

# Rock the Nomination Process

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## 1) Craft Your Call for Nominations

If you are not working with an existing volunteer recognition program to seek out potential nominees, a model volunteer recognition nomination form is provided on the [Volunteer Tennessee GVSA Resources](#) webpage. There is also a Google Form that you can use to accept nominations online.

**Remember to include the standard eligibility requirements and judging criteria** for the Governor’s Volunteer Stars Awards on your nomination form. We also recommend using our sample questions included in the narrative section for more quality submissions.

Another option is to create an online nomination form and receive submissions digitally. There are many options such as Google Forms, Formstack and SurveyMonkey. Volunteer Tennessee has a sample Google form available to County Coordinators to make a copy for your county. So, you can decide which works best for you and adapt the sample nomination form.

It is important to communicate that you are seeking details on why that volunteer stands out and how they have made an impact in the county. Your potential nominators may find tips for writing nominations or examples as a part of the nomination application packet very helpful. Check out [“Tips for A Great Nominations,”](#) too!

## 2) Distribute Your Nomination Form

Whether your nomination form is paper or digital, the call for nominations should be open, fair and available to be accessed by the public. **Volunteer Tennessee receives federal funds to operate the GVSA, so please ensure all aspects of your process do not intentionally leave out various groups for any reason.**

Distributing your form to various locations is the first step to ensure you will receive many nominations and are making it available to the public. The following list provides ideas of some key places to distribute nomination forms within your county.

Local Businesses	Volunteer Centers	Local United Ways
Chambers of Commerce	Educational Foundations	Advocacy Organizations
Faith-based Groups	Libraries	Schools
Local Non-Profits	Community Bulletins	Community Centers
AmeriCorps	Senior Corps	Colleges/Universities

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### 3) Blast Social Media

**Posting on social media and organization websites about the call for nominations should be a part of your organizational plan for your local GVSA process.** You will want to utilize your agency's own social media pages as well as collaborate with your partners for your call for nominations. Graphics are provided on the [Volunteer Tennessee GVSA Resources](#) webpage.

Volunteer Tennessee also wants to know when you post on social media. At various times, we will re-share how County Coordinators are gearing up for their local nomination process. **So, be sure to tag us at the following:**

- [Facebook](#) (@VolunteerTennessee)
- [Instagram](#) (@VolunteerTennessee)
- [Twitter](#) (@VolunteerTN)
- [LinkedIn](#) (@VolunteerTennessee)

Also use these hashtags for additional exposure:

- #VolunteerTennessee
- #TennesseeServes
- #GVSA
- #GVSA2023

#### **Use lots of photos!**

For your website, consider a special page or pop-up message about the GVSA. As you approach your nomination deadline, more prominent places such as your homepage navigation bar, or static banner would be ideal. Remember, if you can create a mechanism for individuals to submit nominations, it could increase the number of nominations you receive.

When posting on social media, you will want to remind your community that nominations are open. Recommendations to talk about your call for nominations online are:

- When nomination opens
- Weekly
- Two Weeks Before Deadline
- One Week Before
- One Day Before/Day of Deadline

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## 4) Engage Media Outlets

**Developing strong media relationships within your community is a prime way to ensure that the goals of your volunteer recognition program are met.** Partnering with media outlets will not only guarantee that your program or event will receive appropriate publicity, but it also has the potential to cut down on much of the advertising expense.

Although approaching the media may seem to be a daunting task, use the following methods to ensure you develop positive media relationships:

- **Know your campaign:** When you are more familiar with your program/event, you will appear more confident and knowledgeable. This will make people more likely to cover your story.
- **Manage your time wisely:** Usually those in the media are pressed for time. When presenting your idea/story, try to provide succinct information.
- **Come prepared:** The media is the best outlet to present your message to a mass audience; therefore, it is important to have access to all documents and information when speaking with them.
- **Don't give up:** Persistence is necessary when disseminating information through the media. Make phone calls, then send follow-up letters or emails, and make actual visits to media offices. Utilize every possible vehicle to present your message.
- **Use a media kit:** The purpose of a media kit is to provide appropriate background and contact information to those covering an event/story (generally reporters). It is extremely important to have these on hand for press conferences and media interviews. Usually placed in a folder, your media kit should include the following documents:
  - ✓ **General news release**
  - ✓ **Ad slicks** (final, camera-ready advertisement)
  - ✓ **Facts sheets/statistics on volunteering**
  - ✓ **Infographics**

Other items that may not be used in your media kit, but are extremely important to have on-hand when working with the press:

- **Media list**—includes a list of current local media, such as newspaper feature editors, local section editors, community affairs departments of radio and TV stations, talk show producers, and magazine editors. Call and ask who at the media outlet covers volunteer activities, general human-interest stories, or community service issues.
- **Pitch letter**—sent out in advance to those on the media list. Letter should ask for an appointment with the editorial board and subsequent coverage throughout the campaign to include proclamations, features on local volunteers, volunteer organizations and businesses that promote volunteering. Be sure to follow up with phone calls asking to be placed on the editorial board calendar.

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- **Photos**—Photos can often make the difference between getting media coverage or not. Contact photo departments of television stations and newspapers prior to your event to invite coverage.

Samples of each of the documents listed are provided on the [Volunteer Tennessee GVSA Resources](#) webpage. Please adapt them as necessary.

## 5) Speak to Your Community

You and your team members should seize every opportunity (and even create opportunities of your own) to speak to your community about your volunteer recognition campaign. Consider the following places to speak:

- Local radio shows
- Civic club meetings
- Town hall meetings
- School board meetings
- Church/faith-based organizations
- Youth group meetings
- Press-covered events
- College campuses
- Chamber of Commerce meetings

