

SAVMA AWARD NOMINATION HANDBOOK

SAVMA Awards Friday, January 22, 2027
Tucson Convention Center 8 AM

Introduction

Welcome to the SAVMA Awards 2027 Nomination Handbook. This guide provides comprehensive information on nominating deserving individuals, groups, and organizations for our prestigious annual awards. Recognizing outstanding contributions is crucial to fostering a vibrant and engaged volunteer community in Southern Arizona. This handbook will guide you through the nomination process, outline the eligibility criteria, describe the award categories, and provide guidelines for submitting your nomination. We encourage you to nominate those who have made a significant impact through their volunteer efforts.

Nomination Details

1. Nominations are open from Now – July 31 at 5:00 PM (Deadline is absolute)
2. Nominations are only accepted at savma.org
3. Direct questions to the Nomination Chair at SAVMATucson@gmail.com.
4. Community Service Recognition (CSR) submissions open in September (details at registration).

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Event Details

Date: Friday, January 22, 2027

Location: Tucson Convention Center

Registration: 8:00 AM

Program Start Time: 8:30 AM

Award Categories and Summaries

- **Volunteer of the Year Award:** Recognizes an individual whose direct line of service volunteerism to one or more charitable causes improved the quality of life in Southern Arizona, demonstrated leadership in service, and whose exceptional volunteerism encouraged others to take volunteer leadership roles in the community.
- **Exceptional Governance Volunteerism Award:** Recognizes an individual whose service as a governance or advisory council volunteer to one or various charitable causes improved the quality of life in Southern Arizona, demonstrated leadership in service, and whose exceptional volunteerism encouraged others to take volunteer leadership roles in the community.
- **Corporate or Group Volunteerism Award:** The award recognizes a corporation or group with a demonstrated record of outstanding commitment through volunteerism. It creates a corporate volunteerism culture that encourages and motivates employees/participants to take leadership roles, make an impact through service, and be involved in the community.
- **Exceptional Volunteer Program Award:** This award recognizes an exceptional volunteer program that strategically engages and recognizes volunteers, prioritizes time and talent investments, and advances the organization's mission, programs, and operations in measurable ways.
- **Youth Volunteer Award (Individual or Group):** Recognizes service by an individual or group under 18 years old (at the time of service) who demonstrated outstanding commitment to the community through volunteerism, development of charitable programs, and leadership in the advancement of the nonprofit sector.
- **Exceptional Volunteer Engagement Professional Award:** Recognizes a Volunteer Engagement Professional (VEP)* whose work exemplifies leadership, competence, achievement, ethical standards, and commitment to the volunteer engagement profession. SAVMA membership is required and must be active at the time of nomination. *Titles may vary, but SAVMA defines a VEP as an individual who spends at least 50% of their time and/or resources on volunteer engagement duties.

General Guidelines, Terms, and Conditions

- **Service area:** Service occurred within Pima, Santa Cruz, Graham, Greenlee, or Cochise County.
- **Age requirements:** The nominee meets the age requirements of the respective category (at the time of service), if applicable.
- **Time of Service:** Nominees' significant and consistent volunteer work before June 30, 2026.
- **Submission Limits:** Nominators may submit multiple individual or group nominations, but are limited to one nomination per organization per category. Individual nominees may only be submitted in one category.
- **Public Service Requirement:** Membership associations are not eligible for awards. There is a public service requirement.
- **Multiple Nominations:** If two organizations nominate the same individual, group, or organization, the first nomination will be the only one considered.
- **Former Award Recipients:** Previous awardees are not eligible for nomination in the same category.
- **Permission to apply:** Not all nominees want public recognition, and permission to submit can help.
- **Self-Promotion:** Strongly recommended! Support your supervisor by providing them with the information needed for your nomination.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Awards Selection Members and their immediate families are ineligible.
- **Definition of Volunteer:** A volunteer is “an individual who performs hours of service for a public agency for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered, is considered to be a volunteer during such hours.” (Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, 2024)
- **Volunteer Engaging-For-Profits (Medicaid Mandated Volunteer Programs):** For-profit hospice and hospital volunteer programs are eligible for nomination in several categories; look for category-specific information.
- **Service Work and Credit Seeking Service:** Include service workers (Federal Work Study, AmeriCorps, AmeriCorpsSeniors, NCCC, etc.) and credit-seeking service workers in the Headcount for Exceptional Volunteer Program Award and exclude them from individual awards.
- **Additional criteria by award:** Some awards have additional criteria.

