

CHOOSE YOUR TEAM

1) Select a County Coordinator

The County Coordinator serves as the sparkplug for recognition of volunteers in their community. This dedicated individual acts as the liaison between county representatives and Volunteer Tennessee. They are chosen through local governments, volunteer centers, nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, and businesses*. County Coordinators are invited to attend the GVSA for volunteering their time to facilitate the local process.

The County Coordinator's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Organizing and selecting the members of the volunteer recognition team
- Ensuring the call to nominations is an **open, fair and public process**
- Recruiting local sites, including volunteer centers, to distribute nomination forms
- Promoting local and statewide volunteer recognition to the local media
- Developing community partnerships
- Honoring GVSA county honorees locally
- Providing feedback on the local and statewide process
- Adhering to the timeline as outlined in the County Resource Guide
- **Ensuring the names of the official award winners are sent to Volunteer Tennessee by November 14, 2025.**

Although the County Coordinator manages the above tasks, supporting team members can provide much of the assistance needed to accomplish each goal.

The time commitment for the County Coordinator certainly depends on your organization's GVSA plan (campaign type, judges' panel, recognition event, etc.) New Coordinators may want to factor in approximately 5 hours per month for the first year.

*While, ideally, County Coordinators are to be appointed before selecting recognition team members, some circumstances may require counties to select their coordinators after forming teams. An informal vote after teams are formed to select the Coordinator may be more feasible in such a situation.

volunteer

a person who voluntarily offers himself or herself for a service or undertaking; a person who performs a service willingly and without receiving a paycheck **b:** a person whose actions are not founded on any legal obligation so to act.

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2) Develop Your Volunteer Recognition Team

Organizing a dedicated team is critical to the success of your volunteer recognition program. Remember that each team should be representative of your county, incorporating all types of diversity. **Counties are also encouraged to include at least one youth member** to provide an appropriate focus for reaching potential youth honorees.

It is also important to consider others' capabilities when forming a team. Ideally, teams would include members with the following skills/knowledge:

- Communication/writing/creative ability
- Public speaking ability
- Knowledge of the non-profit community
- Access to potential partners/sponsors
- Logistical/organizational skills
- Media/business connections

You know the great leaders in your community, but this list may prove helpful as you start brainstorming team members:

Community Leaders	Members of Local Organizations	Members of Local Government
Faith-based Leaders	4-H	Chamber of Commerce
Emergency/Disaster Response Leaders	Boys & Girls Clubs	Mayor's Office
BIPOC Advocacy Leaders	United Way	County Mayor's Office
Senior Center Leaders	AmeriCorps/Senior Corps	Board of Education
School Administrators	County Extension agents	Economic & Community Development Office
LGBTQ+ Advocacy Leaders	Civics Club	Department of Tourism
Disabilities Program Managers/Advocates	Rotary Club	City Council
Health/Medical Facility Leaders	Lions Clubs	Board of Alderman

After devising your list of possible team members, choose to invite them by e-mail, letter, or phone. Utilize tools provided such as the general letter and fact sheets provided. Then, make it personal, including local volunteerism goals for the county in which you live.

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3) Choose Your Organizational Plan

Before the first meeting with your fully developed team, it is important to consider the scope and process by which you will host your program. Consider the overall makeup of your community and plan for organization in one of the following ways:

Existing volunteer recognition program:

Many communities in Tennessee have already developed local volunteer recognition programs to honor the efforts of those who give back. These may be hosted by different organizations such as volunteer centers or chambers of commerce. Examples of local volunteer recognition programs include the Greeneville/Greene County Volunteer Spirit Awards, Strobel Awards (Nashville), and Volunteer Memphis Awards.

To avoid duplicating others' efforts, conduct research to determine whether such a county-wide program already exists within your area. If you or any of your team members are aware of a local ceremony that you may partner with, you're encouraged to use that avenue. It may also save you time. Joining the efforts of others will prove just as successful rather than attempting to host two similar events. If you partner with an existing volunteer recognition program, you can submit your county's youth and adult volunteer of the year from the local event to the Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards.

Media only campaign:

While the primary goal of any local recognition program is to heavily promote volunteerism within local Tennessee communities, this does not have to be accomplished by hosting an event. The County Coordinator and/or volunteer recognition team can use the media tools found on the [Volunteer Tennessee GVSA](#) webpage to conduct a media only campaign. With this approach, County Coordinators would still need to ensure nomination forms are distributed, media attention is obtained, and nominations are judged.

Small volunteer recognition campaign:

Some counties may choose to commemorate a volunteer recognition on a smaller scale. Once again, a county's resources, population, and overall makeup must be considered before starting to plan a program. Such an event may include hosting a reception at a local restaurant or recognizing the volunteer at a county government meeting.

Large volunteer recognition campaign:

Your county's volunteer recognition program has the potential to impact many lives through the promotion of volunteerism. A campaign on a larger scale will require more team members, partners, time and possibly money, but will have a greater influence on your community.

You might consider hosting various volunteer opportunities and recognizing organizations and individuals over the course of a predetermined week, or you might coordinate an awards ceremony at a large venue to recognize your local volunteer stars. This will require involving the entire community, including local businesses and organizations as planners and sponsors.

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4) Equip Your Team

After selecting your team, it is important to schedule a meeting soon after to introduce program goals and concepts. Remember, the goals of your local volunteer recognition program are as follows:

- To showcase the ways volunteers help strengthen communities
- To boost volunteer participation
- To highlight the importance of community service and how it's an integral part of what it means to be a Tennessean

Provide team members a link to the R. Then establish the goals your team wants to achieve within your local community:

- Does your county need more volunteers for mobile meals? Youth mentors? Park clean-ups? Early childhood education volunteers?
- How can your recognition program help you achieve your goals?

In the first meeting, it is important to gain an idea of the areas that will be covered by team members. Consider the following areas to be covered:

- Selection of volunteer honorees
- Public Relations and Publicity
- Event Planning
- Funding/Partners

Finally, work with your team to develop a schedule for the rest of your meetings. While it may not be necessary to determine exactly what kind of volunteer recognition you will host at the beginning of your planning, develop a general idea so you may plan accordingly. For a larger recognition event, meetings may need to be held more frequently. Remember, **plan early**. This will assure that you meet all your goals.

