



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**