



**VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S
VOLUNTEERISM & COMMUNITY
SERVICE AWARDS**

Award Guidelines

The Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards annually recognize the significant contributions of Virginians to the life and welfare of the Commonwealth and its people. One award is presented in each of 10 categories. These outstanding award winners represent the millions of generous Virginians who offer their time and talents to others each year.

Honorees are selected in the following categories:

Individual Awards

- ❖ Youth (aged 18 and under)
- ❖ Young Adult (aged 19-30)
- ❖ Adult (aged 31-59)
- ❖ Senior (aged 60+)

Group Awards

- ❖ Independent Group (Family, friends, neighborhood, or other informal group organized as volunteers for a project or organization)
- ❖ Community Organization (nonprofit, government, or tax-exempt organization)
- ❖ Faith-Based Organization (Spiritual community or faith-based group involved in volunteer service)
- ❖ Educational Organization (K-12 school or university/college program involved in volunteer service)
- ❖ Small Business (For-profit organization with 50 or less employees)
- ❖ Corporation (For-profit organization with 51+ employees)

Eligibility

Nominees must reside and serve within the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the nomination characteristics and identified service must fall within the parameters of the description for the category selected.

If nominating an individual for a category with age-based parameters, please use the age of the individual at the start of the considered period of service (July 1, 2021).

Nomination Requirements

Nominators are required to fill out the nomination form online (or available as a PDF by request) and provide two letters of support for the nominee.

All nominations must be submitted and received online no later than 5 p.m., on the deadline date. Any nomination received after 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date will not be considered.

The nomination form must be complete and accurate to be accepted.

Nominations that use the nominator's contact information for the nominee will be disqualified. If you fill in your contact information for the nominee the nomination will not be accepted as complete.

Letters of support must be uploaded or received and acknowledged before your nomination will be accepted as officially submitted. Two letters of support are required and must be no longer than a page each. Each letter must be written by different individuals, not the same person, and a letter of support from someone who is a relative of the nominee is not allowable.

No self-nominations will be accepted. The nominator cannot be part of a group or serve with a group that they are nominating for a group award. Family members cannot nominate each other or a group with a family member in it. Nominators cannot nominate themselves in the individual category.

Only one nomination will be considered for a particular person or group. If more than one nomination is received, the first nomination accepted as complete with the accompanying letters of support will be the one considered for scoring purposes.

It is important that to adhere to all the guidelines for accurate and complete nominations to ensure a fair and efficient process for all nominees and nominators. We know and value the effort that is needed to write and submit a quality nomination, and we are grateful for your time to recognize amazing Virginians across the Commonwealth. Please ensure you follow all guidelines and FAQs to ensure that your nomination moves forward for scoring. Please contact us at VirginiaServiceInfo@dss.virginia.gov if you have any questions during the process.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is ineligible to be nominated for these awards?

To be eligible for nomination, individuals or organizations must have provided or performed volunteer service within the Commonwealth of Virginia within the nomination period. Ineligible nominations include any nominations substantiated with volunteer service performed outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia, organizations or businesses located outside of Virginia; individuals/families residing outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia; employees of the Virginia Service Commission (Virginia Office on Volunteerism and Community Service), members of the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism, and members of the Virginia Service Foundation.

Are National Service members or programs eligible to be nominated?

National Service Members are NOT eligible for nomination. This includes AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps National, VISTA, Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents, RSVP Volunteers, and AmeriCorps Alums.

National Service Members may be nominated for the Virginia National Service Awards (<http://virginiastate.virginia.gov/ameri-corps-national-service/virginia-national-service-awards/>.) National Service programs can, however, nominate VOLUNTEERS who assist their organizations.

Are previous Governor's Award winners eligible for nomination?

Previous winners of a Governor's Award are eligible to be nominated again provided that five (5) years have elapsed since receipt of the previous award.

Check the Summary of Award Winners at

<http://virginiastate.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2017-21-GovAwardsChart.pdf>

What if I'm having difficulty selecting a Category from the choices?

Sometimes identifying the correct category can be confusing when it comes to the nominee's characteristics vs the actual description of the category. It is very important that the category selected is that of the **nominee**, rather than the affiliation or category of the nominator. If you are unsure of which category your nominee falls under, please contact us for guidance prior to submitting the nomination. To ensure you receive the attention you need, please contact us a week before the nomination deadline.

Which category does my nominee belong to when considering the age parameters?

If the category has an age stipulation you would consider the age of the individual volunteer when the service period for the nomination started; how old they were in July 2021.

Does a community group need to be formalized as a nonprofit or government organization?

Nominees in the "Independent Group" category do not need to be formalized as nonprofit or other types of organizations. Nominees for "Faith-Based Organization", "Educational Organization", or "Community Organization" should be formalized as 501c3, governmental, or other appropriate formalized organization types. If you aren't

sure of the category or if your group can be nominated, please reach out to us at VirginiaServiceInfo@dss.virginia.gov.

