



## **AWARDS CRITERIA & POLICY MANUAL**

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# AWARDS CRITERIA

## MAIN AWARDS

VOTED ON BY ALL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

### Entertainer of the Year

[Award to Artist]

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, consumption, 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.

### Album of the Year

[Award to Primary 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 highest charting position on the Billboard Top Country Albums Chart during the eligibility period, 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 recordings 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 of the Year

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

Any single released and achieving a **Top 20** charted position on Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) 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. 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.

### Song of the Year

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

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, consumption, 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) and no more than twenty (20) members in the Artist/Musician/Producer/Engineer, Songwriter, Music Publisher/PRO and Record Company categories, whose members are approved by the ACM officers, will submit a final list of at least ten (10) songs to ACM members in the Songwriter, Music Publisher/PRO categories 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 and achieving a **Top 50** charted position on Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) 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 Songwriter]**

This award is presented to an individual known predominately as a songwriter, selected by a Professional Panel of judges whose members are approved by the ACM officers 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/Musician/Producer/Engineer, Songwriter, Music Publisher/PRO and Record Company.

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, a commercially released song crediting the songwriter that achieved its highest position in the **Top 50** on Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) 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.

**Music Event of the Year\*****[Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]**

Any music event released and achieving a **Top 50** charted position in Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) charts during the eligibility period is eligible. If the music event single 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 music 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. 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, this category may not be awarded.

**Female Artist of the Year****[Award to Artist]****Male Artist of the Year****[Award to Artist]****Duo of the Year\*****[Award to Artist]****Group of the Year\*****[Award to Artist]**

The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, consumption, 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, Duo Of The Year may be merged with Group Of The Year by the Board, and shall be called Duo/Group Of The Year.*

**New Female Artist of the Year****New Male Artist of the Year****[Award to Artist]****New Duo or Group of the Year**

Presented to an individual artist, group or duo who gains initial fame or significantly greater recognition during the promotion of a debut or sophomore album within the eligibility period.

The artist must have released a single that reached the **Top 40** on Billboard's Hot Country Songs or the Country Aircheck (Mediabase) charts. Any albums self-released through an independent label the artist owns and operates may not be counted as a debut or sophomore album, unless it produces a **Top 40** single reported by Billboard's Hot Country Songs or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) charts. 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 who served or is currently serving as a lead member of a duo or group is not eligible for individual category recognition. Additionally, any artist who has gained initial fame as a solo artist or as part of a duo or group in another genre is not eligible in these categories.

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, they will no longer be eligible in this category. If an artist is a winner in the New Female Artist /New Male Artist/New Duo or Group (or any respective previously named) category their first year on a ballot, they will not be eligible in any New Artist categories again. Any artist who has previously won the award for Entertainer, Female Artist, Male Artist, Duo or Group of the Year (or any respective previously named category) is ineligible for a New Artist nomination.

**Video of the Year****[Award to Producer(s)/Director(s)/ Artist(s)]**

This award is presented to the producer, director and artist performing on an outstanding country music video, broadcast online or on television, released during the eligibility period. Emphasis shall be placed on creativity, production, visual appeal and impact on consumers and the country music industry. Other factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success of any recording for which the video was made at radio, and consumption and success on any digital platform where the video is broadcast. 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. 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.

**Triple Crown****[Award to Artist]**

This award is presented to an artist, duo or group upon receiving the New Male Artist of the Year *or* New Female Artist of the Year *or* New Duo or Group of the Year **and** Male Artist of the Year *or* Female Artist of the Year *or* Duo *or* Group of the Year (or any respective previously named category) **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).

## **INDUSTRY AWARDS**

VOTED ON BY THE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIZED IN THE ARTIST/MUSICIAN/PRODUCER/ENGINEER, VENUE, MANAGER, TALENT AGENT, AND TALENT BUYER/PROMOTER CATEGORIES

### **Casino of the Year**

**[Award to Casino Venue]**

#### **-Theater**

This award is presented to an outstanding theater or showroom within a casino, 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 casino theater or showroom 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.

#### **-Arena**

This award is presented to an outstanding arena or amphitheater within a casino 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 casino arena or amphitheater 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 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 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.

### **Fair/Rodeo of the Year**

**[Award to Fair/Rodeo]**

This award is presented to an outstanding fair/rodeo 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 fair/rodeo must have included a minimum of one (1) country music artist as a headliner, 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.

