

PARITY AWARDS CAMPAIGN HOW-TO

A loose guide as to how you might create an awards campaign in your area.

1. PLOTTING THE INITIAL TIMELINE

Create a basic timeline of the entire campaign. How long do you want the nomination process to be? How long do you want the voting process to be? How soon after voting will the awards program be held?

2. AWARDS EVENT PLANNING

A.) Build a program for your awards show. I put this step before the launch of nominations and voting because promotion of your campaign as a whole will be greatly benefitted by including the date and overview of the awards program itself.

Here are some key considerations in planning the awards event:

- How long do I want the event to last?
- What venue will I ask to host the program?
- How much will you charge (if any) for attendance to the event? The venue will take this into consideration before booking—they need to understand how they will make money off your event.
- Which awards will be offered and in what order?
- What will the physical awards be? (Plaques? Trophies? Other?)
- How much time should be allotted for receiving the award/thanks by recipient?
- After figuring the time needed for presentation and acceptance of awards, how much time remains for live musical performance (or other entertainment elements)? How many artists can you realistically fit into this time allotment?
- Plan for a press release to be distributed to regional media discussing the campaign and the awards event. Note that this would require you to have a date and venue in place early. (Having talent in place would also be very helpful and give your press release more heft.) Keep in mind some media—especially print--requires 4-6 weeks lead-time in order to feature an event.
- Use your press-release as a basis to create a “one-sheet”—a promotional overview of your campaign and event--that can be used for hitting up potential sponsors of the event or for advertising, etc.

B.) Cost of Event. Potential expenses for the show and promotion include:

- Printing (if you are making banners; posters; one-sheets; brochures, etc.)
- Advertising—paid advertising may not be in your budget, but if you can get this expense underwritten, (see below), it can be helpful
- Awards (plaques, trophies, certificates, etc.)

- Green Room/backstage food and hospitality for artists
- Video/photography of the event (photography is a necessity; videography is recommended)
- Merchandise person: this is not a necessity, but if artists are donating their time, it might be a nice perk to the performers if you can handle sales of their merch. (Alternatively, ask for a volunteer to fill this role.) If you've got a budget, you might also consider creating your own merch for the event, such as tee shirts or buttons.
- PA and Stage Gear: avoid the potential cost of supplying a PA or other gear by choosing a venue that already has a PA, sound engineer and shareable backline in place. (Tip: look for a venue that offers a house guitar amp; bass guitar amp; keyboard amp and drum kit.) This supports a quicker turnover of musicians onstage.
- Goody Bags (optional). Consider offering "goody bags" to attendees which, among other offerings, might contain promotional items donated by your sponsors.

C.) Underwriting the costs:

- Seek out performers who might be willing to donate a performance at this event for the benefit of promoting the parity effort.
- Contact merchants/entities who might be willing to sponsor and cover the above costs of the awards show. Start with businesses that have a stake in the music community or in the parity effort in general, and also look for companies who are seeking a larger community footprint. If you're doing a program, be sure and thank these underwriters (including the musicians) in the program and/or on your website. Also be sure to give them a physical poster that they can display at their business and a digital one for their social media pages.

3. NOMINATE CANDIDATES

- Create an online, publicly accessible document where people can type in nominees and their reasons for nominating said person(s). Free nomination forms exist online (see below), though they are usually limited to 100 responses per month with paid options available to enable more responses. For the nomination stage, 100 responses may be enough, so my recommendation would be to start with the free plan. The site will contact you if you reach your limit, at which point if you think you'll be getting more nomination responses, you could upgrade to a temporary paid plan at approximately \$15/monthly. (Opt to pay monthly as opposed to yearly so that you can cancel as soon as your nomination and voting periods end.)
- Ask your music community to participate in the nomination process via social media, email blasts and press releases.

4. VOTE FOR CANDIDATES

- Once you've secured your nominations, you'll need to create a new form for people to vote for their favored parity candidates. In this step, you'll probably want the capability to receive more than 100 responses, so if you've been using a free plan for your online nomination form, it's probably time to move to a temporary paid plan for 1-2 months (or the length of time you've allotted for voting). The basic paid plan on most of these form sites runs about \$14-\$15 per month.
- Publicity for your awards campaign (and especially for voting) is critical. Try to be prepared with a few visual aids for social media--videos and posters--*before* launching your campaign.
- ONLINE FORM RESOURCES:
 - Jotform.com: <https://www.jotform.com/pricing/>
 - FormSite.com: <https://www.formsite.com/detailed/>
 - 123FormBuilder.com: <https://www.123formbuilder.com/free-form-templates/Award-Nomination-Form-1961934/>
 - Wufoo / Survey Monkey: <https://www.wufoo.com/pricing/>

5. PUSH YOUR AWARDS PROGRAM

- I like the idea of keeping the winners of your categories secret to be revealed at the awards show, but do what you think will work best for your event.
- Now's the time to get folks invested in attending your big event:
 - i. Be sure you've created an event page and invited your social circle. Ask your friends, team and performers to invite *their* networks on the event page as well.
 - ii. Don't rely solely on social media, hit up your mailing lists.
 - iii. Talk to your business sponsors, if they send out newsletters, ask them to mention it. Make sure they have a promotional tool for the awards program.