



2024
U.S. Coast Guard
Chief Journalist Alex Haley
CDR Jim Simpson
Public Affairs Awards

Program Guidelines

Information is the catalyst for accountability in our society. Inherent in the first amendment, under freedom of speech and freedom of the press, the American people have an expectation of transparency and a “right to know” from their government. United States Code Title 14, specifically empowers the Commandant to collect, publish, and distribute information concerning Coast Guard operations to meet this public expectation. As servants of this public trust, we have an obligation and responsibility to educate the public on Coast Guard activities. Communication with the public is an element of operations that is fundamental to mission success.

The Chief Journalist Alex Haley Award recognizes the special achievements of individual Coast Guard members whose efforts and published works have furthered the operational goals of local commanders and the service at large. The Commander Jim Simpson Award recognizes a unit’s overall achievement in supporting the Coast Guard’s Public Affairs Program.

These awards exist to encourage and formally recognize Coast Guard-wide participation in conducting public affairs. The Coast Guard’s success depends in great measure upon the American public’s understanding and support of our missions.

CHIEF JOURNALIST ALEX HALEY AWARD

I. Background

The Chief Journalist Alex Haley Award is named in honor of the renowned author and Coast Guard journalist. The award recognizes the achievement of individuals whose efforts and published works have helped raise the visibility of the Coast Guard.

For individuals holding full-time public affairs positions, the award acts as the clearing house for the DoD Media Awards. First place award recipients will be automatically entered to compete against professional communicators from all branches of the Armed Forces.

II. Eligibility

This competition is open to Coast Guard active duty, reserve, civilian, and auxiliary members. Members of other services are not authorized to compete in any category. Government contract employees, and products where content is produced by government contractors, are not authorized to compete in any category.

Use of copyrighted audio, video, and imagery is not authorized without documented permissions. If copyrighted materials are used in a submission, provide a statement on the source of the items used and what permissions for use were granted.

III. Timeline

Date	Event
0001 EST January 1, 2024	Competition year begins
2359 EST December 31, 2024	Competition year ends
February 14, 2025	DVIDS entry deadline
February 17-21, 2025	District/Area/TRACEN Cape May/CG Academy level policy review of entries
February 21, 2025	Deadline for Districts/Areas/TRACEN Cape May/CG Academy to advance entries to HQ level in DVIDS
February 24-28, 2025	HQ policy review of entries
March 17-21, 2025	Judging
March 28, 2025	Award recipients announced & 1 st place category A winners forwarded for inclusion in DoD Media Awards competition

IV. Award Categories

The Chief Journalist Alex Haley Award is divided into 14 separate categories. Ten categories include: B-Roll Video, Blog Post, Feature Photo, Feature Story, Information Story, News Photo, Photo Series, Photojournalism, Portrait, and Video Story. There are four award categories for overall achievement. These categories include: Coast Guard Photographer of the Year, Coast Guard Videographer of the Year, Coast Guard Writer of the Year, and Coast Guard Communicator of the Year. The competition is divided into two groups as outlined below.

Group A: Coast Guard full-time public affairs personnel may compete in all categories. Full-time public affairs personnel are defined as active-duty enlisted members (E6 and below), reserve enlisted members (E6 and below), and civilian members filling a full-time public affairs position. Full-time public affairs enlisted members E7 and above and officers are not eligible to compete.

Group B: Individual Coast Guard members are defined as active duty, reserve, civilian, and auxiliary members, enlisted or officer, not filling a full-time public affairs position. Group B may compete in all categories except Photo Series, Coast Guard Photographer of the Year, Coast Guard Videographer of the Year, Coast Guard Writer of the Year, and Coast Guard Communicator of the Year.

