



LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

Frequently Asked Questions

Entry Process

1. What is this year's deadline?

All entries must be paid for and entered into NRECA's online system by **March 11, 2022** (midnight EDT).

2. I entered before, but I didn't win. Should I enter again?

Of course! Like other award programs, this award is highly competitive and may take more than one cycle to win.

3. Who can submit a nomination?

Nominations may be submitted by a supervisor, subordinate, colleague, industry peer or the individuals themselves. The entry is eligible so long as the individual submitting the nomination is employed by an electric co-op.

4. Can a consultant submit an entry for the LaBerge Award?

No. Only a co-op employee can create and submit an entry for this award.

5. If I am nominating a colleague, will the nominee know that I submitted an entry?

No. The individual who submitted the application will be the one to receive communication about the entry. The nominator will receive the notification on whether their nominee won.

6. Where can I find an example of a winning entry?

You can find more information about previous LaBerge Award winners on cooperative.com/laberge.

7. Who do I contact with questions?

If you have any questions regarding the LaBerge Award, please contact Alexis Dunnum at alexis.dunnum@nreca.coop or 703-907-5714.

Online Payment and Entry Form

8. How does the online entry and payment system work?

Go to the LaBerge Award webpage to make your payment for every entry you plan to submit. Once the payment is made, you will receive a payment confirmation email with a link to the online entry form.

9. Can I start an entry and come back to it later?

Yes! New for the 2022 cycle, you can begin your entry and complete it at another time. Just be sure to Get a head start and download the [sample nomination form](#) or print a copy of the application worksheet prior to beginning the electronic version so that you are prepared for all sections.



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10. What type of communicator should be nominated for the LaBerge Award?

The LaBerge award recognizes an electric cooperative communicator who has demonstrated excellence, influence and impact in co-op communications, both as a practitioner and contributor across the network. The ideal candidate is a communications professional that is experienced but is currently on the rise in his or her career.

Judges, Scoring, Notification and Recognition

11. What does the profile of a winning entry look like?

The profile of a winning entry completely and adequately describes how the nominee meets the criteria within the three categories that comprise the award's application in their written descriptions. The categories are; Cooperation Among Cooperatives, Education, Training and Information and "[Always On](#)" Approach. Nominators should pay special attention to the "Always On" Approach category, which prompts you to describe how your nominee has embodies this principle to advance strategic electric co-op communication.

We recommend that a nominator includes metrics, proof and tangible examples that illustrate why the candidate meets each criterion. If you have an excellent candidate, but the entry doesn't adequately demonstrate why the communicator is award-worthy he/she is not likely to earn maximum points.

12. Who judges the entries?

A three-person panel of judges works separately and independently to determine the winning entry. The panel consists of a senior leader who has just recently left the NRECA network and two current members of the Certified Cooperative Communicator Program or the Cooperative Communicators Association.

13. How does the scoring system work?

The judges score submissions based off a finite rubric that is composed of 100 possible points. It is the responsibility of the nominator to fulfill the criteria the judges are evaluating. You can review more background on the criteria the judges will be looking for in the [LaBerge Application Criteria Guidelines](#) (PDF).

14. How is supplemental material weighed by the judges?

Supplemental material is entirely optional. It is up to the discretion of the judges to decide whether they will consider the extra material in the scoring process.

15. When can I expect to receive general feedback?

If you requested and paid the additional fee, you can expect to receive general feedback on your submission by mid-late March.



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16. When is the winner announced?

The winner of the LaBerge Award is announced and recognized at the CONNECT Conference in May. The winner is invited to all Spotlight on Excellence celebrations and activities. In the event of a cancellation, the CREC Award Committee will make alternate plans to recognize the award recipient and their achievement.

About the Award

17. Who is the LaBerge Award named after?

Justin Erick LaBerge served as the Senior Leadership Communications Manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. This award was established in his memory in 2018.

18. How is the LaBerge Award connected to the Spotlight on Excellence Awards program?

The LaBerge Award falls under the umbrella of the Council of Rural Electric Communicators' Spotlight on Excellence awards program, which celebrates and recognizes the valuable contributions of co-op communicators today. Unlike the 18 categories of the Spotlight on Excellence award, which recognize bodies of outstanding work, the LaBerge Award recognizes a stellar electric cooperative communicator who has demonstrated excellence, influence and impact in co-op communications, both as a practitioner and contributor across the network.

19. What is the "Always On" program and how is it linked to the LaBerge Award?

The "[Always On](#)" program is an initiative to help electric co-ops stay connected to their members in an era of rapid change. Created by the Council of Rural Electric Communications, the program defines communicators' roles and responsibilities for our dynamic and 24/7 world and provide recommendations for aligning strategic communication with operational success.

The "Always On" program is linked to the LaBerge Award because of the emphasis the entry form places on the "Always On" Approach. Nominators are asked to explain why their nominee utilizes this communication model to advance strategic electric co-op communications.

20. Where can I find more information on the "Always On" program?

Being knowledgeable about the NRECA's "Always On" program will better equip you in understanding and fulfilling the award criteria. You can find more information about the "[Always On](#)" program on the [LaBerge Award](#) webpage.