

53rd ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & VOTING PROCEDURES

The following are the official criteria and voting procedures used by the Academy of Country Music (ACM) to determine its annual award winners. The criteria and voting procedures are set forth by the ACM Board of Directors ("the Board") in accordance with the bylaws. The Academy recognizes that the industry is constantly evolving, introducing new methods of promoting artists and music to the mainstream, and therefore its criteria may be amended from time to time as the Board deems appropriate in the best interest of country music. Any disputes shall be resolved by the Chairman of the Board in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

2018 / 53rd ACM AWARDS ELIGIBILITY PERIODS

MAIN AWARDS – November 24, 2016 to December 31, 2017
INDUSTRY AWARDS – November 24, 2016 to December 31, 2017
STUDIO RECORDING AWARDS – November 24, 2016 to December 31, 2017
RADIO AWARDS – November 24, 2016 to December 31, 2017
VIDEO AWARD - November 24, 2016 to December 31, 2017

2018 / 53rd ACM VOTING PERIODS

First Round: January 22, 2018 (opens 9amPST) – January 31, 2018 (closes 5pmPST)
Second Round: February 12, 2018 (opens 9amPST) – February 21, 2018 (closes 5pmPST)
Final Round: March 7, 2018 (opens 9amPST) – March 14, 2018 (closes 5pmPST)

2018 / 53rd SUBMISSION PERIODS

Radio Awards Submission Period: January 3, 2018 – January 15, 2018
Video Award Submission Period: January 3, 2018 – January 15, 2018

MAIN AWARDS

VOTED ON BY PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Album of the Year

[Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

An album is defined as a unified released body of work with a minimum of either seven (7) full-length musical works and/or thirty (30) minutes in length. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership.

An album is considered released on the first available date that the material can be possessed by a consumer via a purchase in its entirety and/or streamed legally in its entirety by a royalty-generating service. If the album was released during the two (2) prior eligibility periods, but achieved its largest annual sales during the eligibility period according to Nielsen SoundScan, it is eligible unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category.

To be eligible, a minimum of 51% of the standard edition of the album must contain songs that have not been previously released by the artist prior to thirty (30) days from the album's release date. "Best Of" and "Greatest Hits" albums are ineligible.

Only the standard edition of an album may be submitted for eligibility, as determined by the record company. Once an album is nominated in the final round, it may not be nominated in alternate configurations for future voting.

Single Record of the Year

[Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, record sales, success in digital media and impact of the single record on consumers and the country music industry. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership.

Any single record released and achieving a Top 20 charted position on Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the eligibility period is eligible. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest Top 20 charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category.

Vocal Event of the Year*

[Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, record sales, success in digital media, video exposure and artistic merit of the single. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership.

Any vocal event single record released and achieving a Top 50 charted position in Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the eligibility period is eligible. If the vocal event single record was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest Top 50 charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category. To be eligible, the vocal event must be a collaboration between two or more artists who do not normally perform together and are all credited on the album track listing.

*In the event that the Board determines that there are not enough nominees in this category in any particular year, this category may not be awarded.

New Female Vocalist of the Year

[Award to the Artist]

New Male Vocalist of the Year

[Award to the Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding individual vocalist in the country music industry who gains either initial fame or significantly greater recognition, through efforts surrounding the promotion of a debut or sophomore album, during the eligibility period.

The artist must have success in digital media; in addition to having charted a single record in the Top 40 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts; and/or selling 100,000 album units reflected in Nielsen SoundScan during the eligibility period. (Any albums self-released by an artist through an independent label that the artist owns and operates may not be counted as a debut or sophomore album, unless it produces a Top 40 single record reported by Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts; and/or sells 100,000 album units reflected in Nielsen SoundScan during the eligibility period.) The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership.

Any artist(s) that previously served (or currently serving) as lead vocalists for, or otherwise fronted duos or groups that have sold 500,000 copies of previously released albums, according to Nielsen SoundScan, are not eligible for this category. Additionally, any artist(s) who gained initial fame as a solo vocalist, vocal duo or vocal group in another genre selling 500,000 copies of previously released albums, according to Nielsen SoundScan, are not eligible in this category.

