

Washington State Volunteer Service Awards

Nomination Guidelines and Form Sample for Volunteer Service in 2025

Serve Washington, a bipartisan governor-appointed commission on national and community service presents the “Washington State Volunteer Service Awards.” The purpose of these awards is to honor the many acts of kindness in communities by individuals, families, service groups, and organizations and to highlight the importance of volunteerism and community helpers across Washington state. Nominations are open to all types of formal and informal volunteerism: neighbors helping neighbors, giving time to hospitals, disaster preparedness and response efforts, supporting events and food banks, delivering meals, through national service, and those who gave their time, care or assistance to help meet the challenges that 2025 presented.

Serve Washington supports programs that bring diverse individuals and perspectives together to serve our state. Through the Washington State Volunteer Service Awards, we recognize individuals and groups who reflect the diversity of our state for their contributions toward effectively addressing the issues that face our communities.

This award will be presented to **one outstanding individual** (formal or informal) **and one outstanding group of volunteers or volunteer program** in each of the following regions:

Northeast: Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln, Spokane counties

North Central: Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, Grant counties

North Puget Sound: King, Snohomish counties

Northwest: Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, Island counties

Peninsula/Coastal: Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Pacific, Kitsap counties

Southeast: Adams, Whitman, Garfield, Columbia, Asotin counties

South Central: Benton, Franklin, Kittitas, Klickitat, Walla Walla, Yakima counties

South Puget Sound: Mason, Thurston, Pierce, Lewis counties

Southwest: Cowlitz, Skamania, Clark, Wahkiakum counties

Please review our “informational and how to” video for more about the awards and helpful suggestions on writing a nomination at servewashington.wa.gov.

A panel of judges comprised of Serve Washington commission members and community members will select the award recipients. The deadline to submit your nomination is **January 5, 2026, by 11:59 PM PST**.

Serve Washington will collaborate with nominators to inform selected recipients and determine how best to recognize their nominee within their own community or region in 2026. All nominators will be notified of final selections no later than February 27, 2026.

How to submit your nomination: Complete the [online nomination form](#) via Smartsheet. Questions and requests for the nomination guidelines and form in alternate format can be sent to servewa@ofm.wa.gov or 360-902-0657.

Upon selection, we will seek the assistance of the nominator to connect with the volunteer recipient to verify information and obtain a quality photo and media release form.

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Guidelines on Eligibility, Definitions and Selection

Eligibility:

- Anyone can submit a nomination for an individual, group of volunteers or volunteer program. Entire organizations should not be nominated.
- Volunteer service over the past calendar year should be the emphasis.
- Volunteer service must be performed in Washington and can include hours served as part of academic credit or court-ordered community service.
- Written nomination statements must be kept to the word count **(750 words total combined for all elements)**.
- Serve Washington staff and commission members are not eligible to receive an award, or to nominate volunteers for awards.
- Entries are received in confidence, are scored by a team of commission and community members and become the property of Serve Washington.
- Submissions may be in the format of a 1 ½ minute video or audio, in lieu of a written statement, but must address the elements. You will still need to complete the [online form](#) to upload the file (no larger than 30 MB) or provide a link to your video/audio. Please do not submit news stories or upload any photos or additional items in these fields. Only submit a nomination.

Definitions (these are not exhaustive of the types of activities):

Individual Volunteering

- **Formal** - involves helping others through organizations or associations and includes activities like supporting public health efforts, conducting wellness checks on isolated seniors, supporting food banks through scheduled activities such as stocking shelves, mentoring or tutoring youth through an after-school program, or walking dogs at animal shelters.
- **Nonformal Volunteering/Community Helpers** - involves helping others outside of an organizational context, including doing favors for neighbors like yard work, watching each other's children, lending tools, running errands, and other ways to lend a hand to others in their neighborhood or community.

Group/Volunteer Program (two or more people)

- A group of people engaged in a volunteer activity, whether with friends, family, colleagues, neighbors or acquaintances. Group volunteering can involve a specific project with a set timeframe, or an ongoing commitment shared by a group of volunteers. For example, roadside cleanup, neighborhood watch groups, beach cleanup, youth advisory boards, FAST groups, hospital dog teams visiting patients, and groups who serve food at shelters.
- Groups that have been brought together to volunteer for a program of a nonprofit, civic, corporate or government organization are also eligible under this category. A volunteer program mobilizes volunteers to serve the community and shows demonstrable community impact. The program goes beyond episodic volunteerism and is committed to long-term community engagement. Entire organizations should not be nominated but, instead, the program through which volunteers perform a service or set of services for the community are eligible.

