

2020 TECHPOINT  
**MIRA**  
AWARDS



## 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.

### 2020 TechPoint Mira Awards Categories

- **PEOPLE**
  - **Rising Entrepreneur Award** – NEW: *No Age Restrictions*
  - **Investor of the Year**
  - **Trailblazer Award** (chosen by TechPoint Board)
- **PLACE**
  - **Community Impact Award** – NEW: *Open to Individuals, Teams & Organizations*
  - **Tech Education Award** – NEW: *Open to Individuals, Teams & Organizations*
  - **Rising Tech City Award**
- **PRODUCTS**
  - **Tech Product of the Year** – NEW: *No Launch Date Restrictions*
  - **Service Partner of the Year** – NEW: *Restructured to Fit Market*
  - **Innovation of the Year**
- **COMPANIES**
  - **Exceptional Employer Award**
  - **Startup of the Year** – NEW: *Expanded 2-Year Launch Timeframe*
  - **Scale-up of the Year**
  - **Large Enterprise of the Year**

**Important Dates & Deadlines for the 2020 Mira Awards**

Tuesday, December 10, 2019	Nominations & Applications OPEN, Call for Entries
Friday, January 17, 2020	All Application Forms Due
Thursday, January 23, 2020 through Monday, February 3, 2020	All applications will be read, evaluated and scored by independent panels of subject matter experts to arrive at the 2020 class of Mira Awards nominees
Tuesday, February 11, 2020	2020 Mira Awards Nominee Announcement & Ticket Sales Open for Nominees
Wednesday, February 26, 2020 & Thursday, February 27, 2020	Nominee Interviews with Judging Panels (Interviews will be scheduled after February 12th finalist announcement.)
Monday, March 2, 2020	Tickets Sales Open to the Public at Early-Bird Pricing through March 17.
Tuesday, March 17, 2020, Midnight	Early-Bird Ticket Purchase Deadline
Saturday April 18, 2020	TechPoint 2020 Mira Awards Gala at the JW Marriott Indianapolis -- Downtown Indianapolis, Indiana

**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 2020 awards are given for achievement during calendar year 2019 (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 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.

Was this your company's best performance year ever? Did you launch a disruptive new product? Can you honestly say that what you have achieved is newsworthy and deserving of recognition on "Tech's Biggest Night" in front of 1,400 of the community's best and brightest? [For more insight into applying, read about past winners.](#)

Still not sure? Contact Joshua Hall of TechPoint and talk through your application.

### **Eligibility for Companies Headquartered Out-of-State**

To qualify for Large Enterprise of the Year, Scale-up of the Year, Best New Startup, or Tech-Enabled Company of the Year awards, 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 Best New Tech Product, Tech Service of the Year, or Innovation of the Year awards, 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 2020 class of Mira Award nominees.

Next, Mira Award nominees are required to deliver brief presentations and participate in 20-minute in-person interviews with the judging panel from their specific category on February 26th or February 27th\*\*, 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 IN-PERSON NOMINEE INTERVIEWS TAKE PLACE WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 OR THURSDAY FEBRUARY 27. PLEASE RESERVE BOTH DATES, AS APPOINTMENTS WILL BE MADE FOLLOWING THE FEBRUARY 11, 2019 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 11, 2020. Mira Award winners will be announced during the Mira Awards Gala on Saturday, April 18, 2020, at the JW Marriott Indianapolis.

**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 “Why does this applicant deserve to win a Mira Award” question.

### **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](mailto:joshua@techpoint.org) or call 317-464-5416.

### **Award Categories:**

## **PEOPLE**

### **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, 2019. 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.

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

- Has the applicant achieved more than would be expected from someone at her or his level of training and experience?
  - Specifically outline tangible achievements such as dollars raised, audience reached and lives impacted.
- Has the applicant demonstrated a desire to be a part of advancing Indiana’s tech community?
- Does the applicant have any other accomplishments, civic activity or community involvement that distinguish him/her in Indiana as outstanding, or other reasons why judges should select her or him for this award?

- Use the Additional Information space to provide other awards, accolades and associations

Please list previous awards/honors received, as well as relevant memberships and associations.

## **Tech Education Award**

**(Individual or Team)**

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:

- Has the applicant demonstrated excellence and/or innovation in the use or development of technology for educational achievement?
- Has the applicant developed an innovative way to teach technology beyond the mere *use* of technology?
- Does the applicant inspire students and excite them regarding the opportunities available to them through technology?
- Did the applicant demonstrate how she/he motivated, rewarded and/or challenged students to achieve through the application of technology?

## **Investor of the Year**

**(Individual or Team)**

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 2019. This is not a firm award; a specific outstanding individual or team is required.

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:

- Did the applicant demonstrate a high level of excellence/risk taking, civic engagement, and commitment to the Indiana/Indianapolis tech community?
- Why does the applicant have a special interest or passion for investing in Indiana companies? What inspired her/him/them to be a part of this community?
- When did you first invest in an Indiana company?

- What is the grand total you have invested in Indiana companies over time?

