

# TENNESSEE ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

## Awards of Excellence

---

Submission Deadline: **January 15, 2021**

---

The purpose of the TAM Awards of Excellence program is to recognize, encourage, and promote excellence within the activities of the Tennessee museum community and organizations in related fields of interest. We will, through these awards, focus public attention on the outstanding programs, projects, and services offered by Tennessee museums.

**Awards of Excellence** will be given for an *outstanding and exemplary* accomplishment as defined in the guidelines by an institution or organization in Tennessee whose primary purpose includes preservation and/or interpretation in one or more of the following areas: natural history, cultural history, folklore, humanities, art or science.

**Awards of Commendation** will be given for nominations that don't meet the criteria defined for an Award of Excellence but still warrant recognition.

### General Guidelines

- Only current members (institutional or individual) of the Tennessee Association of Museums in good standing are eligible to receive TAM Awards.
- For most categories, each nominated project must have **originated, occurred, and/or been completed** in 2020. Long-term permanent exhibitions must have **opened** in 2020.
- **\*\*NOTE\*\*** An exception to the above rule: Temporary exhibitions that opened **BETWEEN November 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019** AND occurred for most or all of 2020 eligible for nomination. This also includes holiday-specific exhibits open for a short period of time.
- A \$15 entry fee is required for **each nomination**. Institutions will be invoiced for the number of nominations and billed via email. Payment can be made via PayPal, or by check or money order made payable to TAM. **Payment deadline is March 1**. Entry fees not received may disqualify the nomination. Entry fees cover printing and supplemental costs associated with the awards.
- Institutions may nominate themselves or be nominated by other organizations, individuals, or businesses. Individuals may be nominated only by TAM member institutions.
- A nomination may be made in only one category or sub-category. For example, an educational event may be nominated in either the "Educational Programming" category or the "Special Events" category, but not in both categories.
- Only one nomination per institution per category is allowed. For example, one institution may not submit two nominations in the "Temporary Exhibition" category. If more than one nomination is received, the Awards Committee may choose to move the nomination to a different category if possible, or disqualify the second entry.
- The nomination should represent an **extraordinary achievement**, as opposed to an **ongoing and/or recurring** program or normal operating situation.
- Fill out the nomination form completely, **without modifying the form**. Include as much detailed information as possible within the given word limits. A description of the nominated program or project must be included on the nomination form, even though support materials are included. **Photos are strongly encouraged.**

### Judging

- **There are 5 criteria listed under Nomination Information. Each criterion is assigned a percentage of the total score. Committee members will rank each criterion on a 1-5 scale based on its description and associated supporting materials. The total will be averaged and a final number given for each nomination. Nominations ranking from 5 to 4.5 will receive an Award of Excellence. Nominations ranking from 4.49 to 3.75 will receive an Award of Commendation.**

## Nomination Form and Submission Guidelines

### Electronic Submission (preferred)

1. Visit [www.tnmuseums.org](http://www.tnmuseums.org) and locate the Awards Nomination Form
2. Complete form, add attachments (see below) and submit; form will then be sent to the appropriate representative. (Representative list is located on the TAM website.)
3. Supporting materials may be attached and emailed with the nomination; these can include documents, photos, press clippings, links, etc. **Photos are strongly encouraged, but please limit supporting materials to no more than 15 digital images, documents and/or pdfs. Please provide context for photos. \*\*NOTE\*\*** If more than 15 images are submitted, only the first 15 images will be considered. Blockbuster Exhibits will be allowed up to 25 images. Committee reserves the right to disqualify a submission if this guideline is not followed.
4. In addition, please also include digital images of your institutional logo, a photo of your building, or other representative images for use in the PowerPoint presentation at the awards ceremony. **These are in addition to the 15 supporting materials documents.**
5. Nominations in the “Publications” and “Special / Novelty” category should have actual hard copies mailed or delivered to your representative for in-hand judging purposes. Contact your representative with any questions.

