

SHAPE America District and National Teacher of the Year Policies and Procedures

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The purpose of this document is to provide guidance, clarity and transparency regarding the overall program to District Awards Chairs, review committee members and Teacher of the Year applicants. In addition, this document will establish common procedures and practices to ensure an equitable and fair process for all applicants of this prestigious award.

It is strongly encouraged that state affiliates adopt these policies and procedures in order to create a more streamlined and effective process for state Teacher of the Year applicants who wish to move forward to the District or National levels. At minimum, state affiliates should adopt the award criteria and scoring rubrics.

Overview of the Program

SHAPE America's Teacher of the Year program recognizes outstanding teachers in the following categories:

- Adapted Physical Education (preK-12)
- Elementary Physical Education (preK-5)
- Middle School Physical Education (6-8)
- High School Physical Education (9-12)
- School Health Education (preK-12)

Individuals who are named Teacher of the Year by their state affiliate are eligible for SHAPE America's District Teacher of the Year award and have a three-year window to apply at the district level. District winners are eligible for the national award and the same eligibility rules are applied at the national level as the district level.

The SHAPE America Teacher of the Year review cycle begins in October of each calendar year for Teacher of the Year awards for the next calendar year. For example, the 2026 District and National Teacher of the Year review cycle will begin in October 2025 with the National Teachers of the Year being announced at convention in 2026.

The Teacher of the Year award year officially begins at SHAPE America's national convention and ends at the next year's national convention.

Eligibility Requirements for Both District and National Teacher of the Year Awards

Teachers who meet the eligibility requirements may apply for one of the SHAPE America Teacher of the Year awards. The following requirements are listed on the [SHAPE America website](https://www.shapeamerica.org) and listed below. The same eligibility requirements apply for both District and National Teacher of the Year awards.

Eligible state Teachers of the Year can apply for the District Teacher of the Year award in their category. Teachers may only apply for one District Teacher of the Year award even if they have received Teacher of the Year awards from two different states in two different districts. The applicant must apply only in the District in which they maintain their primary state or SHAPE America membership residence. Applicants can choose to use their home or school address as their primary residence. SHAPE America membership is no longer required to apply at the District level.

- Minimum five years of teaching experience in the content area applying for
- Degree and certification in teaching
- Full time teaching at time of application submission & selection
 - Retired teachers are not eligible
- Minimum of 50% of total job responsibilities is teaching in the category you're applying for at the time of application and selection:
 - Adapted Physical Education (preK-12)
 - Elementary Physical Education (preK-5)
 - Middle School Physical Education (6-8)
 - High School Physical Education (9-12)
 - School Health Education (preK-12)
- Must be a state teacher of the year award recipient in order to be eligible to apply. The previous three years state recipients are eligible for the current District award (e.g. 2023, 2024 and 2025 state Teacher of the Year winners are eligible for the 2026 District Teacher of the Year award).
 - State Teachers of the Year may reapply for the District Teacher of the Year award within the three-year eligibility window.

- District Teachers of the Year are not eligible to reapply for the National Teacher of the Year award in the same category if they were not selected as a National Teacher of the Year recipient during their District award year.
- National and District Teachers of the Year are not eligible to apply for a District Teacher of the Year award in another category.

***Please Note:** Current members of SHAPE America's Board of Directors, current members of SHAPE America's District Leadership Councils and National Teacher of the Year alumni are not eligible to apply for these awards.*

Application Process for Eligible Teachers of the Year

Applying for District Teacher of the Year

State Teachers of the Year who wish to apply for the District Teacher of the Year Award in their category will apply online. Prior to completing the [SHAPE America Teacher of the Year online application](#), applicants should have all required application materials prepared and should complete a [Word version of the online application](#) and save it. ***Having the Word version will be helpful because once the online application is started progress cannot be saved to finish later.***

Applications must be submitted online by October 15th of each calendar year (e.g. applications for the 2026 District Teacher of the Year must be submitted by Oct. 15, 2025). District Teachers of the Year will be notified of their selection by SHAPE America in mid-December of each calendar year.

