

NFPA Awards and Scholarships Nominations Process (2019 Award Year)

For the convenience of NFPA members and member associations, this document outlines the nominations process for each of NFPA's annual awards and scholarships. If any conflict exists between this document and the NFPA Awards Procedures, the Awards Procedures shall govern.

GENERAL AWARD NOMINATION PROCEDURES

The following procedures apply to all nominations for all awards and scholarships. Award nominations and scholarship applications must be submitted via the online form and include all requested documentation. The nominating person or association is responsible for confirming that the nominee meets the award's eligibility requirements, including membership status in good standing, if applicable.

All nominations and applications must be submitted using the online form by **July 1, 2019**. Nominations or applications submitted via email, mail, or other means will not be considered. Incomplete submissions are reviewed "as is" with no opportunity to supplement.

All award and scholarship recipients receive formal recognition at the NFPA awards luncheon on the Saturday of the Annual Convention, on NFPA's website, in the *National Paralegal Reporter* and in press releases.

ASSOCIATION PRO BONO AWARD

Purpose: This award recognizes NFPA member association that has exhibited outstanding dedication and service in Pro Bono services.

Nomination Process: Anyone may nominate an NFPA member association for this award. The submission can also be self-nominating. The nomination letter of no more than two pages should outline the specific Pro Bono Program ("Program") to be considered and shall include, but not be limited to:

- Name and address of the Association;
- Name, address and telephone number of the nominated Association's Pro Bono Coordinator or other designated representative;
- A description of the target sector of the community for which the Program was developed (e.g. low-income families, children, indigent, battered women, elderly people);
- Requirements used to determine if an individual is eligible to participate in the Program;
- Name, address and telephone number of the individual or group who developed the Program;
- Type of service(s) provided by the Program;
- Name, address and telephone number of the supervising attorney for the Program;
- The goals of the Program;
- Timeline for the Program (when it was started or will start; anticipated completion date or if it is an ongoing program).

Eligibility/Criteria for Selection: This award is open to all NFPA member associations in good standing. The determination of the award recipient will be at the sole discretion of the Judges. The general criteria to be considered shall include, but are not limited to:

- The Program must be designed to target a portion of the community which cannot otherwise afford to seek legal assistance.
- Each paralegal participating in the Program shall comply with the ethical standards of NFPA and the local Association.
- At no time will the judges consider the number of hours contributed by the Association's members, nor the number of people assisted in the program.

Award Presentation: The award recipient will receive a commemorative plaque. If a sponsor is secured or at the Board's discretion, a \$500 donation may be made to support the local Association's pro bono program.

INDIVIDUAL PRO BONO AWARD

Purpose: This award recognizes an individual who is a practicing paralegal and has exhibited extraordinary dedication to the delivery of quality legal services to a portion of the population that cannot afford to pay for legal services.

Nomination Process: Any individual or association may nominate a practicing paralegal for this award. The submission can also be self-nominating. The nomination shall be submitted as a letter of nomination of no more than two pages and shall include, but not be limited to:

- Name and address of practicing paralegal being nominated.
- Name, address and phone number of the nominating individual or contact information for the nominating association.
- A detailed synopsis, including, but not limited to, a clear identification of the Pro Bono services and accomplishments of the nominee.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation, in addition to the nominator's statement, from individuals who can attest to the qualifications of the nominee.

Eligibility/Criteria for Selection: This award is open to all practicing paralegals. The nominee need not be a member of NFPA or an NFPA member association. The determination of the award recipient will be at the sole discretion of the Judges. The general criteria to be considered shall include, but are not limited to:

- The nominee must have offered Pro Bono services designed to target a portion of the population which cannot otherwise afford legal assistance.
- The nominee must have contributed to the delivery of quality legal services to members of the community who are unable to pay reasonable or customary legal fees. The nominee must also further enhance the delivery of such legal services.
- The nominee must exhibit a true dedication to the delivery of quality legal services.
- At no time will the Judges consider the number of hours contributed by the nominee, nor the number of people assisted in the program
- The Judges will consider the dedication and motivation of the individual paralegal who has most enhanced the delivery of quality legal services to that portion of the population who cannot otherwise afford legal services.
- Greater weight shall be given to those nominees who provide Pro Bono services outside of or in addition to their normal course of employment.

Award Presentation: The award includes a commemorative plaque. If a sponsor is secured or at the Board's discretion, the award may also fund a \$1,000 donation to support the pro bono project of the recipient's choice.

JUSTICE CHAMPION AWARD

Purpose: This award recognizes a practicing paralegal whose conduct, actions and activities demonstrate extraordinary dedication to diversity and inclusion as defined in NFPA's Position Statement on Diversity.