Group A: Competition Categories for Coast Guard Public Affairs Personnel

Title	Description
News Photo	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions.
Feature Photo	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Portrait	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Photo Series	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Video Story	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
B-Roll Video	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Information Story	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Feature Story	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Blog Post	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Photojournalism	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Coast Guard Writer of the Year	Submission must follow DoD Media Awards submission criteria for Thomas Jefferson Military Writer of the Year
Coast Guard Communicator of the Year	Submission must follow DoD Media Awards submission criteria for Defense Communicator of the Year
Coast Guard Photographer of the Year	Submission must follow DoD Media Awards submission criteria for Military Photographer of the Year.
Coast Guard Videographer of the Year	Submission must follow DoD Media Awards submission criteria for Military Videographer of the Year.

Group B: Competition Categories for Individual Coast Guard Members

Title	Description
News Photo	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Feature Photo	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Portrait	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions

Video Story	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
B-Roll Video	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Information Story	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Feature Story	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions
Blog Post	See DoD Media Awards Guidance, Appendix B, Product Definitions

V. Submission

All submissions for the Alex Haley Awards, regardless of group or category, must have been created, uploaded, and externally published to the [Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System \(DVIDS\)](#) with appropriate captions and formatting during the competition year, which falls between 0001 EST Jan. 1, 2024 and 2359 EST Dec. 31, 2024. Submissions should effectively depict a person's overall contribution to the Public Affairs Program and should show achievement in journalism and the media arts. Products that were published to DVIDS during the competition year may be submitted as competition entries in the DVIDS awards portal from Dec. 15, 2024 through Feb. 14, 2025. Entries received after Feb. 14, 2025 will not be judged. Entries must be authorized products created, approved and published for public release within the competition year. Any member caught attempting to cheat or submit products created or published outside of the competition year will be disqualified from all award categories.

No single product may be entered in more than one category except when used as part of a submission for Coast Guard Photographer of the Year, Coast Guard Videographer of the Year, Coast Guard Writer of the Year, or Coast Guard Communicator of the Year. **All entries must follow the [DoD Media Awards Guidance](#) for each category.**

Full Time Public Affairs Personnel:

Full-time public affairs personnel are restricted to one entry per category, and for the purposes of the competition, must submit entries through a primary PA office. When selecting a unit during the submission process in DVIDS, the selected unit must be one of the following primary Public Affairs Offices:

- U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters
- U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area
- U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area
- U.S. Coast Guard District 1
- U.S. Coast Guard District 5
- U.S. Coast Guard District 7
- U.S. Coast Guard District 8

- U.S. Coast Guard District 9
- U.S. Coast Guard District 11
- U.S. Coast Guard District 13
- U.S. Coast Guard District 14 Hawaii Pacific
- U.S. Coast Guard District 17
- U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Cape May
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy

Public Affairs personnel stationed at PA detachments, recruiting command, and other units not listed above must be added to the nearest PA office listed above in DVIDS *before* submitting entries in the DVIDS awards module and must select the nearest office above as their unit when submitting products. This is critical to ensure entries are routed appropriately through the competition. **Entries submitted through any unit not listed above will not be included in the competition.**

Individual Coast Guard Members:

Individual Coast Guard members may submit up to five entries per category but may only win once per category (ex: the same member may not win both first and second place awards in the same category).

Individual Coast Guard members must submit entries through their servicing Public Affairs office included in the list above. A [DVIDS](#) account and DVIDS Vision ID are required to enter a submission, and products entered in the competition must be published on DVIDS no later than 2359 Dec. 31, 2024. This means members who wish to enter the competition must obtain a DVIDS account and a DVIDS Vision ID, be added to their servicing PA office in DVIDS and have products published on DVIDS no later than 2359 Dec. 31, 2024.

You may register for a DVIDS account [here](#). **You MUST use your USCG email account and select ‘Military Public Affairs/Combat Camera’ for the account type when registering.**

Questions about this process should be directed to the servicing PA office.