## 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](mailto:joshua@techpoint.org).

## PLACE

### 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 2019 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:

- Is the community champion innovative, creative and adding value?
- Has the champion demonstrated a commitment to contribute to the industry and drive it forward?
- Does the champion project passion for the community/industry and inspire others?
- Is this community champion an advocate for diversity and inclusion?

### 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

## **PRODUCTS**

### **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, 2019.

New this year, the product does not have to be launched for the first time in 2019, 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:

- Provide detailed descriptions of a problem/opportunity, the solution and the results/outcome.
- Does the product demonstrate tech innovation or market disruption?
- Describe your specific approach to innovation as it relates to this product.
  - How has your Product differentiated itself in its technology approach?
- Is the product a great value for its target audience?
- Has the product proven to have market viability either through mass usage, strong pilots, or paying customers?
- Does the 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 2019. It is expected that development and work product will have taken place prior to 2019.

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:

- Provide detailed descriptions of a problem/opportunity, the solution and the results/outcome.
  - Be sure to address the following:
    - What service was provided to the client and what problem did it solve?
    - How did you measure the success of the work for your client?
    - How did the service impact growth and success for the client and demonstrate innovativeness?
    - Clearly describe roles and responsibilities for impact by service partner and client.
- How was the service a great value for the client?
  - Provide client outcomes, results and/or other results of this tech service that demonstrate its real-world success.

## 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 2019. 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:

- Provide detailed descriptions of a problem/opportunity, the solution and the results/outcome.
- What specifically about the work is innovative?
  - It is critical in your response to the question: “Why does this applicant deserve a Mira Award?” that you begin with what is innovative about the work.

## **COMPANIES**

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

- How does the company’s culture support communications/feedback with employees and customers?
- Is professional development via continuing education, training and other methods an integral part of the company’s culture? How? What results have they achieved?
- How does the company’s culture enhance performance and help it to sustain a competitive advantage?
- How does workspace design impact the company’s culture and what impact does the physical space have on the employee and/or brand experience?
- Has the company demonstrated a commitment to diversity and inclusion that is genuine and effective?

- Describe your plans for new hires/employee growth over the next three years.
- Describe your plans for revenue growth over the next three years.
- How has the company focused on leveraging or developing talent within Indiana (e.g. focusing on schools, training, etc)?
- What is the company doing to focus on Triple Bottom Line - the 3 P's of sustainability. People, Planet, and Profit. Good corporate citizens do all three.

## **Startup of the Year**

**(Launched After January 1, 2018)**

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, 2018. The incorporation date of the company can be earlier, but the primary launch of the company and its products or services must be in 2018 or 2019, 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:

- Has the company achieved measurable growth since its inception or has it sufficiently demonstrated a strong likelihood for measurable growth?
- Does the company show potential for high-growth \$10MM-\$50MM in a much larger market?
- Are the company's go-to-market strategies unique and strong? How are they measuring/demonstrating success?
- Who makes up the leadership team and how are they driving this company's success?
- How much capital has been raised to launch and sustain this venture?
  - Please provide a brief summary of fundraising rounds/sources.
  - When is the planned date of profitability for this venture?
- Describe your plans for new hires/employee growth over the next three years.
- Describe your plans for revenue growth over the next three years.

## **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:

- Is the company thinking big? Do they have a well-reasoned and easily explained plan to reach a \$1 billion valuation (or high-water mark for this particular company/industry)?
- Who makes up the leadership team and how are they driving this company's success?
- Has the company demonstrated positive financial growth during each of the previous three years, and has the company's value increased as a result of its financial performance?
- Has the company grown its employee base in Indiana substantially in the past three years?
- Has the company consistently and significantly grown its revenue per employee in the past three years?
- How much capital has been raised to launch and sustain this venture?
  - Please provide a brief summary of fundraising rounds/sources
  - When is the planned date of profitability for this venture?
- Describe your plans for new hires/employee growth over the next three years.
- Describe your plans for revenue growth over the next three years.

## 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.

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, strategic business development, sustainability, impact on the market/industry, technical business and product/service excellence, and accomplishments as an exceptional corporate citizen.

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

- Is the company a recognized leader in its market with a reputation for being innovative?
- Who makes up the leadership team and how are they driving this company's success?
- Has the company demonstrated positive financial performance for the previous three years, and has the company's value increased as a result of its financial performance?
- How much capital has been raised to launch and sustain this venture?
  - Please provide a brief summary of fundraising rounds/sources.
  - When is the planned date of profitability for this venture?
- Describe your plans for new hires/employee growth over the next three years.
- Describe your plans for revenue growth over the next three years.
- How has the company focused on leveraging or developing talent within Indiana (e.g. focusing on schools, training, etc)?
- What is the company doing to focus on Triple Bottom Line - the 3 P's of sustainability. People, Planet, and Profit. Good corporate citizens do all three.
- Has the company grown beyond Indiana/United States or gained national/international exposure for its product/service?

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### **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](mailto:joshua@techpoint.org) or call 317-464-5416.

For information about corporate sponsorship and sponsored seating, please contact Lauren Petersen at [lauren@techpoint.org](mailto:lauren@techpoint.org) or call 317-275-2089.