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Selection:

- Award selections are based on the nominee's volunteer efforts, commitment of time, accomplishments, impact and enhancement of the lives of others, as described in the nomination statement. The elements of the statement include:
 - Nominee's outstanding accomplishments.
 - The impact of their service on individual(s), organization or community.
 - Nominee's outstanding commitment to volunteerism.
- Serve Washington reserves the right to withhold distribution of an award if deemed appropriate.

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Nomination Form Sample

(Nominator must ensure all requirements for nomination are met)

Select type of Nomination:

☐ Individual

☐ Group/Volunteer Program

Nominee Information:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
(if Group/Volunteer Program, provide main point of contact)

Group/Volunteer Program Name: _____
(not organization)

City/Zip: _____ County: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Optional: If volunteer or group formally serves through an organization, provide the following information:

Organization: _____

Address: _____ City/Zip: _____

List County/Counties being served by Nominee: _____

Select the region where the nominee serves:

☐ **Northeast:** Ferry, Stevens, Pend
Oreille, Lincoln, Spokane

☐ **Northwest:** Whatcom,
Skagit, San Juan, Island

☐ **South Central:** Benton,
Franklin, Kittitas, Klickitat,
Walla Walla, Yakima

☐ **North Central:** Okanogan, Chelan,
Douglas, Grant

☐ **Peninsula/Coastal:**
Clallam, Jefferson, Grays
Harbor, Pacific, Kitsap

☐ **South Puget Sound:**
Mason, Thurston, Pierce,
Lewis

☐ **North Puget Sound:** King,
Snohomish

☐ **Southeast:** Adams,
Whitman, Garfield, Columbia,
Asotin

☐ **Southwest:** Cowlitz,
Skamania, Clark, Wahkiakum

Nominator Information:

Name: _____ Organization: _____
(if applicable)

City/State/Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

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Nomination Statement

Statements should be written in third person. Ensure all elements of the information requested are addressed in the nomination statement. **NOTE: There is a 750-word limit in total for all elements combined. The application review committee will only consider the first 750 words.** It is highly recommended to draft each element statement in a Word document to view the combined word count, then copy and paste by section in the online form. **Please review our “informational and how to” video** for helpful suggestions on writing a nomination at servewashington.wa.gov.

Elements

Explain the primary reasons for nominating this volunteer or volunteers in the selected region. Nomination statements will be evaluated based on each of the bullet items below. **Under each bullet are examples** to help as you write your nomination, but you are welcome to highlight other things.

- **Accomplishments over the last year. This can be shown in a variety of ways, using one of the following for an example:**
 - a. Identify what was achieved; focus on results or stories/testimonials to show qualitative impact.
 - b. Share how the nominee’s effort has provided direct service.
 - c. Describe any leadership contributions the nominee has made.
- **The impact of volunteer service can be seen in many ways; describe how the nominee has impacted at least one of these:**
 - a. Community.
 - b. Organization.
 - c. Individual.
- **Outstanding commitment to volunteerism. This can be seen in a variety of ways, such as:**
 - a. Volunteering can be a tool for connection and community building if we are intentional about how we talk about volunteering, educate volunteers, recruit volunteers, share our resources, and distribute power. Individuals can also be key drivers in fostering justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion through volunteering and service to the community.
 - i. Describe how the group or volunteer program is rooted in community and implements services, processes or programs that are informed by underserved, underrepresented or marginalized communities.
 - ii. Describe how the individual leads, promotes and/or models respect, compassion and advocacy for all people.
 - b. Describe the time or effort made to meet their commitment. This could include long or challenging commutes to volunteer activity; integration into everyday life such as helping elderly neighbors with yard work or grocery shopping; a single parent carving out time in their schedule; overcoming barriers that could have prevented the ability to volunteer.
 - c. Describe if the nominee has taken on additional volunteer roles or shown leadership with volunteer programs, events or efforts. Did the nominee see a need and jump in to address it?
 - d. Describe if engaged in or committed to volunteer activities with multiple organizations; share information about the other volunteer commitments/activities. We recommend collaborating with the other organizations on the nomination to ensure a comprehensive nomination.