Press Releases for Award Winner Announcements

Writing a press release is a great way to announce your winners not just to your local press but fellow members. Here are some tips for writing and using press releases.

WRITING THE PRESS RELEASE

In addition to announcing the winners, some other pieces of information you should include in your press releases are:

* When and where the winners were announced
* Description of the award (Member Awards descriptions can be copied and pasted into your press releases from our website: [www.acteonline.org/member\_awards](http://www.acteonline.org/member_awards)).
* Information about the winner (bio pulled from application materials)
* Information about the next stages of the awards process for your winners
* A boilerplate with information about your state association

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| WRITING/EDITING AN AWARD WINNER BIOIn a paragraph or two, all bios should accomplish the same thing:* Provide a little background on the winner (what they do, where they’re from)
* Outline a few key accomplishments that demonstrate the caliber of the candidate as relates to the award criteria
* Include a quote from the candidate, a friend or colleague (optional: these can be taken from the letters of recommendation. If you do it for one, you should do it for all)

*Tips:** The bios should make sense to a person outside the CTE community. Acronyms should be spelled out the first time. If an achievement or anecdote is impossible to explain without using jargon specific to the program, subject area or CTSO, it should be omitted.
* The tone should be journalistic, and the voice should be as objective as possible.
* Keep the focus on CTE: highlight activities pertaining to winners’ professional lives and community contributions instead of details from their personal lives.
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DISSEMINATING THE PRESS RELEASE

In addition to sending the press release to your local press, you should send the press release to your winners, their schools/employers and their colleagues who helped nominate them or write their letters of recommendation. If you are including detailed information about the winner in a bio, it’s a good idea to confirm that information with the winner before the information is released to the greater public. The press release can also be posted on your website and mentioned in your newsletter.

If you have questions about how to reach out to your local press, contact ACTE’s legislative and public affairs manager, Sean Lynch (slynch@acteonline.org) for assistance.

**See next pages for press release templates and style guide recommendations.**

# **SAMPLE A: Press release announcing all state winners**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[DATE]
**Contact**:
[insert name and contact information for questions]

Virginia ACTE Announces State Award Winners, Region Award Finalists

ALEXANDRIA, VA—The Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education (VACTE) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2015 VACTE Awards:

2015 VACTE Teacher of the Year—[name] from [school, city]

2015 VACTE Career Guidance Award*.*—[name] from [school, city]

2015 VACTE Administrator of the Year—[name] from [school, city]

2015 VACTE Postsecondary Teacher of the Year—[name] from [school, city]

2015 VACTE New Teacher of the Year—[name] from [school, city]

2015 VACTE Carl Perkins Community Service Award winner—[name] from [school, city]

2015 VACTE Lifetime Achievement Award winner—[name] from [school, city]

The award winners were announced at an awards ceremony during the VACTE conference in [city] on [date].

The ACTE Excellence Awards promote merit in career and technical education by recognizing individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to CTE, programs that exemplify the highest standards and organizations that have conducted activities to promote and expand CTE programs. Award winners serve as inspirational leaders to ACTE: they embody the core values of serving students and being committed to CTE. The state winners will progress as Region finalists in their categories and will be recognized during the Region conferences.

For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, please visit [www.acteonline.org/awards](http://www.acteonline.org/awards).

**About VACTE**

[insert state association boilerplate language]

# **SAMPLE B—Individual state winner press release announcement**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[DATE]
**Contact**:
[insert name and contact information for questions]

Virginia ACTE Announces Richmond Counselor as State Award Winner

ALEXANDRIA, VA—The Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education (VACTE) announces Janie Jones, a guidance counselor at Stonybrook Middle School in Richmond, Virginia, as the 2015 VACTE Career Guidance Award winner. [The ACTE Career Guidance Award recognizes guidance counselors and career development professionals who have made significant contributions to advocate, educate and communicate the value of CTE as a viable career option to a variety of audiences in their communities.]

[include brief bio of winner]

Jones will be considered as a finalist for the 2016 ACTE Region II title. The Region II winner will be announced at the 2016 Region II conference. [more info if available].

For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, visit <https://www.acteonline.org/awards>

**About VACTE**

[insert state association boilerplate language]

Style Guide for the ACTE Excellence Awards

**AWARD NAMES**

When announcing the award winner at various levels, refer to awards as such:

*State:* [Year] [State ACTE] [Award]

*Region:* [Year] ACTE [Region] [Award]

*National:* [Year] ACTE [Award]

Examples:

*ACTE announces Janie Jones as the 2014 Kansas ACTE Teacher of the Year.*

*ACTE announces Janie Jones as the 2014 Region II ACTE Career Guidance Award winner.*

*ACTE announces Janie Jones as the winner/recipient of the 2014 ACTE Carl Perkins Community Service Award.*

\*\*It is important to specify that your state winners **are your state ACTE winners**, not the ACTE winners, as that can cause confusion.

**YEARS**

The national naming convention is a year ahead. The Region naming convention is one year behind the national naming convention.

*Example:* National winners recognized at the Awards Banquet in 2013 were the 2014 ACTE award winners; Region winners announced at the Region conferences in 2013 were the 2013 Region award winners.

**WINNERS**

When referring to winners for the first time, write out the full name (ex. Janie Jones). Do not attach honorifics (ex. Mr., Ms., Dr.\*) before the name or credentials (ex. RN, PhD) after the name. In subsequent mentions, refer to individuals by their last names (ex. Jones).

*\* If you want to communicate that a winner has a PhD or another credential that is important to them, the best way to do this is to mention that they earned this credential in their bio.*

All qualifying state winners (of awards in the Member Awards category) are Region finalists. Region winners are national finalists. All Image Award winners are national winners. There are no national Image Award finalists.

**SPONSORS**

If your awards program has sponsors, you may want to mention them in your press releases depending on your agreement. Sponsors of your state program should be referred to specifically as sponsors of your state awards and not the national Excellence Awards program.

**TALKING ABOUT THE MEMBER AWARDS PROCESS**

The ACTE Member Awards follow a three-tiered review/selection process, moving through three rounds/levels\*: state, Region, national. Candidates begin the application process by applying for a Member Award in their state, or nominating a peer. State winners are then moved forward for Region consideration as Region finalists by March 1. Region winners are selected by the Region Awards Committees and then moved forward for national consideration by the ACTE Awards Committee. National winners are announced at the ACTE Awards Banquet in conjunction with ACTE’s CareerTech VISION.

\**Avoid referring to the selection/review rounds /levels as ‘competitions.’*

**Other notes:**

* Region awards (NOT regional awards). Capitalize ‘R’ in ‘Regions’
* The ‘a’ in ‘awards’ is only capitalized when it is attached to the ‘Excellence Awards,’ ‘Awards Banquet,’ ‘Member Awards,’ or ‘Image Awards,’ or when a part of the official name of the award (ex. ACTE Career Guidance Award vs. ACTE Teacher of the Year award.)