



“When I think of excellence, I think of people more than things because only people can bring quality, excellence, perfection to things that must work. It is in that light that we achieved the Apollo landings on the Moon.”

—GEORGE M. LOW

GEORGE M. LOW AWARD 2012

Nomination Guidelines

NASA's Quality and Excellence Award

May 2012



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George M. Low Award Trophy Inscription

This trophy is awarded in the memory of George M. Low, who greatly contributed to the early development of NASA space programs during his 27 years of Government service.

Established in 1985 as the NASA Excellence Award for Quality and Productivity, the George M. Low Award is the United States' senior award for organizational quality and excellence.



George M. Low was dedicated to quality and excellence. His career and achievements spanned many fields—space science, aeronautics, technology, and education. As an engineer, mathematician, scientist, NASA Director and Deputy Administrator, Chairman of the National Research Council, and President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, his achievements were legendary. In the space program, he provided management and direction for the Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, and advanced piloted-mission programs.

George M. Low advanced through NASA management on the strength of his extraordinary, quality-embedded achievements. His progress to prominence made him a role model in the sight of all with whom he came in contact. He was a man with a vision—a vision shared by many who also dreamed that America should lead the way in astronautics and aeronautics. George M. Low stretched the boundaries of excellence, and by his example, others are motivated to do the same.

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2012 GEORGE M. LOW AWARD NOMINATION GUIDELINES

I. Purpose

The George M. Low (GML) Award is NASA's premier quality performance award for NASA's prime contractors and subcontractors. The presentation of the GML Award signifies NASA's recognition that the award recipient has demonstrated excellence and outstanding technical and managerial achievements in quality and performance.

II. Nomination Responsibilities

Prior to official submission, all evaluating offices must review and vet the nominees, at minimum, through their Office of Procurement, the Office of Inspector General, and the legal department to ensure that the nominees are in good standing with NASA and in compliance with the eligibility requirements and nomination specifications outlined in this booklet.

In accordance with NASA's core values and ideals that George M. Low represented, companies identified in integrity-based violations or complaints are not eligible.

Office of Safety and Mission Assurance

The Office of Safety and Mission Assurance at NASA Headquarters manages the GML Award for the NASA Administrator and accepts nominations from NASA Mission Directorates, Centers, and Mission Support Offices.

Centers

Centers will submit no more than one nominee per category. NASA Headquarters and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory are considered Centers.

Prior to officially submitting the nominations to the GML Award Program Manager, Centers must e-mail a list of the companies they wish to nominate to the other Centers along with a brief justification for the nomination. Each Center must review and vet the nominees. Center Directors must send a nomination letter to the Chair, George M. Low Award Program.

In the event that more than one Center plans to nominate a contractor that has contracts with multiple Centers, the Centers must select a lead Center that will submit the nomination with input from the other Centers. This fact must be noted in the lead page, as defined in Section III, "Format Requirements."

The other Centers shall provide any appropriate information to the nominating Center concerning the merit of the candidate before that Center submits the nomination.

III. Format Requirements

The introduction of the nomination (not to exceed two pages) will include the following:

- A brief description of the company with an attached organization chart showing how the specific business unit being nominated fits within the company.
- The award category and classification in which the business is being nominated.
- Nominator (if more than one NASA Center or Mission Directorate is participating in the nomination, the lead as well as the participating nominators will be noted).
- Information demonstrating the business unit's qualifications for the identified category and classification.
- The number of employees in the business unit and the number of employees dedicated to NASA contracts.
- The full name, title, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the highest-ranking member of the business and the company's GML Award point of contact or action officer.
- A complete list of the business unit's NASA contracts, the contract values, the contract types (e.g., Firm Fixed Price, Cost Plus Award Fee), the contract number, the contract period of performance, and the corresponding NASA Center for each contract. Nominated business units will be evaluated on the basis of all of their NASA contracts, with main emphasis given to the contracts of the submitting Center.

Additional format requirements include the following:

- Each nomination will be a total of no more than eight pages in length, plus the introductory pages described above, a table of contents, and an acronym list if needed.

- Nomination text and figures will be typed using Arial Regular in a minimum font size of 10 points; margins will be at least ½ inch. Send the nomination to the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance in electronic format by November 30, 2012.
- The nomination must follow the same sequence and address each of the seven factors and subfactors listed in Appendix B, “Evaluation Factors.” The performance period is the latest 3 consecutive contract years of NASA work ending during the 12-month period prior to the submission deadline for the nominations. Clearly identify the start and end dates of the 3-year contract period of performance.
- Nominations that do not meet the eligibility and format requirements will not be considered.

