



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

# Applying for a Golden Bell Award

## BEFORE YOU START THE APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Visit the Golden Bell Awards website: [awards.csba.org/golden-bell](https://awards.csba.org/golden-bell)
2. Choose which **Program Category** to apply for.
3. Review the **Eligibility Criteria** and **Criteria for Selection** for the Golden Bell Awards to make sure your program fulfills all specifications.
4. Review the [2025 Sample Application](#).
5. Prepare and gather all the necessary documentation to apply, making sure your **Program Narrative** fulfills the **Criteria for Selection**.

**Have questions? Visit the [FAQ tab](#) on the Golden Awards website for answers to commonly asked questions or contact the Golden Awards Coordinator at [goldenawards@csba.org](mailto:goldenawards@csba.org).**

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

- ◆ Program Narrative
- ◆ Evidence of Board Support
- ◆ Three (3) program photos

## HOW TO WRITE A COMPELLING PROGRAM NARRATIVE

- ◆ Explain how the program demonstrates each topic of the **Criteria for Selection**.
- ◆ Describe your program so that both novice and seasoned reviewers can understand the program description and the importance of the work.
- ◆ Narrative must be in PDF format, no longer than four (4) pages in length, double spaced and at least 11-point font.

## IMPORTANT APPLICATION REMINDERS

- ◆ Eligible programs must have started at least **two years** prior to the Golden Bell Awards program entry deadline and currently still be in existence.
- ◆ **Evidence of Board Support format guidelines:** Submit a PDF of a board agenda and/or meeting minutes that shows evidence of board support, no longer than two (2) pages in length.
- ◆ **Three (3) program photos:** Photos should be 1-4 Mb each and will be used by CSBA for slideshows, presentations, at the ceremony and in the winners program, if selected.

## BEST PRACTICES

- ◆ Read and follow the **Eligibility Criteria** and **Criteria for Selection** specifications.
- ◆ In the [sample application](#), under **Upload Documentation, Program Narrative**, read the list of topics and address each of them in your narrative.
- ◆ View examples of successful program photo entries at the bottom of the [Golden Bell Awards website](#).
- ◆ Apply early so if any of the criteria is missing, CSBA staff can contact you and allow you to submit the missing piece(s) prior to the **June 27, 2025**, submission deadline.



GOLDEN BELL AWARDS

# Process & Timeline

1

## APPLICATIONS OPEN

Applications for the Golden Bell Awards **open on March 31**. Visit the [Golden Bell Awards website](#) to review the categories, eligibility requirements and more.

2

## APPLICATIONS DUE

Applications **close on June 27**, giving LEAs three months to submit their applications online via the Entry Form on the website.

3

## JUDGING

Eligible applications will be evaluated by a panel of judges **in July**. Each application will be reviewed by at least three judges.

4

## VALIDATIONS

The finalists will be assigned a validator from their region who will conduct an on-site or virtual validation of the program **in September**.

5

## WINNERS SELECTED

Winners will be notified **in October**. They will be asked to designate two individuals to accept the Golden Bell on behalf of the winning district/COE at the Golden Bell Awards Ceremony and Reception in December.

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## REGISTRATION

Registration for the ceremony will **open in mid-October**. Winners will be notified via email and provided with a link and instructions on how to register.

7

## CEREMONY

The ceremony will take place on **Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025** at the CSBA Annual Education Conference and Trade Show (AEC).

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## PHOTOS AND WINNER'S KIT

**After AEC**, winners will receive an email containing a Winner's Kit and a link to photos taken at the Golden Bell Ceremony and Reception to be used at their discretion.