



Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP)

Guidelines for The Américas Award for Children's & Young Adult Literature

MISSION STATEMENT

Two awards are given each year, one for a picture book and one for a young adult or middle grade book. The awards recognize U.S. published (including Puerto Rico) works of fiction, poetry, folklore, non-fiction, and works in translation that authentically and engagingly portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or the Latinx community in the United States. By linking the Américas, the intent is to reach beyond geographic borders, as well as multicultural-international boundaries, focusing instead upon cultural heritages within the hemisphere.

The Américas Award is intended to: 1) recognize the work of authors and illustrators who sensitively portray Latin American, Caribbean, or Latinx cultures in their work; 2) encourage the publication and circulation of such books; 3) provide teachers with potential classroom resources; and 4) offer librarians suggestions for culturally diverse collection development.

The committee will designate one picture book winner and one young adult or middle grade book winner. Additionally, the committee may recognize up to four honor books, and will produce a list of commended titles that, while not award-winning, still demonstrate significant cultural and pedagogical value. The list of all recognized titles will be distributed as an annotated bibliography.

ESTABLISHED

1993

ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSORS

The national Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), an organization of post-secondary Latin American Studies programs throughout the U.S., devoted to teaching, program development and outreach about Latin America and the Caribbean.

AWARD COORDINATORS

The Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona and The Stone Center for Latin American Studies at Tulane University

COORDINATION OF AWARD

1. The daily operation of the award will be based in the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona and The Stone Center for Latin American Studies at Tulane University, both institutional members of CLASP.
2. The location of the Américas Award Coordinators will be determined at the discretion of the CLASP Executive Committee. The Executive Committee of CLASP reserves the right to terminate the relationship, with a minimum of one year's notice.

REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. The Review Committee includes 8 members each serving a 3-year term. Terms are staggered so that no more than 3 members are replaced each year.
2. Committee members represent a diverse set of experiences and backgrounds including K- 12 teachers, librarians, bilingual education and children's literature specialists, and outreach staff.
3. The committee should have broad geographic and ethnic representation.
4. All committee members should have the ability to read works written in Spanish, and it is preferred that at least one member have experience with Indigenous languages or Portuguese.
5. At least one member of the committee with at least 1 year's previous experience will serve as Chairperson.
6. No individual should serve more than 1 year as Chairperson of the Review Committee in order to balance responsibilities among committee members.
7. The committee also will include 1 non-voting ex-officio member.

CHAIRPERSON RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Work with Coordinators to establish committee review deadlines and schedule virtual committee meetings.

3. Correspond with the Review Committee regularly to encourage ongoing conversation and to move the process forward.
4. Provide leadership to the committee in review discussions and in development of the final annual list of commended titles/award winners.
5. Write the annotations or delegate the writing to members of the Review Committee.
6. Seek opportunities, whenever possible, to promote the award's visibility.

COORDINATORS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Circulate the award announcement to publishers, authors, illustrators, agents, and any other entities involved in children's and young adult literature.
2. Solicit nominations for new review committee members from current review committee.
3. Assure that the committee members receive all books submitted for award consideration.
4. Provide the Review Committee with periodic updates of submissions.
5. Work with the Chairperson to establish the review schedule and to arrange virtual committee meetings.
6. Produce and circulate the final annotated list.
7. Handle award correspondence, including with publishers, award recipients, and the general public.
8. Maintain the Américas Award website, social media accounts, and email database.
9. Coordinate the award presentation, in collaboration with award site staff.
10. Support the work of the Review Committee and the Chairperson.

BOOK ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible books will be published in the year preceding the award year designation. The award year designation is the year in which the award is announced--that is, the year following the year of publication: for example, the 2025 Américas Award will recognize titles published during 2024.
2. The title may be for any reading level from PreK through 12th grade.
3. Language of publication may be English, Spanish, Portuguese, or any language indigenous to the Americas.
4. The book must be published in the United States (including Puerto Rico), or by a publisher with offices within the U.S.
5. Submissions may be fiction, poetry, folklore, or non-fiction.

