

2021 Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards (VSAs)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the important dates to remember?

Nomination Deadline: March 5, 2021

VSA Date: Tuesday April 20, 2021

2. What are the guidelines for this year's FXCO Volunteer Service Awards?

You can find the updated guidelines and categories [here](#).

3. Where can I find the nomination forms?

Please click on the following links:

- [Competitive Awards](#)
- [#StrongerTogether Honorable Mention](#)

4. Why has there been a change in the competitive award categories?

In consultation with County representatives, and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Volunteer Fairfax VSA leadership team made the decision to recognize mission-based work of volunteers rather than demographic information of the nominee (# of hours volunteered, age, group or family status, etc.). We also found that in the 250 Hours (Over and Under) categories, there were nominees that were competing from very different fields that made it difficult for our judges to compare the work of volunteers with such vastly different roles and responsibilities (for example, a library volunteer competing against an emergency response volunteer). We hope that having mission-based categories will help address this.

5. I'd like to honor my 'Steady-Eddie' volunteers, but I'm not sure if they fit into a competitive category. Is there a category to recognize these volunteers?

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, safety guidelines and precautions prevented many volunteers from continuing to volunteer as they have in the past. In fact, many agencies and organizations had to turn their volunteers away as they adjusted to the new protocols to help limit the spread of the coronavirus and to keep their clients, volunteers, and staff safe. ***For this reason, we have replaced the traditional Benchmark***

categories emphasizing hours served with a new noncompetitive category:

#StrongerTogether Honorable Mention. This category is for all those who have risen to the unique challenges presented by the COVID 19 pandemic and who demonstrated a unique and exemplary response to the crisis through advocacy or volunteer service. To nominate someone for this category, [click here](#).

6. I don't see the Fairfax County Volunteer or Volunteer Program listed in the categories. Will they be represented with the awards program?

The FXCO Volunteer and Volunteer Program categories will still be represented at the 2021 VSAs; however, the awardees will be chosen through a different process. For more information please reach out to [Mayjean Deem](#), Corporate Services and Events Manager.

7. I see that this is a new nomination form. What are some of its features?

The VSA leadership team listened to your feedback and are happy to announce that we are using a new submission form through Cognito Forms. With this new form, you can:

- **See the various fields split into separate pages which you can toggle between to double check your information before submitting:**

2021 Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards Nomination Form

Established in 1993, the Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards serve as a community-wide celebration of volunteerism. The Awards honor individuals, groups and organizations that have given outstanding volunteer service. The good deeds of dedicated volunteers often go unnoticed; therefore we need your help to honor, celebrate, and thank our community superstars for their commitment and energy. This form will take some time to fill out. If you need to gather other data, please do so and begin after perusing requirements. You will be able to save and return. We want to do our best to honor all nominees equally for the great work they do, so complete information is necessary.

① Guidelines and Categories ② Nominator Info ③ Nominee Info ④ **Nomination Type and Submission**

This page is to select the award you believe the nominee qualifies for and ought to receive, based on their acts of service in our community.

- **Save and come back to your nomination at any time. At the bottom of each page you will find a “Save” button:**

meant to honor all of the helpers during this crisis.

I have read the Guidelines and Categories and am ready to move forward.

For your reference, the Guidelines and Categories can be found [here](#).

Next- Nominator Info

Save

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When you click this button, a new dialog box will appear giving you a unique link or you can ask to receive the link in an email to finish your nomination at a later date:

RSVP program is a partnership between Volunteer Fairfax, Volunteer Alexandria, and Volunteer Arlington, nominees living and volunteering outside Fairfax County will be accepted for this award.

9. Lifetime Achievement
Honors an individual who, over the course of at least 15 years, has made significant contributions to Fairfax County through volunteer efforts.

10. #Stronger
Honors volunteer who has demonstrated a unique and exceptional commitment to the community, and whose efforts are meant to honor...

I have read the Guidelines and Categories and am ready to move forward.

For your reference, the Guidelines and Categories can be found [here](#).

Next- Nominator Info

Save

1 / 4

Your progress has been saved.

Copy or email the link below and return to your form to complete your submission.

Copy your form link:

Email me my link:

Send

- **Upload photos in seconds with limited spooling:**

Upload Honoree Image(s) *

Upload or drag files here.

Submit

Save

8. What are the questions asked for the competitive award nominations?

In order to get a complete picture of your volunteer and the impact they have had in the community, we ask all nominators to respond to the following prompts:

- Help us to understand why the nominee deserves this award and how the nominee meets the category's criteria (i.e. how have they been outstanding in their volunteer service or had a significant impact on persons or groups through their volunteerism). Consider how the nominee is an asset to your organization or community, demonstrated initiative or innovation, and/or how the nominee inspires others to engage in volunteerism. (3-5 bullet points)
- Please describe the activities and services provided by the volunteer for the organization in 2020. If nominating a group or corporation: please describe the goal or mission the nominee accomplished for the organization. Please be detailed and consider ways in which the nominee displays special skills/talents or exceeds expectations. (75-100 words) required
- Please summarize the impact or result this individual (or group) has provided to your organization and the positive results of this volunteerism. For example, did the volunteer(s) address a specific need or create a positive change in your organization or the community, increase the number of people served, raised funds or was a catalyst for beneficial change? (75-100 words) required
- Please provide a quote from someone at the organization where the volunteer worked.

9. Is there a cost involved in nominating volunteers?

There is no cost involved in nominating volunteers and the virtual event will be open to nominators, nominees and their families at no cost.

10. I have an outstanding volunteer couple that I would like to nominate. Would couples be considered a group?

No, groups are persons of 3 or more. We have found that couples tend to have unique service experiences and therefore recommend you nominate each of them separately. However, if you really feel that the couple you have in mind should be nominated together, you may also nominate one person as the main volunteer and note in the body of your nomination that this person is part of a couple that should be judged together.

11. I have a corporate volunteer group that did exceptional work supporting our nonprofit in 2020 with food insecurity. Should I nominate them for the competitive Hunger Hero award or in the Corporate Groups category?

While moving towards mission-based award categories, we recognize that it's still useful for the judging panel to be able to compare "apples to apples" in certain cases. It remains a

useful distinction to recognize that a youth or faith-based group is quite unique from a corporate group for example, so we've kept corporate groups as a separate and distinct category. If you have a corporate group whose work you want to recognize, you should nominate them under this specific category.

12. I'm not sure which category best fits my nominee. What should I do?

Please contact [Hollie Gordon](#), Senior Corporate Services and Special Events Coordinator, to discuss which category may be the best fit.