



## AASLH Leadership in History Awards Manual

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Who is eligible for nomination?**

AASLH encourages organizations and individuals to nominate others or self-apply for the national Leadership in History Awards. A nominee does not have to be an AASLH member to apply and self-nominations are encouraged (except for the individual lifetime achievement category of the Award of Excellence).

### **What awards are available for nomination?**

The **Award of Distinction** is given infrequently and only in recognition of long and very distinguished individual service. Recipients are noted for their contributions to the field of state and local history and are recognized nationally as leaders in the profession. To nominate an individual for this award, please submit a Preliminary Nomination by February 1.

The **Award of Excellence** is presented to recognize excellence for projects (including civic engagement, special projects, educational programs, exhibits, publications, etc.), and individual lifetime achievement.

AASLH's Awards Committee selects candidates from the Award of Excellence nominations for these additional special recognitions. You do not apply for them directly.

The **Albert B. Corey Award** recognizes primarily volunteer-operated historical organizations that best display the qualities of vigor, scholarship, and imagination in their work. Regional chairs may recommend any primarily volunteer organization that is nominated for the Award of Excellence. This is an award made at the discretion of the Awards Committee.

The **History in Progress (HIP) Award** is a special additional award for an Award of Excellence winner whose nomination is highly inspirational, exhibits exceptional scholarship, and/or is exceedingly entrepreneurial in terms of funding, partnerships, or collaborations, creative problem solving, or unusual project design and inclusiveness. This is an award made at the discretion of the Awards Committee.



### **How do I submit my nomination?**

- Contact your state team leader prior to submitting your nomination. They can answer questions, provide tips, and help you craft a stronger nomination.
- Complete and submit nomination form via the AASLH website. Most award categories are due **March 1**, but Award of Distinction preliminary nominations and publications nominations are due **February 1**.
- For publications, copies of your publication should be sent to the AASLH office. Media mail is the most economical shipping method. You can estimate your postage at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).

### **What happens after I submit a nomination?**

The nomination form instructs you to submit your completed nomination for an Award of Excellence online. But what happens to your nominations after that? After state team captains review submissions, working with you to make certain that each nomination is complete, they send the nomination along with their comments to their respective regional representatives. These fourteen regional representatives, along with the National Awards Chair, form the Awards Committee.

In the spring, the entire committee meets at AASLH headquarters in Nashville to choose that year's award winners. Every nomination, out of a total of well over 100, is reviewed by each committee member and then voted on individually by the full committee. Nominees will be notified of the committee's decision by July 15. From those nominations selected to receive an Award of Excellence, the Awards Committee also may choose to grant additional recognition through the Albert B. Corey award, and the History in Progress (HIP) award.

Please be aware that once submitted, your nomination materials becomes the property of AASLH, may be used to promote the awards program, and will not be returned.

### **How are the winners honored?**

Successful nominees will be announced, celebrated and presented with their award at the AASLH Annual Meeting.



## Criteria for Evaluation

### General Criteria Evaluating Nominees for all Award Categories

To make effective and consistent evaluations, the following general criteria will apply in evaluating nominations for all award categories:

- Nominations are encouraged for exceptional and meritorious work by organizations or individuals. The mere fulfillment of routine functions does not justify an award. **Action over and above the ordinary call of duty** is a prerequisite for a Leadership in History Award.
- Special consideration is given to new and promising, or well-executed ideas, approaches, and innovations that will serve as a model for the field.
- Awards are primarily conferred on special accomplishments occurring **within the eighteen months prior** to the March 1 deadline. On occasion, awards may be given to notable programs extending beyond the immediate period under consideration (for example, nominees whose overall excellent work has occurred over many years). Exceptions are made for Public Programming and Studies nominations.
- Is it good history? The field known as state and local history plays a major role in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of the past and present throughout the United States. Each award nomination is to be evaluated in terms of the nominee's contribution to the advancement of state and/or local history. The importance of that contribution – judged in the light of other standards contained in the guidelines – is a critical factor in making the decisions required in the awards process. Nominations should answer the question, "Is it Good History?"

### Definition of Good History

- Embraces difficult topics by reflecting current scholarship, grounding the work in primary source research, and providing a genuine contribution to the understanding of history.



- Acts to build diversity and inclusiveness through interpretation that considers race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and geography, and is provocative through presenting contested history and multiple perspectives.
- Cultivates an experimental and creative spirit as a source for imaginative problem solving, exploring new approaches, and resourcefulness, while also looking to others for inspiration. Projects that extend the mission of an organization, demonstrate risk-taking, and offer activities outside conventional boundaries will merit greatest consideration.
- Demonstrates the relevance of history and showcases how the public can make use of the past in discussions of the present and the future.
- Attempts to be accessible to wide audiences with differing learning styles, abilities, and interest in history.

