



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM of MARYLAND

2025 – 2026 Board of Regents Staff Awards

EXEMPT NOMINATION GUIDELINES

A Council of University System Staff (CUSS) initiative, the University System of Maryland Board of Regents Staff Awards represent the highest honor for achievements of staff employees from institutions within the system who demonstrate extraordinary achievements in five non-exempt and five exempt categories.

The nominee's achievements should focus on the **impact** they have had on their department, institution, and/or campus community within one of five categories:

- ◇ Exceptional Contribution to the Institution and/or Unit
- ◇ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- ◇ Effectiveness and Efficiency
- ◇ Extraordinary Public Service for the University or Greater Community
- ◇ Outstanding Service to Students

Eligibility:

1. Nominee must be a staff employee of the University System of Maryland community, including all staff employees in Regular and Contingent II status.
2. Nominee must have been employed within the USM for at least five (5) consecutive years, and in an exempt position at the time these awards guidelines are released (approximately July). Award recipients must still be employed in the USM at the time awards are announced (approximately March).
3. Any USM employee or student may nominate an eligible staff employee with their knowledge and consent. Self-nominations are accepted.

Submission and Selection Process:

1. Each USM institution sets a deadline for receipt of preliminary submissions (cover sheet, nomination letter, position description, and two (3) reference letters). Refer to each institution's shared governance body for non-bargaining staff employees for specific guidance, procedures, and deadline(s).
2. Each USM institution selects no more than one applicant in each category and requests support letters from their president. Complete applications (all materials included in one PDF file per applicant) are **due to CUSS by 12pm on Monday,**

November 24, 2025 via email to CUSSBOR@usmd.edu. CUSS will confirm receipt of all applications within three (3) business days.

3. CUSS reviews all applications and submits final recommendations to the Board of Regents. Recipients will be announced in early 2026, with a formal presentation of awards by the Board in the spring. Each awardee will receive a \$2,000 stipend and plaque.
4. Direct any questions to CUSS Awards & Outreach Committee Co-chair Brian Jara via email at CUSSBOR@usmd.edu.

AWARD CATEGORIES & CRITERIA

Exceptional Contribution to the University and/or Unit to which the Person Belongs:

- This award showcases staff who have demonstrated a track record of specific accomplishments over the course of their time working in the USM.
- Recipients of this award excel in multiple areas such as, but not limited to: implementing creative approaches to improving processes and/or contribute to the success of the home unit / institution; staff in non-supervisory roles who provide leadership, team building and/or mentoring; staff in supervisory roles who consistently grow their unit / institution by supporting, mentoring, and advocating on behalf of their direct reports.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging:

- This award highlights a staff member who has put forth effort to cultivate an environment where all employees feel valued, respected, and supported, regardless of their position, status, identities, or other personal attributes.
- Recipients of this award actively promote multicultural understanding, equitable practices, and a sense of belonging emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives in achieving common goals.

Effectiveness and Efficiency:

- This award recognizes exemplary staff with innovative ideas or approaches for leveraging existing resources that, when implemented, serve to further the Efficiency and Effectiveness (E&E) Initiative of the University System of Maryland.

- In 2015, USM launched E&E 2.0, which aims to enhance student success, continue innovation in teaching and learning, reengineer administrative processes, and reduce costs.
- Complete nomination packets in this category must include (somewhere in the application materials): a brief description of the innovation and its potential benefits and magnitude (single institution, multi-institution, system-wide). The recipient may be invited to address the Board of Regents.

Extraordinary Public Service for the University or Greater Community:

- This award celebrates an staff member with a passion for and dedication to a project and/or cause and specific accomplishments that leverage the outreach and service priorities of the institution/system.
- Recipients of this award have, throughout their USM career, sustained a collaborative commitment to improving the greater community. The award recognizes contributions in and through their role in the USM rather than as a private citizen.

Outstanding Service to Students:

- This award recognizes a staff member who has consistently prioritized student success throughout their USM career and has a track record of making a difference and impact in students' lives.
- Recipients of this award have consistently led or contributed to programs and initiatives that have positively impacted and/or transformed the student experience.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For the preliminary submission at the institutional level, the following materials are required:

1. **Cover Sheet:** completed in full and signed by the nominator. Contact information (email and work phone number) is required.
2. **Nomination letter** (1000-word maximum): addressed to the Board of Regents, this must identify the specific award category and document the nominee's exemplary performance in that area. Signature and contact information (email and work phone number) are required.

3. **Position description** (500-word maximum): must include the purpose and specific job duties listed in detail. The position description must be signed by the nominee's direct supervisor.
4. **Three (3) recommendation letters** (500-word maximum each): addressed to the Board of Regents, each letter must identify the specific award category and document the nominee's exemplary performance in relation to the award category. Signature and contact information (email and work phone number) are required.

Each USM institution, through their staff shared governance body, is responsible for:

- Developing their own internal institutional process and deadlines for reviewing preliminary nominations.
- Selecting no more than one applicant in each category as the institutional nominee for submission to CUSS.
- Soliciting the **President's Endorsement** (1000-word maximum) for all institutional nominees.
- Ensuring that all materials listed above are complete and adhere to the guidelines provided in this document.

BOARD OF REGENTS STAFF AWARDS (EXEMPT)

NOMINATION COVER SHEET

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: _____

Email: _____ Office phone: _____

USM Institution: _____ Department / Unit: _____

Position Title: _____

Years in current position: _____ Years at current institution: _____ Years in USM: _____

Award category (select one):

- ☐ Exceptional Contribution to the University and/or Unit
- ☐ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- ☐ Effectiveness and Efficiency
- ☐ Extraordinary Public Service for the University or Greater Community
- ☐ Outstanding Service to Students

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name: _____

Email: _____ Office phone: _____

USM Institution: _____ Department / Unit: _____

Position Title: _____

The nominator should collect the following materials for the preliminary deadline:

- ☐ This cover sheet, completed and signed
- ☐ Nomination letter (see attached form)
- ☐ Position description (see attached form) completed and signed by nominee's direct supervisor
- ☐ Recommendation letter #1 (see attached form), completed and signed
- ☐ Recommendation letter #2 (see attached form), completed and signed
- ☐ Recommendation letter #3 (see attached form), completed and signed

NOMINATION LETTER

Nominator name:

Signature:

Date:

NOMINEE POSITION DESCRIPTION

Supervisor name:

Signature:

Date:

RECOMMENDATION LETTER #1

Recommender name:

Signature:

Date:

RECOMMENDATION LETTER #2

Recommender name:

Signature: Date:

RECOMMENDATION LETTER #2

Recommender name:

Signature: Date: