SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

HELLO!

- We’re going to be getting underway shortly.
- In the chat, let us know if you’re new to Spotlight or whether you’ve entered before.
- FYI- We’ll be posting the slides on the Spotlight webinar page. This webinar is being recorded.

SPOTLIGHT ON 2025: UPDATED SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE AWARDS!

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

NRECA &
The Council of Rural Electric Communicators (CREC)

TODAY'S AGENDA

01. TEAM INTRODUCTIONS

02. NEW FOR 2025

03. WHY ENTER SPOTLIGHT

04. HOW TO APPLY

05. HELPFUL RESOURCES

06. QUESTIONS

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

MEET THE PRESENTERS

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

TALIA HAMM
Spotlight Administrator
Blue Wagon Group

AMY ROSIER
VP, MEMBER + GOVT. RELATIONS
Poudre Valley REA

ANNE PRINCE
Senior Communications Manager
NRECA

AMY ROSIER
VP, MEMBER + GOVT. RELATIONS
Poudre Valley REA

CHESNUTT WINNER

White River Valley EC and Tri-State G&T

J.C. BROWN WINNER

Poudre Valley REA

COUNCIL OF RURAL ELECTRIC COMMUNICATORS

The Council of Rural Electric Communicators, in partnership with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, advocates for the strategic role of communications and empowers electric cooperative communicators by promoting and recognizing excellence.

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

LaBerge Award for Strategic Communications

J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award

The Autry Award
for "Always On" Communication

New Co-op Communicators Orientation

you
spoke
we
listened

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

PREVIEW OF 2024-2025 CYCLE

01. **EARLY BIRD – SUPER SAVER RATE**
New

02. **STREAMLINED ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS**
Easier to understand forms

03. **IMPROVED ENTRY PROCESS**
Improved user experience

04. **IMPROVEMENTS TO PLATFORM**
To help enact change

NEW EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT FOR 2025!

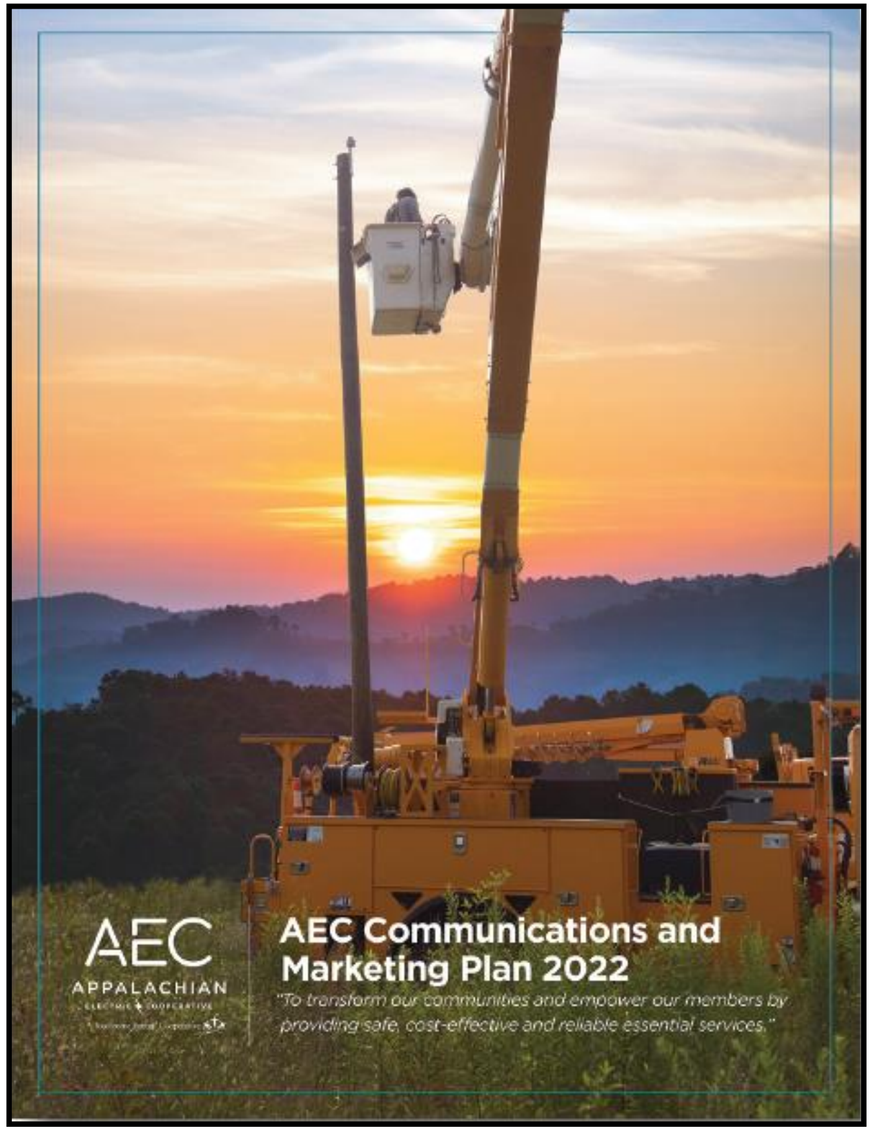
- **EARLY BIRD PERIOD** – OCT. 10 – OCT. 31
- **DISCOUNT** – $96 PER ENTRY – 20% OFF STANDARD ENTRY FEE OF $120
- **ALL ENTRANTS ARE ELIGIBLE** FOR THIS DISCOUNT!
- THERE IS **NO ENTRY MAXIMUM** FOR THIS DISCOUNT
- EARLY BIRD ENTRIES **MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 11:59PM EST ON OCT. 31**. CHANGES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOLLOWING THIS.
- ALL ENTRIES SUBMITTED NOV. 1 – DEC. 5 ARE SUBJECT TO THE STANDARD FEE.

VALUE of SPOTLIGHT (why enter)

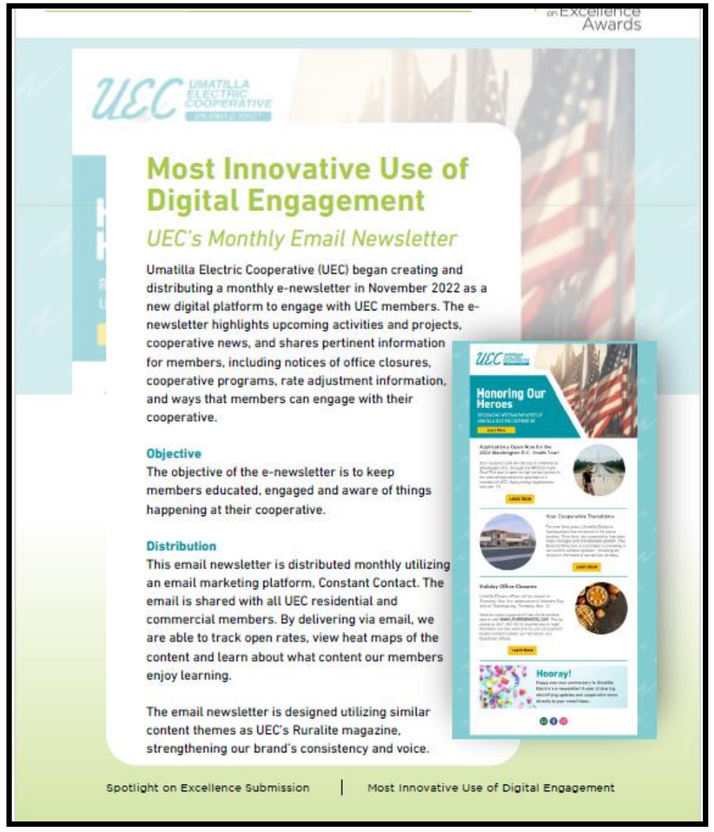
- Earn recognition for yourself & your co-op
- Validates work your team is doing
- Helps establish you & your co-op as leaders in the industry
- Helps build professional portfolio
- Contributes to leading practices that strengthen the entire network - particularly for smaller co-ops
- Highlights leading practices across the network

WHAT TO ENTER? 2024 WINNING EXAMPLES

BEST PHOTO – UNION POWER COOPERATIVE



EDGAR CHESNUTT AWARD – APPALACHIAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



MOST INNOVATIVE USE OF DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT – UMATILLA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ENTRY TIPS

01. **DEMONSTRATE RATHER THAN TELL**
Provide proof points, data

02. **SOLID PLANNING, EXECUTION**
Show research, course corrections,
Explain accomplishments, provide details

03. **OVERALL QUALITY**
Consistency of work; examples

04. **WHAT COUNTS IS WHAT'S COMMUNICATED**
Make a compelling case

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

HOT TIPS FROM THE JUDGES!

THIS JUST IN

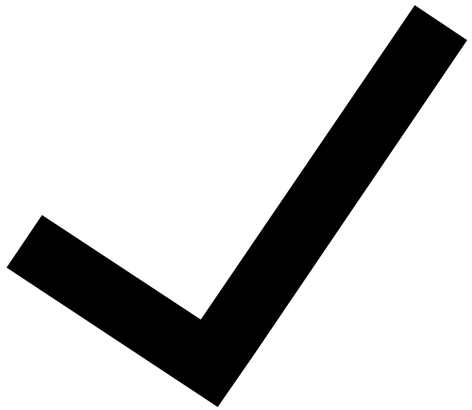
BE THOROUGH IN THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE ALONG WITH YOUR ENTRY. SOME ENTRIES HAD LITTLE INFO , BUT MORE INFO HELPS JUDGES UNDERSTAND HOW AND WHY ENTRANTS CREATED AND DEVELOPED THEIR PIECES, THEIR MOTIVATIONS, CREATIVITY, CHALLENGES, GOALS, AND OTHER KEY FACTORS.

