



National Gold Medal Award Program February 3, 2016 Live Chat Transcript

1:50 Brenda:

Welcome to the 2016 National Gold Medal Award Live Chat. Please stay on this page. The Live Chat will begin promptly at 2:00 pm, 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).

1:59 Brenda:

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

Mike Abbaté is the Director of Parks and Recreation for Portland, OR. Mike is the Gold Medal Head Judge and has been on the judge's panel for four years. His agency won the Gold Medal in 2011.

Mike McCarty is the Executive Director for the Glenview Park District, IL. Mike is a member of the Academy Gold Medal Committee.

Rod Tarullo is the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Golden Parks, CO. Rod is the immediate Gold Medal past Head Judge and was on the judges' panel for 5 years. His agency won the Gold Medal in 2010.

Lori Daniel is the retired Recreation Services Manager for the City of Aurora (CO) Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces. Lori is the Academy Gold Medal Judges Liaison. Her agency is a former Gold Medal recipient and Lori has served as a Gold Medal judge.

Mike, would you like to begin?

2:00 Mike Abbate:
Good Day everyone! I am glad you are taking this opportunity to get more information about the National Gold Medal Award Program. We are here to help you create the most competitive submittal possible. Feel free now to type in questions you may have.

2:01 Comment From Jonathon Turlove
How many jurisdictions typically apply?

Mike Abbate:
Mike Abbate: An average of 60 jurisdictions has applied over the past 3 years, but we are hoping for more!

2:04 Comment From Meghan Dwyer
Hello from Englewood, CO

2:05 Comment From Molly
Is there an application fee? and what costs are involved?

Lori Daniel:
There is no application fee. Costs are staff time and actions implemented by the agency.

2:05 Comment From Meghan Dwyer
How recent should the city's comprehensive plan/master plan be? We are in the midst of a master update but the most recent is from 2006.

Mike Abbate:

It should be the most recent Parks master plan (not the overall City Comp plan), but make sure you mention that you are in the update process this year, what progress has been made, and when it is expected to be completed.

2:07 Comment From First time applicant here and I'd like to know what pitfalls to avoid

Is there a category for special events?

Rod Tarullo:

There is not a category or specific question about special events. Several questions on the application could be answered with information about your agency's special events.

2:08 Comment From Kimberly

I am new to this entire process. I'm not even certain what questions to ask. I did go onto the application website and viewed that portion and it looks as if there is a lot of logistical demographic information that is needed. Is that correct?

Michael McCarty:

There are a number of demographic questions and financial questions related to your jurisdiction. If you have entered this information in the past in NRPA's PRORAGIS you are well on your way. However, gathering all this data in advance is very helpful. You will have to enter all data in the GM application even if you have previously completed a PRORAGIS profile.

2:08 Comment From Paula Redmann

When the question refers to "the last three years," I would assume that would be 2013-2014 and 2015, correct?

Mike Abbate:

Yes, that is correct. It may vary depending on when your fiscal year runs. The goal is to make sure that all examples are recent.

2:09

Brenda:

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

2:09

Comment From Nancy Desmond

Just confirming, this application in 2016 covers activities in years 2013, 2014, 2015, correct?

Michael McCarty:

The 2016 Application covers years 2011 to 2015 for statistical data and 2013-2015 for narrative questions.

2:10

Comment From Ben Johnson

Is it beneficial to include hyperlinks to programs referred to in the essay questions, in case judges would like more information?

Lori Daniel:

No. Please be sure your website is complete with current information and links that the judges may explore and review by going to the web page URL you provide in the statistical portion of the application.

2:10

Comment From Amy Spence

Is there a timeline for participants to say yes we are submitting? If so is there a form we need to fill out to be eligible to submission

Mike Abbate:

This year's applications are due March 13, 2016. You can find all the application requirements on the NRPA web site.

2:10 Have you applied for a Gold Medal Award before?

Yes

(59%)

No

(41%)

2:11 **Comment From Chris Jackett**

What's the biggest 1-2 things that most jurisdictions miss when applying for the award?

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.

2:12 **Comment From First time applicant here and I'd like to know what pitfalls to avoid**

Is having a Master Plan required?

Lori Daniel:

No. It may be a master plan, comprehensive plan and or long range plan. It is desired you are doing planning and making progression on that plan

2:12 **Comment From Jim from Parker, CO**

We understand the video has been reinstated. Have expectations changed for the video compared to previous years?

Mike Abbate:

The video is now 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.

2:14 Comment From Lynn Jordan

Is there a way to attach pictures to the application?

Rod Tarullo:

There is not an easy way to attach pictures to the application. Should you have pictures that you would like the judges to see, please post them in some fashion on your web site.

2:14 Comment From City of Carlsbad

What strategies would you recommend using in completing the essay questions? Any tips?

Michael McCarty:

There are a variety of approaches you can take. Some lessons learned from my experience are: Designate a lead writer; work with your local university to provide writing assistance; pull your team together to review the possible responses; story board your response; make sure you paint a picture of the agency and use relevant terms

It was a great team building effort when we worked on the essays

2:14 Comment From Nancy Desmond

Will CAPRA accreditation be taken into consideration?