IV. Categories

GML Awards are presented to one outstanding company in each of the following categories:

- Large business*
- Small business*

** Can be product or service. A product can be hardware, software, research, and/or technology development.*

V. Eligibility Requirements

Each NASA prime contractor or subcontractor in good standing with NASA for at least 3 consecutive years is eligible to be nominated for the GML Award in the category that reflects its contractual status at the time of the application submittal. New follow-on contracts may use previous data to complete the nomination package and provide 3 years of objective evidence. Only one nomination for each independently operating business unit of a company will be eligible (e.g., a unit of a corporation that reports to a corporate president).

Federal requirements for small and large businesses apply for the category and classification as noted on the contract at the time of application. Please contact the GML Award Program Manager or Center or Mission Directorate GML contact for further guidance if needed.

VI. Process Participants

Review Council

The Review Council is composed of representatives from the NASA Mission Directorates, Centers, and Headquarters Mission Support Offices.

The Review Council evaluates the candidates nominated for the GML Award, verifies eligibility, and assesses the candidates according to the GML evaluation factors (Appendix B). The Review Council selects finalists and forwards the results of the selection to the Validation Board Site Visit Team for action.

On a case-by-case basis, without violating the spirit of the GML Award program and by consensus, the Review Council has latitude to deviate from a strict interpretation of the eligibility requirements.

Validation Board Site Visit Team

The Validation Board Site Visit Team is composed of five or more members from a subset of the Review Council. The Validation Board Site Visit Team conducts the site visits to the finalists.

The purpose of the site visit is to allow Validation Board Site Visit Team members to meet the company's management and staff, observe the company's operations, and give company management an opportunity to answer questions and to clarify specific issues that surfaced in the company's nomination. Acceptance of the visit is voluntary.

The site visit will not exceed 6 hours during a single-day visit. In addition, the Center or Headquarters office whose finalist is being visited is encouraged to send a representative to the site visit.

Panel of Judges

The Panel of Judges is composed of the Mission Directorate Associate Administrators; the Assistant Associate Administrator; and the Chief, Safety and Mission Assurance, who is the chairperson. When Mission Support Office nominees are among the finalists, an Assistant Administrator from a Headquarters Mission Support Office will be appointed as an additional judge. The Panel of Judges may accept recommendations of the Validation Board Site Visit Team and forwards recommendations to the Administrator for approval.

Consultants

Although they are not members of the Panel of Judges, the Validation Board Site Visit Team, or the Review Council, other NASA offices involved in the acquisition and contract oversight process may be consulted throughout the evaluation process for relevant input. These NASA offices will include, but are not limited to, the Offices of the General Counsel, Inspector General, Procurement, Diversity and Equal Opportunity, and Small Business Programs.

VII. Selection Factors

Selection and Evaluation

Throughout the nomination process, GML Award candidates will be considered according to the following seven evaluation factors that apply to the contractual requirements of the nominee:

1. Technical performance.
2. Schedule performance.
3. Cost performance.
4. Customer satisfaction process.
5. Leadership and quality improvement.
6. Research and development and/or innovative technology breakthroughs.
7. Items of special interest to NASA.

Appendix B contains more detailed information about the evaluation factors and point values that are used to assess a candidate.

Review and Validation of Nominees and Selection of Finalists

Nominees and finalists are reviewed to ensure that they are in good standing.

The Centers are notified by their GML contact of the Review Council's findings with respect to their nominees.

The GML Award Program Manager notifies finalists in writing, and usually a site visit by the Validation Board Site Visit Team is coordinated.

Selection of Award Recipients

Following the site visits, the Validation Board Site Visit Team recommends winners to the Panel of Judges.

The Panel of Judges selects the winners and submits the results to the Administrator for approval.

Winners and finalists will receive their trophies and plaques at an appropriate forum.

Every effort will be made to debrief all finalists by the Center or Mission Directorate GML contact and the GML Award Program Manager after the award presentation.

A GML Award winner is ineligible to be nominated again for a period of 3 consecutive years. (The start of the waiting period begins at the end of the calendar year for which the GML Trophy was awarded. For example, if a company won the 2011 GML Award, the 3-year waiting period would be for 2012–14, making the company eligible to reapply in 2015.)

APPENDIX A—Milestone Schedule

May 2012

- 2012 GML Award nomination cycle opens and guidelines are distributed.
- GML representatives are requested.

