



Tips for a Great Nomination

We appreciate your interest in submitting a nomination for consideration for the Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards. You know how great your volunteers are, so it is important to help others understand the invaluable work that they do.

This could lead to increased spotlight not only on your volunteers, but increased support for your volunteer program and organization. Read the tips below on crafting a great nomination.

BEFORE YOU START

Review the Criteria – Make sure you understand what the judges will be looking for and adhere to any requirements specified in the guidelines.

Take the Winners' Lead – When possible, read the narratives of previous winners. Evaluate how they met judging criteria and apply it to your own nomination.

Request Feedback – If you have submitted before, consider asking the coordinator or Selection Committee for feedback on past nominations. If it is available, it can help shape how you write this year.

AS YOU WRITE

Meet the Criteria - Be sure to answer all the questions in the narrative section and double check that it meets judging criteria.

Check the Rubric - Pay close attention to any scoring rubric as well and focus on the information that is outlined here. Failure to do so may cause you to lose valuable points in scoring.

Be Specific – When possible provide specific, concrete data about the volunteer's accomplishments. Think numerically. If there is a stark change as a result of the nominee's service, you want to highlight this.

*Ex. The volunteer has doubled the amount of food we are able to deliver to needy families by volunteering 40 hours per week for the past three years **VS**. The nominee volunteers weekly.*

Provide examples and/or quotes: These items could prove to be powerful for your nomination as it can provide more insight and understanding of the nominee's service. Also include any challenges or issues encountered and overcome.

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Focus on the difference made – Does the nominee tackle common issue areas in your community (hunger, homelessness, disaster preparedness, economic opportunity, etc.)? You want to show the impact of your nominee’s service on the organization, its clients/stakeholders, and the community.

Utilize Strong Verbs and Shorter Sentences - Word Choice and Sentence Structure can make a difference. Do not use your narrative section to just list accomplishments or copy and paste a resume. But do implement strong action verbs and tell a story.

Examples of strong action verbs include:

Achieved	Coached	Collaborated	Improved	Reorganized
Directed	Streamlined	Researched	Marketed	Developed
Led	Spearheaded	Analyzed	Budgeted	Constructed
Secured	Trained	Reduced	Planned	Solved

Adapted from [University of Tennessee](http://www.universityoftennessee.edu).

Write shorter sentences that are concise and give specific detail. You will want to also make sure that you do not go over the word count.

Do not get too personal – Too often, we see a run-down of interest, hobbies and family members. While these are all great things, you do not want to include them unless it relates to the nominee’s service.

“He has 2 kids and five cats vs. His love for felines inspired Bob and his family to open a cat shelter.”

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

Take on a judges’ mindset – A judge may have several applications to read through, so he or she will be looking for nominees, whose service stands out. Once you have completed your narrative, self-assess as to how this volunteer is truly an above average volunteer.

Seek A Peer Review – Before submitting your nomination, have at least two people read through the application. Your review team may have additional information to add or catch errors that you may have missed.

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