**The Asian Pacific American Officers Committee Frequently Asked Questions**

* **PHS Honor Award Nomination**
1. **What is the general process of submitting a PHS Honor Award nomination through the Asian Pacific American Officers Committee (APAOC)?**

The APAOC Awards and Recognition Subcommittee accepts nomination packages submitted by nominators, conducts an initial screening to ensure all required documentation is included, and forwards the complete nomination package to the APAOC Chair for review. Nominations endorsed by the APAOC Chair are submitted quarterly to the Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC) for review and endorsement before final submission by MOLC to the Office of the Surgeon General Awards Board (OSGAB). All endorsements by APAOC should be completed within 60 days of the nomination date and forwarded to MOLC. As of 2021, MOLC requires the four Chartered Minority Advisory Groups (CMAGs) including APAOC to submit endorsed nomination packages quarterly with due dates on the 15th of February, May, August, and November.

1. **What type of accomplishments can be nominated for a PHS Honor Award through APAOC?**

Accomplishments considered for nomination must include and clearly identify official APAOC activities. The nomination narrative must clearly demonstrate accomplishments and impact above and beyond the routine duties of APAOC members in a Subcommittee/working group/initiative, of which, Special Assignment Award and Letter/Certificate of Appreciation are appropriate recognitions. For unit awards, the nominator needs to establish a clear criterion (e.g., time commitment) for officers to be included in the nomination package.

1. **When can a nomination package be submitted to the APAOC Awards and Recognition Subcommittee?**

The APAOC Awards and Recognition Subcommittee is open to receiving nomination packages throughout the year, and nomination packages are submitted to MOLC in adherence to the processing timeline specified above. Please note, nominations must be initiated within 13 months of the noteworthy act or specific period of service deserving recognition.

1. **Is there an official guidance of Award submission?**

Yes. Please read PERSONNEL OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM (POM) on [Awards Processing](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/POM08_003.pdf). Notable change starting in 2020:

*The narrative may not exceed one single spaced typed page with 1” margins. Times New Roman 12 point type font is preferred, but a comparable font that provides no less than 12 point and no more than 12 characters per inch can be used. Use of double space between paragraphs and use of bullets is suggested when they can provide clarity.*

Also, please read the attached “Awards Submission Guidance for SG Appointed Groups & Other PHS Activities” and use the attached template to develop award nomination narratives.



1. **What should a nomination package include?**

For an Individual Honor Award, a nomination package should include:

1. Form [PHS 6342-2](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/PHS-6342-2.pdf)
2. Narrative

For a Unit Honor Award, a nomination package should include:

1. Form [PHS 6342-1](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/PHS-6342-1.pdf)
2. Narrative
3. A spreadsheet listing all the nominees (use the attached template, list nominees by Rank, list civilian nominees toward the end, and put “CIV” in the rank column for civilian nominees)



1. **What are the responsibilities of nominators/nominees?**

Only nominators can submit nomination packages to the Awards and Recognition Subcommittee. The nominator cannot be a member of the Unit Award nominees. Both nominators and nominees are responsible for developing strong nomination packages that clearly identify and document noteworthy acts. Please review and adhere to the narrative template, and clearly demonstrate the nominees’ accomplishments and impact above and beyond routine duties performed during APAOC activities.

Nominators and nominees should ensure: 1) the timeframe of the noteworthy accomplishment in Form PHS 6342 matches the dates outlined in the narrative; 2) the citations on the Form PHS 6342 is consistent with the narrative; and 3) all nominees meet the readiness requirements specified in COMMISSIONED CORPS INSTRUCTION: [Awards Program](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CCI_511.01.pdf) (section 6-9 d).

1. **Are there any tips for narrative writing?**

Nominees are highly recommended to work diligently with nominators to identify noteworthy acts and appropriate award levels, and to develop strong narratives for deserving recognition. It is also highly recommended to seek guidance from mentors (APAOC, Agency, or Category), in order to submit a concise and succinct narrative. Before final submission, please ensure that the language is consistent in Form PHS-6342 and the narrative, especially on timeframe and citation.

For narrative writing, please follow the advice listed in POM [Awards Processing](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/POM08_003.pdf):

*The narrative should clearly describe the impact and/or achievement of the officer(s), emphasize leadership/initiative, and provide a clear indication of how the officer’(s) act(s) exceeded expectations.*

1. **Are there any other resources available for PHS honor award nominations?**

[Nomination Procedures and Forms](https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_nominations_m.aspx)

COMMISSIONED CORPS INSTRUCTION: [Awards Program](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/CCI_511.01.pdf)

POM: [Awards Processing](https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ccis/documents/POM08_003.pdf)

[Commissioned Officers’ Awards Program (COAP) FAQ](https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_frequently_asked_questions_m.aspx)

In addition, the Health and Human Services (HHS) Commissioned Corps Interagency Awards Board (CCIAB) recently shared Public Health Service (PHS) award write up tips for PHS officers.

The following guidelines can improve the quality of your PHS Honor award narrative and can minimize the risk of the award nomination being denied, downgraded, or returned (to be rewritten).

# General Tips

PHS Honor Award nomination tips:

* Ensure the nomination recognizes achievements and acts of service outside your expected scope or responsibility.
* Submit the nomination as a unit award and not multiple individual awards when multiple officers work as a team to achieve an objective.
* Ensure narratives are based on the actual performance period for which the officer is being nominated versus a non-specific date (end of fiscal year).
* Thoroughly review the awards criteria and select the appropriate level for your award nomination.

# Format of the Narrative

* Do not exceed **one** single-spaced typed page for the narrative.
* Use block paragraphs, 1-inch margins, and use double-spacing between sections.
* Use bullets to provide clarity without losing the meaning in any section.
* Use Times New Roman 12-point style font and **do not modify the font—no reductions**. Use a comparable font if Times New Roman font is unavailable.

# Clear and measurable Impacts

* Remain clear and concise when stating how the outcomes and impacts of the specific attributable accomplishments affected the nominated action or project.
* Use facts, data, and dates whenever possible to assist in demonstrating the impact of your nomination.
* Use chronological order to assist in clarity.
* Ask someone for an objective review. It should be someone who is unaffiliated with the nominated project that can review the award narrative.

# Nomination Grammar and Spelling

* Use spell check or a dictionary. **Important:** Spell check only checks for correct spelling, not how you used the word.
* Ask someone to review your narrative for formatting and grammar before submitting.
* Do not use future tense phrases, such as “will accomplish” or “might affect” If you are unable to adequately measure or document outcomes and impact, it is better to delay the nomination until it is ready.