

Launching a Local Prism Award Program



INSPIRED Coaching.

INSPIRING Results.

Since 2005, ICF Global's International Prism Award program has honored businesses and organizations with coaching programs that fulfill rigorous professional standards, address key strategic goals, shape organizational culture, and yield discernible and measurable positive impacts. What you may not realize is that the Prism Award was originally a local initiative developed by ICF Toronto to celebrate organizations using coaching in and around Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Over the last decade, several ICF Chapters around the globe have established their own Prism Award programs. For Chapters, there are numerous benefits to launching a local Prism program, including:

- **Stronger relationships with the local business community.** Chapter-level Prism programs provide a platform for connecting with local businesses. They also provide an opportunity to forge key strategic partnerships with potential allied organizations (e.g., chambers of commerce, local chapters of organizations like the Association for Talent Development, etc.).
- **Enhanced local awareness of ICF and professional coaching.** ICF Chapters have used their Prism Award programs to earn valuable media coverage.
- **Additional opportunities for member engagement.** The most successful local Prism programs engage member volunteers to support every aspect of the process, from marketing and public relations to judging nominations.
- **The creation of a valued member benefit.** Many ICF Chapters require coaches to hold a current ICF Membership in order to nominate an organization for a Prism Award. ICF Members can also benefit from networking opportunities at a Prism event where they meet members of the local business community.
- **A new source of non-dues revenue.** Over time, ticket sales for a local Prism event that delivers value to the local coaching and/or business community can become a valuable source of non-dues revenue for your Chapter.



A Strong Foundation

When launching a local Prism program, think of the big picture from the start. With your Chapter Board and Prism committee, clarify your goals for the program and identify the outcomes you'd like to achieve in year one of the award and beyond.

To ensure a strong foundation for your Chapter's Prism program, commit to engaging appropriate volunteers and establishing a clear, feasible timeline and workflow. Finally, be sure to connect with ICF HQ staff to make the most of resources available at the ICF Global level.



Volunteer Engagement

If your ICF Chapter decides to launch a local Prism Award program, begin by ensuring that you have sufficient volunteer support in place. Depending on the size of your Chapter and the leadership experience of its members, you may choose to select a Prism Award lead or chair from within or outside of the Chapter's board of directors. Although this individual will serve as point person and project manager, he or she will need support from a committee of member volunteers to support public relations and marketing, nominee relations, program administration and event planning. Your Chapter's membership can also be a source of volunteer judges (learn more about judge selection on page 5).



Establishing a Timeline

Chairs of successful local Prism programs agree: Establishing a timeline and workflow up front is essential for success.

Most of the work for ICF Global's International Prism Award program takes place during a six- to seven-month period, but managing the program is a year-round responsibility. This is true for most successful Chapter-level Prism programs, as well. Establishing a timeline from the outset will help your Chapter's Prism lead and committee stay on task and on schedule throughout the process. A sample timeline might look like this (please note that you should choose the date pattern that works best for your Chapter and its goals):

Date	Tasks and Activities
May	Open nomination process
June	Conduct training/orientation for judges
July	Close nomination process
August	Judges complete review of nominations
September	Judges select finalists; Prism committee conducts interviews of finalists
October	Judges select honoree(s); Prism committee orders awards for honored organizations and nominating coaches
November or December	Prism event/presentation of awards



Connecting with ICF Global

If your Chapter decides to launch a Prism Award program, please contact ICF Awards Director Stephanie Norris by email at stephanie.norris@coachingfederation.org. In addition to managing the International Prism Award program, Abby maintains a record of Chapter-level awards activities and is a resource for ICF Chapters with awards programs. She is available to answer your questions about managing an awards program and can connect you with Chapters that are operating successful programs.

By connecting with ICF Global, you'll also receive access to a custom local Prism logo with your Chapter's name, as well as details for aligning with the Prism Award brand. Beginning in January 2017, all Chapters operating Prism Award programs will be required to use a local logo provided by ICF Global and to align with ICF's Prism brand guidelines.



