



National Gold Medal Award Program February 9, 2017 Live Chat Transcript

10:50 NRPA:

Welcome to the 2017 National Gold Medal Award Live Chat. Please stay on this page. The Live Chat will begin promptly at 11:00 am, EST.

The National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in the Field of Park and Recreation Management is brought to you by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (the Academy) in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

10:59 NRPA:

Good morning and welcome to the Gold Medal Award Live Chat. It is my pleasure to introduce you to the presenters for today's session.

Darrell Crittendon is the Director of Norfolk Recreation, Parks and Open Space in Norfolk, VA. Darrell is the Gold Medal Head Judge and has been on the judges panel for four years.

Mike McCarty is the Executive Director for the Glenview Park District, IL. Mike is a member of the Academy Gold Medal Committee. He served as the Director of the City of Fairfax, VA Parks and Recreation Department when the agency won the Gold Medal in 2011.

Rod Tarullo is the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Golden Parks, CO. Rod is the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration's (AAPRA) Judges Liaison and was on the judges panel for 5 years. His agency won the Gold Medal in 2010.

Marybeth Thaman is the Director of Kettering Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts in Kettering, OH and serves as the Chair of the AAPRA Gold Medal Committee. Her agency won the Gold Medal in 2014.

Rod - would you like to begin?

10:59 Rod Tarullo:

Good morning everyone. I am glad you are taking this opportunity to get more information about the National Gold Medal Program. Feel free to type in questions you may have.

11:01 Comment From Jason Lang, East Goshen Township

Thanks for hosting this Chat Session. For the "Citizen Involvement" question - can the "citizen" be an elected official? Or is the question looking for someone involved in a volunteer capacity?

Mike McCarty:

Thank you for your question. The citizen can be both a volunteer and elected official

Mike McCarty:

For those viewing the chat, this is question is related to question 17 on the general application

1:02 Comment From Jason Lang, East Goshen Township

Thanks

11:02 Comment From Melinda

Is everyone required to submit a video?

Rod Tarullo:

No, Videos are required only for the finalists. Finalists will be announced the week of April 24th, 2017

11:05 Comment From Kevin Cowling, Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation, Rome GA

Good morning, does being CAPRA certified give you any advantage in the scoring process?

NRPA:

CAPRA accreditation is not required. It is only used in case there is a tie.

11:06 Comment From Nazanin Weck

Would like to know how the scores are given on specific milestones or initiatives.

Mike McCarty:

You can find the judging criteria on the NRPA website at the following link

<http://www.nrpa.org/uploade...>

The application also identifies the point potential for each essay question.

11:06 Comment From Michael Egging, Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

Is there an opportunity to receive feedback from our agency's previous year's application and video?

NRPA:

You may submit a request to awards@nrpa.org to receive feedback on last year's application.

11:06 Comment From Don Reuter

For the State's Gold Medal Awards, are nominees allowed to submit support materials, such as disks with digital videos, publications, etc. along with the nomination form? If so, how should this be done?

Rod Tarullo:

Don, the judges will only accept the online application. They will be looking at agency websites. Any additional materials you want to have highlighted could be placed on your website for potential judge review

11:07 Comment From Kevin Cowling, Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation, Rome GA

Thanks!

11:08 NRPA:

Questions are coming in fast! We are very excited about your participation and appreciate your patience while we work to answer them all.

11:09 Comment From Kimberly Johnston

Will there be a transcript sent out with this Q & A?

NRPA:

Yes - transcripts will be available next week. We will answer all questions even if we do not get to them during the Live Chat and incorporate them into the transcript.

11:10 Comment From Paula from Bismarck ND

Just to be clear, when a question asks for examples from the last three years, the years should be the completed years of 2014-2015-2016, yes?

Mary Beth Thaman:

Yes

11:10 Comment From Nazanin Weck

What about social media? How much weight does a presence on social media have on our application and website/technology part?