### **Club of the Year**

**[Award to Club]**

This award is presented to an outstanding country music club, 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 club 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.

### **Theater of the Year**

**[Award to Venue]**

This award is presented to an outstanding theater or performing arts center, not associated with a casino, 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 theater/performing arts center 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.

### **Outdoor Venue of the Year**

**[Award to Venue]**

This award is presented to an outstanding outdoor venue, not associated with a casino, 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 outdoor 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.

**Arena of the Year****[Award to Venue]**

This award is presented to an outstanding indoor arena, not associated with a casino, 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 arena 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.

**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 buyer must have bought at least fifteen (15) 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 Individual Promoter]**

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 promoter must have promoted at least fifteen (15) 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 THE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIZED IN THE ARTIST/MUSICIAN/PRODUCER/ENGINEER CATEGORY

### **BASS PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**[Award to Artist]**

This award is presented to an outstanding session bass player, selected by a Professional Panel of judges approved by the ACM officers. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. 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) 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 charting position 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 Artist]**

This award is presented to an outstanding session drummer, selected by a Professional Panel of judges approved by the ACM officers. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. 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) 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 charting position 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 Artist]**

This award is presented to an outstanding session guitar player, in any capacity, selected by a Professional Panel of judges approved by the ACM officers. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. 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) 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 charting position 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 Artist]**

This award is presented to an outstanding session piano/keyboards player, selected by a Professional Panel of judges approved by the ACM officers. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. 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) 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 charting position 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 Artist]**

This award is presented to an outstanding session specialty instrument(s) player, selected by a Professional Panel of judges approved by the ACM officers. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. 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) 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 charting position 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 Artist]**

This award is presented to an outstanding session steel guitar player, selected by a Professional Panel of judges approved by the ACM officers. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. 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) 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 charting position 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 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 approved by the ACM officers. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. 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) 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 charting position 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 Artist]**

This award is presented to an outstanding producer, selected by a Professional Panel of judges approved by the ACM officers. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. 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) 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 charting position 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 THE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIZED IN THE RADIO CATEGORY

### **ON-AIR PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR**

**[Award to 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 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.*

### **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 Icon Award**

**[Award to 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.

### **Gene Weed Milestone Award**

**[Award to 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 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 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 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 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 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 Recipient]**

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

### **Dick Clark Artist of the Decade Award**

**[Award to 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.

### **Album of the Decade Award**

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

This award recognizes an album that has impacted country music over the decade. The factors to be considered are, but not limited to the success at radio of singles released from album, album concept, commercial media, sales and streaming, artistic merit and ACM Award recognition.

### **Song of the Decade Award**

**[Award to Songwriter(s)/Publisher(s)/ Artist(s)]**

This award recognizes a song that has impacted country music over the decade. The factors to be considered are, but not limited to success at radio, commercial media, sales and streaming, creative integrity, artistic merit and ACM Award recognition.

**Songwriter of the Decade Award****[Award to Songwriter(s)]**

This award recognizes a songwriter whose creative works have impacted country music over the decade. The factors to be considered are, but not limited to success of body of work at radio, commercial media, sales and streaming, creative integrity, artistic merit and ACM Award recognition.

**Artist-Songwriter of the Decade Award****[Award to Performing Artist]**

An artist-songwriter is defined as an artist who has commercially released material, written in whole or in part by said artist. This award recognizes a songwriter whose creative works and performance have impacted country music over the decade. The factors to be considered are, but not limited to success at radio, commercial media, sales and streaming, artistic merit and ACM Award recognition.

**Single of the Decade Award****[Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]**

This award recognizes a single that has impacted country music over the decade. The factors to be considered are, but not limited to success at radio, commercial media, sales and streaming, artistic merit and ACM Award recognition.

**Music Event of the Decade Award****[Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]**

This award recognizes a recording performed by artists who do not regularly perform together that has impacted country music over the decade. The factors to be considered are, but not limited to success at radio, commercial media, sales and streaming, artistic merit and ACM Award recognition.

**Breakout Artist of the Decade Award****[Award to Artist(s)]**

This award recognizes an artist that first impacted country music in the decade and has contributed to the country music format in an impactful way. Factors to be considered are, but not limited to success at radio, commercial media, sales and streaming, creative integrity, touring statistics, artistic merit and ACM Award recognition.

