



## COLORADO FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

Denver Federal Center | Bldg 810 | Room 5014  
PO Box 25567 | Lakewood CO 80225-0567  
303 202 4588  
[www.colorado.feb.gov](http://www.colorado.feb.gov)

## TIPS FOR WRITING QUALITY AWARD NOMINATIONS

The key to a well-written nomination is providing evaluators with specific information illustrating how the individual's or group's achievements have made a positive impact on your agency or organization. The number of examples is not as important as ensuring that the nominee's (or nominees') contributions match the specific award criteria, and that there are measurable results.

The selection committee relies on your words and examples to "see" your nominee's attributes and contributions. They may not know anything about your nominee's job, so detailed information is essential.

### WHO SHOULD YOU NOMINATE?

Before you can write your nomination you must first, carefully review the award nomination criteria to determine the most appropriate person or team you would like to honor. Ensure the individual or team meets the nomination criteria before you begin.

### KEEP IT BRIEF

Write short sentences that are concise and give specific detail. Avoid giving work history or job descriptions, unless it directly relates to the award criteria. The goal is quality, not quantity.

### ANSWER THE "WHAT" & "HOW"

*WHAT did the nominee(s) do?*

- ◆ Projects and/or activities above and beyond job descriptions
- ◆ Any challenges or issues encountered and overcome
- ◆ Give specific examples

*HOW did the nominee(s) do it?*

- ◆ Initiative and/or leadership
- ◆ Teamwork
- ◆ Creativity and/or innovation
- ◆ Behaviors and/or attitudes

*WHAT were the results and/or impacts?*

- ◆ What did the nominee(s) accomplish?
- ◆ Are there specific benefits derived from those efforts?

### MAKE EVERY SENTENCE/BULLET POINT COUNT!

Successful nominations have enough details to make the case for the nominee's achievement.



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### **SHOW THE “ABOVE AND BEYOND”**

It’s one thing to report what a person did, but the selection committee would like to know if those accomplishments were the normal part of the person’s job or something more.

- ◆ Are these numbers up from last year, or from the previous person who did this job?
- ◆ Was this an extra task, voluntarily taken on?
- ◆ What is different from before?
- ◆ What is “extra” and by how much?

### **BE CLEAR AND SPECIFIC**

Don’t assume that selection committee members will understand the specific nature of a project or achievement without full explanations. Be specific about what the nominee(s) did and how that helps fulfill your organization’s mission.

### **SAY IT LIKE IT IS**

Don’t worry about using “fancy” speech. Use bulleted lists. Be sure to explain the technical details in such a way that non-experts will understand, and spell out/define acronyms.

### **USE CONCRETE EXAMPLES**

Anecdotes, quotations from colleagues or patrons, specific numbers or statistics, etc. help strengthen your nomination. Describe the amount of time and resources spent on the project. If the project the nominee(s) is/are working on is still being developed or has not produced results, consider identifying major milestones completed. If this progress is not of substantial impact, consider waiting to submit the nomination until after the results/impact can be documented and supported.

### **COMMUNICATE SINCERITY & PERSONAL COMMITMENT**

Show that you personally value the contributions of your nominee(s). Write your nomination from the heart, but provide as much specific information as you can.

### **GATHER INPUT FROM OTHERS**

Gather input from colleagues on your nominee’s achievements before you write the nomination. Have colleagues review the nomination for thoroughness and accuracy prior to submitting it.

### **PROOFREAD!**

- ◆ Grammatical errorz, typos, and misspellllled words detract from the qualityof the the nomination. oops!
- ◆ Verify the accuracy of all information in the nomination. Have someone review your nomination before you submit it online, they may find errors or give feedback on how to make it better.

### **AVOID GENERALITIES**

- ◆ He’s a hard worker
- ◆ She goes above and beyond her job duties



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### SAMPLE ANSWERS TO NOMINATION QUESTIONS

***List nominee's specific achievements that resulted in significant positive outcomes for the agency.***

#### **WEAK**

- ◆ Kate always celebrates diversity
- ◆ Kate's achievements have resulted in providing for an open and welcoming atmosphere
- ◆ Kate fosters numerous interns, encouraging talented young people to serve in government. By allowing students involvement and access during their internships, they gain exposure to new opportunities resulting in several students going on to Federal careers or networked into jobs with key partners.

#### **STRONGER**

- ◆ Kate organized the agency's first multicultural training for 500 employees, which led to the recruitment of culturally diverse teams from our agency for five high profile EEO projects within the Dept. of Interior.
- ◆ Kate developed a buddy program for new employees that resulted in a 30% rise in employee satisfaction according to our annual employee satisfaction survey. The agency has asked Kate to develop a formal mentoring program based on the success of her buddy model.
- ◆ Above and beyond her assigned duties, Kate reaches out to schools to find potential interns for our agency. She brings on and mentors five interns annually, providing project support for her colleagues within our agency and networking opportunities with other federal agencies and key partners. Last year, two of the interns entered federal service.

***Describe the scope and impact of the nominee's contribution (quantify where possible).***

#### **WEAK**

- ◆ Kate is reliable, diligent, ready to learn, and has a willingness to help her co-workers
- ◆ Kate made a herculean effort to lead the division from non-compliant to compliant
- ◆ Kate coordinated oversight for multiple programs

#### **STRONGER**

- ◆ Kate performed thirteen compliance reviews, which involved analyzing thousands of pages of information and documentation provided by the companies under review. She contributed to six additional audits which covered copper, gold, silver, salt, potassium,



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coal, and molybdenum minerals from Indian and Federal leases. These audits required an extensive learning curve to verify that the company's paid royalties correctly on the minerals removed from the leased lands.

- ◆ We relied upon Kate's institutional knowledge through the many changes of leadership. First, Kate's Associate Director retired; Second, an Assistant Director position was created, then that person resigned; Third, her entire area was merged with another unit, followed by the resignation of her immediate supervisor. In spite of these challenges, Kate developed policies, procedures and 15 different training manuals that led her division from 0% to 100% compliant with agency financial reporting requirements, which avoided over \$100,000 in potential regulatory fines.
- ◆ Kate led 180 personnel that provided oversight for fourteen IT programs from three major contractors at four sites resulting in delivering new IT capabilities valued at over \$10m annually

### ***What leadership qualities does the individual or team possess that inspires others within your agency?***

#### **WEAK**

- ◆ A true team player - she always comes to work with a smile on her face
- ◆ Involved | Selfless | Unsurpassed energy and drive | Loyalty & dedication to improve well above reproach
- ◆ The scope and impact of Kate's leadership capabilities cannot be overstated

#### **STRONGER**

- ◆ Strategic Thinking, Initiative, Innovation: Kate realized some of our monthly reports were being prepared manually. She took it upon herself to automate the process and train our team on Microsoft Access with specific emphasis on how to apply the tools and techniques to our needs.
- ◆ Team Building, Developing Others, Entrepreneurship: In the last year, Kate published 3 research papers, presented 3 invited talks, contributed papers to 5 technical conferences, submitted 2 patent applications, hosted a visiting scientist from China, and mentored 2 postdoctoral scientists, an undergraduate student for the summer, two high-school summer interns, and one junior scientist (who recently completed her Bachelor's Degree).
- ◆ Communication, Collaboration: Kate pulled together an intergovernmental team of 27 experts from cities, counties, the State of Colorado, and eight federal agencies to address the transportation and environmental concerns of citizens and communities along the I70 corridor. Kate led 50 town hall meetings in six months, resulting in improved relations and support for the \$245B monorail from DIA to Grand Junction.