Administrators of the PA office DVIDS accounts are as follows:

Public Affairs Office	Administrator
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters	PACS Jon-Paul Rios
U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area	PACS Nicholas Ameen
U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area	PACS Matthew Masaschi
U.S. Coast Guard District 1	PAC Richard Brahm
U.S. Coast Guard District 5	PAC Connie Terrell
U.S. Coast Guard District 7	PAC Nicole Groll
U.S. Coast Guard District 8	PAC Jonathan Lindberg
U.S. Coast Guard District 9	PAC David Micallef
U.S. Coast Guard District 11	PAC Levi Read

U.S. Coast Guard District 13	PAC Kip Wadlow
U.S. Coast Guard District 14 Hawaii Pacific	PAC Corinne Zilnicki
U.S. Coast Guard District 17	PAC Travis Magee
U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Cape May	CWO Mike Lutz
U.S. Coast Guard Academy	CDR Krystyn Pecora

Uploading Products to DVIDS:

Products must be published on DVIDS by 2359 Dec. 31, 2024 but don't have to be entered into the competition until Feb. 14, 2025. Members who need assistance with publishing products on DVIDS must reach out to their servicing Public Affairs office prior to Dec. 31, 2024. Directions for entering products in the competition are below.

Submitting Entries into the Competition:

After logging into DVIDS, select the ADMIN link at the top left side of the page and then select AWARDS from the column on the left. Select SUBMIT PRODUCTS and then select INDIVIDUAL. Select the appropriate submission type for the desired category and follow the additional DoD Awards Guidance.

A [video tutorial](#) created in 2023 is available on the Public Affairs Program Awards SharePoint page.

PACs, APAOs and/or PAOs assigned to the offices in the table above are responsible for reviewing all entries at the unit level to ensure compliance with Coast Guard and DoD policy and DoD Media Awards guidelines using the [Appendix D, Policy Review Checklist in the DoD Awards Guidance](#) before advancing all compliant entries to the branch level of the competition. Corrections are authorized prior to advancing entries to the branch level. Entries must be advanced to the branch level no later than 2359 Feb. 21, 2025.

Below are some common errors that may result in disqualification or lowered scores:

- Incorrect VIRIN format
- Dates & cities in captions not formatted correctly
- VIRIN doesn't match date taken field and/or date in caption
- Date in caption doesn't match date taken field
- Failure to follow [DoD Visual Information Style Guide](#)
- Incorrect credit line: U.S. Coast Guard photo by or U.S. Coast Guard video by.... ensure the correct one is used for the applicable product
- Submission doesn't meet category description or requirements as listed in the [DoD Awards Guidance](#)
- Grammar and spelling errors

VI. Judging

Commandant (CG-0922) will select judges based on their experience level in the Public Affairs program. The panel will judge each entry on professional excellence, communication impact,

originality/military relevance, and caption/description. The judging panel will provide its recommendations to COMDT (CG-0922) for final approval.

Judges will select one first place recipient in each category; judges will have the discretion to recommend additional award recipients (second, third place) if appropriate. Judges will select only one award recipient in each of the over-all achievement categories. If no entry in a category is considered within contest standards, judges may choose to withhold any or all awards within that category. Alex Haley Award recipients will be announced via ALCOAST message.

COMMANDER JIM SIMPSON AWARD

I. Background

The Commander Jim Simpson Award is named in honor of the late public affairs officer who is best known for his efforts to raise the Coast Guard's visibility through the news media. The award recognizes a unit's excellence in its entire public affairs program – media relations, social media, internal information, and community relations.

II. Eligibility

The Commander Jim Simpson Award recognizes Coast Guard active duty, reserve, and civilian members assigned to Coast Guard units. Eligibility is not restricted to public affairs specialists or full-time public affairs officers. Members of other services are not authorized to compete in any category.

III. Timeline

Jan. 1, 2024 - Competition year begins
Dec. 31, 2024 - Competition year ends
Feb. 25, 2025 - Entry deadline
Mar 3-7, 2025 - Entry judging
March 28, 2025 - Awards recipients announced

IV. Award Categories

Competition for the Commander Jim Simpson Award is divided into two groups.