### Mail Submission

1. Download nomination form from TAM website.
2. Complete form.
3. Submit original form, any hard copies of supporting materials, hard copies of any “Publications” nominated, and a CD or flash drive (non-returnable) of images to your representative. If you include a CD or flash drive, please limit the number of documents/images to no more than 15. **Photos are strongly encouraged. Please provide context for photos.** If more than 15 images are submitted, only the first 15 images will be considered. Blockbuster Exhibits will be allowed up to 25 images. Committee reserves the right to disqualify a submission if this guideline is not followed.
4. Additionally, please include digital images of your institutional logo, a photo of your building, or other representative images for use in the PowerPoint presentation at the awards ceremony. **These are in addition to the 15 supporting materials documents.**
5. Submit via US mail or deliver to your appropriate representative. Contact your representative with any questions.

**A Note on Photos: Please keep in mind Awards Committee members may not have been to your institution and may not have seen or be familiar with your nomination. In order for us to fairly judge your nomination, we must be able to visualize what has taken place. Your pictures need to tell your story. Please ensure photos are large enough to be seen clearly. \*\*NEW\*\* Please include context with any photos to explain what is happening.**

**All forms and support materials must be received by January 15, 2021.**

**There will be no extension of the deadline!**

### INSTITUTIONAL SIZE CLASSIFICATIONS

Museums and related organizations will be classified in one of six categories based on the size of their budget (this includes operating monies and salaries). Of primary importance to the Awards Committee will be the accomplishments relative to the resources available to the organization. Competition and awards will be within class size. The Awards Committee may re-classify an institution if its budget and/or part-time staff are significantly larger or smaller than those of other institutions in the same class.

1. \$50,000 or less
2. \$50,000—\$200,000
3. \$200,000—\$500,00
4. \$500,000—\$1M
5. \$1M - \$5M

## 6. \$5M or more

### CATEGORIES / SUBCATEGORIES

Awards may be made in each of the following categories in the six institutional size classes. Submission in the appropriate category is the responsibility of the nominator. Submissions may be re-categorized or disqualified at the discretion of the Awards Committee if not in the correct category.

**EXHIBITIONS – In general, the exhibition must have opened in the calendar year for which the award will be given, in this case, 2020. **\*\*NOTE\*\*** Temporary exhibitions that opened **BETWEEN November 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019** AND occurred for most or all of 2020 are eligible for nomination. This includes seasonal / holiday themed exhibits that may run for just a few months.**

**Permanent Exhibit:** Long-term exhibits installed for a minimum of 5 years. Exhibit must have opened in the year for which the award will be given, in this case 2020.

**Temporary Exhibit:** Original exhibits or displays produced in-house for a given and limited period of time. Also eligible are existing traveling shows (rentals) that are **significantly** augmented by the nominee with additional research, content, artifacts, etc.; the nomination for a rented **exhibit should emphasize the nominee's original contributions to the project.**

**Blockbuster:** Major temporary exhibitions of extraordinary and/or unusual size, expense, or lavish production created in-house that feature history, art, science, popular culture, etc. **\*\*NOTE\*\*** Nomination cannot be an annual or recurring occurrence and must be unique in its exhibition. Digital photos, slides, or video (not to exceed 5 minutes in length) that indicate the scope and nature of the exhibition should be included with the nomination. **\*\*NOTE\*\*** Blockbuster nominations will be allowed to submit up to 25 digital images / supporting documents.

**Traveling Exhibit:** Exhibit created by the nominee that tours to other locations.

**PUBLICATIONS – The nominated publication must have been produced or published in the calendar year for which the award will be given, in this case 2020. A significant portion of work on publications should have been done in-house vs by outside contractors (ie: text, layout, design, concept, proofing, etc.) Please note what was done internally vs what was done by outside contractors on designated space on the application. Hard copies of publications should be delivered / mailed to your area representative for judging purposes.**

**Book / Catalogue / Annual Report** - bound text with or without pictures

**Gallery Guide** – to accompany an exhibition

**Flat Paper** - posters, invitations, brochures, etc

**Newsletter** - a publication published more than once a year - **\*\*NOTE\*\*** A newsletter must change significantly in design or layout, or be a Special Edition, to be nominated (not just a change in content each month or quarter.) Based on this new guideline, nomination should be justified in the narrative with special attention given to the changes in content and design, and a previous example should be submitted for comparison.

