

Clayton R. Christopher Memorial Award 2026

The Clayton R. Christopher Memorial Award recognizes the career achievements of an emergency manager who is/ or was the designated head of or the individual designated responsibility for an emergency management program at the local level of government for outstanding contributions and commitment to a local emergency management program.

How the Award Originated

In commemoration of Clayton R. Christopher, Vice President, Region III, U.S. Civil Defense Council (Jan. 1, 1975-Oct. 29, 1976), Region III of the U.S. Civil Defense Council created an annual award titled the “Clayton R. Christopher Memorial Award.” The original Region III is now IAEM-USA Region 4 of the IAEM-USA Council. The name of the award has been amended to describe the award to include all local emergency managers.

Who was Clayton R. Christopher?

Clayton R. Christopher served as Director of Clayton County, Georgia, Civil Defense from June 1962 until his death on Oct. 29, 1976, when he died in an airplane crash on his way to Thomasville, Georgia, to get final approval on plans for an addition to the county civil defense center from authorities in the Civil Defense Region Headquarters. He was Clayton County’s first Civil Defense Director and was instrumental in making emergency management in Clayton County what it is today. He reorganized and modernized the system. He also served as President of the U.S. Civil Defense Council Region III (now IAEM-USA Region 4).

IAEM-USA presents this award annually in honor of Clayton R. Christopher for his unselfish dedication. His principles of integrity and leadership have served as a guiding force to the institution of emergency management and formed a strong foundation for its future.

Eligibility

- Eligible nominees are local emergency managers who are currently the designated head of or the individual delegated responsibility for a local emergency management program or were the designated agency head within the year preceding their retirement. Local for the purpose of this award includes county, parish, municipality, city, town, township, and tribal emergency management agencies.
- If the nominee is currently working in the emergency management field, they must be a member of IAEM-USA in good standing as of the date nominated. If the nominee is retired, they must have been a member of IAEM-USA in good standing as of the last month of work and their retirement date must be within one year of the date nominated.
- Self-nominations are not allowed for this award category.
- The nominee must have lived and delivered services in the United States. If the nominee has retired, the nominee’s current location of residence is not a consideration.
- The recipient does not need to attend the IAEM Annual Conference to be selected although they are strongly encouraged to participate in the conference. The IAEM Awards Committee or judges are not informed about conference registration and do not consider it in decision-making.

Completing the Official Award Entry/Nomination

- Method: An entry must be submitted in English on the official IAEM awards portal available on the Membership Dashboard on the iaem.org website. Non-IAEM members who wish to submit an entry for this award must register as a Guest on the IAEM website to gain access to the awards portal. Non-members of IAEM must pay a \$75 entry fee. All entry details must be complete, or the entry will be disqualified. Please note some fields have word count limitations.
- Supporting Materials: One (1) Letter of Nomination (maximum 2 pages) and two (2) Letters of Support (maximum one page) are required.

- Must include verification from immediate supervisor (or former supervisor for nominees whom are retired) that includes a validation that the nominee is the lead of the emergency management program, title and agency of the nominee, and jurisdiction covered by the nominee.
- Letters of Support may be from anyone who can validate the nominee’s qualifications as required in the judging criteria. At least one of the supporting documents must verify job performance. The Letter of Nomination and Letters of Support must be on official letterhead and signed by the author. Submitted documents should be concise.

Judging Criteria

Documentation of the following criteria must be submitted via the awards portal including or within the Letter of Recommendation and support documents.

Category	Documentation	Weight
Jurisdiction Benefits	Describe and list at least three (3) examples of accomplishments that benefitted the nominee’s jurisdiction.	30%
Innovative Programs	Provide a minimum of three (3) examples of innovative programs implemented by the nominee that demonstrate leadership and initiative.	20%
Accomplishments	Describe accomplishments achieved by the nominee during service in their local emergency management director/ coordinator position to articulate why the nominee is award worthy. Accomplishments must convey a benefit and a measurable impact.	30%
Experience	Define the nominee’s work and emergency management experience, include certifications, licenses, awards, and honors obtained by the nominee.	10%
Job Performance	Illustrate how the nominee has performed emergency management-related tasks in a superior capacity. Verification must be included in at least one or more of the supporting documents.	10%

Judging Process

The award entries will be judged based on the compliance of content requirements explained above. All award entries will be evaluated through an unbiased selection process.

Only written documentation via entries and uploads on the awards portal will be reviewed. Incomplete entries will not be considered.

The judging panel for the Clayton R. Christopher Award is assigned jointly by the Awards and Recognition Committee Chair or delegee and the President of IAEM-USA Region 4 or delegee. Judges who have a conflict-of-interest as defined in the IAEM Code of Conduct will be recused.

Judges will provide a recommendation for selection of one recipient of this award to the IAEM-USA Awards and Recognition Committee whose decisions are final. Any questions can be referred to the Awards and Recognition Committee Chair.

Announcement of Award Results

Once the USA Awards and Recognition Committee confirms the award recipient, IAEM Headquarters will notify the recipient, the nominator, and the recipient’s IAEM Region President. Additionally, nominators of entries not selected will be notified.

Questions

If you have a question about this award or its criteria, please email: awards@iaem.com. Phone calls are not accepted. Email questions prior to the entry deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.