



**RTDNA Canada**

Radio Television Digital News Association  
Association des nouvelles radio, télévision et numériques

## Judging Procedures and Criteria

*Thank you for volunteering to be a judge for the 2021 RTDNA Canada Awards. These are awards to be presented in 2021 for journalism published in 2020.*

*Members of RTDNA Canada appreciate the valuable contribution you are making to improve broadcast and digital journalism by accepting the position of judging these prestigious Awards.*

*This guide is designed to assist you at the Regional, National and Best Canadian Local News judging levels. It will help answer some of the questions that may arise while you are engaged in the judging process.*

*Good luck and good judging!*

*If you have come across this page and would like to VOLUNTEER TO BE A JUDGE, thank you!  
Please email us at [awards@rtdnacanada.com](mailto:awards@rtdnacanada.com)*

*Karen Mitchell  
Joe Olafson  
Awards Co-chairs, RTDNA Canada*

### Judging Dates and Deadlines

March 2021:	Judges informed of their panel assignments
March 4 - 14, 2021	Regional and National Awards Judging Period
March 15 - 19, 2021	Regional and National Awards - tie break period
Late April 2021	Regional Awards nominees announced
March 22 - April 4, 2021	Best Canadian Local News Awards Judging Period
March 15 - 19, 2021	Best Canadian Local News Awards Judging - Tie Break period
Early May 2021:	Regional Award Winners Announced - West, Prairies, Central, East
Mid May 2021	National Awards nominees announced
Mid May 2021	Best Canadian Local News Awards nominees announced
Early June 2021	National and Best Canadian Local News Awards winners announced

## Judging Criteria and Rules

1. Familiarize yourself with the [Entry Guidelines](#) as soon as possible. Any applicant who fails to adhere to the written instructions or submit a complete application package may be disqualified.
2. The RTDNA Canada Code of Ethics serves as the basis for judging standards. The entries you are judging must follow the code of ethics.
3. Each entry will be judged in the category in which it is submitted unless it is disqualified.
4. There must be only one winner in each category. There cannot be co-winners.
5. Judging Criteria vary for different award categories. Criteria are listed at the bottom of each submission and can also be viewed [here](#) for Regional and [here](#) for National awards. Score 1-10 for each criterion.
6. Judges will base their scoring on what is contained in the submission.
7. Judges will take into account the resources available to a newsroom so that small operations with minimal resources have an equal opportunity of winning as large operations with many resources.
8. Entries will only be judged up to the maximum duration allowed in that particular category with a 10-second margin. e.g. An entry with a 15-minute maximum will only be judged until the 15:10 point.
9. Only working web links will be considered. Do not judge links on websites which require registration or password access.
10. Commercial theme music is permitted in radio entries but should not be judged as part of their entry. Only theme music created by the station should be judged.
11. Judges at the Regional level are not obliged to select a winner in any category if, in the opinion of the judges, the entries do not meet the established criteria.
12. Judges may select entries for Honourable Mention. However, if an entry is deemed to be worthy of an Honourable Mention and there is no winner in that category, the entry must become a winner. It is not possible to award an Honourable Mention without declaring a winner.
13. The winning entries in each region will go on to be judged for the National Awards.

## Judging and Conflict of Interest

RTDNA Canada's judges come from a wide variety of background and affiliations - ranging from people working at small private stations to large networks to faculty of journalism programs. And just as many Canadian journalists work for a handful of large employers, many of our judges come from large organizations in this country's very concentrated media landscape.

We have taken certain measures to minimize conflict of interest. For example, individuals are assigned to judge entries which originate in other regions of the country. Similarly, journalists who work at the network level are asked to judge regional entries and vice versa.

From time to time, a judge will flag us about a potential conflict of interest and we will rule whether to assign them elsewhere or leave them as assigned. We trust in the professionalism of judges to vote for excellence even if an entry was submitted by the "competition." Looking at our former judges and their track record, we would say that our trust is well placed.

We have also created a buffer in that all judging is done independently so that judges are not aware of other members of their panel - neither their identities nor how they have voted - aside from rare occurrences when a tie needs to be broken. For this reason, we do not release the names of our judges.

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to flag a potential conflict of interest, please contact us at [awards@rtdnacanada.com](mailto:awards@rtdnacanada.com).

We are also sensitive to Canada's employment climate and that some of the country's premier journalists have found that their job status has changed - sometimes of their own choice, sometimes not. Consequently, some of our judges are self-employed and others have taken a break from their retirement to judge for us. Their employment status has not diminished their ability to judge journalistic excellence.

We are beholden to all our judges - regional, network, faculty, freelance and retired - for the time and expertise that they donate to us annually.

There would be no RTDNA Canada Awards without you.

## Award Categories

Please click the links to view [Regional](#) and [National](#) Award categories.