

Writing a Strong Award Nomination

How you represent a candidate's accomplishments and qualities in a nomination is critical in making the best impression on judges. Here are some tips for making the most out of your nomination:

Persuasiveness & Impact

- Does your nomination address the criteria for the award? Looking at the rubric will give you an idea of what areas are most important.
- Are you being descriptive enough with your candidate's achievements? How did the nominee contribute to the goal, and what were the end results? Include measurable outcomes or milestones where possible (growth in programs, better retention, higher graduation rates, more students going to college, higher test scores, increased funding, etc.)
- What makes this candidate unique from others in the profession? How has he or she gone above and beyond? Provide concrete examples over general descriptions.

Clarity & Conciseness

- Can you sum up in one sentence why the nominee deserves recognition? Keep your writing focused and make every word count. Don't worry about adding details that don't speak to the candidate's qualifications for the award.
- Is it easy for the reader to follow your train of thought and identify how every point addresses the criteria for the award? Keep the application organized; use bullet points if appropriate.
- Explain achievements in plain language. Judges may not be as familiar with activities that are specific to your content area, program or CTSO. Try to eliminate or explain jargon where possible.

Professionalism

- **Proofread!** Type your application in Microsoft Word or a program that will catch basic spelling and grammatical mistakes before copying into the online form. Then ask a peer or colleague to proofread your application. Two sets of eyes are better than one!

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

A positive endorsement from a colleague, peer or supervisor can be a very powerful way to showcase the qualities and achievements of the candidate. Be sure to choose your sources carefully! You can help your recommenders by providing them with a copy of the award criteria and your resume so they can write specifically to those qualities. Ask them to sign and date their letters for you—these details make the letters look more authentic and professional.

It takes time to write a strong nomination. The biggest advantage you can give your candidate is by starting your nomination early and giving yourself time to collect information, letters of recommendation and proofread. Good luck!