#### **Additional General Criteria**

- **Evaluation on the basis of the nominee's own resources** - Each nomination is evaluated in terms of the resources that the nominee has at its command. Those resources may include funds, collections, the talents of individuals, or the professional training and experience of an organization's staff. The essential standard is not how do those resources compare with other nominees or possible nominees, but rather what has been done with these resources. Organizations/individuals with access to greater/better resources will be held to higher standards than those organizations that are all-volunteer or have limited resources.
- **The quality of the achievement for which the nomination is made** - Consideration is given to both what a nominee has accomplished and to how well the job has been done. Awards shall be made only for genuine, proven accomplishments in the field of state and local history. Project should reflect professional growth of an organization or individual, adhere to museum standards and best practices, calculated risk-taking, and enhance the organization's mission.
- **Accomplishments vs. plans** - Awards are given for demonstrated accomplishment, ideas, concepts, and plans are generally not eligible for awards. Furthermore, programs that have just started are not eligible for awards; organizations less than three years old simply have not yet proved an established commitment to state and local history. The Awards Committee must have evidence of demonstrated accomplishments.



- **Nominations judged in the light of prevailing thought** - Nominations are judged in terms of the theories, practices, and procedures generally accepted in the field of state and local history at the time of such nominations. Projects will be evaluated on the basis
- of relevancy, significance to the field, overall quality, and their unique or innovative character.
- **The standards of particular disciplines** - The professional and ethical practices and evaluative criteria of particular disciplines (historic preservation, exhibition production, oral history, etc.) within the field of state and local history is used in making the decisions required in the awards process. Project should improve the organization's ability to serve the public, reach new audiences, enhance current programs, and are part of a permanent commitment to improvement.
- **Financial contributions** - Awards are not given to nominees whose contributions to the field of state and local history are solely or primarily financial in nature.



## **How to Apply for Each Category**

All types of Award of Excellence nominations (including publications and individual lifetime achievement), have similar requirements except for section 5, which will differ according to the category you choose for your nomination. The Award of Distinction has different requirements.

### **Award of Distinction Requirements**

The first step of the nomination process is submitting a Preliminary Nomination form by **February 1**, which is received and discussed by a review committee before going forward with the process. The form asks for two co-nominators to endorse the awards candidate, write a nomination statement about the nominee's accomplishments, and include the resume/C.V. The committee will be in touch with next steps and further instructions, which will include gathering letters of recommendation for the nominee. Please note this is a confidential process and it is recommended that the nominee not be told about the nomination until it has been accepted.

### **Award of Excellence Requirements**

#### **Section 1 – Nomination Narrative**

- Please introduce the project, organization, or individual and describe their achievements and impact on the community served. For nominated projects and organizations, also state goals and objectives and how they were met, as well as identify intended audiences and how they were reached. (350 words)
- For nominated projects and organizations, state how the project or organizational achievement has supported the mission of your institution. Include your institution's mission statement. (100 words)
- Highlight how the project exemplifies Good History. (300 words) Read the committee's [Statement on Good History](#).
- Describe how you assessed and evaluated success for this project and how you measured impact for this project. (250 words)

**Section 2 – Two Letters of Critical Review with CV/Resumes of the reviewers.** This critical testimony, from at least two disinterested professionals not involved with the project or



nominee, is required. One of the critical reviews should **address the scholarship involved** with the nomination. The other critical review should **address the outcome and effect** of the project on the organization or the community or constituency(ies) served. Reviews published in scholarly journals may be substituted for one letter of critical review. Local news coverage,

letters of support, press releases, etc., **do not** qualify as critical testimony. Qualifications of individuals providing critical testimony either are clearly stated in the testimony itself or in an attached CV/resume. [Read our instructions for reviewers.](#)

**Section 3** – One page budget for the project showing all revenues and expenses. If you have questions about providing this information, please contact your state team captain.

**Section 4** – Resumes of project’s key personnel.

**Section 5** – Documentation as requested for specific nomination categories

**Section 6** – This section is for additional, non-required materials that you feel will enhance your nomination. Examples of appropriate materials include additional letters of support, publicity and promotional materials, evaluations (if not required), information, newspaper articles, etc. Page limit: 5 pages of additional material.

## **Items for Section 5 – Additional material for each category**

### **Civic Engagement**

This category is designed to encourage contemporary history projects that actively involve community engagement and civil dialogue. Examples might include exhibitions or public programs that examine aspects of very recent topics such as the Boston Bombing, Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, the Zimmerman trial, or Hurricane Sandy; dialogue from both sides of contemporary issues, such as environment vs. industry or political debates; or explorations of different segments of a community, such as religion, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Please note: you can choose to submit under this category or under the Public Program or Exhibit categories, but you should follow the guidelines for the appropriate categories.

