



2026 PRSA Puget Sound SUMMIT AWARDS

General Guidelines

The PRSA Puget Sound Awards honor the best work of communications professionals in Washington state and are sponsored annually by the Puget Sound Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. These awards recognize professional excellence and ingenuity in more than 20 categories, covering both public relations components and programs.

In addition to the individual category awards, special accolades include the Best of Show, Young Professional Award and the President's Choice Award. The public relations landscape and toolkit are always evolving, and the awards will showcase those tactics and programs that should be emulated.

Eligibility

The PRSA Puget Sound Awards competition is open to all public relations, communication, and marketing professionals in the region—PRSA members and nonmembers alike throughout the Pacific Northwest. The competition is open to communications professionals in Mid-Columbia, Spokane and Oregon, for example.

Work entered in the Program Category may span both 2024 and 2025 to allow time for evaluation and demonstration of measurable results. The bulk of the work for the Component Category entries must have been completed during calendar year 2025 (exceptions may be granted in advance at the discretion of the awards committee). Entries submitted in previous years may not be submitted again.

Please note – a public relations program may be entered into one program category and one component category only and each must have distinct summaries.

Entry Deadlines

- Early bird entries must be uploaded by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 27, 2026.
- Final deadline for entries **must** be uploaded is 11:59 p.m. on Friday, April 24, 2026. Unlike previous years, where we were able to extend the deadline, we will not be able to extend the deadline this year.

A link to the online payment and submission portal will be posted by March 9, 2026, to the Puget Sound Summit Awards webpage at https://prsapugetsound.org/Summit_Awards.

Judging Criteria

Each entry will be reviewed and scored by at least two judges from another PRSA chapter. If judging scores vary by more than 12 points, a third judge will be brought in, and the lowest score will be dropped. The research and evaluation portions of the entries are judged first. Entrants are encouraged to describe the research and evaluation phases as fully as possible to earn the score their work deserves.

Each entry is judged on its own merits. You're competing only against yourself, except in the top award categories. There can be multiple awards and multiple Certificates of Excellence awarded in each category - or none.

Point System for Judging

Entries in both the Program Category and Component Category are scored on a point system with a maximum of 100 points as outlined below. see the judging point breakdown for programs/components listed below.

Program Category

Program Category entries are judged based on research, planning, execution and evaluation, as presented in the PRSA universal accreditation program.

Points are awarded as follows:

- 20 points for research
- 30 points for planning
- 20 points for implementation
- 30 points for evaluation

Component Category

Component Category entries are judged based on research, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Public Relations Components are individual program tactics that will be judged primarily on effectiveness in supporting a program goal or communicating a program message.

Points are awarded as follows:

- 25 points for research/planning
- 50 points for implementation
- 25 points for evaluation

Planning for Your Entry

Be sure to carefully select the most appropriate category for your entry. Keep in mind:

- A public relations program may be entered into one program category and one component category only and each must have distinct summaries.
- The number of entrants per category does not affect judging. Each entry is judged on its own merits.
- If judges feel an entry is submitted in the wrong category, they may move your entry into the proper category with no penalties.
- If your entry does not meet the timeline requirements (listed under eligibility) it will be disqualified, and refunds will not be given. If you have questions, please contact the Awards Committee first.
- To aid you in preparing your entry, see [https://prsapugetsound.org/Summit Awards](https://prsapugetsound.org/Summit_Awards) for awards entry tips, two-page summary samples, and more.

Preparing Your Entry

The following items are required for a complete award submission:

- Entry form (online)
- Entry fee (online)
- Two-page summary
- Supporting materials (i.e., plans, research, audits, photos, graphics, spreadsheets, news releases, budget, etc.)
- Submitted on time (no late submissions will be accepted, and no extension will be granted)

Two-Page Summary

- Summaries may be no longer than two typed pages in no smaller than 10-point type.
- You will be automatically disqualified, and your entry fee forfeited, for any summary of more than two pages or type smaller than 10 points.
- Summaries should address research, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- The two-page summary is one of the most important elements to aid the judges in evaluating the merits of your work.

Entry Fees

Online entries only. A link to the online payment and submission portal will be posted on the PRSA Puget Sound webpage by March 9, 2026 at https://prsapugetsound.org/Summit_Awards.

- Early Bird Pricing (ends March 27, 2026):
 - o PRSA Puget Sound Chapter Members - \$125 per entry
 - o Non-Chapter Members - \$175 per entry
- Regular Pricing (after March 27, 2026):
 - o PRSA Puget Sound Chapter Members - \$175 per entry
 - o Non-Chapter Members - \$275 per entry
- Credit card payments are accepted and preferred with your online entry.

Questions About Your Entry?

Please e-mail questions to Eric Moss or Jennifer Hawton at awards@prsapugetsound.org or contact Eric Moss at (206) 931-1838 and leave a message. E-mail is preferred and the fastest way to have your questions addressed.

Awards Event

Save the date! Celebration details for the Aug. 19, 2026, event will be announced when award winners are notified in June 2026.