VERY SIMPLE – FILL OUT THE FORM IN ITS ENTIRETY AND PROVIDE ASSETS THAT SUPPLEMENT THE INFORMATION IN THE FORM. IT IS ALWAYS SURPRISING TO ME TO SEE ENTRIES THAT ARE INCOMPLETE. IT'S OFTEN A GREAT SUBMISSION BUT MISSING SOME KEY COMPONENTS FOR THE JUDGES TO JUDGE FAIRLY.

MANY SUBMISSIONS LACKED QUANTIFIABLE GOALS OR PERFORMANCE DATA, RELYING INSTEAD ON SUBJECTIVE STATEMENTS LIKE "RECEIVED A LOT OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK." WHILE SOME ELEMENTS, LIKE PRINTED MAGAZINES, MIGHT BE CHALLENGING TO MEASURE FULLY, THESE PUBLICATIONS ARE OFTEN UPLOADED TO WEBSITES AS DIGITAL VERSIONS AS WELL. ***INCLUDING PARTIAL ENGAGEMENT METRICS FROM THESE ONLINE PLATFORMS WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY AID THE JUDGES IN COMPREHENSIVELY EVALUATING EACH ENTRY.***

BE MORE ATTENTIVE TO THE PROMPTS AND ANSWER THEM CLEARLY.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE JUDGES....



1. TAKE YOUR TIME!

2. BE THOROUGH IN EVERY SECTION OF YOUR ENTRY.

3. GIVE HELPFUL MARKERS OF THE SUCCESS OF YOUR ENTRY

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

HOW TO ENTER

SPOTLIGHT ADMINISTRATOR

Talia Hamm
Blue Wagon Group

ENTRY PROCESS AT A GLANCE

01. MAKE YOUR PAYMENT

Visit Spotlight Page and Navigate to"Start Your Entry"

02. CREATE (OR LOGIN) TO AWARD FORCE ACCOUNT

After you complete your payment, you will use the link emailed to you to navigate to the Spotlight Award Force page

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE PLATFORM

Carefully review application materials and requirements and ensure all required fields are answered.

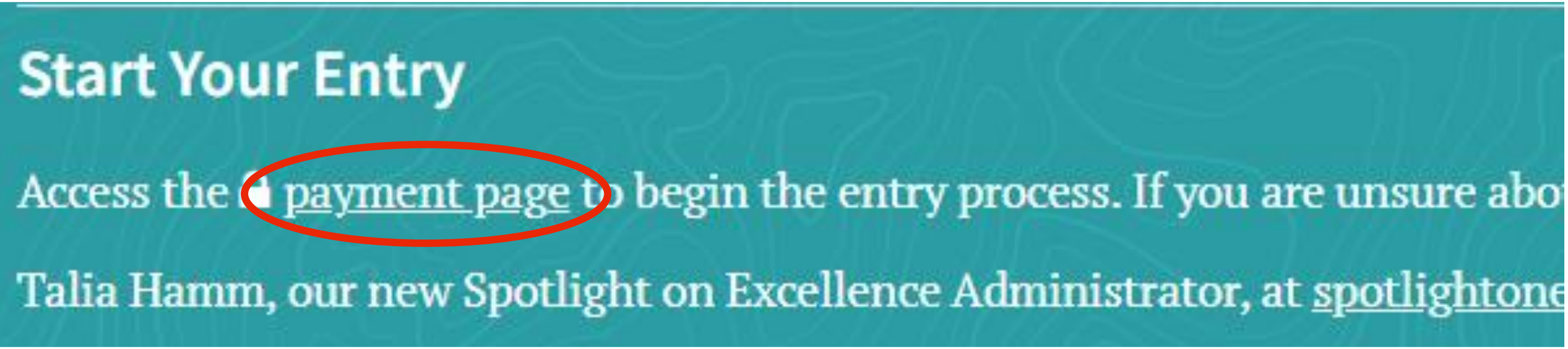
04. SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY!

After completing your submission and uploading any required materials, submit your entry!

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

01. MAKE YOUR PAYMENT

VISIT SPOTLIGHT PAGE – COOPERATIVE.COM/SPOTLIGHT

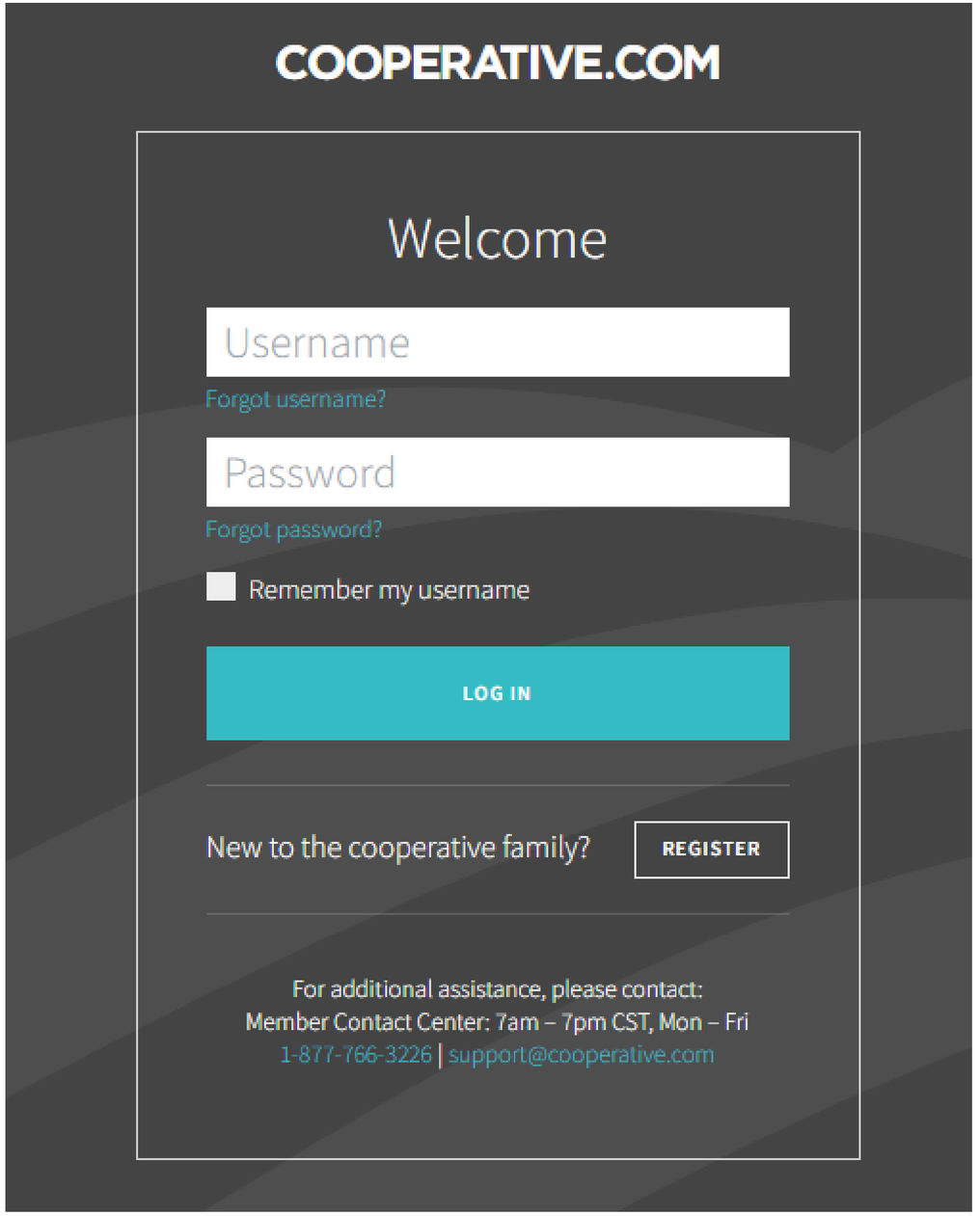


Navigate to "Start Your Entry" and head to the payment page.

01. MAKE YOUR PAYMENT

ENTER PAYMENT PAGE

Login with cooperative account



01. MAKE YOUR PAYMENT

USE EMAIL LINK SENT

Once payment is received a link will be sent to you via email to begin your entry

Thank you for your payment! You can now access the Spotlight on Excellence submission platform, linked here: https://nreca.awardsplatform.com/

Early Bird Submission Deadline: October 31, 2024

Submission Platform Info

If you don't already have an Award Force account, you will be required to create an account on the Award Force platform. Once you successfully log in, you can return to the entry platform and your entry as often as necessary. You can save your work and return to it at another time and edit submitted materials up until the Early Bird deadline of Oct. 31, 2024. Submissions received after October 31, will be subject to the full rate.

Early Bird Cancellation Policy:

Members with a cooperative.com login can make changes and cancellations online via cooperative.com > Member Center > My Registrations. Cancellations received/processed by October 31, 2024, are fully refundable. Cancellations made after the October 31, 2024, are non-refundable. If you have difficulty cancelling online, please contact Accounts Receivable accountsreceivable@nreca.coop.

