

PRSA Chicago Awards Program

How to Prepare Your Entry 2026

REQUIREMENTS AND HOW TO PREPARE YOUR SKYLINE AWARD ENTRIES

Requirements for ALL Entries:

- Entries must be uploaded to OpenWater. The URL to the online entry system is <https://prsachicago.secure-platform.com/a/solicitations/17/home>.
- A 100-word description of the entry must be entered directly into the online entry form (not uploaded as a PDF). Up to three company/agency logos, photos and/or graphics of the program or project (for use if selected as a finalist) may be uploaded.
- The one- or two-page summary should be submitted as a PDF and free of logos, drawings, or other artwork. Pages should be no larger than 8.5 x 11 inches.
- Program entries should not exceed 200 pages in the document. Tactical Project entries should have no more than 100 pages in the document. Multimedia files, including photos, videos (less than 5 minutes), or audio, should be uploaded separately.
- Supporting materials should be uploaded as a single PDF. The document should include any supporting materials referred to in the one- or two-page summary. For example, if you reference a public relations planning document, include a copy of the plan.
- Any collateral, such as press kits, direct mail pieces, etc., may only be accepted electronically. Include a screenshot, photograph or rendering within your PDF document.

Submission Guidelines and Tips for PROGRAM Entries (Categories #1-20)

- **Two-page Summary:** The two-page summary (to be uploaded as a PDF) is the single-most important component of a Skyline Program Campaign entry. It should begin with a brief situation analysis of your program, followed by addressing each of the four entry criteria — insights and analysis, planning, execution and evaluation. The summary should include measurable objectives, target audiences, budget and any other specific information requested in the individual category.
- **Judging Criteria:** Judges will evaluate your entry on the merit of the four criteria — insights and analysis, planning, execution and evaluation — that you share in your two-page summary and supporting materials.
- **Supporting Materials:** Your entry should include relevant supporting materials referred to in the two-page summary. For example, if you refer to a public relations planning document, include a copy of the plan. Other examples of supporting material would be representative press clippings, reports, letters, pictures and samples of tactical materials.
 - Quality is more important than quantity. For example, include only emails or meeting notes if they contain relevant information that judges need to evaluate the planning and successful execution of the program; there is no need to include duplicate press clippings when a representative sample and summary of coverage will suffice.
 - Video or other multimedia files no longer than 5 minutes may be uploaded to accompany your entry.
 - Uploaded documents must be in PDF format. Pages should be no larger than 8.5 x 11 inches with a minimum of 10-point typeface and one-inch margins.

The following questions will help you prepare a strong Skyline Program Campaign entry:

Insights and Analysis

- What prompted the research — was it in response to an existing problem or to examine a potential problem?
- What type of research did you use — primary, secondary or both, to arrive at your insights/analysis? Primary research involves original research, including focus groups, interviews, data and analytics software and surveys. Secondary research involves searching existing resources for information or data related to a particular need, strategy or goal (e.g., online computer database searches, Web-based research, library searches, industry reports and internal market analyses).
- How was the research relevant to shaping the planning process?
- How did the research help define or redefine the audience(s) or the situation?

Planning

- How did the plan correlate to the research findings?
- What was the plan in general terms?
- What were the specific, measurable objectives of the plan?
- Who were the target audiences?
- What was the overall strategy used?
- What was your budget?

Execution

- How was the plan executed, and what was the outcome?
- How did the activities flow in general terms?
- What were the key tactics?
- Were there any difficulties encountered? If so, how were they handled?
- Were other organizations involved?
- Were nontraditional public relations tactics used, such as advertising? (Unless you are entering this program under “Integrated Communications,” advertising costs should not exceed one-third of the budget.)

Evaluation

- What methods of evaluation were used?
- What were your results?
- How did the results compare to the specific, measurable objectives you identified in the planning section?
- How well do the results reflect the original strategy and planning?

Submission Guidelines and Tips for [TACTICAL PROJECT](#) Entries (Categories #21-37)

- **One-page Summary:** A concise summary no longer than one page must be uploaded as a PDF. The one-page summary is the single most important component of a Tactical Project Award entry.
- **Judging Criteria:** Judges evaluate the entry on four key areas — planning/content, creativity/quality, technical excellence and results. *Media Relations entries (category #22)*

are not judged on technical excellence. Within these areas, the summary should include measurable objectives, target audiences, budget and any other specific information requested in the individual category. Results — qualitative, quantitative or both — should provide evidence of how the stated measurable objectives were met, and how the entry impacted the success of a broader or ongoing program.

