

# PINNACLE

## COLLEGE MEDIA AWARDS

### CONTEST INSTRUCTIONS

#### Contest information:

(rules, categories, FAQ, etc.) is at <https://collegemedia.org/pinnacle-awards/>

These are directions for preparing and submitting entries. Please read through the instructions before you begin.

- If you have questions about rules, eligibility, deadlines or updating contestant information, contact: CMA at [info@collegemedia.org](mailto:info@collegemedia.org) or (518) 463-8644.
- If you have questions about the BetterBNC platform (tech support questions), contact: BetterBNC 24/7 at [www.betterbncsupport.com](http://www.betterbncsupport.com).
  - Click on "Start Trouble Ticket."
  - Or, call 360-427-6300 8a.m. – 5p.m. PST Monday through Friday.

**IMPORTANT:** BetterBNC is optimized for the Google Chrome browser; and Firefox for PC and Macintosh/Apple.

Please have a recent version downloaded and installed for the best contest experience.

### INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

**IMPORTANT:** There are three ways to enter the contest, depending on your role and the type of submission you're making:

**Contestant Manager** – For the primary contact or administrator of your organization, who is responsible for submitting entries on behalf of your team.

**Authorized Entrant** – For individuals authorized by their media organization to submit entries.

**Open Call Contestant** – For individuals submitting their own entries, including non-members and students without an adviser.

\* Open call is ONLY available June 16-17 for last-minute entries. If you do not have a profile and it is prior to June 16, email: [info@collegemedia.org](mailto:info@collegemedia.org) for assistance creating a profile.

**Better BNC Support cannot create a profile for you.**

**Note: First-time Login** (for this year only):

If it's your first time logging in this year, **use the temporary password: **bnc** (lowercase).**

After logging in with this temporary password, the system will prompt you to update your password. The new password will be used for this year's Pinnacles contest.

**! Each outlet or publication is limited to ONE entry per category**

**ENTRY FEE** **\$20** **\$40**  
Members Non-Members

**Deadline**  
**JUNE 17, 2025**  
Midnight • EST

### DIVISIONS

Division I: 10,000+

Division II: 3,000 – 9,999

Division III: under 2,999

Two-Year Schools

on campus undergraduate enrollment (not including distance education)

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## COLLEGE MEDIA AWARDS

### AUTHORIZED ENTRANT & CONTESTANT MANGAER

## Logging In

1. Go to [www.betterbnc.com](http://www.betterbnc.com).
2. Click on **Contestant Login** and select **2025 CMA Pinnacles**
3. Select the appropriate contestant type:
  - If you are the **primary contact for your organization**, select **Contestant Manager**. Then, skip to "4. Contestant Manager Login."
  - If you have been authorized to submit entries on behalf of your media organization, select **Authorized Entrant**. Then, skip to "5. Authorized Entrant Login".
  - If you are submitting your own entries (including non-members and students without an adviser), follow the instructions for **Open Call Contestant Only** on the next page.

## Submitting Entries

2. Click "Submit Entry" from the Manage Entries page
2. Select a Division (group of Categories)
3. Select a Category
4. Enter the entry headline or title
5. Add entry content (may vary by category): if you need instructions on "uploading your entries" see next page
6. Add Comments, if appropriate
7. Enter Credits
8. Click "Submit Entry"

## Payment

3. When all entries are submitted, log into your account
2. Navigate to the Manage Entries page
3. Click "Calculate Entry Fees"
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to pay for your entries



**Note: First-time Login** (for this year only):

If it's your first time logging in this year, use the temporary password: **bnc** (lowercase).

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## UPLOADING YOUR ENTRIES

**! Each outlet or publication is limited to ONE entry per category**

To upload digital files (excluding audio/video):

- Click “Browse”, find your file, and click “Open.”
- Allowed file types: PDF, DOC/DOCX, TXT, JPG, GIF, PNG
- To add more files to the same entry, click “Browse and Attach More Files.”
- Files should be under 20MB (we recommend keeping them around 5MB for easier access by judges).

If your file is larger than 20MB:

- Click the “RealView” icon on the Submit Entry page to create a free account, upload your file, and paste the URL in the Website URL field.
- You can also use other free hosting sites like:
  - scribd.com or issuu.com.

To add web, audio, or video content:

- Paste the link in the Website URL field.
- You can upload content to free sites like YouTube or ask your IT team to host it on your organization’s website.

**! Make sure your content is accessible online for the entire contest and awards process.**

Test your links from outside your organization to ensure they work properly.

You can upload audio and video content to free streaming sites like:

- Audio: kiwi6.com, soundcloud.com
- Video: youtube.com, vimeo.com

**Important:** Do not use links that are behind paywalls or require passwords.

**Judges will not request access or wait for fixes. Entries that can’t be accessed will be disqualified.**

## Film & Audio Festival

The CMA Film and Audio Festival is accepting entries as part of the overall Pinnacles process.

