



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM of MARYLAND

2026 – 2027 Board of Regents Staff Awards

AWARD GUIDELINES (Exempt AND Non-exempt)

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.

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 as of 10/14/2026, and currently classified consistent with the award category (exempt or non-exempt). Award recipients must remain employed in the USM at the time awards are announced (March 2027).
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 deadlines for receipt of preliminary submissions (cover sheet, nomination letter, position description, and two (non-exempt categories) or three (exempt categories) 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 nominee per category and requests a support letter from their campus president. Complete applications are **due by 12pm on Wednesday, October 14, 2026**.
3. **NEW THIS YEAR:** Designated shared governance representative must submit completed applications via an online USM portal (scheduled to open Fall 2026).
4. CUSS reviews all applications and submits final recommendations to the Board of Regents. Recipients will be announced on or around March 2027, with a formal presentation of awards by the Chancellor in the spring. Each awardee will receive a \$2,000 stipend and plaque.

5. Direct any questions to CUSS Awards & Outreach Committee Co-chairs Brian Jara and Catherine Fu via email at CUSSBOR@usmd.edu.

EXEMPT STAFF AWARDS

For exempt awards the nomination packet should focus on the **IMPACT** the staff member has on their department, institution, and/or campus community and their **EXTRAORDINARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS** within one of five categories:

Exceptional Contribution to the University and/or Unit:

- 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 a staff member with a passion for and dedication to a project and/or cause and specific accomplishments that leverage the outreach and community engagement priorities of the institution/system.
- Recipients of this award have, throughout their USM career, sustained a collaborative commitment to engaging with 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 on 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.

NON-EXEMPT STAFF AWARDS

For non-exempt awards the nomination packet should focus on the **IMPACT** the staff member has on their department, institution, and/or campus community within one of five categories:

Making a Difference to the Campus:

- This award showcases staff who have impacted the broader campus community, reaching outside of their department.

- Impact could include contributions such as improving the campus environment, fostering cross sectional collaboration, enhancing campus life, or initiating successful projects that benefit the campus.

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.

Excellence in Performance:

- This award highlights exceptional work specific to their position or department, demonstrated by effectiveness in job performance, resulting in significant contributions to their department's goals.
- Recipients of this award consistently meet/exceed expectations, display a high level of professionalism, and set a benchmark for quality and excellence within their field.

Excellence as a Team Player:

- This award celebrates an individual who consistently demonstrates outstanding collaboration, communication, and support within a team.
- Recipients of this award go above and beyond to foster a positive work environment, contribute to collective goals, and uplift their peers. They strive in showcasing a commitment to the success of the entire team rather than just individual achievements.

Outstanding Role Model:

- This award recognizes individuals who not only embody admirable qualities and behaviors but also actively engage in formal or informal mentoring of others.
- Recipients of this award embody the values and standards of the organization, inspire colleagues through their actions and attitude, and positively influence the workplace culture.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Nominators: The following materials must be submitted to your campus' Board of Regents Staff Awards committee:

1. **Nominee Information:** see form below.
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. Nominator email and phone number are required.
3. **Nominee's Current Position Description Form** (provided by HR)
4. **Two [non-exempt nominations] OR Three [exempt nominations] 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. Recommender email and phone number are required.

Awards Committee: 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 a **President's Endorsement** (1000-word maximum) for each institutional nominee.
- Ensuring that all materials listed above are complete and adhere to the guidelines provided in this document.
- Submit all documents via online USM portal.



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BOARD OF REGENTS STAFF AWARDS

EXEMPT NOMINEE INFORMATION

NOMINEE

Name: _____

Email: _____ Office phone: _____

USM Institution: Bowie State University Department / Unit: _____

Position Title: _____

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

Award category: Exceptional Contribution to University and/or Unit

NOMINATOR

Name: _____

Email: _____ Office phone: _____

USM Institution: Bowie State University Department / Unit: _____

Position Title: _____

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

- This completed cover sheet
- Nomination letter
- Position description (provided by HR)
- Recommendation letter #1, maximum 500 words.
- Recommendation letter #2, maximum 500 words.
- Recommendation letter #3, maximum 500 words.



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BOARD OF REGENTS STAFF AWARDS

NON-EXEMPT NOMINEE INFORMATION

NOMINEE

Name: _____

Email: _____ Office phone: _____

USM Institution: Bowie State University Department / Unit: _____

Position Title: _____

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

Award category (select one): Making a Difference to the Campus

NOMINATOR

Name: _____

Email: _____ Office phone: _____

USM Institution: Bowie State University 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 (provided by HR)
- Recommendation letter #1, maximum 500 words.
- Recommendation letter #2, maximum 500 words.