

2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

COLLEGE DIVISION

Welcome to the 2025 New England Better Newspaper Competition - New England's most prestigious journalism recognition program. NENPA member colleges and universities from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont are invited to enter.

In this packet you will find all of the information necessary to prepare your entries, including a list of competitive categories, complete rules and guidelines, and the criteria that each contest category will be judged upon. **You can find additional information on preparing entries - such as how to make PDF files smaller, extract particular pages, and how to combine several PDF files - in the **Frequently Asked Questions** page at the end of this packet.**

Work published by student newspapers, in print and/or online, during the **August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025** contest year is eligible for this competition.

The deadline to submit entries is **Friday, October 31, 2025**.

Awards will be presented during the annual New England Newspaper Convention (date and location to be announced.)

We wish you the very best of luck in this year's competition! If questions come up while preparing your entries please email **students@nenpa.com** or **info@nenpa.com**.

2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION**RULES AND GUIDELINES
COLLEGE DIVISION**

To submit entries, go to www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa and register.
*Please enter association code: **NENPA***

1. COMPETITION YEAR

The competition is open to all New England collegiate newspapers. Work published between August 1, 2024 and July 31, 2025 is eligible. A series that starts before the cut off date but continues beyond that date is eligible in its entirety.

2. DEADLINES

Entries should be uploaded by **October 31, 2025**.

3. ELIGIBILITY

All New England colleges and universities are invited to enter the competition.

4. COST

This year, schools may submit up to 10 entries for a flat fee of \$125. Any organization submitting more than 10 entries will be billed \$20 for each additional entry.

5. INSUFFICIENT ENTRIES

If not enough entries are received in any category, the staff reserves the right to cancel a category and/or change the number of awards given.

Questions? Contact us at students@nenpa.com or info@nenpa.com



2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

COLLEGE DIVISION

The College Division consists of 32 competitive categories:

REPORTING / WRITING

Critics Award (NEW)
Feature Story
Good News Award (NEW)
In-depth Reporting
News Story
Press Freedom or Right-to-Know
Protest and Demonstration Coverage (NEW)
Sports Story
Sports Game Story
Multimedia Reporting
Headline Writing
Editorial

SECTIONS AND DESIGN

Arts & Entertainment Page or Section
Special Section or Editorial Supplement
Front Page
Opinion Page(s)
Graphic Illustration

PHOTOJOURNALISM

Feature Photo
Sports Photo
General News Photo
Spot News Photo
Photo Series

DIGITAL

Online News Site
Podcast
Best Video
Social Media Portfolio (NEW)

ADVERTISING

Best Print Ad
Best Digital Ad

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Collaborative Journalism

TOP HONORS

Top College Journalist
College Rising Star
Newspaper of the Year

presented by:

**New England Society
of
News Editors**

2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION**COLLEGE DIVISION**

To submit entries, go to **www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa**

Please enter association code: **NENPA**

NOTE: All entries must be the work of the student publication. Material from syndicated services, wire services, etc. are not eligible to submit as their own work. **Each submission should be a single pdf that includes all pages—please do not submit every page separately.**

REPORTING / WRITING

Critics Award - An article, essay, column or review on any entertainment or culture topic, including (but not limited to) theatre, book, music, movie, and dining reviews. Entries must be written by full- or part-time members of the newspaper staff, or written exclusively for the newspaper submitting the entry

Feature Story - Judges will be looking for lively, readable coverage and will be asked to consider the quality of the reporting and writing, as well as its presentation. No sports stories in this category.

Good News Award – For outstanding journalism that highlights the uplifting, heartwarming, and hopeful stories that remind us of the good in the world. Whether spotlighting acts of kindness, everyday heroes, resilient communities, or creative solutions, these stories should be thoughtfully reported and beautifully told. Judges will look for originality, emotional resonance, and storytelling that goes beyond clichés—leaving readers informed, inspired, and maybe even smiling.

News Story - Single news story, can be accompanied by related sidebars published the same day. Judges will be asked to consider the quality of the reporting and writing, and the significance of the story, as well as its presentation.

Press Freedom or Right-to-Know - Recognizing a student journalist or student newspaper for outstanding work—whether a single story, series, editorial, or body of work—that demonstrates a strong commitment to upholding the principles of press freedom and the public's right to know. This award recognizes perseverance in the face of challenges, including efforts to hold school or public officials accountable, demand transparency, or protect the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment. It honors student journalism that champions open access to information and defends the role of a free and independent student press.