Steps to Success

Depending on your Chapter's specific program goals and timeline, the steps you take to build your Prism program may vary. However, the following tasks and activities are common to most successful local Prism Award programs, as well as to ICF Global's International Prism Award program.



Develop eligibility and scoring criteria and produce a nomination form.

At this time, ICF Chapters are not required to align with the eligibility and scoring criteria for the International Prism Award. However, many Chapters choose to align with these standards in order to streamline their processes and increase the likelihood of local honorees succeeding in competition for an International Prism Award.

Eligibility and Scoring Criteria

Eligibility criteria for the International Prism Award are as follows:

- The nominee must be a business or organization that uses coaching, but is not a coach-training organization or a vendor of professional coaching.
- The organization must be nominated by an external or internal coach who holds an up-to-date ICF Credential and has participated in the coaching initiative.
- The organization must have begun implementing coaching no later than one (1) year prior to the opening of nominations.
- The organization must consent to provide ICF with additional information that may be published in future press releases, testimonials, ads, marketing materials and/or case studies.

Some Chapters also include ICF Membership as an additional criterion for eligibility. This enables them to position their Prism program as a valuable member benefit. Finally, Chapters are encouraged to limit eligibility to organizations headquartered within their geographic borders.

ICF Global uses four scoring criteria for the International Prism Award. Judges assign scores for each of these four criteria on a scale of 1–5. The criteria are as follows:

- **Impact**—any observable and measurable details that underscore the value, influence or effectiveness of coaching.
- **Standards**—examples of how coaching in the organization was developed and implemented in a way that would highlight a commitment to rigorous professional standards, industry excellence or best practices within organizational coaching.
- **Strategy**—examples of how organizational goals, strategic priorities or workplace needs are being addressed through coaching.
- **Sustainability**—examples of how coaching has become embedded into the fabric of the organization, as well as examples of any plans to develop/expand coaching further.

Nomination Forms

For maximum efficiency, develop and host your nomination form online (as opposed to accepting hard copy or email nominations). ICF Global accomplishes this using a specialized online platform for awards programs called **OpenWater**. However, this platform likely wouldn't be cost-effective for a smaller Chapter. Other options you may consider include **JotForm**, **Wufoo** and **Formstack**. You may also build a fillable form in Microsoft Word and house it online.

For an example of the nomination form used by ICF Global, please download the 2016 ICF Prism worksheet found in the Chapter-level Prism Award toolkit.

Identify judges.



Each Chapter takes its own approach to selecting Prism judges. Some Chapters prefer to use exclusively ICF Credential-holders and/or Members, while others also include members of the local business community with a particular interest in coaching. ICF Global's panel is comprised of ICF Members from around the globe (most, if not all, of whom hold ICF Credentials). Typically, the panel includes a combination of internal and external coach practitioners; all panelists must have extensive familiarity with the organizational coaching space.

To ensure the integrity of its blind review process, beginning in 2016 ICF Vancouver chose to source judges from outside of British Columbia. This (combined with a nomination form stripped of identifying details) helps decrease the likelihood that judges will be able to recognize a given organization by its nomination.

Regardless of whether your Chapter uses ICF coaches, organizational representatives or a combination of both, it's important to ensure that all judges are well-versed in ICF's standards for professional coaching (e.g., definition of coaching, Code of Ethics, etc.) and how they can be applied in the organizational setting. It's also essential to educate judges about conflicts of interest and require them to recuse themselves if they have a connection with one of the nominees.



Market the program to prospective nominees and nominating coaches.

Even Chapters with highly successful local Prism Award programs report that this is the most difficult task facing Prism chairs and committees, particularly if initial eligibility requirements are high. However, there are several tactics you can use to raise awareness of the Prism Award program, including:

- Spreading the word about the nomination process to Chapter members.
- Reaching out to business-related organizations in your community (e.g., Association for Talent Development chapters, human resources associations, chambers of commerce) to promote the award.
- Advertising or pursuing earned coverage in local publications targeting business and organizational leaders.
- Hosting an event for businesses and organizations to learn more about the Prism Award.



