



National Association for Interpretation Awards

Categories and Criteria

NAI members may submit nominations in any award categories aside from the President's Award, however, they are limited to one nomination within each category. Awards Committee members and NAI staff are ineligible to submit nomination materials.

The Committee will accept the nomination for the category for which it was written and will not accept any nomination that gives the impression of uncertainty toward a category. The Committee will not move or change nominations because of any 'better fit' or to fill another category.

As a nominator, keep in mind that the awards reviewers are relying on the information you provide to choose the most deserving recipient for the award. Please address each nomination guideline and make sure your nominee meets the award criteria and requirements. Clarity, specificity, and brevity are most important.

Letters or videos of support serve the purpose of supporting the nomination qualifications. Videos will not be evaluated based on production quality and should be no longer than three (3) minutes. Letters will not be evaluated based on grammar, spelling, or formatting, must be submitted in English (can be translated from another language), and can be one paragraph (250 words approximately) to one single page in length. Letters/videos of support will be considered during the review process as supporting and enhancing the submission, not in place of submission content or missing information.

Details regarding the vetting and scoring process are in the Awards Committee Manual.

Submit nominations using this [form](#).

All awardees will be requested to complete a [Media Consent and Release Form](#).

Please contact awards@nai-us.org with any questions.

Award Categories.....	3
President’s Award.....	3
Excellence.....	3
Fellow.....	3
Voices of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity in Interpretation.....	4
Meritorious Service.....	6
Distinguished.....	9
Distinguished Interpretive Manager.....	9
Distinguished Front-line Interpreter.....	9
Outstanding.....	11
Outstanding Innovation in Interpretive Programs.....	11
Outstanding New Interpreter.....	12
Outstanding Part-time/Seasonal Interpreter.....	12
Outstanding Volunteer Interpreter.....	13
Board Honors.....	15
Honor for Interpretive Support.....	15
Honor of Special Recognition.....	15

Award Categories

President's Award

This award is given at the discretion of the NAI President to up to one recipient per year. The Committee does not review or score for this award, however, the Committee must receive the nomination from the NAI President by the end of June.

Because the NAI President is the only person who can nominate this award, it is not listed on the annual award announcement. There are no established criteria associated with this award.

President's Award nominees and recipients do not need to be an NAI member.

The President's Award may be conferred posthumously.

The President's Award has the following set of special features:

- It is not listed on the Awards call for nominations because it is given at the discretion of the NAI President and may not be awarded each year.
- It need not go through the award committee scoring process.
- It still needs to be vetted for any ethical or membership issues.

Excellence

Excellence Awards highlight those who have consistently advanced the field and those who are striving to innovate and forge new paths in interpretation while embodying [NAI's values and actions](#).

Fellow

Our highest honor for an individual member with a demonstrated impeccable character and a distinguished record of honorable service to the field and association throughout their career. The nominee must be strongly committed to interpretation and the interpretive profession and actively involved in furthering both. Nominees are expected to meet commonly held standards of professional ethics and integrity.

The nominee must have made significant contributions to the interpretive profession, such as through leadership, training, mentoring, presentations, writing, front-line interpretation, management, research, and/or other measurable achievements. Nominees exemplify and apply the evolving principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity (JEDAI) throughout their work.

This award may be conferred posthumously.

NAI Membership Requirement

Nominator and nominee must be a member in good standing

Number of Awards Each Year

Up to One

Submission Requirements

- An essay (maximum of 1500 words) that explains how the nominee exemplifies the purpose of the Award and addresses how the nominee demonstrates impeccable character and honorable service to the field and association and how the nominee demonstrates commitment to actively furthering the interpretive profession and interpretation. List with brief descriptions the nominee's significant contributions to the interpretive profession. Explain why you believe the nominee should receive the award by responding to the specific criteria outlined in the nomination guidelines. This essay should provide specific examples so that it is clear to the selection committee.
- Provide tangible examples of how the nominee works towards supporting the [NAI Strategic Plan](#). Examples should include work or practices in training, mentoring, research, writing, front-line interpretation, and management.
- Three letters/videos of support from sources separate from the primary author of the nomination materials.
- While not required, nominators can choose to submit additional documentation. This can include materials that you feel help support the nominee's achievements, such as previous awards or recognition, articles, etc. You may also include a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé of no more than four pages, highlighting the nominee's relevant accomplishments, if available.

Voices of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity in Interpretation

The overall objective of NAI's diversity effort is to create a culturally progressive and socially reflective organization that represents, supports, and celebrates diversity of identities and experiences at all levels, one that is unashamed about its promotion of diversity and inclusivity and always cognizant of privilege.