# AWARDS & VOTING POLICY

## MAIN AWARDS VOTING PROCEDURES

### SUBMISSION PERIOD

The Academy of Country Music will open the Awards Submission Process each year to receive submissions for awards consideration in the following awards categories:

#### **Main Awards Categories:**

Album of the Year  
Single of the Year  
Music Event of the Year  
New Male Artist of the Year  
New Female Artist of the Year  
New Duo or Group of the Year  
Video of the Year

#### **All Industry Awards Categories**

#### **All Radio Award Categories**

#### **FIRST ROUND BALLOT**

In the following categories:

Album of the Year  
Single of the Year  
Music Event of the Year  
New Male Artist of the Year  
New Female Artist of the Year  
New Duo or Group of the Year  
Video of the Year

The full membership will choose one (1) submission.

In following categories:

Entertainer of the Year  
Female Artist of the Year  
Male Artist of the Year  
Duo of the Year  
Group of the Year

The full membership will write-in one (1) submission.

The Top 20 submissions will be presented for review to the Board to ensure the submissions meet all eligibility criteria. The Top 20 submissions must also have achieved a minimum of 2% or more of the vote within the respective category.

### **SECOND ROUND BALLOT**

In the second round, up to two (2) votes may be cast in each category for the category to be counted. The five (5) submissions receiving the most votes in each category will be placed on the final ballot. If there are less than five (5) eligible submissions 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 BALLOT**

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.

**SONG OF THE YEAR VOTING** –A Professional Panel of at least twelve (12) and no more than twenty (20), members from the Artist/Musician/Producer/Engineer, Songwriter and Music Publisher/PRO categories – whose members are approved by the ACM officers – will review all eligible songs prior to the Song of the Year Panel. Prior to meeting, they will submit to the Academy staff their top 20 choices. The panel will review the aggregated list of songs and discuss. After discussion, the panel will vote by confidential weighted ballot to determine a list of top 20. After additional discussion, the panel will then vote by confidential weighted ballot to determine a list of the top 10. The panel will then submit a final list of ten (10) songs to ACM members classified in the Songwriter and Music Publisher/PRO categories to select up to two (2) choices to determine 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 full ACM membership.

**SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR VOTING** – This award is presented to an individual known predominately as a songwriter, and selected by a Professional Panel of judges – whose members are approved by the ACM officers – composed of songwriters, publishers, producers, and performing rights organization (PRO) representatives. The panel will review and discuss all eligible songwriters of eligible recordings. The panel will vote by a confidential weighted ballot to determine a top 10 list of writers. After additional discussion, the panel will then vote by confidential weighted ballot to determine a list of the top 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/Musician/Producer/Engineer, Songwriter, Music Publisher/PRO and Record Company.

**STUDIO RECORDING AWARDS VOTING-** A Professional Panel whose members are approved by the ACM officers 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 panel will review and discuss all eligible candidates. The panel will vote by a confidential weighted ballot to determine a Top 10 list of candidates. After additional discussion, the panel will then vote by confidential weighted ballot to determine a list of the top 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 Artist/Musician/Producer/Engineer membership 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. Awards to be given out at annual Honors event.

**INDUSTRY AWARDS VOTING** – A Professional Panel whose members are approved by the ACM officers will submit five (5) nominees to be approved by the Board for the final round in the following categories; Casino Theater, Casino Arena, Festival of the Year, Fair/Rodeo of the Year, Club of the Year, Theater of the Year, Outdoor Venue of the Year, Arena of the Year, Don Romeo Talent Buyer of the Year and Promoter of the Year, based on the criteria for each category. The panel will review and discuss all submitted candidates. The panel will vote by a confidential weighted ballot to determine a top 10 list of candidates. After additional discussion, the panel will then vote by confidential weighted ballot to determine a list of the top 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 Artist/Musician/Producer/Engineer, Venue, Manager, Talent Agent, Talent Buyer/Promoter membership 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. Awards to be given out at annual Honors event.

Members must be in good standing in order to be eligible to vote in the Main Awards, Industry Awards and Studio Recording Awards.

**SPECIAL AWARDS VOTING** - A Professional Panel whose members are approved by the ACM officers will submit candidates to be approved by the Board as recipients in the Special Awards categories. Awards to be given out at annual Honors event.

**RADIO AWARDS VOTING** – A Professional Panel whose members are approved by the ACM officers shall evaluate submissions from the current eligibility period based on the station’s or 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 station’s or personality’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. Radio awards to be given out (1) off-camera in a presentation one day prior to the main show or (2) depending on timing, during the telecast in some format.