Group A: Public affairs offices may compete for the Coast Guard Public Affairs Office of the Year award. Public affairs offices are those teams of public affairs professionals who are assigned to Coast Guard Area or District command cadre, TRACEN Cape May and the Coast Guard Academy. District public affairs detachments are not independently eligible for this award; their work should be included in District public affairs submissions.

Group B: All other Coast Guard units may compete in the Outstanding Unit Achievement in Coast Guard Public Affairs award within their respective category.

Group A: Public Affairs Offices

Title	Description
Coast Guard Public Affairs Office of the Year	Public affairs professionals who are assigned to Coast Guard Area or District command cadre, the Coast Guard Academy and TRACEN Cape May.

Group B: Coast Guard Units

Title	Description
Outstanding Unit Achievement in Coast Guard Public Affairs (Large Afloat)	All vessels equal to or greater than 225 feet
Outstanding Unit Achievement in Coast Guard Public Affairs (Small Afloat)	All vessels less than 225 feet
Outstanding Unit Achievement in Coast Guard Public Affairs (Sector)	All sectors
Outstanding Unit Achievement in Coast Guard Public Affairs (Operations Ashore)	All operations ashore (stations, aids to navigation teams, etc.)
Outstanding Unit Achievement in Coast Guard Public Affairs (Air Station)	All air stations
Outstanding Support Unit Achievement in Coast Guard Public Affairs	All training commands (except Coast Guard Academy and TRACEN Cape May), bases, logistics and service centers

V. Entry Submission Content

Command Endorsement: A commanding officer’s recommendation memorandum is required, not to exceed two pages. The memorandum should articulate which award the office/unit is recommended for, a brief description of the office/unit’s achievements, and validation that all work was produced by the office/unit during the competition calendar year.

Entry Outline: Submissions should depict a unit’s overall public affairs program and demonstrate how the unit furthered the goals and objectives of the local command, the District Commander, and the Coast Guard at large through internal and external engagement. Units should only provide their best examples to demonstrate achievement in the following areas.

1. **Media Relations:** Media relations includes efforts undertaken to inform a specific target audience via traditional media with the intent of furthering a goal or goals of the organization. An example would be conducting media interviews to promote boating safety.
2. **Social Media Planning:** Social media planning includes efforts to inform a specific target audience via social media channels with the intent of furthering a goal or goals of the organization. An example would be a Facebook campaign to increase lifejacket use.
3. **Community Relations:** Community relations includes efforts undertaken to improve or maintain a relationship with a local public, not directly through media relations tactics, i.e. unit open houses, static displays and booths, speaker’s bureaus, etc.
4. **Communication Planning:** Communication planning may include any event that is foreseen, yet has the potential for a negative or positive impact on the organization and

requires communication planning to successfully manage. Examples include cutter homeport change, significant unit deployment, court-martial, unit closure, etc.