October 2012

- NASA Centers assemble nominations and, as appropriate, submit the names of nominees to other Center GML or Mission Directorate contacts for comment. (This activity is particularly important to ensure that there are no duplications if a nominee has contracts with NASA Centers other than the nominating Center.)

November 2012

- All Center final nominations are submitted to Kelly Kabiri, GML Award Program Manager, Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, at 202-358-0590 by November 30, 2012.

January 2013

- Members of the Review Council and Validation Board Site Visit Team are selected.
- The Review Council is convened. The Review Council reviews and scores all of the nominations, selects finalist candidates, and forwards the results of the selection to the GML Award Program, ATTN: Office of Safety and Mission Assurance.

February–March 2013

- Finalists are notified that they will receive a site visit.
- The Validation Board Site Visit Team conducts a site visit to each finalist organization.
- The Validation Board Site Visit Team prepares its findings for the Panel of Judges.
- The Panel of Judges selects the GML Award winners, with no more than one in each category. The Panel of Judges also determines the companies that will receive a GML Award Finalist Plaque.
- The Administrator approves the selections and presents the awards to the winners.

APPENDIX B—Evaluation Factors

During the nomination/evaluation/screening process, the Review Council will use the following nomination factors and associated objective evidence as the primary means of assessing nominations. Maximum scores for each factor and subfactor have been provided as an additional tool to assist in ranking nominees. Unless otherwise noted, calls for objective information will cover each of the 3 consecutive contract years in the performance period with data shown for each year. Information outside the 3-year performance period will not be considered. The performance period is the latest 3 consecutive contract years of NASA work ending during the 12-month period prior to the submission deadline for the nominations. New follow-on contracts may use previous data to complete the nomination package and provide 3 years of objective evidence. In addition, calls for objective evidence/metrics should cover all contracts within the scope of the nomination.

PERFORMANCE FACTORS:

1. Technical Performance (200 Points)

- A. For each of the past 3 consecutive contract years, provide objective evidence (e.g., Technical Award fee scores, Award term evaluations, NASA Form 1680 “Evaluation of Performance” feedback, other survey data or records, and other verifiable inputs from NASA and other relevant third parties) that demonstrates the customer’s high degree of satisfaction with the contractor’s technical performance in meeting contract requirements. (100)
- B. Describe how the contractor has instituted initiatives to improve the performance and outcome of its products and/or services. Provide evidence of their effectiveness. (50)
- C. Describe how the contractor tracks, assesses, and manages technical performance. (50)

2. Schedule Performance (150 Points)

- A. For each of the past 3 consecutive contract years, provide objective evidence that demonstrates the customer’s high degree of satisfaction with the contractor’s ability to meet schedules. (100)
- B. Describe how responsive the contractor has been in rescheduling, work-arounds, and reprioritized work activities. (25)
- C. Describe how the contractor manages schedules. (25)

3. Cost Performance (150 Points)

- A. For each of the past 3 consecutive contract years and allowing for NASA-initiated changes, provide objective evidence of the contractor's cost performance on NASA procurements (e.g., award fee, incentive fee, past performance, and 1680 evaluations as they relate to cost performance). (100)
- B. What is the contractor's cost-reduction/cost-avoidance record? What specific initiatives were instituted to accomplish this? (50)

4. Research and Development and/or Innovative Technology (50 Points)

- A. Describe research and development and/or any innovative activities developed by your organization that made a special contribution to the ability of NASA to accomplish its mission. When research and development is not part of the business's operations, focus should be on innovative management initiatives or activities. (50)

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FACTORS:**5. Customer Satisfaction Process (100 Points)**

- A. Describe the contractor's process to gauge NASA's customer satisfaction effectively (e.g., methodologies and tools). (100)

6. Leadership and Quality Improvement (250 Points)

- A. Describe the process for creating the organization's vision, mission, values, and quality policy, and then how these are communicated to the workforce to ensure their buy-in and support. (25)
- B. Describe the management processes and tools (e.g., capability maturity models like CMMI and/or CMM, ISO, Six Sigma, or incentives) used to improve processes and performance continuously. These may be company-unique or widely accepted. Demonstrate their effectiveness with specific examples. (100)
- C. Describe how the contractor fosters teamwork among all of the various participant groups (management team, workforce, subcontractors, customer, etc.). Where applicable, describe how effective the contractor is in helping its subcontractors/suppliers infuse quality into their processes, products, and services. (75)

- D. Describe the processes in place to incorporate lessons learned and other organizational experiences. Describe how the contractor benchmarks the performance of best-in-class organizations to determine improvement goals and measure progress toward world-class status. Provide examples to demonstrate their effectiveness. (50)

