



NEXT Awards & Entrepreneurs' Hall of Fame FAQ

Q: What is the NEXT Awards & Entrepreneurs' Hall of Fame?

Nashville Entrepreneur Center's **NEXT Awards + Entrepreneurs' Hall of Fame, Presented by Amazon**, is one spectacular night devoted to the exceptional entrepreneurs transforming their industries, creating opportunities, growing economies, and improving lives in the greater Nashville area and beyond.

Q: What industries are recognized?

There are six industry categories:

1. Healthcare
2. Financial Services
3. Music, Sports, Gaming & Entertainment
4. Products & Services
5. Real Estate & Construction
6. Hospitality & Retail

Q: What are the awards given in each category?

There are two awards given within each category based on stage:

- **Startup:** Businesses operating for less than 5 years*
- **Growth:** Businesses operating for more than 5 years*

*The business' public launch date is considered to be its first date of operation

Q: What is the Entrepreneurs' Hall of Fame?

As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, NEC has the privilege of honoring the city's innovative leaders who have made an indelible mark on Music City and represent both the great past and bright future of Nashville.

A new class will be inducted into this year's Entrepreneurs' Hall of Fame as we celebrate visionary business leaders and companies who have laid a foundation of support and helped foster entrepreneurship in Nashville.

Past inductees: Dolly Parton, Beth Chase, Charlie Martin, Scott Borchetta, Tom Cigarran, Ron Samuels, Jose Gonzalez, Clara, Mejia and Renta Soto, Richard Boyd, Kix Brooks, Hal Cato, Dan Crockett, Raymond Danner, Sherry Deutschmann, Tod Fetherling, Darrell Freeman, Cordia Harrington, John Ingram, Joey Jacobs, Ken Levitan, Clayton McWhorter, Wayne Smith, Becca Stevens, Shannon Terry, Cal Turner and Jon Yarbrough.

Q: How many NEXT Awards will be given out and how long will it last?

Five influential entrepreneurs will be inducted into the Entrepreneurs' Hall of Fame. The program also honors a **Startup Entrepreneur of 2024** and a **Growth Entrepreneur of 2024**, as well as the top three finalists in six industry categories, ultimately awarding 12 founders and their companies with trophies on stage.

(That's 5 Hall of Fame inductees, 12 category winners, 2 Entrepreneurs of 2024)

5:45 pm Arrive for red carpet photos, mingling and pre-event drinks
6:30 pm Dinner is served
7:15 pm Awards show begins, ends at 8:45 pm
8:45 -10 pm Enjoy a nightcap and sweet treats in the Schermerhorn courtyard

Q: What is the dress code for NEXT attendees?

Attendees are encouraged to wear "Nashville" black-tie. That means fancy dresses and tuxes or suits. Boots are always acceptable! Check out the [red carpet looks](#) from last year for inspiration.

Q: What are the ticket prices?

Three options of:

1. VIP Floor Seat, \$500, Includes cocktails, VIP plated dinner with wine service, award show, and following the program, a nightcap and sweet treats in the Schermerhorn Courtyard
2. Box Seat, \$250, Includes reserved box seating, elevated boxed dinner, drinks, award show, and following the program, a nightcap and sweet treats in the Schermerhorn Courtyard
3. Balcony Seat, \$50, Includes open seating in the venue's theater seats with cheese & charcuterie box, drinks, award show, and following the program, a nightcap and sweet treats in the Schermerhorn Courtyard

Q: What are the qualifications to win a NEXT Award?

- Headquartered in Middle Tennessee
- Founder of company must still be actively involved with the company
- Proven growth, success and some level of scale
- Must have made a significant impact within past 12 months
- Must be a for-profit company

All finalists are founders in our community who've led their business through significant growth and must show proof through qualitative and quantitative data submitted in the application process.

Q: What is the application process like?

Applications are submitted and passed to an independent accounting firm to be ranked based on quantitative data. The top-ranked applications are then sent to a panel of independent judges, who are experts in their respective industries, to be ranked based on quantitative and qualitative data. Rankings from each judge are averaged and the top three finalists in each category are notified in early August before tickets go on sale to the general public. Selected companies must meet the qualifications.