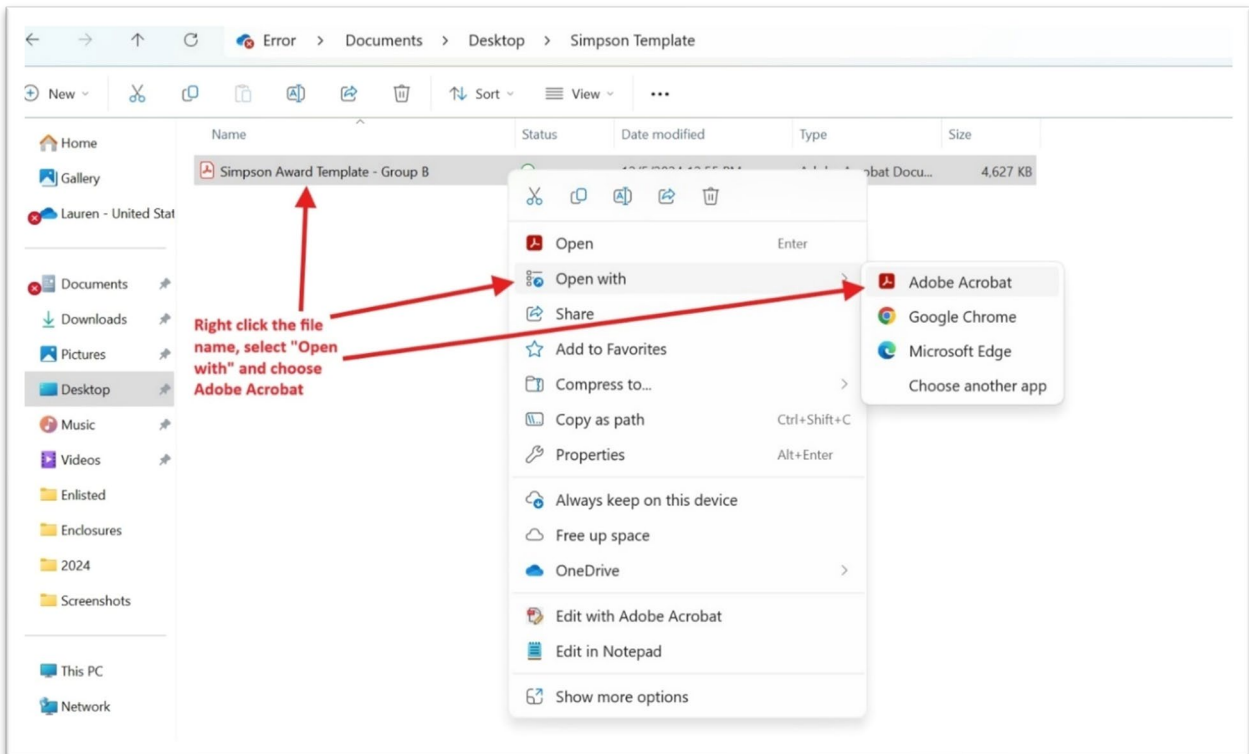
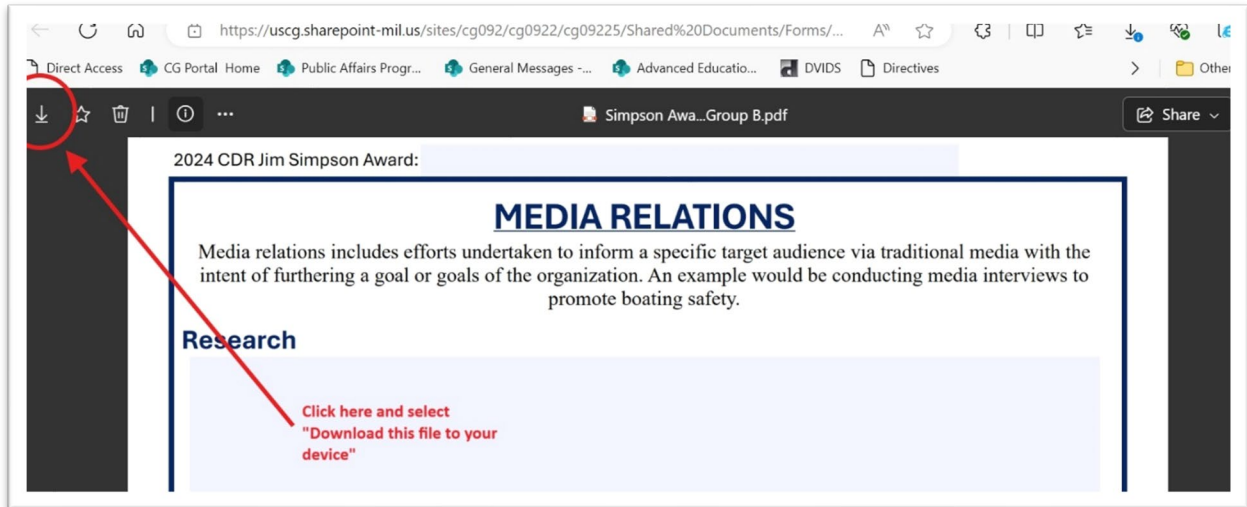
Summary: Success in each area should be quantified in a summary not to exceed two pages. Each summary may highlight a single initiative or may encompass several initiatives supporting the same goal. For example, a submission for community relations may highlight a single event with a large impact, or several events throughout the year with a common goal. Each summary should contain the following four sections.

