



The ClearMark Awards  
How to Have a Successful Submission  
December 4, 2018

- About the ClearMark Awards
- Why Enter
- Award Tiers and Categories
- Judging Criteria
- How to Enter
- Q&A

# Today's Agenda

# Our 2018 Sponsors

## — Corporate Circle —

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simplicity | clarity | illumination

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Solstice Benefits  
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## — Contributor —

Western & Southern Life  
David Berman  
Kate Sussman  
C-Point  
Zuula Consulting  
The Plain Language Group



# About The ClearMark Awards

Sets a high standard for clarity and simplicity

Recognizes excellence in English and Spanish content created by North American organizations

Provides robust feedback you can use to improve your content



# Why enter?

Be recognized for outstanding work via a competitive process

Get robust feedback with extensive analysis that improves your work

Get our help marketing your award winning work with press release templates and videos

# Who should enter?

Plain language communicators who:

Created or substantially improved a consumer-facing communication

Released in 2016-2018 for North America

You won't be considered if:

You entered the identical or similar asset(s) last year (revisions are okay)

You've won your category in the past two years

# Should I enter?

If I....

Am a contractor who created an asset on behalf of a client in the United States?

Work for an American organization that created this asset for people outside the United States?

Work for a global organization that creates assets for people in the United States and other countries?

# How much does it cost?

Fee for each submission:

Members	\$180
Non-Members	\$230

Your fees help pay for the cost of the awards.

# How do I save on fees?

Join the Center for Plain Language!

Become a member for \$50 per year!

Get the member rate on submissions and special events!

Get access to information about international standards and our new forthcoming job list!

Join now. Fee is going up in 2019.

# Award Tiers and Categories



# Award Tiers

Grand ClearMark Award

Category Winner

Award of Distinction

# Award Categories – Languages

Two Eligible Languages

English

Spanish

# Categories

Digital – Websites

Digital – Apps and Microsites

Digital – Email and Newsletters

Letters/Print Correspondence

Posters, Charts, Fliers

Infographics

Brochures – Up to 10 Pages

Brochures – More than 10 Pages

Legal Documents

Forms, Applications, Statements

Before and After – Digital

Before and After – Print

# Digital – Websites

Websites with more than 20 pages

Tips:

Select five pages for judging

Choose pages that reflect your strategy

Choose most useful, helpful content

# Digital – Apps and Microsites

Microsites: Fewer than 20 web pages

Apps: Native apps or part of a website, such as a wizard, interactive advisor, or calculator

Tips:

Judges can't install apps on their devices, please submit five screen shots

Videos **are** accepted as part of the entry (include the script)

Choose pages that reflect your strategy and most helpful content

# Digital – Emails and Newsletters

Any email message or campaign is eligible

Can mirror a print version (newsletter)

No asset length requirements

Tips:

Choose your five best examples

Provide links or PDFs

For emails, put into one PDF review

# Letters/Print Correspondence

Any print letter or other communication  
via the USPS

No length requirements

Tip:  
Choose your five best examples

# Posters, Charts, and Fliers

This is a print-only category

Uses effective design and copy to tell a story

Tips:

Submit individual examples or a campaign

If you submit as a campaign, share the context and strategy

# Infographics

Visually communicates data while telling a story

Tips:

Submit individual examples or a campaign

If you submit as a campaign, share the context and strategy

# Brochures – Up to 10 Pages/More than 10 Pages

Print or digital brochures

Examples:

Insurance Summary of Benefits

Health Plan Summaries

Workplace Policies

Marketing Collateral (Complex topics)

Tip:

Submit as a PDF

# Legal Documents

Documents that address legal issues or content

Examples:

Terms and Conditions

Explanation of Benefits

Bankruptcy Forms

Tip:

Submit as a PDF

# Forms, Applications, and Statements

Print or digital transactional forms

Any type of application or statement is appropriate

Examples:

Online application

Financial statement

Tip:

Submit as a PDF

# Before and After

Submit your best examples of transformed work

Two categories: print and digital

Tips:

Showcase your content transformation

Share the story of the journey

Submit PDF examples of before and after



# Judging Criteria

# Judging Criteria

Based on international plain language definitions and criteria

Can the user find what they need?

