



## **Industry Awards Guidelines 2025–2026**

Welcome to the East Coast Music Association (ECMA) 2026 Industry Awards submission guidelines. The East Coast Music Association presents over 30 music and industry awards each year. Award submissions are adjudicated by juries of qualified regional, national and international music industry professionals and peers.

Please review all guidelines before proceeding with your submission. Applicants are expected to be familiar with all general award guidelines as well as the guidelines pertaining to the categories for which they are applying.

# EAST COAST MUSIC ASSOCIATION

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East Coast Music Association Inc., Halifax, Nova Scotia

Toll-free: 1-800-513-4953 / Local: 1-902-423-6770 / Email: [membership@ecma.com](mailto:membership@ecma.com)

## **KEY DATES**

### **Submission Period**

September 2 to October 6, 2025

### **Eligibility Period**

Submitted materials must apply to the period of June 1, 2024 – Dec 31, 2025

### **Nomination Announcement**

Following submissions and jurying, nominees will be announced at the ECMA 2026 Press Conference in early 2026.

### **Winner Announcement**

ECMA winners will be announced live at the East Coast Music Awards: Festival & Conference in Sydney, Cape Breton, May 20–24, 2026.

# **EAST COAST MUSIC ASSOCIATION**

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Atlantic Canadian**

Applicants must be Atlantic Canadian in accordance with the ECMA definition. In the case of a group, an artist listing may include the terms “vs” “&” or “featuring,” however, at least 50% of group members must fulfill this eligibility criteria. This excludes any sampled or AI-generated music.

For awards and showcase purposes, Atlantic Canada is defined as New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. To be defined as Atlantic Canadian, a person must either be born in Atlantic Canada or have lived in Atlantic Canada for at least 12 months during the ECMA eligibility period. In the case of a group, at least 50% of members must be Atlantic Canadian. Cases where an Atlantic Canadian plays a primary leadership role in the project are eligible for consideration, subject to approval by the Awards & Stages Committee.

Atlantic Canadian Business: Candidates must reside and work in Atlantic Canada. In the case of a company, candidates must maintain an office and be a registered business in Atlantic Canada to be eligible.

### **ECMA Membership**

Applicants must hold a membership in good standing with the East Coast Music Association. This means having an up-to-date ECMA membership, with no one in your group or party having had their membership revoked due to violations of the ECMA Code of Conduct.

Applicants who do not hold an active ECMA membership will be contacted to update their membership before being considered for an award nomination or stage opportunity. Note that a free ECMA membership is included in, and can be claimed by providing ECMA with proof of, membership with any of the following music industry associations:

East Coast Music Association Inc., Halifax, Nova Scotia

Toll-free: 1-800-513-4953 / Local: 1-902-423-6770 / Email: [membership@ecma.com](mailto:membership@ecma.com)

- African Nova Scotian Music Association
- Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative
- Music/Musique NB
- MusicNL
- Music Nova Scotia
- Music PEI

If you have any questions regarding your membership status, please log in to your account online or email us at [hello@ecma.com](mailto:hello@ecma.com).

## Category Minimums

ECMA requires a minimum of four (4) submissions from different applicants in order for an industry award category to run. If fewer than four submissions are received in a given category, applicants will be notified and the category will not run that year.

## Eligibility Issues

Any eligibility-related issues shall be dealt with at the sole discretion of the ECMA Awards & Stages Committee. ECMA reserves the right to disqualify any applications that do not meet ECMA's Eligibility/Basic Requirements. Applicants whose submissions are disqualified or not accepted will not be notified.

# **EAST COAST MUSIC ASSOCIATION**

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

### **Deadline**

Submissions will be accepted from September 2, 2025 at 9:00 AM (ADT) to October 6, 2025 at 11:59 PM (ADT) at [ecma.awardstage.com](https://ecma.awardstage.com).

All submission requirements must be met at the time of submission. In the interest of fairness, incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

### **Fees**

Industry awards do not have an application fee.

Membership fees associated with the application must be received for the application to be considered.

# EAST COAST MUSIC ASSOCIATION

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

*NOTE: There are separate applications for awards and showcase opportunities. To be considered for a stage performance, please submit a Stages Application.*

1. Name of applicant to be considered for an award
2. What region do they represent?
3. Lead contact information (name, role, phone number, email, address)
4. Promo photo (JPG, JPEG, PNG, GIF)
  - a. Please ensure your photo is landscape oriented, minimum of 300dpi, and labeled correctly with "Your Name". Photos that are not properly submitted will not be used.
5. Short bio
6. Evaluation criteria
  - a. Please check the evaluation criteria in the [Award Overview & Criteria](#) section for the Industry Award in which you are applying.
7. Self identification information

## JURYING PROCESS

After an internal screening process, applications are juried by qualified regional, national, and/or international industry professionals and artists selected for their specific expertise across musical genres. ECMA aims to assemble juries that reflect the diversity of regions, communities and musical genres in Atlantic Canada. Each jury is made up of a minimum of 3 jurors. Jury members evaluate applications and score based on set criteria as outlined in the [Award Overview & Criteria](#) section.

