

## 2026 Municipal Authority Community Engagement Award <Award Guidelines and Application>

Municipal Authorities are a success story that needs to be told. Each day, authorities implement innovative solutions to meet complex challenges, create opportunities for growth and enhancement, initiate solutions and adapt to changing conditions, and provide services to meet the basic human needs of Pennsylvania residents.

How does your Authority communicate **YOUR STORY** and the **VALUE** you bring to your customers?

**The Municipal Authority Community Engagement Award** is given annually to PMAA member authorities who are going above and beyond to effectively communicate the value of their authority to the community while providing exceptional service. These authorities use good management practices, along with innovative approaches to challenges, to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to community engagement.

Communications is a vital component of community engagement – do you share your story through websites, newsletters, annual reports, special community events, partnerships, internal messaging, staff development, or in other ways to be more visible and share the value of your authority?

### Why submit?

Why not? You've put your time and talent into creating a memorable story that has proven results. Consider sharing with your colleagues and be recognized for the work you do on behalf of your authority!

- Select submissions will be showcased during the Annual Awards banquet (Monday, September 14, 2026) at the PMAA Annual Conference & Trade Show.
- Submissions are encouraged that embody this year's conference theme - ***Ideas in Motion: From Insight to Impact*** focusing on moving ideas forward from inspiration to action.
- Select submissions will be showcased in a future issue of *The Authority* magazine.

### Categories – How Do You Share Your Story?

How do you communicate the value of your authority to the community, local citizens, and your ratepayers?

Entries may be submitted under these categories – **no more than two entries may be submitted per eligible authority:**

1. **Print**  
Printed materials such as annual reports, brochures, calendars, posters, bill stuffers, newsletters, magazines, editorials or feature articles, white papers, etc.
2. **Electronic**  
Electronic materials such as social media campaigns, websites, webinars, e-newsletters, etc.
3. **Community Events**  
Community programs or events such as festivals, educational events, groundbreaking ceremony or other special events showcasing the project, etc.
4. **Partnerships – Association, Intergovernmental Relations**  
Efforts conducted in coordination with local, state or national groups or associations, or programs or events with government entities, local legislators or other public audiences.
5. **Internal**  
Efforts to support personnel engagement and build authority strength internally such as rebranding, employee newsletters, special events for Board/staff, professional growth opportunities, internship programs, etc.

Multiple winners may be selected for each category based on authority size. An overall **Best of Show** recipient will also be named. The Best of Show entry will be awarded for engagements that cross multiple categories and that stand out as the best example of a comprehensive community engagement initiative.

## **Guidelines for Submission**

Your awards entry must include:

1. Application Form
2. Submission Summary
3. Supporting Materials

The **Submission Summary** may include:

- An overview of your authority (500-words or less) including information on the size of your authority, the type of your authority, authority history, scope of work, who was impacted or reached by your communication (audiences), budget for the project, or anything else you want the judging committee to know, etc. If you prefer, you may submit a two-minute video instead of a written synopsis.
- Include an outline of any best management practices used (administration, finance, operations, personnel) and if you had defined goals/objectives, research/planning, or innovation/execution.
- Please provide results, i.e., what impact it had, or evaluation measures if available.

Please provide a description of any **supporting materials** you are submitting (articles, print projects/publications, photos, news clippings, audio or video files, etc.). We suggest submitting no more than three supporting materials.

**Your submission must consist of projects completed from January 1, 2025 through May 31, 2026.  
Submit your entry no later than June 1, 2026.**

## **Committee Review/Scoring**

Are you interested in knowing what the committee will be looking for and the components of the scoring system?

### **CATEGORY 1: Strategy & Planning (20 Points)**

- 1.1 – Challenge or Opportunity Identified (5 pts): Clearly defines the issue, need, or opportunity the project addressed.
- 1.2 – Target Audience Defined (5 pts): Identifies and demonstrates understanding of the intended audience.
- 1.3 – Measurable Objectives Established (5 pts): States clear, specific, and measurable goals.
- 1.4 – Strategic Approach & Resource Planning (5 pts): Outlines strategy, timeline, budget, staffing, and resource allocation.

