ABA Foundation

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT *Awards*

Guide to Preparing an Award Winning Entry

ABA FOUNDATION®

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for entering the ABA Foundation Community Commitment Awards (CCAs). CCAs recognize and promote the many valuable ways banks of all sizes and charters contribute to economic growth, community development and enhancing the quality of life in the communities they serve.

To receive a Community Commitment Award, in narrative form, entries must paint a picture that illustrates the program/project's alignment to community needs, institution involvement, originality, sustainability and measurable results. The entry will require you to provide enough information for a judge to determine that the program/project meets these criteria. With this guide, you'll be able write your narrative based on the criteria used by judges. We encourage you to use this guide when preparing your entry submission.

The Basics

IMPORTANT: To complete and submit the entry form, it must be opened in <u>Adobe Acrobat</u>.

Please read the category description carefully to determine which category best fits your entry. You may enter a different or the same program/project in multiple categories. However, based on feedback from our judges, if the same program/project is entered in more than one category, it is strongly recommended that you tailor your narrative responses to the entry form questions based on the category.

You must use the entry form provided and comply with the character limit counts for each of your responses. Make sure to follow the directions and answer all questions clearly and concisely.

There is no minimum to how long the program/project has been implemented; however, programs/projects that have been in existence for a year or more prove to be more helpful when answering the entry form questions and judging the program/project.

You may resubmit a previously entered program/project with updated narrative responses. Please note, resubmitted entries with the same responses from previous years are at a high risk of not advancing in the judging process. Resubmission responses are strongly encouraged to highlight things such as improvements, successes or changes made to the program/project.

Links to marketing videos for your program/project may be included in the general summary section. However, videos will not replace the required narratives nor will they be used as part of the judging process.

Eligibility

Banks of all sizes and charters are welcome to enter the CCAs and the financial institution does **<u>NOT</u>** need to be an ABA member. Public relations or marketing consultants may enter on behalf of their bank client; however, the bank employee contact information must be used on the entry.

If you have questions, email Melissa Murray. Best of luck to your submission!

HOW TO OPEN AND
PREPARE THE ENTRY FORM

To complete and submit the entry form, it must be opened in <u>Adobe Acrobat</u>. Please follow the instructions below to download, save and open the form:

