

TECHPOINT **MIRA**AWARDS

2021 Categories & Criteria Guide

Mission of the TechPoint Mira Awards

The Mira Awards bring us together as a community to celebrate the state's tremendous tech success stories and amplify them to media, investors and technology buyers nationwide.

TechPoint created the awards program in 1999 to recognize tech-related achievements and innovation statewide, and ultimately to stimulate future tech growth and entrepreneurship. Among recent Mira Award winners, many have increased sales, venture capital and talent attraction.

2021 TechPoint Mira Awards Categories

- **PEOPLE**
 - **Community Impact Award** – *Open to Individuals, Teams & Organizations*
 - **Tech Education Award** – *Open to Individuals, Teams & Organizations*
 - **Rising Entrepreneur Award** – *No Age Restrictions*
 - **Investor of the Year** – *Open to Local & Out-of-State Investors*
 - **Trailblazer Award** (Chosen by TechPoint Board)
 - **Bridge Builder Award** (Chosen by TechPoint Foundation for Youth)
- **PLACE**
 - **Rising Tech City Award** – *Open to Cities, Towns, Development Authorities & Other Place-Based Organizations*
- **PRODUCTS**
 - **Tech Product of the Year**
 - **Service Partner of the Year**
 - **Innovation of the Year** – *R&D-Based, Technological/Discovery Recognition*
- **COMPANIES**
 - **Exceptional Employer Award**
 - **Startup of the Year** – *2-Year Launch Timeframe*
 - **Scale-up of the Year**
 - **Large Enterprise of the Year**

Important Dates & Deadlines for the 2021 Mira Awards

Tuesday, December 1, 2020	Nominations & Applications OPEN, Call for Entries
Friday, January 22, 2021	All Application Forms Due
Tuesday, February 16, 2021	2021 Mira Awards Nominee Announcement
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 & Thursday, March 11, 2021	Nominee Presentations/Interviews with Judging Panels (Interviews will be scheduled after February 16th finalist announcement.)

General Eligibility Requirements

- Anyone may submit an application.
- There is no cost to apply.
- Self-nomination through the application process is common and encouraged. (You don't have to be nominated by someone else, just go ahead and apply.)
- All 2021 awards are given for achievement during calendar year 2020 (except for individual, company and products categories that allow for longer timelines).
- Individual applicants must work and live in the state of Indiana, except for the Investor of the Year category.
- Company applicants must either be headquartered in Indiana or at a minimum have a comprehensive set of business functions located in Indiana, and Indiana employees must have been central to the business' accomplishments or culture depending on the category. Only work done by Indiana employees will be considered for awards.
- Association with TechPoint is not required and membership/sponsorship has no impact on an applicant's chances of being named a nominee or winning.
- Should an application appear to better qualify for a different category than originally submitted, Mira Award judges and TechPoint staff reserve the right to enter the application into the more suitable category.

Nomination vs. Application

The public is encouraged to nominate deserving individuals, teams, organizations and companies using the simplified [Nomination Form](#). Those nominated will receive notification and they must complete the official Mira Awards [Application Form](#) in order to be considered for an award.

Only those who complete the Application Form will be considered for awards. Applicants are evaluated by the judges and then the scoring determines which applicants move forward as official Mira Award nominees.

Eligibility for Companies Headquartered Out-of-State

To qualify for the Exceptional Employer Award, Large Enterprise of the Year, Scale-up of the Year or Startup of the Year, a company must have a comprehensive set of business functions located in Indiana, and Indiana employees must have been central to the businesses accomplishments.

For example, a company with only sales and marketing offices in Indiana would not qualify, but a company with product development, sales, marketing, and services likely would. Revenue and growth results should focus on the Indiana-relevant business unit results, not just the corporate whole.

To qualify for the Exceptional Employer Award, the application must focus on the cultural elements present in Indiana, with particular focus on those elements initiated in Indiana and executed by Indiana employees.

To qualify for Tech Product of the Year, Service Partner of the Year or Innovation of the Year, the product, service, or innovation must have been primarily developed in Indiana by Indiana employees of the company.