Manage the nomination, judging and interview process.

Every Chapter approaches this process differently, and not every Chapter takes every step (e.g., some Chapters interview every nominee, while other Chapters choose not to hold interviews at all). Regardless of the approach your Chapter favors, keeping the lines of communication open is essential. To make the process easier for all parties involved, consider taking some of the following steps:

- Include the Prism Chair's name and contact information on relevant nomination materials so she or he can answer any questions from nominating coaches or organizations. Surveys of nominating coaches conducted by ICF Global show higher participant satisfaction when there is a single point person available to answer questions and provide clarification and assistance.
- Predetermine when (if at all) you'll shift from a blind review process to sharing the identities of the nominees. For the International Prism Award, this takes place after judges have reviewed and independently scored all nominations, but before they meet to select finalists.
- To prevent fatigue, don't schedule interviews back to back. Instead, spread them out over a few days to a week.
- If the judges themselves aren't conducting the interviews (or if all judges can't be present), give them an opportunity to weigh in on the questions asked.
- If possible, record all interviews so judges can refer back to them during deliberations.
- Schedule judges' meetings or calls as far in advance as possible to ensure maximum participation.



Order awards.

Your Prism budget should include provisions for recognizing honored organizations and the coaches who nominated them with trophies and/or plaques. Some Chapters also choose to present an award to each finalist organization.

The vendor(s) you choose to work with will vary depending on where you are based: Some Chapters prefer to partner with a local, brick-and-mortar trophy shop, while others use an online retailer. Either way,

ensure that you build in sufficient lead time to allow time for your desired pieces of hardware to come in and to rectify any errors in the engraving phase.

Provide a copy of your local Prism logo to your trophy shop or engraver for inclusion on the awards. Don't forget to include the date! Additionally, it's always a good idea to ask to see a proof of each award before engraving gets underway.



Present awards.

Increasingly, the most successful Chapter-level Prism programs use their awards presentation as an opportunity to build relationships with the local business community by hosting an event that combines a celebration with valuable education (e.g., panels, presentations, etc.) and networking opportunities for attendees. A sample schedule for such an event can be found in the toolkit.

Other presentation possibilities include:

- A dedicated Chapter meeting celebrating Prism.
- Your Chapter's end-of-year celebration or awards gala.
- Sending a representative of your Chapter board to present the award to each honoree at their own headquarters or event.



Share honorees' stories.

Your Prism Award program should generate valuable publicity for both your Chapter and the organizations you recognize. Consider the following possibilities for sharing honorees' stories:

- Distribute a press release to local media outlets.
- Prepare case studies of coaching in each organization and share them on your Chapter's website.
- Identify speaking opportunities for nominating coaches, coaching sponsors and coaching champions.
- Film interviews with nominating coaches, sponsors, champions, coaches and clients and share them on your Chapter's website and social media channels.
- Use your Chapter's social media channels to share details about each honoree.



Promote the ICF International Prism Award.

The nomination window for the International Prism Award typically opens during International Coaching Week and closes eight to 10 weeks later. More information about the International Prism Award is available at Coachfederation.org/prism.

Organizations that have participated in Chapter-level Prism programs are strongly encouraged to submit nominations for the International Prism Award. If you have chosen to align your Chapter's Prism Award program with ICF Global's eligibility and scoring criteria for the International Prism Award, coaches for participating organizations may be able to complete the International Prism Award nomination form very easily. However, it is important to keep in mind that, at this time, the International Prism Award nomination form is only available in English, and may only be completed in English.

This resource was developed by ICF Global staff with the input and assistance of several ICF Chapters with successful Prism Award programs. Thank you to the officers, Prism chairs and Prism committees of the following ICF Chapters for sharing your time and expertise:



[Coachfederation.org/prism](https://www.coachfederation.org/prism)