Nomination Process: Any individual or association may nominate a practicing paralegal for this award. Submissions can also be self-nominating. All nominees must be practicing paralegals at the time of nomination and selection. Nominations shall be submitted via the online nominations platform and include, but not be limited to:

- Name and contact information of the practicing paralegal being nominated.
- Name and contact information of the nominating individual or nominating association (if applicable).
- A comprehensive summary including clear identification and documentation of the activities and accomplishments of the nominee in furtherance and support of the causes of civil, equal and human rights, diversity and inclusion.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation from current or past employers, professional colleagues or instructors attesting to the nominee's demonstrated work ethic and professionalism.
- Posthumous nominations may be considered.
- The nomination may also be accompanied by the following:
 - Articles from newspapers, professional publications, etc.;
 - Photograph of the nominee;
 - Resume or curricula vitae of the nominee.

Eligibility/Criteria for Selection: This award is open to all practicing paralegals. The nominee need not be a member of NFPA or a NFPA member association. The determination of the award recipient will be at the sole discretion of the Judges. The general criteria to be considered includes, but are not limited to:

- The nominee must have a confirmable paralegal educational background such as a paralegal degree (associate, bachelor, master), a certificate from an ABA approved or other recognized paralegal program, or a paralegal certification from a nationally recognized paralegal association.
- The nominee must exhibit consistent encouragement and understanding between persons of different races, genders, age groups, ethnicities, religious origins, national origins, indigenous heritages, socio-economic statuses, disabilities, and sexual orientations and identities.
- The nominee must demonstrate outstanding efforts to promote bias and discrimination free environments where all are valued, respected and have the same opportunities.
- The nominee must enhance inclusion through positive communication between diverse populations and promote healing between those in conflict.
- The nominee must establish extraordinary achievement or long-term commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- The nominee must validate genuine dedication to the advancement of civil and equal rights, civil liberties, and domestic and/or international human rights.

- The Judges will consider the dedication and motivation of the individual paralegal who has demonstrated a quantifiable and outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Greater weight will be given to those nominees who demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion over and above actions taken through the nominee's course of employment.
- The Judges will consider nominees' actions and activities in the following areas:
 - Extraordinary steps taken to promote diversity and inclusion.
 - Mentoring diverse populations.
 - Encouraging inclusion in the paralegal profession of underrepresented populations.
 - Participating in speaking engagements to champion diversity and inclusion and taking proactive steps to encourage diversity and inclusion.
 - Writing articles or books promoting diversity and inclusion.
 - Ensuring the voices of paralegals from diverse backgrounds are heard and included in NFPA's leadership.
 - Working on pro bono matters that have a significant impact on diversity and inclusion objectives.
 - Espousing initiatives to ensure policies are established in the nominee's local association or legal community to promote diversity and inclusion.

In Memoriam: This award was established in memory of Heather Heyer, a paralegal who “was a very strong woman,” said Alfred A. Wilson, manager of the bankruptcy division at the [Miller Law Group](#) in Charlottesville, Virginia where she [worked as a paralegal](#). She stood up against “any type of discrimination,” he said. “That’s just how she’s always been.” Friends described Heather as a passionate advocate for the disenfranchised who was often moved to tears by the world’s injustices. That sense of conviction led her to join demonstrators protesting against a rally of white nationalists in Charlottesville on August 12, 2017, where she lost her life in the fight for justice.

Award Presentation: The award includes a crystal award or commemorative plaque incorporating purple, Heather's favorite color. If a sponsor is secured or at the Board's discretion, and with the approval of the selected recipient, the award may also fund up to a \$1,000 donation in the recipient's name to the Heather Heyer Foundation or to a charitable nonprofit of the recipient's choosing for Diversity and Inclusion initiatives.

NFPA OUTSTANDING LOCAL LEADER AWARD

Purpose: This award recognizes an individual NFPA member for outstanding leadership contributions to his/her local association.

Nomination Process: An NFPA member association or a member of an NFPA member association may nominate an individual NFPA member for this award.

- Nominations must include a statement detailing how the nominee meets the criteria for eligibility. The nomination may also contain the following:
 - a. clippings from newspapers, professional publications, etc.; and/or
 - b. photograph of nominee; and/or
 - c. resume or curriculum vitae of the nominee.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation, in addition to the nominator's statement, from individuals who can attest to the qualifications of the nominee.

Eligibility/Criteria for Selection: Nominees for this award must be a member of an NFPA member association and must be nominated by a member association or individual member of the same association. The nominee will have demonstrated influential behavior in the paralegal profession, promoted interest and active participation in the activities of his/her local association, motivated others to work toward establishing and carrying out professional goals, and will have been recognized by the legal community as a committed professional dedicated to the advancement of the legal profession.

Award Presentation: The award is a commemorative plaque.