Regular Submission Deadline: Friday, December 5, 2024

Submission Platform Info

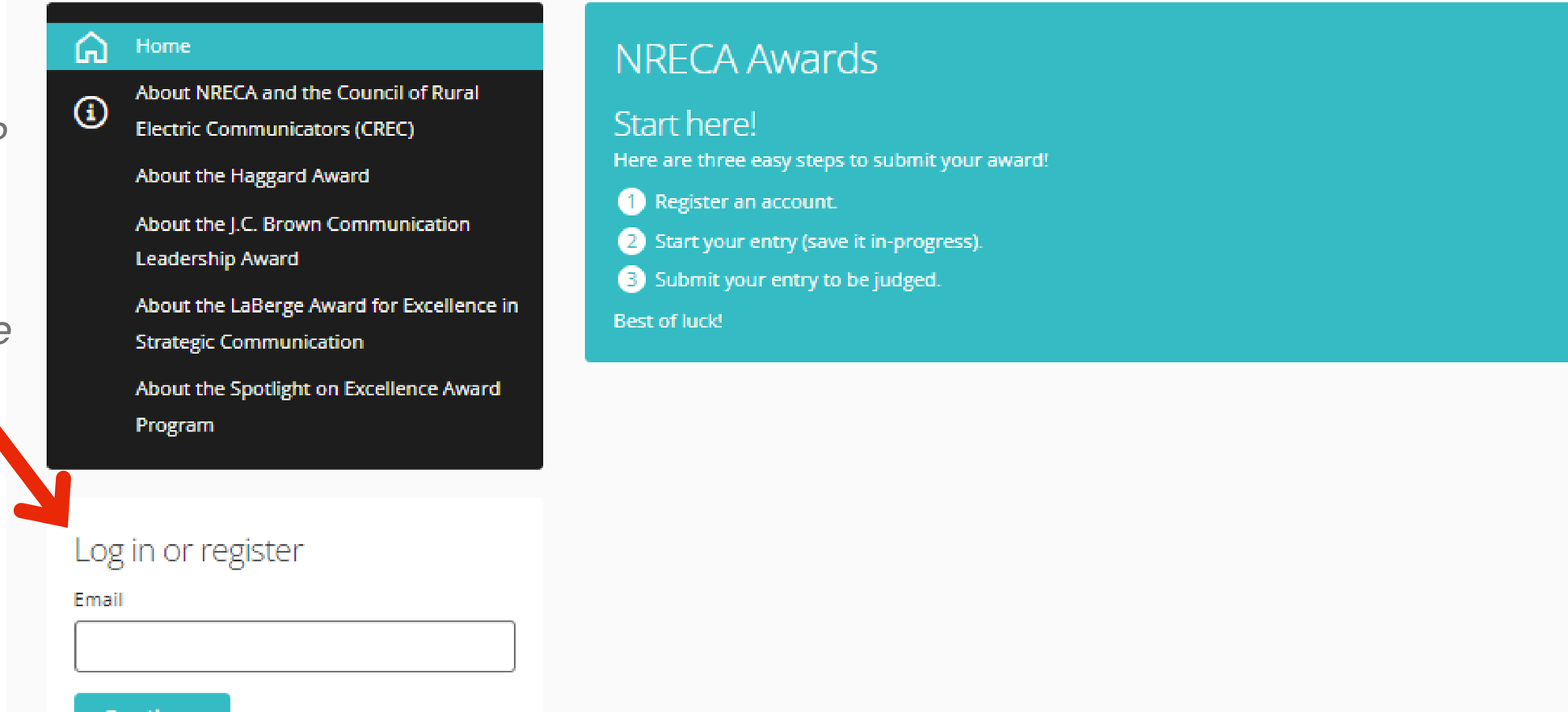
If you don't already have an Award Force Account, you will be required to create an account on the Award Force platform. Once you successfully log in, you can return to the entry platform and your entry as often as necessary. You can save your work and return to it at another time and edit submitted materials up until the deadline.

02. CREATE (OR LOGIN TO) YOUR ACCOUNT IN AWARD FORCE

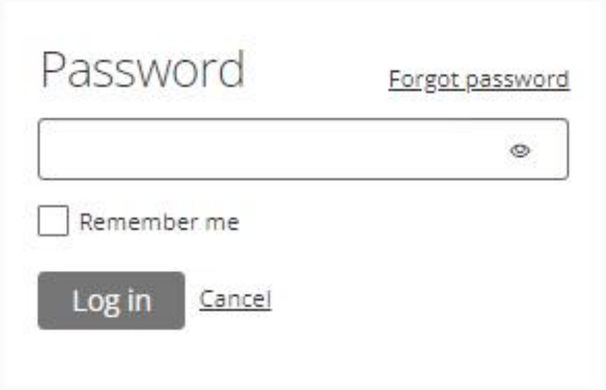
Do I need a new account?

OR

I can't remember if I have one



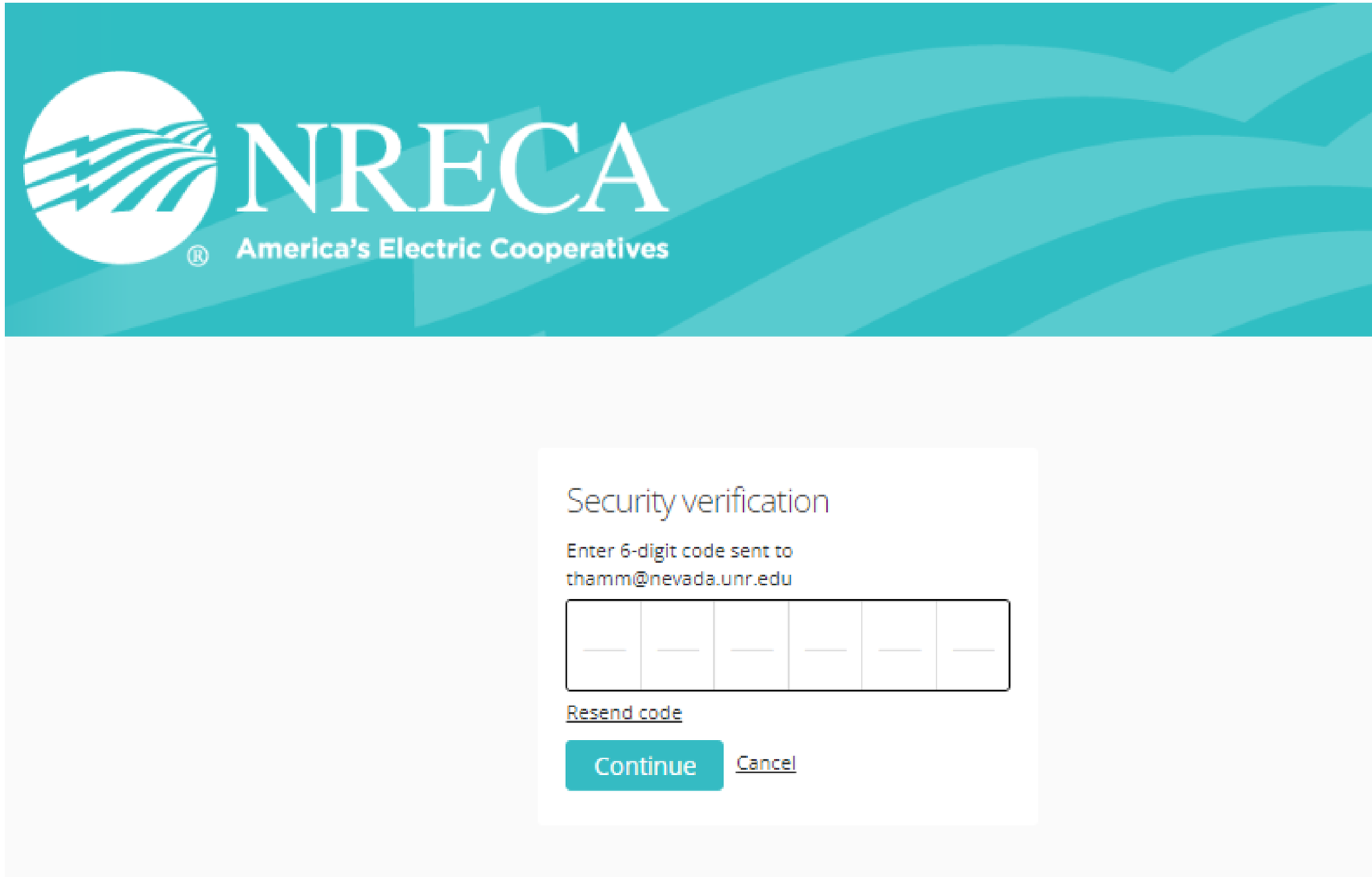
02. CREATE (OR LOGIN TO) YOUR ACCOUNT IN AWARD FORCE



If you previously made an Award Force account, you will be prompted to enter a password.