1. When you click on the entry form link it opens with a black background. Many entrants will want to and have immediately completed the form when it is like this. However, the black background indicates that you are VIEWING the PDF online IN THE WEB BROSWER. While the form fields are active, but if you complete the form and click "Submit Form" nothing will happen because the entry form has not been opened in Adobe Acrobat.
2. **DO NOT COMPLETE THE FORM IN THE WEB BROSWER**.
3. Click the download icon (circled in red below) in the black tool bar and save the form to your desktop.
4. Everyone's browser set up is different; for some a Save window may automatically open when you click the download icon or for some you may need to locate the form in the download folder on your computer.
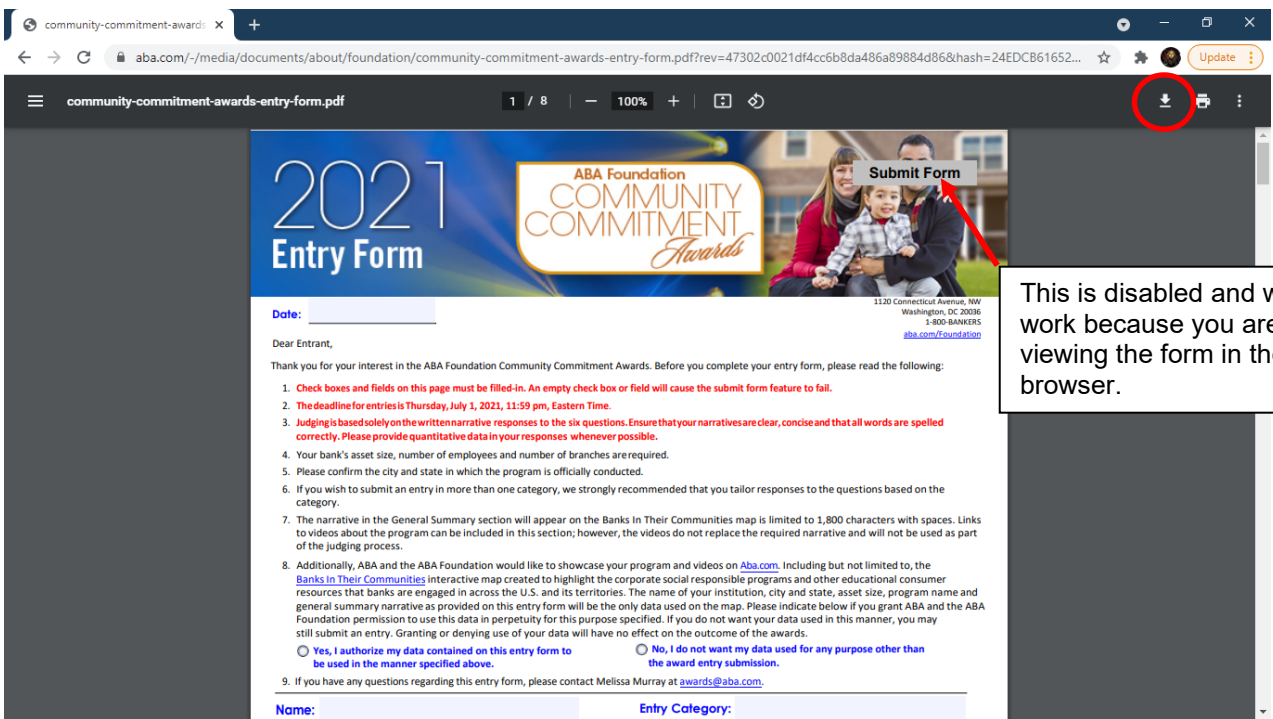
1. Locate the document on your desktop.
2. Place your cursor over the file; right click and select **"Open with Adobe Acrobat"**.
3. If the top of the form has a purple bar (see example below), then the form was opened correctly and is ready for input.
4. **REMEMBER NO PURPLE BAR MEANS NO INPUT**.
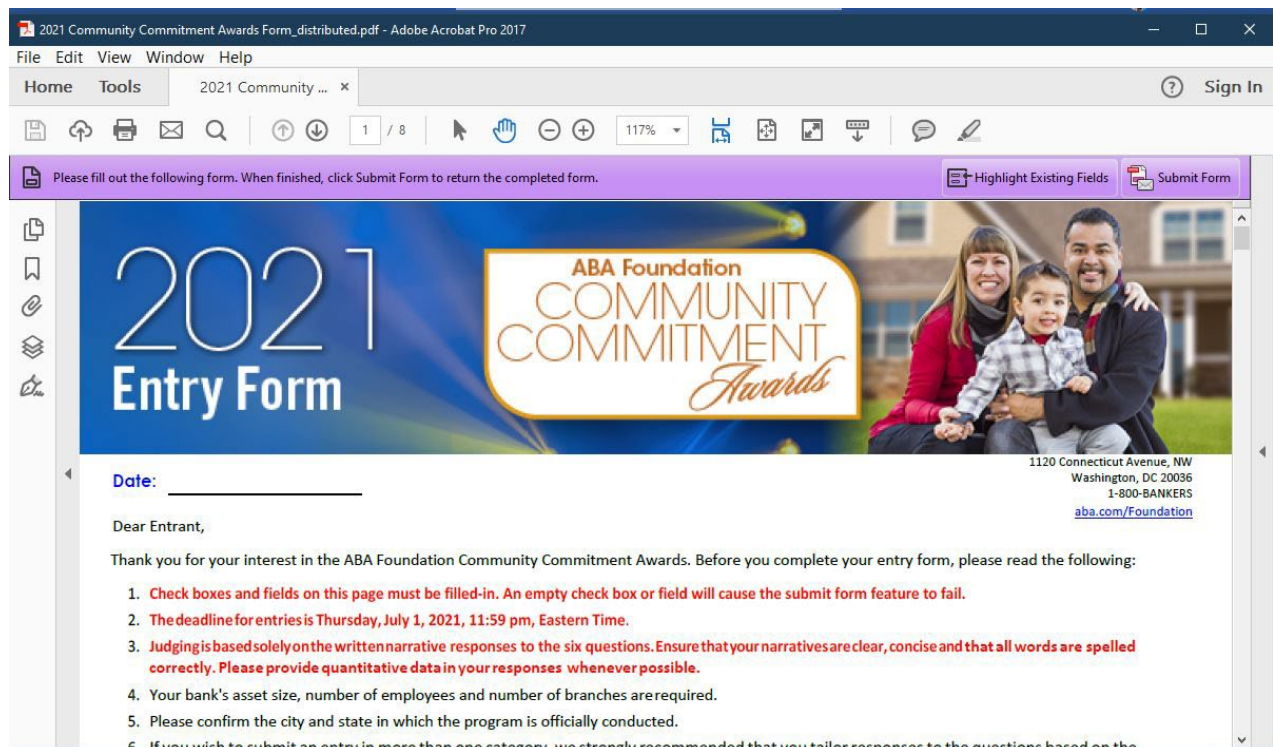
General Information Section

