



2026

AWARDS
FOR
EXCELLENCE
RULEBOOK

DEADLINE:
FRIDAY,
JAN. 8, 2027
(4 P.M.)

General Rules

Deadline Friday, Jan. 8, 2027 (4 p.m.)

This competition is limited as follows:

1. Entries are limited to WBA member stations.
2. **All entries must have originated on-air or published between Jan. 1, 2026 and Dec. 31, 2026.**
3. **If you are a Music or News and Talk station your entries must be in either the News and Talk division or Music division. No cross-overs allowed.**
4. TV and Radio entries must be primarily created and produced by **YOUR** member station. They **may not** include material produced with outside advertising or production agency equipment, assistance, or direction, but may include material produced by another outlet which is supplemental or supportive of the topic of the story being entered. Radio entries should be audio-only, with an exception for digital/social media categories. Outside sources should be credited. **It is in the opinion of the WBA Awards Committee that entries containing content produced by artificial intelligence (AI) are strongly discouraged.**
5. Original content aired on multiple stations may only be submitted for one station.
6. Entries submitted must fit within the length requirements stated in each category. This applies to the length of the file itself, not the audio/video within the file. **Time limits are strictly enforced.** Narratives or scripts, where required, must be submitted in PDF format and limited to **one page**. **DO NOT** submit a PDF attachment unless requested in the requirements for that specific category. Complete instructions on how to enter are included on the final page of this booklet. The WBA reserves the right to edit entry titles for brevity and clarity.
7. Social and Digital Media - Content must be the product of the station or organization entering it. A website with a majority of content from an outside agency is NOT eligible.
8. Social and Digital Media entries will need to provide a URL link to the live website. Password information must be provided for password protected sites. Remember the site must be live at the time of judging.
9. Social and Digital Media entries may be submitted in either horizontal or vertical format. Categories eligible for vertical video entries are noted in the category descriptions.
10. Only text and photos are allowed in entry attachments (PDFs). Links and embedded video in PDF attachments are forbidden.
11. As in any contest, conflicts may arise. Issues involving judging of entries will be resolved by the judges. Their decisions will be final. Issues involving interpretation of the rules and procedures of the WBA Awards Program will be settled by the Executive Staff of the WBA and, if deemed necessary by the Executive Staff, in consultation with the WBA Awards Committee. Their decisions will be final.
If you have eligibility questions, please call the WBA Office at 608-255-2600 or 800-236-1922.
12. Entries are limited to two per station in each of the categories, except where specifically noted.
13. **An entry can only be submitted in one category. However, portions of submissions in the highlighted "compilation" categories (1-5 for Television and News and Talk, 1-3 for Music) can be submitted in other categories. (e.g., A two-minute interview could be submitted for Best Interview, even if it's part of a fifteen-minute Best Radio Show entry. But that two-minute interview could NOT be submitted for both Best Interview and Best Use of Audio.) Only the content of the entry is subject to this rule. Supplementary materials submitted with the entry, such as a written description, are not subject to this rule.**
14. Snippets: You are encouraged to select a :15 second snippet of your entry that will be used for the video/audio montage should your entry receive a **1st** place. If you don't identify a snippet, the first :15 will be used.
15. Entry fees are \$35 per entry for radio, \$45 per entry for television.
16. Fees can be paid **online** when submitting your entry or by calling the WBA Office at 608-255-2600 or 800-236-1922.
17. Entries must be completed and submitted **online** to BetterBNC.com. Entries must be received online by **Jan. 8, 2027 by 4 p.m. CT**. **Online** entries will be accepted beginning Dec. 1, 2026.
18. Winning entries will be announced during the WBA Awards Gala on **Saturday, May 1, 2027** at the Madison Marriott West.

Judging will be done by peers outside of Wisconsin.

THE WBA CUMULATIVE VOTING SYSTEM

◆ Each station will be given one point for each eligible category in which they enter.

Important note: *Even if a station enters two entries in a category (two is the limit), they still only receive a single point.*

◆ A third place award in each eligible category receives one additional point.

◆ A second place award in each eligible category receives two additional points.

◆ The first place award in each eligible category receives four additional points.

◆ The total points earned in each division will determine the winner.

