

The Complete Guide

2024 New Jersey Press Association

Journalism Contest

Daily Division



New Jersey Press Association

P.O. Box 358

Titusville, NJ 08560

(609) 406-0600 • www.njpa.org



2024 New Jersey Press Association Journalism Contest

Daily Newspapers

The Essentials

CONTEST DEADLINE: Monday, [January 20, 2025](#)

All entries may be uploaded until 11:59 p.m.

CONTEST PERIOD: [January 1 to December 31, 2024](#)

WHO CAN ENTER:

NEW THIS YEAR

[Daily Over 20,000](#) • [Daily Under 15,000](#) • [Digital News Organizations \(enter in the over 15,000 division\)](#)

CONTEST WEBSITE: www.betternewspapercontest.com

All entries must be entered on the website.

YOUR PASSWORD:

If it is your first time logging into your account, use the temporary password: bnc. You will be asked to change it when you log on for the first time. However, if your newspaper entered last year, you already have a Contestant Manager who created a password. Please contact that person and request to be made an Authorized Entrant. If you don't know who your Contestant Manager is, call Peggy Arbitell at (609) 406-0600 opt 2.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ENTRIES: [Varies by category](#)

Please refer to the list of contest categories for specific information.

COST TO ENTER:

[Choose either \\$425 per newspaper or \\$15 per entry](#)

Choose either \$425 per newspaper or \$15 per entry, whichever is more affordable. Please total the number of your entries on the enclosed Contest Entry Form. Send the form and a check for the full amount to NJPA by the deadline. If entering multiple contests, a single check may be sent with the various contest entry forms or you may also pay with credit card.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

[Peggy Arbitell](#)
(609) 406-0600opt 2
parbitell@njpa.org
www.njpa.org

[New Jersey Press Association](#)
2024 Journalism Daily Contest
P.O. Box 358
Titusville, NJ 08560



Pay Attention
when you see this icon. It could make the difference between winning an award and having your entry disqualified.

General Information

New Jersey Press Association's Daily Journalism Contest encourages excellence by recognizing the achievements of NJPA member newspapers and digital news organizations. The contest looks to the future by encouraging news organizations to find new ways to inform, entertain, enlighten and engage their readers.

Eligibility

This competition is open to newspapers and digital news organizations that are full members of New Jersey Press Association whose dues and assessments are paid in full through December 31, 2024.

Contest Period

January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

Deadline

Monday, January 20, 2025

The contest website will accept entries until 11:59 p.m.

Judging

Entries will be judged according to the guidelines set forth in the category listings and rules. Judges who are independent of the New Jersey Press Association will select First, Second and Third place winners in each category. Awards will be granted only when judges believe that special recognition is warranted. In categories that receive fewer than four entries, the association encourages judges to award prizes only if the entries merit them.

Awards Presentation

Winners will receive their awards at NJPA's Spring Awards Celebration in April.

Entry Criteria

This contest has two divisions – Daily Over 15,000 and Daily Under 15,000– which are judged separately.



All entries must have been published between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023. Entries must have been published inside the newspaper or website except for O1–O5.

The maximum number of entries per category, per newspaper or digital news organization, is three, unless otherwise indicated in the category description.



An article or series of articles may be entered in only one category with one exception: One article of a series may be entered as part of an individual's portfolio. A "series" must have been clearly labeled as such in the newspaper. There is no limit to the number of stories in a series. A "portfolio" is three articles or examples by the same individual. A "sidebar" is considered an article. Note: A three-story series would be considered three articles in a portfolio.

Entries from a publication or magazine that are distributed with or within the newspaper on a regular basis throughout the year may enter any category. Publications distributed independent of the newspaper are not eligible for the contest.

Entries from a publication that is published outside of NJ and has NJ circulation that are members of NJPA, must only submit entries that pertain to NJ issues/topics.

The contest allows entries from wire services, from groups of NJPA daily newspaper members, and from businesses jointly owned by NJPA member newspapers. These entries may be submitted only in the Over 15,000 circulation division and will not count toward the General Excellence Award.

