



An Affiliate of the National Association of Counties and National Recreation and Park Association

2026 NACPRO Awards - Call for Nominations

Nominations are now being accepted for the NACPRO 2026 awards program. The annual awards program honors excellence in parks and recreation at the county, regional, and special district levels.

The presentation of awards will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2026 in Sarasota, Florida during NACPRO's annual meeting. Registration is expected to open in early March, 2026.

Important details:

- **New this year:**
 - Each agency is limited to 1 nomination per award category.
 - Revised population classes aligned with member agency service areas to improve equity and peer comparison.
 - Park and Recreation Areas and Facilities has been divided into two categories:
 - Natural Parks and Facilities
 - Developed Recreation Parks and Facilities
 - Replaced "Social Justice" category with "Community Impact"
- Your nomination should be for projects, programs and events that occurred or were completed in 2025.
- Each agency can receive a maximum of 2 awards per year.
- A non-refundable fee of \$100 per nomination is required.
- Award nominations are accepted only from agencies that have a NACPRO member.
- You will be notified of the disposition of your award nomination by March 23.

Not sure if your agency has a member? Contact Brenda at (814) 927-8212 or Brenda@nacpro.org. Once your agency has an active member, you can access to the online form with your member's username and password.

The deadline for award submissions is January 30 at 11:59 pm EST.

See page 4 for instructions on how to prepare and submit your award nomination.

Individual Awards

Outstanding Public Official

Presented to a nominated, elected, or appointed official, such as commissioners, board members, and state and federal representatives, who are strong advocates for parks and recreation, to the benefit of NACPRO member agencies.

Professional

Presented to professionals from NACPRO member agencies who have impacted the profession or community.

Lifetime: Recognizes professionals who are retiring or leaving parks and recreation service.

Fellow: Recognizes an exemplary professional currently employed in the parks and recreation service.

New Professional: Recognizes up-and-coming leaders in the parks and recreation profession with less than 7 years' experience, who possess leadership qualities and talents.

Friends of Parks and Recreation

Presented to lay individuals who have made exemplary contributions benefiting parks and recreation programs or facilities at NACPRO member agencies.

Outstanding Contributor: Presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution of land or financial resources to parks and recreation.

Outstanding Volunteer: Presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution of personal time and talent.

Outstanding Support Organization: Presented to an organization that has made a significant contribution to benefit park and recreation programs, facilities, operations, or organizational support.

Area and Facility Awards

Natural Parks and Facilities (new this year)

Recognizes excellence in the planning, preservation, and management of natural parks, including open space areas, conservation lands, and parks designed primarily for low-intensity, nature-based recreation.

Class 1 Award: Agencies with a population service area of less than 200,000

Class 2 Award: Agencies with a population service area from 200,000 – 749,999

Class 3 Award: Agencies with a population service area from 750,000 – 1,999,999

Class 4 Award: Agencies with a population service area over 2,000,000

Developed Recreation Parks and Facilities (new this year)

Honors outstanding design, development, and operation of active parks that include built recreation amenities such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, and other facilities intended for higher-intensity recreational use.

Class 1 Award: Agencies with a population service area of less than 200,000

Class 2 Award: Agencies with a population service area from 200,000 – 749,999

Class 3 Award: Agencies with a population service area from 750,000 – 1,999,999

Class 4 Award: Agencies with a population service area over 2,000,000

Trails and Corridors

Recognizes excellence in a trail, greenway, waterway, corridor, or other linear park development project.

Class 1 Award: Agencies with a population service area of less than 200,000

Class 2 Award: Agencies with a population service area from 200,000 – 749,999

Class 3 Award: Agencies with a population service area from 750,000 – 1,999,999

Class 4 Award: Agencies with a population service area over 2,000,000

Program Awards

Park and Recreation Program

Recognizes excellence in a program, activity, or event.