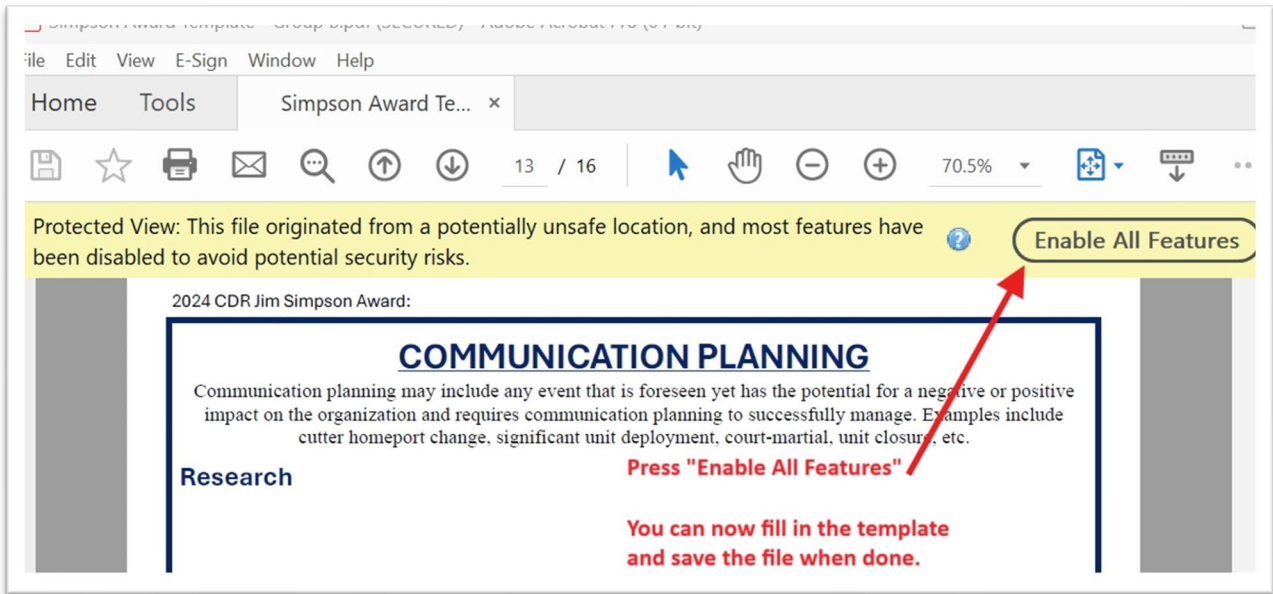
1. **Research:** In this section, identify a recognized communication need and key audiences. Your research goal should establish a comprehensive list of variables and findings that inform and impact communication efforts. Identify the strategic intent of the supported program or initiative and the intended effect of the communication effort. In some cases, the overall goal or desired effect may be to create awareness that can be translated into support for the Coast Guard as an organization or our missions. Discuss your strategy and tactics to achieve the overall communication goal. How did you collect information in order to execute your communication strategy? Your research should identify where to focus efforts.
2. **Planning:** What path did you chose to execute your plan according to your research? Address what went into the development and what goals and objectives were identified. How did you take your communication strategy and create tactics for mission success? What goals were determined and how did you plan to achieve those goals? What audiences/stakeholders did you identify? What were the desired communication efforts in terms of knowledge, attitude, or behavior outcomes? Define your objectives in specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely means.
3. **Implementation:** The tactics used to execute the plan should be outlined. An example would be inviting media to a search and rescue demonstrations or issuing a press release to increase visitors to a unit open house event. It should note what resources went into the plan, what challenges had to be overcome, or what modifications were made to the plan to achieve success. Implementation should highlight the unit's skill and commitment at executing the communication plan in an effort to reach the end goal.
4. **Evaluation:** The evaluation section should explain in detail how the plan and implementation was successful. The best examples of an evaluation should convey how the results directly tie back to the initial communication objective.