Complete the required information including your name and bank name, FDIC number (use the hyperlink in the form to go to the FDIC web page to obtain your number), the category that you're entering, program/project name and start year. If the program/project is conducted in a different city and state than the bank, please provide where it is officially conducted.

With your permission, your bank name, asset size, program/project will be showcased on americasbanks.com and aba.com, including but not limited to the ABA Foundation's *Banks in Their Communities* searchable database on the awards web page. Created to highlight the corporate socially responsible program/projects and other educational consumer resources that banks are engaged in across the U.S. and its territories.

WRITING THE NARRATIVES

It is strongly recommended that narratives be written in Microsoft Word, and then copied and pasted in the entry form. Be sure to have your narratives reviewed and proofed to ensure they are clear, informative, concise and that words are spelled correctly. Unfortunately, certain Microsoft Word formatting such as tables will not work in the entry form; however, bullets and tabbing can be used.

Please adhere to the character limitations for each section. If the number of characters is exceeded, your text will be cut off.

When writing your narratives, ask yourself:
- ➢ Does it provide enough information that a judge (who isn't familiar with the program/project) can understand the program/project?
- ➢ Does it show how the program/project helped the community and the institution?
- ➢ Could your program/project be used to show others what works?
- ➢ Does it tell a compelling story about the program/project?

General Summary Section

While this section isn't scored, this is valuable information that provides judges the context to assess your entry. This is a high-level overview about the program/project and briefly tells the judges what they should know about your program/project. Specifics are to be addressed in the narrative responses to the questions. This section will also be included, with your permission, in the *Banks in Their Communities* searchable database and/or on the *America's Banks* web site. **You may include links to videos about the program/project in this section. However, videos will not replace the required narratives, nor will they be used as part of the judging process.**

Question-by-Question Narratives

After the summary, responses to the next six questions on the form will be scored. To help you write your responses, we have provided you with the judging criteria for each question and tips to help you craft your narratives. Judges understand that each bank is different with varying resources available for outreach programs — small banks may do things differently than larger ones. In evaluating your entry, thought is given to the geography and size of the bank; however, this is **not** the deciding factor in scoring. You may want to consider highlighting these differences in your narratives.

Question 1: What critical need in the community or communities does the program or project address?

Judges will look for the narrative to describe the community need and how the program/project provides a solution for that need.

When writing this narrative, ask yourself:
- ➢ Is the community need clearly explained? If research drove the program/project, briefly mention the research.
- ➢ Does it show how the program/project was strategically planned and implemented?
- ➢ Does it provide enough information that a judge can understand how the program/project meets the need?

Question 2: Quantify the financial and/or other resources, including volunteer hours, devoted to the implementation and success of the program or project. Include the level of executive engagement and other public or private resources.

Judges will look for the narrative to include the number of volunteer hours, the amount of financial or other resources that were devoted to the implementation and success of the program/project. The narrative should describe the how executive management was engaged in the program/project and how public or private resources were utilized to implement the program/project.

When writing this narrative, ask yourself:
➤ Does it describe how the program/project ranks in the institution's priorities?
➤ Does it clearly show how the resources, executive and public or private involvement directly contributed to the implementation and success of the program/project?
➤ Does it explain the program/project's benefit to the institution?

