



# New York Nonprofit Press

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## Ten Semifinalists for Nonprofit Excellence Awards

The ten semifinalists for the 2014 New York Community Trust Nonprofit Excellence Awards have been announced. The Awards recognize outstanding management practices of nonprofits in New York City, Long Island and Westchester. The 10 organizations were selected, by a panel of 31 nonprofit management experts, from a pool of 77 applicants – a 25 percent jump over the prior year.

This year's semifinalists are:

**Bowery Residents' Committee:** This Manhattan-based organization is a leading provider of housing and services to more than 10,000 of New York City's neediest individuals.

**Community Access:** Based in downtown Manhattan, this organization expands opportunities for people to recover from trauma, mental illness and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy and healing-focused services.

**Equal Justice USA:** Based in Brooklyn, this organization works to build a national criminal justice system that is fair, effective and responsive to everyone impacted by crime.

**Girls Write Now:** Based in Manhattan, this organization provides guidance, support, and opportunities for at-risk and underserved girls from New York City's public high schools to develop their creative, independent voices, explore careers in professional writing, and learn how to make healthy school, career and life choices.

**Graham Windham:** For more than 200 years, Manhattan-based Graham Windham has supported families and communities to ensure that children have a safe and caring environment for success and happiness in school and beyond.

**Leake and Watts, Inc.:** This Yonkers/Bronx-based organization provides services to more than 5,000 individuals in the New York metropolitan area ranging from poverty assistance to aiding in access to adequate education.

**Planned Parenthood of New York City:** For more than 90 years, this organization has been providing low-cost reproductive health care services to individuals.

**Row New York:** Based in Queens and Manhattan, this organization empowers youth from under-resourced communities to build strength, gain confidence, and pursue excellence through the competitive sport of rowing, paired with academic support.

**Safe Horizon:** With 57 programs in all five boroughs, Safe Horizon provides support, prevents violence and promotes justice for victims of violence and abuse, their families and communities.

**Washington Heights CORNER Project:** Based in Washington Heights, this organization seeks to better the lives and health of those who use drugs through outreach programs, education, and referral services.

The semifinalists serve a wide range of constituents, including foster children, homeless individuals, people with mental illness and substance abuse problems, underserved youth, domestic violence survivors, individuals involved in the criminal justice system, and women in their childbearing years. Half of the semifinalists have applied in previous years; the organizations vary in size, two have budgets under \$1 million, two have budgets of over \$60 million.

Later this year, three winning organizations from among the 10 will win the Nonprofit Excellence Awards and receive a total of \$60,000 in prize money, along with other noteworthy perks.

"This has been an incredible year for the Awards in terms of the number of applications we received. The semifinalists represent the best of the pool and are all models of key best practices that showcase how nonprofits can employ strong management to better fulfill their missions," said Michael Clark, President of the Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York. As part of the application process, all 77 organizations are offered 360-degree feedback on their management practices with the goal of improving organizational performance.

The 10 semifinalists will submit a second ap-

plication, and six finalists will be announced in early October. In November, three winning organizations will be honored at an Awards presentation. Winners will receive cash awards of \$30,000, \$20,000 and \$10,000 and scholarships for the Programs in Social Enterprise in Executive Education at Columbia Business School.

Now in its eighth year, the Awards program has received more than 630 applications and recognized 23 organizations for management practices such as implementing a training program on organizational values for all prospective employees; using a

website as an internal referral tool and external resource for people seeking specific information; and implementing a fundraising strategy that includes diversification of resources and financial opportunities and flexibility.

Applicants were asked about their practices in eight key performance areas of nonprofit management identified as crucial by nonprofit professionals nationwide, including: Focus on Results; Board Governance; Financial Management; Diversity and Cultural Competency; Human Resources; Information Technology; Communications; and Fundraising and Re-

source Development.

"We're pleased to help innovative groups share lessons of effective management that can be used by many of the 40,000 nonprofits in the city and suburbs," said Lorie Slutsky, president of The New York Community Trust, one of the region's leading funders of nonprofits.

"The nonprofit sector is constantly innovating management practices aimed at improving mission results. This awards program helps us uncover those amazing new practices and share them with the nonprofit and grantmaking community," said Ronna Brown, president of Philanthropy New York.