

Judging the *FIRST* Impact Award

FIRST has divided outreach activities into 3 areas. Teams should not be penalized if they choose not to discuss a topic on this list. This is not a comprehensive list but is intended to spark ideas for the judges when reviewing submissions and interviewing teams. Consider utilization of team resources, especially when comparing large teams vs small teams and focus on how teams sustain their activities. In short, what did they accomplish with the resources available to them?

Words that are bolded and italicized are the *FIRST* Impact Award Definitions. Please ensure teams are aware of the definitions and are using them correctly, see the [FIRST Impact Award Definitions](#).

Spreading the <i>FIRST</i> Mission	Impact on the <i>FIRST</i> community	Inspiring the STEM Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting <i>FIRST</i> LEGO League, <i>FIRST</i> Tech Challenge, and/or <i>FIRST</i> Robotics Competition teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider the teams' direct impact on the new teams ○ Ask if the teams are still in place and sustainable ○ Ask where the funds came from, if they still support the team and how, etc. • Local volunteerism • Demonstrations and presentations about <i>FIRST</i> to the community • Reaching people who are not familiar with <i>FIRST</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring/Assisting <i>FIRST</i> LEGO League, <i>FIRST</i> Tech Challenge, and/or <i>FIRST</i> Robotics Competition teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not stated, ask what they do to help these teams • Run, Host, or Support with <i>FIRST</i> events • Run, Host, or Support with off-season events • Provided Public Resources (Creating documents, presentations, or other resources to help other teams) • Run, Host, or Support workshops for other <i>FIRST</i> teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of team on <i>FIRST</i> participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased interest in STEM ○ Increased number of college bound students ○ New life skills, (i.e., time management, problem solving, communication and teamwork) • Helping create science & technology curriculum for your school • Creating awareness in the community around STEM • Engaging in Advocacy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be sure you understand the role the team played in advocacy. Did they organize an advocacy opportunity or were they participating in an event planned by other teams? • Helping other non-<i>FIRST</i> STEM based programs

Suggested Questions (if needed - ask for specific examples):

- How did you further STEM and the *FIRST* mission in your school or community this season?
- How were you able to connect with the community this season?
- How did you manage to ensure a sustainable program with sponsors?
- How does your team ensure info and training is passed on to each year's new members?
- Describe a program from previous years that you have been able to continue this year
- If your team overcame a challenge, what did they learn from it?
- If you could start the season over, what would you or your team do differently?
- How do you engage and support your sponsors?

FIRST Impact Award Feedback

Judges fill out feedback for every team that interviews at an event and enter it into the *FIRST* Impact Award Judge Portal which is shared with the team 48 hours after the event. The feedback will answer:

1. An area the team has an opportunity to improve,
2. Something that really impressed the judges, and
3. A team submitted question (this question varies by team - see the last executive summary).
 - a. Questions asking what is required to win or inappropriate questions should be answered with "Did not follow guidelines".
 - b. If you can't answer the question, it's okay to say you don't know.

Keep in mind, **the feedback should help and inspire**. Here are a few tips:

- Judges only provide feedback on what they learn from the submission or from the interview.
- *Use Proactive language* - Be constructive and encouraging. Judges should avoid 'brutely honest' feedback. The judge role is to provide general guidance on potential areas of improvement.
- *Give Helpful Advice* - Provide teams with what the judges believe they did well or what may help them improve. Remember, judging is subjective, and feedback should carry to the next interview when possible. Don't assume that a team has the resources— use "if possible", "try", "consider".
- *Address Specific Outreach Activities* – Provide feedback oriented around a specific activity. (e.g. Team A has a camp they advertise at school, you may suggest they expand it to their community)
- *Skills or Knowledge* - Use wording that addresses a specific skill or knowledge that was used or could have been used to improve.
- *"I noticed..."* - To reference examples of specific positive actions, use the phrase "I noticed you did ... And that went well." to acknowledge efforts and make a positive performance connection.

How to Narrow Down the List

- Information in the essays should be used to distinguish the outstanding teams.
 - Compare data carefully - it is not apples and oranges: there are large teams, small teams, well financed team teams, struggling teams
 - Evaluate their impact on the total number of people engaged through their efforts
 - Evaluate the sustainability & longevity of their outreach activities & any teams formed
 - Be cautious of hard luck stories. It's ok to have challenges, but the team needs to articulate how they overcame it to achieve a goal or successful outreach. What did they learn from it?
 - Avoid evaluation of teams based on "social objectives." Judges should not try to 'send a message' by recognizing teams that may be from underserved communities. Teams should be evaluated based on the award criteria and their success, given their available resources.
 - Watch out for claimed outreach activities that are older. Team success stories should be within the past 2 – 3 years. If the timeline is not clear, ask about it during Q&A.
 - Year over year program improvements and growth are great. It's okay to change programs based on the interests of the current team.
- Presentation
 - Are they gracious and professional?
 - Does the presentation enhance the data provided in their essays? Is the presentation consistent with statements made in the essay?
 - Is it compelling? Do you feel inspired?
- If teams have equal impact, those who work with *FIRST* programs rise to the top.
- After Judges deliberate and have their shortlist of top contenders, Judges can use the [FIRST Impact Award Documentation Form](#) to verify team's claims.

A team does not have to have the FIRST Impact Award Documentation form, but it does help show to the judges that they are using the correct terminology and offers proof of the activities.