6. A book will only be considered in its first year of publication in the United States. A book originally published in the U.S. in English with a translated edition in a subsequent year will only be eligible in the year of the first edition.
 - 6.a. A book first published in Latin America in a previous year, then published in the United States in translation, may compete for the award in the year of its U.S. publication.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Nominations may be accepted from any individual with an interest in the mission of the award.
2. To nominate a title, submit review copies to the 11 committee members (8 Review Committee members, 1 ex-officio member, and 2 Award Coordinators) by January 31 of the year following the publication year (i.e. by January 31, 2025 for titles published in 2024).
3. There is no entry fee for nominations.

AWARD CRITERIA

In determining the award, books will be judged by the following criteria:

1. Distinctive literary quality
 - 1.a. Is the story unique or innovative in its development of characters, setting, plot and other narrative elements?
 - 1.b. Is the story engaging for its intended audience?
2. Cultural contextualization
 - 2.a. Does the book accurately and sensitively represent a cultural setting, practice, identity, or way of life? Accurately here is defined as with integrity and appropriate nuance, not pure fidelity since there is no one single Latinx experience.
 - 2.b. Does the book convey sufficient cultural detail that the reader will gain greater understanding about Latin American, Caribbean or Latinx cultures, histories, and identities?
3. Exceptional aesthetic appeal, where applicable.
4. The Américas Award recognizes the book (as opposed to the individual author or illustrator).
 - 4.a. Is the book appealing as a whole?
5. Potential for classroom use
 - 5.a. Does the book lend itself to use in multiple subject areas at the primary or secondary level?

5.b. Would the book make a strong addition to a classroom or school library?

REVIEW PROCESS

1. Books will be shipped directly by the publishers to each Review Committee member (approximately 200 titles to be reviewed per year). Review copies will become the property of the reviewer.
2. Periodically, the Award Coordinator will produce an updated submission list for members to verify books received. (Committee members should contact the Coordinators regarding any missing titles.)
3. After all books are received and read, Committee members will submit a list of about 10 titles to the coordinators that they consider most fully to satisfy the Award criteria.
4. The coordinators will collate the lists and circulate the results via email.
5. Approximately 3-4 conference calls, initiated by the Award Coordinators, will be scheduled periodically during the review period. The Award Coordinators will notify the Review Committee in advance of the books to be discussed in a given call. The Chairperson or Coordinators will assign committee members to lead the discussion of each title.
6. Before finalizing the commended list, the committee will again review all remaining submissions to verify that all titles that merit discussion have been included in the conversation.
7. The award winners, honor books, and commended titles will be determined by consensus. If consensus is not possible, the choices will be based upon a simple majority of the members.
8. The committee reserves the right to not make an award if it determines that no submissions sufficiently meet the criteria.

SCHEDULE

1. The new Review Committee will be established during July-August.
2. The announcement of the current year's call for submissions will be shared by the Award Coordinators before July 1.
3. The Coordinators will schedule a preliminary conference call early in the review process (fall) for committee introductions and to review guidelines.
4. The book submission deadline is January 31 of each year for titles published during the preceding year.
5. Committee members should complete assigned reading and comments approximately 1 week prior to each scheduled call.

6. The series of 3-4 conference calls should be completed in the spring. The last conference call will be used to determine award winners, honor books, and commended titles.
7. The Américas Award announcement will be made at the annual Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Congress that takes place in May or June.

AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

1. The award results will be announced no later than June 30 each year.
2. The Award Coordinators will send appropriate letters to each winner, including authors, illustrators, and publishers.
3. The annotated list will be circulated to all of the above; to a mailing list of those interested in the award results; and posted on the CLASP website (<https://claspprograms.org/>)
4. The Coordinators and Review Committee will proactively promote the Américas Award commended list as a resource for classroom and/or for library collection development.

AWARD PRESENTATION

1. The formal award presentation will be held each fall at a site determined by the Award Coordinators.
2. The event will be organized by the Award Coordinators.
3. The Award Coordinators will work with publishers of the award winners to cover travel expenses to the award ceremony.
4. The award consists of \$650 (from CLASP), a framed certificate, and a gift symbolic of the weaving of stories.

Please share comments or questions with Katrina Dillon (kedillon@arizona.edu) or Cynthia Garza (cgarza@tulane.edu)

Updated: 08-2024