### **CATEGORY 2: Implementation & Execution (20 Points)**

- 2.1 – Project Description & Execution Clarity (5 pts): Clearly explains how the project was implemented.
- 2.2 – Alignment of Strategy to Tactics (5 pts): Demonstrates consistency between stated goals and actions taken.
- 2.3 – Effective Use of Resources (5 pts): Shows thoughtful and efficient use of budget, personnel, and time.
- 2.4 – Professional Quality of Deliverables (5 pts): Materials, communications, and execution reflect professionalism and quality.

### **CATEGORY 3: Innovation & Creativity (20 Points)**

- 3.1 – Innovative Approach (5 pts): Demonstrates originality or a new approach to a challenge.
- 3.2 – Purposeful Innovation (5 pts): Innovation is intentional and clearly tied to objectives.
- 3.3 – Creativity in Execution (5 pts): Displays creativity in messaging, outreach, or engagement methods.
- 3.4 – Adaptability & Problem-Solving (5 pts): Shows flexibility and creative problem-solving during implementation.

### **CATEGORY 4: Impact & Measurable Results (20 Points)**

- 4.1 – Measurement Methods Identified (5 pts): Clearly explains how results were tracked and evaluated.
- 4.2 – Quantifiable Outcomes (5 pts): Provides measurable data demonstrating results.
- 4.3 – Achievement of Objectives (5 pts): Demonstrates effectiveness in meeting stated goals.
- 4.4 – Community/Audience Impact (5 pts): Shows meaningful benefit or positive impact on the intended audience.

### **CATEGORY 5: Overall Excellence & Replicability (20 Points)**

- 5.1 – Overall Quality of Submission (5 pts): Submission is organized, clear, and complete.
- 5.2 – Significance of the Project (5 pts): Project demonstrates meaningful value to the community and authority.

5.3 – Replicability & Model Potential (5 pts): Project could serve as a model or best practice for other authorities.

5.4 – Overall Distinction (5 pts): Project stands out as exceptional, exemplary, or industry-leading.

TOTAL: 100 POINTS

View past winning projects in the February and April 2026 issues of *The Authority* magazine (also found at: [municipalauthorities.org](http://municipalauthorities.org), under Communications, select *The Authority* Digital Edition). For a list of all past winners, visit [www.municipalauthorities.org/conf-awards](http://www.municipalauthorities.org/conf-awards).

**Submit your application electronically via PennBid by June 1, 2026. As this is a Private opportunity, interested authorities shall contact Jennifer Case at [case@municipalauthorities.org](mailto:case@municipalauthorities.org) in order to be granted access.**



## 2026 Municipal Authority Community Engagement Award Application

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Authority: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Please complete, where applicable:

- ✓ Type of Authority (water, wastewater, recycling, EMS, airport, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Audience Reached (residents, government officials, public, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Was Project Created:  Internally by Authority Staff **OR**  Third Party (i.e., Ad Agency or PR Firm)
- ✓ Annual Gross Revenues: \_\_\_\_\_ Percent of Budget Dedicated to Project: \_\_\_\_\_

**This entry is being submitted for the following category** (no more than two entries may be submitted per eligible authority – please use a separate application for each entry):

- Print  Electronic  Community Events  Partnerships  Internal

### Submit the following with your application:

- ✓ An **Executive Summary** including:
  - Overview of Your Authority (written 500 words or less, or two-minute video clip may be provided)
  - Outline of best management practices used and if you defined goals, research and planning, innovation, and explanation of results
  - Description of supporting materials included (no more than three supporting)
- ✓ Attachments, links, and samples of **supporting materials** (no more than three) such as photos, news clippings, audio or video files, publications, etc. Event and presentation outreach examples can be described in summaries with any accompanying pictures or images. All materials must be supplied electronically.

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