

CITY OF SANTA ROSA MERIT AWARDS GUIDELINES

Purpose

This document outlines the guidelines related to the City of Santa Rosa Merit Awards.

City Vision

Santa Rosa - Leading the North Bay

City Mission

To provide high-quality public services and cultivate a vibrant, resilient and livable City

The Program and Committee

Since 1978, the Santa Rosa City Council has annually presented Merit Awards to individuals, organizations and businesses who volunteer their time and energies to serve the community and improve the quality of life in Santa Rosa.

The Merit Award Committee (Committee) is composed of members from the Board of Community Services, the Community Advisory Board, and other community members. Insofar as practical and possible, members of the Committee shall be of diverse ethnic backgrounds, city districts, and genders. The Committee is staffed by the Recreation and Park's Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Community Engagement Coordinator from the Economic Development Division. The Committee shall normally consist of 6 to 8 members and a non-voting staff liaison.

Website

<https://srcity.org/1241/City-Merit-Awards>

Committee Member Roles and Responsibilities

Committee Members are expected to participate in all Merit Award Committee meetings, generally once per month and more frequently in the month leading up to the ceremony, including pre-meetings and the final wrap-up meeting. Committee Members assist staff with outreach during the nomination period. Committee Members review all nomination forms and participate in a selection process to determine award recipients. After selecting the award recipients, Committee Members create scripts and collect photos for each awardee. On the day of the ceremony, Committee Members assist staff with set-up and clean-up, welcoming recipients and their guests, and read scripts during the awards presentation.

There is a significant time commitment for two months while evaluating award nominees and preparing for the ceremony and lighter during the rest of the year.

Role and Responsibilities

Committee Chair

Chair is responsible for the following activities:

- Conducting Merit Award committee meetings

- Creating meeting agendas
- Recruiting, welcoming, and training new committee members
- Answering committee member questions
- Opening & closing ceremony remarks
- Filling in, as needed

Committee Secretary

Secretary is responsible for the following activities:

- Taking accurate meeting minutes, including attendance, of each committee meeting.
- Submitting draft of minutes to Committee Chair and City staff for review.
- Proofing, editing and assisting in Committee Members award presentation scripts
- Summarizing each winners' accomplishments into one sentence sound bites
- Composing letters to nominators and nominees

Photographer

City staff, a committee member, or a hired photographer is responsible for the following activities:

- Assisting with the Power Point presentation by collecting and taking photos of winners' volunteer work
- Taking photos during ceremony

City Staff

Staff is responsible for the following activities:

- Monitoring program budget and if needed, finding other sources of funds for the program
- Updating all program materials and website annually, as needed
- Translating all program materials to Spanish, as needed
- Booking Council Chambers for rehearsal and ceremony
- Coordinating with City Council for presentations at ceremony
- Conducting online and in-person outreach for nomination period
- Coordinating and scheduling Merit Awards Committee meetings
- Preparing event media release
- Assisting in the recruitment of new committee members and providing training binders
- Mailing letters and invitations to nominators and nominees
- Booking photographer and interpreter(s) if needed for ceremony
- Ordering awards for each recipient
- Creating script binder and Power Point presentation for ceremony
- Following-up with nominators and nominees, as needed

Marketing & Outreach Coordinator

All media requests should be referred to the Communications & Intergovernmental Relations Marketing & Outreach Coordinator at (707) 543-3276. Committee Members are not authorized to speak on behalf of the City of Santa Rosa regarding City matters unless first approved by the Marketing & Outreach Coordinator.

Member and Committee Chair Selection

Committee members will conduct an annual open call seeking new members. Persons wishing to be considered for the Committee must complete an application (see appendix) and submit it by the posted deadline. All applications will be evaluated by the Committee and applicants will be contacted upon Committee's decision.

Should the Chair position become vacant, Committee Members will nominate and vote on a replacement. Only active members of the Committee are eligible for the Chair position.

Awards Categories

On an annual basis before solicitation, the award categories will be reviewed and revised as needed.

Award categories as of 2020 include:

- Beautifying our community.
- Serving others, particularly young people, seniors, and those in need.
- Strengthening our neighborhoods.
- Expanding and enriching the artistic and historical culture of the City.
- Fostering sustainability and protecting the environment.
- Rising to the challenge: Community Heroes

Selection Process

Nominations

An annual call for nominations will be made throughout the community, utilizing various forms of outreach including City social media sites, media outlets, and the City's website. The nomination period will be open for a three (3) month period. Nomination forms may be submitted online, by mail or in-person.

Criteria

The Merit Award Committee shall meet to consider and discuss all nominations for a given year. The criteria for award are that the individual, organization, or business be a volunteer or have participated in a volunteer activity and that the activity is of benefit to those who live in Santa Rosa. The volunteer activity can be one-time or on-going and without pay or compensation. An employee of a non-profit organization can be considered for an award if the employee's volunteer work is outside the scope of their non-profit job duties.

Volunteer service as a member of a City board/commission alone is ineligible, however City members are eligible to receive an award for other qualifying volunteer work. Volunteering related to political lobbying or political campaign work do not qualify. Current elected officials, candidates, and City staff are not eligible for an award.

Awards will not be given to nominees who are participating in or conducting projects that go against City Council Policy Ordinances. In addition, awards will not be given to nominees who directly violate City, County, State, or National Orders during an emergency/disaster.

A nominee cannot receive an award if they have received a Merit Award within the last ten years however, an individual nominee may **not** be disqualified based solely on volunteer work done for an organization that has received an award in the past ten years.

Nominations should not be evaluated based on nominee's race, color, gender, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

The above criteria will not cover all circumstances. If a question exists regarding acceptance of a nomination, the committee should discuss. A good guideline would be to ask how the volunteer work addresses a social problem within the City of Santa Rosa.

Voting

Winners will be selected through the Dot-Voting process. Non-eligible nominations will be removed, and members will review, consider, discuss and place nominations into award categories before voting. Any Committee Member who nominated a candidate shall abstain from voting for a winner in that award category.

Members are given different colored dots signifying their vote, e.g. green for "Yes", yellow for "Maybe", and red for "No". Members place one colored dot next to each nomination quietly with conversation resuming only after all members have completed the process. City employees are to abstain from participating in the voting process.

There is no limit to the number of Merit Awards presented although no more than 12 total or 2 per category is recommended. Each award category may be presented with one or more winners if each is determined by the Committee to meet the criteria. All award categories are discretionary, and it is not mandatory that any of the categories be presented in any given year.

Presentation of Award

Awards are given on an annual basis, generally in the fall of each year. Presentation of the awards will take place with members of the Council present and in the City Council Chambers. Award recipients may choose to send someone to the ceremony on their behalf if they cannot attend.

The award should consist of a plaque engraved with the City of Santa Rosa logo, Merit Award, recipient's name, the category of achievement, and the year.

Resignation, Termination and Absences

Resignation from the Committee must be in writing and submitted to the Recreation and Parks Department's Volunteer Coordinator. A member may be terminated for excessive absence of two or meetings within a year.

Updated and Approved

April 2020