

# DECIDE WHAT TO & HOW CELEBRATE

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## 1. Confirm Your Guidelines and Criteria

It is important to be ready to communicate instructions and eligibility criteria to potential nominators. At a minimum, you will need to include the GVSA eligibility requirements from the [2024 County Resource Guide](#).

What makes an outstanding volunteer? Listed below are the four Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards criteria to be used for judging volunteer award nominees.

<b>Need</b>	Service addresses a specific, compelling need in the community
<b>Action</b>	Nominee was actively involved and took initiative
<b>Innovation</b>	Nominee used unique or creative methods to confront community challenges
<b>Impact</b>	Active or service produced positive change and sets a guiding example for others

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Any individual whose volunteer activities in Tennessee benefit the community or the State of Tennessee in a substantial, important, or unique way. If a nominee is age 25 or under, please select Youth as the category on the nomination form.
- Individuals **MUST** reside in the county for which they are being honored.
- Students receiving course credits are eligible only if the volunteer service extends beyond course requirements. This must be clearly indicated in the nomination letter.
- National Service program participants (AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, RSVP, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, etc.) are encouraged to apply based on their volunteer involvement in their national service assignment.

### Who is NOT Eligible:

- Individuals who do NOT reside in the county for which they are being honored.
- Individuals involved in court-mandated community service or those serving as "loaned executives."
- Persons who receive compensation for service rendered (except National Service participants noted above).
- Individuals who have previously received a Governor's Volunteer Stars Award.
- Groups or families. Each individual will need to be submitted as separate nominations.

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Other information to confirm:

- Nomination Process and Deadline
- Special Instructions for the Narrative
- Submission Methods
- Information Release
- Scoring Rubric
- Winner Notification
- Local and State Recognition Information

This information is recommended to be shared in the nomination packet. **A sample nomination form is provided on the [Volunteer Tennessee GVSA webpage](#).** Each county can make adaptations based on its own goals, but please include the above criteria and eligibility requirements at a minimum.

## 2. Decide How You Will Celebrate

**The goal is to celebrate in a way that works for your county.** If your county is famous for something, consider incorporating it into your recognition program. Counties are strongly encouraged to schedule their local recognition events to take place before the GVSA award ceremony **but no later than January** please.

**Here are some volunteer recognition event ideas:**

- Host a Volunteer Recognition banquet at a local restaurant/ballroom.
- Plan a themed party/luncheon/reception.
- Plan a community-wide volunteer activity.
- Collaborate with an existing community event host to recognize volunteers.
- Organize a parade of volunteers. Invite local nonprofits and community volunteers to march.
- Designate “Volunteer Day” at a local sporting event.
- Create a Volunteer Recognition park or exhibit at a park/zoo.
- Plant trees annually for each Volunteer Recognition award recipient.
- Establish a “Volunteer Wall of Fame” in the local library, Chamber of Commerce, or courthouse. Invite local media, nonprofits and volunteer award nominees.
- Host a concert featuring local artists (bluegrass band, rock band, local choir, et
- Acknowledge volunteers at a local government meeting
- Pursue a news feature about your local volunteers

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