

First things first.

1) Read the nomination form carefully and be sure to answer all of the questions. Each piece of information requested in the form provides guidance to our judges and you don't want to omit anything that will help them to understand the contributions of your nominee.

2) Remember that the judges are reading multiple nominations and are looking for specific information. Too much information can be as harmful as too little.

3) Well-written nominations are appealing to the judges.

- a) Write short sentences that are concise and give specific detail.
- b) Support what you have to say with observation and fact.
- c) Avoid praising adjectives. List the most important information in the first few sentences, and then elaborate as necessary.
- d) Proofread your work and then ask others to review it for errors or to make suggestions.

4) Follow the instructions in the nomination form. Use the space provided to answer each question. Nominations are limited to two full pages in length.

5) Submitting on line is the easiest way to make your nomination. The best way to submit is to type up the nomination in a Word document and then copy and paste the text into the online form. Save your Word document just in case. (Printed nominations are also accepted, and a hard copy nomination form is available upon request.)

6) Read the selection criteria carefully. Honorees are chosen on these criteria and it is important that you understand and respond to each appropriately.

- a) **Volunteer Activities Performed:** Describe the types of activities and services that your nominee provides. Include the special talents and skills that are a major contributor to their success and impact as a volunteer.
- b) **Organizations Served and Time Given:** Include the organizations where services occurred and the number of hours that the nominee has volunteered.
- c) **Overall Impact:** Describe how the nominee's work had a significant impact on others or the community. Were they influential or inspirational? What did they do to effect change?
- d) **Obstacles Overcome:** Were there any challenges in the life of the nominee that motivated them to volunteer? If yes, tell how they overcame these obstacles as it relates to their volunteer activities.
- e) **Other Relevant Information:** Use this space to describe information not included in the other criteria sections. Write about special contributions, how the volunteer went above and beyond the call of duty, or any other information that you believe sets your nominee apart.

Let's get started.

7) Interview your nominee or if nominating a group, choose select members of the group for interview purposes. Remember that you must have permission to submit their name(s) for nomination. Most people are flattered to be nominated.

- a) Ask the questions noted on the nomination form and listen for information you can use to support your own thoughts and ideas.
- b) If permitted by the nominee, contact people who work for and with them.
- c) Gather as much information as possible. Be accurate and write down specific examples that will reinforce why you believe the volunteer(s) deserve recognition.

8) Focus on one program that most exemplifies the nominee's work. Provide detail explaining the program or services, then describe the nominee's other volunteer work or leadership positions as they rank in importance.

Time to start writing.

1) Organize your thoughts carefully and follow the nomination form.

- a) Focus on key questions.
- b) Detail accomplishments and their impact.
- c) Describe leadership abilities and how the nominee has made a difference through volunteerism.
- d) Create a unique picture of your nominee.

2) Provide the judges with complete information about the nominee and organization that they volunteer for. It is important to tell the nominee's story as you would to a stranger.

3) Describe unique characteristics that are more than just what a great or nice person this nominee is. Choose one or two qualities that make this person truly outstanding and then give specific examples (i.e. listening, teambuilding, collaboration, creativity, and professionalism.)

4) Nominees who have initiated a program that addresses a community problem or provides a needed service attract attention. Be sure to include examples of how the program had an impact and what results were achieved. Include any unusual challenges the nominee had to overcome (i.e. disabilities, limited funding, and public perception.) Describe the amount of time and resources spent on the activity or service.

5) Verify all information on the form. Winning nominations are checked carefully to verify all information and ensure that all requirements have been met. Any false statements will disqualify the nomination.

6) That's it! Select which way you'll deliver the nomination form (online, email, post mail, fax, or hand delivery) and you're on your way. If you have questions or need assistance call Volunteer Kalamazoo at 269.382.8350 or vckzoo@volunteerkalamazoo.org.