An artist may be a nominee two times in a three-year period. Once an artist releases the lead single from a third studio album, she will no longer be eligible in this category. If an artist is a winner in the New Female Vocalist category her first year on a ballot, she will not be eligible in any New categories again. Any artist who has previously won the award for Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Vocal Duo or Vocal Group of the Year is ineligible for a New Artist nomination.

New Vocal Duo or Group of the Year

[Award to the Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding duo or group featuring a vocalist (herein called “duo or group”) in the country music industry who gains either initial fame or significantly greater recognition, through efforts surrounding the promotion of a debut or sophomore album, during the eligibility period. The artist(s) must have success in digital media; in addition to having charted a single record in the Top 40 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts; and/or selling 100,000 album units reflected in Nielsen SoundScan during the eligibility period. (Any albums self-released by an artist through an independent label that the artist owns and operates may not be counted as a debut or sophomore album, unless it produces a Top 40 single record reported by Billboard’s Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts; and/or sells 100,000 album units reflected in Nielsen SoundScan during the eligibility period.) The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership.

Any artist(s) that previously served (or currently serving) as lead vocalists for, or otherwise fronted duos or groups that have sold 500,000 copies of previously released albums, according to Nielsen SoundScan, are not eligible for this category. Additionally, any artist(s) who gained initial fame as a solo vocalist, vocal duo or vocal group in another genre selling 500,000 copies of previously released albums, according to Nielsen SoundScan, are not eligible in this category.

A duo or group may be a nominee two times in a three-year period. Once a duo or group releases the lead single from a third studio album, they will no longer be eligible in this category. If the duo or group is a winner in the New Vocal Duo or Group category their first year on a ballot, they will not be eligible in any New categories again. Any artist who has previously won the award for Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Vocal Duo or Vocal Group of the Year is ineligible for a New Artist nomination.

Entertainer of the Year

[Award to the Artist]

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, sales of pre-recorded music, success of music videos, vocal performances, live concert ticket sales, artistic merit, appearances on television, appearances in films, songwriting, success in digital media, and contributions to the country music industry.

The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership.

Female Vocalist of the Year

[Award to the Artist]

Male Vocalist of the Year

[Award to the Artist]

Vocal Duo of the Year*

[Award to the Artist]

Vocal Group of the Year*

[Award to the Artist]

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, sales of pre-recorded music, success in digital media, live concert ticket sales and vocal performances.

The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership.

*In the event that the Board determines that there are not enough nominees in this category in any particular year, Vocal Duo Of The Year may be merged Vocal Group Of The Year by the Board, and shall be called New Vocal Duo/Group Of The Year.

Triple Crown

[Award to the Artist]

This award is presented to an artist, duo or group upon receiving the New Artist *or* New Male Vocalist *or* New Female Vocalist *or* New Solo Vocalist *or* New Vocal Duo *or* New Vocal Group *or* New Vocal Duo or Group **and** Male Vocalist *or* Female Vocalist *or* Vocal Duo *or* Vocal Group *or* Vocal Duo or Group **and** Entertainer of the Year awards. The Board decides when and where the recipient will be honored with this award (not always an annual award).

Song of the Year

[Award to Composer(s)/Publisher(s)/ Artist(s)]

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, record sales, success in digital media and impact of the song on consumers and the country music industry with emphasis on the creative integrity of the song. **A Professional Panel of at least twelve (12), no more than twenty (20), established songwriters**, whose members are approved by the ACM officers, will submit a list of at least 10 nominees or 10% of all eligible songs (whichever number is greater) to ACM members classified in the Composer category to select the final five (5) nominees to be placed on the final ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership.

Any song released reaching its highest charted position on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts, during the eligibility period is eligible. If the song was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible, unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category.

