



Tips for Writing Award Nominations

Human Resources Management Division (HRMD)

A “winning” nomination begins with nominators who use a well thought out process to capture extraordinary accomplishments or contributions of their colleagues with descriptions of the impact they are having on the organization’s business or mission goals. This document provides general information about writing a nomination.

Content Ideas:

To make the nomination strong, consider the following questions in your write-up:

- What is the individual or team being nominated for? Be specific.
- How did the individual or team achieve this?
- What are the measurable outcomes resulted from the nominee’s achievement? (reduced costs, increased effectiveness, improved processes, solutions provided)
- Identify one or more of the award criteria that the nominee(s) exemplified, and then explain how the achievement was outstanding in that regard?
- Solicit information from colleagues to strengthen and support the nomination.
- Is the contribution an activity or project that is still being developed or in the early stages of use? If so, consider waiting to submit the nomination after the impact can be documented.
- If uncertain about the criteria being used for an award, don’t hesitate to ask for clarification. Experience indicates that the most important and difficult part of effective recognition management is getting all managers and employees in an organization on the same page as to the meaning and application of stated award criteria
- Remember, it’s not the quantity of the nomination. It’s the quality.

General Writing Tips:

1. Read General Information, Eligibility, and Qualifications for the award.
2. Develop responses that are well thought out and organized.
3. Describe what the nominee(s) did, impact and result by using an opening statement, supporting statements and a closing statement.

4. Be specific in how the nominee met the award criteria can make your nomination a winner. Explain detailed behaviors and give specific examples which paint the picture of why the nominee deserves to be recognized.
5. Use projects that are complete, discuss the impact and use action verbs that describe what the nominee did.
6. Use examples of projects and programs that communicate the depth and breadth of achievement, and use those that help set the nominee apart from the competition. The review panel and other decision makers may not know the program or person (or the technical area), therefore, the nomination should paint a picture of the contributions.
7. Use your own words to summarize and describe.
8. Review the nomination and responses for completeness, spelling, typos, omissions, incorrect grammar, inconsistent font size, relevancy of responses to questions asked, and overall strength of the application presented.
9. Ensure the application has all the required approvals.

Writing Citations

The purpose of a citation is to provide an instrument, on the award itself, which succinctly describes the achievements and accomplishments warranting the award.

Citation Guidelines:

- Citation cannot exceed 175 characters.
- Does not include pronouns.
- Citation cannot read the same as the justification.
- Define accomplishments/achievements well enough for others to understand the purpose a succinct and clear manner.
- Determine how the citation should read, think from the perspective of ceremonial protocol.
- Citations must begin with “For exemplary.....” or “For outstanding.....”
- Add a period at the end of the citation.
- Do not use “&” instead of “and.” Only use “&” if there is no room.
- When using commas in items in a series, place a comma after the next to last item before the “and”).
- List each nominee for group/team awards.
- Use the name of the program, instead of the acronym, if space permits.

Citation Examples:

- For demonstrating innovative technologies and process improvements made through the development of state-of-the-art electronic communication for the Agency.
- For outstanding teamwork in the completion of 2011 file audit, resulting in a \$25,000 cost savings to the Center.
- For exemplary performance, dedication, and customer service to the Office of Internal Affairs, Electronic Communications Division.

Writing Justifications

The purpose of a justification is to provide the validation for the awards granted. They validate that accomplishments are in alignment with mission, goals and values. The justifications also help ensure proper documentation for statutory and regulatory requirements for monetary, honorary and time-off awards.

Justification Guidelines

- Citation cannot exceed 3500 characters.
- Justification cannot read the same as the citation
- Spell out acronym the first time it is used, followed by the acronym in parenthesis.

Justification Components:

Opening Statement

- One or two sentences in length describing why the nominee deserves recognition.
- Example: Ms. Mason serves as the lead of the Webmail Communications Office. In this capacity, Ms. Mason developed...

Supporting Statements

- These statements should include activities above and beyond the nominee's job description.
- Answer these questions in the supporting statements:
 - Who made the achievement?
 - What was the accomplishment?
 - How was it accomplished? (when/why/where)
 - What was the impact or result?
- State the level of impact—Organization, Directorate, Center, Agency, Global using meaningful and measurable results such as reduced costs, increased efficiencies, improved processes, increased compliance/processes, increased productivity, and solutions provided.

Closing Statement

- The final statement which concludes the nominee's achievement.
- Example: For the above stated reasons, along with Ms. Mason's continuous display of professionalism and quality workmanship, she is richly deserving of this recognition for the Exceptional Service Medal.

Lessons Learned From Previous Nominations

- Typos and spelling errors through-out nomination.
- Unclear or grammatically incorrect sentences.
- Case for nomination not compelling enough.
- Not enough specific examples of why candidate deserves the nomination.
- List the nominee's full job responsibilities.
- Interchange of professional/proper name with nickname. (Example: from Mr. Robert Smith to Bob).