Required Application Materials:

- [Verification of Teaching Assignment Form](#)
 - Use the SHAPE America provided form linked above.
 - This document must be from the current school year when applying. This may require individuals to get a new Verification of Teaching form signed by their principal or administrator.
- Award criteria
 - When completing the award criteria please use the following format:
 - **Do not include any identifying information (your name, school name or on school/district letter head).**
 - **Bold the specific criteria as a heading, then outline your qualifications in paragraph form below the bolded criteria heading (see example below).**

Criteria should be **two-pages or less** in length, single spaced, typed in size 11 Calibri font.

- Responses to each criterion should be in **one** Word document. Please do NOT upload each criteria response in a separate Word document.
- Example format for Award Criteria:

Conducts a comprehensive and diverse physical education program that utilizes the Essential Components of Physical Education as reflected in the SHAPE America National Physical Education Standards and other best practices.

Begin to write response to award criteria prompt underneath.

- Physical Education (Elementary, Middle, and High School)
- School Health Education
- Adapted Physical Education

Please note: Award criteria were updated in 2023. Please be sure you have updated your award criteria responses.

- Head shot (JPEG at 300 dpi minimum) *for promotional purposes only*. Headshots will not be shared with reviewers. Please do not submit PDFs of photos. **Must be JPEG or PNG file format.**

Letters of recommendation are no longer required at the District Teacher of the Year level.

District Teacher of the Year Review Timeline

- **October 15:** State Teacher of the Year recipients submit application materials to SHAPE America via the online application.
- **December 1:** Deadline for the District Teacher of the Year reviewers to submit scores.
- **By December 20:** District Teacher of the Year applicants are notified of selections by SHAPE America.
- **SHAPE America National Convention & Expo:** District Teachers of the Year are celebrated, and National Teacher of the Years are announced at the Closing General Session.

Applying for National Teacher of the Year

District Teachers of the Year who wish to apply for the National Teacher of the Year award in their category will participate in a four-part application process:

- written application
- recommendations
- video submission
- online interview

The National Teacher of the Year **written application** materials will be reviewed by a committee of experts in each category.

The online application that was submitted for the District Teacher of the Year award will be used for the written application portion.

Two recommendations will be submitted via a survey and will only be required by District Teachers of the Year applying for the National Teacher of the Year award. SHAPE America will provide survey links to applicants who will then share the links with an administrator/supervisor and a student or parent. Administrators and parents will be asked to complete a written survey of two to three questions and students will submit a short video or written response answering two to three questions.

District Teachers of the Year will receive detailed communications in December from the SHAPE America Teacher of the Year program director with specific timelines and instructions for completing their **video submissions** and participating in the **online interview**.

A portion of the online interview will be dedicated to applicants presenting to reviewers what message they would like to share as they make presentations across the country if they are selected as a National Teacher of the Year. Teaching videos are typically due after winter break ends for most schools. **There are no exceptions or extensions granted for the submission of these videos.**

District Teachers of the Year will receive complimentary registration to attend the SHAPE America National Convention & Expo where they will be celebrated and highlighted for their excellence in teaching. National Teachers of the Year will be announced at the National Convention.

Review Process

Review Process for the District Teacher of the Year Award

Each District will have a Teacher of the Year review committee comprised of Teacher of the Year alumni, retired teachers, college/university professors/faculty and health and physical education state/district leaders. Review committees will have representation from various SHAPE America

Districts and will not be solely made up of members from the same District. Review committee members will maintain strict confidentiality throughout the entire review and selection process.

The District Teacher of the Year award review process is outlined below.