02. CREATE (OR LOGIN TO) YOUR ACCOUNT IN AWARD FORCE

If there is no account associated with the email you entered, you will be prompted for a security code



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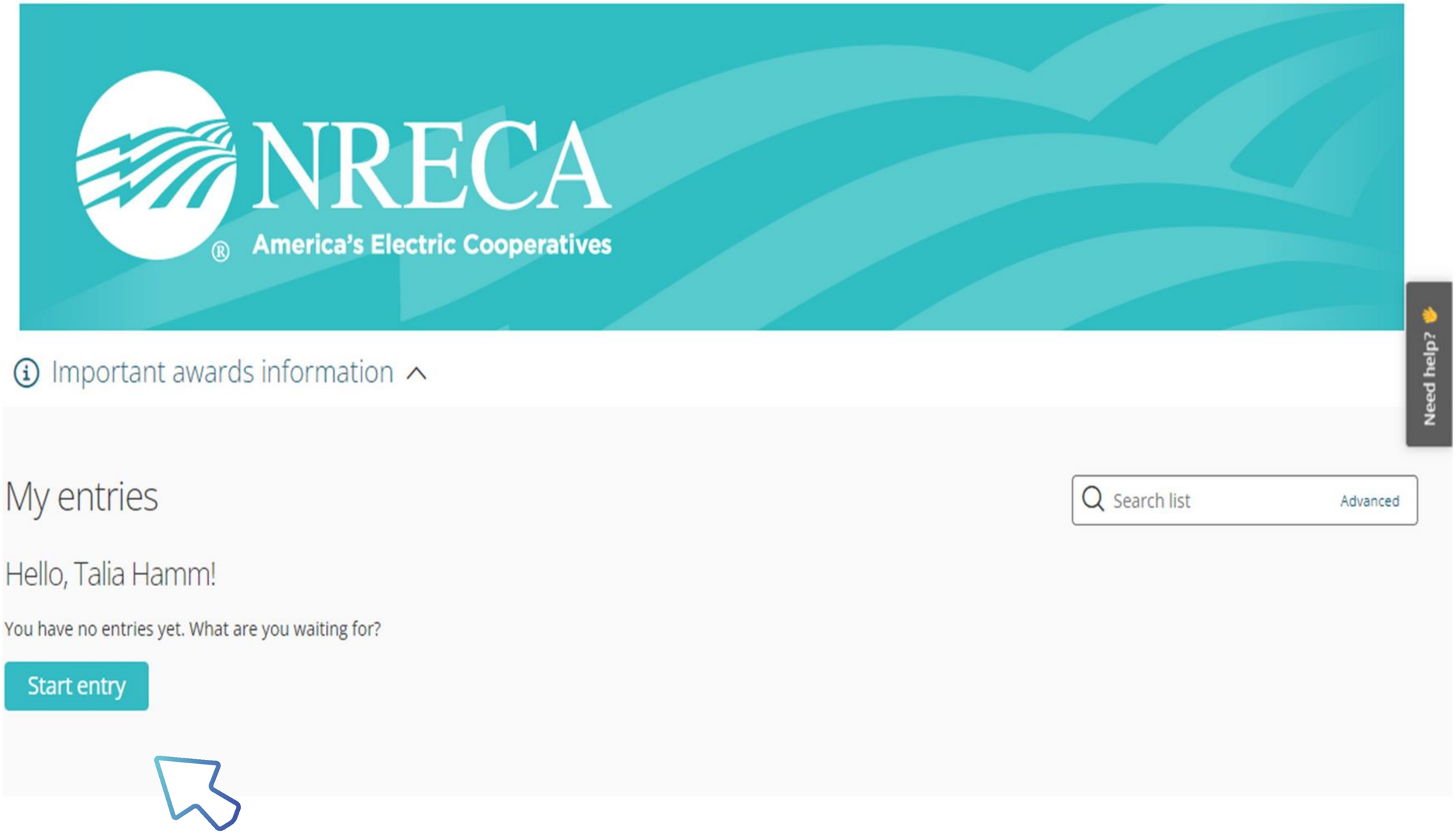


03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

01. START HERE!

Select the chapter, your category, co-op category where applicable, and provide an entry name.

02. SPOTLIGHT ENTRANT & COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

Entrant info, Co-op info, and contact information.

03. SPOTLIGHT ENTRY MATERIALS

Application questions that are specific to your submission category.

04. SPOTLIGHT ATTACHMENTS

Upload attachments or provide links to submission materials.

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

ENTRY COMPONENTS

Start Here! | Spotlight Entrant & Cooperative Information | Spotlight Entry Materials | Spotlight Attachments

Getting Started!

Welcome to NRECA's award submission platform!

Thanks for your interest in our awards programs! Before you get started, here are a few things you should know.

Chapter refers to the name of the award program.

Category refers to the category in which you are submitting an entry. If there are additional classification requirements for that award program, continue making the correct selections for your entry.

Entry Name Please indicate the name of your project as you would like it to be referred to in promotional materials where applicable.

Early Bird Discount: New for the 2025 awards cycle! Entrants will receive a 20% discount ($96 per entry) for entries purchased and submitted in the early bird period. Between October 10th and October 31st, 2024, entrants will be able to purchase and submit early bird entries. **Early bird entries must be purchased and fully submitted by the October 31st deadline.**

Helpful Hints: If you're unsure what to enter in a specific field, please click on the (?) icon to reveal some helpful hints. Be sure to also reference the Help Text located along the right side of your screen.

Need Assistance?
If you run into any issues along the way, don't hesitate to reach out! Please visit the award's webpage on cooperative.com and reach out to the appropriate staff member noted in the Contact Section at the bottom of the page.

SUBMITTING MULTIPLE ENTRIES? Here's a tip to save you some time!
If you are submitting multiple entries, you can save yourself some time by copying your entry form. (This is especially useful for the Personal Information tab!)

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

YOU'LL NOTICE THE ENTRY DEADLINE WILL BE COUNTING DOWN IN THE TOP RIGHT CORNER OF YOUR SUBMISSION

My entries → Entry form → Start entry

All questions must be answered, unless marked optional.

Deadline 2024-10-31 19:01
(GMT +00:00) UTC

24	04	36	25
Days	Hours	Minutes	Seconds

Start Here! | Spotlight Entrant & Cooperative Information | Spotlight Entry Materials | Spotlight Attachments

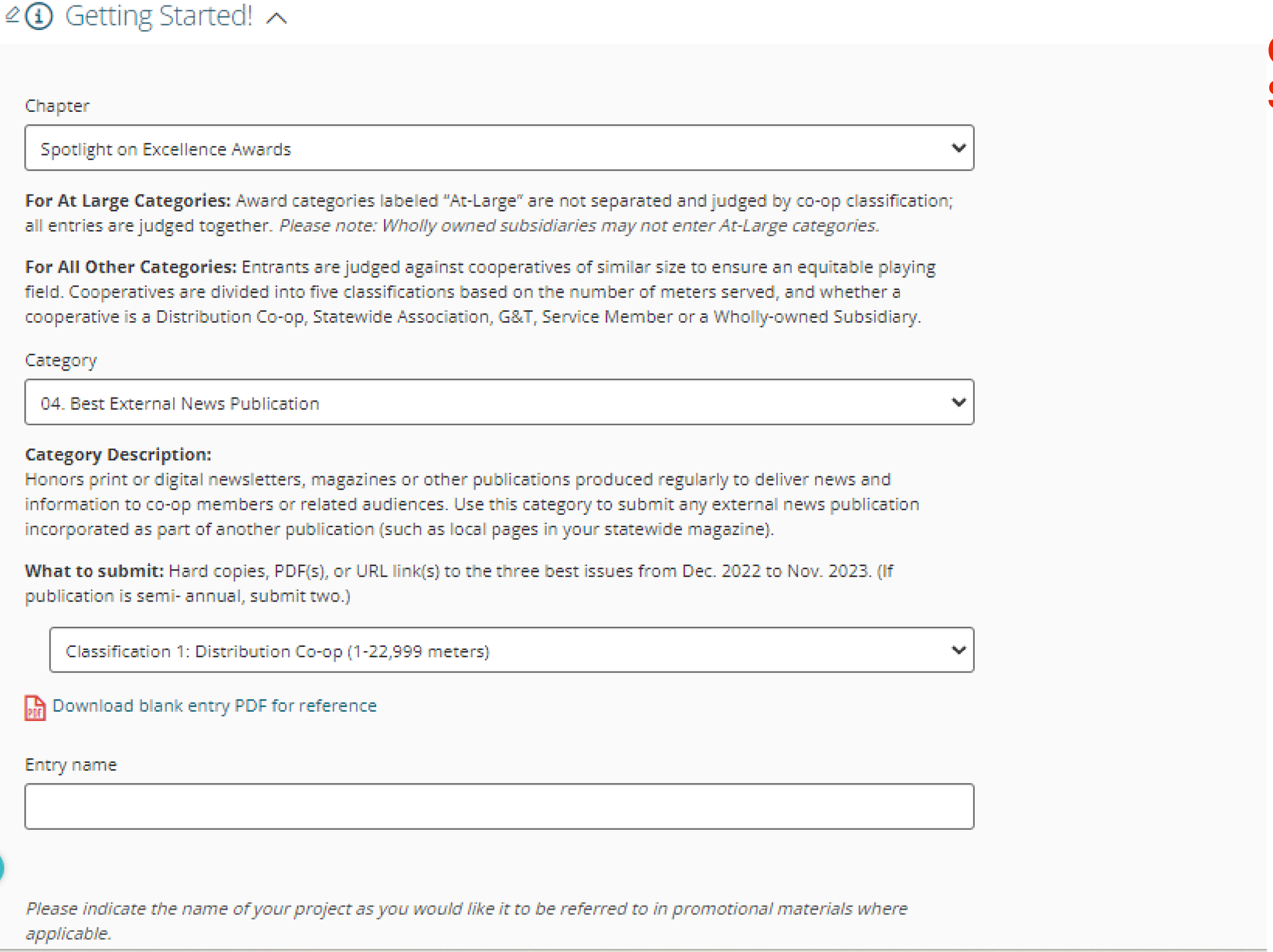
Need help?