Application Process and Applicant Interview Dates

Mira Award applications are reviewed and ranked by independent panels of company founders, CEO/presidents, CIOs, VPs and a variety of other subject matter experts. The rankings determine which applicants will be included in the 2021 class of Mira Award nominees.

Next, Mira Award nominees are required to deliver brief presentations and participate in virtual interviews (20 minutes total) with the judging panel from their specific category on March 10th or March 11th**, and should be prepared to answer questions and discuss their application in further detail.

** We recommend making note of both of these interview dates in your calendar immediately to avoid conflicts that may prevent you from being available to present.

**** MARK YOUR CALENDAR: REQUIRED NOMINEE INTERVIEWS TAKE PLACE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10TH OR THURSDAY, MARCH 11TH. PLEASE RESERVE BOTH DATES, AS APPOINTMENTS WILL BE MADE FOLLOWING THE FEBRUARY 16, 2021 NOMINEE ANNOUNCEMENT.**

Because the volunteer judges are busy professionals themselves, it is impossible to reschedule missed interview appointments.

Mira Award nominees will be announced on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. Mira Award winners will be announced during the Mira Awards Gala in April 2021.

PRO TIP: The best way to think about your application is as a whole—not just individual questions—and that you are writing a compelling story for the judges to read. It should not be long. It should not be difficult for a subject matter expert in your field to understand. And the innovative, unique or most interesting thing about your achievement should be right in the beginning of the question “Why does this applicant deserve to win a Mira Award?”

Confidentiality

TechPoint and the TechPoint Mira Awards judges agree to maintain the highest standards of confidentiality with respect to information that is not in the public domain regarding organizations, individuals, or technologies nominated for the TechPoint Mira Awards.

Questions

If you have any questions about the nomination form or process, please contact Joshua Hall at joshua@techpoint.org or call 317-464-5416.

Award Categories:

PEOPLE AWARDS

Community Impact Award

(Individuals, Teams or Organizations)

This award category celebrates and thanks people who have championed the advancement of Indiana’s tech community.

To be eligible, a major effort or project should have been executed during the 2020 calendar year. Special attention will be paid to those applicants who demonstrate genuine drive to improve the tech community and the careers and/or lives of people living and working in Indiana.

For example:

- A legislator who champions pro-technology Indiana public policy
- An educator who helps children discover STEM and steers them toward more opportunities
- An early-adopter corporation with a commitment to buy its technology within Indiana
- A public figure who helps to draw attention to the tech community’s vitality

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. List community projects executed by the applicant during calendar year 2020.
2. In what ways did these efforts advance Indiana's tech community?
3. What has the applicant developed that is new or innovative?
4. Describe the applicant's contributions to inspiring others and driving the tech industry forward in Indiana.
5. In what ways has the applicant advanced diversity, equity and inclusion and/or created opportunities for underrepresented individuals?

Tech Education Award

(Individuals, Teams or Organizations)

This award recognizes educators and education innovators who inspire students to learn and whose creative, innovative application of technology in the classroom or other learning environments has had a positive impact on student achievement.

No school association is required. Many applicants are associated with an educational institution including K-12 and post-secondary schools, however, educators of all kinds teaching in diverse and non-traditional environments are encouraged to apply.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. What has the applicant developed that is new or innovative?
2. How does this development advance tech education and/or the education of students beyond the mere use of technology?
3. In what way or ways does the applicant inspire students to learn?
4. Describe the applicant's impact on student achievement.
5. In what ways has the applicant advanced diversity, equity and inclusion and/or created opportunities for underrepresented individuals?

Rising Entrepreneur Award

This award recognizes a leader with great potential—regardless of age—who is both an entrepreneur and a contributor to the tech community. The emphasis for this award is on the impact made and demonstrated outstanding, continuous achievement.

To be eligible, applicants must have created a business prior to December 31, 2020. There is no minimum or maximum age limit. Students and teen entrepreneurs who run their own businesses are eligible, as are later in life entrepreneurs who started their businesses after starting their families or following long careers.