Cover letters or statements may be submitted in categories D1, D3, D4, O1 and O3. They are optional for categories O1 and O2.

Each print entry must be submitted as a URL or PDF tearsheet of the entire newspaper page, including the publication date. Identify each article, column or section by its title or headline; do not use just the reporter's or columnist's name. See Making entries on Page 7 for more details.

All online entries must have been created locally by you and must have appeared on your website. For each entry, submit a URL to a permanent location on your web server and a screenshot saved either as a PDF or JPEG.

For files larger than 20 MG, you can click the "RealView" icon on the Submit Entry page to create a free account, upload your files, and then copy and paste the URL into the URL field on the Submit Entry Page. You may also use a similar 3rd party website that provides hosting services (scribd.com, issuu.com, etc.). Alternatively, you can use Adobe to shrink your full-size edition and then upload it to the website. The size limit is 20 MB.

Again for this year, you will no longer need to mail in special sections, etc. Simply upload your shrunken file, or generate a link to your publication online using the third party software. Once you e-publish your large document, then copy the link. Paste the link into the entry form (instead of uploading). When judges click your entry, they will be instantly taken to your e-published document. Check your work by navigating to "Manage Entries" where you can test the link.

Color icons

Icons shown in each category indicate whether a statement or letter is required.



letter
required

Contest Instructions

New Jersey Press Association's Daily Journalism Contest is digital.

All editorial entries are submitted on the contest website:

www.betternewspapercontest.com. For best results, the contest website recommends using Google Chrome browser; and Firefox for older PCs and Macs. Please have a recent version downloaded and installed for best contest experience.

Reminders for this year's contest

Username and Password

Each person submitting entries will have a unique username and password.

Contestant Manager

The "Contestant Manager" controls what is entered in a contest for your newspaper or website.



- **IMPORTANT:** Your Contestant Manager is the same person year to year. The first person who logs into the contest and makes two entries becomes your Contestant Manager. (These first two entries may be test entries that are deleted after other entries are submitted.)
- NJPA has four contests: Advertising, Journalism Daily, Journalism Weekly, Daily Photography and Weekly Photography. Your newspaper or website can have a different Contestant Manager for each contest.

Questions?

Contact

NJPA's contest
coordinator:

Peggy S. Arbitell
(609)406-0600 ext.
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parbitell@njpa.org

- The Contestant Manager can choose to make entries exclusively or authorize others to make entries. To allow others to make entries, the Contestant Manager must create a separate account for each person.
 - The Contestant Manager has access to all entries submitted to a contest for your newspaper or website, and can edit, disable or delete any entry.
 - The Contestant Manager can access account information and passwords for every person he/she authorizes to make entries.

Authorized Entrant

Each person the Contestant Manager gives permission to make entries is an “Authorized Entrant”.

- While the Contestant Manager can see and edit all of the entries and account information, the Authorized Entrant only can see and edit the entries he/she made.

Scrapbooks

Potential contestants can save their work on the contest website in their own Scrapbook accounts. Scrapbooks are personal. They are not connected with a particular contest, but are available for any contest.

- For this contest, once a potential contestant has been made an Authorized Entrant, he/she can upload content from his/her Scrapbook directly into an entry.



Start early and become familiar with the process

We strongly recommend that you start making your entries early. Certainly don't wait until the day before the deadline!

We suggest you make some test entries to learn the process. Later, these test entries should be “disabled” so they are not part of your official entries.

Step-by-step directions for setting up accounts and making entries are available on the contest website – www.betternewspapercontest.com. Under “Contestant Login”, click on “Contestant Manager Help” or “Authorized Entrant Help”.

Or use these links for PDFs of the directions:

- Contestant Managers
http://betterbncsupport.com/images/ContestantManager_Instructions_4_3.pdf
- Authorized Entrants
http://betterbncsupport.com/images/AuthorizedEntrant_Instructions_4_3.pdf

If you have questions or problems, please contact Peggy Arbitell at 609-406-0600 opt 2, or parbitell@njpa.org.