Getting Started!

Chapter

Spotlight on Excellence Awards (entry round closed)

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE



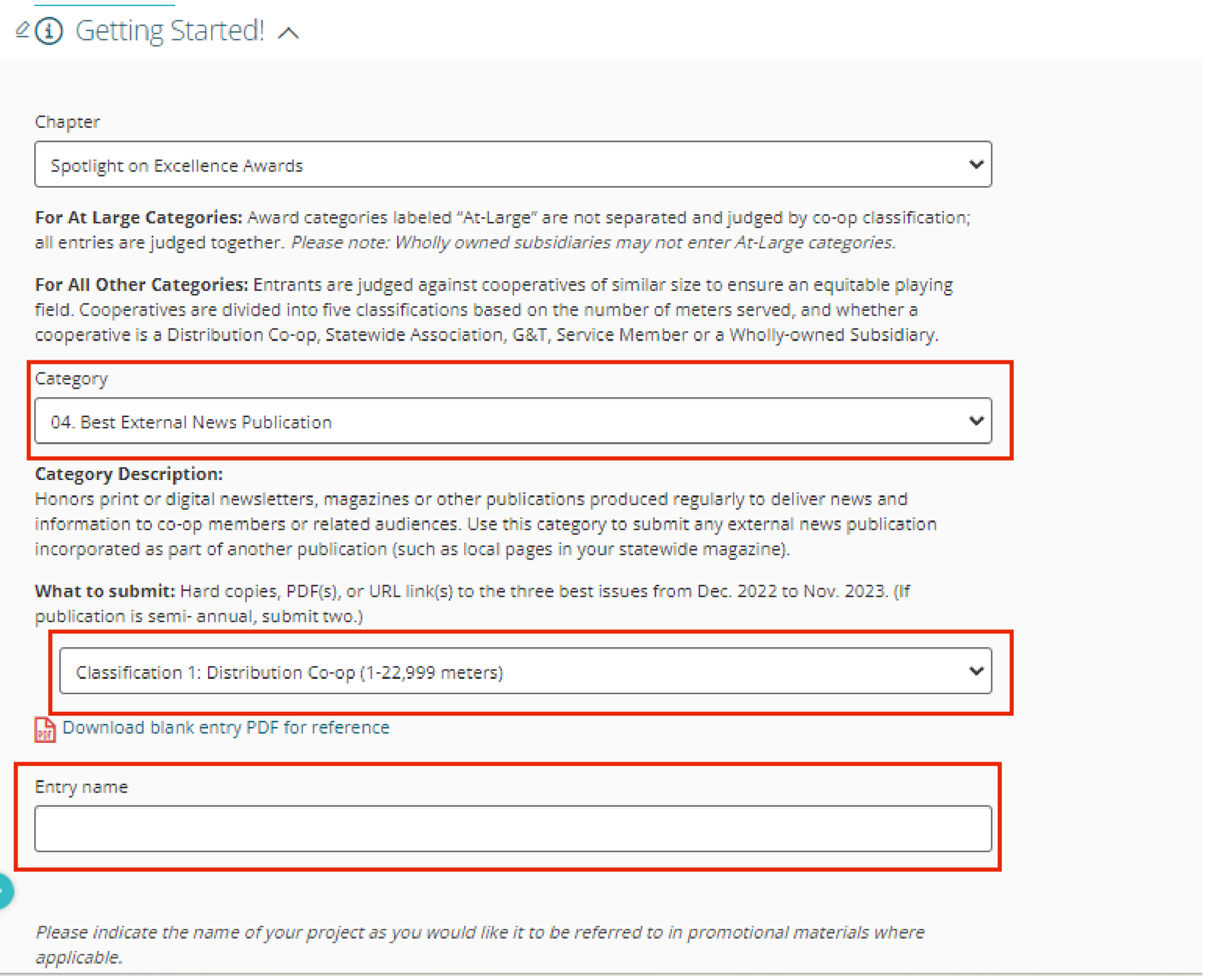
CCA MEMBERS – MAKE SURE TO SELECT SPOTLIGHT!

START HERE!

The first page of your application will prompt you to provide:

- ***Chapter*** – Spotlight on Excellence Awards
- ***Category*** – Your submission category
- ***Cooperative Classification*** (where applicable)
- ***Entry name***

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE



START HERE!

The first page of your application will prompt you to provide:

- ***Chapter*** – Spotlight on Excellence Awards
- ***Category*** – Your submission category
- ***Cooperative Classification*** (where applicable)
- ***Entry name***

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

Category Description:
Honors print or digital newsletters, magazines or other publications produced regularly to deliver news and information to co-op members or related audiences. Use this category to submit any external news publication incorporated as part of another publication (such as local pages in your statewide magazine).

What to submit: Hard copies, PDF(s), or URL link(s) to the three best issues from Dec. 2022 to Nov. 2023. (If publication is semi- annual, submit two.)

Classification 1: Distribution Co-op (1-22,999 meters)

Download blank entry PDF for reference

Entry name

Spotlight Entry

Please indicate the name of your project as you would like it to be referred to in promotional materials where applicable.

Save + next | Save + close | Preview | Submit entry

SAVE + NEXT

SAVE + CLOSE

PREVIEW

SUBMIT ENTRY

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

SPOTLIGHT ENTRANT INFORMATION

Entrant Information

Entrant's Name

Entrant's Cooperative

Phone

+1

Please use this field to submit the best phone number to reach you during normal business hours.

PLEASE NOTE: This information will not be shared or distributed and will ONLY be used to contact you in the event of an issue with your submission.

Work Email

Please use this field to submit the best phone number to reach you during normal business hours.

PLEASE NOTE: This information will not be shared or distributed and will ONLY be used to contact you in the event of an issue with your submission.

Preferred Method of Communication

- [ ] Phone
- [ ] Work Email

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

Cooperative Information

Official Name of Cooperative

PLEASE NOTE: It is important you indicate the official name of the cooperative as you would like it to appear on the physical award.

Was this work completed in collaboration with an agency, consultant, or freeelancer?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

PLEASE NOTE: Consultants, agencies and freelancers are not allowed to submit entries to the awards program directly, nor are they eligible for awards in any category. Work done in conjunction with an agency, freelancer or consultant is acceptable if it meets the following criteria:

(1) The cooperative must have regular, ongoing and strategic involvement in the creative, execution and review process of a project.

(2) The entry is submitted by someone employed at the cooperative. Entries submitted by an agency, freelancer or consultant will be disqualified without a refund.

If you would like the agency or consultant name listed on the award, please indicate the official name here. (optional)

PLEASE NOTE: It is important you indicate the official name as you would like it to appear on the physical award.

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

ELIGIBIITY AND MAILING ADDRESS

☐ I can confirm that I am an employee of a Distribution Co-op, Statewide, G&T, or Wholly-owned Subsidiary.

As stated in the Spotlight on Excellence Call for Entries, an employee of the cooperative must submit all entries. Agencies, freelancers or consultants are not permitted to pay for or submit entries to the awards program directly, nor are they eligible for awards in any category.

Please use the following fields to enter the location where you would like your Spotlight on Excellence Award sent.

Mailing Address

P.O. Box addresses will not be accepted.

PLEASE NOTE: This information will not be shared or distributed and will ONLY be used for the purpose of mailing physical awards.

City

State

Zip Code

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

SPOTLIGHT ENTRY MATERIALS

4. Best External News Publication

Describe **your role, or your co-op's role,** in the work that is being submitted. 0 / 100 words

Please indicate the capacity in which you and/or the cooperative are responsible for the concept, development and creation of this work. The tasks completed by you an/or the cooperative should be highlighted.

Things to consider:

Writing Categories: Writing, storyboarding, creating support materials, sourcing, etc.
Design Categories: Illustration, graphic development, photography, layout, typestyles, etc.
Event Categories: Event support, planning, etc.
Video Production Categories: Storyboarding, filming, editing, etc.

Describe the **role of other resources or groups** in the work that is being submitted. 0 / 100 words

Please disclose whether outside sources of material were used (including templates, pre-existing web tools/apps, stock photos/music, information from outside groups such as Straight Talk or Touchstone Energy, etc.).

If an agency, freelancer or consultant was involved, please indicate what tasks they completed. (Note: Work submitted for Best News Story, Best Feature Story, Best Column or Blog Post, Best Photo, and Best Graphic Design must be the original work of a co-op employee; work by agencies, freelancers or consultants are not permitted in these categories.)

If no outside groups or resources were used please indicate "Not Applicable" or "NA".

Provide the **names of others** involved in the work that is being submitted. 0 / 100 words

Include the names of team members, other co-ops, outside organizations, and (if applicable) freelancers, consultants or agencies involved in completion of this work. (Note: Work submitted for Best News Story, Best Feature Story, Best Column or Blog Post, Best Photo, and Best Graphic Design must be the original work of a co-op employee; work by agencies, freelancers or consultants are not permitted in these categories.)

If no others were involved please indicate "Not Applicable" or "NA".

Describe the **use of Aritificial Intelligence**, if any, including tools used, to assist in the work that is being submitted. 0 / 100 words

Please indicate if AI was used in development of the entered work. Entered work utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist with planning or ideation are permitted; however, the work may not be a complete creation of AI.

