



How to Write a Winning Award Nomination

Each year, TAM members submit many remarkable award-winning nominations, highlighting the hard work Tennessee museums and their staff do every year. The nominations annually awe and amaze the awards committee with their reach, creativity, impact and effort. Committee members are dedicated to ensure fair and unbiased judging of all Award of Excellence nominees that get submitted each year. In order to do so, certain criteria are required of nominees to help with that process. Here are some hints to help you with that procedure:

- Don't omit filling out a section of the form – the form has each section for a reason. Some of the routinely missed or misunderstood sections, and how they impact judging are:
 - Your organization's mission statement and how the nomination fits with your mission – if it doesn't fit with your mission, why was it done? If the committee doesn't see the fit, they will grade lower
 - Program attendance and impact - let us know how popular your program or exhibit was. Impact counts for 30% of the judging!
 - Budget – especially for smaller museums, this line is important
 - Staff size and time
 - If a sections doesn't apply, simply write N/A
 - **"Traveling Exhibits"** are exhibits your institution created that travel to other sites.
 - Shows or exhibits you have rented from other sites can be included in "Temporary Exhibits" IF you have **significantly** augmented the show or exhibit with additional research, content, artifacts, etc.; **the nomination for a rented exhibit should emphasize your original contributions to the project.**
- Photographs should ALWAYS be included, and must be large enough and clear enough to be seen. Assume that no one on the committee was in attendance at your event / program / exhibit. We must be able to visualize what you're telling us about in order to properly

understand what is happening. Once we understand and visualize, then we can fairly judge. Also please provide context for the photos. If we don't know what's happening in the photograph, we can't understand what you're trying to convey.

- Read the guideline instructions carefully. Make note of the fact that almost every nomination should have started / happened in the nomination year. Exhibits can continue into the following year, but need to have originated in the year for which the awards are being given. Many disqualifications have occurred because this was not followed. For example, if an exhibit opened the previous year and has run the entire nomination year, it is NOT eligible for nomination. If it opened in the nomination year and is running into the upcoming year, it IS eligible, even if it has not ended. Note the current year-to-date impact on the nomination form.
- Only one nomination per institution is allowed in each sub-category. Disqualifications happen frequently due to multiple nominations from an institution. For example, an institution CAN submit nominations for a Blockbuster Exhibit and a Temporary Exhibit, but CANNOT submit two Temporary Exhibit nominations. For institutions that have multiple staff or curators, make sure you communicate! This is where the committee has seen duplicate nominations, from separate curators at the same institution.
- Choose your category carefully! The committee has the discretion to move nominations to different categories, or to disqualify them based on the wrong category.
- Nominations in the Publications category (books, catalogues, gallery guides, flat paper) and the Special / Novelty category should always have a hard copy or item available for the committee to physically see

The biggest thing to know is, if you have **ANY** questions at all about any aspect of the awards, please don't hesitate to contact a committee member. We are here to answer questions and help you draft your nominations so you will be able to receive the recognition you so deserve.