- State Teachers of the Year apply for their District using the online system. *(Note, it is strongly encouraged for states to adopt the SHAPE America Teacher of the Year award criteria.)*
- SHAPE America appoints review committees to review state Teacher of the Year applications for each of the five Districts.
 - District Awards Chairs and members from the District Leadership Councils will submit 10-12 recommendations of diverse professionals to serve on District TOY awards committees.
 - The review committees will include at least one person from each category (elementary PE, middle school PE, high school PE, APE, dance and health).
 - *SHAPE America national BOD members cannot serve on review committees.*
 - District TOY review committees for each District will be comprised of members from across the country and across each District. SHAPE America will make final selections for the committees and ensure an equal number of members is on each District review committee by selecting additional review committee members if necessary.
 - Each district application will be reviewed anonymously. Applicants are assigned a random number and any identifying information is removed or blacked out to make the applicant anonymous to the reviewer.
 - Review committee members are one of the following:
 - Teacher of the Year Alumni *(no other K-12 teachers can serve on a review committee)*
 - Retired K-12 teacher or university professor
 - College/University professor or faculty
 - Health and Physical Education state or district leader**Review committee members do not have to be SHAPE America members but must be highly familiar with SHAPE America's National Health Education Standards and National Physical Education Standards and current best practices related to teaching health and physical education**
- The same SHAPE America rubrics will be used across all Districts to score applicants.
 - SHAPE America will provide guidance to applicants on what is being scored and will share the rubrics publicly.
 - A minimum score must be met by any candidate to move on to both the District and National level (80% of total possible points, which excludes points awarded for teaching at a Title I school).
- SHAPE America will provide an online form for reviewers to submit their scores, rubrics and notes.
- The SHAPE America Teacher of the Year program director will contact all District Teacher of the Year applicants to notify them of their selection status.

- SHAPE America will notify District Awards Chair and District Directors of their District winners, first.
- After SHAPE America has notified all applicants and made public announcements regarding the winners, Districts may then send personal communications to their District winners.
- SHAPE America director will cc District Awards Chair on the communication.
- The District Teachers of the Year are eligible to move on to apply for the National Teacher of the Year Award in their content area.

The District Awards chair will:

- Communicate with states about encouraging their Teacher of the Year applicants to apply to be considered for District TOY.
- Submit 10-12 names to serve on a District TOY Review Committee.
 - Should represent a variety of content areas (health education, elementary PE, secondary PE, dance education, adapted physical education)
 - Should reflect ethnic, racial, and demographic diversity.
 - Can work with District Leadership Council to solicit names.
- Review District applications and confidentially communicate any concerns with the SHAPE America program director prior to the start of the review process.

Review Process for the National Teacher of the Year Award

There are five national review committees (one for each category) with each category having 3-5 reviewers, for a total of 15-25 reviewers. When possible, each committee will have a member who is a Teacher of the Year alumnus, health and physical education state/district leader and college/university professor/faculty. Reviewers will only review five candidates at most depending on the content area being reviewed. Reviewers agree to keep the review process confidential and will not discuss candidates or review materials with individuals outside of the review committee.

Reviewer responsibilities include:

- Maintain strict confidentiality throughout the entire review and selection process.
- The review process begins mid-December.
- Reviewers will have access to National Teacher of the Year candidate applications and will review and score the candidates independently with the rubric provided by SHAPE America.
- From late-January to mid-February, online interviews will be held with National Teacher of the Year candidates. Interviews are facilitated by the SHAPE America Teacher of the Year program manager.
- Reviewers will conduct the interviews with predetermined questions.
- All scoring of written applications and video materials will need to be completed before the candidate's online interview.

- During the online interview process, reviewers will be required to score the candidates' answers using SHAPE America's scoresheet. Using your notes and highlights generated during the interview, each reviewer will choose one candidate and create a two-paragraph summation of the candidates' achievements. The reviewer will upload the scores, achievement summation, and notes to an online form.
- After all online interviews are conducted, a conference call (facilitated by the SHAPE America Teacher of the Year program director) will be held for each committee to discuss candidates and to select a winner.
- Rubrics and final scores must be used to guide reviewers in selecting a National Teacher of the Year and each member of the committee will be given the opportunity to discuss (and potentially adjust) scores assigned. The reviewers will work together to build consensus regarding a final choice, selecting the teacher that has demonstrated that they will be the best ambassador for the Teacher of the Year program and a national representative of SHAPE America.
- Write brief biographical introductions for each District Teacher of the Year in their category to be read at the District Teacher of the Year awards dinner held at the National Convention.
- The process will be completed by the beginning to middle of March.