Songwriter Of The Year

[Award to Composer/Songwriter]

This award is presented to an individual known predominately as a songwriter, selected by a **Professional Panel of judges composed of songwriters, publishers, producers, and performing rights organization (PRO) representatives**. The Panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the final ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of ACM members classified in the following categories; Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist, Composer, Music Publisher/PRO, Record Company, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager *subcategory* [contained within the Affiliated category].

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released single crediting the songwriter that charted on Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the eligibility period. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the current eligibility period, it is eligible, unless it appeared on a final ACM ballot.

Video of the Year

[Award to Producer(s)/Director(s)/ Artist(s)]

Emphasis shall be placed on creativity, production, visual appeal and impact on consumers and the country music industry. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership.

A Professional Panel from the video/production industry whose members are approved by the ACM officers will submit the final nominees, which will be placed on the final ballot once approved by the Board. The Panel will choose the final nominees from a pool of eligible videos submitted by record labels, as well as any other country music video that the panel deems worthy for consideration based on its artistic merit.

If the video was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its biggest impact during the eligibility period, it is eligible unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category.

INDUSTRY AWARDS

VOTED ON BY THE PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACM IN THE FINAL ROUND OF VOTING

Casino of the Year

[Award to Casino]

-Small Capacity

This award is presented to an outstanding casino, with a maximum capacity of 4,000 seats, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership. The casino must have bought or promoted at least five (5) country concerts/dates during the eligibility period, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

-Medium Capacity

This award is presented to an outstanding casino, with a capacity of 4,001 to 11,000 seats, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership. The casino must have bought or promoted at least four (4) country concerts/dates during the eligibility period, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

Festival of the Year

[Award to the Festival]

This award is presented to an outstanding country music festival where artist(s) received market value compensation for their performance, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership. The festival must have taken place over two (2) or more consecutive days, included a minimum of ten (10) acts, with at least ninety percent (90%) of headlining acts classed in the country genre, occurred during the eligibility period, and be in good standing with all professional vendors and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

Nightclub of the Year**[Award to Nightclub]**

This award is presented to an outstanding country music nightclub, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership. The nightclub must have bought or promoted at least ten (10) country concerts/dates during the eligibility period, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

Venue of the Year**[Award to Venue]****-Small Capacity**

This award is presented to an outstanding venue, with a maximum capacity of 4,000 seats, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership. The venue must have bought or promoted at least five (5) country concerts/dates during the eligibility period, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

-Medium Capacity

This award is presented to an outstanding venue, with a capacity of 4,001 to 11,000 seats, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership. The venue must have bought or promoted at least four (4) country concerts/dates during the eligibility period, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

-Large Capacity

This award is presented to an outstanding venue of any type, with a minimum capacity of 11,001 seats, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership. The venue must have bought or promoted at least three (3) country concerts/dates during the eligibility period, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

Don Romeo Talent Buyer of the Year**[Award to Individual Buyer]**

This award is presented to an outstanding talent buyer, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership. The buyer must have bought at least twenty (20) country concerts/dates during the eligibility period, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

Promoter of the Year**[Award to the Individual Promote]**

This award is presented to an outstanding promoter, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the ACM professional membership. The promoter must have promoted at least twenty (20) country concerts/dates during the eligibility period, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

STUDIO RECORDING AWARDS

VOTED ON BY ONLY THOSE MEMBERS CLASSIFIED IN THE ARTIST-ENTERTAINER/MUSICIAN-BANDLEADER-INSTRUMENTALIST CATEGORY, AND THE PRODUCER-ENGINEER-STUDIO MANAGER SUB-CATEGORY (CONTAINED WITHIN THE AFFILIATED CATEGORY)

BASS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

[Award to the Individual Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding session bass player, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of ACM members classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager subcategory [contained within the Affiliated category]. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released single or album embodying the player's performance, which achieves Top 20 or better on Billboard's Hot Country Songs, Billboard's Top Country Albums or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the current eligibility period. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible in this category. If the album was released during the two (2) prior eligibility periods, but achieved its largest annual sales during the eligibility period according to Nielsen SoundScan, it is eligible. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

