

**Council for Exceptional Children
Unified Teacher of the Year (TOY)
Unit Nomination Process
FAQ
(July 2025)**

What is the Unified CEC TOY Nomination?

It is a process that will allow CEC units to use the CEC’s TOY nomination eligibility criteria, award criteria, nomination form, and rubric to select their Unit award recipient. By using the unified application, Unit TOY recipients will then automatically be considered for the CEC TOY award. This allows for Units to be relieved of responsibilities related to crafting their own award criteria, timeline, nomination form, and scoring rubric, etc. by adopting those of CEC. In addition, it provides the opportunity for enhanced recognition of unit award recipients at a higher level.

How will the process be implemented?

The Unified TOY Nomination Process allows Units with a TOY Award to align with the CEC TOY Award process in an “opt-in” fashion. Participating Units will promote and solicit nominations for their own TOY Award. (Learn more below.) CEC’s nomination form will be used to collect all submissions. CEC will provide all nominations received for a unit’s award to its designated representative.

Unified TOY Award Participation Disclaimer:

If your unit is currently accepting nominations for its next TOY award and does not use CEC’s eligibility criteria and nomination requirements, you will need to complete CEC’s current TOY Nomination Form by the stated deadline for the relevant year to have your recipient considered, as long as your recipient is presented with you award by the nomination deadline.

Once your unit uses CEC’s eligibility criteria and nomination requirements, your Unit will need to use **only** the CEC Unified TOY Award Nomination Form and refrain from using a separate form and/or additional criteria/requirements.

How does this process impact our Unit’s solicitation of nominations?

Once your Unit has opted in to the unified nomination process, the Unit will continue to solicit nominations for its award using the CEC-provided nomination form (as well as eligibility and nomination criteria). All efforts to promote the award and encourage nominations should be carried out as “normal” by the Unit and the link to the unified nomination information, with link to the online form, available [here](#).

<https://exceptionalchildren.org/awards/cec-teacher-year-award>

Eligibility and nomination criteria and deadline for CEC’s TOY Award

They are all available here:

<https://exceptionalchildren.org/awards/cec-teacher-year-award>

- Each participating Unit’s award recipient must be communicated to the Honors Committee staff liaison (contact information below) **by the deadline each year**, for consideration for the next year’s CEC TOY award, which will be presented at the CEC Convention and Expo the follow year

(typically in March). **The unit must have used CEC's eligibility and nomination criteria, and the award must have already been presented.**

- Notifications received after the deadline in any given year will be maintained for consideration for next year's CEC TOY award.

If (or when) my unit opts in, what happens after the nomination deadline?

- Your Unit will receive the materials submitted via CEC's TOY Award Nomination Form for any nominations received.
- Your Unit will review and score its nominations using the CEC-provided rubric to select its award recipient.
- After selecting its award recipient, **and presenting the award**, the Unit will communicate its selected recipient to the CEC Honors Committee staff liaison. CEC will automatically consider the Unit's award recipient for the next CEC TOY Award.
- If the Unit's award recipient is selected for the CEC Award, the Unit will be contacted by staff accordingly.

What is the role of the CEC Honors Committee in the process?

- The Honors Committee will review all nominations for the CEC TOY award annually. (Units that have opted in will continue to review their own nominations to select their recipient, who will then be considered for the next CEC TOY award.)
- The recipient of the CEC TOY Award will be selected from a pool containing all Unit-selected recipients submitted through the unified process, along with any additional nominees (i.e. those from states/provinces without a Unit).
- CEC TOY Award recipient is typically selected in October.

What happens if our Unit's nominee receives the CEC TOY Award?

CEC will communicate with your Unit leadership accordingly. The Unit will be contacted by CEC staff and involved prior to notifying the award recipient.

My Unit wants to participate in the Unified TOY Nomination Process, but our award timeline does not match CEC's. What can we do to still participate?

- If your Unit uses CEC's eligibility and nomination criteria but will be presenting the award **after** the annual nomination deadline, your award recipient will be automatically considered for the CEC TOY Award for the following year.
- If your unit does not use CEC's eligibility and nomination criteria, you can nominate your award recipient using CEC's nomination form, as long as the award has already been presented.

What if the award recipient's membership expires during the selection process, or soon after receiving the award?

- CEC requires the TOY nominees and recipient to be a current CEC member.
- Your Unit should ensure that its recipient is still a member before submitting their name for the CEC TOY award.
- Your Unit may choose to gift (pay for) an additional year of membership for your Unit's TOY award recipient.

What if the award recipient's title or employer changes after or during the award selection, or before CEC's recognition of the TOY?

CEC will ensure that the individual is noted to have received this recognition for their role/work for which they were nominated at the unit level. A change in title, employer, etc., will not impact their eligibility to be considered for the CEC TOY award.

How does a unit opt-in to participate?

Each Unit can opt-in annually to indicate their participation. **To opt-in for this year's Unified TOY Nomination Process, [please complete this form](#).**

Please direct any additional questions to Sharon Rodriguez, Director of Governance and Executive Service/Honors Committee Staff Liaison at srodriguez@exceptionalchildren.org.