Submission Information

Be prepared with the following information. Using a word processor is strongly recommended for compiling the answers to the questions.

Nominator Submission Information

Nominator Name:

Nominator Email:

Nominator Phone:

Relation to Nominee:

Verified eligibility: (yes or no drop-down)

Nominee Submission Information

Nominee Name:

Nominee Email:

Nominee Phone:

Nominee Service Organization's Mission:

Nominee Volunteer Title: (volunteer is not a title, unless employee is also a title in the organization)

Length of Service (with nominating charity/service org):

High-Definition Photo (PNG or JPG):

For Group or Corporate Submissions Point of Contact Name:

Award Category:

Award Categories and Evaluation Criteria

Each question has a 1,600-character limit, approximately 250 words.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Recognizes an individual whose direct line of service volunteerism to one or more charitable causes improved the quality of life in Southern Arizona, demonstrated leadership in service, and whose exceptional volunteerism encouraged others to take volunteer leadership roles in the community.

- Describe the nominee's positive impact on the community through the organization or cause they served.
- Describe how the nominee exceeded program expectations, inspired and motivated others, served as a role model to other volunteers, and showed initiative and leadership.
- Describe the quantifiable impact for consideration (depth and breadth): # of hours, # of clients helped, or the positive results achieved.

Award Eligibility

- **Background Checks:** Nominees' background checks should not include crimes against persons. Selected individual awardees must pass or have passed a background check through their volunteer organization.
- **Volunteer Engaging-For-Profits:** Nominations in this category are accepted from Medicaid-mandated volunteer Service organizations, for-profit hospices, and hospitals.

Exceptional Governance Volunteer Award

Recognizes an individual whose service as a governance or advisory council volunteer to one or various charitable causes improved the quality of life in Southern Arizona, demonstrated leadership in service, and whose exceptional volunteerism encouraged others to take volunteer leadership roles in the community.

- Describe how the nominee positively impacted the community through the organization or cause they served (may not hold the position as a condition of their employment).
- Describe how the nominee exceeded program expectations, inspired and motivated others, served as a role model to other volunteers, and showed initiative and leadership.
- Describe the quantifiable impact for consideration (depth and breadth): # of hours, # of clients helped, or the positive results achieved.

Award Eligibility

- **Background Checks:** Nominees' background checks should not include crimes against persons. Selected individual awardees must pass or have passed a background check through their volunteer organization.

- **Exclusionary Activity:** Fundraising efforts will not be considered in evaluating this award, but hours spent conducting board service, including fundraising activities, will be considered. The Association of Fundraising Professionals awards for volunteer fundraising.

Corporate or Group Volunteerism Award

Recognizes a corporation or group with a demonstrated record of outstanding commitment through volunteerism, creating a corporate volunteerism culture that encourages and motivates employees/participants to take leadership roles, make an impact through service, and be involved in the community.

- Describe the number of volunteers (unpaid*) and volunteer hours worked in the nominating year.
- Describe how the organization actively engages employees/participants in serving their community by centering volunteerism as a core value in their business strategy. Their volunteerism makes a significant and lasting impact on individuals and the community.
- Describe how the organization creates a culture of volunteerism within their corporation or group that encourages and motivates employees/participants to engage in the community beyond episodic volunteering and is committed to long-term community engagement.

*Cannot include workforce hours paid by the corporation

Exceptional Volunteer Program Award

Recognizes an exceptional Volunteer Program that strategically engages and recognizes volunteers, prioritizing time and talent investments and advancing the organization's mission, programs, and operations in measurable ways.

- Provide a 13-month Volunteer Program unduplicated headcount as of June 30, 2025,*and describe the number of hours provided by those volunteers and community service workers.
- Describe the organization's breadth (number of roles) and depth (complexity- layers of volunteer leadership) of volunteer roles.
- Describe the organization's formal and informal award and/or recognition program for volunteers.

***Volunteer Program Headcount:** The calculation method was discussed in detail at the SAVMA Program. A follow-up blog post can be found here: <https://www.savma.org/volunteer-engagement-defined-and-measured/>

Youth Volunteer Award (Individual or Group)

Recognizes service by an individual or group of young people under 18 years old who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to the community through volunteerism, development of charitable programs, and leadership in the advancement of the nonprofit sector.

- Describe how the nominee(s) positively impacted the community through the organization or cause they served.
- Describe how the nominee(s) exceeded program expectations, inspired and motivated others, served as a role model to other volunteers, and showed initiative and leadership.
- Describe the quantifiable impact for consideration (depth and breadth): # of hours, # of clients helped, or the positive results achieved.

