



NEXT Awards Application FAQs

Applications

Q: How many NEXT Awards will be given out, and who qualifies?

The NEXT Awards recognizes 10 founders and their companies in the following industry categories, plus an **Entrepreneur of 2021** and an **Emerging Entrepreneur of 2021**:

Products, Services and Retail (B2B or B2C) - Businesses offering goods and services that target a consumer or business market.

Healthcare - Businesses operating in any area of the healthcare industry.

Music, Sports and Entertainment - Businesses operating in any area of the entertainment, sports, and media industries.

Technology - Businesses driving growth in the technology industry.

Real Estate, Hospitality and Construction - Businesses innovating in any areas of the real estate, hospitality, or construction industry

The NEXT Awards will honor two companies in different stages of each industry: **Emerging** and **Market Mover**.

Qualifying **Emerging** companies will have less than \$1 million in annual revenue.

Market Mover companies will have \$1 million or more in annual revenue.

Qualifying companies in both categories must be headquartered in Middle Tennessee and have a founder actively working in the business.

In addition to industry awards, the NEXT Awards will also honor two innovative founders across all industries with:



Entrepreneur of 2021 Award: Qualifying nominees for Entrepreneur of 2021 will be active founders of companies making more than \$1 million in annual revenue.

Emerging Entrepreneur of 2021 Award: Qualifying nominees for Emerging Entrepreneur of 2021 will be active founders of companies making less than \$1 million annually.

Both Entrepreneur of 2021 awards will be selected by nomination only.

Q: What is the application process like?

Applications are submitted, and passed to an independent accounting firm to be ranked based on quantitative data. The top-ranked applications are then sent to a panel of independent judges who are experts in their respective industries to be ranked based on quantitative and qualitative data. Rankings from each judge are averaged and the top three finalists in each category are notified in early August. Your company name and information will remain anonymous when sharing the financial numbers for review.

Nominations

Q: How do nominations work for the industry awards?

You can nominate a founder or company for an industry-based NEXT Award [here](#) by giving us their name/contact info. A member of the EC team will reach out to them letting them know they've been nominated. Businesses nominated for industry awards will still need to submit an application to qualify.

Q: How do nominations work for the Entrepreneur of 2021 and Emerging Entrepreneur of 2021 awards?

You nominate a founder for the Entrepreneur of 2021 or Emerging Entrepreneur of 2021 awards by using the form here. Please note that only nominated entrepreneurs will be considered for these awards - there is no additional application process.



Nominated entrepreneurs will be evaluated by an independent selection committee. Top-ranked nominees will be contacted for interviews.

Attending the NEXT Awards

Q: Do finalists need to purchase tickets to attend the NEXT Awards?

We hope all who survived 2020 will want to attend; however, a prerequisite is that all finalists must attend the event and will receive a discount on tickets.