**PR Kits** - information packages including press releases, etc. to promote an event or exhibit

**SPECIAL OR NOVELTY ITEM** - t-shirts, street banners, coffee mugs, etc – items produced, designed or commissioned by the organization or institution; mass-produced or bought-in products are not eligible

**AUDIO-VISUAL – The nominated element must have been produced in the calendar year for which the award will be given, in this case 2020.**

**Audio Tour**

**Film/Documentary**

**Exhibit Component**

**Video Blog**

## **DIGITAL MEDIA**

**The nominated platform must have either been created or reformatted, or had significant content added in the calendar year for which the award will be given, in this case 2020.** A significant portion of work should have been done in-house vs by an outside contractor (ie: text, content, layout, design, etc.) Please note what was done internally vs what was done by an outside contractor on designated space on the application.

Website - Nomination can be for all or a portion of the website.  
Social Media Page (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, etc)  
Podcast  
Digital Collections  
**\*\*NEW\*\* Blog**

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING – The nominated program must have originated and occurred in the calendar year for which the award will be given, in this case 2020.** Examples include a packaged program that involves an exhibition, interpretive events (historical dramatizations, living history programs, etc.), a lecture or film series, an outreach program to special audiences, teachers’ manuals, children’s workbooks, etc. An annual or recurring program may be nominated if the current year’s program was **significantly different** from previous ones; the nomination must explain why the current year’s program was a unique accomplishment.

**SPECIAL EVENTS – The nominated event must have originated and occurred in the calendar year for which the award will be given, in this case 2020.** Examples include a one-time promotional or exhibit-related event, a one-time celebration of a local or wider event, holiday tours, conferences, concerts, etc. An annual or recurring event may be nominated if the current year’s event was **significantly different** from previous ones; the nomination must explain why the current year’s event was a unique accomplishment.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION – The nominated occurrence must have taken place in the calendar year for which the award will be given, in this case 2020.** Examples include marketing or membership campaigns, fundraising or research projects, oral history projects, etc.

**VOLUNTEERISM – The nominated individuals or groups must have contributed significant support in the calendar year for which the award will be given, in this case 2020. Cumulative support as an individual volunteer will be taken into consideration, but the nomination must explain why the volunteer’s contribution in 2019 is significant.**

Individuals  
In-house Volunteer programs  
Outside Group Volunteer Projects

Examples include individuals, corporations, organizations, volunteer groups, or programs that have provided outstanding volunteer support. Nominees can be in-house volunteers or groups, or outside groups brought in for special events, programs or projects.

**\*\*SUBMISSION INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS\*\* Submit a narrative giving the nominees’ information (name or group), nomination category and institution, along with the volunteers’ contributions to the organization and why they are exceptional, and up to 15 photos / supporting documents, to the TAM Awards Chair at [awards@tnmuseums.org](mailto:awards@tnmuseums.org). Word limit for nomination is 500 words.**

**\*\*EMERGING PROFESSIONALS AWARD\*\* – This board-voted award recognizes the emerging professionals that help cultivate success at your institution. Individuals should have less than 5 years of service in the museum field and should have distinguished themselves by showing exceptional promise and potential in the field. They must be currently employed by or working/interning for a TAM Institutional Member, or a graduate student in a history-related program. **Submit the nominee’s information, place of employment, distinguishing accomplishments and contributions, photo, and a letter of support to the TAM Coordinator at [tnmuseums@gmail.com](mailto:tnmuseums@gmail.com)****