Supporting Material: Supporting material specifically referenced in the research, planning, implementation, and evaluation sections may be included immediately following each section and is limited to two pages per section. **Please do not provide any video.** Examples of supporting material may include a graph quantifying all press releases for the year (do not submit all related press releases), a comprehensive list of community relations events with a breakdown

of attendees, a list of published photos, or a media distribution report noting viewership or readership.

Format: All award submissions must use the 2024 CDR Jim Simpson Public Affairs Award template for the unit's respective category ([Group A](#) or [Group B](#)). Templates are located on the [Public Affairs Awards SharePoint page](#). **To ensure the template functions properly, you must download the template and open the downloaded file using the Adobe app before editing. Opening via web or attempting to edit it directly from the link will restrict the inclusion of supporting materials.**





Do not add a cover page.

Ensure the unit name is added to the header block in the template.

Photographs or graphics are not permitted on the summary pages.

Supporting material pages should contain photographs, graphics, and data tables that clearly support items discussed in the summary. You are not required to fill in all the image placeholders; blank spaces are acceptable.

Do not include screen shots or shrink press releases, Twitter posts, Facebook posts, articles, etc. to create an unreadable collage.

Do not subtract pages or add additional pages.

*Page 1-2: Commanding Officer's recommendation memorandum. *The template will not allow you to add pages, so the memo should be submitted as a separate PDF file as noted in the Submission section below.*

Page 3: Media Relations – Research and Planning

Page 4: Media Relations – Implementation and Evaluation

Page 5-6: Media Relations – Supporting Material

Page 7: Social Media Planning – Research and Planning

Page 8: Social Media Planning – Implementation and Evaluation

Page 9-10: Social Media Planning – Supporting Material

Page 11: Community Relations – Research and Planning

Page 12: Community Relations – Implementation and Evaluation

Page 13-14: Community Relations – Supporting Material

Page 15: Communication Planning – Research and Planning

Page 16: Communication Planning – Implementation and Evaluation

Page 17-18: Communication Planning – Supporting Material

*Page 19 (*Only applies to Group A: Public Affairs Offices): Roster of Public Affairs Staff

If there is no content for any category, note this in the applicable sections and do not delete the pages.

Note: The award template is new for 2024. If you encounter issues using it, please notify CWO Lauren Jorgensen immediately via email at Lauren.L.Jorgensen@uscg.mil.

Submission: Entries may be submitted until Feb. 25, 2025. Entries received after this date will not be judged. All content included in an entry must have been produced during the competition year, Jan. 1, 2024 to Dec. 31, 2024. The command endorsement memo and completed award template must be submitted together in one email containing both PDF files as separate attachments. The PDF files must be named using the following format: 2024 CDR Jim Simpson Award - Unit Name and 2024 CDR Jim Simpson Endorsement – Unit Name. Units submitting unreadable files will be disqualified. Submit entries electronically via email to PublicAffairsPrograms@uscg.mil.

VI. Judging

Commandant (CG-0922) will select judges based on their experience level in the Public Affairs Program. Submissions will be judged on initiative, consistency, impact, management, and quality. The judging panel will provide its recommendations to Commandant (CG-0922) for final approval.

Judges will select one first place recipient in each category; judges will have the discretion to recommend additional award recipients (second, third place) if appropriate. If no entry in a category is considered within contest standards, judges may choose to withhold any or all awards within that category. Simpson Award recipients will be announced via ALCOAST message.