



How to write a powerful nomination for Orders, Honours and Awards

The Orders, Honours and Awards Programs celebrate Yukoners who have contributed to the development of our territory.

Here are the Orders, Honours and Awards presented at the territorial Level:

- The Order of Yukon
- The Commissioner of Yukon's Award for Bravery
- The Commissioner of Yukon's Award for Public Volunteer Service
- The Outstanding Youth Achievement Awards
- The Daisy Mason Wellness Fund
- The Borealis Prize: The Commissioner of Yukon Award for Literary Contribution

Here are some of the Orders, Honours and Awards presented at the National Level:

- Order of Canada
- Polar Medal
- Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers
- Various Governor General's Awards

Completing a nomination form can be intimidating and time-consuming. The Office of the Commissioner of Yukon prepared this document to help you write powerful nominations that will stand out in the selection process. We would like to thank the Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat for allowing our Office to adapt the document titled *Tips for writing and submitting a nomination*.

How to write a powerful nomination

For your nomination to stand out amongst the many others received, you must explain and include examples as evidence to what makes your nominee more exceptional than others.

Use examples

It is important to use specific, concrete examples to illustrate how your nominee meets each of the eligibility and award criteria. Provide examples of how your nominee is deserving of the order, honour or award.

Explain how they have:

- exemplified the virtue of good citizenship;
- touched or enriched the lives of others, particularly those who are vulnerable;
- shown ongoing initiative, leadership and dedication;
- devoted themselves to sustained and selfless voluntary service;
- been an outstanding individual who has demonstrated a high achievement; and
- made a significant contribution to society in any area.

Describe the impacts of your nominee's contributions

Another aspect of a powerful nomination is the description of the impacts of your nominee's contributions on society.

Use the following questions to help shape your examples:

- How did your nominee's actions change how things were before?
- What knowledge of the situation did your nominee have and what actions did they choose?
- Is the achievement ongoing or completed?
- What was the impact of the achievement on the community or territory?
- What made it an outstanding achievement? Be sure to include any extraordinary circumstances or challenges the nominee faced.
- What made your nominee's actions different from others doing the same?

Example of a citation

Here is an example of a citation that illustrates how a nominee has demonstrated outstanding character and meets many of the criteria listed above:

“She has made a measurable impact over the last 15 years as a passionate advocate for all those afflicted with cancer in the Yukon. Her volunteer activities are as varied as her skills, and they include working with new patients and helping them understand and overcome their fear of their diagnosis; assisting new patients with understanding the administrative processes of the medical system in the Yukon; speaking at cancer research benefits and fundraisers in the Yukon (like the Run for Mom); and simply being a friend to those who needed one. She has directly and personally raised more than \$150,000 for cancer research as a participant in the annual Run for Mom event. She has also frequently been asked to speak at presentations in the Whitehorse business community as well as appeared as the subject in many media-related fundraising materials – each that has encouraged thousands of financial contributions to cancer

research in the territory. Her contribution to others becomes all the more impressive when you take into account her own health challenges over the years.”

It is achievements of this kind that will convince a selection committee to consider your nominee.

What to include in reference letters

In addition to the description of the achievement, we also require supporting letters of reference from individuals (other than the nominator) who support the nomination. These reference letters are an integral part of the nomination process, since they help to paint a complete picture of your nominee and what they have accomplished. Reference letters should describe why the candidate should be recognized, including what sets them apart, what significant contribution they have made to the Yukon and over what period they actively made their contributions.

The reference letters **should**:

- be written by individuals who know the nominee well enough to be able to talk about the impact of their achievement first-hand;
- be current and written specifically for the order, honour or award you are nominating for; and
- provide various examples from a variety of views and perspectives.

The reference letters should **not**:

- state that the author supports the nomination – they should provide more information about the achievement of the nominee.

Here are three sample citations written about the same nominee, each from a different perspective:

“We were quite impressed by the maturity of her at 12 years old. She is now 20 and still comes to visit us on a regular basis. She still organizes many fundraising events on behalf of our daughter for the MS Society of Canada.” – Parent

“I have never seen such maturity in a young person in my 20 years of teaching.” – Teacher

“I have been inspired by her to become more involved in the community, by reaching out to those not as privileged as myself and share my talents to make a positive change in the community.” – Peer

Note that a reference letter from a high-profile or influential individual will not automatically give it more weight. The letter still has to address the merit of the nomination.

How to keep your nomination clear and simple

Remember that longer does not necessarily mean better. Before you submit your nomination, ensure your explanations are clear and to the point while providing enough information for the selection committees to make a decision.

A strong nomination will include words such as:

admired	articulate	commitment	conscientious	creativity	dedicated
determined	drive	exemplary	generous	helpful	hero
influential	impact	innovation	inspirational	leadership	mentor
organized	passionate	performance	pioneer	positive	recognition
resourceful	respect	role model	selflessness	supportive	sustainability
teamwork	trusted	vibrant	visionary		

and use phrases such as:

- going over and above
- made/make a difference
- overcoming obstacles
- positive outcome
- strong mentor and role model

The selection committees are only able to evaluate nominees based on the merits in the information provided to them. The weaker nominations are usually composed of an extended resume or CV, a list of educational achievements or transcripts, a list of appointments, awards or a job description for any or all of their positions. These types of nominations are seen as not exceptional, and it makes the nominees appear as if they were just doing their job. Instead, you need to describe how exceptional or outstanding your nominee's achievements are and how memorable the difference they made is.

For more information

We hope this guide is helpful. You can find out more by visiting our [website](#) and clicking on the program you would like to nominate a person for. Ensure you have read the criteria carefully and give yourself time to complete the nomination process by the deadline listed.

If you have any questions, please contact:

The Office of the Commissioner of Yukon

Phone: 867-667-5121 or toll free 1-800-661-0408 (ask for the Commissioner's Office)

Email: nominations@yukon.ca