

great ourregionawards applicationguide2018

The Our Great Region Awards recognize outstanding projects, plans, programs, and policies advancing the goals and strategies identified in the Our Great Region 2040 plan. Completed in 2014, the Our Great Region 2040 plan is a high-level plan providing tools and strategies that could be used to make the 13-county region an even better place to live, work, and prosper by the year 2040. Find the plan at www.ourregion.org.

Big Ideas for Our Region

The Our Great Region 2040 plan is founded on six Big Ideas that provide a road map for our region to become a great place to live, work, and prosper.

The Big Ideas include:

Economic Development

Strengthening our economic competitiveness through an educated and skilled workforce

Environment

Securing a clean and ample water supply

Healthy Communities

Cultivating places where people can lead active, healthy lives

Housing

Providing balanced housing choices near jobs, services, and transportation options

Transportation

Achieving a world-class transportation network

Resiliency

Increasing our resiliency to disaster and a changing environment

Timeline

October 15	●	Application
November 16	●	Application Deadline
December 28	●	Award Notification
January 18	●	Award Ceremony

Eligibility

Plans, programs, projects, or policies that have furthered the goals of the Our Great Region 2040 plan within the 13-county region in the past three years are eligible for submission. The 13-county region includes Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Harris, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, and Wharton counties.

Any organization may apply for the award(s). Organizations may include cities, counties, other units of local governments, nonprofits, educational institutions, private businesses, and community groups.

Award Categories



The Connection Award
Honors a project that uses innovative partnerships to accomplish a strategy of the Our Great Region 2040 plan



The Diligence Award
Honors a completed project that used a creative and tenacious approach to overcome challenges to implementation



The Reach Award
Honors a project that demonstrates exemplary public participation



The Opportunity Award
Honors a project that helps to overcome disparities in access to opportunity

The Excellence Award
The highest honor bestowed in the Our Great Region Awards, recognizes projects that are best advancing the vision of the Our Great Region 2040 plan in urban, rural, suburban, and coastal areas of the region. Multiple awards representing the different geographies may be awarded.



Application Components

The Our Great Region Awards application has two components: A narrative and an application form.

The narrative is intended to give a background of your project and explain how it meets the Our Great Region 2040 plan's vision to create a region that is a better place to live, work and prosper in the year 2040. Applicants must submit a photo of the project with the narrative.

The application form has two parts: A general application section and an award-specific section. The general application section is the same for all award categories. The award-specific section contains questions based on each award category.

Applicants can also submit letters of support for the awards, but they are not a requirement. Applicants may submit as many letters of support as wanted. All letters of support should be combined to one PDF.

Evaluation

Eligible award applications will be evaluated by a panel of experts representing the diverse subject areas and geographies covered by the Our Great Region 2040 plan. The evaluation panel will use criteria based on the narrative and application form.

Submission

Only online submissions will be accepted. All materials must be submitted through www.ogrwards.org. Submissions by any other means will not be considered.

Application Guidance

Narrative Guidance

Each applicant must submit a narrative that tells the story of the project. The narrative must be in a PDF format and can be no more than two pages in length, double-spaced with a 12-point font size for all text. Images should be uploaded separately, not as part of the narrative.

At a minimum, the narrative must include the following components:

1. A clear description of the project and how the project meets the needs of the community
2. A description of project outcomes and measures of success
3. A clear explanation of how the project helps the region become one of the greatest places to live, work, and prosper by 2040

Connection Award narratives should focus on the innovative partnerships within the project.

Diligence Award narratives should focus on the creative and tenacious approach to implementing the project.

Reach Award narratives should focus on the process of public engagement and its impact on the success of the project.

Opportunity Award narratives should focus on the project's ability to help overcome barriers to access to opportunity.

Excellence Award narratives should make an argument for why the project has made a major impact.

Image Requirements

To help explain your project or showcase its impact, at least 1 project image or picture is required.

General Application Questions

Each application will begin with general application questions followed by award-specific questions.

1. Organization Name
2. E-mail Address
3. Contact Person
4. Title of Project
5. Project or Plan URL (if applicable)
6. Planning Document URL (if applicable)
7. List key project partners (please include organization name as well as contact name).
8. Describe and/or provide a map of the geographic area of the project.
9. Which strategies in the Our Great Region 2040 plan has the project advanced?
10. Describe how the project has advanced this strategy/these strategies? **300 words or less**

The Connection Award

Honors a project that uses innovative partnerships to accomplish a strategy of the Our Great Region 2040 plan. Applicants for the Connection Award must demonstrate how their unique partnership structure helped them achieve and surpass project goals.

