media Association
10 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 875
Chicago, IL 60606

Good luck and thank you for participating.

Entry Deadline

Open Submission Deadline: 11:59 p.m. CST, Jan. 31, 2024
Extension Submission Deadline: 11:59 a.m. CST, Feb. 7, 2024