

**TO: APA California Board of Directors**

**FROM: Ashley Atkinson, President**

**Derek Wong, Vice President for Administration**

**Shiromi Welipitiya, Intern**

**DATE: September 22 , 2021**

**SUBJECT: Chapter/ Section Awards Alignment & Revision to Awards Policies**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

It is recommended that the Board vote to amend the Awards Policies to a) require an Excellence or Merit award at the Section level to proceed to the Chapter awards program, and b) to require that Sections offer the Chapter's award categories, with the ability to add additional local categories at their discretion; and c) reflect related changes. See the attached redline draft for specific amendments to the language.

Additionally, it is recommended that the Board vote to amend the Awards Policies to make procedural updates describing the nomination process for Special Chapter Awards Categories and the Section Activity Award (also known as the President’s Awards), and encouraging Section adoption of the Chapter awards policies. See the attached redline draft for specific amendments to the language.

**BACKGROUND:**

Revision to the Awards Policies toward the goal of greater Chapter / Section alignment has been ongoing since 2019. In that year, the policies were revised to require submission at the Section level in order to proceed to the Chapter program. Having implemented that policy for the 2020 and 2021 awards, the President, Vice President of Administration, and Section Directors initiated discussion of further alignment for 2022.

During the Section Directors’ meetings on July 9th and August 20th, discussions regarding the awards program were held. Issues raised include the need to elevate the profile of the Section awards; the opportunity to better support and encourage more diverse applicants through a more unified process; and award categories that receive few applicants and may need to be combined or eliminated.

After reviewing the award categories offered by the Sections and the Chapter, along with the number of applicants in each category at the Chapter level, the group discussed the potential requirement for an Excellence (First Place) win at the Section level in order for an applicant to proceed to the Chapter program. This would limit the universe of applicants to 8 in each category. After further discussion, there was a consensus between the directors that both Excellence (first place) winner and Merit (second place) winners within the Sections should be considered at the Chapter level, to broaden the applicant pool.

In order to facilitate this new tiered approach to the awards program, the Sections would be required to adopt the Chapter’s awards categories and update them as updated by the Chapter. An exception would be for the Pioneer and Landmark awards, which would be optional to offer at the Section level, based on the recommendation of the Chapter Historians. Sections would have the opportunity to add their own local awards categories at their discretion. Winners in Section-only award categories would not advance to the Chapter awards program..

The proposal was also discussed at the Executive Board meeting on August 20. The Executive Board was generally in agreement with the proposal, although concerns were raised that quality applicants from larger Sections might be excluded from the Chapter program due to more robust competition in those Sections. However, given that most Chapter award categories receive fewer applicants than there are Sections (see table below), this proposal should ultimately result in more quality applicants at the Chapter level, rather than fewer.

As is the current policy, applicants for projects with regional (i.e., overlapping Sections) or statewide significance may submit directly to the Chapter.

**DISCUSSION:**

Another item for discussion, but not today’s action, is a potential reorganization or reduction of the Chapter awards categories, to create a more efficient program with improved outcomes. Twenty percent of the Chapter’s award categories did not receive any applicants in 2021, while another 35% of the awards categories had one or two applicants.

| **Award Category / # of Applicants** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Academic Award** | 5 | 5 | 8 |
| **Advancing Diversity and Social Change in Honor of Paul Davidoff** | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| **Best Practices Award** | 6 | 7 | 4 |
| **Communications Initiative Award** | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| **Comprehensive Plan Award: Large Jurisdiction** | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| **Comprehensive Plan Award: Small Jurisdiction** | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| **Economic Planning and Development** | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| **Emerging Planning and Design Firm Award** | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| **Grassroots Initiative Award** | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| **Hard-Won Victories Award** | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| **Implementation Award: Large Jurisdiction** | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| **Implementation Award: Small Jurisdiction** | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| **Innovation in Green Community Planning Award** | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| **Opportunity and Empowerment Award** | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| **Planning Advocate Award** | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| **Planning Agency Award** | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| **Planning Firm** | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| **Public Outreach Award** | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| **Transportation Planning Award** | 7 | 6 | 9 |
| **Urban Design Award** | 9 | 9 | 4 |

**Exhibits:**

[APA California Section Awards Categories](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1T76-0V8rRUDXXoLJLGjcJaCJTowMVIf1/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=105222059819689764664&rtpof=true&sd=true)

[Redlined Draft Revised Awards Policies](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m0vjPk5Uwkbklv0WSJUMPmo2rGM3BLwY/edit)

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