TIEBREAKER: If there is a tie, the station with the most first place awards will be declared the winner. If there is still a tie, the station with the greater number of second place awards will be declared the winner. If it remains a tie after that, a tie will be declared.

The Awards for Excellence are sponsored annually by the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association to recognize outstanding achievement by Wisconsin radio and television broadcasters. This competition was established to encourage the highest standards of reporting, community service, and production creativity. It brings the ultimate prize: Peer recognition to members of the broadcast industry in Wisconsin.

AWARD MARKETS

For purposes of this competition, a station's market is based on the market in which it promotes itself and/or where it maintains its office/studio location, regardless of city of license. All entries must have been "on-air" or published between Jan. 1, 2026 and Dec. 31, 2026.

TELEVISION

Large Market: Milwaukee

Medium Market: Green Bay-Appleton, Madison

Small Market: La Crosse-Eau Claire, Kenosha, Superior, Wausau-Rhineland

Entry Fee: \$45 per TV entry

MUSIC RADIO & NEWS AND TALK

Large Market: Milwaukee, Madison

Medium Market: Appleton, Beloit, Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Green Bay, Janesville, Kenosha, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Marshfield, Neenah-Menasha, Oshkosh, Racine, Sheboygan, Stevens Point, Superior, Wausau, Wisconsin Rapids

Small Market: All other cities

Entry Fee: \$35 per Radio entry

THE BEST OF THE BEST

STATION OF THE YEAR AWARDS

There will be a WBA Station of the Year Award in each market size for Radio Music, Radio News and Talk, and Television. The winners are determined using the WBA Cumulative Voting System. No separate entry is needed to compete for these awards.

TELEVISION NEWS OPERATION OF THE YEAR AWARD

Winners in each market size will be determined from these 15 categories using the WBA cumulative voting system:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Spot News | • Morning Newscast | • Evening Newscast | • News Writing |
| • Hard News/Investigative | • Series or Documentary | • Feature | • Live On-Scene Reporting |
| • Use of Video | • Continuing Coverage | • Best Sports Reporting | • Best Digital Story Presentation |
| • Best Sportscast | • Best Weather Coverage | • Best Digital Breaking News Coverage | |

RADIO NEWS OPERATION OF THE YEAR AWARD

Winners in each market size will be determined from these 12 categories using the WBA cumulative voting system:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Spot News | • Hard News/Investigative | • Feature | • Newscast |
| • Audio in News | • News Writing | • Live On-Scene Reporting | • Continuing Coverage |
| • Best Sports Play By Play | • Best Digital Story Presentation | • Best Sportscast | • Best Digital Breaking News Coverage |

REMINDER: To ensure that your entry is not disqualified, check the file timing listed in each category.

TELEVISION AWARDS

1. Best Morning Newscast

This award honors the best regularly scheduled newscast originally aired between **4 AM - 12 PM**.

Criteria: Presentation of facts, thoroughness, production quality, interest of stories presented, and overall impact of the newscast.

Requirements: No longer than **15:00** minute composite of a single program from a single day with no commercials. No PDF narrative.

2. Best Evening Newscast

This award honors the best regularly scheduled newscast originally aired between **4 PM - 11 PM**.

Criteria: Aspects of the newscast (i.e. News, Weather and Sports), presentation of facts, thoroughness, production quality, interest of stories presented, and overall impact of the newscast and delivery.

Requirements: No longer than **15:00** minute composite of a single program from a single day with no commercials. No PDF narrative.

3. Best Sportscast

This award honors the best locally originated and regularly scheduled sportscast.

Criteria: Clear presentation of facts, thoroughness, delivery/communication skills, and interest of stories presented.

Requirements: Entry **must** include **three** single sportscasts from **three** different days with no commercials and no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

4. Best Weather Coverage

This award honors the best locally originated weather broadcast.

Criteria: Clear presentation of facts, thoroughness, delivery/communication skills, and effective use of available technology.

Requirements: Entry **must** include **three** complete weather segments from **three** different days with no commercials and no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

5. Best Continuing Coverage

This award honors the best on-going coverage of a single news story.

Criteria: Ability of the news staff to follow a story over an extended period of time, reporting significant developments as they occur, and reporting breadth and depth of various angles to the story.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

6. Best Spot News

This award honors the best single report or series of reports on an unscheduled or unplanned story.