We aspire to develop, promote, and sustain an organizational culture that values, nurtures, and leverages diversity and inclusiveness in all that we do. In addition, NAI is committed to respecting and highlighting the richness of our diverse membership so that every member has an equal opportunity to contribute in significant ways to create a strong culture where we can all learn, grow, and be successful.

Merriam-Webster defines “voice” as a “wish, choice, or opinion openly or formally expressed” or a “right of expression; also: influential power”. In many of our cultures, one’s “voice” is where people find their strength, their truth, and their connection to others. Our voices are the ways we share, express, and advocate. Interpreters are the keepers, tellers, and facilitators of stories for our natural, cultural, and historical resources. This award recognizes those who use their voice to make their organization, our Association, and our profession a more just, equitable, diverse, accessible, and inclusive space.

We acknowledge that all forms of oppression are linked, therefore it is important in discussing the ways that we are empowering, engaging, and advocating for people from multiple historically marginalized and oppressed populations. We understand that these efforts come in many forms: individuals, groups and communities, and activities. This award seeks to recognize voices of justice, equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity no matter the form.

With acknowledgement that justice, equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity (JEDAI) work is necessarily ongoing and iterative, this recognition highlights and recognizes important and influential work that is transforming and making a difference in our profession, both internally through culture, programs, and policies, and externally through engagement with audiences and communities.

The work of awardees serves as learning opportunities and inspiration to others in the field. Consideration is given equally to those individuals and organizations who may not define their efforts as specifically JEDAI, but whose commitment to these values is evident in the outcomes and results of their work. Awardees will successfully demonstrate that they have implemented significant changes through strategies that have ripple effects and serve as catalysts for change.

Recognition may be given for:

- **Individuals** who have served as a catalyst for change in the areas of justice, equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity in their workplace, community, and/or the interpretation field
- Single **programs/initiatives** in any area of an organization’s structure (administration, collections management, community engagement, curation, development, exhibitions, educational programming, human resources, public relations, registration, etc.) that advance justice, equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity
- **Organizations** that demonstrate sustained and measurable support for advancing justice, equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity across all areas of their structure, internally and externally

Programs/initiatives designed as one-time or special events for single implementation will not be considered. Programs/initiatives must be active at the time of submission to be eligible.

NAI Membership Requirement

Nominator and nominee (if an individual) must be a member in good standing

Nominated organizations must be an institutional member in good standing

Number of Awards Each Year

Up to Two

Nomination Instructions

Each nomination should include:

- An essay (maximum of 1500 words) that explains how the nominee exemplifies the purpose of the Award and addresses the ways that the sustained impact of that work has been felt by others. This essay should provide specific examples so that it is clear to the selection committee how the nominee was effective in supporting multiple marginalized populations. The author of the essay will serve as the primary nominator for this award.
- A statement of the history of the nominee. For individuals, this might be a resume or CV. For programs/initiatives or organizations, this might be explaining the purpose and history of this program/initiative/organization that includes its founding, current status, and dates in between.
- Three letters/videos of support from a source separate from the primary author of the essay.
- While not required, nominators can choose to submit additional documentation. This might include statements of support from students or other community members, artifacts that demonstrate work or impact, pre-planning process, research that supports the need, metrics and assessments, event programs or agendas, or other relevant documents at the discretion of the nominator.

Meritorious Service to NAI

Presented to NAI members who have performed extensive and invaluable service to NAI, especially on the national level. Eligible nominees have exemplified and applied the evolving principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity (JEDAI) throughout their work. This award provides a stimulus for continued service to our profession, where service is defined as work done or

duties performed primarily with the intent of benefiting or giving assistance to the profession without need for personal gain.

The individual's service must:

- Be of a nature that promotes the profession.
- Have widespread and general effects, rather than being limited in scope.
- Be concerned with the interpretation profession, including involvement in front-line interpretation or management.
- Relate to the areas of interest of one or more NAI committees and/or communities (regions and/or sections).

The Meritorious Service Award has the following unique features:

- While the Professional Awards Committee may grant up to one Meritorious Service Award each year, the NAI Board of Directors may grant one more Meritorious Service Award at their discretion.
- Like the President's Award, the NAI Board of Directors needs to let the Awards Committee know that they are submitting this award by the end of June.