For technical issues, go to the contest website – www.betternewspapercontest.com
Click on “contact BetterBNC”, then “Start Trouble Ticket”.

Contest definitions

Division: a specific contest, e.g., Advertising, Editorial Daily, Editorial Weekly, Daily Photography and Weekly Photography.

Category: a specific competition within a contest division, e.g., “News Writing Portfolio” or “Opinion Column”. Each division has a number of categories, which have specific requirements and limitations that are explained in the contest rules.

Entry: a submission in a category. Each category permits a specific number of entries. For example, a newspaper may submit two entries in the “Editorial Comment” category, but only one in the “Breaking News” category. The contest rules provide specific information.

Example: Some categories require multiple examples as part of each entry, e.g., several columns as part of a writing portfolio. In this case, ALL of the examples for the entry should be uploaded in as a URL or single PDF, e.g., three tearsheets containing the columns as separate pages in one PDF. For information on how to combine multiple tearsheets into one PDF, see Preparing your entries below.



Preparing your entries

Keep the judges happy!

If not uploading URL's, don't make them wait for your PDFs to be displayed because a file is too large. Entries that the judges cannot view will be disqualified.

Maximum entry size

Each entry should be less than 5 MB. Smaller is better, faster.

- Eliminate extra pages. Upload only the page on which the entry is located.
- For multiple-example entries, combine all examples into one PDF.
- Reduce the size of each PDF.

Extract pages from multi-page PDFs

If your entry is part of a multi-page PDF, open the PDF and save it with a new name. Open the new PDF, go to “Document” menu, select “Extract Pages” and follow the directions. Eliminate all pages that are NOT part of your entry.

Combine multiple PDFs into one

Open the PDF that you want first in your entry and save it with a new name. Open the new PDF, go to the “Document” menu and choose “Insert Pages”. Navigate to the PDF that you want next in the entry and select it. Continue until you have inserted all of your pages.

Make PDF files smaller

For printing, most newspaper PDFs include high-resolution grayscale or color images. However, contest entries will be viewed and judged on computer screens at low resolution (72–96 dpi) and in RGB color. Changing the resolution and color mode of images are the two most effective ways to reduce file size without sacrificing the screen viewing quality.

Use lower resolution

In PDFs, the text is clear regardless of resolution. Resolution only relates to photos and graphics. Reducing resolution by half can reduce an image file size by 75%. The

recommended maximum resolution of 96 dpi can be enforced in your Adobe Distiller settings.

You might create an Adobe PDF Preset called “NJPA Contest” with the recommended settings, and share it with all the Contestant Managers and Authorized Users in your company.

Or simply use the “Smallest File Size” preset, instead of “High Quality Print” or “Press Quality”.

Convert images to RGB color mode



Converting images from CMYK color mode to RGB will reduce image files by about 25%. This color conversion can be enforced in your Distiller settings.

Embed all fonts

Regardless how you make your PDFs, make sure ALL fonts are embedded. The judges will not have the same fonts as you have. If the PDF is missing fonts, your entry will not display properly.

Redistill PDFs

After making final adjustments to your PDF, redistill it to make it smaller.

Changes you made to your PDF may not yield the expected reduction in file size until you redistill the PDF. This is true even if you reduce resolution or change color mode using a PDF editor, like Enfocus Pitstop or Quite a Box of Tricks, or use the native profiling/editing tools in Acrobat 6 or later.

To redistill, open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat. Go to the “Advanced” menu, scroll down to “Print Production” and select “Acrobat Distiller”. Enter the settings recommended above or choose the preset that you created and be sure that ALL fonts are embedded.

Web entries

All website entries must be accessible online to the judges. PLEASE INCLUDE PASSWORD TO BYPASS FIREWALLS.