Entrants will have the opportunity to win a Pinnacle AND be featured in the 2025 CMA Film and Audio Festival in Washington, D.C.

If you’ve entered the work in the Festival before, you’ll simply complete your entries in the Pinnacles system. Be sure to read and follow the instructions for ensuring your work is visible to judges and available for screening.

**All submissions MUST be:**

- Smaller than 5 GB
- File type .mov, .mp4 or .m4v
- Audio entries should be .mp3

**By uploading/submitting your files, you agree to the following:**

- The video may be shown at the Film and Audio Festival Screening at the convention
- The video may be uploaded to the CMA film and audio festival website for others to see
- All the work was completed by students.

## CATEGORIES

Creative Audio Performance

Best DJ Personality

Short Documentary

Long Documentary

Creative Film

Vertical Short Video

Feature Package (audio/video)

Podcast

General News Package (audio/video)

Video Newscast

Video Public Service Announcement

Audio Public Service Announcement

Sports Feature (audio/video)

Video Sportscast

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## COLLEGE MEDIA AWARDS

### OPEN CALL CONTESTANTS

**Open Call is only available June 16–17 for last-minute entries.**

## Logging In

- 1** 1. If you do not have a profile and it is before June 14, email: [info@collegemedia.org](mailto:info@collegemedia.org) to get assistance creating your profile.
2. Better BNC support cannot create a
3. profile for you.
4. Click Open Call Login in the blue bar at the top of the page.
5. If you already have an Open Call Contestant account, enter your email address and password, then click Login and skip to section 7. Request to Make Entries in a Contest below.
6. If you do not have an Open Call Contestant account, click Create your Open Call account.
7. Fill out the form.
8. Click Submit.
9. Once the form is submitted, you will receive a validation email.
10. Click the link in that email to activate your account before logging in.

## Submitting Entries

- 2** 1. Hover over the red Open Call Contestant text in the blue bar at the top of the page.
2. Select My Contests from the dropdown menu.
3. In the Available Contests section, check the box next to the contest you wish to enter.
4. Hover over the red Open Call Contestant text again.
5. **Select Manage Entries.** If you need instructions on how to upload a file, please refer to page 2, “uploading your entries.”

## Payment

- 3** 1. When all entries are submitted, log into your account
2. Navigate to the Manage Entries page
3. Click “Calculate Entry Fees”
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### ORGANIZATIONAL AWARDS

The process for entering the organizational Pinnacles looks a lot different this year. Essentially, outlets (newspapers, websites, etc.) earn a score based on their Pinnacle entries and the top five outlets are then ranked by a panel of judges.

### HOW IT WORKS

Every individual entry that places in the top five (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or Honorable Mention) is considered a finalist and earns points:

1st place = 5 points

2nd place = 3 points

3rd place = 2 points

Honorable Mention = 1 point

- Only finalist entries are counted in the average (non-finalist entries are excluded).
- The outlet's total finalist points are divided by the number of finalist entries to calculate an average score.
- The top five outlets (by average score, within each division) are passed to a panel of judges, who rank them based on the submitted work. Judges do not see scores—only the top five.

### EXAMPLE:

The Daily Newspaper (Division 2)

25 entries submitted: 10 entries are finalists:

- 2 first-place = 10 points
- 2 second-place = 6 points
- 3 third-place = 6 points
- 3 honorable mentions = 3 points
- Total: 25 points / 10 entries = 2.5 average

If 2.5 places The Daily Newspaper in the top 5, **and they have submitted and paid for the Newspaper of the Year category**, then their materials will be reviewed by judges for final placement.

### ELIGIBILITY

To be considered for an organizational award, such as Newspaper of the Year, your outlet must:

1. Submit entries in individual categories (e.g., Best Feature Story, Best Sports Photo)
2. Submit a separate entry to the corresponding organizational category (e.g., Newspaper of the Year) and include all of the same materials (links, PDFs) that were submitted individually.
3. Pay the entry fee for the organizational category.

**\$20.00 per entry**

This will allow judges to evaluate the full scope of your work in one place.

**Important:** If you do not submit and pay for the organizational category, your outlet will not be considered for that award—even if your individual entries score highly.

**Each organization may enter only ONE organizational category.** For example, if you publish both a print newspaper and a website, you must choose one category to enter.

Entering multiple categories will result in disqualification.

### CATEGORIES

Weekly Newspaper of the Year  
Periodic Newspaper of the Year  
Media Website of the Year  
Video Outlet of the Year  
Audio Outlet of the Year  
Feature Magazine of the Year  
Literary Magazine of the Year  
Yearbook of the Year