Question 3: What is original or innovative about the program or project? If it is an existing initiative, what improvements have been implemented?

Judges will look for the narrative to describe the originality of the program/project— what sets the program/project apart from other programs addressing the same community need. If this is an existing initiative, the narrative should explain improvements or new ways the program/project was implemented.

When writing this narrative, ask yourself:
➤ Have you explained in enough detail how the program/project creatively connects or engages the audience?
➤ Does it clearly describe the impact improvements had on an existing program/project?

Question 4: How has the program or project engaged members of the community, non-profit organizations, and local civic and governmental leadership? Was a public-private partnership formed to implement it? If so, did this partnership factor into its success?

Judges will look for the narrative to describe in detail how the program/project engaged community and local governmental leadership as well as the steps taken to form community partnerships to implement the program/project and how the partnerships contributed to the program/project success.

When writing this narrative, ask yourself:
➤ Does it described how partners were determined?
➤ Have you explained in enough detail how community and local government leadership engaged in the program/project?
➤ Does it clearly describe how the partnerships contributed to the success of the program/project?

Question 5: Is the program or project economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable over the long term? Could it be grown to be implemented on a larger scale?

Judges will look for the narrative to describe in detail how the program/project can be sustained beyond its immediate need and how it can be grown on a larger scale.

When writing this narrative, ask yourself:
- ➢ Have you answered the question in enough detail?

Question 6: What tools were used to monitor and gauge progress and success? What measurable benefit to the targeted community or communities has the program or project achieved? How did the bank benefit from this initiative?

Judges will look for the narrative to describe a set targets for success, including how the bank benefited, in the form of measurable objectives that are relevant to your purpose for the program/project.

When writing this narrative, ask yourself:
- ➢ Have you included at least three of the most important objectives?
- ➢ Have you included objectives that are relevant to the category entered?
- ➢ Have you explained in detail the specific tools used to monitor and gauge progress and success?

HOW ENTRIES ARE SCORED

There are two rounds of judging and they are based solely on the narrative responses you provide on the entry form. Narratives should paint a picture that illustrates the originality or innovativeness of your program/project. Narratives demonstrating creativity and innovation that truly differentiate the entrant's program/project as being groundbreaking and worthy of recognition receive higher scores.

Judges will be comparing how well your program/project addresses the criteria for each question. Make sure to follow the directions and answer all questions clearly and concisely. The winners are determined by the highest overall score in the respective award category.

Meet the Five-Point Scale

Judging is based solely on the narrative answers to the questions you provide on the entry form. Each question is weighed equally and scored on a 1-5 point scale, with five being the highest possible score.

5	**Outstanding:** *An extraordinary or insightful approach or result.*
4	**Significantly better than average:** *Demonstrates an innovative, strategic approach to community need and delivers significant results.*
3	**Better than average:** *Demonstrates a strategic approach and aligns the solution with the community need to deliver meaningful results.*
2	**Average:** *Competent approach or results.*
1	**Somewhat less than satisfactory:** *Not enough information provided in narrative to assess this area.*