- Provide a direct URL for each entry, to a permanent location on your web server.
- If a username and password are required, please enter those details in the “Comments” box on the entry page.
- If the judge cannot access your entry, it will be disqualified.



Also, upload a screenshot of each entry, in PDF or JPEG format, for the slide presentations of winning entries shown during the award banquets.

Making entries

Headline or Title of Entry

Remember that you are submitting full-page PDFs or URL's, so please make sure your titles accurately identify the items the judges need to locate on the pages!

- In the “Headline or Title of Entry” box, enter the headline of the ad, article or photo being uploaded, exactly as it appears on the page.
- Do NOT use just the name of the advertiser, writer or photographer.
- For categories that require more than one example per entry, you may use the name

of the advertiser, writer or photographer if it is obvious on every example in the entry. Otherwise, list all of the headlines or titles, separated by double slashes like this:
Title1 // Title2 // Title3

- Do NOT use commas, semicolons, colons, dashes or single slashes to separate entry titles. Often they are used in headlines, but double slashes never are.

To add web/audio/video content, copy and paste the content's URL address into the provided Website URL field. To host your content online, either upload it to a free streaming content website (e.g. YouTube) or talk to your IT person about adding it to your publication's website. Make sure the content will be accessible online throughout the duration of the contest and judging process. IMPORTANT - Be sure that items are not behind a paywall or a password protected area.

Credits

In the boxes labeled "Who should be credited for this entry?" you can enter up to four names of people who worked on the entry.

- In the box titled "First Name" list the FULL name: Joe Green
- In the box titled "Last Name" list that person's title: Reporter, Editor, etc.
- If more than four people worked on the project, enter: Editorial Staff, etc.

Statements

Some categories require that a statement or cover letter be included with each entry.

- If a statement is required, attach it as a Microsoft Word document or PDF.

Official Entry Form

Once you have completed the entry form, click on the "Submit" button and you will be taken to the entry verification page, titled "This Page is Your Official Entry Form."

- From the verification page, you can "Submit Another Entry", "Manage Entries" or "Logout".
- DO NOT hit the Back button or you may eliminate this entry!

Once the maximum number of entries is reached in a category, that category is no longer available unless an entry is "disabled" using "Manage Entries".

You may print copies of the Official Entry Form for your use, but do not send them to NJPA.

Please send NJPA the Contest Entry Form that is included with this package.



Print Categories – Open to member newspapers

RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM

Two entries per newspaper per category unless specified.. PLEASE SUBMIT PASSWORD TO BYPASS FIREWALLS.

D1 Public Service – Lloyd P. Burns Memorial Award
(Lloyd Burns was the long-time general manager of the New Jersey Press Association who served in that capacity from 1950 until his untimely death in 1976 at the age of 60.)

This award goes to articles or series that help fulfill journalism's responsibility to use enterprise and initiative to advance the public good. Judged by the newspaper's willingness to commit resources, the team effort involved, the initiative shown in finding information and overcoming obstacles and the outcome of the articles or series. Entry must consist of 5 stories. An explanatory letter (200 words or less) may accompany each entry.



D2 Editorial Comment
This category is to encourage excellence in editorials and recognizes courage, analysis, research and writing style. An entry consists of three editorials or one series (no more than five) by the same writer.

D3 Enterprise Reporting (Three entries per newspaper)
An entry will demonstrate enterprise, initiative and resourcefulness by an individual or reporting team in a series or individual article reporting newsworthy developments. Limit of 5 stories per entry. Each entry may be accompanied by an editor's letter (200 words or less).



D4 First Amendment – Art Weissman Memorial Award
(Art Weissman was a talented journalist who worked for ABC news in New York, The Record in Hackensack and finally moved to the Asbury park Press in 1991. He became head of the Press' Statehouse bureau in 1993, overseeing coverage of government and politics for the paper and its sister publication, The Home News. In January 1997, he died suddenly of heart failure at the age of 37. Later that year the board of directors of NJPA established this award in his name.) This award recognizes excellence in reporting that highlights the importance of a free press, especially in coverage of state, county, or local government. Judges give special weight to reporting that uncovers actions detrimental to the public good and which would have remained hidden otherwise. Entries may be articles or series and may be accompanied by a letter (200 words or less) describing the impact of the news coverage and obstacles overcome to get the story. Each entry consists of three stories.