Award Eligibility

- **Service Work and Credit Seeking Service:** Service workers (Federal Work Study, AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors, NCCC, etc.) and credit-seeking service workers are not eligible.

Exceptional Volunteer Engagement Professional Award

Recognizes a Volunteer Engagement Professional (VEP)* whose work exemplifies leadership, competence, achievement, and commitment to ethical standards in the volunteer engagement profession.

- Describe how the nominee embodies professional and ethical standards, models best practices, and engages volunteers effectively.
- Describe how the nominee takes leadership roles supporting the profession (local and national) and how they are committed to continuing education as a VEP.
- Describe the quantifiable impact for consideration (depth and breadth): # of volunteers, the positive results achieved, the roles held, and the growth of their VEP career.

*Titles may vary, but SAVMA defines a VEP as an individual who spends at least 50% of their time and/or resources on volunteer engagement duties.

Award Eligibility

- **Volunteer Engaging-For-Profits:** VEPs at Medicaid-mandated for-profit hospices and hospitals are eligible for the Exceptional Volunteer Engagement Professional Award.
- **SAVMA Membership:** To be considered for the award, nominees must be active SAVMA members on June 30, 2026. This shows commitment to the local profession.

Selection Process

Event Committee Members nominate an Independent Panel of Judges to comprise the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee Members are Community Leaders with personal and professional experience and commitment to volunteerism. They represent a diverse cross-section of the community. Judges use a rubric to evaluate and score nominations independently over two weeks. Final selection is made at a meeting where judges provide feedback, vote, and officially select the

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awardee using their independent scores as a guide. Selection Chair(s) coordinate and oversee the process, but do not vote for awardees. Nominators and their awardees are notified before awardees are announced publicly on September 10th.

Selected awardees must submit a short biography and high-resolution photos, including one headshot and images depicting the nominee in service. Information from nominations may be released to the media and elected officials.

Empowering Volunteer Engagement Professionals!

SAVMA promotes excellence in volunteer program management for volunteer engagement professionals by providing educational programs, leadership, resources, and peer networking throughout Southern Arizona.

Independent Sector's Value of Volunteer Time

Independent Sector, with the Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland, announced on April 21, 2026 that the estimate for the value of a volunteer hour was \$36.14 in 2025* — a 3.9% increase from 2024.

Disclosures and Agreement

The Company/Organization authorizes me to sign this release on their behalf. To the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this application is accurate and complete. I certify that the Company/Organization has not been the subject of an investigation by a governmental body or a civil or criminal complaint in the last five (5) years. If selected as a finalist, I agree to participate and/or allow my employees to participate in a personal interview.

Applications become the property of the Southern Arizona Volunteer Management Association (SAVMA) and will not be returned. An independent panel of judges will review the information contained within the application. The information contained in the application, in whole or in part, may be used by SAVMA for media purposes. The applicant authorizes SAVMA to use the awardees' pictures, likenesses, names, and all other information outlined in the application and personal interviews, articles, and third-party publications (such as magazines, newspapers, and electronic media) for advertising or promotional purposes.

SAVMA is not responsible for printing or typographical errors in award-related materials or stolen, lost, late, misdirected, damaged, incomplete, or illegible entries. SAVMA reserves the right to cancel or modify the contest if fraud or technical failures compromise the contest's integrity.

Nominees must complete the full SAVMA Awards Application during the Nominations Period, which begins July 1, 2025, at 12:01 AM MST and ends July 31, 2026, at 5:00 PM MST. The contest is open to any eligible individual or organization in Pima, Santa Cruz, Graham, Greenlee, or Cochise Counties who meet the eligibility requirements as of June 30, 2026. The Contest is subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. A panel of judges will select the winning entrants based on the answers submitted through the online nomination form.

The applicant also authorizes SAVMA, by itself and through third parties, to conduct background checks on the awardees, including, but not limited to, a review of public records, credit bureau reports, and personal investigations. SAVMA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to determine the acceptability of each applicant and nominee. All financial information contained herein shall remain confidential.

Failure to sign this form will disqualify your application. By participating, entrants agree to a) the award rules and the decisions of SAVMA in their sole discretion, which shall be final in all respects; and b) release, discharge, and hold harmless SAVMA, their respective subsidiaries, affiliates, sponsors, officers, directors, members, and employees from any liability, claims or damages arising out of their participation in the contest and the acceptance, use, misuse or possession of any prize.