

Illinois Associated Press Media Editors Newspaper Contest

DIVISIONS

Newspapers compete by size division. During the entry process each paper's entries will automatically be entered in the appropriate size division.

Newspaper	Assigned Division	City
Belleville News-Democrat	Division 2	Belleville
Breeze-Courier	Division 1	Taylorville
Chicago Daily Law Bulletin	Division 1	Chicago
Chicago Sun-Times	Division 2	Chicago
Chicago Tribune	Division 2	Chicago
Commercial-News	Division 1	Danville
Daily Chronicle	Division 1	Dekalb
Daily Herald	Division 2	Arlington Heights
Daily Ledger	Division 1	Canton
Daily News	Division 1	Robinson
Daily Record	Division 1	Lawrenceville
Daily Review Atlas	Division 1	Monmouth
Daily Union	Division 1	Shelbyville
Dixon Telegraph	Division 1	Sterling
Edwardsville Intelligencer	Division 1	Edwardsville
Effingham Daily News	Division 1	Effingham
Herald & Review	Division 1	Decatur
Jacksonville Journal-Courier	Division 1	Jacksonville
Journal-Gazette & Times-Courier	Division 1	Mattoon
Journal Star	Division 2	Peoria
Morning Sentinel	Division 1	Centralia
Mount Vernon Sentinel	Division 1	Mt. Vernon
News-Herald	Division 1	Litchfield
News-Tribune	Division 1	La Salle
Pekin Daily Times	Division 1	Pekin
Rockford Register Star	Division 2	Rockford
Southern Illinoisan	Division 1	Carbondale
SouthtownStar	Division 2	Tinley Park
Star-Courier	Division 1	Kewanee
The Beacon News	Division 1	Aurora

The Courier	Division I	Lincoln
The Courier News	Division I	Elgin
The Daily Gazette	Division I	Sterling
The Daily Journal	Division I	Kankakee
The Daily Leader	Division I	Pontiac
The Dispatch-Argus	Division 2	East Moline
The Herald-News	Division I	Joliet
The Journal-Standard	Division I	Freeport
The McDonough County Voice	Division I	Macomb
The Naperville Sun	Division I	Chicago
The News-Gazette	Division 2	Champaign
The News Sun	Division I	Waukegan
The Northwest Herald	Division I	Crystal Lake
The Pantagraph	Division 2	Bloomington
The Quincy Herald-Whig	Division I	Quincy
The Register-Mail	Division I	Galesburg
The State Journal-Register	Division 2	Springfield
The Telegraph	Division I	Alton
The Times	Division I	Ottawa

Two contest categories are open to all newspaper in the competition and will not be broken into size divisions – Those two categories are Column or Blog and Editorial Writing

ENTRY FEES

Entry fees are \$12.00 per entry.

Entry fees must be paid by the entry deadline date. Payments can be made via credit card through the contest system.

SUBMISSIONS

- Entries are open to print and digital presentations. Please ensure entries are not behind a paywall or password-protected area and that URL links work properly. If entries are password protected, you must provide username/password information in the “Explanation” field of each entry. Judges may disqualify your entry if work samples are inaccessible.
- A letter detailing how a story or stories originated and how obstacles in getting a story or stories were overcome may accompany any of the entries.
- Any corrections associated with the submitted work must be included. Work must have been published between January 1 and December 31, 2021.

- Work from part-time and freelance journalists may be entered.
- If collaborative work between more than one newspaper is entered, it should be submitted in the circulation division of the newspaper that was the primary resource of the entry (typically judged by the top byline). If the collaboration is, in general, evenly split or if there is any question as to the degree of collaboration, the entry should be submitted in the circulation division of the larger newspaper.
- Work that incorporates a minimal amount of material supplied by The Associated Press or other wire services is allowed provided that that material is clearly subordinate and tangential to the core of the entry and appropriately credited.

CATEGORIES & JUDGING CRITERIA

JUDGING CRITERIA

The AP editorial contest assesses news value, reporting and writing. Judges are asked to weigh the enterprise required to gather information and the skill shown in writing the article(s), including creativity, clarity, organization and narrative flow. Judges are asked to make every effort to award at least three places in each category; however, judges have some discretion and may award “honorable mention” status in the place of a 2nd or 3rd place award if the entries are deemed not to rise to the level of a 2nd or 3rd place honor.