NFPA PARALEGAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Purpose: This award recognizes an individual NFPA member whose on-the-job achievements, including contributions to his/her employer, colleagues and the paralegal profession, have contributed to expansion of the paralegal profession in general.

Nomination Process: Anyone may nominate a member of a NFPA member Association or an individual sustaining member of NFPA for this award. Nominations for this award must include no more than a two page description of how the nominee has taken the initiative beyond typical job duties to contribute to expansion of the paralegal profession, including how an expanded role has served the paralegal's employer and/or others for whom the paralegal performed additional duties, cost savings, added efficiency, added professionalism, increased visibility, or other factors that have been a positive result of the paralegal's initiative and how his/her efforts have been recognized and appreciated by the individuals who the paralegal performs paralegal duties for.

Eligibility/Criteria for Selection: Nominees for this award must be members of a NFPA member association or an individual sustaining member of NFPA. Paralegals working as traditional or non-traditional paralegals are eligible to receive this award. If the nominee is a freelance or independent paralegal (within the scope of the authorized practice of law), the nominating individual may be a client.

Three (3) letters of recommendation, in addition to the nominator's statement, from individuals who can attest to the qualifications of the nominee.

Judges for this award will consider the nomination with particular attention to the initiative taken by the nominee, overall contributions to the legal team with which the nominee works, the framework within which the nominee functions on the job and how the nominee has changed that framework, and the effects the initiative has had on the nominee's career, the environment in which the nominee works, and other paralegals in the organization. The award recipient will be chosen on the basis of her or his impact on expanding the paralegal profession and contributions to the nominee's employer, colleagues, and the paralegal profession in general.

Award Presentation: The award is a commemorative plaque.

WILLIAM R. ROBIE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Purpose: This award recognizes an NFPA member in honor of the Honorable William R. Robie and his dedication to the paralegal profession, the expansion of the delivery of legal services and equal access to justice for all Americans.

Nomination Process: Any NFPA member association may nominate a voting, student or affiliate member of an NFPA member association for the Robie Award. The nomination shall be accompanied by a letter/letters of nomination from the nominating association's president and/or other individuals and contain the following information:

- Information that confirms the candidate is a voting, student or affiliate member of an NFPA member association, which must be in good standing.
- A description of the following qualities:
 - Dedication to the paralegal profession
 - Service to the legal community
 - Leadership
 - Participation in the NFPA member association's work
 - Positive attitude toward paralegal education either by service on an advisory board, as an instructor in a paralegal program, or as a speaker in a continuing education project; and
 - Has created a lasting legacy to the paralegal profession through some distinct contribution(s).

Supporting documents shall be provided (e.g. newspaper articles, CLE programs).

Eligibility/Criteria for Selection: Any NFPA member association may sponsor an association member for the award. The nominee need not be a member of the nominating association but must be a member of an NFPA association. Currently serving NFPA Board Members, including the NFPA Board Advisor, are not eligible for this award. Nominees cannot be a vendor, full-time legal educator, lawyer or sustaining member of NFPA.

The award recipient will have demonstrated dedication to the paralegal profession; service to the legal community; leadership; participation in association work; a positive attitude toward paralegal education either by service on an advisory board, as an instructor in a paralegal program, or as a speaker in a continuing education program; and have made a lasting legacy to the paralegal profession through some distinct contribution(s).

Judges, at their sole discretion, will determine the award recipient based on the criteria set forth in the Nominations Procedure.

Award Presentation: The award is a commemorative plaque.

PARALEGAL CERTIFICATION AMBASSADOR & ASSOCIATION AWARD

Purpose: This award recognizes outstanding achievement in promoting NFPA's paralegal certification exams.

Nomination Process: Any NFPA member may nominate his/her paralegal certification ambassador and the association for the award by submitting a letter of nomination and providing evidence of all the marketing efforts made by the ambassador and/or the association in the previous year. The nomination must be specific as to dates with respect to accomplishments, projects or any other information submitted. It should answer the questions posted in the Eligibility/Criteria for Selection section below.

Eligibility/Criteria for Selection: This award is presented to an NFPA member association and its paralegal certification ambassador.

The criteria are based on the previous calendar year. Activities, projects and/or accomplishments, whether started and/or finished in said time frame, will be considered. Consideration is given for:

20%: Utilization of the Paralegal Certification Ambassador Program

Considerations:

- Has the association appointed a paralegal certification ambassador?
- Has the association sent its ambassador or other representative to the NFPA Paralegal Certification Ambassadors' Conference?
- How effective has the ambassador been?
- Any other evidence presented by the association.

