

Tips for Completing a Successful Nomination

Background Information

The selection of the New Mexico Nursing Excellence Awards honorees is accomplished through a blind review of nominations, each rated by 3 or more reviewers. All identifying information is removed from the nomination form and then each criterion is rated. An average score is reached for each nominee. The top scoring nominee is selected as the award recipient in that category. In the event of a tie, an additional reviewer scores the nomination and it may then go to the NMCNE Executive Committee for final selection.

Because the reviewers are making all their decisions based on the information provided, it is imperative that the information about the nominee be very specific as to how the nominee meets the criteria. Nominations that most clearly describe the achievements of the nominee will stand out.

Do your homework and review the specific criteria for the category

Start early, think about your nomination. Make notes. Get a clear picture of why this nurse is simply the best. Follow a simple progression of what the nurse did, how the nurse did it and the impact of that action. Divide achievements in your summary into the 4-5 major points listed under the category. Address each of these points, noting the weight given to each criterion. The better written the nomination essay, the better chances it has in scoring well.

Talk to the nominee !!

Don't keep your nomination a secret! It is a great morale boost to know that someone is nominating you, and your nominee can help with information. You'll learn things you didn't know before! Also discuss your nomination with others who work with her/him. Get facts, thoughts and anecdotes. Transform the information into stories and outcomes; then describe them.

Highlight Your Setting

The Awards recognize excellence in clinical practice, leadership, and commitment to the profession in settings across the continuum of care, both urban and rural. The nominee should exemplify behaviors above the job description and usual expectations for nurses in similar positions. The Awards recognize contributions of both formal leaders and staff nurses (informal leaders) who positively impact the outcomes of care and make a difference.

Grab the reviewer's attention

In the first paragraph, introduce your nominee with conviction about why she/he deserves to win. Remember "who, what, where, when, why and how". Use measurable outcomes to describe behaviors.

- **Example (measurable outcome):** *This employee revised the procedure for administering medications to reduce medication error rates on the unit. She developed the new procedure, and assisted with implementation. As a result, the medication error rates on the unit have decreased by 30%!*
- **Example (non-measurable outcome):** *This employee is very conscientious in delivering patient care. She always does a good job and other staff members admire her for her commitment.*

While the second example may be flattering to the nurse, it does not give the reviewer any evidence to compare to others who are also conscientious and committed.

Make it personal

Explain the unique attributes of this nominee. Describe their leadership and role modeling skills. Describe the core beliefs, values, skills, qualities, and characteristics which exemplify nursing excellence in this person. Specific examples are a great way to share the nurse's contributions and show how the nurse meets the criteria.

Keep it brief

Reviewers read multiple nominations and look for specific information to help them select their winner. Succinctly support your case with fact and observation. Avoid unnecessary detail - be informative and concise. When you think you have finished the write-up, let it sit for a day or two, then go back and read it. Ask yourself these questions:

- * Does it say what you want it to say? * Do the words used meet the test for directness, emphasis and impact?
- * Were the non-impact words edited? * Were strong action verbs used? * Do the ideas flow smoothly?

REMEMBER:

- Answer all the questions on the form, and fill out the Biography. **Separate resumes will not be accepted.**
- Indicate the nomination category you are selecting. If it is apparent that the nominee is listed in the wrong category, the Committee reserves the right to move them to the appropriate category.
- **Try not to provide identifying information.** This is an anonymous process with all nominations blinded. In the narrative, you might use "she," "he," "this nurse," "nominee," rather than nominee's name. Also, avoid identifying descriptions of facility, if possible.
- Provide a summary of **no more than 2 pages**, double-spaced, using 12-point font. **NOTE: If essay is longer than two pages, only the first 2 pages will be reviewed.**