



## Why participate in book awards programs?

- **Digital visibility:** boost online discoverability through improved search rankings, social media buzz, or inclusion in curated lists.
- **Long-term visibility:** book awards placements can contribute to long-term author or publisher brand visibility, not just short-term book promotion.
- **Credibility boost:** Winning or being shortlisted adds prestige and legitimacy to the work.
- **Marketing opportunities:** Awards provide a promotional angle for marketing campaigns.
- **Industry recognition:** Acknowledgment from peers and experts in the field.
- **Sales potential:** Award-winning books often see increased sales and interest.
- **Networking:** Participation can lead to valuable industry connections.
- **Feedback:** Some awards provide constructive feedback from judges.
- **Media attention:** Winners often receive press coverage, further increasing visibility.
- **Library and bookstore interest:** Awards can influence purchasing decisions for these outlets.
- **Personal and professional growth:** The process can be a learning experience for authors.
- **Reader trust:** Awards can serve as a quality indicator for potential readers.
- **Long-term career benefits:** Accolades can boost an author's or publisher's overall reputation.

# Not all are equal

Awards programs typically require an entry or administrative fee, and not all awards programs are created equally! Here are some tips for discerning which programs to enter:

1. Research the program's history and reputation:
  - Look for well-established awards with a track record of recognizing quality books.
  - Check if respected authors or publishers have participated in previous years.
2. Examine the judging process:
  - Legitimate awards typically have a transparent judging process.
  - Look for programs that use qualified judges (e.g., librarians, booksellers, or industry professionals).
3. Investigate the organizers:
  - Research the organization behind the awards. Are they a respected industry association or a for-profit company?
  - Be cautious of awards run by vanity presses or companies that mainly profit from entries.
4. Assess the entry fees:
  - While most legitimate awards charge entry fees, be wary of excessively high fees.
  - Ensure the fees are commensurate with the perceived value and prestige of the award.
5. Look at past winners:
  - Check if previous winners have gained recognition or success after winning.
  - Be cautious if you can't find information about past winners or if the quality seems questionable.
6. Evaluate the prizes:
  - Legitimate awards often offer tangible benefits beyond just a seal or certificate.
  - Look for programs that offer publicity, industry connections, or other valuable opportunities.
7. Check for excessive categories:
  - Be wary of programs with an unusually high number of categories, as this can be a red flag for "award mills."
8. Look for industry recognition:
  - Check if the award is acknowledged by reputable industry organizations or media.
9. Assess the submission requirements:
  - Legitimate awards usually have clear, reasonable submission guidelines.
  - Be cautious of programs that accept any submission without quality criteria.
10. Consider the program's reach and impact:
  - Evaluate whether winning the award would actually help increase visibility and credibility in your target market.

Other book awards programs outside of the Midwest Book Awards (the following programs are not affiliated with MiPA):

- IBPA Book Awards (formerly the Benjamin Franklin Awards): Presented by the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA), honoring excellence in book editorial and design.
- IPPY Awards: Recognizes excellence in independent publishing across a wide range of categories.
- Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Awards: Celebrates the best books from independent publishers, university presses, and self-published authors.
- Next Generation Indie Book Awards: Recognizes and honors the most exceptional independently published books.
- Eric Hoffer Book Award: Highlights salient writing, as well as the independent spirit of small, academic, and micro presses.
- Hugo Awards: Honors the best in science fiction and fantasy literature.
- Edgar Awards: Presented by the Mystery Writers of America, recognizing the best in mystery fiction, non-fiction, television, film, and theater.
- PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction: Celebrates the best published works of fiction by American citizens.
- Bram Stoker Awards: Recognizes superior achievement in horror writing.
- Lambda Literary Awards: Celebrates LGBTQ+ books and authors.