

The Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Awards are presented annually to ASTC members and/or their employees in recognition of extraordinary accomplishments—in Visitor Experience, Business Practice, and Leadership in the Field—that not only enhance the performance of their own institutions, but also significantly advance the mission of science centers and museums. A new award category for 2019, The Overcomer, celebrates one ASTC-member science center or museum that has successfully surmounted a significant and specific challenge.

The Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award for **Visitor Experience** recognizes up to two ASTC-member institutions annually: one large institution (operating expenses equal to or exceeding USD 3 million for the most recently completed fiscal year) and one small institution (operating expenses less than USD 3 million). Nominations will be judged according to 1) the visitor experience’s unique application of new ideas and promising practices, demonstrating creativity and extraordinary performance; 2) its role in furthering the institution’s mission by achieving a tangible impact or lasting effect on visitor experience—including, but not limited to, exhibitions, education programs, technology applications, theater and film programming, visitor services, research, and evaluation; 3) its embodiment of ASTC core values such as collaboration; forward-looking leadership; diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and equity; creativity; and the joy of experiential learning; and 4) its potential to serve as a model of creative thinking and best practices for the field as a whole.

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**Eligibility:** Visitor experiences implemented in the past three years (since January 2016) at ASTC-member institutions in good standing are eligible. Collaborations between ASTC-member institutions are also eligible. Each nominating institution is limited to one nomination per category per year. Nomination forms must be signed by the institution’s chief executive officer, board chairperson, or equivalent. Nominations from the home institution of a Leading Edge Awards jury member will not be considered.

**Selection:** A jury of professionals knowledgeable about the science center field, representing a broad spectrum of ASTC’s worldwide membership, will review entries and select finalists. Once detailed nomination information is submitted, the jury will review all finalists and select awardees. All decisions of the jury are final, including the decision not to choose an award recipient in a given category.

**Awards Ceremony and Recognition:** The 2019 Leading Edge Awards will be presented during the ASTC Annual Conference in Toronto, Ontario, Canada (September 20–24). Each award will consist of a crystal “Edgie” award trophy and a complimentary full conference registration to the 2019 ASTC Annual Conference (fees for special events, tours, and workshops are not included). Awardees will receive recognition in *Dimensions* magazine, on the ASTC website, and in ASTC’s social media. Awardees will also receive a special award-winner logo to display on their website or other promotional material, and a press release to assist them in publicizing their recognition.

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**Deadline:** Friday, May 31, 2019. Nomination forms and supporting materials should be emailed to [awards@astc.org](mailto:awards@astc.org) or mailed to Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Awards, Association of Science-Technology Centers, 818 Connecticut Avenue NW, 7th Floor, Washington, DC 20006-2734, U.S.A.

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**NOMINATION FORM AND CHECKLIST**

- Check here to confirm that the visitor experience was implemented in the past three years (since January 2016).

**Institutional Information**

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/title: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of ASTC-member institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Operating expenses for the ASTC-member institution's most recently completed fiscal year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Visitor Experience Information**

Name of the visitor experience: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions**

*Responses to all five questions below should total no more than five double-spaced pages in 12-point font. Please adhere to page limits. Jury members may not read your narrative beyond the five-page limit.*

1. Describe the visitor experience and its level of creativity and extraordinary performance.
2. Describe the visitor experience's role in furthering the mission of the institution by achieving a tangible impact or lasting effect on operations—including, but not limited to, exhibitions, education programs, technology applications, theater and film programming, visitor services, research, and evaluation.
3. Provide evidence or evaluation data in support of the visitor experience's impact.
4. Describe the visitor experience's embodiment of ASTC core values such as collaboration; forward-looking leadership; diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and equity; creativity; and the joy of experiential learning.
5. Describe the visitor experience's potential to serve as a model of creative thinking and best practices for the field as a whole.

**Letters of Support**

*Include no more than two letters of support (one page each) from independent sources. Letters of support from staff, board members, or contractors involved in the nominated project are not appropriate.*

Letters of support must address the following:

- Explain your knowledge of and affiliation with the visitor experience.
- Describe why the visitor experience represents a unique application of new ideas and best practices, demonstrating creativity and extraordinary performance.
- List the most significant benefits of the visitor experience, as you see them.

**Other Documentation**

*Include **up to three** supporting items, including but not limited to PowerPoint presentations, videos, articles, or photographs (professional quality not required). Review of supporting items is at the discretion of the jury. If more than three items are submitted, additional items will be discarded. Please submit items electronically to [awards@astc.org](mailto:awards@astc.org). If these materials cannot be submitted electronically, mail one set to ASTC to be made available at the jury review session.*

- Check here to grant permission to distribute information about your nomination to the science center field. Information will not be used for commercial purposes without permission of the chief executive of the science center or museum.
- By checking this box, I consent to receive ASTC communications, and to ASTC storing and processing my contact and membership data to maintain communications with me. I understand that I may unsubscribe from any subscription at any time by using the "unsubscribe" link provided at the bottom of each email or by writing [info@astc.org](mailto:info@astc.org), and that I can view ASTC's [privacy policy](#) on its website at any time.
- This nomination is supported by the chief executive officer, chairman of the board, or equivalent representative of the nominating institution (signature below).

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Jury Criteria Checklist

This checklist is to help guide your application focus and materials. In addition to overall eligibility criteria (see page 1), the jury will emphasize the following characteristics in choosing an award winner:

- Has the visitor experience applied new ideas and promising practices in unique ways, demonstrating creativity and extraordinary performance?
- Has the visitor experience furthered the institution's mission by achieving a tangible impact or lasting effect on visitor experience—including, but not limited to, exhibitions, education programs, technology applications, theater and film programming, visitor services, research, and evaluation?
- Does the visitor experience embody ASTC core values such as collaboration; forward-looking leadership; diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and equity; creativity; and the joy of experiential learning?
- Does the visitor experience show potential to serve as a model of creative thinking and best practices for the field as a whole?