Mike McCarty:

The judges will look at social media and your website if you are selected as a finalist. Both website and social media are weighted as a whole

11:10 Comment From Ryan from Wyoming State Parks

#4 Jurisdiction population growth rate 2000-2014 (from Census data or estimates) How do you answer this question. for 2012 and 2016 its a direct question for 2000-2014. Its conflicting

Rod Tarullo:

Ryan, great question! Please respond with your population growth rate in either the FY2012 or FY2016 box. Thanks for pointing this out!

11:11 Comment From Matt Anderson

Can we include pictures?

Mike McCarty:

Pictures should not be included in the application.

11:12 Comment From Nazanin Weck

How is the website component evaluated and how much weight does it hold?

Rod Tarullo:

The judges look at the websites for overall perspective of the agency. No specific weight is given in the judging.

11:14 Comment From Rob

With the limited word count, are bullet points acceptable?

Mary Beth Thaman:

I would advise to use sentences not necessarily bullets. You need to fully explain your points so the judges can understand your information. Bullets may or may not provide the necessary explanation.

11:14 Comment From Mick, City of Carlsbad, CA

I read that there would be mention of suggested video content in this chat session. Any recommendations on what the video should contain/feature?

Rod Tarullo:

The video is only 5 minutes maximum and should be seen as additional visual images that support the application. It does not need to be a high cost piece; in this age of accessible video, we are trying to give jurisdictions another tool to demonstrate their excellence, and expect that they will be useful by agencies in communicating with their own community. Only the finalist will be requested to post a 5 min. video to their web page by June 5.

11:14 Comment From Matt Anderson

Do you recommend using the same example to answer multiple questions?

Mike McCarty:

It's helpful to use different examples for each of the questions where appropriate as it begins to give a broader based picture of your agency. Some examples might be link to different results.

11:14 **Comment From I have more of a comment, than a question. We are submitting a state park application. The statistical questions look like they are geared more towards municipal government. We are finding some of it very hard to pin down and answer. For example, we**
And I'm assuming for the state parks applications, our "community" would transfer to the "state."

Rod Tarullo:

That is correct!

11:15 Had your agency previously applied for a Gold Medal Award?

Yes

(66%)

No

(34%)

11:16 **Darrell Crittendon:**

We do as judges acknowledge CAPRA accreditation but that isn't weighed segment of our judging criteria.

11:16 **Comment From Jason Lang, East Goshen Township**

For the sake of brevity when answering questions, can you answer with bullet points or should it be in paragraph/narrative form?

Rod Tarullo:

There are strict word limits. We would suggest use of grammar that is most efficient and effective in telling your story. If you prefer bullet points you are welcome to use them!



11:17 **Comment From Don Reuter**

Thanks, how do we steer the judges to the proper location since our web site is set up for public use, not for award competitions?

Mike McCarty:

Please provide the direct url address to your organizations page. If you're part of a city or town that has one major site, please direct them to your department site.

11:17 **Comment From Michael**

What errors or issues do you often see during the application process that organizations should know about?

Rod Tarullo:

What we see is that some applications do not give the proper number of examples that are specifically requested and spelled out. The second thing that we see is that some agencies do not highlight what is unique and special about their services and facilities

11:20 Comment From Mick, City of Carlsbad, CA

A previous Gold Medal agency award winner suggested that essay responses need not be submitted in "complete sentence"/grammatically correct form. Do you have a recommendation?

Mike McCarty:

The responses should be in complete sentences and grammatically correct.

11:21 Comment From Robert

How many judges score the applications?

NRPA:

There is a committee of five judges that score the applications.

11:21 Comment From Kimberly Johnston

I have a question concerning the Armed Forces submission. Can you provide any guidance on what is being looked for with the challenges and strategies portion?

Rod Tarullo:

The judges are looking for your installation's unique challenges and how you have addressed them. Hope that is not too vague of a response to you!

11:22 Comment From Nazanin Weck

It would be great to see the previous winning applications, to get an idea of how to write up an award

Mike McCarty:

We do not share any agency application. You can reach out to an agency that has participated and ask for a copy of their application. My recommendation would be to ask an agency that is not in your category so you don't have a threat of competition.

11:23 Comment From Sameera Luthman

What are some examples of addressing the NRPA pillar of 'social equity'? Would that pertain to economic need, like our scholarship program, or being inclusive of all abilities, ethnicities, etc., or all of the above?