Can they understand what they find?

Can they act on that understanding?

# How Are Winners Selected?

Awards of Distinction:

Panel of 2-4 judges; Review, score and select winners

Category Winners:

Panel of 2-4 Category Judges; Review, score and select winners

Grand Award:

Head Judge and Category Judges confer and select

# Role of Judges

Attend orientation and planning calls

Review 6 to 15 entries across a single category

Score and rank entries, based on criteria

Collaborate with fellow judges to confer Awards of Distinction and Category Awards

Provide written feedback on each entry

Total commitment: Up to 30 hours

# Scoring

Needs Work – Missed the mark on plain language usage

Improving – Uses basics, but misses most of the principles of plain language

Average – Competent example

Above Average – Small room for improvement

Outstanding – Excellent and inspiring example of plain language that is used in a masterful way

# Scoring: Audience Needs

Is it clear what the goal is for the audience?

Will they learn something or take a specific action?

Are the writing, tone, and creative presentation appropriate for the audience?

Does the judge get the sense that the creator wanted the target audience to understand and succeed?

# Scoring: Style and Voice

Did the creator follow plain language principles?

Does the content feel credible and sincere?

Does the voice, tone, word choice and style convey respect for the audience?

Does the creator avoid jargon, acronyms?

# Scoring: Structure and Content

Are the sections clearly organized and labeled?

Do labels help the reader predict what's in each section?

Does the writer create effective transitions?

Is the content presented in an order that tells a story or helps the user complete a task?

Does the creator convey key content while avoiding unnecessary details?

Does the creator provide relevant information in a balanced way (not overselling or underselling)?

# Scoring: Information Design and Navigation

Do the typography, color, and white space guide the reader's attention?

Does the layout make the information easy to scan?

Can a user tell at a glance where the important information is?

(Websites) Does the navigation offer a visible, guided path through the content?

# Scoring: Graphics and Charts

Do the pictures, graphics, or charts support the content?

Will users understand the point of the graphics or chart?

Do the visuals help a user understand important information? Do they show them how to take action?

OR

Are the images and graphics purely decorative?

Would the content be easier to understand if the creator chose more or different images?

# Scoring: Evaluation Tools

Were the evaluation tool(s) (surveys, focus groups, etc.) appropriate for this audience? Is the data useful?

Were the evaluation tool(s) used at the right time?

Did the submission include an explanation of the tool(s) and why they were used?

Was the evaluation completed by a representative audience?

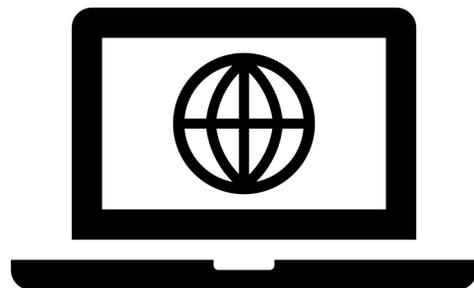
Were the findings used to shape and improve the final product?

# Scoring: Overall

Can the target audience find, understand, and take action based on this content?

Does this entry help the organization achieve business goals (i.e., increased customer self-service, informed decisions)?

Is this an example of effective plain writing and information design?



# How to Enter

# Entry Form

[centerforplainlanguage.org/submit/](http://centerforplainlanguage.org/submit/)

Include in the submission:

Submitter and contact information

Content owner/contact information

Category

Title

Publication date

Goal of the entry (4000 characters)

Target audience (1000 characters)

Project constraints (2000 characters)

How success was evaluated (4000 characters)

The impact/usage of plain language (2000 characters)

Upload of the document/content

# Final Tips

Get feedback from your team(s).

Use our Word template to prepare.

Tell YOUR story. Everyone who enters writes in plain language. Why is your entry unique?

Prove it. Quantify the impact of this entry using data. Alternatively use qualitative data.

Have a credit card handy.

Trouble using the form or logging in? Email [support@submittable.com](mailto:support@submittable.com).

# When to submit

Start: 10 a.m. ET on Jan. 2

Finish: 11:59 p.m. Feb. 2

# Q&A

Questions? Need help?  
[info@centerforplainlanguage.org](mailto:info@centerforplainlanguage.org)