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

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Please indicate if AI was used in development of the entered work. Entered work utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist with planning or ideation are permitted; however, the work may not be a complete creation of AI.

Pay attention to word limits and helpful tips next to each question.

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

Information About Attachments

On this tab, please include any attachments or active links for your Spotlight on Excellence Award entry.

Where possible, consolidate all assets into a single PDF and **do not include more than four separate attachments** with your entry.

Please refer to the formatting guide and other helpful resources found on cooperative.com/spotlight for information about what to submit for each category.

Drag your files here
or

Select attachments

Add link or video

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

WRITING ENTRIES	What to Submit	Hard Copy Required?	Other Notes
4. Best External News Publication	Hard copies, PDF(s) or URL link(s) to up to three of the best issues from Dec. 2023 to Nov. 2024.	No, not required.	While not required, you are welcome to send any hard copy/supporting materials if you feel it will benefit your entry. **PLEASE NOTE** – If publication is semi-annual, submit BOTH issues.
5. Best Internal News Publication	Hard copies, PDF(s) or URL link(s) for up to three best issues from Dec. 2023 to Nov. 2024.	No, not required.	While not required, you are welcome to send any hard copy/supporting materials i you feel it will benefit your entry. **PLEASE NOTE** – If publication is semi-annual, submit BOTH issues.
6a. Best Special Publication – Small (1 to 8 pages)	PDF(s), JPG(s), or URL link(s) to a sample.	**Hard copies are required if the original publication was produced via print format.** • If submitting a hard copy entry, two hard copy samples of the publication will be required. • Hard copy samples must be mailed to the Awards Administrator at the address listed on Call for Entries and postmarked no later than Dec. 5th, 2024.	If your submission was only produced via digital format, please indicate this in your entry form. For exclusively digital publications, no hard copy materials are required.

FORMATTING GUIDANCE

- ***What to submit***
- ***Hard copy requirements***
- ***Helpful notes and tips for each category***

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

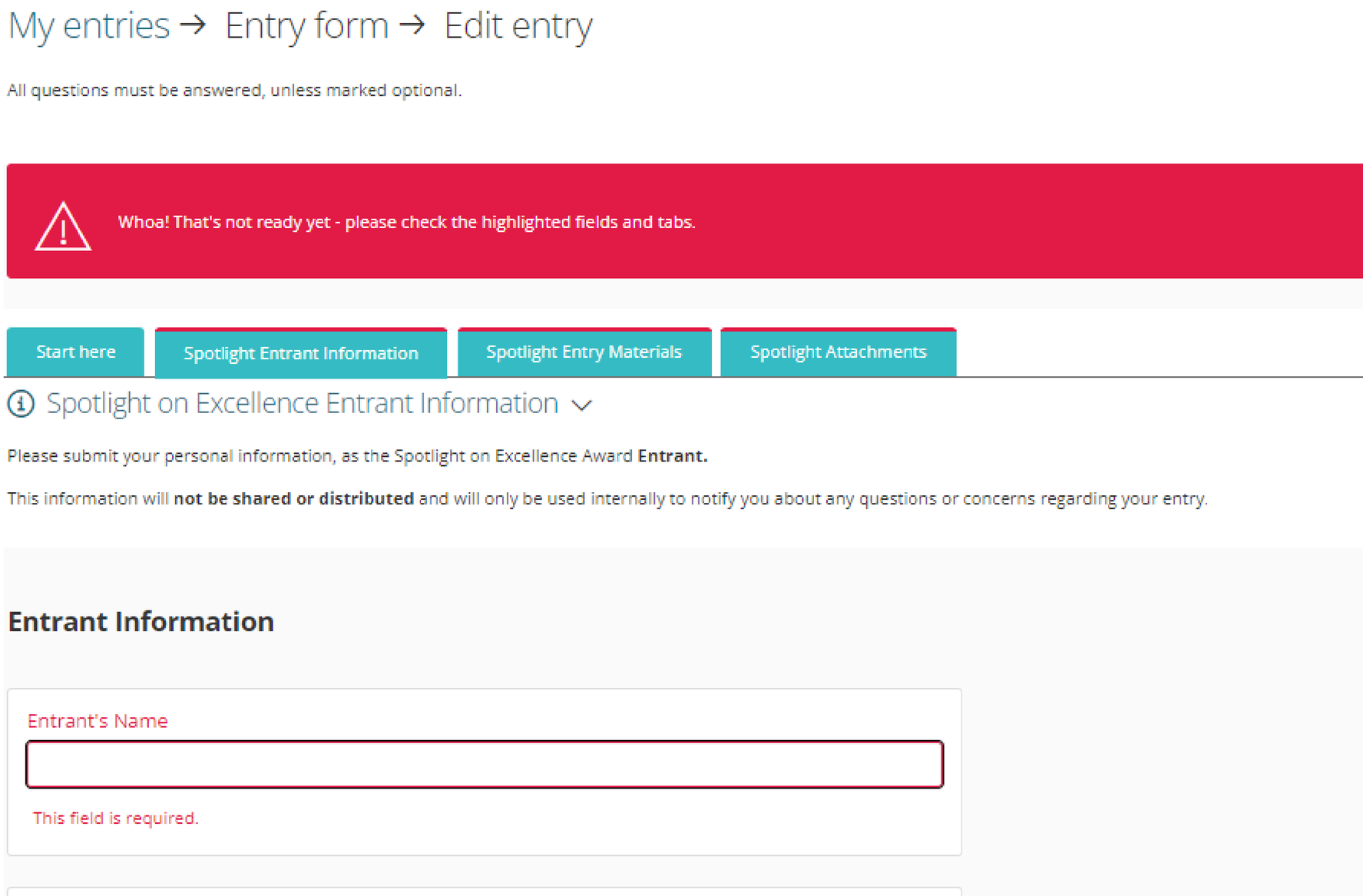
You can find a full entry form example with all questions and helpful tips as they are listed in Award Force via the Spotlight Webpage under ‘Helpful Resources’

Helpful Resources

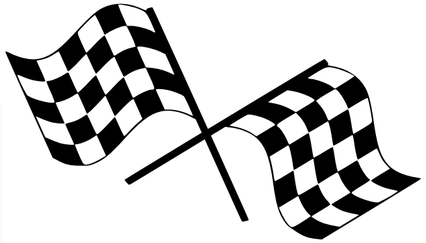
- Call for entries detailing the award entry and judging process
- Call for entries quick start guide (New for 2025)
- Sample entry forms

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

Note: *Award Force will not allow you to submit your entry without all required fields. You will be prompted to correct any missing or incomplete sections before submitting your entry.*



04. SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY!



Thanks for submitting your entry!

You are able to return to Award Force and edit your entries up to the call for entries deadline.

Early Bird Deadline - 11:59 PM EST on October 31st, 2024
Standard Deadline - 11:59 PM EST on December 5th, 2024

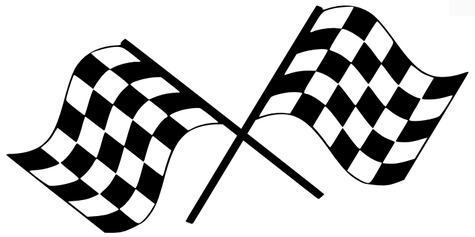
We'll keep you informed of the progress of your entry via email notifications.

If you have any questions on the status of your entry, please reach out to spotlightonexcellence@nreca.coop.

Thanks for your interest and best of luck!