SUBMITTING AND SAVING THE ENTRY FORM

REMEMBER: To submit the entry form, it must be opened in <u>Adobe Acrobat</u>. Please refer to the instructions on page 5.
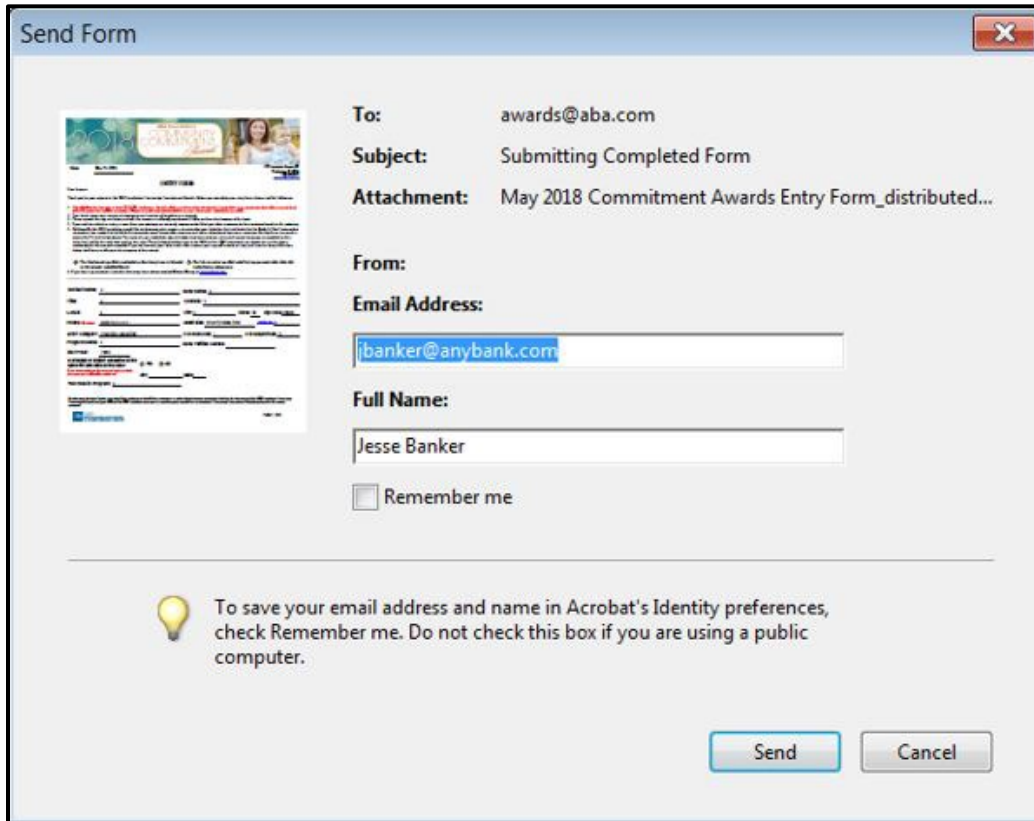
Submitting the entry form:
1. The form is designed to be submitted via email.
2. Click **"Submit Form"** (circled in red below) located in the purple bar at the top of the form.
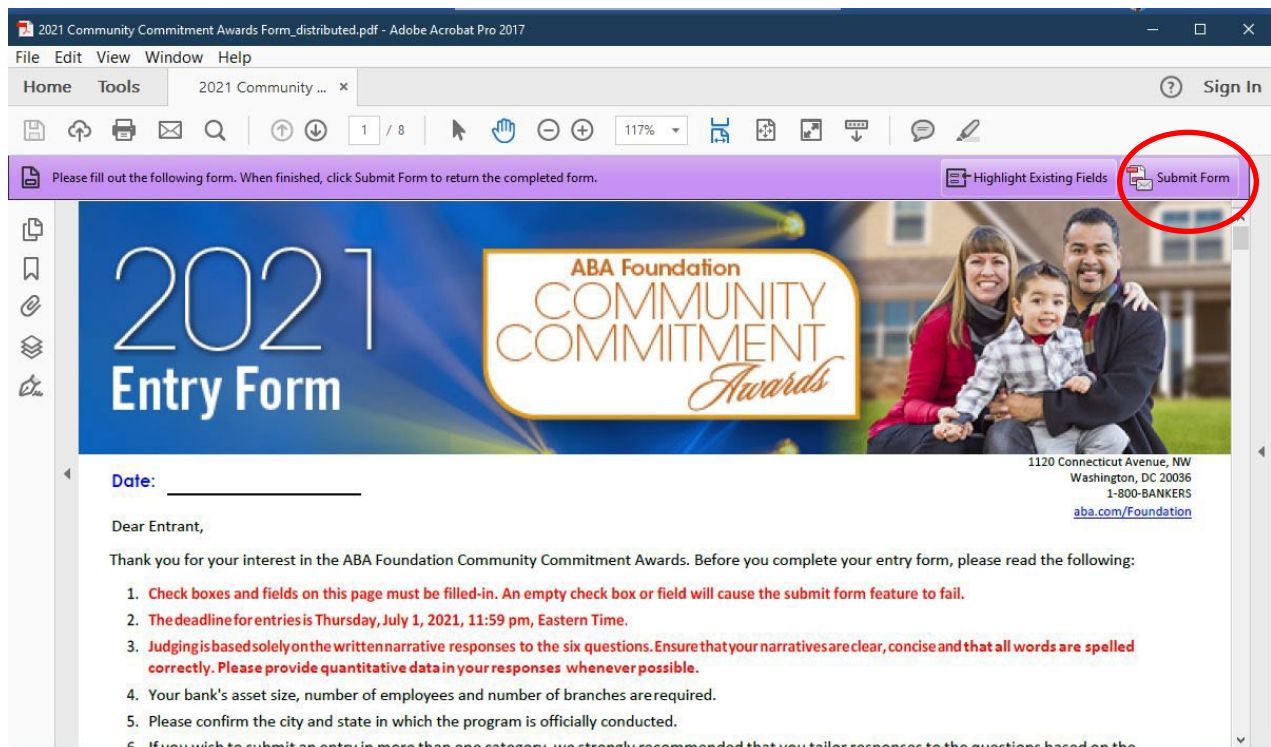
Submitting the entry form (continued):