REPORTING & WRITING

Three entries per newspaper per category unless otherwise stated

- D5** **News Writing Portfolio**
An entry must be two articles demonstrating excellence in news reporting by the same individual. Entries may include coverage of education, health, science, the environment, technology, politics, courts, police or transportation. Judged on significance, clarity, originality and writing style.
- D6** **Specialty Writing Portfolio**
An entry must be three articles demonstrating excellence in topics such as medical, education or environmental writing by the same individual. Articles may be features, columns or daily reporting. Judged on significance, clarity, originality and writing style.
- D7** **Feature, Lifestyle & Entertainment Writing Portfolio**
An entry must be three articles demonstrating excellence in feature writing or coverage of lifestyle and/or entertainment by the same individual. Articles will be judged on significance, clarity, originality and writing style.
- D8** **Sports Writing Portfolio**
An entry must be three articles demonstrating excellence in sports reporting by the same individual. Articles may be features, or daily reporting. Judged on significance, originality and writing style.
- D9** **Scholastic Sports Writing Portfolio**
An entry must be three articles demonstrating excellence in coverage of high school or youth sports by the same individual. They may be features, columns or daily reporting. Judged on significance, clarity, originality and writing style.
- D10** **Business Writing Portfolio**
An entry must be three articles by one writer demonstrating excellence in business reporting. Articles may be features, columns or news coverage and will be judged on significance, clarity, originality and writing style.
- D11** **Government Writing Portfolio**
An entry must be three articles by one writer demonstrating excellence in government reporting. Articles may be features, columns or news coverage and will be judged on significance, clarity, originality and writing style.
- D12** **News Column**
An entry must be three locally written columns by the same columnist that appear regularly. Judged on writing style, originality, impact and local appeal
- D13** **Sports Column**

An entry must be three locally written columns by the same columnist that appear regularly. Judged on writing style, originality, impact and local appeal.

D14

Best Headlines

(One entry per newspaper or website)

An entry must be three headlines by the same individual. Headlines will be judged on accuracy, clarity and how well they pull the reader into the story.

D15

Critical Writing

An entry must be three articles by the same individual demonstrating excellence in areas such as art, movie, book and restaurant reviews. Judging will be based on technical knowledge as well as writing quality and local appeal.

D16

Critical Writing

This award goes to a journalist in their first year of professional work at a daily newspaper, website or other print media outlet that publishes regularly everyday and is a member of NJPA. An entry must be three articles demonstrating excellence in reporting and writing by the same individual. Entries may include any subject matter, but must show grasp of material and the ability to relate that material to the audience. Judged on clarity, reporting depth and writing style.

General Excellence Award

Two winners are named, one in each circulation division. Winners are chosen by tallying points based on each award won in each category including photography. First place earns three points, second place earns two points and third place earns one point.



Online Categories

Two entries per category per news organization.

D01

Best Web Project

Recognizes the presentation and content on a single topic. Projects may integrate both online and print elements, and should be innovative, visually stunning and have interactive components to engage readers. Project must have been created by the publisher. May include a description of the project and any promotion done in print. Submit a permanent link to the project, and a screenshot saved as PDF or JPEG. For projects with print elements, also submit PDFs of newspaper pages. PLEASE SUPPLY PASSWORD TO BYPASS FIREWALLS.

D02

Best Video

Recognizes a single video that uses visuals, natural sound, interviews and narration to tell a story. Can be related to breaking news, features or sports, and can be a supplement to print coverage or a stand-alone element. Emphasis will be placed on engagement and creativity. Submit a permanent link to the video, and a screenshot saved as PDF or JPEG. Contestant must include information in the comment box pertaining to their video the following instructions for the judge: For example: If the video is 15 minutes in length, they will instruct the judge to only concentrate on a specific portion of the video - such as minute 7 to minute 13, which pertains to the entry. PLEASE SUPPLY PASSWORD TO BYPASS FIREWALLS.