Mary Beth Thaman:

Yes, economic needs and inclusive approach is a good direction for the 3 pillars. I would recommend reviewing the definitions of the three pillars and then applying to your agencies programs and services.

11:24 Comment From Jason Lang, East Goshen Township

For the sake of brevity when answering questions, can you answer with bullet points or should it be in paragraph/narrative form?

Mary Beth Thaman:

I would suggest sentences and not bullets

11:24 Darrell Crittendon:

Effectiveness of results: To be effect you should have measures, also whatever is placed in categories can be supported by the video. This weighs heavily with the judges being able to visualize and see items that are placed in the categories. Also being able to show how the population is being served through diverse opportunities. If you have determined a special population in your community what percentage of this population is being served. Also, again visualization is also a great tool.

11:25 Comment From Tiffany Peterson, Hillsborough County Parks and Rec (Florida)

I have heard that judges will reach out to agency for further questions following submission of application. Is this for which we should be prepared?

Mike McCarty:

The judges would not reach out directly to an applicant for clarification. In the rare occasion with finalist, if clarification is needed a representative from NRPA will reach out directly. Again, this is very rare.

11:25 Comment From Ryan from Wyoming State Parks

#10 What do you consider Preservation Land? We have State Historic Sites which are preserved; would this be considered preservation land? "No Management" what does that mean?

Rod Tarullo:

The question says undeveloped land. Preservation Land in this case would be defined as undeveloped and not having direct management.

11:25 Comment From Michael

Does the committee prefer stats or stories... or vise versa

Mike McCarty:

Both. Your stats should tell a story and your stories could feature stats.

11:26 Comment From Mick, City of Carlsbad, CA

A previous Gold Medal agency award winner suggested that essay responses need not be submitted in "complete sentence"/grammatically correct form. Do you have a recommendation?

Mary Beth Thaman:

We would recommend using full sentences. You need to be sure your reply is providing the judges with a full understanding of what you are trying to convey.

11:27 Comment From Michael

What errors or issues do you often see during the application process that organizations should know about?

Eric:

Pay particular attention to how many examples are requested in many of the narrative questions, and that you are explaining how those examples address the question.

11:28 Comment From Michael Kalvort, Virginia Beach

For a large municipality that does not have the name recognition such as a New York City or Chicago, what is your advice to stand ahead of those who already have such a wonderful and cherished public image...both in the public's eyes and our fellow professional's eye?

Mike McCarty:

Hello Michael. The story that you tell through your answers on the application will help you stand out. No applicant has more weight based on their name recognition nationally.

11:28 Comment From Tiffany Peterson, Hillsborough County Parks and Rec (Florida)

2. Did any of your agencies list "Friends" as a source of "total operating expenditures? (Question 6)

Mary Beth Thaman:

Will you ask that question again?

11:29 Comment From Linda

How many applicants reach the finalist stage?

Mike McCarty:

There are four finalist for all categories

11:29 Comment From Can you give us more information on the "simpler Format" of the video submission?

Can you give us more information on the "simpler format" of the video submission?

Rod Tarullo:

The videos for the finalists are supposed to be more organic and hopefully created at a local level without the use of expensive video production crews as had previously been used in the past process of the early 2000's. The time limit was also reduced from 12 minutes to 5 for easier production.

11:29 Comment From Michael Kalvort, Virginia Beach

My apologies for being late and I'm sorry if this has been answered already....

Mike McCarty:

No problem

11:30 Comment From Guest

Regarding section 4 on jurisdiction information, I have noticed that some of the information being asked is not readily available on the quick facts website for census information listed on the application. Is it better to give estimations rather than leave an area blank?

Rod Tarullo:

Yes please! Please do your best to reflect as accurately as possible!

11:30 Comment From Tiffany Peterson, Hillsborough County Parks and Rec (Florida)

I apologize in advance, but I have infinity questions for you all. THANK YOU SO MUCH for providing us with this opportunity to pick your brains!