Protest and Demonstration Coverage - Honoring excellence in journalism that covers protests and civil demonstrations with depth, integrity, and impact. It recognizes journalists and newsrooms that bring attention to community voices, uncover the roots of civic unrest, and provide accurate, courageous, and ethically sound reporting—often under challenging or high-risk conditions. Entries should reflect a strong commitment to fairness, context, and storytelling that elevates public understanding.

Sports Story - Single sports story. The story can be about any sport, athlete or team at any level. Judges will be asked to consider the quality/originality of the subject matter and its treatment.

Sports Game Story - Covering a sporting event, written on deadline. Judges will be asked to consider the quality of reporting, writing, and presentation.

In-depth Reporting - Single story or series of stories. Entries should include a cover letter detailing efforts required to develop and substantiate the story or series, and any results or follow up. Judges will be asked to consider worthiness of subject and quality of reporting — including the use of multiple sources, data, quotes, clarity of writing and depth of information.

Multimedia Reporting - This category recognizes a packaged news story of any type that creatively and effectively incorporates multimedia components in its presentation – including print, photography, audio and/or video, slides, exhibits, reader interaction, etc. Please submit a note that describes the effort to report the story and the rationale for the formats used, along with tearsheets and URL.

Headline Writing - Each entry submitted should be for an outstanding headline written for a single story, and must include the story. Judges will be asked to consider effectiveness of the headline in telling the story, fairness in the headline's representation of the story content, colorful use of words, appropriate size for space and story.

Editorial - Please include the full page that includes the editorial submitted. Judges will be asked to consider quality of writing, fairness, significance of subject matter and demonstrated importance to the audience.

PHOTOJOURNALISM

Submission Guidelines

- ***A series of photos may be entered in only the Photo Series category, but photos entered as part of a series may also be entered as individual photos in other categories.***
- All entries must be submitted as JPEG files .
- **Tearsheets** - In addition to the JPEG, each entry MUST be accompanied by a digital tearsheet of the page.
- If the image appeared online only, a screenshot and/or a link to the image must be provided.

Feature Photo - Any photo showing an unusual event, item or person, (not necessarily of a specific news event) or an unusual photo of a commonplace event, item or person.

General News Photo - Any photo of a local happening that is known, assigned and planned for in advance, such as political rallies, campus events, drum and bugle corps competition, etc.

Photo Series – Two or more images that are taken and tell a story.

Sports Photo - A photo that captures the spirit of a sports event, competition or team.

Spot News Photo - Photos of unexpected news events, such as fires, accidents, unrest or disasters of any kind, for which there is no advance assignment or planning.

DIGITAL

Online News Site - Entries will be judged on content quality, timeliness of information, presentation and visual appeal, ease of navigation, usability, use of photos and/or graphics, use of links to other sites, integration of advertising, and overall value to the audience. Please submit your URL (including a password if required). Judges will view sites on a random day that will be stipulated by NENPA.

Best Podcast - This category recognizes journalistic storytelling told through a podcast on newspaper websites. Judges will consider quality of subject matter that educates, inspires and/or entertains. Entries may be an individual episode or one of a series within the contest year. A supporting description may be submitted.

Best Video - This category recognizes the best video on newspaper websites, including news, feature, entertainment, or sports. Judges will consider the quality of the content, the production quality of the piece, and how well it conveyed the story.

Social Media Portfolio - This category recognizes consistent outstanding storytelling published on your newsroom's social media channels. Judges will consider creative and effective use of multimedia elements such as video, audio, photography, graphics, and more. Submit three examples from platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, or others that show your best work.

SECTIONS AND DESIGN

Front Page - Judges will be asked to consider story/content selection, makeup, design, typography, general appearance, use of headlines and subheads in relationship to stories, and effective, dramatic use of photography.

Opinion Page - Please include your entire op-ed or commentary page(s) as your entry. Judges will be asked to consider variety, imagination, local focus, quality of writing, significance/effectiveness of editorials, columns, layout, and overall impact of editorial page(s).

Arts & Entertainment Page or Section - Judges will be looking for lively, readable coverage and critique of the local arts and entertainment scene. This should be a weekly or periodic section.

Special Section or Editorial Supplement - The supplement may cover any subject except entertainment. All editorial copy must be written by members of the newspaper staff, or written exclusively for the newspaper submitting the entry. Judges will be asked to consider: topic choice and reader interest, quality of writing, presentation and section structure.

Graphic Illustration - Recognizing artwork other than photography that is used to tell, explain or clarify a story through the use of illustrations, maps, charts, diagrams or other graphics. Please include a tearsheet or screenshot of digital work and any accompanying story with this entry.