D03 Online Breaking News

Overall work on a breaking story within 24 hours after the story breaks. Judges will consider the speed with which postings were made, including overall coverage, updates, and supplementary information, such as photographs, video, audio, PDFs or any other form of multimedia. Submit permanent links to the elements, and one screenshot saved as PDF or JPEG. Include a short statement (maximum of 200 words) describing the specific circumstances surrounding the entry. Date of content must be verified by time stamps or a signed statement from the editor. PLEASE SUPPLY PASSWORD TO BYPASS FIREWALLS.

D04 Best Video Portfolio

Recognizes excellence in a video portfolio generated by a single journalist. A portfolio shall consist of no more than 5 entries and can be drawn from any platform. Can be related to any content topic or theme, and may include individual pieces of work nominated as a standalone entry in other categories. Contestant must include information in the comment box pertaining to their video the following instructions for the judge: For example: If the video is 15 minutes in length, they will instruct the judge to only concentrate on a specific portion of the video - such as minute 7 to minute 13, which pertains to the entry. Submit a permanent link to the video, and a screenshot saved as PDF or JPEG. PLEASE SUPPLY PASSWORD TO BYPASS FIREWALLS.

D05 Best Audio Portfolio

Recognizes excellence in an audio portfolio generated by a single journalist or a team of journalists. A portfolio shall consist of no more than 3 entries generated and produced by the same individual or team. Entries may include podcasts, audio briefings or audio used to complement traditional reporting. Can be related to any content topic or theme, and may include individual pieces of work nominated as a standalone entry in other categories. No time limit. Submit a permanent link to the audio file or podcast, and a screenshot saved as PDF or JPEG. PLEASE SUPPLY PASSWORD TO BYPASS FIREWALLS.



NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION
2024 Daily Journalism Contest Entry Form
 Daily Newspapers

_____ DAILY OVER 15,000 _____ DAILY UNDER 15,000 _____ DIGITAL NEWS MEDIA

Newspaper _____

Address _____

Contact Person _____ Title _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

The fee is \$425 per newspaper or \$15 per entry. You may pay by check or credit card. If paying by credit card, please select "Credit Card" below and submit this form via email to parbitell@njpa.org. NJPA will then email you an invoice for the payment along with a link to pay online through PayPal.

Payment options: _____ Credit Card _____ Check enclosed (payable to NJPA)

Below, indicate the total number of entries per category that your newspaper or company is entering.

CATEGORIES		# of Entries
D1	Public Service – Lloyd P. Burns Memorial Award	D1 _____
D2	Editorial Comment	D2 _____
D3	Enterprise	D3 _____
D4	First Amendment – Art Weissman Memorial Award	D4 _____
D5	News Writing Portfolio	D5 _____
D6	Specialty Writing Portfolio	D6 _____
D7	Feature, Lifestyle & Entertainment Writing Portfolio	D7 _____
D8	Sports Writing Portfolio	D8 _____
D9	Scholastic Sports Writing Portfolio	D9 _____
D10	Business Writing Portfolio	D10 _____
D11	Government Writing Portfolio	D11 _____
D12	News Column	D12 _____
D13	Sports Column	D13 _____
D14	Best Headlines	D14 _____
DO1	Best Web Project	O1 _____
DO2	Best Video	O2 _____
DO3	Online Breaking News	O3 _____
DO4	Best Video Portfolio	O4 _____
DO5	Best Audio Portfolio	O5 _____
AMOUNT PAYMENT enclosed		\$ _____

Contest Entry Form & Payment MUST arrive at NJPA's office by 4 p.m. on January 20, 2025
 parbitell@njpa.org or mail to: Daily Journalism Contest, P.O. Box 358, Titusville, NJ 08560