NAI Membership Requirement

Nominator and nominee must be a member in good standing

Number of Awards Each Year

Up to One

Nomination Instructions

Each nomination should include:

- An essay (maximum of 1200 words) that explains how the nominee exemplifies the purpose of the Award and addresses the nominee's relevant service to the field of interpretation and NAI and how they are of lasting importance. Explain why you believe the nominee should receive the award by responding to the specific criteria outlined in the nomination guidelines. This essay should provide specific examples so that it is clear to the selection committee.
- Provide tangible examples of how the nominee works towards supporting the [NAI Strategic Plan](#).
- Three letters/videos of support from sources separate from the primary author of the nomination materials.
- While not required, nominators can choose to submit additional documentation. This can include materials that you feel help support the nominee's achievements, such as previous NAI awards or recognition,

articles, etc. You may also include a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé of no more than four pages, highlighting the nominee's relevant accomplishments, if available.

Distinguished

Distinguished Awards recognize individuals who demonstrate high standards and excellence in interpretation and a respected ability to pass these skills on to others, thereby affecting positive change within the profession while also demonstrating JEDAI (justice, equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity) values and actions.

Distinguished Interpretive Manager

The Distinguished Interpretive Manager Award recognizes an individual who has worked for five or more years in the profession and whose current duties are primarily supervisory and administrative. Eligible nominees demonstrate a proficiency of interpretive techniques, site management, program management, and/or staff management, and an ability to pass these skills on to others. Distinguished Interpretive Managers demonstrate and apply the evolving principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity (JEDAI) throughout their work.

NAI Membership Requirement

Nominator and nominee must be a member in good standing

Number of Awards Each Year

Up to One

Submission Requirements

- An essay (maximum of 800 words) that explains how the nominee exemplifies the purpose of the Award and describes the nominee's involvement in interpretation and in management, indicating interpretive technique, innovative programs, mentoring experience, creative approaches to making interpretive services available to the public, facility or program development, and management techniques. Explain why you believe the nominee should receive the award by responding to the specific criteria outlined in the nomination guidelines. This essay should provide specific examples so that it is clear to the selection committee.
- Provide tangible examples of how the nominee works towards supporting the [NAI Strategic Plan](#). Examples should include management techniques and practices and any relevant projects, programs, and/or initiatives.
- Three letters/videos of support from sources separate from the primary author of the nomination materials.

Distinguished Front-line Interpreter

The Distinguished Front-line Interpreter Award recognizes an individual who has worked for five or more years in the profession and whose current duties are at least 60 percent front-line interpretation. Eligible nominees demonstrate a mastery of interpretive techniques, program development, and design of creative projects, and serve as a model to others in the field. Distinguished Front-line Interpreters demonstrate and apply the evolving principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity (JEDAI) throughout their work.

NAI Membership Requirement

Nominator and nominee must be a member in good standing

Number of Awards Each Year

Up to One

Submission Requirements

- An essay (maximum of 800 words) that explains how the nominee exemplifies the purpose of the Award and describes the nominee's involvement and achievements in front-line interpretation, key projects or programs developed by the nominee, and how the nominee serves as a model to others. Explain why you believe the nominee should receive the award by responding to the specific criteria outlined in the nomination guidelines. This essay should provide specific examples so that it is clear to the selection committee.
- Provide tangible examples of how the nominee works towards supporting the [NAI Strategic Plan](#). Examples should include interpretive techniques, program development, and design of creative projects.
- Three letters/videos of support from sources separate from the primary author of the nomination materials.

Outstanding

These awards recognize outstanding contributions to the field of interpretation through creatively advancing the foundations of interpretation and demonstrating JEDAI (justice, equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusivity) values and actions.

Outstanding Innovation in Interpretive Programs

The Outstanding Innovation in Interpretive Programs Award recognizes innovative personal interpretation programs. These programs are facilitated by a live interpreter that allows audience interaction in real time and can include, but is not limited to, face-to-face interpretation, live-streamed programs, webinars, prop talks, evening programs, costumed interpretation, theatrical programs, guided hikes, historical reenactments, etc.

These programs demonstrate and apply the evolving principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity (JEDAI) throughout their work.

Recognition may be given for:

- **Individuals** who have demonstrated innovative techniques and approaches to designing and delivering interpretive programs
- Single **programs/initiatives** in any interpretive area
- **Organizations** that demonstrate sustained and measurable support for innovation in interpretive programs across all areas of their structure, internally and externally

NAI Membership Requirement

Nominator and individual nominees must be a member in good standing
Nominated organizations must be an institutional member in good standing

Number of Awards Each Year

Up to Two

Submission Requirements

- One nominee (individual, program/initiative, or organization) per entry; not a compendium or collection.
- Submission materials can include good-quality video, images, scripts, and/or outlines. Upload videos onto a video sharing platform such as YouTube or Vimeo. Please ensure the viewing permission is open (i.e., does not require a password) and does not exceed 1 hour in length. Videos should include the introduction, body, and conclusion of your program. It is helpful if the video also captures some of the audience's response. For live virtual programming on platforms such as Facebook, please provide a link to the video on the original platform.