New England Society of News Editors

ADVERTISING

Best Print Ad - Entries should be paid ads created by your newspaper for one of its advertisers. Ads may be black & white or color. Judges will be asked to consider the basic idea, layout (including typography, art work, organization), copy, use of color and originality.

Best Digital Ad - Entries can be a single ad or campaign that the paper developed for one of its advertisers. Judges will be asked to consider the basic idea, layout (including typography, art work, organization), copy, use of color and unique capabilities the digital format offers, as well as originality.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Collaborative Journalism - This award honors student newsrooms who have formed partnerships or collaborations to cover a topic, story, or community. Entries should include documentation from each partner in the collaboration covering the contributions from various entities that made the collaboration a success. A winning entry should show creativity and innovation through a partnership that resulted in outstanding journalism and unique storytelling approaches. If a professional news organization submits the same entry, the college will receive a credit for one entry in the contest in the following year.

The following awards are presented in partnership with the New England Society of News Editors:

TOP COLLEGE JOURNALIST – A *college senior* who epitomized the best of the craft over his or her college journalism career. Nominees may be reporters, editors, copy editors or digital journalists.

COLLEGE RISING STAR AWARD – Honors an *undergrad* who is already distinguishing her or himself as a standout in the newsroom. Nominees may be reporters, editors, copy editors or digital journalists.

Entry qualifications for both:

*Must be a college student studying journalism or a related field in a New England school. Please submit the following materials: cover letter, resume or biography, letter of recommendation, **AND** a body of published work in a school news publication, general circulation newspaper, or a similar publication **AND/OR** a body of work prepared for a journalism class. **Each submission should be a single pdf that includes all pages—please do not submit every page separately.***

NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Upload two editions of your newspaper that were published within the contest dates (August 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025), along with your URL and a cover letter.

Our panel of regional editors will judge your newspaper based on design, editing, writing, coverage and service to its readership. First, Second and Third Place will be awarded.

Frequently asked questions....

How does registration work?

Go to the online contest platform -- www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa. Here you will find a link to register along with specific instructions for registration. **Use association code: NENPA**

What file formats are accepted for uploading?

Acceptable formats include PDFs, URL links, and JPEG (for photos and graphics). **Note that a PDF or JPEG ensures our judges will be able to view your entries.** A URL bringing the judge directly to the item, without paywalls or registration required, is also accepted. If your site does have a paywall or required registration, you must include login information in the explanation field when submitting the entry. Entries will be disqualified if there is a paywall and no login information is provided.

How can I make my PDF smaller

For categories not pertaining to photography, graphics, or design we recommend optimizing the PDF through the PDF editor settings/tools - there is usually an "Optimize" option under File or Tools. There are also a number of online PDF compressors that allow you to quickly reduce the size of your PDF. We suggest www.pdfcompressor.com. This method will affect photos and graphics so do not use where those elements are being judged. Most newspaper PDFs include high-resolution grayscale or CMYK images for printing. However, PDF contest entries will be viewed and judged on a computer monitor, which displays at low resolution (72-96 dpi) in RGB color. Changes in resolution and color mode of images are the most effective ways to reduce file size without sacrificing quality. In PDFs, the text is always clear regardless of resolution. The resolution only relates to photos and graphics. Reducing resolution by half reduces image file size by 75%. The recommended max. resolution of 96 dpi can be changed via the PDF editors settings/preferences. Color Mode: Converting from CMYK to RGB color will reduce the image file size by another 25%. This can be done in the editor settings. Before submitting be sure to check the final entry PDF against the original (prior to compressing or changing resolution/color) to make sure you are satisfied with the results.

How do I extract pages from full-issue or full-section PDFs?

Open the PDF file in Acrobat and choose "Extract Pages..." from the Document menu. This will allow you to save individual or sequential pages in separate files anywhere on your computer. Alternatively, you can extract certain pages by going to File > Print and select Print to PDF under the printer option. Simply select the pages/page range to print to PDF.

How do I combine PDFs into a single file?

Open the PDF that you want to appear first in the entry. Choose "Save As..." from the File menu and give it the name of the final entry. Choose "Insert Pages..." from the Document menu, choose the file that you want to appear next in the entry, then specify where that file should be inserted. When all insertions have been made, save & close the PDF. Make sure the final PDF is optimized for size/resolution

How do I pay for my entries?

NENPA will send an invoice after the entry period is closed.

When are awards presented?

Awards will be presented during the annual New England Newspaper Convention (date and location to be announced.)

Questions? Contact Linda Conway at L.Conway@nenpa.com or Tara Cleary at t.cleary@nenpa.com