CATEGORIES

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMPONENTS

Each entry must include an entry summary of no more than two typed pages, at 10-point type or larger and supporting materials. (Entries with summaries longer than two pages or type font smaller than 10-point will be disqualified.) Be sure to include these elements:

- Research/Planning— include details on the situation and research
- Implementation/Execution— include information about the budget, challenges/solutions, evidence of strong project management and quality of piece
- Evaluation/Effectiveness— whether objective was met, use of resources, quantifiable results

Writing

An original single article, speech or series:

- a. Scripts
- b. Editorials/Op-Ed Columns
- c. Technical Writing
- d. Speech Writing (submit final in author's name)
- e. Feature Writing
- f. Other

Internal Publications

For periodicals, submit three consecutive issues (includes printed or electronic versions):

- a. Magazines
- b. Newsletters
- c. Handbooks/Manuals
- d. Other

External Publications

For periodicals, submit three consecutive issues (includes printed or electronic versions):

- a. Magazines
- b. Newsletters
- c. Other

Special Publications

One-time components published for a special audience, event or purpose (includes printed or electronic versions):

- a. Brochures
- b. Direct Mail
- c. Advertising
- d. Posters
- e. Books
- f. Other

Visual Presentations

- a. Videos
- b. Audio/Visual Presentations (PowerPoint, Webisodes, etc.)
- c. Photography
- d. Graphic Illustration
- e. Other

Digital Media

- a. Websites
- b. Social Media
- c. Mobile Technology/Apps
- d. Other

Media Relations

- a. News Releases
- b. Pitches
- c. Bylined Articles
- d. Media Kits
- e. Public Service Announcements
- f. Other

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Communications

Any public relations component with a key focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Annual Reports

For external or internal audiences reporting on the previous year's activities.

Communications Audits

Communications Plans

PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMS

Each entry must include an entry summary of no more than two typed pages, at 10-point type or larger and supporting materials. (Entries with summaries longer than two pages or font smaller than 10-point will be disqualified.) Be sure to include these elements:

- Research/Planning—situation and research
- Implementation/Execution—budget, challenges/solutions, evidence of strong project management and quality of piece
- Evaluation/Effectiveness—whether objective was met, use of resources, quantifiable results

Community Relations

To enhance relationships, improve cooperation, and advance an objective in a community. “Community” in this category refers to a specific geographic location or locations. Campaigns designed to promote products should be entered into the Marketing Communications category.

Institutional Programs

To affect an organization’s stature, reputation or relationship(s) with its public or key elements of its public.

Special Events and Observances

To observe/promote commemorations, openings, national or local observances, celebrations, and other events.

Public Service

To advance public understanding of a social issue, problem, or concern where the principal motivation of the sponsoring organization is altruistic or philanthropic. (Includes PSAs if they are the essence of the program. Standalone PSAs can be entered in Media Relations Components.)

Public Affairs

To influence public policy and/or affect legislation, regulations, political activities, or candidacies at the local, state, or federal government level, so that it benefits the entity funding the program.

Marketing Communications

To publicize or promote new or established products.

Global Public Relations

Any type of program designed to improve relations with countries or the public outside of the United States.

Crisis Communications

To deal with or prepare for disasters, crises, or emergencies.

Internal Communications

To promote internal efficiency through communications or to affect relations with employees.

Investor Relations

To improve relations with shareholders, advisors, and financial investors.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Communications

Any public relations program (i.e. institutional, marketing or community relations) with a key focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Reputation/Brand Management

To manage and improve relationships with the brand and its public.

Pro Bono Project

Public relations program or campaign developed and executed at no charge on behalf of a cause or charity, including a one-time special event.

THE BEST OF THE BEST

Think you've got the goods to be the best of the best? Entrants may also be eligible for the following awards:

BEST OF SHOW AWARD

The Best of Show winner, chosen by the PRSA chapter judging the awards, is drawn from a field of top entries submitted in the Public Relations Programs categories. The Best of Show winner exemplifies the best in public relations programs and is an example for the profession.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD

The Young Professional Award, selected by the PRSA chapter judging the awards, is given to a professional with three or fewer years of experience whose performance has taken him or her to the highest level of professionalism on an entry submitted in the Public Relations Programs categories. Applicants for this award must be PRSA Puget Sound Chapter members in good standing. Contact awards@prsapugetsound.org to verify membership status if needed.

How to qualify: All young professionals (three or fewer years of experience) are eligible for this award providing they were the lead person on the project submitted. Please note your young professional eligibility on your entry form.

PRESIDENT'S CHOICE AWARD

The President's Choice Award will be selected from a field of award-winning finalists by a panel of the current and/or past presidents of the PRSA Puget Sound Chapter. It will honor one of the award entries that excelled despite difficult circumstances. Was your deadline pushed up by a client, causing you to re-work your whole campaign and still pull it off successfully? Did your campaign garner six-course results on a fast-food budget? Or was your successful campaign for that multi-million-dollar corporation completed solely by you?

How to qualify: If you believe that your campaign qualifies for this award, please include an explanation as to why you are eligible in 50 words or less, along with your entry, and note your application on your entry form.