- **Supporting Materials:** Entrants will be asked to upload supporting documents and back-up materials as requested in each individual category (PDFs, videos, audio, video links, website URLs, etc.).
 - Video or other multimedia files no longer than 5 minutes may be uploaded to accompany your entry.
 - Uploaded documents must be in PDF format. Pages should be no larger than 8.5 x 11 inches with a minimum of 10-point typeface and one-inch margins.

The following questions will help you prepare a strong Skyline Tactical Project entry:

Planning/Content

- Was the objective or goal of the entry thoughtfully considered, clearly stated and attainable?
- Was the audience identified?
- Was a clear strategy stated or implied?

Creativity/Quality

- Do messages tie to objectives?
- Is content substantive, understandable, consistent and appropriate for the stated audience?
- How is the entry unique?
- How is the tool used imaginatively to achieve program goals?

Technical Excellence

- Do graphic or communications elements set the entry apart?
- Is production quality superior, based on budget and scope of the project?
- Media Relations entries (category #22) are not judged on technical excellence.

Assessment/Results

- What effort was made to assess whether the objective or goal was met?
- Did the entry meet its stated intent?
- Are there other indicators of success, quantitative or qualitative, in meeting objectives?

Submission Guidelines and Tips for ORGANIZATIONAL Entries (Categories #38-42)

Best In-house Team Submission Requirements:

- **Two-page Summary:** An overview of the business/organization and a detailed description of outstanding accomplishments/strategic benchmarks within the award program timeframe. Differentiate the role of the in-house team from any externally employed resources (e.g., agencies). Submitting teams should include examples of measurable impact on their organization; how they dealt with challenges; how they developed creative or innovative programs; how they influenced behavioral or attitudinal change among their target audiences; and/or how they foster a positive working culture.

- **Case Study Upload:** Two brief case studies or examples (each 500 words or fewer). Current Silver Anvil or Skyline Award submissions can be included instead of case studies.
- **Number of employees** on the team and annual public relations budget (including staffing costs).

Best Agency Submission Requirements:

- **Two-page Summary:** An overview of the agency, its offerings, and a detailed description of outstanding accomplishments/strategic benchmarks within the award-program timeframe. Submitting agencies should include examples of measurable impact for their clients; how they dealt with challenges; how they developed creative or innovative programs; how they influenced behavioral or attitudinal change among their clients' target audiences; and/or how they foster a positive working culture.
- **Case Study Upload:** Two brief case studies or examples (each 500 words or fewer). Current Silver Anvil or Skyline Award submissions can be included instead of case studies.
- **Number of employees** at the agency and annual revenue.
- **A client list** from the past 12 months, including tenure. Uploaded as a one-page PDF.

Best College/University Communications Program or Department **No fee to enter**

- **Two-page Summary:** An overview of the education institution and a description of outstanding accomplishments within the last 12 months. Submissions should include examples of how the team is equipping students for job readiness; metrics related to admissions, graduation trends, first-year employment data, internship placement and other related measurable results; as well as examples of academic achievements and other stand-out successes.
- **Number of faculty members** (full-time, part-time, adjunct)
- **Description** of faculty industry experience and/or professional involvement (e.g., PRSA membership, accreditation, industry leadership — encouraged but not required)
- **Description** of experiential learning opportunities available to students (e.g., student-run agencies, capstone projects, internships, client work)

Best Solution Provider/Vendor:

- **Two-page Summary:** An overview of the company and the service(s) it provides. A detailed description as to how these services are both (a) first in class, through customer service, comprehensiveness and/or other distinct qualities, and (b) tailored to support the communication industry.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Two letters of recommendation from customers/clients in support of your company's award submission.

Best AI Integration and Digital Innovations

- **Two-page Summary:** An overview of the business/organization and a detailed description of the exceptional creativity, effectiveness, and ingenuity in leveraging digital innovations, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), to revolutionize the organization's PR/comms strategies and results. Provide examples of the successful implementation of AI-driven technologies that have significantly enhanced visibility, engagement, efficiencies and overall PR performance.
- **Case Study Upload:** Two brief case studies or examples (each 500 words or fewer). Current Silver or Bronze Anvil or Skyline Award submissions can be included instead of case studies.

