



2026 National Coffee Association

Rising Star Award

Terms & Conditions

DESCRIPTION OF THE AWARD

The National Coffee Association's Rising Star Award (NCA Rising Star Award) honors an emerging young professional in the U.S. coffee industry who is under the age of 40 and has a total of 5 to 10 years of experience in the coffee industry. The recipient of this special recognition has demonstrated exceptional creativity, forward-thinking, innovative ideas, and inspiring leadership skills, making a notable impact within their organization or the coffee industry.

This award recognizes a young professional whose contributions exceed expectations, demonstrating exceptional growth and impact, and indicating a promising future for both them and the entire coffee industry.

NOMINEE'S ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- The nominee must be a current member of the NCA in good standing.
- The nominee must be under the age of 40 and have a total of 5 to 10 years of professional experience in the coffee industry.
- The nominee must have exceeded the expectations of their duties and responsibilities.
- No restrictions as to the classification of membership.
- The timeframe of the nominee's contributions is open-ended.
- The nominee must be widely regarded as possessing integrity, honesty, and the respect of his/her peers.
- Current members of the NCA Board of Directors are not eligible for consideration during their term of office. Nomination of a prior board member cannot occur until the candidate has left the Board.
- The award recipient or a representative, on behalf of the Award recipient, must be available for the Awards Presentation during the NCA Annual Convention.

BENEFITS

The NCA Rising Star Award recipient will receive the following benefits:

- Press release announcing the NCA Rising Star Award Winner.
- A complimentary delegate registration to attend the NCA Annual Convention at which he/she is honored.¹
- Presented with a commemorative plaque at the NCA Annual Convention at which he/she is honored.
- Receive an NCA Rising Star Award badge ribbon at the NCA Annual Convention at which he/she is honored.
- Recognized on the event app of the NCA Annual Convention at which he/she is honored.
- Recognized in an issue of the *NCA Coffee Reporter Weekly* before the NCA Annual Convention.
- Recognized on a dedicated NCA Rising Star Award webpage on the NCA website.
- The winner will receive additional recognition among their peers with a post on the NCA LinkedIn page.

NOMINATION PROCESS

- A minimum of two (2) nominations is required, but a maximum of four (4) nominations may be submitted by NCA members or non-members.
- **Required Nominations:**
 - One (1) Lead Nomination.
 - One (1) Supporting Nomination.
- **Additional Nominations (Not Required):**
 - Two (2) additional Supporting Nominations may be submitted.
- Self-nominations are not accepted.
- Nominations must be in English.
- Nominations must explain why the nominee deserves, above all others, this award.
- Nominations must contain sufficient information to inform the NCA Awards Committee without additional research.

¹ Complimentary NCA Annual Convention delegate registration only and does not include any optional activities and events that require additional registrations and/or fees.

- **Nominations will address the following areas:**
 - Character, Leadership Qualifications, and Commitment
 - Work Performance
 - Innovation & Creativity
 - Results and Impact

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

Online Submission Deadlines: November 7, 2025.

- **Supporting Nominators** must submit their nominations by **November 3, 2025**, so that the **Lead Nominator** has time to submit all required nominations by **November 7, 2025**.
- For nominees to be considered as award recipients at the next NCA Annual Convention, nominations must be submitted to the NCA by **November 7, 2025**.

AWARDS PRESENTATION: Friday, March 13, 2026. The Awards Presentations will take place during the Friday Luncheon & Awards Ceremony at the 2026 NCA Convention.

JUDGES AND JUDGING CRITERIA

- The NCA Awards Committee shall review nominations for the Rising Star Award.
- The NCA Awards Committee will consist of the current Chair of the NCA Board and at least four other members of the NCA Board of Directors. The NCA Awards Committee may include additional judges designated by the Awards Committee and the NCA.

SELECTION PROCESS AND NOTIFICATION

- **SELECTION PROCESS**
 - The final candidate for the NCA Rising Star will be determined by consensus of the NCA Awards Committee.
 - The recommendation by the NCA Awards Committee will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors.
 - The NCA Rising Star Award is limited to one recipient in any given year.
 - The NCA Rising Star Award is not required to be given annually.

- The NCA Award Committee may decide not to give the award if, in its sole discretion, the judging criteria are not met.

- **NOTIFICATION**

The NCA Rising Star Award recipient and nominators will be notified by the Chair of the NCA Awards Committee. Such notification will be sent by email within 30 days prior to the date of the Award presentation. The email will contain a request not to disclose the selection prior to the official announcement by the NCA.

RELEASE WAIVER AND USE OF NOMINATOR'S INFORMATION

The NCA will not return any of the submission materials. By submitting a nomination for the 2026 NCA Rising Star Award the nominator takes full responsibility for the accuracy of all information submitted and warrants that all necessary permissions have been obtained from others who may have rights to the information and/or materials and that no compensation is due to the nominator in exchange for the information/materials submitted. Nominator further holds the NCA and NCA employees, agents, officers, directors, and members harmless from all liability, and grants to the NCA the non-exclusive right to publish, reproduce, and distribute submitted information on the NCA website, at the 2026 NCA Convention, on the 2026 NCA Convention app, and in NCA digital, social, and print communications.

REMOVAL AND REVOCATION OF NCA RISING STAR AWARD

The NCA shall have the sole authority and discretion to remove an individual from the NCA Rising Star Award and all privileges connected therewith, having determined that there is good cause to do so. This may include, but is not limited to, misrepresentation, fraud, deception, or unethical practices. The NCA's discretion in this matter shall include the right to rescind an Award and remove the individual from the list of honorees after the Award has been bestowed.

AMENDMENTS

The NCA shall have the sole authority to interpret and enforce all terms and conditions contained herein, to make any amendments thereto, and to make further rules as shall be considered necessary. Any and all matters or questions not specifically covered by these terms and conditions are subject to the discretion of the NCA, whose decisions will be final.

NCA PRIVACY POLICY

[Click here](#) to view the most recent Privacy Policy.

QUESTIONS

Contact Terri Bartlett, Director of Member Relations, [via email](#) or at (646) 924-4039.