Criteria: The manner in which the news organization responded, presentation of facts, delivery, follow-up, and any hard news elements that may have been uncovered.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

7. Best News Writing

This award honors the best news writing for a single story.

Criteria: How well the story engages the audience and provides the needed information in a comprehensive and informative manner.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes and **must** include both scripts and on-air version of the story. **Submit script**, but no narrative allowed.

8. Best Hard News/Investigative

This award honors the best same day or on-going coverage of a significant event affecting the community.

Criteria: Significance, presentation of facts, thoroughness, research, and delivery.

Requirements: Entry may be a single report or a series. Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

9. Best Series or Documentary

This award honors the best series of reports on a single topic included in a regularly scheduled newscast or a single documentary.

Criteria: Significance, resourcefulness, comprehensiveness, thoroughness of research, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

10. Best Feature

This award honors the best single report that ran in a newscast as relief or contrast to serious reporting or as a standalone.

Criteria: Human interest, subject portrayal, creative writing, entertainment value, and effective use of audio and/or video.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

11. Best Live On-Scene Reporting

This award honors the best single or series of live on-scene reports by a single reporter.

Criteria: Ability of the reporter to use the scene to relate details of the story, use of props, quality of live interviews, Q&A with anchors, ad-lib ability, and any other qualities which make the live report stand-out.

Requirements: Entry **must** include a minimum of **three** live reports totaling **no more than 15:00** minutes and pre-recorded packages/inserts **may** be included for context. No PDF narrative.

12. Best Use of Video

This award honors the best use of video, audio, and editing.

Criteria: Variety, creativity, selection, and composition of camera shots as well as other creative and technical elements including use of natural sound, quality of lighting, and the overall effect of the edited story or program.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

13. Best Sports Reporting

This award honors the best in sports coverage. Both same day and feature stories are eligible.

Criteria: Significance, presentation of facts, delivery and/or creativity, entertainment value, and effective use of audio and/or video.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

14. Best Significant Community Impact

This award honors the best action or series of actions by a station that results in a positive impact on one's community.

Requirements: Entry must be **no longer than an edited 15:00** minutes and may include a one page PDF description of the action, the impact and how it came about. PDF may contain text and images, but no links.

15. Best Specialty Programming

This award honors the best one-time non-news programming (i.e., coverage of parades, station-produced town hall meetings, concerts, or other programs) that are specific to a station's service area.

Criteria: Community interest, production quality, and depth of coverage.

Requirements: Entry must be a minimum of **5:00** minutes but **no longer than an edited 15:00** minutes. A **one page** PDF narrative may be submitted. PDF may contain text and images, but no links.

16. Best Image Promotion

This award honors the best video based promotional material designed to promote a station, news, personalities, or program image.

Criteria: Creativity and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

17. Best Weather Promotion

This award honors the best video based promotional material designed to promote weather image, personalities, breaking weather, weather specials, or weather franchise.

Criteria: Creativity and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

18. Best Sports Promotion

This award honors the best video based promotional material designed to promote sports image, personalities, stories or series, breaking sports, sports specials or sports franchise.

Criteria: Creativity and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

19. Best Topical Promotion

This award honors the best single announcement tailored to promote a specific newscast, news story, or program episode (i.e., "coming up" promotion, sweeps story promotion, event coverage promotion, proof of performance following specific coverage).

Criteria: Creativity, "tune-in" message delivery, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

20. Best Public Service Announcement

This award honors the best single announcement promoting a **non-profit** effort or organization.

Criteria: Creativity and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

21. Best Commercial or Underwriting Spot

This award honors the most effective non-humorous commercial or underwriting spot created for an advertiser or underwriter.

Criteria: Creativity, message delivery, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

22. Best Humorous Commercial or Underwriting Spot

This award honors outstanding use of humor in a commercial or underwriting spot created for an advertiser or underwriter.

Criteria: Creativity, message delivery, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

23. Best Website

This award honors the best TV station website.

Criteria: Treatments of content including text, audio, video, digital storytelling tools, how well the site communicates information, overall appearance, ease of use, use of visuals, and the depth and quality of information available.

Requirements: Stations must submit the site's URL. No screenshots. No PDF narrative. Eligible websites include both overall station sites and special purpose sites developed by the station.