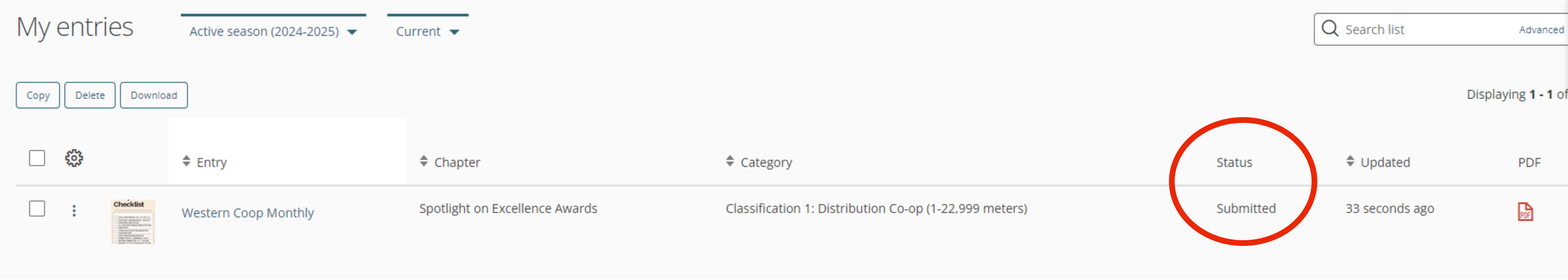
Share

Return to my entries



04. SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY!

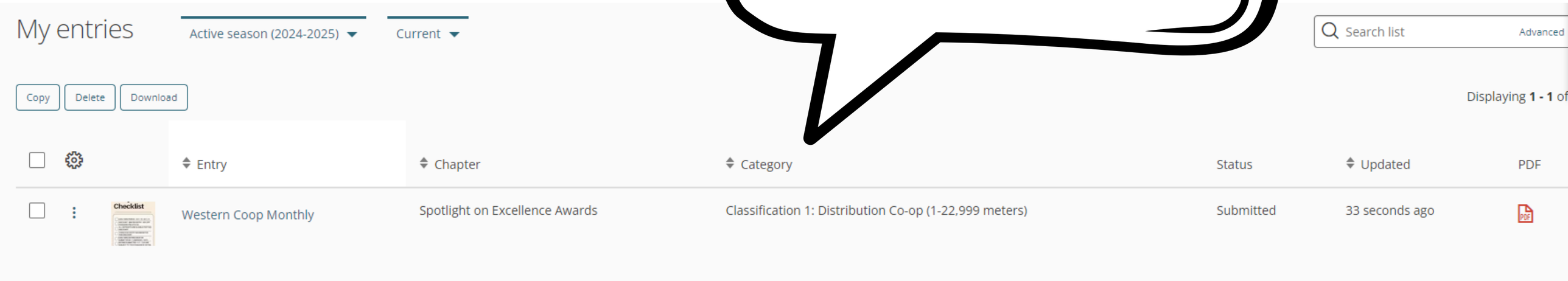
CONFIRMING YOUR SUBMISSION STATUS



You will also recieve a confirmation email from Award Force

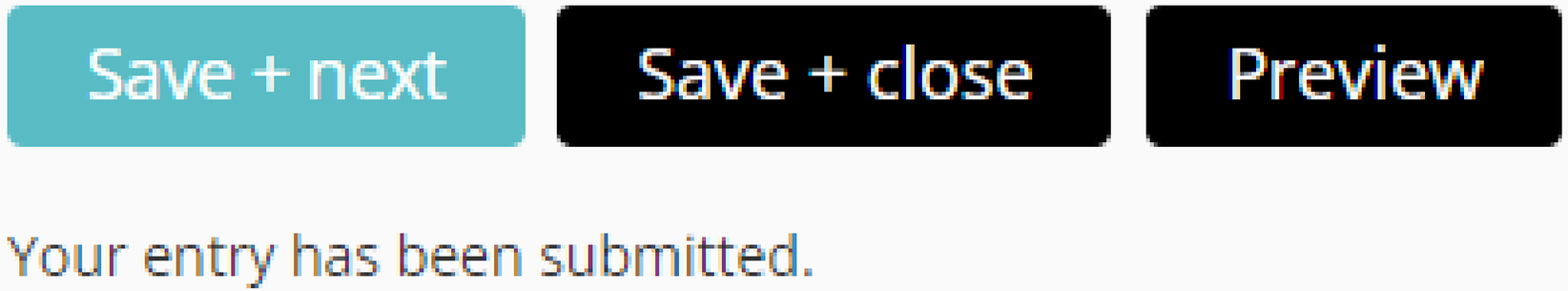
04. SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY!

UH-OH,
I NEED TO MAKE A CHANGE!



SIMPLY CLICK ON THE ENTRY NAME

03. COMPLETE ENTRY ON AWARD FORCE

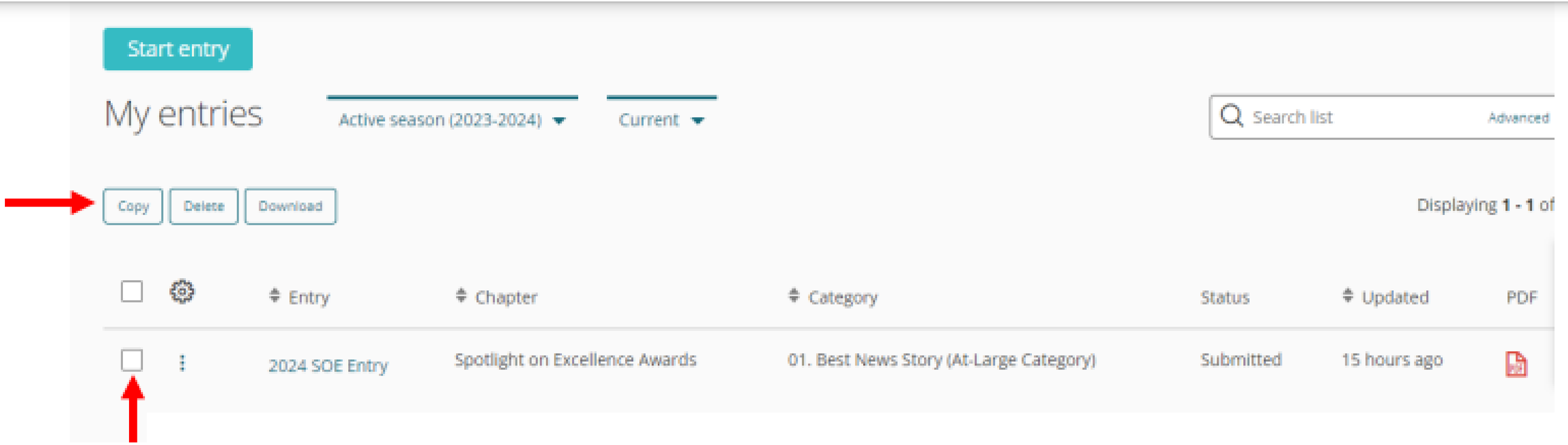


MAKE YOUR EDITS AND BE SURE TO CLICK SAVE + CLOSE

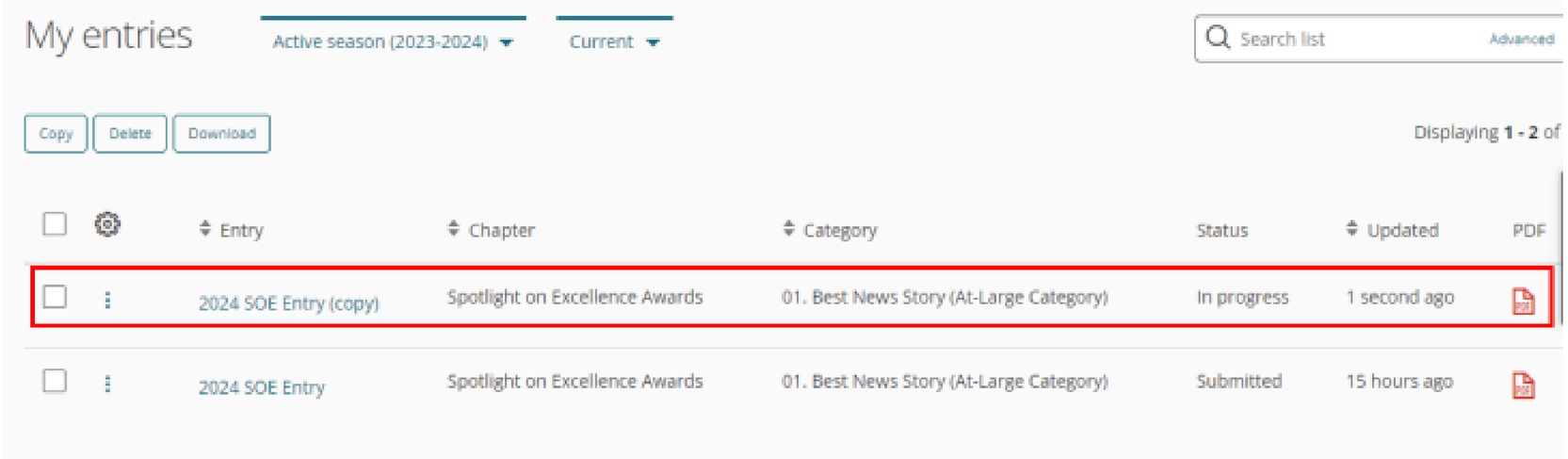
04. SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY!

SUBMITTING MULTIPLE ENTRIES?

YOU CAN SAVE YOURSELF SOME TIME BY COPYING YOUR ENTRY FORM. (THIS IS ESPECIALLY USEFUL FOR THE ENTRANT INFORMATION TAB!)



04. SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY!



ONCE YOU COPY THE ENTRY, AWARD FORCE WILL POPULATE A SECOND ENTRY WITH THE SAME ENTRY TITLE WITH '(COPY)' AFFIXED AT THE END.

QUESTIONS DURING THE ENTRY PROCESS?