For example:

- Applicants who have achieved more than would be expected from someone at her or his level of training and experience.
- Tangible achievements such as jobs created, dollars raised, customers/audience reached and lives impacted are key considerations.
- Applicants who have also demonstrated a desire to be a part of advancing Indiana's tech community.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. What business (or businesses) has the applicant started?
2. Has the applicant raised capital? If yes, list amount and source.
3. List the applicant's primary entrepreneurial accomplishments.
4. List awards/honors received.
5. List civic activity, memberships and associations, and any other community involvement, including diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

Investor of the Year

(Individuals, Teams or Organizations)

This award category recognizes all types of investors who bet on Indiana tech companies and serve as critical mentors and connectors beyond the financial instrument.

To be eligible, the investor must have made an investment in at least one Indiana headquartered technology company during calendar-year 2020.

Individuals from venture capital firms, peer-lending organizations, investor groups, angel investors and personal investors located within and outside of the state of Indiana are encouraged to apply.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. What investments did the applicant make in Indiana companies during calendar year 2020?
2. In what ways does the applicant invest in its Indiana portfolio or the community beyond the financial instrument?
3. Does the applicant have a special interest or passion for investing in Indiana companies? If yes, what inspires them?
4. What is the grand total the applicant has invested in Indiana companies over time?
5. In what ways has the applicant advanced diversity, equity and inclusion and/or created opportunities for underrepresented individuals?

Trailblazer Award

The TechPoint Trailblazer Award is selected by the TechPoint Board of Directors. There is no application process, however, the public may submit suggestions for the Trailblazer Award by sending recommendations to Joshua Hall at joshua@techpoint.org.

Bridge Builder Award

The TechPoint Foundation for Youth Bridge Builder Award is selected by the TechPoint Foundation for Youth Board of Directors. There is no application process, however, the public may submit suggestions for the Bridge Builder Award by sending recommendations to Joshua Hall at joshua@techpoint.org.

PLACE AWARDS

Rising Tech City Award

This award category recognizes a city, town, region or community within the state of Indiana and celebrates the projects and the people behind them who have championed the location's advancement with particular emphasis on tech friendliness.

To be eligible, a major effort or project should have been executed during the 2019 calendar year or celebrated a major milestone such as a public launch or project completion. Special attention will be paid to those applicants who demonstrate genuine drive to improve the tech community and the careers and/or lives of people living and working in Indiana.

For example:

- Talent attraction or development programs
- Place-making to attract and retain talent, attract and retain companies, etc.
- Regional partnerships or organization launch or milestone; sector or sub-sector focus and investment in developing companies, products, corporate partnerships or other organizations, capacity-building.
- Cooperative regional efforts to equip employers for Industry 4.0 and digital transformation.
- Attracting notable tech or tech-enabled companies
- Infrastructure development like innovation parks, incubators/accelerators,
- Venture capital investment vehicle
- Smart City implementations
- Startup accelerator, incubator or R&D facility
- Policy or government initiatives

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. List community projects executed by the applicant during calendar year 2020.
2. In what ways did these efforts advance the location's tech friendliness?
3. What has the applicant developed that is new or innovative?
4. Describe any specific efforts to attract tech talent or recruit tech companies to the location.
5. In what ways has this community advanced diversity, equity and inclusion and/or created opportunities for underrepresented individuals?

PRODUCTS/SERVICES AWARDS

Tech Product of the Year

This award category recognizes innovative new commercially available, technology-based products (hardware or software).

To be eligible, products must currently be in-market and must have been available for sale for the first time (no upgrades or Mark II products unless entirely new) prior to December 31, 2020.

The product does not have to be launched for the first time in 2020, but it should have had a major milestone, such as adoption by a major corporation or retail store, making it a bestseller with a giant leap in users. The point being that the product had its best year ever!