24. Best Digital Story Presentation

This award honors the best use of digital storytelling tools to cover a single story or event.

Criteria: Originality and depth of the coverage, use of visuals, navigation, and appearance.

Requirements: Submission of only one URL is required. Screenshots allowed. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted. Images may be included in a one page PDF, no narrative.

25. Best Use of Station Social Media Platforms

This award honors an outstanding compilation of social media by a station to connect with audiences and inform the public.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include multiple URLs to social media posts or videos. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

26. Best Original Digital Content

This award honors an outstanding topic, event or series created exclusively for digital platforms.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include only one URL to a social media post or video. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

27. Best Digital Creator

This award honors an individual who demonstrates creativity, consistency, and impact in engaging an online audience through original digital content.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include multiple URLs to social media posts or videos. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

28. Best Digital Breaking News Coverage

This award honors exceptional digital coverage of a breaking news event. Entries should demonstrate timely, accurate, and engaging use of digital platforms to inform the public as events unfold.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include multiple URLs to social media posts or videos. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

29. Best America 250 Coverage

'Merica! Put your station's best patriotic foot forward!

This award honors the various ways your station covered and celebrated America 250. Entries may include community event coverage, station imaging such as top-of-hour IDs, promos and show opens, client event promos, PSAs, on-site broadcast segments, interviews, specialty programming, and more. Have fun with this one!

Criteria: Production quality, entertainment value, creativity, and variety of content.

Requirements: Submit an entry montage no longer than **10:00** minutes. A one-page PDF with a collage of up to nine photos or screenshots may also be submitted. No PDF narrative or URLs.

RADIO NEWS AND TALK AWARDS

1. Best Morning Radio Show

This award honors the state's best morning show airing between **5 AM - 10 AM**.

Criteria: Entertainment value, creativity, production quality, presentation, and impact.

Requirements: Radio show members must be on the staff of the station entering the category at the time the program aired. No syndicated programs, except where the program is syndicated by the station itself. Entry must be up to a **15:00** minute composite of a single day's broadcast. No PDF narrative.

2. Best Radio Show

This award honors the state's best radio show airing between **10 AM - 5 AM**.

Criteria: Entertainment value, creativity, production quality, presentation, and impact.

Requirements: Radio show members must be on the staff of the station entering the category at the time the program aired. No syndicated programs, except where the program is syndicated by the station itself. Entry must be up to a **15:00** minute composite of a single day's broadcast. No PDF narrative.

3. Best Newscast

This award honors the best single newscast.

Criteria: Presentation, production quality, interest of stories presented, and overall impact of the newscast.

Requirements: Entry must not include commercials or underwriting announcements, must not be a composite, and must not exceed **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

4. Best Sportscast

This award honors the best locally originated and regularly scheduled sportscast.

Criteria: Presentation of facts, delivery, creativity, entertainment value, production quality, and effective use of audio.

Requirements: Entry **must** contain **three** unedited single sportscast examples from **three** different days without commercials and must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

5. Best Continuing Coverage

This award honors the best on-going coverage of a single news story.

Criteria: Ability of the news staff to follow a story over an extended period of time, reporting significant developments as they occur, and reporting breadth

and depth of various angles to the story.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

6. Best Spot News

This award honors the best single report or series of reports of an unscheduled or unplanned story.

Criteria: The manner in which the news organization responded, presentation of facts, delivery, follow-up, and any hard news elements that may have been uncovered.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

7. Best News Writing

This award honors the best news writing for a single story.

Criteria: How well the story engages the audience and provides the needed information in a comprehensive and informative manner.

Requirements: Entry **must** include both scripts and on-air version of the story and must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. Submit script, but no narrative allowed.

8. Best Hard News/Investigative

This award honors the best same day or on-going coverage of a significant event affecting the community.

Criteria: Significance, presentation of facts, thoroughness, research, and delivery.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. Entry may be a single report or a series. No PDF narrative.

9. Best Feature

This award honors the best single report that ran in a newscast or sportscast as relief or contrast to serious reporting or ran as a standalone programming element.

Criteria: Human interest, subject portrayal, creative writing, entertainment value, and effective use of audio.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

10. Best Use of Audio in Radio News

This award honors the best use of audio in radio news.