- Photographs: 10 – 12 showing elements of program and participants (at least 800 px along longest dimension)
- Sample label copy





- Program handouts as applicable to project
- Marketing materials

### **Exhibits**

In your nomination narrative, please include:

- Exhibit opening and closing dates
  - Importance of exhibition to the institution and mission
  - Target audience and attendance projections, and whether these have been met
  - Accessibility and sustainability of the exhibition-how did you make it accessible to all types of audience and how will you sustain the exhibition over the time it is on view (if applicable)
  - Evaluation information (audience surveys, letters from visitors, social media comments, etc.) and how you have/will use the information gathered
- Photographs: 10 – 12 showing elements of program and participants (at least 800 px along longest dimension)
  - Sample label copy, including examples of formatted labels (All introductory, theme, or section panels and 5-10 artifact labels)
  - Full exhibit floor plan, including square footage. DIY floor plans are fine.
  - Representative list of artifacts
  - List of resources consulted
  - Highlight any innovative interpretive techniques or devices and complementary components such as web presence or programming if applicable

### **Multimedia**



- Copy of the DVD, CD, other product, or website address  
(Scripted video/audio must offer Closed Captions or an accompanying transcript)
- Copy of the complete script
- Bibliography or statement of works consulted
  
- Evaluation information (audience surveys, letters from visitors, social media comments, etc.) and how you have/will use the information gathered

**Public Programming** (Education programs, festivals, workshops, performances, etc.)

- Copy of marketing/handout materials
- Photographs: 10 – 12 showing elements of program and participants (at least 800 px along longest dimension)
- Videos and/or scripts. Scripted video/audio must offer Closed Captions or an accompanying transcript.
- Evaluation information (audience surveys, letters from visitors, social media comments, etc.) and how you have/will use the information gathered

**Special Projects**

This category is for projects that have multiple aspects and should be used if the nominee wants all aspects of a larger project reviewed as a whole. As examples: an exhibition with related educational and public programming and website, or a walking tour that has curriculum materials and related articles in the local paper. Alternatively, a nomination may be submitted for only one component of a larger project, such as a specific exhibit or program. In that case the nomination should be submitted in the specific category that matches the format, such as exhibits.

- Copy of marketing/handout materials
- Photographs: 10 – 12 showing elements of program and participants (at least 800 px along longest dimension)
- Videos and/or scripts. Scripted video/audio must offer Closed Captions or an accompanying transcript.



- Evaluation information (audience surveys, letters from visitors, social media comments, etc.) and how you have/will use the information gathered
- If your special project involves the preservation of a historic structure, you must include a letter from the State Historic Preservation Office addressing the project's compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards

**Studies** (Research projects undertaken in the past five years to increase knowledge of a subject for a defined purpose such as preservation or influencing public policy.)

- Documentation of methodology and participation of community
- Copy of marketing/handout materials
- Photographs: 10 – 12 showing elements of activities and participants (at least 800 px along longest dimension)
- Videos and/or scripts. Scripted video/audio must offer Closed Captions or an accompanying transcript.
- Evaluation information that demonstrates impact and results
- Any published materials resulting from study

### **Special Instructions for Individual Lifetime Achievement Nominations**

**Section 1** – Complete nomination form and narrative. Include why the award is appropriate now in the individual's career.

**Section 2** – Critical testimony from at least two professionals not involved with the nomination is required. One of the critical reviews should address the **exceptional leadership or scholarship** demonstrated by the nominee. What did this individual accomplish to benefit state and local history? The other critical review should **address the effect of the nominee's efforts** on the organization or the community or constituency(ies) served. How did this individual make a difference? Qualifications of individuals providing critical testimony either are clearly stated in the testimony itself or in an attached CV/resume.

**Section 3** – A one-page description of the individual's work indicating how his/her community has been improved by the nominee's efforts.



**Section 4** – Samples of the individual’s work or works

**Section 5** – Individual’s resume or CV

**Section 6** – Up to 5 pages of optional materials may include additional letters of critical testimony or support, published articles concerning the individual, additional examples of the individual’s works, etc.

### **Additional Criteria for Individual Lifetime Achievement Nominations**

- Evaluations are for individuals, both career professionals (including retired), and volunteers, who have demonstrated exemplary contributions to or exceptional accomplishments for state and local history.
- The individual's undertakings should advance his/her history organization and the field of history up and above the duties required for their regular job.
- An individual may be recognized for leadership, scholarship, or lifetime contributions.
- The individual does not need to be active on the national level.
- An individual may not receive the Award of Excellence more than once in five years.
- Individuals cannot self-nominate.

### **Special Instructions for Publications**

Please review our Publications Award Manual, available on the AASLH website.