CORE VALUES:

7. Items of Special Interest to NASA (100 Points)

This factor addresses core values and areas where NASA places special emphasis, including the following:

- A. Describe special safety initiatives in place that underscore NASA's vital concern with the safety of the workforce, workplace, product, and service. How does the company ensure that senior management is viewed by the workforce as being integral to, and a vital supporter of, the contractor's safety program? Describe the company's safety record for each of the past 3 consecutive years. (25)
- B. Provide evidence that senior management leadership is valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity within a diverse workforce, at all levels, and has an institutionalized management philosophy that values differences by incorporating equal opportunity and diversity into management development and employee education and training curricula. (25)
- C. In what ways does the contractor support the small business community? For those with contractual goals, provide metrics. (25)
- D. Describe the contractor's education and outreach programs (external or public), consistent with NASA's vision and mission. (25)

George M. Low Award Past Recipients

2011

Teledyne Brown Engineering (Large—Service)
Sierra Lobo, Inc. (Small—Service)

2010

Analytical Mechanics Associates, Inc. (Small—Service)
Neptec Design Group (Small—Product)
Jacobs Technology, Inc. (Large—Service)
ATK Aerospace Systems (Large—Product)

2009

United Space Alliance (Large—Service)
Applied Geo Technologies (Small—Service)

2008

ARES Corp. (Small—Service)
Boeing CAPPs (Large—Service)
Oceaneering Space Systems (Large—Product)

2007

Sierra Lobo, Inc. (Small—Product)
ASRC Aerospace Corp. (Small—Service)
Lockheed Martin Mission Services (Large—Service)
Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne, Inc. (Large—Product)

2006

Barrios Technology (Small—Service)
Teledyne Brown Engineering (Large—Service)

2005

BTAS, Inc. (Small—Product)
SGT, Inc. (Small—Service)
QSS Group, Inc. (Large—Service)
ATK Thiokol, Inc. (Large—Product)

2004

Alliance Spacesystems, Inc. (Small—Product)
ERC, Inc. (Small—Service)
Space Gateway Support, LLC, and Titan Corporation
(Large—Service)
Northrop Grumman Space Technology (Large—Product)

2003

Marotta Controls, Inc. (Small—Product)
Lockheed Martin Space Operations, ITS (Large—Service)
Spectrolab, A Boeing Company (Large—Product)

2002

Analytical Services & Materials, Inc. (Small—Service)
Jacobs Sverdrup Marshall Space Flight Center Group
(Large—Service)
ManTech International Corporation Aerospace Technology
Applications Center (Large—Service)
RS Information Systems, Inc. (Small—Service)
Williams International (Small—Product)

2001

Native American Services, Inc. (Small—Service)
Raytheon ITSS (Large—Service)
Swales Aerospace (Small—Product)

2000

Advanced Technologies Incorporated (Small—Product)
The Boeing Company, Delta Launch Division
(Large—Product)
Computer Sciences Corporation, NASA Programs
(Large—Service)
Jackson & Tull, Inc., Aerospace Engineering Division
(Small—Service)

1999

Barrios Technology (Small—Product)
Kay and Associates, Inc. (Small—Service)
Raytheon Service Company (Large—Service)
Thiokol Propulsion, Space Operations (Large—Product)

1997–98

BST Systems, Inc. (Small—Product)
Advanced Technology Company (Small—Service)
ILC Dover, Inc. (Large—Product)
AlliedSignal Technical Services Corporation
(Large—Service)
DYNCORP—Johnson Support Division (Large—Service)

1996–97

Dynamic Engineering, Inc. (Small—Product)
Hummer Associates (Small—Service)
Boeing-Rocketdyne Propulsion & Power (Large—Product)
Scientific & Commercial Systems Corporation
(Small—Service)

1995–96

Hamilton Standard Space Systems International
(Large—Product)

1994–95

Unisys Space Systems (Large—Service)

1992

IBM Federal Systems Company (Large—Service)
Honeywell Space and Strategic Systems Operation
(Large—Product)

1991

Grumman Technical Services Division (Large—Service)
Thiokol Space Systems (Large—Product)

1990

Rockwell Space Systems Division (Large—Product)
Marotta Scientific Controls, Inc. (Small—Product)

1989

Lockheed Engineering and Sciences Company
(Large—Service)
Rocketdyne Division, Rockwell International Corporation
(Large—Product)

1987

IBM Federal Sector Division (Large—Service)
Martin Marietta Michoud Aerospace (Large—Product)