Criteria: Quality of audio and editing, variety, creativity, writing, and composition as well as other creative and technical elements including use of natural sound resulting in the overall effect of the edited story.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

11. Best Live On-Scene Reporting

This award honors the best single or series of live on-scene reports.

Criteria: Ability of the reporter to use the scene to relate details of the story, ability to give listeners the "feel" of the location, quality of live interviews, Q&A with studio announcer, ad-lib ability, and any other qualities which make the live report stand-out.

Requirements: Entry may include pre-recorded packages/inserts for context. Must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

12. Best Interview

This award honors the best interview.

Criteria: Quality of questions, rapport with interview subject, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

13. Best Sports Play By Play

This award honors the best locally originated sports play by play.

Criteria: Presentation of facts, creativity, and delivery.

Requirements: Entry must be unedited and not exceed **5:00** minutes. Coverage of Brewers, Bucks, Packers, Badger Basketball/Football does not qualify. All submissions **must** come from the originating stations, not from network affiliates. No PDF narrative.

14. Best Significant Community Impact

This award honors the best action or series of actions by a station that results in a positive impact on one's community.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than an edited **15:00** minutes and may include a one page PDF description of the action, the impact, and how it came about. PDF may contain text and images, but no links.

15. Best Specialty Programming

This award honors the best one-time non-news programming (i.e., coverage of parades, station-produced town hall meetings, concerts, debates, or other programs that are specific to a station's service area).

Criteria: Community interest, production quality, and depth of coverage.

Requirements: Entry must be a minimum of **5:00** minutes but no longer than an edited **15:00** minutes. A **one page** PDF narrative may be submitted. PDF may contain text and images, but no links.

16. Best Promotional Announcement

This award honors the best single announcement promoting the station.

Criteria: Creativity and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

17. Best Public Service Announcement

This award honors the best single announcement promoting a **non-profit** effort or organization.

Criteria: Creativity and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

18. Best Commercial or Underwriting Spot

This award honors the most effective non-humorous commercial or underwriting spot created for an advertiser or underwriter.

Criteria: Creativity, message delivery, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be produced on behalf of an advertiser by a radio station and must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

19. Best Humorous Commercial or Underwriting Spot

This award honors outstanding use of humor in a commercial or underwriting spot created for an advertiser or underwriter.

Criteria: Creativity, humor value, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be produced on behalf of an advertiser by a radio station and must be no longer than **02:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

20. Best Website

This award honors the best Radio News and Talk station website.

Criteria: Treatments of content including text, audio, video, digital storytelling tools, how well the site communicates information, overall appearance, ease of use, use of visuals, and the depth and quality of information available.

Requirements: Stations must submit the site's URL. No screenshots. No PDF narrative. Eligible websites include both overall station sites and special purpose sites developed by the station.

21. Best Digital Story Presentation

This award honors the best use of digital storytelling tools to cover a single story or event.

Criteria: Originality and depth of the coverage, use of visuals, navigation, and appearance.

Requirements: Submission of only one URL is required. Screenshots allowed. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted. Images may be included in a one page PDF, no narrative.

22. Best Use of Station Social Media Platforms

This award honors an outstanding compilation of social media by a station to connect with audiences and inform the public.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include multiple URLs to social media posts or videos. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

23. Best Podcast

This award honors outstanding audio storytelling created specifically for podcast platforms.

Submissions must be original works produced for on-demand listening, not rebroadcast or re-edited versions of previously aired radio content.

Criteria: Production quality, editing, and creativity. Entries should demonstrate podcasting's unique qualities in an engaging way.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

24. Best Original Digital Content

This award honors an outstanding topic, event or series created exclusively for digital platforms.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include only one URL to a social media post or video. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

25. Best Digital Creator

This award honors an individual who demonstrates creativity, consistency, and impact in engaging an online audience through original digital content.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include multiple URLs to social media posts or videos. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

26. Best Digital Breaking News Coverage

This award honors exceptional digital coverage of a breaking news event. Entries should demonstrate timely, accurate, and engaging use of digital platforms to inform the public as events unfold.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include multiple URLs to social media posts or videos. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

27. Best America 250 Coverage

'Merica! Put your station's best patriotic foot forward! This award honors the various ways your station covered and celebrated America 250. Entries may include community event coverage, station imaging such as top-of-hour IDs, promos and show opens, client event promos, PSAs, on-site broadcast segments, interviews, specialty programming, and more. Have fun with this one!