Lori Daniel:

The CAPRA is used specifically if there is tie.

2:15 Comment From Amy Spence

Can explain the video component further. How will it be used? Are there samples we could view?

Mike Abbate:

See my answer to Jim from Parker, above. Also, samples may be available from past winners, but just as in reviewing past applications, you will need to request this directly from the jurisdictions

2:16 Comment From Paula Redmann

But the video is required only if you are a finalist, correct, or is it for all applicants?

Mike Abbate:

Only finalists will be asked to prepare videos. Finalists will be notified by week of April 29, and videos will be due June 5; posted to your agency web page.

2:17 Comment From Kimberly

Is the video due by March 13 as well?

Mike Abbate:

Only finalists will be asked to prepare videos. Finalists will be notified the week of April 29, and videos will be due June 5; posted to your agency web page.

2:17 Comment From Miranda Gomez

Will PRORAGIS auto populate the demographic and budgetary portion of the application if we have completed our profile?

Lori Daniel:

No. The application is not in PRORAGIS so please complete all data requested in the application. The application and PRORAGIS are two separate systems. We will explore this opportunity in the future.

2:18 Comment From Amy Rickman

On some questions, can "agency" include the department and the city? For example, we have been involved for past few years in development of city bond for 2016, which includes priorities from our parks master plan.

Michael McCarty:

Yes, you can include your City. When I applied in 2010 and 2011, I was with the City of Fairfax and we were in a similar situation.

2:19 Comment From Walter Munday, Louisville, KY:

Of the 60 cities that apply, how many normally reach the finalist stage?

Rod Tarullo:

There is a possibility of up to four finalists in each of the five population class categories and four finalists in the Armed Forces category (24 total) and every other year state parks could have up to four finalists.

2:20 Comment From Javier

Which Class has the most amount of applicants, on average?

Rod Tarullo:

There is no way to tell. Every single year is different.

2:21 Comment From Chris Jackett

If you have fiscal years as 2014-15 & 2015-16, do you want us to use the year ending in 2015 as the 2015 data requested in the application? Similarly, 2010-11 stats for the 2011 data despite 2011-12 being complete.

Mike Abbate:

You should use data that is complete for a Calendar year, even if it bridges fiscal years. So, you should include the 2015 data from your current 2015-2016 data to provide a completed year of data. Is that clear?

2:21 Comment From Jim from Parker, CO

In reference to Lori's earlier comment about accreditation, how often are there ties?

Lori Daniel:

We have had close but no ties.

2:23 Comment From Wendy Landreth

We are demonstrating the agency as a whole in the essay section while highlighting what makes us unique, correct? This is our first time applying.

Lori Daniel:

Yes, you are on target!

2:23 Comment From Ben Johnson

Should essay questions use detached possessive determiners (The parks department accomplished its goal by...) or can responses use "we" and "our"? (We accomplished our goal by...)

Mike Abbate:

There are strict word limits, so I would use grammar that is most efficient and effective in telling your story. No need to "burn" up words unnecessarily. No judges are English majors, but we appreciate complete sentences!

2:23 Comment From Miranda Gomez

Is there scoring criteria associated with questions 10, 11 & 12? Meaning if the city shows growth between FY11 & FY15 in number of facilities or park acres?

Michael McCarty:

These are just statistical questions. We're just looking for a snapshot of what has changed or the trend over the last five years for your agency.

2:24 Comment From Lynn Jordan

Are winners' applications publicized?

Rod Tarullo:

Winner's applications are not publicized or shared by the Gold Medal program. Often a winning agency will receive direct requests to share their application from other finalists or agencies. Most winners are happy to share when requests come their way.

2:24 Comment From Sky

Will the transcripts from this Live Chat be available to download later this week?

Brenda:

Transcripts will be available later this week. We will answer all questions even if we don't get to them during the Live Chat and incorporate them into the transcript.

2:26 Comment From Catherine Heitman

Under Question 17, dealing with public support, citizen involvement and staff engagement, can you explain what is meant by "range and depth of actions"?

Mike Abbate:

"Range" is meant to address the broad spectrum of different efforts, while "depth" has to do with the degree of detail and effectiveness of a few select efforts

2:27 Comment From Ben Johnson

Should we use data from the 2010 Census or a more recent population estimate when determining which class to apply for?

Michael McCarty:

Yes, you can use the 2010 Census but if your agency collects and updates your information more frequently, you can use this as well.

2:28 Comment From Dawn Sommers

Will the content (questions/answers) of this live chat remain on the NRPA website, for reference?

Brenda:

The transcript will be published on the Web Chat page later this week. It will remain for you to refer to.

2:29 Comment From City of Carlsbad

What criteria is used to differentiate one "finalist" from another? I'm assuming finalists are all equally qualified at one point in the process?

Mike Abbate:

All applications are judged according to the scoring criteria. Top 4 scores in each class become finalists, and then all finalists are considered equal as they enter the next round of judging. This year, videos from the finalists will be used to score the finalists.