- Provide tangible examples of how the nominee works towards supporting the [NAI Strategic Plan](#). Examples should include interpretive programs and/or initiatives.
- Support:
 - For an individual or organization, three letters/videos of support from sources separate from the primary author of the nomination materials.
 - For programs/initiatives, include evaluation data.

Outstanding New Interpreter

The Outstanding New Interpreter Award recognizes an individual who, at the time of nomination, has worked less than five years in the profession and who demonstrates a recognized potential in interpretation, leadership skills, creativity in programming development or projects, and a commitment to the profession and NAI. Outstanding New Interpreters demonstrate and apply the evolving principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity (JEDAI) throughout their work.

NAI Membership Requirement

Nominator and nominee must be a member in good standing

Number of Awards Each Year

Up to One

Submission Requirements

- An essay (maximum of 800 words) that explains how the nominee exemplifies the purpose of the Award and describes the nominee’s involvement in front-line interpretation, leadership skills or potential, and outstanding examples of projects or programs the nominee developed. Explain why you believe the nominee should receive the award by responding to the specific criteria outlined in the nomination guidelines. This essay should provide specific examples so that it is clear to the selection committee.
- Provide tangible examples of how the nominee works towards supporting the [NAI Strategic Plan](#). Examples should include leadership skills and creativity in programming development or projects.
- Three letters/videos of support from sources separate from the primary author of the nomination materials.

Outstanding Part-time/Seasonal Interpreter

The Outstanding Part-time/Seasonal Interpreter Award recognizes an individual who does not currently work full-time in the profession, and has not previously

worked full-time in the profession. Eligible nominees demonstrate leadership skills or potential, creativity in programming development or projects, and a commitment to the profession and NAI. Outstanding Part-time or Seasonal Interpreters demonstrate and apply the evolving principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity (JEDAI) throughout their work.

NAI Membership Requirement

Nominator and nominee must be a member in good standing

Number of Awards Each Year

Up to One

Submission Requirements

- An essay (maximum of 800 words) that explains how the nominee exemplifies the purpose of the Award and describes the nominee's involvement in part-time or seasonal front-line interpretation, leadership skills or potential, and outstanding examples of projects or programs the nominee developed. Explain why you believe the nominee should receive the award by responding to the specific criteria outlined in the nomination guidelines. This essay should provide specific examples so that it is clear to the selection committee.
- Provide tangible examples of how the nominee works towards supporting the [NAI Strategic Plan](#). Examples should include leadership skills and creativity in programming development or projects.
- Three letters/videos of support from sources separate from the primary author of the nomination materials.

Outstanding Volunteer Interpreter

The Outstanding Volunteer Interpreter Award recognizes an individual who has served three or more years as a volunteer interpreter and whose current volunteer duties are in front-line interpretation or administration of an interpretive program. Eligible nominees demonstrate initiative and a dedication to the affiliated organization. Outstanding Volunteer Interpreters demonstrate and apply the evolving principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusivity (JEDAI) throughout their work.

NAI Membership Requirement

Nominator and nominee must be a member in good standing

Number of Awards Each Year

Up to One

Submission Requirements

- An essay (maximum of 800 words) that explains how the nominee exemplifies the purpose of the Award and describes the nominee's involvement as a volunteer front-line interpreter or administration of an interpretation program, demonstrated initiative, and dedication to the affiliated organization. Include the nominee's number of hours per year of volunteer service. Explain why you believe the nominee should receive the award by responding to the specific criteria outlined in the nomination guidelines. This essay should provide specific examples so that it is clear to the selection committee.
- Provide tangible examples of how the nominee works towards supporting the [NAI Strategic Plan](#).
- Three letters/videos of support from sources separate from the primary author of the nomination materials.

Board Honors

The NAI Board of Directors may choose to present Honors to individuals or organizations.

Honor for Interpretive Support

Presented to an individual member or nonmember, governing body or official, administrator, business, agency, or organization, whose major focus may or may not be interpretation, but has shown recognition of the value of interpretation through exceptional and sustained support.

This support may be broad-based financial, administrative, or executive (or a combination of these), and serves as a respected model for other interpretive venues and contributors. Recognition may be for, but is not limited to, sponsorship or support for interpretive programs and enhancement of interpretive facilities.

Honor of Special Recognition

Presented to members or nonmembers, individuals, NAI Communities, agencies, or organizations in special recognition.

These honors may be in the form of certificates of appreciation, memberships for nonmembers, or other recognition.