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. What specific problem does this product solve and how does it solve it?
2. Does the product demonstrate tech innovation, market disruption or both, and how so?
3. Describe how this product was developed, such as your specific innovation approach, including a development timeline.
4. Has the product proven its market viability through mass usage, strong pilots, paying customers or other metrics? Explain.
5. In what ways does this product have lasting ability and the potential to become a technology staple?

Service Partner of the Year

The newly restructured Service Partner of the Year award is designed to recognize:

1. Firms providing excellent service important to tech company success; AND
2. Services teams operating inside a tech company.

The spirit of this award is to celebrate people, teams, or organizations delivering remarkable, impactful service to clients—whether they be external or internal—to tech companies or tech teams in tech-enabled companies.

These services could include (but are not limited to) IT/cyber, design/branding, marketing/PR, legal/accounting, consulting, data science or other.

Delivery of the service may be aided by use of a software product, but this award is not intended for products subscribed via a Software as a Service (SaaS) model.

To be eligible, the service provider should have executed, at least in part, or experienced a significant milestone such as a launch or implementation with the described client project or projects during calendar-year 2020. It is expected that development and work product will have taken place prior to 2020.

The Service Partner of the Year award is evaluated and determined by the descriptions and results/data stemming from solution work done to support the Service Partner's client (internal or external), not the company's entire history or body of work. The service must have been primarily developed in Indiana. New versions or applications of previously marketed solutions will not be considered.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. What specific service was provided and what problem did it solve?
2. In what ways is the service new, innovative or disruptive?
3. Describe how this service was developed including a development timeline.
4. How did you measure success and how did the service impact the client/department?
5. Provide other client/department outcomes that demonstrate the real-world success and great value of the service.

Innovation of the Year

This award category recognizes scientific achievements, the results of R&D efforts and other trailblazing, market disrupting new technologies, which may include completed products.

To be eligible, the innovation must have achieved a significant development milestone in 2020. The innovation of the year is a singular innovation, not a company or body of work. The technology-based innovation must have been primarily developed in Indiana. New versions of previously marketed technologies will not be considered.

Nominees are expected to demonstrate how this innovation positions the company or licensees for sustainable future growth and business success, even though actual sales are not a requirement. However, commercial viability will be closely examined.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. What specifically about the work is innovative?
2. Describe the R&D/development process that created this innovation.
3. Provide a development timeline for the innovation.
4. In what ways is this innovation a trailblazing, market disrupting or otherwise significant scientific achievement?
5. How might the innovation be applied to future products/services and what potential impact is expected?

COMPANIES AWARDS

Pandemic Pivot of the Year

The tech industry is known for its creativity and adaptability when faced with problems or opportunities, and the COVID-19 pandemic presented plenty of problems and opportunities.

This year we want to recognize the tech employers who responded in remarkable ways to: 1) serve societal or customer pandemic-induced needs, 2) seize market opportunities created by pandemic-induced market demand shifts, or 3) survive amidst very difficult pandemic-induced challenges.

To be eligible, companies must be headquartered in Indiana or at a minimum have a significant Indiana-based operation or division/business unit with employees who work and live within the state.

Special attention will be paid to those applicants who demonstrate creative, bold, unique and/or innovative solutions that are supported with available data and positive outcomes.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. Describe the problem or opportunity the applicant faced and responded to. What makes it significant?
2. Describe how you pivoted. What key steps did you take to pivot and why are they significant?
3. What about the pivot is creative, bold, unique or innovative? What sets it apart?
4. List available data points and results/outcomes that demonstrate the impact of the pivot (for your company, customers, employees, community, etc.)

5. Describe how this pivot experience has affected your company or organization and will impact it into the future.

Exceptional Employer Award

This category recognizes tech companies that are doing an exceptional job of hiring and developing talent, cultivating workspaces and workplace culture, and deliberately increasing diversity. Special attention is paid to employers that recognize their role in the workforce development pipeline and place value on recruiting, training and ongoing professional development.

