

Lessons from the IAEM Ministry of Recognition

By Cullen Case, CEM, Senior Manager, Emergency Preparedness, National Marrow Donor Program; Program Manager, Radiation Injury Treatment Network, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Rocky Lopes, Chair, IAEM-Global Awards and Recognition Work Group and Chair, IAEM-USA Awards and Recognition Committee; Manager, Outreach and Education, Integrated Systems Solutions, Inc.

IAEM Award Entry Period Is Open

The IAEM Awards and Recognition Committee is pleased to announce that the annual Call for Entries for the IAEM-USA and IAEM-Global Awards **opens on Apr. 1, 2013** – a full two-and-a-half months earlier than ever before! Find entry guidelines and information at www.iaem.com/Awards. The deadline for entries is **Friday, May 31, 2013, 5:00 p.m. Eastern time** – enter today!

Five Ways to Improve Your Award Entry

IAEM Awards Judges have the best job of all members in all IAEM committees. We get to see the details of what all of you are doing to innovate and move our profession forward. We are truly lucky to have the opportunity to review award submissions. We have noticed some recurring themes that we thought we could tell you about to help you submit an entry that is compelling and competitive.

■ **Content.** Since content is weighted at 50% for most of the awards, take time to describe thoroughly yet concisely what made your project successful. Apply your Incident Command knowledge by using common language, and do not try to impress the judges by using flowery phrases, acronyms or buzzwords. Explain the project/program just as though you were telling your neighbor about it, assuming your neighbor is not an emergency manager. Also, we are reviewing dozens of award entries, so get to the point.

■ **Above-and-Beyondness.** Describe how this project is above-and-beyond what you ordinarily do. Could a judge dismiss your entry by noting that your agency should be doing this type of thing anyway? Describe how what you did is so innovative that everyone will want to adopt it as their own. If your project is about disaster awareness or a response exercise, then tell us how your project

is special and describe its unique qualities. Remember, we are comparing it with some other really amazing submissions.

■ **Third Party Review.** Does your entry form make sense and avoid assumptions? Is it free of spelling and grammar errors, and within specified word count limits? Have someone not involved with the project read your final submission. Whether it is your neighbor, your significant other, your kid's fifth grade teacher, or the barista you see every morning, have someone read your submission for clarity, spelling, grammar – and, oh yes...clarity. We don't all know what your local/regional collaborative response group, ABEPS, is. The name isn't as important as what it does related to the submission. Some of us crusty old judges don't have the latest iPad apps or Facebook, and if you assume we do in your submission, some important information may not be seen by us.

■ **Describe/Promote Replicability.** One of the main purposes of giving recognition through awards is to promote and spread good ideas and model practices. The judges value programs or projects that can be adapted and used elsewhere. Sometimes what is submitted is not transferable, because it cost \$400,000, required a rocket engine, was funded through a one-time grant, or required something else inaccessible to most. While we understand copyright protections, we look for statements that programs may be used by others with permission but at no charge.

Speaking of replicability, though, please avoid submitting the same project for an award year after year. Despite the aging memories of the judges, we usually remember when the same project is submitted, and we notice when the same project is entered in more than one award category.

■ **Ensure that the Entry Is Complete.** Never assume that we will be able to look at your website, view your Facebook page, or find your

project on the Internet. Sometimes the *Grand Forces of the Internet* conspire to thwart judges from accessing your link. Keep the links in the submission in case we can see them, but submit a screen shot or a PDF of everything you want the judges to see. If we can evade the anti-Internet security protocols installed by our IT overlords to look at the website, we will.

Conclusion

Be encouraged! Learn from the experience of IAEM Awards Judges to write an entry that will command our attention and cause us to want to recognize your quality work.

Remember, you can't win if you don't enter! Just like the old joke where someone asks in prayer, "Why won't you let me win the lottery?" The reply was, "You have to buy a ticket first!" Award entries are the same. It's free for IAEM members; \$75 for non-members. **Submit your entry before 5:00 p.m. Eastern time, on May 31, 2013.** Good luck!

Call for IAEM Award Entries & Guidelines

The IAEM 2013 Call for Awards and Awards Competition Guidelines can be downloaded from the IAEM Awards Program page at www.iaem.com/Awards.

Learn from Last Year's IAEM Award Winners

While you are visiting the IAEM Awards page at www.iaem.com/Awards, be sure to look at the entry forms and supporting documents of the 2012 winners at both the Council and Global levels.



Published
in the April
2013 IAEM
Bulletin