Relative greater weight will be given to reporting skills in the General Excellence, Public Service and Enterprise categories. More weight is given to writing skill in such categories as Columns or Blog and Features. Judges will be comprised of an impartial panel of editors from out-of state AP member newspapers.

GROUP OR JOINT PROJECTS: When two or more newspapers share news gathering staff on a story, photo or project, those papers must enter the category under the newspaper with the highest circulation. Stories, photos or joint projects produced by staff from more than one newspaper will be entered under the name of ONE member newspaper, the paper listed in the largest division.

CONTEST CATEGORIES

GENERAL EXCELLENCE: General Excellence awards will be given in each division. Entries should consist of two complete print editions of the newspaper – one on September 19, 2021 (publications that do not print on that date must print the first edition printed after that date); and one selected by the entrant. Judges should view the papers from the overall service to the audience and the community: storytelling, public service, design and navigability, completeness, the depth of the report.

BEST DIGITAL STORYTELLING: This may involve effective websites, multiplatform storytelling, video or any creative uses of the web. Group collaboration or origins must be disclosed. If your site is password-protected, please provide a username and password for the judges in the “Explanation” field.

PUBLIC SERVICE: A story or stories that show the newspaper's ability to fulfill its public service role by providing information that helps readers make informed decisions or conclusions or investigative coverage with emphasis being placed on evidence of public benefit. Entries should clearly demonstrate the newspaper's commitment to the public good and its ability to translate that into compelling storytelling. An ability to obtain hard-to-get information, facts and pertinent detail is a plus. Letters explaining the public service attempts are encouraged, but please focus on concrete descriptions and results, not puffery. A single entry is limited to no more than 10 stories, including sidebars, digital-only components and samples of social media engagement. While most entries will include significant print components, this is not a requirement; in fact, public service projects that are exclusively digital will be considered. A letter may be included outlining additional topics covered in any series or more than 10 parts.

ENTERPRISE COVERAGE: For pre-planned, issue-oriented reporting in a single story or series of as many as five parts that show creative initiative and originality in subject matter and approach. If a series contains more than five parts, briefly summarize the added topics in a letter. This category is inclusive of all sections, including sports.

GENERAL NEWS: For spot or general news coverage of news events or ongoing stories of interest. Include a cover letter in the “Explanation” field to explain any extenuating circumstances or innovative reporting techniques

FEATURE: For a single story, series or package on a topic or person. This can be related to news, lifestyle or sports. Emphasis will be placed on subject matter, writing and originality. If an entry is a series or package, it is limited to no more than five stories including sidebars, digital-only components and samples of social media engagement.

SPORTS STORY: For coverage of games, matches and other breaking sports news or for general sports topics, features or news. An entry may be a single story or stories. Emphasis will be placed on subject matter, scoops, analysis, writing and originality. If an entry is a series or package, it is limited to no more than five stories including sidebars, digital-only components and samples of social media engagement. A letter may be included outlining additional topics covered in any series or more than 5 parts.

BUSINESS REPORTING: For outstanding writing and reporting on a business topic with special emphasis on relevance for the non-business reader. The entry may be a single story, or a column or series. If the entry is a series or package, it is limited to no more than five stories including sidebars, digital-only components and samples of social media engagement. A letter may be included outlining additional topics covered in any series or more than 5 parts.

NEWS PHOTO: Best photograph capturing a spot or general news story.

FEATURE PHOTO: Best feature photograph.

PORTRAIT/PERSONALITY: Best photo portrait capturing character and personality.

SPORTS PHOTO: Best sports action or feature photograph.

COLUMN OR BLOG: For commentary, personal columns, sports, humor or critical reviews and online blogs. Emphasis is on the quality of writing and audience engagement. An entry may consist of just one work sample, or as many as three work samples. A column that is associated with a blog may combine the two forms in an entry, but the total number of work samples still may not exceed three. Columns or blogs that are identified as produced by a writing team are accepted. All work samples in an entry must be by the same author or team of authors. **This category is open to all newspapers, without size divisions.**

EDITORIAL WRITING: To recognize high achievement and dedication in the craft of editorial writing. An entry may include an individual editorial writer or a staff. Each entry should consist of up to three editorials. **This category is open to all newspapers, without size divisions.**

SWEEPSTAKES AWARD (No Entry Required): A Sweepstakes Award will be selected in each division from among the first-place winners of all categories except General Excellence, Column or Blog, and Editorial Writing.