Mike McCarty:

You're welcome

11:32 Comment From Tiffany Peterson, Hillsborough County Parks and Rec (Florida)

How do you feel about using CAPRA as an example for question 15 (as an "Outstanding" example)?

Mary Beth Thaman:

Well, you can, however, you may want to really look at other accomplishments that truly sets your agency a part from others. CAPRA is great, but may or may not define how you are really outstanding.

11:32 Comment From Ryan from Wyoming State Parks

Question #12 Being a State Parks System we do not have football or baseball fields, but we have volleyball and basketball courts. How can we account for these?

Rod Tarullo:

You could use the "Other" option on question #14 to account for those amenities.

11:33 Comment From Guest

The application asks for a link to the agency's "program brochure." Our agency's main publication is huge and not available at this time through a link - only a set of design files. How would you propose we get this to you?

Eric:

If you have a section of your website dedicated to your programs then you could provide a link there. Otherwise I would suggest pairing down the brochure to the elements you wish the judges to view and providing a link to that portion of the brochure. Converting the design files to a PDF may also help the size.

11:34 Comment From Sameera Luthman

On Q.25, the application asks for an Exec Summary of the "most current comprehensive, long range or strategic plan." Our district has both a strategic plan and a master plan. The master plan is aligned mostly around parks and facilities where our strategic plan focuses on the organization more broadly. Would it be best for us to focus on our strategic plan?

Mike McCarty:

If you have both a comprehensive and strategic plan, please submit both executive summaries



11:34 Comment From Linda

Can we ask questions after this live chat throughout the application process?

NRPA:

Yes - you may send any questions to awards@nrpa.org.

11:36 Darrell Crittendon:

New and innovative programs are a combination of both. Programs that have been implemented that are reaching a segment of your population that hasn't been touched before. Of course judges do get excited about new innovations that are introduced to the industry that go beyond what is typically viewed as traditional and the norm.

11:36 Comment From Guest

If a response scored well on past applications, is it possible to use the same response for the new application?

Mike McCarty:

You can use the same response but make sure it aligns with the questions. The questions can change from year to year.

11:36 Comment From Michael Kalvort, Virginia Beach

Thank you all for taking the time to share your time and experiences. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in New Orleans. This chat is a great resource!

NRPA:

Thank you - we look forward to seeing you there!

11:37 Comment From Chelsea

When judging the effectiveness of results for various categories, what are you looking for? Some topics don't have hard statistics, so what is the best measurement?

Rod Tarullo:

Great question. Judges are looking for quantifiable information and descriptive narratives. Both are really important; you need to tell the overall story in narrative, while also providing enough details and data to show that it is real!

11:38 Comment From Nazanin Weck

What is considered new and innovative programming? Is that based on if it's new to our agency or overall to the industry?

Mary Beth Thaman:

It is up to you to determine and ask the questions, Is this changing and making a difference in our service approach"? How is this improving your systems or services in a new way?

11:38 Comment From Tiffany Peterson, Hillsborough County Parks and Rec (Florida)

Is there a preferred method or format for the Executive Summary submission (Word, PDF, etc)? How about a template? (Header, footer, spacing, margins, etc.)

Mike McCarty:

A pdf format is best. We want to see the executive summary as it appears in your plan.

11:39 Comment From should we be hearing audio?

When will this transcript be available?

NRPA:

The transcript will be available online next week.

11:39 Comment From Linda
How many applicants reach the finalist stage?

Eric:
Four applicants in each category reach the finalist stage.

11:40 Comment From Mick, City of Carlsbad, CA
How do you suggest balancing a meaningful narrative with supporting data? Do you look for more story or numbers to support the story?

Mary Beth Thaman:
Quantification of information is a good approach with a supportive narrative

11:41 Comment From Michael
Does the committee prefer stats or stories... or vice versa

Mary Beth Thaman:
A combination of quantified/data info incorporated with good narrative.

11:41 Comment From Michael T
Hi. The application asks for "your program brochure." We have several. Is a link to the home page acceptable? Do we need to create a single "Welcome to the District" brochure?