Criteria: Production quality, entertainment value, creativity, and variety of content.

Requirements: : Submit an entry montage no longer than **10:00** minutes. A one-page PDF with a collage of up to nine photos or screenshots may also be submitted. No PDF narrative or URLs.

RADIO MUSIC AWARDS

1. Best Morning Radio Show

This award honors the state's best morning show airing between **5 AM - 10 AM**.

Criteria: Entertainment value, creativity, production quality, presentation, and impact.

Requirements: Radio show members must be on the staff of the station entering the category at the time the program aired. No syndicated programs, except where the program is syndicated by the station itself. Entry must be up to a **15:00** minute composite airtime of a single day's broadcast. No PDF narrative.

2. Best Radio Show

This award honors the state's best radio show airing between **10 AM - 5 AM**.

Criteria: Entertainment value, creativity, production quality, presentation, and impact.

Requirements: Radio show members must be on the staff of the station entering the category at the time the program aired. No syndicated programs,

except where the program is syndicated by the station itself. Entry must be up to a **15:00** minute composite airtime of a single day's broadcast. No PDF narrative.

3. Best Newscast

This award honors the best daily information report (i.e. news, sports, agriculture, weather or traffic reports).

Criteria: Informational and entertainment value, use of audio, production, and editing.

Requirements: Entry must not exceed **10:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

4. Best Interview

This award honors the best interview.

Criteria: Quality of questions, rapport with interview subject, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

5. Best Original Feature

This award honors the best creatively produced segment or series aired in contrast to musical programming.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, originality, and entertainment value.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **5:00** minutes. No PDF narrative.

6. Best Live On-Site Broadcast Remote

This award honors the best single or series of announcements made directly from a live, on-site broadcast.

Criteria: Information value, entertainment value, and production.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than **15:00** minutes and may include broadcasts from client locations, station events or unscheduled on-scene news reports. No PDF narrative.



REMINDER: To ensure that your entry is not disqualified, check the file timing listed in each category.

7. Best Use of Audio (Non-News)

This award honors the best use of audio (non-news) to demonstrate radio's unique ability to create theater of the mind.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, originality, and entertainment value.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than 15:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

8. Best Sports Coverage

This award honors the best sports coverage by a Music Format Station, and can include play by play (play by play coverage of Brewers, Packers and Bucks do not qualify), a feature story, sportscast, or other sports programming. Entries must be locally originated and broadcast.

Criteria: Creativity, entertainment value, delivery, presentation of facts and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than 15:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

9. Best Significant Community Impact

This award honors the best action or series of actions by a station that results in a positive impact on one's community.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than an edited 15:00 minutes and may include a one page PDF description of the action, the impact, and how it came about. PDF may contain text and images, but no links.

10. Best Specialty Programming

This award honors the best special off-format programming (i.e. niche show, concert, or other non-news programming specific to a station's service area).

Criteria: Community interest, production quality, and depth of coverage.

Requirements: Entry must be a minimum of 5:00 minutes but no longer than an edited 15:00 minutes. A **one page** PDF narrative may be included. PDF may contain text and images, but no links.

11. Best Promotional Announcement

This award honors the best single announcement promoting the station.

Criteria: Creativity and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than 02:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

12. Best Station Promo

This award honors the best single announcement promoting the station's format playlist.

Criteria: Creativity, editing, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than 02:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

13. Best Station Event Promo

This award honors the best single announcement promoting a station sponsored event.

Criteria: Use of audio, creativity, editing, and

production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than 02:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

14. Best Client Event Promo

This award honors the best single announcement promoting a client or underwriter sponsored event.

Criteria: Use of audio, creativity, editing, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than 02:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

15. Best Public Service Announcement

This award honors the best single announcement promoting a **non-profit** effort or organization.

Criteria: Creativity and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than 02:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

16. Best Commercial or Underwriting Spot

This award honors the most effective non-humorous commercial or underwriting spot on behalf of an advertiser or underwriter.