A national review committee member's full commitment is mandatory to ensure obligations on SHAPE America's end are upheld for convention. Reviewers are **not** obligated to attend convention.

National review committee members will submit all scoring and notes via an electronic form and will discard any materials used.

The following is a sample timeline of the review process:

- **By early January-** TOY written application materials (online application, award criteria, and letters of recommendation) with scoring rubric uploaded to Dropbox for reviewers to access
- **Mid-February-** E-mail sent to National TOY Award reviewers with a Dropbox link to TOY videos of lessons (each video is 20 minutes in length)
- **Late February- mid-March-** Online interviews held for National TOY candidates; applications and videos must be reviewed prior to the first interview. Most interviews will be done in the evening to accommodate the TOYs schedules.
- **By early March-** Conference calls are held with review committee members to discuss candidates and identify winners
- **By the end of March-** National TOYs have been identified and brief biographical introductions are written and sent to SHAPE America program director.
- SHAPE America reserves the right to adjust the timeline as needed.

District Awards Chairs

District Awards Chairs agree to adhere to guidelines and procedures set forth by the SHAPE America national office or risk being removed from the position. They also agree to maintain strict confidentiality throughout the entire review and selection process.

District Awards Chairs agree to virtually attend any meetings that may be held throughout the year.

District Awards Chairs agree to communicate with the SHAPE America Teacher of the Year program director any concerns, questions or feedback to improve the program.

District and National Teacher of the Year Responsibilities

The following briefly outlines responsibilities of District and National Teachers of the Year once they receive their award. The responsibilities are to be upheld during the award year. The Teacher of the Year award year is from convention to convention.

- District/National Teachers of the Year will act as a SHAPE America ambassador and embody the highest and most current standards of health and physical education.
- District/National Teachers of the Year will attend the National Conventions bracketing the front and back of their Teacher of the Year award year (example, Baltimore 2025 and Kansas City 2026). Expenses are to be paid by the Teachers of the Year with the exception of registration.
- District/National Teachers of the Year will present a session at their state conference. Expenses to be paid by the Teachers of the Year unless the state SHAPE/AHPERD is able to assist with covering costs.
- District/National Teachers of the Year will present a group session at the National SHAPE America Convention & Expo at the end of their Teacher of the Year award year.
- National/District Teachers of the Year may not accept any honorarium for presentations when invited to present during their award year. However, National/District Teachers of the Year may accept a stipend to cover travel, lodging, meals and other expenses that may be incurred.
- When asked to present at SHAPE America events, state affiliate conferences, or other events as a SHAPE America Teacher of the Year, teachers should only be representing SHAPE America and the Teacher of the Year Partner Network.
- National Teachers of the Year will attend and participate in a Teacher of the Year Retreat (if one is able to be held) after they've been selected. All expenses will be covered by SHAPE America. This event may be in person or virtual.
- National Teachers of the Year are to attend the event where the National Teachers of the Year will be announced during the following year's SHAPE America National Convention and will announce the winner of the next National Teacher of the Year in their content area.

- National/District Teachers of the Year will be provided with more specific details in a Memorandum of Understanding regarding presentation expectations.

District and National Teacher of the Year Gifts and Opportunities

Awardees at the District and National level will receive various gifts and opportunities to be highlighted.

- District/National Teachers of the Year will receive complimentary registration to the SHAPE America National Conventions at the beginning and end of their award year.
- District/National Teachers of the Year will receive 250 SHAPE America business cards indicating they are a SHAPE America Teacher of the Year.
- District/National Teachers of the Year will receive a SHAPE America Teacher of the Year polo.
- National Teachers of the Year will receive a SHAPE America Teacher of the Year jacket.
- National Teachers of the Year will receive a \$1,000 stipend for travel costs towards the SHAPE America National Convention & Expo at the end of their award year.
- District/National Teachers of the Year will receive opportunities to be featured in SHAPE America and Partner Network periodicals, webinars, and online publications.
- District/National Teachers of the Year will receive opportunities to provide input in SHAPE America projects, programs and documents and may be invited to help develop new resources.