



# Agency Honor Awards: Writing a Quality Nomination

Please note the following disclaimer: The nomination examples are for guidance and/or reference only. Use of any part of the documents is no guarantee of an approved honor award nomination.

# Agency Honor Awards



Do you enjoy writing?

- **“Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead.”**

**–Gene Fowler**

- **“Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary.”**

**–Margaret Cousins**

# Objectives

- Identify appropriate individual/team for proposed award
  - Ensure award criteria match achievement
  - Understand the writing process
  - Build award nominations using tools and techniques
- **Nominator's Toolkit located at**  
***<http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/awards/toolkit.htm>***





# Identify Appropriate Individual/Team For Proposed Award



**ACTION 1: Determine appropriate award type**

**TOOL 1: Refer to NPR 3451.1 and Center awards guidance, as well as your Center Awards Officer**

**ACTION 2: Ensure nominee is in good standing**

**TOOL 2: If giving an award across organizational lines, important to check with supervisors to ensure no issues/concerns BEFORE writing nomination**

# Ensure Award Criteria Match Achievement



**ACTION:** Determine candidate(s) whose accomplishments meet established criteria

**TOOL:** Gain insight/information from various sources:

- Performance evaluations
- Personal observation
- Staff meetings
- Team/project leads, coworkers, others
- Individual folder established on each employee



# Understanding The Writing Process



- Understand the award criteria
- Ensure achievements match criteria
- Link accomplishments to NASA's mission, goals, and values
- Know your audience
  - Center Awards Officer
  - Center Review Board
  - Center Director
  - Headquarters Expert Panels
  - Incentive Awards Board



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Citations



**PURPOSE:** To provide a succinct description, on the certificate given to the recipient, of the accomplishment(s) warranting the award.

## **RULES:**

- In NAAS, cannot exceed 175 characters/spaces
- Begins with “For” and ends with a period (.)
- Does not include acronyms
- Does not include personal pronouns
- More tips/tools available from Nominator’s Toolkit



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Citations (continued)



## GUIDELINES:

- Succinctly and clearly state essence of achievement(s) for others to understand for many years
- In determining how citation should read, think from perspective of ceremonial protocol:
  - For example, the Exceptional Bravery Medal is given to recognize achievements that demonstrate acts of heroism
  - “This medal is presented to John Q. Public.”
  - “For exemplary strength and courage demonstrated in rescue efforts during dangerous weather conditions at XXX Center.”

# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Justification



## DEFINITION:

- ☼ To prove or show to be just, right, or reasonable
- ☼ To show to have had a sufficient legal reason
- ☼ A reason, fact, circumstance, or explanation that justifies or defends



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Justification (continued)



## PURPOSE:

- Gives weight of worthiness for awards granted
  - To nominee/team
  - For specific award type
  - For purpose stated in citation
- Statutory and regulatory guidance for honorary awards
  - NPR 3451.1
  - Center policies
- Responds to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Justification (continued)



## PURPOSE (continued):

- **NAAS is utilized at Agency level**
- **High-level review for Agency Honor Awards**
  - **Expert Panels**
  - **Incentive Awards Board**
- **Substantiates that accomplishments are in alignment with Agency mission, goals, and values**



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Justification (continued)



## BREAKDOWN:

- Opening Statement
- Supporting Statements
- Closing Statement



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Justification (continued)



## OPENING STATEMENT:

- One to two sentences in length
- Clear, direct, specific statement of why nominee(s) deserve(s) the proposed award
- Can be a restatement of the proposed citation



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Justification (continued)



## SUPPORTING STATEMENTS:

- **WHAT did the nominee(s) do?**
  - Projects and/or activities above and beyond the nominee's job description
  - Any challenges or issues encountered and overcome
  
- **HOW did they do it?**
  - Initiative and/or leadership
  - Teamwork
  - Creativity and/or innovation
  - Behaviors and/or attitudes (should not dominate write-up)



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Justification (continued)



## SUPPORTING STATEMENTS (continued):

- **WHAT was the result and/or impact?**
  - **What did the nominee's efforts accomplish?**
  - **Are there any specific benefits that NASA derived from those efforts?**
  
- **Supporting statements answer the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions**



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Justification (continued)



## CLOSING STATEMENTS:

- Final one or two sentences to summarize and conclude the nomination
- Example: “For these reasons, along with her continuous display of professionalism and quality workmanship, Ms. Doe is richly deserving of this recognition for the Exceptional Service Medal.”



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-Justification (continued)



## RULES:

- Per Agency policy, cannot exceed 3,500 characters/spaces
- Justification cannot read the same as the citation
- Acronyms follow same rules as in correspondence
- Grammar, spelling, punctuation same rules as with any other correspondence
- Get to the point and state the obvious – avoid “fluff”
- Do not assume reviewer is familiar with your work/function OR jargon
- ALWAYS link back to NASA mission/goals/values



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques



- Polish citation in final form, making certain it captures essence of accomplishment(s)
- Confirm that the justification addresses the award criteria
- Persistently check grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and acronyms



# Build Award Nominations Using Tools And Techniques-NAAS Recap



- **Team Name-50 characters/spaces**
- **Citation-175 characters/spaces**
- **Justification-3,500 characters/spaces**



# Questions?

Contact your Center Awards Officer

Nominator's Toolkit located at  
<http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/awards/toolkit.htm>





# Background Additional Information





# Criteria Checklist



## NOMINEE ATTRIBUTES:

- **Consistently does what he/she commits to do**
- **Exceptional work habits and standards of quality**
- **Consistently exceeds customer expectations**
- **Is always reliable**
- **Presents a positive image of NASA/[Center]**
- **Exhibits team spirit and fosters an environment of teamwork**
- **Motivates others**
- **Communicates effectively**
- **Consistently puts customer satisfaction first**