



NEA – Retired “Spirit of Membership Award” Program Overview

Membership is the “lifeblood” of any nonprofit organization, but for an organization to flourish, its membership must be organized, engaged, and active. The Spirit of Membership Award recognizes and honors those state and local retired affiliates that, while building membership, have innovative programs to engage, involve, grow, and advocate around professional issues within their organization, state, and communities.

Goal: To recognize and honor state and local retired affiliates that have developed successful, innovative, and productive programs that exhibit positive membership results in one or more of the following areas:

- **Leadership** – The program successfully exhibits strategies that have resulted in organizing or mobilizing members.
- **Involvement/Capacity** – The program shows marked increase in the number of retired members participating in retired affiliate initiatives.
- **Communication** – The program shows improved sharing of overall retired affiliate information with and among members to promote unity, and with others to promote program success.
- **Advocacy/Social Justice** – The program has built advocacy skills of members and gained momentum in protecting or improving members’ benefits and rights or those of its targeted population.
- **Community Outreach** – The program allows for productive interaction and/or collaboration on shared community and/or association-based initiatives.
- **Growth** – The program has effectively increased retired affiliate membership numbers or shows the potential to do so.

Eligibility: All state and local retired affiliates, in good standing with the NEA and NEA-Retired (and state retired affiliates in the case of a local submission) are eligible. An application must be postmarked by April 15th of the award year to qualify. The program submitted may be for the current fiscal year or the previous fiscal year. Affiliates may submit applications on an annual basis but cannot resubmit an application from a previous year. Only newly created applications will be considered.

Judging: Program submissions will be scored by the Awards Committee using a scoring rubric. The program submission that earns the highest combined total of the judges’ scores will be deemed the award winner.