



Judging Criteria and Rules

Important Dates, Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, Award Submissions Rules and Entry Guidelines, and Criteria and Description Summaries

Thank you for volunteering to be a judge for the RTDNA Canada 2026 Awards. These are awards presented in 2026 for journalism published in 2025.

Members of RTDNA Canada appreciate the valuable contribution you make to improve audio, digital and video journalism by helping to judge these prestigious awards.

Good luck and good judging!

If you have any questions, please email us at awards@rtdnacanada.com

Awards Committee, RTDNA Canada

Mary Nersessian – Chair

Espe Currie

Sarah Mills

Sumran Bhan

Judging - Important Dates and Deadlines 2025

Round 1 Start Date: 8:00am March 2nd, 2026 Regional and National

Round 1 End Date: 11:59pm March 16th , 2026 Regional and National

Round 2 Start Date: 8:00am March 25th, 2026 Best Canadian Local News

Round 2 End Date: 11:59pm April 8th, 2026 Best Canadian Local News

Judging and Conflict of Interest

RTDNA Canada's judges come from a wide variety of backgrounds and affiliations - ranging from people working at small private news organizations to large news organizations 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 that originate in other regions of the country. Similarly, journalists who work at the *National* 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 record, we would say that our trust is well placed.

For this reason, RTDNA Canada does not release the names of 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.

We are also sensitive to Canada's employment climate and that some of the country's premier journalists have found 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 by all our judges - regional, national, faculty, freelance and retired - for the time and expertise that they donate to us annually!

There would be no RTDNA Canada Awards without you.

Judging and Confidentiality

To ensure the confidentiality of members' submissions and maintain the integrity of the awards, we ask you to keep the information assigned to you private.

Specifically, you undertake to:

1. Respect the confidential nature of all submissions and not disclose information in submissions, in any way whatsoever, to third parties.
2. Use such information as is disclosed to you only for the express purpose of scoring submissions assigned to you, and for no other purpose.

Award Submissions Rules and Entry Guidelines, and Criteria and Description Summaries

Please click these links to view [Regional](#) and [National](#) Awards Criteria and Descriptions summaries and this link to view [Award Submissions Rules and Entry Guidelines](#).

*** CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

If you see any **potential conflict of interest or other issues in your assignment** email awards@rtdnacanada.com as soon as possible. We will investigate and, if needed, shift judging responsibilities.

IMPORTANT: we will need to know ASAP of any possible conflicts. If you wait until the last minute to review your assignment, we might not be able to find a replacement judge for your panel.

DO NOT DELAY *Please review your assignment and start judging now.

Much time and effort has been invested by your fellow journalists towards this year's entries and the entries merit your time and careful review.

Please set aside enough time to review and score the submissions before the deadline.

CRITERIA - descriptions of Diversity, Resources and Time Limits are below.

RTDNA Canada has listened to members' feedback and has created judging criteria to level the playing field for all submitters. Please score all criteria for every entry. If you have any questions about the criteria, please do not hesitate to contact us.

For a description and criteria list for each Regional and National Awards please review these summary documents:

[Regional Criteria and Description summary](#)

[National Criteria and Description summary](#)

1. DIVERSITY - What does RTDNA Canada mean when we ask you to consider diversity in each entry?

Reflecting diversity is integral to what we do as journalists. That's why we've made it one of our pillars for judging. So, what do we mean by diversity? We respect that diversity means different things to different people and we encourage you to reflect on what it means for you, and to your community.

For the purposes of judging, we ask that you consider the following for each submission: Whose voices are underrepresented and/or marginalized? Who do we not see or hear from enough on this topic? Think broadly, in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age and physical disabilities, geography and groups that have faced systemic barriers.

And think about diversity within the context of the story you're evaluating. Maybe the piece scores high for "diversity" because of the voices it features, the way the narrative is framed, and/or who is empowered to tell the story.

You can review this with the judges on your panel for further discussion on how diversity is reflected in each entry.

2. RESOURCES - Please consider that not all news organizations have the same resources.

Submissions include information regarding the number of contributors and number of hours put into the project. To help level the playing field for smaller teams (with fewer resources), please take these factors into consideration (i.e., did an entry produce great work with less resources?)

3. TIME LIMITS - If an entry exceeds the time limit allowed review only to the time outlined in the rules

- Submissions that run past the time limit will not be disqualified.
- Please review submissions only up to the allotted time for each category.
- If the submission runs a few minutes beyond the time limit it is at your discretion to watch to the end.

MISTAKES HAPPEN

If you think the entry guidelines have not been followed, please let us know **ASAP** so we can investigate.

SCORING - Single Award, No Winner, and Honourable Mention

1. SINGLE AWARD SUBMISSION ENTRY

If there is a category where only one submission was received the entry should be judged on merit alone and not be deemed a winner by default.

2. NO WINNER

If you feel that none of the entries in a category meets the criteria, nor deserves to be a winner, you can recommend that no award be presented.

3. HONOURABLE MENTION

If two submissions are tied for first place, after a conversation with your fellow judges, you may decide to award one the first place, and the second place one an Honourable Mention award.

JUDGES ON YOUR ASSIGNED PANEL

If you would like to connect with the other judges on your panel, contact details are displayed on your submission summary page.

Should you have any questions in the process, or are having any technical difficulties, please email awards@rtdnacanada.com.

Good luck and happy judging!

Sincerely,

RTDNA Canada | Awards Committee

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