Rod Tarullo:
A link to the home page is great. Please note that several brochures are available through that home page. You might provide one link of your most robust brochure for reference also.

11:41 Comment From I have more of a comment, than a question. We are submitting a state park application. The statistical questions look like they are geared more towards municipal government. We are finding some of it very hard to pin down and answer. For example, we Can a state use their SCORP as their comprehensive plan - along with individual management plans for each state park - to satisfy the "comprehensive plan" component for state applications?

Mike McCarty:
In lieu of not having a strategic plan or a comprehensive plan, submit your SCORP plan. However, if you are in the process of finalizing a comprehensive plan and strategic plan, you should also make note of this.

11:43 Comment From Ben Johnson, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
For questions that ask for examples in the last three years, is it appropriate to highlight initiatives that were planned in 2016 but just began rolling out in 2017?

Rod Tarullo:

Yes! Judges like to see progress on plans and implementations beyond just a planning portion. You can use current, relevant examples even into 2017.

11:44 Comment From Michael T

So to clarify, if we don't have a single program brochure, we can provide a link to a Web page that discusses programs?

Rod Tarullo:

Correct!

11:44 Comment From Nazanin Weck

It would be great to see the previous winning applications, to get an idea of how to write up an award

Mary Beth Thaman:

You may want to reach out to other agencies that have won the Gold Medal. They might be able to help you with the application.

11:45 Comment From Michael Kalvort, Virginia Beach

For those fortunate enough to make it to the finals, what are your recommendations for the video? What would you focus on? Only what makes you unique or do you show that you offer traditional rec services to all the residents through outreach? I know this is a very large question but some departments have large media departments and some have very small resources available.

Eric:

The finalist video should support your application, and tell your agency's story. Focusing on what makes your agency unique and special is a good idea in the application and video. The production quality is not judged.

11:46 Comment From How important are weblinks in the application?

Can you define program brochure?

Mary Beth Thaman:

The publication that promotes/markets the agencies programs and services.

11:46 Comment From Guest

How are sports fields and facilities weighed in the applications? Our mission is focused on natural and cultural resources, and though we do have a handful of sports fields/facilities, our governing body has specifically steered us away from providing these and leaving that to county and municipal systems. Perhaps I should use "other" to explain this?

Rod Tarullo:

The first 14 questions are to give judges an overview of your agency and what its scope of service is. There are no points added or deducted for these metrics questions. You are welcome to use the "Other" spot to show anything missed in the other questions.

11:47 Comment From Michael T

Thanks for doing this. About the time duration "last three years" -- if we have something that took place in April 2014, is that within the time frame? In other words, is it three years from March 12? Or is the time requirement looser?

Mary Beth Thaman:

2014, 2015 and 2016 is the three year window

11:47 Comment From Tiffany Peterson, Hillsborough County Parks and Rec (Florida)

Have any organizations listed "Friends" as a source for 6? For example, we have "Friends of the County Parks" that are able to fund activities or events that we as a Government agency may not be able to fund or support. Would "Friends", then be considered as a source of total operating expenditures? Or NO, as they are an outside entity?

Mike McCarty:

This question is asking what percentage came from sources to cover the operating expenditures. Friends groups could be considered foundations and there is a specific area to list the income from foundations on this question.

11:49 Comment From Guest

How do you define lands developed for parks and recreation purposes? Should this include open space which is open to primitive recreation opportunities.

Mike McCarty:

Yes, this would include lands developed for passive parks and recreation purposes.

11:49 Comment From In speaking with several parks and recreation agencies about their Gold Medal Award designations, it has been suggested that it is a multi year submittal process to progress to the Finalist category. Traditionally, approximately how many years are require

In speaking with several parks and recreation agencies about their Gold Medal Award designations, it has been suggested that it is a multi year submittal process to progress to the Finalist category. Traditionally, on average, approximately how many years have previous winners participated prior to being recognized?

Mary Beth Thaman:

There is not any average. An agency can be awarded the Gold Medal the first time they apply.

11:50 Comment From Mick, City of Carlsbad, CA

Same judges as last year?

Eric:

One judge rolls off and one new judge joins each year. There are five judges total.