**AWARDS & VOTING COMMITTEE** – The Awards & Voting Committee is to be co-chaired by the current Chair of the ACM Board and President of the ACM Board. The Awards & Voting Committee meets annually before voting begins to review criteria, discuss updates and ensure information is current with the awards and voting processes. Any changes approved by the committee are presented to the ACM Board for ratification.

**TELECAST AWARDS** – The following five awards categories will always be televised: Entertainer of the Year, Album of the Year, Song of the Year, Female Artist of the Year & Male Artist of the Year. The TV committee will decide annually if any of the following remaining awards will be televised: Duo of the Year, Group of the Year, Single of the Year, Video of the Year & Music Event of the Year. The following categories will always be visible on the Awards show: New Male Artist of the Year, New Female Artist of the Year & New Duo or Group of the Year.

**OFF CAMERA AWARDS** - Off-camera awards to be given out prior to the telecast; time/location dependent upon winners’ availability. Awards should be referenced during main telecast when applicable.

All nominees for all awards to be in awards show program book (this decision was made since the program book serves as our “yearbook” and is our main historical record).

#### **ACM AWARD STATUETTE POLICY**

- ACM Award Statuettes may not be purchased under any circumstances except for replacement of either damaged or stolen statuettes. In the case of a damaged statuette, the damaged statuette must be returned to the Academy along with payment for the replacement statuette. In the case of a stolen statuette, written notification of a request to replace a statuette must be submitted to VP, Awards & Membership along with a formal police report indicating theft of the statuette. Cost for the replacement statuette is \$795.00.
- ACM Award statuettes for all awards are silver except for Special Awards. Special Awards are gold.
- All statuettes are shipped out within six weeks of the awards show.
- All winners and Special Award recipients are bound by the following language regarding the ACM Award statuette: The ACM Award statuette is the property of the Academy of Country Music and may not be transferred, sold or used in any manner, without the express written consent of the Academy of Country Music, it being understood that possession of the ACM Award statuette is intended solely for the private use and benefit of the recipient and the recipient’s heirs.

#### **ACM AWARD STATUETTE POLICY - CERTIFICATES & COMMEMORATIVES**

- Certificates [are provided to][may be purchased by] ACM Award winners in recognition and appreciation of those individuals who materially contributed to the ACM Award-winning achievement.
- Commemorative ACM Award statuettes may be ordered on behalf of a record label, publisher, agency or management principally involved with the ACM Award-winning achievement. Commemorative ACM Awards cannot be ordered for individuals. The intent of issuing Commemorative ACM Awards is to give the record labels, publishers, agencies and managers the opportunity to display, in a corporate public space, the ACM Awards for achievements for which their artists are recognized. All Commemorative ACM Award orders are subject to the approval of the Awards Committee.



### **THIRD-PARTY AUDITOR POLICY**

The Academy shall engage a third-party auditor, selected by the Executive Committee and ratified by the ACM Board, to review and report the results of all voting periods for the ACM Awards, based on a mutually agreed upon set of procedures. The responsibilities of the third-party auditor shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Obtain a password-protected database file from online voting vendor with final results and other voting metrics.
- Perform mathematical computations to determine accuracy of all voting information.
- Inspect the database file to identify potential voting anomalies.
- Prepare and present a list of results to the VP, Awards & Membership pursuant to the voting round criteria. Any potential voting anomaly identified as suspect, will be presented to the chairman of the Board and the Parliamentarian. Based on instructions from these individuals, who are responsible for determining whether a vote should be disqualified, they shall exclude those votes that they have disqualified from the count of the database votes and perform mathematical computations to tabulate the totals of the votes by nominee by category.

In order to maintain the integrity of the ACM Awards process, ACM Board members and administration shall have no access to specific voting metrics or email delivery data. Any inquiries about such metrics, shall be made to the VP, Awards & Membership who will then engage third party auditor. As a matter of policy, third party auditor shall not disclose specific information about any voting metrics or email delivery metadata.

### **VOTE SOLICITATION POLICY**

ACM award nominees and their affiliates are prohibited from soliciting votes directly from Academy members through mail (physical and email), or any other similar direct solicitation. The Academy will allow trade ads. Physical marketing mailers that do not mention voting, voting categories or use the Academy of Country Music corporate or awards logo are also allowed.