EMAIL: SPOTLIGHTONEXCELLENCE@NRECA.COOP

VISIT SPOTLIGHT WEBPAGE:
COOPERATIVE.COM/SPOTLIGHT

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

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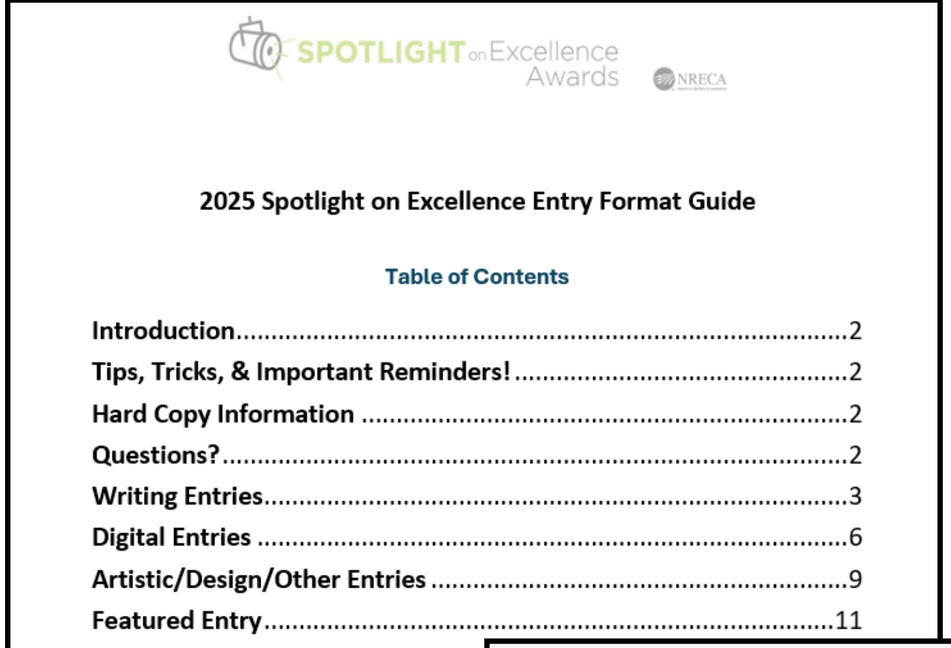
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HELPFUL RESOURCES

1. Call for Entries & Quick Start Guide
2. Sample entry form
3. Scoring criteria and judging rubric
4. Formatting guide
5. FAQ
6. Spotlight Library of Leading Practices

Email: spotlightonexcellence@nreca.coop



SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards NRECA

2025 Spotlight on Excellence Entry Format Guide

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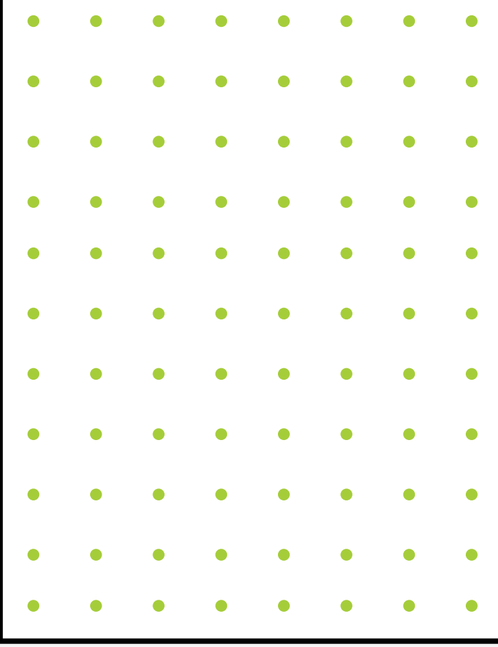
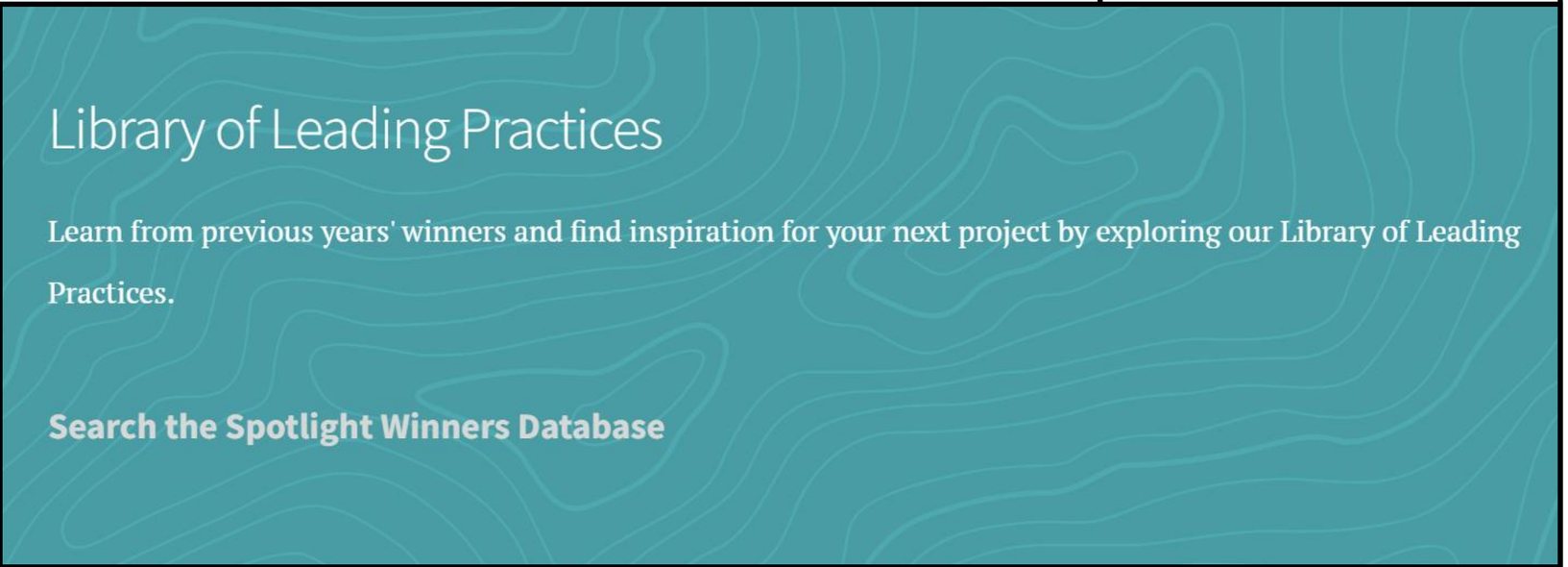
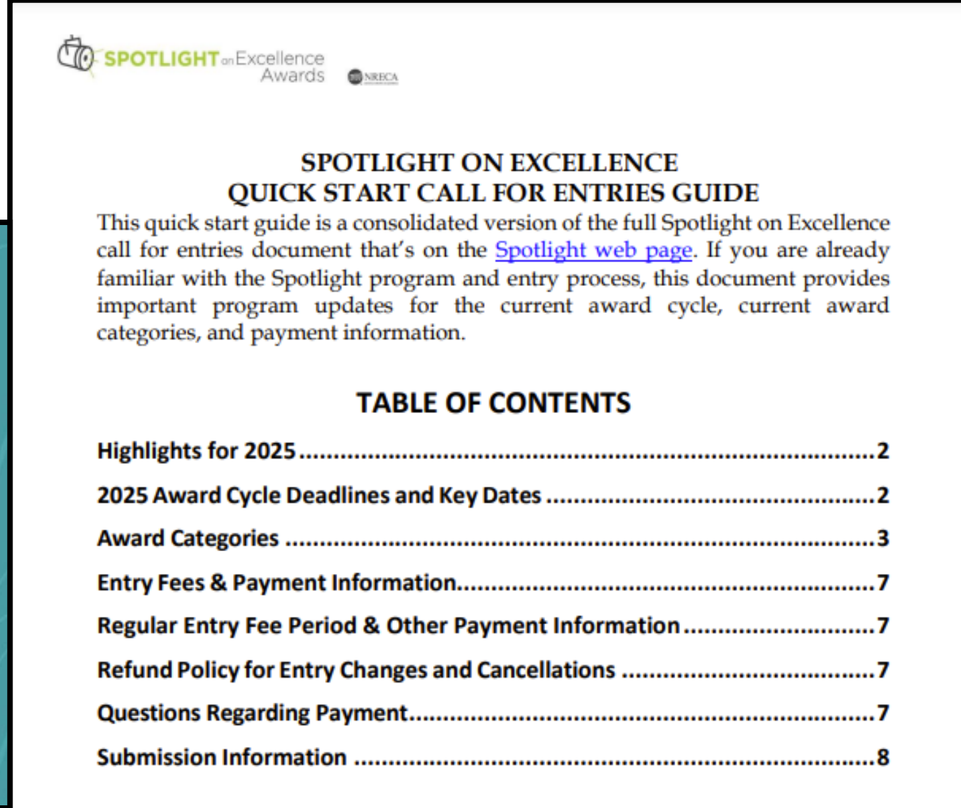




Library of Leading Practices

Learn from previous years' winners and find inspiration for your next project by exploring our Library of Leading Practices.

Search the Spotlight Winners Database



SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards NRECA

SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE
QUICK START CALL FOR ENTRIES GUIDE

This quick start guide is a consolidated version of the full Spotlight on Excellence call for entries document that's on the Spotlight web page. If you are already familiar with the Spotlight program and entry process, this document provides important program updates for the current award cycle, current award categories, and payment information.

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SPOTLIGHT TIMELINE

01. CALL FOR ENTRIES PERIOD

EARLY BIRD - Oct. 10 - Oct. 31
STANDARD - Nov. 1 - Dec. 5

02. WINNERS NOTIFIED

Email notification sent informing submitters of entry status- Week of Feb. 24, 2025

03. AWARD RECOGNITION – CONNECT CONFERENCE

Winners recognized at General Session, Spotlight Celebration & Spotlight Cafe - May 13-15

04. WINNING ENTRIES ADDED TO SPOTLIGHT LIBRARY

Winning entries posted in Spotlight Library of Leading Practices - May 13

05. ACCESS TO JUDGES' FEEDBACK

Email notification that feedback is available in Award Force platform - Following Connect Conference

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

QUESTIONS?

TYPE YOUR Q IN THE CHAT!

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

REACH OUT

SPOTLIGHT on Excellence Awards

TALIA HAMM
Spotlight Administrator
spotlightonexcellence@nreca.coop

ANNE PRINCE
Senior Communications Manager
NRECA
anne.prince@nreca.coop