Quick Guide to Skyline Award Entries

	Program Categories (#1–20)	Tactical Project Categories (#21–37)	Organizational Categories (#38–42)
Judging criteria	<p>Judging is based on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Insights and Analysis 2. Planning 3. Execution 4. Evaluation <p>Skyline Awards recognize complete programs that demonstrate strong insights, planning, execution and measurable results across all four criteria.</p>	<p>Judging is based on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning/content 2. Creativity/quality 3. Technical excellence 4. Results <p><i>Media Relations entries (category #22) are not judged on technical excellence.</i></p> <p>Summaries should include measurable objectives, target audiences, budget and any required category-specific information. Results (qualitative and/or quantitative) must demonstrate how objectives were achieved and how the tactic contributed to a broader program or campaign.</p>	<p>Judging is based on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall excellence and performance 2. Measurable impact and results 3. Innovation and strategic contributions 4. Organizational effectiveness and leadership <p>These categories recognize teams, agencies, programs and solution providers that demonstrate sustained excellence in public relations, including measurable impact, innovation, leadership and contributions to workplace culture.</p>
Summary page	<p>A concise summary (maximum two pages) must accompany each entry and address all four judging criteria.</p> <p>Each criterion should be supported with additional detail in the full entry. The summary must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be typed in at least 10-point font with one-inch margins 	<p>A concise one-page summary is required for each entry and should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objectives ● Target audiences ● Budget ● Results <p>The summary must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be typed in at least 10-point font with one-inch margins 	<p>A concise summary (maximum two pages) must accompany each entry and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overview of the organization, team or program ● Key accomplishments within the award timeframe ● Measurable impact and results ● Examples of innovation, leadership and/or strategic contributions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exclude logos, graphics or other artwork ● Not include hyperlinks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not include hyperlinks 	<p>The summary must be typed in at least 10-point font with one-inch margins.</p>
Supporting materials	<p>Submit supporting materials as part of a single PDF document. Include only materials referenced in the summary (e.g., plans, reports, representative coverage).</p> <p>Collateral such as press kits or direct mail must be included as screenshots, photographs or renderings within the PDF.</p>	<p>Include only materials requested for the specific category.</p> <p>Quality is more important than quantity. Provide only materials that help judges evaluate planning, execution and results. Avoid duplicate or unnecessary content.</p>	<p>Include only materials requested for the specific category.</p> <p>Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case studies ● Client lists or organizational data ● Letters of recommendation (for vendors) ● Examples of work or outcomes <p>Quality is more important than quantity. Include only materials that demonstrate measurable impact, innovation and excellence.</p>
Online entry requirements	<p>Entries must be submitted through OpenWater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enter a 100-word summary directly into the online form (do not upload as a PDF) ● Upload up to three logos, photos or graphics (for finalist use) ● Submit the full entry as a single PDF (maximum 200 pages) ● The two-page summary must be included in the 	<p>Entries must be submitted through OpenWater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enter a 100-word summary directly into the online form (do not upload as a PDF) ● Upload up to three logos, photos or graphics (for finalist use) ● Submit the full entry as a single PDF (maximum 100 pages) ● Include the one-page summary within the PDF 	<p>Entries must be submitted through OpenWater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enter a 100-word summary directly into the online form (do not upload as a PDF) ● Upload up to three logos, photos or graphics (for finalist use) ● Submit the full entry as a single PDF ● Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cover page ○ Two-page summary

	<p>PDF and follow formatting guidelines</p> <p>Multimedia files (video under five minutes, audio, images) should be uploaded separately.</p>	<p>Multimedia files (video under five minutes, audio, images) may be uploaded separately.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting materials (as required by category) <p>Multimedia files (video under five minutes, audio, images) may be uploaded separately.</p>
Additional materials	<p>Optional multimedia (video, audio or images) may be submitted to support your entry.</p>	<p>Additional materials may be required by category. Please review individual category requirements.</p>	<p>Additional materials may be required by category. Please review individual category requirements.</p>
Additional notes	<p>Include only relevant materials. Quality is more important than quantity.</p>	<p>Collateral (e.g., press kits, direct mail) should be included as screenshots, photographs or renderings within the PDF.</p>	<p>Entries should clearly demonstrate sustained impact, innovation and leadership over time and differentiate the role of the organization, team or agency. Submissions should reflect overall excellence rather than a single campaign.</p>