Nominees are selected from the combined average of juror scores. While the normal number of nominees for each category is 5, there may be more than 5 nominees per category, such as in the event of a tie. There may also be fewer than 5 nominees, such as in the event of a disqualification.



# EAST COAST MUSIC ASSOCIATION

## AWARD OVERVIEW & CRITERIA

Jurors are asked to score each submission based on the criteria outlined below.

### Artist Management of the Year

*Awarded to:* Manager or Management Company

*Recognizes:* An Atlantic Canadian artist manager or management company who has had an exceptional impact on Atlantic Canadian artists during the eligibility period.

*Minimum Criteria:*

A short biography outlining the manager or management company's, and their artists', accomplishments during the eligibility period.

List of manager or management company's public appearances and involvement in professional development activities (e.g. volunteer work, community involvement, mentorship, panel appearances, etc.)

Links to press coverage of artists.

### Evaluation Criteria

Assess the activity of the manager or management company's roster. Are the artists performing, getting sync placements, releasing music?	40%
Assess the manager or management company's effectiveness in maintaining and enhancing the artist's public image, including media relations, and overall communication strategy. Consider the success in gaining positive media coverage and managing public perception.	40%
Assess the manager or management company's participation in the music community through volunteer work, mentorship, panel appearances, advisory board committees etc.	20%

## Event of the Year

*Awarded to:* Event Leadership

*Recognizes:* An outstanding event held during the eligibility period that prominently featured live performances by Atlantic Canadian artists.

*Minimum Criteria:*

A description detailing the event's promotion of Atlantic Canadian musicians, value to the community, conditions for artists, and overall public participation.

List of accomplishments/contributions to the Atlantic Canadian music industry.

Full list of performers and the Atlantic Canadian region (New Brunswick; Newfoundland and Labrador; Nova Scotia – Cape Breton; Nova Scotia – Mainland; Prince Edward Island) they are from.

Total number of attendees.

### Evaluation Criteria

Assess accomplishments during the eligibility period (e.g. event execution, inaugural event press coverage. In the case of standing events: new stage development, improved event environment.)	25%
Evaluate event attendance and its impact on the local community's music industry.	25%
Assess the amount of Atlantic Canadian talent given performance slots and the conditions in which artists were expected to work.	25%
Consider the breadth of the event's financial and community partnerships	25%

## Innovator of the Year

*Awarded to:* Individual or Company

*Recognizes:* An individual or company who has demonstrated innovation and creativity leading to unique accomplishments and contributions.

*Minimum Criteria:*

A short biography of the applicant's achievements and contributions.

Description of implemented project/initiative(s) during the eligibility period and how the project/initiative(s) were innovative in planning and execution.

### Evaluation Criteria

Consider if the project/initiative(s) satisfied a need in the music industry.	25%
Assess how the project/initiative(s) were innovative in planning and execution	50%
Assess the accomplishments as a result of the innovative project/initiative(s).	25%

## Media Excellence Award

*Awarded to:* Media person (Individual)

*Recognizes:* An individual who has provided outstanding support to Atlantic Canadian artists through media coverage of arts, culture, and industry in the region.

## *Minimum Criteria:*

A short biography outlining the individual's accomplishments/contributions during the eligibility period and that they have been active in music media for at least 2 consecutive years (radio host, journalist, podcaster, music blogger, TV host, YouTuber, etc.).

Have a consistent publication or production schedule (e.g., minimum 10 pieces per year).

Electronic samples of the individual's work during the eligibility period. Please only submit three (3) samples of work – if more than three (3) samples are submitted, jurors will choose which samples to consider. Samples can include: print, radio, TV, podcasting, YouTube, social media, blogs, etc.

Demonstrate a professional body of work focused significantly on East Coast music and artists by providing a list of Atlantic Canadian artists, events, or venues covered in the eligibility period.

Operate on a legitimate platform—either through a recognized outlet (CBC, SaltWire, Spotify podcast etc.) with a measurable audience, or a verified, self-produced platform with proven audience and engagement.