Criteria: Creativity, message delivery, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be produced on behalf of an advertiser by a radio station and must be no longer than 02:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

17. Best Humorous Commercial or Underwriting Spot

This award honors outstanding use of humor in a commercial or underwriting spot created for an advertiser or underwriter.

Criteria: Creativity, humor value, and production quality.

Requirements: Entry must be produced on behalf of an advertiser by a radio station and must be no longer than 02:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

18. Best Website

This award honors the best Music station website.

Criteria: Overall appearance, ease of use, use of visuals, the depth and quality of information available, and ability to reflect the spirit and personality of the station.

Requirements: Stations must submit the site's URL. No screenshots. No PDF narrative. Eligible websites include both overall station sites and special purpose sites developed by the station.

19. Best Use of Station Social Media Platforms

This award honors an outstanding compilation of social media by a station to connect with audiences and inform the public.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include multiple

URLs to social media posts or videos. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

20. Best Podcast

This award honors outstanding audio storytelling created specifically for podcast platforms.

Submissions must be original works produced for on-demand listening, not rebroadcast or re-edited versions of previously aired radio content.

Criteria: Production quality, editing, and creativity. Entries should demonstrate podcasting's unique qualities in an engaging way.

Requirements: Entry must be no longer than 15:00 minutes. No PDF narrative.

21. Best Original Digital Content

This award honors an outstanding topic, event or series created exclusively for digital platforms.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include only one URL to a social media post or video. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

22. Best Digital Creator

This award honors an individual who demonstrates creativity, consistency, and impact in engaging an online audience through original digital content.

Criteria: Production quality, creativity, and variety of content, and how well it engages a digital audience.

Requirements: Submission may include multiple URLs to social media posts or videos. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

23. Best Digital Live Event Coverage

This award honors the best use of digital and social media in live event coverage.

Criteria: Frequency, quality of updates, and use of storytelling tools.

Requirements: Submission should include URLs to relevant pages and may include screenshots. A **one page** PDF narrative may be submitted. PDF may contain text and images, but no links. Horizontal or vertical video formats accepted.

24. Best America 250 Coverage

'Merica! Put your station's best patriotic foot forward! This award honors the various ways your station covered and celebrated America 250. Entries may include community event coverage, station imaging such as top-of-hour IDs, promos and show opens, client event promos, PSAs, on-site broadcast segments, interviews, specialty programming, and more. Have fun with this one!

Criteria: Production quality, entertainment value, creativity, and variety of content.

Requirements: : Submit an entry montage no longer than 10:00 minutes. A one-page PDF with a collage of up to nine photos or screenshots may also be submitted. No PDF narrative or URLs.

LET'S PARTY!
WBA Awards for Excellence Gala
May 1, 2027

TO ENTER:



Online entries will be accepted starting Dec. 1, 2026.

Find entry instructions at: [wi-broadcasters.org/awards/submit-entry](https://www.wi-broadcasters.org/awards/submit-entry)

The 2026 Awards for Excellence Brochure and Gala registration is available online at www.wi-broadcasters.org/awards

If you have questions, please contact the WBA office at 608-255-2600 or 800-236-1922



GENERAL JUDGING CRITERIA

What judges will be asked to consider when reviewing your entries:

◆ *Content Value & Accuracy*

Are the facts presented clearly and accurately?

Does the entry show strong reporting, thorough research, or insightful storytelling?

◆ *Creativity & Originality*

Is the entry fresh, engaging, or innovative in its approach?

Does it stand out from similar work in the field?

◆ *Production Quality*

Is the audio or video clear, well-edited, and technically strong?

Are visuals, sound, or writing used effectively to enhance the content?

◆ *Storytelling, Relevance & Impact*

Does the entry tell a compelling story with a clear beginning, middle, and end that draws the viewer or listener in and holds their attention?

Is it engaging, emotionally resonant, or thought-provoking?

Does it reflect the community it serves, connect with its intended audience in a meaningful way?

◆ *Presentation & Delivery*

Is the piece well-paced, cohesive, and easy to follow?

For on-air talent, is the delivery compelling and professional?

◆ *Use of Medium*

Does the entry make the most of its format—radio, television, or digital?

Are tools like natural sound, visuals, graphics, or social media used thoughtfully?