To be eligible, companies must be headquartered in Indiana or at a minimum have a significant Indiana-based operation or division/business unit with employees who work and live within the state of Indiana. The application should address the company's culture in relation to the Triple Bottom Line (the 3Ps of Sustainability) People, Planet, and Profit.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. Describe company plans for new hires/employee growth over the next three years.
2. Describe company plans for revenue growth over the next three years.
3. How has the company developed and leveraged its Indiana-based talent?
4. How does the company's culture enhance performance and help it to sustain a competitive advantage?
5. In what ways has the company advanced diversity, equity and inclusion and/or created opportunities for underrepresented individuals?

Startup of the Year

(Launched After January 1, 2019)

The Startup of the Year category recognizes startups with great potential that demonstrate the creative, strategic and innovative entrepreneurial spirit of Indiana's technology industry.

To be eligible, startups must have executed public launch activities after January 1, 2019. The incorporation date of the company can be earlier, but the primary launch of the company and its products or services must be in 2019 or 2020, and there must be an in-market tech product or service that can be purchased.

Nominees will be judged on a variety of factors including the quality of their business idea and plan, the strength of the founding team and their ability to fund initial operations.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. Describe company plans for new hires/employee growth over the next three years.
2. Describe company plans for revenue growth over the next three years.
3. What are the startup's go-to-market strategies and how is success being measured?
4. List the complete leadership team and their roles in driving success for this startup, including any key advisors.
5. How has this startup achieved or demonstrated a likelihood to achieve measurable growth and potential for high-growth in the future?

Scale-up Company of the Year

This award category recognizes high-growth, innovation-driven companies that provide technology products or services (or are a highly tech-enabled business), are gaining traction and could be Indiana's next big success stories.

To be eligible, companies must be headquartered in Indiana or at a minimum have a significant Indiana-based operation or division/business unit with employees who work and live within the state of Indiana.

Minimum Qualifications:

- At least (1) one year old
- Annual revenue of at least \$100,000, up to millions
- At least 20% annual revenue growth
- Desire to grow and hire significantly in Indiana
- Fewer than 500 employees

Key considerations are financial growth, business growth, sustainability, impact on the market/industry, and technical business and product/service excellence.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. Describe company plans for new hires/employee growth over the next three years.
2. Describe company plans for revenue growth over the next three years.
3. List the complete leadership team and their roles in driving success for this scale-up, including any key advisors.
4. In what ways is this scale-up thinking big? How will the company reach a \$1 billion valuation (or high-water mark for this particular company/industry)?
5. Explain how this company's performance over the past three years have set up future high growth for the scale-up.

Large Enterprise of the Year

In this age of digital convergence and transformation we are bringing together two categories that previously separated tech companies and tech enabled companies and we are putting them into one. We welcome applications from both tech and tech-enabled companies for the Large Enterprise of the Year award.

This award category recognizes exceptional innovation and market position that is helping Indiana to become a recognized technology leader. Leadership teams are taken into account along with the company's influence on markets, industries and economies.

To be eligible, companies must be headquartered in Indiana or at a minimum have a significant Indiana-based operation or division/business unit with employees who work and live within the state of Indiana.

Key considerations are financial performance (including capital raised), strategic business development, sustainability, impact on the market/industry, technical business and product/service excellence, and accomplishments as an exceptional corporate citizen. Companies applying in this category should be recognized leaders with a reputation for being innovative.

The following criteria will be considered in determining the nominees and winner:

1. Describe company plans for new hires/employee growth over the next three years.
2. Describe company plans for revenue growth over the next three years.
3. How has the company developed and leveraged its Indiana-based talent?
4. Describe the company's culture in relation to the Triple Bottom Line (the 3Ps of Sustainability) People, Planet, and Profit.
5. In what ways has the company advanced diversity, equity and inclusion and/or created opportunities for underrepresented individuals?

Questions and Contact Information

If you have any questions about the nomination guidelines, nomination form or process, please contact Joshua Hall at joshua@techpoint.org or call 317-464-5416.

For information about corporate sponsorship, please contact Lauren Petersen at lauren@techpoint.org or call 317-275-2089.