DRUMMER OF THE YEAR

[Award to the Individual Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding session drummer, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of ACM members classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager subcategory [contained within the Affiliated category]. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released single or album embodying the player's performance, which achieves Top 20 or better on Billboard's Hot Country Songs, Billboard's Top Country Albums or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the current eligibility period. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible in this category. If the album was released during the two (2) prior eligibility periods, but achieved its largest annual sales during the eligibility period according to Nielsen SoundScan, it is eligible. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

GUITAR PLAYER OF THE YEAR

[Award to the Individual Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding session guitar player, in any capacity, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of ACM members classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager subcategory [contained within the Affiliated category]. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released single or album embodying the player's performance, which achieves Top 20 or better on Billboard's Hot Country Songs, Billboard's Top Country Albums or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the current eligibility period. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible in this category. If the album was released during the two (2) prior eligibility periods, but achieved its largest annual sales during the eligibility period according to Nielsen SoundScan, it is eligible. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

PIANO/KEYBOARDS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

[Award to the Individual Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding session piano/keyboards player, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of ACM members classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager subcategory [contained within the Affiliated category]. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released single or album embodying the player's performance, which achieves Top 20 or better on Billboard's Hot Country Songs, Billboard's Top Country Albums or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the current eligibility period. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible in this category. If the album was released during the two (2) prior eligibility periods, but achieved its largest annual sales during the eligibility period according to Nielsen SoundScan, it is eligible. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

SPECIALTY INSTRUMENT(S) PLAYER OF THE YEAR

[Award to the Individual Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding session specialty instrument(s) player, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of ACM members classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager subcategory [contained within the Affiliated category]. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released single or album embodying the player's performance, which achieves Top 20 or better on Billboard's Hot Country Songs, Billboard's Top Country Albums or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the current eligibility period. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible in this category. If the album was released during the two (2) prior eligibility periods, but achieved its largest annual sales during the eligibility period according to Nielsen SoundScan, it is eligible. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

STEEL GUITAR PLAYER OF THE YEAR

[Award to the Individual Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding session steel guitar player, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of ACM members classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager subcategory [contained within the Affiliated category]. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released single or album embodying the player's performance, which achieves Top 20 or better on Billboard's Hot Country Songs, Billboard's Top Country Albums or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the current eligibility period. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible in this category. If the album was released during the two (2) prior eligibility periods, but achieved its largest annual sales during the eligibility period according to Nielsen SoundScan, it is eligible. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

AUDIO ENGINEER OF THE YEAR

[Award to the Individual Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding audio engineer, primarily involved in the recording and/or mixing process, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of ACM members classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager subcategory [contained within the Affiliated category]. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released single or album crediting the outstanding audio engineer, which achieves Top 20 or better on Billboard's Hot Country Songs, Billboard's Top Country Albums or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the current eligibility period. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible in this category. If the album was released during the two (2) prior eligibility periods, but achieved its largest annual sales during the eligibility period according to Nielsen SoundScan, it is eligible. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

[Award to the Individual Artist]

This award is presented to an outstanding producer, selected by a Professional Panel of judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of ACM members classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager subcategory [contained within the Affiliated category]. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released single or album crediting the producer, which achieves Top 20 or better on Billboard's Hot Country Songs, Billboard's Top Country Albums or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) country charts during the current eligibility period. If the single was released prior to the eligibility period, but achieved its highest charted position during the eligibility period, it is eligible in this category. If the album was released during the two (2) prior eligibility periods, but achieved its largest annual sales during the eligibility period according to Nielsen SoundScan, it is eligible. The winner from the previous year is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

RADIO AWARDS

VOTED ON BY ONLY THOSE MEMBERS CLASSIFIED IN THE RADIO AND ON-AIR PERSONALITY CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

ON-AIR PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

[Award to the On-Air Personality(s)]

This award is presented to an outstanding Country Music On-Air Radio Personality who best represents the country music genre, as selected by a Professional Panel of Judges approved by the ACM Officers.

