ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Award

Procedures

PURPOSE OF THE AWARD:
The award for the National Language Teacher of the Year is intended to elevate the status and the public profile of the language profession at the state, regional, and national levels by creating opportunities to recognize accomplished members of our profession. First and foremost, this process is designed to involve all of our state, regional, and national organizations in promoting the language teaching profession. Second, it is intended to create as many media opportunities as possible to increase the visibility and importance of language learning with the media, policymakers, and the general public. The award also recognizes best practices and excellence in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. All regional finalists are featured in the ACTFL Language Teacher Hall of Fame, located on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org.

CRITERIA FOR APPLYING:
Candidates must be full-time language teachers who spend at least 50% of their time in direct teaching during the year of application with an expectation of teaching for at least two additional years.

PROCESS OF APPLICATION:
The National Language Teacher of the Year process begins at the state level with the state language organizations selecting a top candidate each year whose application is then submitted to the regional level. The finalist for each of the five regions then competes at the national level. The process outlined below at each level is designed to facilitate the development of the portfolio used in the evaluation process by requiring certain items at each level of competition leading toward the complete portfolio required at the national level. This process is intended to incrementally add the required elements of the portfolio at each level to encourage broad participation while having sufficient evidence from candidates of their teaching accomplishments and ability to represent the language profession. ACTFL will supply the forms and samples needed so that candidates understand what is required at each level. In addition, there is a detailed explanation of the portfolio items on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org.

PROCEDURE AT THE STATE LEVEL: Deadline: Fall of each year
State language associations may use any mechanism to select their state winner. States may choose to require a nomination process or self-nomination, or they may use their existing state teacher of the year process. ACTFL recommends, however, that the state association use the following elements selected from the comprehensive portfolio

requirements to make its determination since the candidate selected to move on to the regional level must provide these items in the portfolio submitted to the regional awards committee. Following are the items that must be included in the state candidate's portfolio submitted to each regional awards committee:

1. Letter of recommendation from a professional colleague
2. Letter of recommendation from a supervisor
3. Letter of recommendation from a current or former parent or student
4. *Curriculum Vitae* of no more than five (5) pages.
5. Five-hundred-word (500) first-person statement on the value of learning language and culture.
6. Completed Commitment form (available on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org) which is a statement of willingness to participate in all required activities associated with the award including:
    a. A commitment to attend the respective regional conference for a personal interview (The regional organization or state association may provide reimbursement of some expenses);
    b. If selected as the regional winner, a commitment to attend the ACTFL Annual Convention (hotel, registration, and transportation are paid by ACTFL); and
    c. Willingness to serve as a spokesperson for the profession, based on availability.

PROCEDURE AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL: Deadline to regional: Dec. 15 - Jan. 15 (Region may determine deadline within this window based on their conference and awards committee schedule). Regions may submit a candidate only once for the national level competition.

Once the state association has selected its candidate who will move forward to the regional level, the state association ensures that its candidate submits the portfolio with all the required items listed in the previous section and, in addition, includes the following:

1. Nomination Cover Page (available on ACTFL website at www.actfl.org) completed by an officer of the state language association.
2. Examples of Student Work (up to five individual examples, one page and one-sided only) that reflect the goals of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning.
3. Reflective Commentary (not to exceed 5 pages total) that describes how the student work examples are representative of the following:
    a. The connection between the student work and how the teacher addresses the national standards in the classroom;
    b. The connection between the student work examples and how the teacher uses and promotes target language communication in the classroom;
    c. How the student work examples demonstrate differentiation of instruction and/or assessment to meet the needs of all learners;
    d. How the chosen examples demonstrate how the teacher integrates culture into instruction and/or assessment; and

    e. The type of feedback provided to students on this work.
4. An interview process designed individually by each regional. (No documentation regarding this interview is required in the portfolio submitted at the national level.)

PROCEDURE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: Deadline to ACTFL: May 31

In addition to the items already mentioned, regions work with their finalists to ensure that their candidates submit their portfolios for review by the national awards committee to ACTFL headquarters by the May 31 deadline. ACTFL will appoint the members of the Teacher of the Year Selection Committee. No committee members will be from the same state as any of the regional finalists.

The final portfolio includes all of the items required at the regional level with the addition of the following items:

1. Nomination Cover Page (available on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org) completed by an officer of the regional language association.
2. Detailed lesson plan and a 20-30 minute continuous, unedited video segment of that lesson plan being used in an actual classroom setting that demonstrates target language communication and a variety of instructional strategies. The video should not be professionally produced or edited and should be filmed during the current academic year.
3. Written reflections, not to exceed two pages each:
    a. How does the teacher engage students in cultural activities beyond the classroom, including strategies that are appropriate for students at different levels of instruction?
    b. How do the samples of student work and the content of the classroom video reflect the teacher's personal statement on the value of learning language and culture?
4. Documentation to demonstrate professional growth, active involvement in professional organizations, advocacy for language learning, and a variety of professional leadership experiences.
5. A one-page Contact Information Sheet containing names and addresses to notify the appropriate parties of the candidate's selection (available on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org.)
6. The entire portfolio must not exceed 50 pages (one-sided only).
7. A professional photograph in electronic format is required at the national level.
8. Face-to-face interview at the ACTFL Annual Convention (travel expenses paid by ACTFL).
9. All original portfolio materials will be returned to the candidates. ACTFL, however, reserves the right to copy and use any of the portfolio contents for promotion of the award or for professional development.

GET THE WORD OUT:

It all begins at the state level. Since the state association's nominee must be submitted to the respective regional association between December 15 and January 15 of each year, it

is recommended that every newsletter or communication to members have information about the process and be published well in advance of the award deadlines. ACTFL has camera-ready notices, articles and deadline information that are ready for newsletter publication – be sure to let ACTFL know who should receive these materials. Additional ways to encourage teachers to apply at the state level include:

- Recognizing each year's winner at your state conference and in your publications.
- Encouraging language supervisors and administrators to nominate a deserving teacher.
- Asking higher education members to recommend nominees that they know to be excellent teachers.
- Including information about the process in every communication to members as well as in a prominent place on your website. You can also link to the ACTFL website and the comprehensive Teacher of the Year information there so you do not have to re-create the information on your website.
- Encourage state level chapters of national associations to nominate candidates to your state organization.

PROMOTE YOUR STATE WINNER:

Arrange for your state winner to receive press coverage the same way that it's done at the national level.

- Send out a press release (see samples on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org) to the media when the teacher is selected.
- Arrange for your state winner to be recognized by your governor or other appropriate legislators at the state level.
- Arrange for your state winner to make several appearances throughout the year at local and state events like summer festivals, legislative rallies, state fairs, etc.
- Contact the media when your state winner is going for the regional title—it makes for a great news story.

Questions regarding your state nomination?

Contact your regional organization:

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL)
Rebecca Kline, Executive Director (717) 245-1977
nectfl@dickinson.edu

Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT)
Lynne McClendon, Executive Director (770) 992-1256
lynnemcc@mindspring.com

Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSCTFL)
Patrick Raven, Executive Director (414) 405-4645 CSCTFL@aol.com

Pacific Northwest Council for Languages (PNCFL)
Greg Hopper-Moore, Executive Director (541) 346-5699
pncfl@uoregon.edu

Southwest Conference on Language Teaching (SWCOLT)
Jody Klopp, Executive Director (405) 330-1318 jklopp@cox.net

Questions regarding the national level competition?
Contact Marty Abbott at (703) 894-2900 or mabbott@actfl.org