Eligible applications must...

- Have two or more organizations involved in the project (such as nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, political jurisdictions, and/or private entities)
- Have organizations that represent at least two of the six distinct topic areas from the Our Great Region 2040 plan (Economic Development, Environment, Healthy Communities, Housing, Transportation, and Resiliency)
- Show that the project advances a strategy of the Our Great Region 2040 plan
- Be for a continuous partnership, or a partnership on a project within the past 4 years

Connection Award Questions

1. Describe how the project involved a collaborative effort between multiple partners, including a description of each organization's role. **200 words or less**
2. How does the partnership benefit your project, and how does it impact the wider community? **150 words or less**
3. Describe what lessons you learned from the partnership. **150 words or less**



The Diligence Award

Honors a completed project that used a creative and tenacious approach to overcome challenges to project implementation. Applicants for the Diligence Award must show that the project is fully constructed and/or advances a strategy of the Our Great Region 2040 plan.

Eligible applications must...

- Demonstrate that the project has been completed
- Be a physical project, not a plan, process, or policy
- Show that the project advances a strategy of the Our Great Region 2040 plan
- Be for a project completed within the past 4 years

Diligence Award Questions

1. Describe the underlying planning process that led to successful implementation of the project
150 words or less
2. Describe the challenges and/or lessons learned from the implementation process
150 words or less
3. Describe the measurable outcomes and/or impact this project had on the community.
200 words or less



The Reach Award

Honors a project that demonstrates exemplary public participation. Applicants for the Reach Award must show how meaningful public engagement shaped the outcome of the project.

Eligible applications must...

- Be for a public engagement process conducted during the course of a project (including, but not limited to, public workshops, Instant Impact projects, volunteer events, design charrettes, etc.)
- Explain the role of public engagement in accomplishing the larger goals of the project
- Show that the project advances a strategy of the Our Great Region 2040 plan
- Be for a continuous project, or a project completed within the past 4 years

Reach Award Questions

1. Describe the project's public engagement activities. **150 words or less**
2. Describe how the engagement process shaped the outcomes of the project. **150 words or less**
3. Describe how the process built capacity in the community, catered to specific needs, and built existing strengths in the community. **200 words or less**



The Opportunity Award

Honors a project that helps overcome disparities in access to opportunity. Applicants for the Opportunity Award must demonstrate how their project advanced access to opportunities in their community.

Eligible applications must...

- Demonstrate the specific ways the project helps overcome disparities in access to opportunity
- Show that the project advances a strategy in the Fair Housing Equity Assessment (<http://www.ourregion.org/fhea.html>)
- Be for a continuous project, or a project completed within the past 4 years

Opportunity Award Questions

1. Describe the socio-economic characteristics of the community served by the project and the barriers to opportunity in the community. **200 words or less**
2. Describe, in detail, how the project has reduced and/or improved high-poverty areas. Select and describe the two most relevant topics to your project. **150 words or less for both topics**

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Diversifying housing stock
- Increasing availability of affordable housing
- Increasing the mix of incomes within an area
- Reducing poverty rates
- Reducing crime
- Improving residents access to capital for residential investment
- Improving the quality of education
- Providing workforce training or education opportunities
- Improving access to fresh food
- Reducing environmental hazard
- Other



The Excellence Award

As the highest honor bestowed in the Our Great Region Awards, the Excellence Award recognizes projects that are best advancing the vision of the Our Great Region 2040 plan. Applicants for this award must meet the criteria for at least two of the other award categories (Connection, Diligence, Reach, and Opportunity) and must demonstrate community impact.

Eligible applications must...

- Fully meet the eligibility requirements of at least two of the other award categories (Connection, Diligence, Reach, and Opportunity)
- Demonstrate a positive impact on the community, as shown through measurable outcomes
- Show that the project advances a strategy of the Our Great Region 2040 plan

Excellence Award Questions

1. Explain why this project deserves the Excellence Award. *150 words or less*
2. Aside from the category already selected, in which other category does this project show excellence? (Select the most relevant, even if the project covers more categories)
 - Connection
 - Diligence
 - Reach
 - Impact



Apply by November 16

Submit your projects for an Our Great Region Award by November 16, 2018. Please also pass this along to colleagues or partners who you think deserve recognition for their hard work.

For any questions about the application or the process, please contact Amy Combs, a Planner in the Community & Environmental Planning Department, at amy.combs@h-gac.com or 713-993-4544.



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