The Professional Panel shall evaluate submissions from the current eligibility period based on the Personality's body of work, as represented in an aircheck (maximum length of 5 minutes), and an essay (maximum length of 500 words) defining the Personality's unique brand, demonstrating impact on audience and exemplifying artist discovery.

Principal personalities must be together for eight (8) consecutive months and still be working at the submitting station by the submission deadline. Personalities are only eligible to enter for one Station within one category (Major Market, Large Market, Medium Market or Small Market) and must be in the largest market in which they are eligible. The prior year Winner is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

Entries will be judged using market size consideration based on Arbitron markets:

1-25 Major
26-50 Large
51-100 Medium
101+ Small.

International stations will be placed in categories based on metro population.

NATIONAL ON-AIR PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

[Award to the On-Air Personality(s)]

This award is presented to an outstanding National Country Music On-Air (terrestrial, satellite or internet) Radio Personality who best represents the country music genre, selected by a Professional Panel of Judges approved by the ACM Officers.

The Professional Panel shall evaluate submissions from the current eligibility period based on the Personality's body of work, as represented in an aircheck (maximum length of 5 minutes), and an essay (maximum length of 500 words) defining the Personality's unique brand, demonstrating impact on audience and exemplifying artist discovery.

Entrants must demonstrate they air in a minimum of ten markets with a minimum of 32 shows airing during the submission period. Principal personalities must be together for eight (8) consecutive months and still be working at the submitting station by the submission deadline. The prior year Winner is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

Entries will be judged using market size consideration based on Arbitron markets:

1-25 Major
26-50 Large
51-100 Medium
101+ Small.

International stations will be placed in categories based on metro population.

RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR

[Award to Station]

This award is presented to an outstanding Country Music Radio Station who best represents the country music genre, selected by a Professional Panel of judges, approved by the ACM Officers.

The Professional Panel shall evaluate submissions from the current eligibility period based on the Station's body of work, as represented in an aircheck (maximum length of 5 minutes), and an essay (maximum length of 500 words) defining the Station's unique brand, demonstrating impact on audience and exemplifying artist discovery. Judges shall consider daypart market share/in-market rank. The prior year Winner is ineligible for a consecutive nomination in this category.

Entries will be judged using market size consideration based on Arbitron markets:

1-25 Major

26-50 Large

51-100 Medium

101+ Small.

International stations will be placed in categories based on metro population.

SPECIAL AWARDS

REVIEWED AND VOTED ON BY THE ACM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cliffie Stone Career Achievement Award

[Award to the Recipient]

This award is presented to a country music artist, duo/group or industry leader who throughout their career has advanced the popularity of the genre through their contributions in multiple facets of the industry such as songwriting, recording, production, touring, film, television, literary works, philanthropic contributions and other goodwill efforts.

Dick Clark Artist of the Decade Award

[Award to the Recipient]

This award is presented to an outstanding country music artist or duo/group who has dominated country music over the decade, through success at radio, digital media, sales and streaming, distinguishing events, touring, television appearances, and artistic merit.

Gene Weed Milestone Award

[Award to the Recipient]

This award is presented to a country music artist, duo/group or industry leader for a specific, unprecedented or outstanding achievement in the field of country music during the preceding calendar year.

Gary Haber Lifting Lives Award

[Award to the Recipient]

This award is presented to a country music artist, duo/group or industry professional who is devoted to improving lives through the power of music, has a generosity of spirit, and is committed to serving others, voted on by the ACM Lifting Lives Board of Directors.

Jim Reeves International Award

[Award to the Recipient]

This award is presented to a country music artist, duo/group or industry leader for outstanding contributions to the growth of country music throughout the world.

Mae Boren Axton Service Award

[Award to the Recipient]

This award is presented to an outstanding country music artist, duo/group or industry leader in recognition of years of dedication and service to the Academy of Country Music.

