

*NC TECH, in partnership with **Business North Carolina**, has launched the [NEXT TECH Awards](#) to showcase and celebrate North Carolina's rising tech stars. **NEXT TECH Awards** will honor a selection of individuals who are critical and exceptional performers helping to grow our state's tech and tech-enabled companies and organizations, but who — not being a c-suite executive — don't often get recognized publicly.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What was the impetus was for launching the Next Tech Awards?

The NC TECH community is likely familiar with our annual NC TECH Awards, held in November, which recognizes tech companies, the use of technology along with a handful of individual awards including tech CEO of the year, CIO and CISO of the Year and Public Leader. However, we haven't had an outlet or program to recognize professionals who aren't in the c-suite.

We're talking about exceptional performers and rising stars in tech, those who build products, grow revenue, serve customers, support, and encourage their co-workers and give back to serve in the community.

There is a great tech organization in Indianapolis called TechPoint that has an awards program to recognize high performers (it's called the Tech25). We loved their model and felt it would be a great fit for NC TECH. We spoke with our peers in Indiana, and they have been great to allow us to replicate much of the structure of their awards here in North Carolina.

We then approached Business North Carolina magazine and were thrilled that said YES to be a partner on the **NEXT TECH Awards**, which really does raise the visibility for the program and makes it special for the winners to get the recognition of being profiled in North Carolina's business magazine.

Describe the categories and types of professionals we're looking for?

With the **NEXT TECH Awards**, we want to make sure we cover all types of roles to recognize non-C-suite contributors who go the extra mile, build products, grow revenue, support operations, and run projects that propel business forward.

There are 3 categories in which we will recognize winners.

Of course, no one will be surprised that **TECH + INNOVATION** is one of the 3 categories. Here we would include those in product development – engineers, architects, developers – those in data science and analytics, and supporting and securing IT operations. These by no means is an exhaustive list but it hopefully gives you an idea. This category is open to leaders in tech companies as well as tech-enabled businesses/organizations.

We have **SALES + MARKETING** so those in sales and business development who are growing revenue, teammates that marketing and branding the company, including, content and storytelling. This category would also include employees who are working directly with customer experience and success.

The last category is **TECH PROFESSIONAL** which includes leaders in HR roles including recruiting, diversity, training and development, this category would also include those in professional business roles in operations, accounting, and risk management.

By no means did I cover every role, but I hope this overview can help you think of those worthy of this special recognition and point you to the right category.

What's the nomination process, and who can nominate?

We encourage you to huddle with your management team to discuss nominating an outstanding employee for the **NEXT TECH Awards**. Once you determine your person (or people) you would like to nominate, the nomination process is simple.

The online nomination form ([View Here](#)) requires some basic information and then asks for some written responses (not too long) on why the nominee deserves to be recognized from the perspective of the company's management team.

We also ask detail on the nominee's professional contributions, how the nominee's energy and attitude set them apart and how the nominee is working to make a difference in the community (whether that be the tech community, civic, schools, non-profits, family and diversity, equity and inclusion activities.) We recommend that you solicit information directly from the nominee as necessary.

The nomination form requests a 100-word bio and a 100-word testimonial from a supervisor, manager, or company executive. There is also the option to upload supporting information and we do request a picture.

A couple other things to mention about nominations:

- A company, organization or institutions CAN nominate more than 1 nominee.
- A company, organization or institution that is not an NC TECH member CAN submit a nomination.
- Nominees MUST be based (work + live) in North Carolina.

Will there be some sort of recognition event for the winners?

Of course! NC TECH will host a reception on the evening of May 22 at the Durham Convention Center.

It's important to note that the reception is also a pre-conference reception that leads into NC TECH's annual State of Tech Event which will be held on May 23.

It's at this reception, where will celebrate all the winners, which will include sharing a bit about each of them, providing each with a nice award to display, taking individual + group photos and toasting their achievements.

The winners will be profiled in Business North Carolina (June issue) so we will have lots of copies to share with those at the reception.

The class of winners can expect to be celebrated at the reception, receive a complimentary registration to State of Tech EXPONENTIAL and will be recognized on NC TECH's website and in communications.

What's the timeline for nominations, and will winners be notified or announced in advance?

The deadline for 2023 nominations is March 15.

We will work with the judging panel to review all nomination and select winners. The 2024 inaugural class of **NEXT TECH Award** winners will be announced in early-April.

All who submitted nominations will be notified in advance of the public announcement.

The winning class will then receive direct communication from [NC TECH](#) and [Business North Carolina](#) with more details including the reception and magazine profiles.

Where do people go to learn more about the Next Tech Awards process and nominate, or register for the recognition reception?

You can visit [NEXT TECH Awards \(nctech.org\)](https://nctech.org) or just visit our home page at www.nctech.org and you'll see the awards banner on the home page.

Thank you for your interest and we hope you will begin the process of submitting a **NEXT TECH Awards** nomination.

If you have questions or need assistance, contact Michelle Calton at Michelle@nctech.org or call our office at 919.856.0393.