



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF WHEAT GROWERS**

|| 2026-27 AWARDS PROGRAM

The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) Awards Program recognizes exceptional wheat growers and state wheat organizations whose leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and innovation make a meaningful and lasting impact on the wheat industry. The awards celebrate the individuals and organizations who go above and beyond to advance the interests of wheat growers, strengthen the wheat industry, and contribute to the success of NAWG and its members. The program also highlights the importance of grassroots leadership and engagement in shaping the future of the wheat industry. Award recipients will be recognized annually at Commodity Classic, providing a high-profile opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments, share their stories, and inspire continued leadership and engagement across the wheat community.

Award	Ideal Candidate Demonstrates
<u>Distinguished Service Award</u> <i>Recipient Type: Grower</i> Recognizes a wheat grower whose career-long commitment and leadership have made a significant and lasting positive impact on NAWG, its members, and federal agricultural policy.	• Sustained involvement and service to NAWG and the broader wheat industry. • Meaningful contributions to federal advocacy and policymaking. • A strong record of leadership at the state and/or national level. • Commitment to advancing the interests of wheat growers. • A lasting positive impact on NAWG and its mission.
<u>Bridge Builder Award</u> <i>Recipient Type: Grower</i> Recognizes a grower who has demonstrated exceptional ability to bring people, organizations, and perspectives together to advance shared goals and strengthen the wheat community.	• Success in developing new relationships and partnerships. • Collaboration across state, regional, national, or agricultural organizations. • Ability to find common ground among diverse stakeholders. • Leadership that strengthens relationships between growers and policymakers, industry partners, or other agricultural organizations. • A demonstrated commitment to cooperation and consensus-building.

<u>Emerging Leader Award</u> <i>Recipient Type: Grower</i> Recognizes a newer or younger wheat leader who has demonstrated significant achievement, leadership potential, and commitment to the future of the wheat industry.	• Meaningful leadership accomplishments despite relatively limited time in the industry or association leadership. • Active participation in NAWG, a state wheat organization, or other agricultural organizations. • A willingness to advocate for wheat growers and the agricultural community. • Innovative thinking and a forward-looking approach to industry challenges. • Strong potential for continued leadership at the state and/or national level. • The award is intended to recognize an emerging leader based on demonstrated accomplishments and potential, rather than solely on age.
<u>Innovation in Advocacy Award</u> <i>Recipient Type: State Wheat Organization</i> Recognizes a state wheat organization that has developed and implemented an innovative, effective, and replicable approach to policy advocacy, member engagement, or grassroots activation.	• A new or substantially improved advocacy strategy, campaign, or initiative. • Creativity in engaging growers, policymakers, media, or other stakeholders. • Measurable results or demonstrated impact. • Effective use of technology, communications, grassroots engagement, coalition-building, or other innovative tools. • A strategy that could serve as a model for other state grower organizations.

Eligibility:

Awards are intended to recognize individuals and organizations that have demonstrated meaningful contributions to the wheat industry and the mission of NAWG.

- Grower awards may recognize individuals actively involved in wheat production or individuals whose qualifying service was performed during their career as a wheat grower.
- State wheat organization awards may recognize NAWG member state wheat organizations.
- Nominees should be in good standing with applicable state or national grower organizations.
- Judges may decline to consider nominations that do not provide sufficient information to evaluate the nominee.

NAWG may establish additional eligibility requirements or modify eligibility criteria as the program develops.

Nominations:

Nominations may be submitted by state wheat organizations, NAWG board members, or NWF board members via email to NAWG CEO Sam Kieffer (skieffer@wheatworld.org). Each nomination should include:

- Name, phone number, email address and mailing address of nominee.
- Award category.
- High-resolution photo of nominee (grower award categories only).
- Name and contact information of the nominator.
- A brief description of the nominee's qualifications (not to exceed 1000 words) that include specific examples of leadership, accomplishments, advocacy, collaboration, or innovation, relevant measurable outcomes or impacts, and any supporting materials that strengthen the nomination.
- Self-nominations for grower awards are not permitted. State wheat organizations can, however, self-nominate for the Innovation in Advocacy Award.

Judging Process:

Nominations will be reviewed and awardees selected by an independent judging panel of three industry professionals for each award category. Panelists will have expertise in areas such as agricultural policy, advocacy, leadership, communications, member engagement, or association development. To promote an impartial evaluation process, judges will not need to be directly involved in the wheat sector. Nominations will be evaluated based on the quality and impact of their accomplishments.

Timeline:

NAWG will announce annual nomination and award timelines in advance. A typical annual cycle includes:

- Nomination Period: Opens **September 1, 2026** and closes **November 15, 2026**.
- Eligibility Review: Completed following the nomination deadline.
- Judging: Independent panels review eligible nominations and select recipients **no later than December 31, 2026**.
- Recipient Notification: Award recipients are notified **no later than January 15, 2027** and invited to attend award presentation at Commodity Classic.
 - Grower Award Winners will receive airfare reimbursement for one person, complimentary Commodity Classic registration or two persons, and three hotel nights at NAWG convention hotel during Commodity Classic.
- Public Announcement and Award Presentations: Winners will be announced at Commodity Classic and through NAWG communications.

Contact Information

Questions regarding the NAWG Awards Program should be directed to NAWG CEO Sam Kieffer (717.497.4645, skieffer@wheatworld.org).