11:50 Comment From Michael T

I'm also curious about projects that are underway. If we launched a capital plan or program that is now underway and expected to finish in the next year or two years, can we include it in some questions, or do the topics have to be fully implemented?

Rod Tarullo:

Projects do not have to be fully implemented for consideration by the judges. Completed, recent projects are always well received!



1:51 Comment From Robert

How many judges score the applications?

Mary Beth Thaman:

5 judges

11:53 Comment From Tiffany Peterson, Hillsborough County Parks and Rec (Florida)

What if the executive summary exceeds 3 pages for each plan? Would you still like to see the submission of the entire document (6 pages), or would you like to see a summary of the summary.

Mike McCarty:

If it's much longer or your plan does not include an executive summary, applicants can write and submit their own executive summary keeping it to three pages. To answer Matt Anderson, you can write your own executive summary to address the topics suggested in the question.

11:53 Comment From Ryan from Wyoming State Parks

Question #13 Campgrounds: Campsites- does this equal total number of Campsites (tent, primitive, RV) , and Campgrounds: RV sites equal only RV sites? for Example if we have a 1000 total campsites and only 300 of them are RV would the answer for the first be a 1000 and the second be 300.

Rod Tarullo:

I would answer that 700 campsites and 300 RV sites.

11:53 Comment From Matt Anderson

#25 - What if an Executive Summary does not specifically address the topics suggested in the question? Should we edit?

Mike McCarty:

I answered a question similar to this for Tiffany. See below.

If it's much longer or your plan does not include an executive summary, applicants can write and submit their own executive summary keeping it to three pages. To answer Matt Anderson, you can write your own executive summary to address the topics suggested in the question.

11:54 Comment From Jason Lang, East Goshen Township

This has been great. Thank you all for the chat today, much appreciated!

Mike McCarty:

You're welcome

11:55 Comment From Amy Charlesworth

I have an executive summary that shows how in combination the Strategic Plan and Capital Improvement Plan help to guide the agency. Would it be better to use it or to use the executive summary from the Strategic Plan?

Rod Tarullo:

I would suggest the combination showing the CIP and Strategic Plan's relationship.

11:57 Rod Tarullo:

Any last minute questions before we wrap up?

11:57 Comment From Sameera Luthman

Can you provide any additional info about what would define "staff engagement"? Is it staff involvement outside of their workplace, or staff who develops something within the workplace for the betterment of the community, or something else?

Mary Beth Thaman:

Staff engagement is employee involvement in the organization that impacts internal and external services. Also an agency engaged with employees and developing their skills and capacities in their jobs.

12:01 Darrell Crittendon:
Mary Beth is right on point. Staff Engagement is making sure that everyone feels a part of the team, are given a voice within the organization and feel their suggestions are contributing to the overall well-being and effectiveness of the agency (team).

12:01 Comment From Paula from Bismarck ND
Thank you, Mary Beth. Best explanation of staff engagement ever!

12:01 Comment From Guest
Thank you! Most helpful!

12:01 Comment From Amy Charlesworth
Thank you all for your time, this has been very helpful.

12:02 Comment From Mick, City of Carlsbad, CA
In an effort to manage total word count, do essay question responses need to be in complete sentences? Do "typos", grammatically incorrect sentences count against you?

Rod Tarullo:
Complete sentences are good! I would not want to turn in an application with typo's. Do your best! None of the judges are English majors but form counts for something.

12:03 Comment From Guest
Is the judging criteria the same since the one listed on the website?

Rod Tarullo:
yes, Basically the same as 2016

12:03 NRPA:
Thank you for your participation. The transcript will be available on the website next week. Please send any additional questions to awards@nrpa.org.

12:03 Comment From Michael T
Follow-up to Sameera's question -- would an employee donation program be considered staff engagement? A program that helps people donate to the district. ...

Mike McCarty:
It could

12:03 **Comment From Ryan from Wyoming State Parks**

Thank you

Mike McCarty:

You're welcome

12:03 **Comment From Tiffany Peterson, Hillsborough County Parks and Rec (Florida)**

Agreed! Thank you so much!