2:30 Comment From Miranda Gomez

Is there criteria you can share with us that demonstrates the scoring criteria for the essay questions? How is it determined what is considered a 3-point, 2-point or 1-point example? Are there tips for 3-point examples?

Lori Daniel:

This is the range of potential score. Each judge reads the application and based on their experience and knowledge will score each individual answer. They each apply their score consistently through scoring process.

2:32 Comment From Amy Spence

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

Brenda:

Of course. We are always available to answer questions. You can contact me directly at awards@nrpa.org.

2:33 Comment From Javier

When are finalists notified they have been moved to the finalist stage after the original March 13 submittal?

Mike Abbate:

Finalists will be notified the last week of April. Videos will be due on June 5th for Finalists only. The video should be posted on the agencies web page by June 5th.

2:34 Comment From Lynn Jordan

Do non-finalists get an assessment of their submission and in what areas they are strong and weak?

Michael McCarty:

Non-finalist can receive an assessment of their submission but it must be requested.

2:35 Comment From Paula Redmann

We received our judge's scores from the last two years we have applied. We are applying again. Someone on my team thinks the best strategy is to leave the answers we did well in alone, and only "fix" the ones where we could improve. Hmmm. Thoughts??

Rod Tarullo:

Every year is different based on different judges on the judging committee and different applicants. My opinion is that agencies who have applied multiple times would do well to always review their previous application and make changes based on their internal review of strengths and weaknesses and new or different elements of their agency from year to year. You might also consider having a third party review your application.

2:37 Comment From Jim from Parker, CO

How many judges score the applications?

Rod Tarullo:

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

2:38 Will you be attending the NRPA Conference in St. Louis?

Yes

(80%)

No

(20%)

2:39 **Comment From Kimberly**

Is the profile that PRORAGIS auto populates on the website? Is this in addition to the application? Or is this found elsewhere on the website?

Lori Daniel:

No. PRORAGIS does not auto populate. PRORAGIS and the gold medal application are two separate systems. You must complete the requested data in the GM application. We will consider in the future if the two systems can link.

2:41 **Comment From Guest**

How much weight is given to programming, as our park mainly provides facilities for others to use for programming? For example, we have several stadiums which local high school teams use for sports, but our park does not have our own teams.

Mike Abbate:

We are most interested in how your agency, in your unique community, and with your unique challenges and opportunities is "Outstanding". There are no questions about programming, per se

2:41 **Comment From Chris Jackett**

Yes, complete fiscal years are clear. So we should be OK with the fiscal years that ended in mid-2011 & 2015 then.

Michael McCarty:

Yes, The application is looking for the most recent calendar year but your midyear fiscal year data is okay.

2:43

Comment From City of Carlsbad

Confirming . . . each year there is a different jury?

Rod Tarullo:

The judges committee changes every year. There is a guest judge and four permanent judges that work through a four year cycle. The guest judge often becomes a permanent judge the next year and the head judge (usually the fourth year judge) goes off the committee. Sometimes there can be other vacancies on the committee that result in more change.



2:46

Comment From Molly

Are you looking for quantifiable information (percent increases in attendance, revenue, etc.) or a more descriptive narrative regarding programs and facilities?

Mike Abbate:

Great question, Molly! Yes - 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!

2:49

Comment From Ricardo

Can I start the application and then leave the page and then go back into it?

Mike Abbate:

YES

Mike Abbate:

There is a "Save and Continue Later" button at the top of each page of questions.

2:49 Comment From Jennifer

Use of Valuable Resources: The question is somewhat confusing – are you asking us to identify outstanding or innovative ways that we utilize or rely on public support, citizen involvement and staff engagement??

Michael McCarty:

How do you utilize those resources which may result in relying on if it becomes institutionalized? You may say "we utilize this innovative....to...", or it may be "we rely on this innovative to ..." Which is most comfortable to tell your story!

2:51 Mike Abbate:

Any more questions?

2:53 Comment From Walter Munday, Louisville, KY:

Thank you for taking the time to offer this valuable learning resource.

Brenda:

Thank you! We sincerely appreciate that!

2:54 Comment From Miranda Gomez

Will you review draft application prior to the deadline and give feedback?

Rod Tarullo:

No. We suggest that agencies use a third party to review applications before they are submitted.

2:54 Comment From Terrence Williams

Who do we contact to get our scores or evaluation from last year's Gold Medal?

Mike Abbate:

awards@nrpa.org

2:56 Comment From Javier

Is the Gold Medal Award the only award the NRPA offers?

Brenda:

NRPA offers 11 National Awards and the Hall of Fame Award. Information is available at www.nrpa.org/awards. For questions contact awards@nrpa.org. The National Gold Medal Award program is presented by the Academy for Park and Recreation Administration in partnership with NRPA and currently sponsored by Musco Lighting, LLC.

2:57 Brenda:

Thank you for your participation in our Live Chat. The Live Chat transcript will be posted on the Live Chat webpage later this week.

We would like to encourage you to read the Gold Medal article that appeared in the January Parks & Recreation magazine. This article has 10 Tips for submitting an application. The February issue will also have an article regarding Gold Medal myths. . Be sure to read these articles for useful information.