Have the nomination categories changed since last year?

There is one change for 2022. The "Family Category" has been expanded to include other independent groups who volunteer together. The new category is called "Independent Groups" and includes families that volunteer, along with friend groups, neighborhood groups, or any other group of individuals who volunteer regularly together.

May I nominate someone for a category that is not on the nomination form?

No. Nominators must select only one of the listed categories. You will be unable to select multiple categories for the same candidate.

If you are unsure of which category your nominee falls under you can contact us for guidance prior to submitting the nomination. To ensure you receive the attention you need, please don't wait until the last day that nominations are accepted.

How do I submit a nomination?

Your nomination may be submitted online through the following Google Form link <https://forms.gle/5BtSvTrivgo6vrnd6>. If you have a firewall or another issue completing the form you can request a fillable PDF file by contacting us at VirginiaServiceInfo@dss.virginia.gov.

To submit the nomination, complete the online form and upload two letters of reference. You will be allowed to edit your answers until the nomination period closes. We suggest working in a word or text file for your answers, and then copy and pasting it into the Google form.

You will be able to save your work in the Google form and come back later if required. Simply go back to the survey link and your nomination will have been saved.

You may upload the letters of reference as PDF or Microsoft Word versions. If you have difficulty with uploading these files, contact us and we will ensure you can include them so your nomination can be submitted.

How long is the nomination period?

The nomination process for the 2022 Virginia Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards begins Monday, April 18, 2022, and lasts until Friday, June 17, 2022 close of business day.

What period of service does the nomination need to reflect?

The nomination should reflect the service period from July 2021 through June of 2022.

Is it necessary to complete the nominator and the nominee profiles?

Yes, please include the full name or full legal name (for organizations or businesses) and contact information for both the nominator and nominee. The information should be complete and accurate for each of the profiles. Do not use the nominator contact information for the nominee.

How long can each long answer entry be?

Each criteria requires an answer and should be no longer than 300 words. We suggest you write your nominations in Word or other word processing application and copy and paste the final drafts into the form.

Do the nomination entries need to follow any specific format?

Yes. The nomination entries should answer all of the questions as stated on the nomination questions section of the nomination form and in the order presented.

May I submit multiple nominations?

Yes, you can nominate multiple individuals and organizations. Please only nominate each individual or organization once. Individuals may be nominated for an individual category, as well as belong to a nominated organization.

What are the general requirements for the letters of support?

Two letters of support are required, no longer than one page each. Letters should clearly state the author's relationship to the nominee and knowledge of his/her service in order to provide sufficient information on the individual or organization. Letters may not be used to serve as both a letter of support and the nomination narrative. Letters must be submitted by someone other than the nominator or nominating organization and by someone not directly related to the nominee. If possible, letters of support should be submitted on organizational letterhead.

Can the support letter author remain anonymous?

The nominator will be asked to provide the contact information of those submitting letters of support when filling out the nomination form. Providing the contact information allows us to contact the author in case we need to track the letter of support.

Can the nomination author also write a letter of support?

No. A letter of support must be submitted by an independent party, someone other than the nominator. These letters support your nomination.

Can I submit additional information such as additional support letters, photographs, and/or news clippings to further support my nomination?

Additional information beyond the two required letters of reference will not be considered. However, you may mention this information in the narrative.

Who reviews the nominations?

Nominations are reviewed by Virginia Service Commission staff in the preliminary scoring round. The members of the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism complete final scoring. The Governor's Office approves award recipients.

When will I be notified about my nomination's status and know the results of the awards judging process?

The judging process for all nominations will close July 11. Highest scoring nominations will be sent to the Governor's Office for final approval prior to notification to the nominators.

Once approved by the Governor's Office, the Virginia Service Commission will notify the nominators of the selected honorees. The nominators will have the opportunity to share the news directly with the honorees.

We will notify the nominators and nominees who weren't selected by the end of July.

Nominators and nominees who weren't selected as the categories' honorees will be notified by the end of July.

When is the Governor’s Volunteerism and Community Service Awards ceremony and reception?

Currently plans are to hold the awards ceremony and reception in person in early September.

Can I let people know and post the news to social media of the honoree selection?

There will be a formal press release from the Governor’s Office recognizing the selected honorees. We will let you know when the press release is available and provide you with a link to the release. After the release is made public, you can share the news on social media and with others.

If I have further questions, where may I call or e-mail for assistance?

You may contact the Virginia Service Commission at VirginiaServiceInfo@dss.virginia.gov or call Leanne Costantinidis, Project and Training Coordinator for Virginia Service Commission, at 804-726-7071.