



2026

# Achievement Awards


MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA



# Municipal Association of SC Achievement Awards

The Achievement Awards program has three main objectives: to recognize innovative projects, to share those projects with other municipalities, and to demonstrate the value of cities and towns.

## **Judging criteria**

- Innovation
  - Efficient use of resources
  - Role in the city's overall vision
  - Effective use of partnerships
  - Quantifiable results
  - Adaptability to other hometowns
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# Population Categories

*(for municipalities with less than 20,001 population)*

Use 2020 population figures from the U.S. Census to select the appropriate category.

- **1 – 1,000 population**
- **1,001 – 5,000 population**
- **5,001 – 10,000 population**
- **10,001 – 20,000 population**

These submissions are judged on the written entry only.

# Subject Categories


*(open to all municipalities)*




- **Communications** (includes marketing, branding campaigns, websites, social media, e-newsletters, etc.)
- **Economic Development – Joseph P. Riley Jr. Award** (includes community development and land-use planning)
- **Public Safety** (includes emergency, law enforcement and fire services)
- **Public Service** (anything not covered in other subject categories)
- **Public Works** (includes infrastructure projects)

These submissions are judged on the written entry and virtual oral presentation.



## Submission Rules

1. Municipalities can compete in only one category — population or subject. Municipalities with a population of 20,001 or more can only compete in a subject category.
  2. The entry's submission must include all required information: entry application with complete responses to all questions, supporting materials (no more than four pages) and three digital photographs. *See the Written Entries section for more information.*
  3. Only substantially completed projects are eligible for submission.
  4. Each municipality can submit only one entry.
  5. Previously submitted projects that did not win may be resubmitted only one additional time. After being submitted twice, an entry is no longer eligible.
  6. Two or more municipalities can submit an entry together; however, they must enter the project in a subject category.
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7. Municipalities can submit several projects grouped under a common theme. An example of a common theme is downtown revitalization. Projects under that umbrella could include installing sidewalks and seating areas, providing incentives for businesses to remodel their exteriors, burying utility lines and organizing the merchants to promote downtown.
  8. Agreeing to the terms of agreement on the online application indicates your municipality's commitment to send the mayor or a councilmember to the Association's Annual Meeting awards presentation lunch on July 18, 2026, should the municipality win.
  9. The judges reserve the right not to name a winner in every category.
  10. Omitting an item on the application will disqualify the entry.
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## Written Entries

The written entry must provide a concise program description using the award application form found at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) (keyword: achievement award).


In addition to the application, four pages of support materials (news clippings, letters from constituents or other items that help you present your entry) are allowed.

Three digital photographs (no smaller than 3 inches by 5 inches and 300 dpi) depicting the project must be submitted for use in the Achievement Award video and publications. By submitting the photographs, you are granting the Municipal Association the right to use the photos in print and online. *Note: Printed photos and collages will not be accepted.*

All program description questions must be answered for the entry to be valid. Agreeing to the terms of agreement on the online application indicates your municipality's commitment to send the mayor or a councilmember to the Association's Annual Meeting on July 18, 2026, should the municipality win.

**All entry materials must be submitted online by February 4.**

If you are competing in a population category, judging is based entirely on your written entry.







## Oral Presentations

If you are competing in a subject category, judging is based on both the written entry and an oral presentation. The presentation must last no more than 15 minutes. Following the presentation, 10 minutes will be allotted for judges' questions.

- You may use more than one presenter. However, make sure each presenter is aware that time limits are strictly enforced. Presenters can be elected officials, municipal staff, project partners or residents. Paid consultants or vendors are not allowed to be presenters.
- Audiovisual aids, such as videos and PowerPoint presentations, are allowed during the oral presentations.


**The presentations will be February 23 and 24. Staff will assign presentation times after receiving all entries.**





## And the Winner is ...

Winners will receive statewide recognition and other benefits.

- Featured in a news release sent to local media outlets.
  - Recognized on July 18 at the Municipal Association 2026 Annual Meeting at the Hyatt Regency Greenville.
  - Given four complimentary tickets to the awards presentation lunch.
  - Featured in a video shown at the awards presentation that can be posted to the city's website, social media accounts and used during local presentations.
  - Publicized in the Municipal Association's newsletter, *Uptown*, and posted on the Association's website at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc).
  - Given the winner's trophy for one year, which is then returned to the Association for next year's awards presentation.
  - Given a plaque to keep permanently.
  - Honored during a local awards presentation, at the request of the municipality.
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## How to Enter

The fill-in-the-blank, online application provides an easy-to-use format to highlight project qualities for judging. The judges will look for projects that show innovation, efficient use of resources, effective partnerships, quantifiable results and adaptability to other hometowns.

Complete the online application at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) (keyword: achievement award). You will need to complete the application form and upload your supporting materials and photos online.

The main contact person listed on the application will receive an email confirmation from the Municipal Association. If the main contact does not receive a receipt by February 11, contact Kara Pippin at 803.354.4750 or [kpippin@masc.sc](mailto:kpippin@masc.sc).






## Submitting Your Entry

Complete your digital application by visiting [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) (keyword: achievement award).

Omitting an item will disqualify the entry.

*(Each answer must be 100 words or less.)*

1. Brief summary of project.
  2. Describe the need or challenge that prompted the project.
  3. Describe the planning process used to determine a solution or work plan to meet the challenge.
  4. What were the goals and how well did the outcome achieve the goals?
  5. How was the project funded and how were the funds used efficiently?
  6. Who did you work with to achieve the goals of the project? How did the group(s) contribute?
  7. How does this project promote the long-term success of the municipality and fit into its overall strategic plan?
  8. What are the future plans or next steps for this project?
  9. How is the approach to the project innovative?
  10. What best practices can be shared with other cities after the completion of this project?
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**Make sure you have included the following before submitting your entry by February 4:**

- Completed application form
- Completed responses to the 10 program description questions
- Supporting material (no more than four pages)
- Three digital photographs (no smaller than 3 inches by 5 inches and 300 dpi)

The main contact person will receive an email from the Municipal Association confirming the entry has been entered into our database. If the main contact does not receive a receipt by February 11, contact Kara Pippin at 803.354.4750 or [kpippin@masc.sc](mailto:kpippin@masc.sc).

## **Submission Deadline: February 4**

- Submit your application, supporting materials and photos online at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) (keyword: achievement awards).

**For more information, contact Meredith Houck at 803.933.1215 or [mhouck@masc.sc](mailto:mhouck@masc.sc).**





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