Have a measurable public reach, engagement, and impact promoting Atlantic Canadian artists creating original music and the East Coast performance spaces they play. This can be demonstrated via:

- Readership/listenership/viewership stats
- Social media engagement
- Syndication or republication

## Evaluation Criteria

Credibility	Evaluate the journalist's editorial integrity by accessing their factual accuracy and the professional reputation of the media outlet(s) they work with.	25%
Reach	Evaluate the audience reached through print circulation, digital traffic, broadcast listenership / viewership, social engagement, or syndication.	25%
Quality of Work	Consider clarity and the ability to present compelling narratives. Are the works well produced and edited with appropriate visuals added?	25%
Who Are They Giving Voice To?	Assess the diversity and range of voices considering: where the interviewees are from (regional vs. provincial), as well as representation of marginalized or underrepresented artists and communities.	25%

## **Recording Engineer of the Year**

*Awarded to:* Individual

*Recognizes:* Excellence in sound recording engineering.

### *Minimum Criteria:*

Biography of the technician outlining the individual's accomplishments.

List of artists, producer(s), studio(s) worked with during the eligibility period.

Three (3) samples of projects worked on during the eligibility period.

## Evaluation Criteria

Biography and accomplishments.	30%
Artists, producer(s), studio(s) worked with during the eligibility period.	20%
Quality of projects worked on during the eligibility period.	50%

## Technical Excellence Award

*Awarded to:* Individual

### *Recognizes:*

An individual who has demonstrated outstanding skill and professionalism in a live technical role supporting the Atlantic Canadian music industry. This includes (but is not limited to) work in live sound, lighting, backline, stage management, tour production, and technical direction. Roles essential to successful live performance, touring, and music presentation.

### *Minimum Criteria:*

- A short biography outlining the individual's technical background, areas of expertise (e.g., audio, lighting, video, backline, stage, etc), and experience working in live environments.
- Provide examples that demonstrate the individual's technical contributions during the eligibility period. This may include a list of artists, festivals, venues, tours, or music events the individual supported during the eligibility period. This should illustrate both the consistency of their work and the breadth of their involvement across the region. Optional: letters of support, artist/colleague testimonials, photos, or other supporting documentation.
- An outline of the individual's engagement with the East Coast music community. This could include touring across provinces, mentoring emerging techs, working on community events, professional development, speaking on panels, or supporting under-resourced venues or organizations.

## Evaluation Criteria

Consistency Assess the individual's ability to consistently deliver high-quality work while demonstrating a sustained commitment to the industry, including dedication to multi-year projects, long-term collaborations, and continued professional involvement.	25%
Technical Skill Evaluate the individual's expertise in their technical field (audio, lighting, stage, backline, etc.). with particular attention to their versatility, adaptability, and ability to collaborate.	25%
Impact on Music Industry & Community Consider how their work enhanced the experience for peers, artists and/or audiences.. Did their contribution elevate the performance environment or final output?	25%
Support for Atlantic Music Industry Assess the individual's engagement with the East Coast music community — e.g., working across multiple provinces, mentoring others, or contributing to community events.	25%

## **Venue of the Year**

*Awarded to:* Venue

*Recognizes:* A club, soft seat theatre, or any venue with a capacity of 1,750 or less located in Atlantic Canada that has featured live performances by Atlantic Canadian artists.

*Minimum Criteria:*

The venue must be located in Atlantic Canada.

A short description detailing the venue's musical focus and how a quality event experience is facilitated for performers and the audience.

List of performances (acts and dates) booked within the eligibility period.

## Evaluation Criteria

Assess the impact within the community by evaluating the programming based on frequency of performances, notoriety of acts performing, and focus on original music.	50%
Assess the conditions for the artists and professionalism of the venue (professional sound techs, sound and lighting gear, etc.)	50%

## **Visual Artist of the Year**

*Awarded to:* Individual

*Recognizes:* A visual artist who has contributed to the Atlantic Canadian music industry through the creation of visuals (still or video) for artist promotion.

### *Minimum Criteria:*

A short biography outlining the applicant's accomplishments during the eligibility period.

Three (3) digital examples of visual work completed during the eligibility period. If more than three (3) samples are submitted, ECMA will ask the jury to consider the first 3 works submitted. For short clips you may edit together a single 2 minute highlight reel as one of your three (3) samples of work.

## Evaluation Criteria

Consider the artists, music industry organizations, or businesses worked with during the eligibility period.	25%
Evaluate if the content is creative, aligned with artists' overall branding, and engaging.	50%

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Assess the accomplishments such as awards or accolades of the individual or company.	25%
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## ECMA DEFINITIONS

For detailed definitions of terms for ECMA purposes, please visit:

[www.ecma.com/ecma-definitions/](http://www.ecma.com/ecma-definitions/)