3. A **"Send Form"** window will pop up.
4. Enter your email address in the blue highlighted **"Email Address"** field.
5. Enter your name in the **"Full Name"** field.
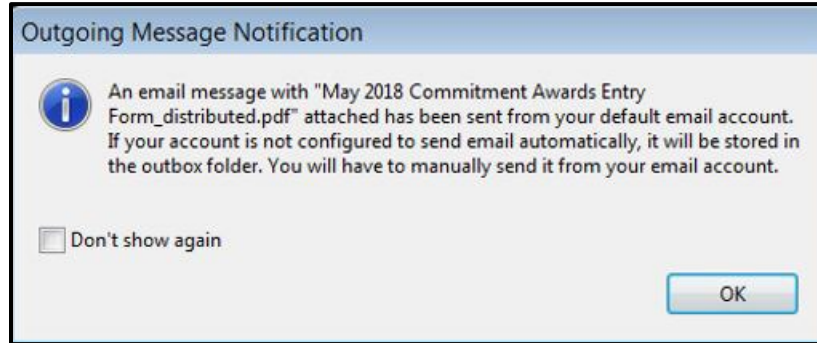6. Click **"Send."**

7. A **"Send Email"** window will pop up asking how you would like to send the email; the default is Microsoft Outlook. It is strongly recommended that Outlook be used. However, if you are using your personal email, select Use Webmail and use the dropdown to add your personal email address
8. Click **"Continue."**
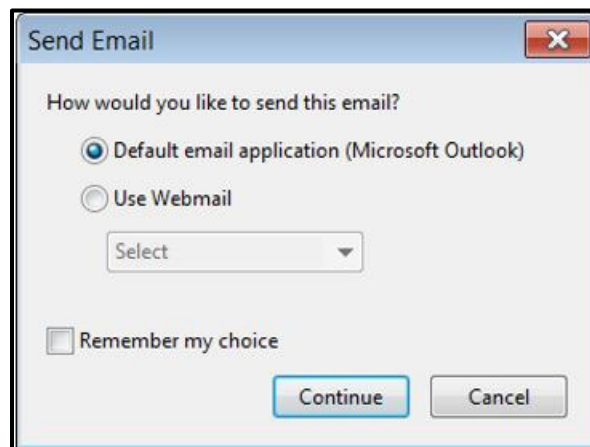
Submitting the entry form (continued):

9. An **"Outgoing Message Notification"** window will pop up with a message that states an email with a PDF attachment has been sent from your default email account (Microsoft Outlook).

   However, if your email account is not configured to send email automatically from Adobe Acrobat, the email and PDF will be stored in your outbox folder and <u>NOT</u> actually sent. **You will have to go to your Outlook outbox and manually send the email and PDF form.**


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Outgoing Message Notification

(i)  An email message with "May 2018 Commitment Awards Entry
     Form_distributed.pdf" attached has been sent from your default email account.
     If your account is not configured to send email automatically, it will be stored in
     the outbox folder. You will have to manually send it from your email account.