Merle Haggard Spirit Award

[Award to the Recipient]

This award is presented to a singer-songwriter who is continuing the legacy of country legend and 20-time ACM Award Winner Merle Haggard by following his/her own path, crafting great songs and epitomizing Merle's spirit through genuine performances and great storytelling.

Poet's Award

[Award to the Recipient]

This award is presented to a country music songwriter for outstanding and longstanding musical and/or lyrical contributions throughout their career, with special consideration given to a song or songs' impact on the culture of country music.

Tex Ritter Film Award

[Award to the Recipient]

This award recognizes an outstanding television movie, series or feature film released during the preceding calendar year which prominently features country music.

VOTING PROCEDURES

The voting procedure shall comply with all legal requirements and requirements of any network airing the awards show. Disputes as to voting procedure shall be resolved by a majority vote of the Board. Ballots will be tabulated by an independent accounting firm. ACM members will vote via the Internet. The voting eligibility period for the 2017 awards is November 24, 2016 to December 31, 2017 for all awards. ACM nominees and their affiliates are prohibited from mail/physical, email and similar direct solicitation of votes from Academy members.

FIRST ROUND

The professional membership will submit one (1) nomination in each of the following categories:

Entertainer of the Year
Male Vocalist of the Year
Female Vocalist of the Year
Vocal Duo of the Year
Vocal Group of the Year
New Male Vocalist of the Year
New Female Vocalist of the Year
New Vocal Duo or Group of the Year
Album of the Year
Single Record of the Year
Vocal Event of the Year.

The Top 20 vote getters will go before a review committee to ensure the entry meets all eligibility criteria (see "criteria" below). The Top 20 vote getters must also have achieved a minimum of 2% or more of the vote within the respective category.

SECOND ROUND

In the second round, up to two (2) votes may be cast in each category for the category to be counted. The five (5) nominees receiving the most votes in each category will be placed on the third ballot (final round). If there are less than five (5) eligible nominees in any given category, the Board may elect to allow the category to proceed to the final round with at least three (3) nominees.

FINAL ROUND

In the final round, only one (1) vote will be cast in each category. The nominee receiving the most votes in each category will be deemed the winner. In the case of a tie, all winners will receive an award.

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES VOTED ON IN THE FINAL ROUND

A Professional Panel will submit five (5) nominees to be approved by the Board for the final round in the following categories; Song of the Year, Video of the Year, Casino of the Year – Small Capacity, Casino of the Year – Medium Capacity, Festival of the Year, Nightclub of the Year, Venue of the Year – Small Capacity, Venue of the Year – Medium Capacity, Venue of the Year – Large Capacity, Don Romeo Talent Buyer of the Year and Promoter of the Year, based on the criteria for each category (see "criteria" below). The nominee receiving the most votes in each category will be deemed the winner. In the case of a tie, all winners will receive an award.

STUDIO RECORDING BALLOT

The Studio Recording ballot is voted on by only those members classified in the Artist-Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader Instrumentalist category, and the Producer-Engineer-Studio Manager subcategory (contained within the Affiliated category).

A Professional Panel will submit five (5) nominees to be approved by the Board for the Studio Recording ballot in the following categories: Bass Player of the Year, Drummer of the Year, Guitar Player of the Year, Piano/Keyboards Player of the Year, Specialty Instrument(s) Player of the Year, Steel Guitar Player of the Year, Audio Engineer of the Year and Producer of the Year. The nominee receiving the most votes in each category will be deemed the winner. In the case of a tie, all winners will receive an award.

SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR BALLOT

The Songwriter of the Year award is voted on by only those members classified in the following categories: Artist Entertainer/Musician-Bandleader-Instrumentalist, Composer, Music Publisher/PRO, Record Company, and the Producer-Engineer Studio Manager subcategory [contained within the Affiliated category]. A Professional Panel will submit five (5) nominees to be approved by the Board for the final round. The nominee receiving the most votes in the category will be deemed the winner. In the case of a tie, all winners will receive an award.