Class 1 Award: Agencies with a population service area of less than 200,000

Class 2 Award: Agencies with a population service area from 200,000 – 749,999

Class 3 Award: Agencies with a population service area from 750,000 – 1,999,999

Class 4 Award: Agencies with a population service area over 2,000,000

Special Awards

Community Impact ([new this year](#))

Honors a park system that has delivered measurable improvements in access and service for underserved populations. This award recognizes initiatives that translate values into action through thoughtful planning, collaboration, and sustained community impact.

Conservation

Recognizes an exceptional effort to acquire, restore, and preserve, natural areas or significant conservation areas, as well as programs that create public awareness and appreciation for conservation efforts.

Cultural History

Recognizes excellence in historic and cultural facility development, preservation, programming, interpretation, or events.

Innovative Financing

Recognizes creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial strategies to generate financial resources for park-related capital and operating expenses. Some examples may include but are not limited to special taxes, referendums, millages, ballot initiatives, sponsorships, philanthropy, and partnerships.

Marketing

Recognizes a marketing effort demonstrating unique, significant, or remarkable outcomes. This award category includes projects involving market research, marketing plans, promotion, advertising, and the use of information technologies.

Planning Initiative

Recognizes an outstanding research or planning project that contributes to a body of knowledge and advances the practice of planning.

Universal Accessibility

Recognizes a unique program or facility that enables and encourages greater participation in parks and recreation by persons with disabilities.

Early submission is strongly encouraged - Do not wait until the last day to submit your award nomination. Technical issues, file upload errors, character limits, or member login and password resets may delay submission. Assistance may be limited on the deadline day. Submitting early allows time to review your materials, and ensure your nomination is complete and submitted successfully.

[NACPRO Awards Program Instruction Video](#) - This brief video highlights key tips for navigating the NACPRO awards application and strengthening your nomination. A few minutes of viewing can save time, avoid common mistakes, and help your submission stand out.

Instructions - The deadline for award submissions is January 30 at 11:59 pm EST.

1. Award nominations are only accepted from county, regional and special district agencies that have a NACPRO member. You cannot proceed with your nomination until you have an active membership and your member's username and password.
2. Nominations are submitted via an online form. If you plan on submitting several nominations, we prefer to invoice you for the total. This saves us time and processing costs. Choose the "Invoice Me" option when you get to the payment page. Check, purchase order, Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover Card are accepted.
3. Each agency is limited to 1 nomination per award category.
4. Each agency can receive up to 2 awards per year.
5. Your nomination should be for projects, programs and events that occurred or were completed in 2025.
6. An award nomination cannot be edited once it has been submitted online. We recommend preparing the nomination in Notepad or Word before you login, and pasting the text into the online form.

You will need to gather the following information to complete your nomination:

- a) **Contact Person:** Name, phone number and email address.
- b) **Nomination information:** Your nominee, nominee's organization, population of area served (for class awards), and year project was completed or program occurred.
- c) **Project Phases:** Has this project, or any earlier phase of it, received an award from NACPRO in a previous year?
- d) **Achievement Narrative:** Make your best case for why your nomination is worthy of recognition. Limit your narrative to 2000 characters or about 300 words.
 - For **Individual Awards** please describe the individual's role, a description of their actions, the scope of their achievements, the impact of their activities, and support provided to your agency.
 - For **Facility or Special Awards** please describe the facility, its outcomes and benefits, timeframe, partners, innovative techniques, public response, complexity, and any aspects of sustainability.
 - For **Program and Event Awards** please describe the event or program, its benefits to participants, partners, innovative techniques, public response, and when it was conducted.
- e) **Support information:** Supplemental materials such as media coverage, testimonials, brochures, resumes, and links to videos or reports can significantly strengthen your nomination. These materials provide context, depth, and real-world evidence that bring your narrative to life and help reviewers gain a complete picture of the nominee's impact. If submitting multiple items, combine them into a single PDF under 5 MB.
- f) **Attach three digital photos of the nominee** (person, project, event, facility, or program). Upload one photo per file in JPG format, at least 300 dpi, and no larger than 2 MB each.

Log-in to enter your award nominations: <https://nacpro.memberclicks.net/2026-awards>

Questions? - Contact Brenda Adams-Weyant at (814) 927-8212 or Brenda@nacpro.org