[ ] Don't show again

                                                    [ OK ]
```

10. Click **"OK"** to close the window.


Confirmation the Entry Form Received

You will not receive an automatic confirmation that your entry was received. Each email submission is opened, and the entry form reviewed for duplicative efforts. A personal confirmation is then sent that your submission received.

You can confirm if the form was sent by checking your **sent** email folder and to see that an email went out to awards@aba.com.

Saving the entry form to attach in an email:

You can also send your entry form as an email attachment.

1. Complete the entry form.
2. Click "**File**"; select **"Save As."**
3. Locate where on your computer you want to save the form.
4. <u>Rename the form</u>; click **"Save."**
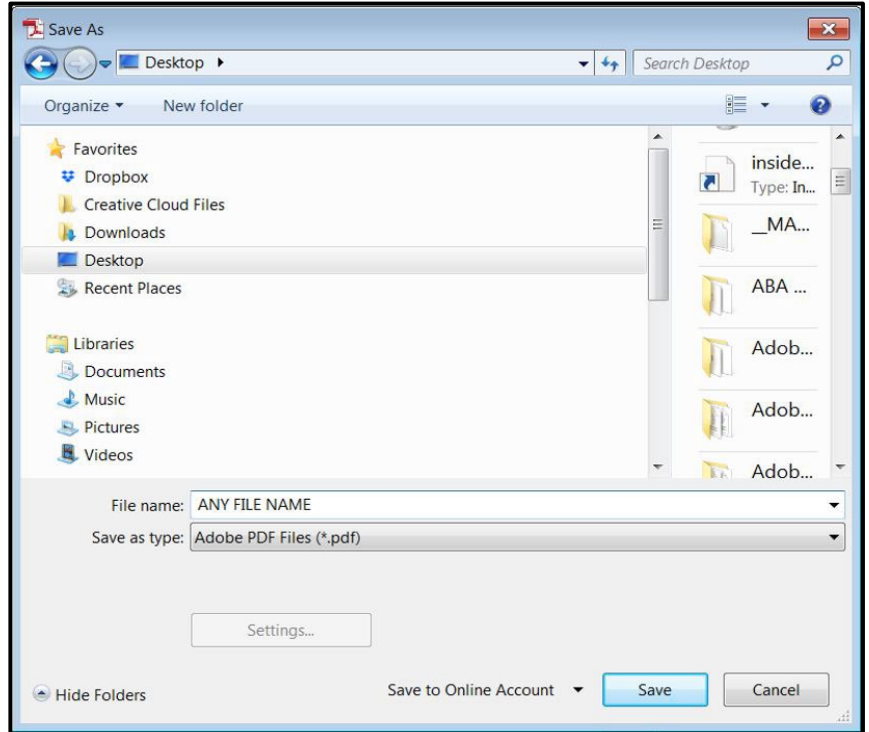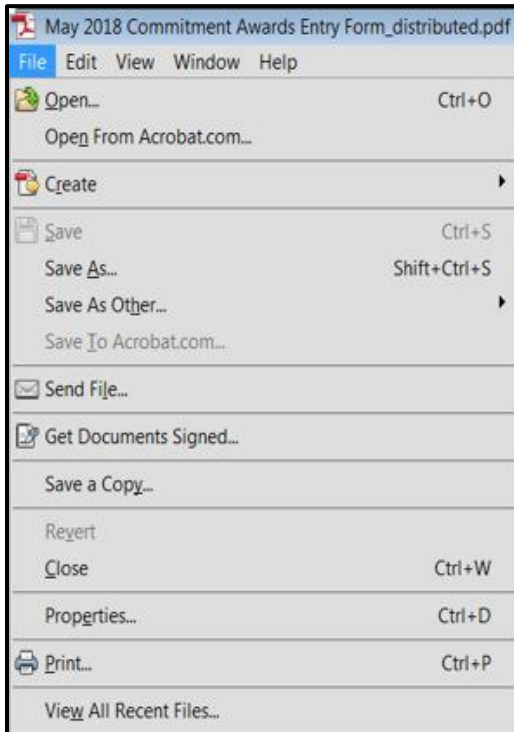
Thank you for entering the ABA Foundation Community Commitment Awards and best of luck to your submission!

If you have questions, email [Melissa Murray](mailto:).