20%: Assisting members by helping them prepare to take PACE or PCC Exam

Considerations:

- Has the association formed and mentored study groups?
- What percent of members who have participated in study groups?
- Has the association sponsored any PACE or PCC Exam Overview Seminars or other seminars geared toward helping their members prepare for either exam?
- Has the association encouraged participation in the PACE/PCCE Review Course or overview seminars?
- Any other evidence presented by the association.

20%: Participation by individual members in PACE or PCC Exam

Considerations:

- What percentage of the association's members have taken either the PACE or PCC Exam and what percentage took their exam during the previous calendar year?
- What percentage of local association's board members have taken either exam?
- Any other evidence presented by the association.

20%: Marketing the PACE and the PCC exams within the association

Considerations:

- Has the association provided its members with exam information?
- Has the association marketed the PACE/PCCE Review Course, study groups, overview seminars and other preparatory materials?

- Has the association printed articles in its newsletter promoting NFPA's paralegal certification exams?
- Has the association visited schools to promote NFPA's paralegal certification exams?
- Has the association marketed to vendors to sponsor an exam scholarship?
- Any other evidence presented by the association

20%: Marketing the PCC and PACE exams to other members of the legal community

Considerations:

- Has the association made exam presentations to employers or assisted paralegals in such presentations?
- Has the association submitted articles regarding the NFPA's certification exams to bar association(s)?
- Has the association met with the bar association(s) to promote NFPA's certification exams?
- Has the association educated and promoted the NFPA certification exams to Judges?
- Any other evidence presented by the association.

Award Presentation: The award is a commemorative plaque.

CERTIFICATION SCHOLARSHIP

Award: NFPA will award one (1) PCCE Scholarship.

This award will include the PCCE Exam fee; the PCCE Application fee; the PCCE Study Manual; and enrollment in an online review course of the sponsors choosing.

- a. A copy of the winning essay will be sent to the Sponsor(s) for the award. The essay will be reprinted in the *National Paralegal Reporter*, when space can be allocated. The winning essay shall become the property of NFPA and the recipient shall surrender any claim to the ownership of said essay upon acceptance of the scholarship. The recipient's name will be mentioned in the *National Paralegal Reporter* and press release(s) issued by NFPA to appropriate parties about the scholarship recipient.
- b. The recipient(s) will receive a commemorative plaque provided by NFPA.

Application Packets:

- a. All applications must include:
 - i. A completed application for the PCCE Scholarship.
 - ii. An essay on the following topic:

With the changing legal industry, the paralegal profession faces constant evolution and expansion into unfamiliar territories, such as: the Limited Licensed Legal Technicians in Washington, the Licensed Paralegal Professionals in Utah, and freelance or contract paralegals providing their services to attorneys in non-traditional methods. Explain voluntary paralegal certification's role and necessity in the continued evolution of the paralegal profession.
 - iii. An agreement from the applicant attesting that he/she (i) meets the eligibility requirements for the PCCE; (ii) agrees to take the exam within one year of receipt of the scholarship; and (iii) is either an individual sustaining member of NFPA or is a member in good standing of a NFPA member association.
- b. No application will be considered without all component parts.

Basic Eligibility Requirements: The criteria listed below may be utilized in selecting scholarship recipients.

- a. Must meet PCCE eligibility requirements.
- b. Must be an individual sustaining member of NFPA or a member in good standing of a NFPA member association at the time of the NFPA Annual Convention in the year for which the scholarship is awarded.
- c. Must agree to take the PCCE within one year of the scholarship award.

- d. Prior unsuccessful attempts to take PCCE will not cause the applicant to become ineligible for the scholarship award. However, scholarship winners may not receive the scholarship as a reimbursement for PCCE expenses already incurred prior to the date of the award.

Award Criteria: The Judges will review applications based on the following criteria and weightings, which were determined by the NFPA Board of Directors:

- a. Application – 5%
- b. Essay – 40%
- c. Years of paralegal experience – 15%
- d. Efforts to further the paralegal profession in the community. (This may be through pro bono work, serving on committees, local association boards, bar association committees, etc.) – 20%
- e. Leadership in place of employment and within local association and/or in the community - 15%
- f. Miscellaneous other criteria (might include financial need, whether the applicant's employer will reimburse for costs associated with PCCE) –5%

Disqualification: Applicants may be disqualified for any one of the following reasons:

- a. Conviction of a felony or comparable crime as defined by an individual state that does not have felony designations.
- b. Currently under the suspension, termination, or revocation of a certificate, registration of a certificate, registration or license to practice by a professional organization, court, disciplinary board or agency in any jurisdiction.
- c. Falsification or misstatements on any part of the PCCE Scholarship Application or plagiarism of any part of the essay.
- d. Failure to meet the PCCE eligibility criteria or dishonesty in the application.

NOTE: Applicants will not be disqualified for prior unsuccessful attempts to take PCCE.

Default:

- a. In the event that the scholarship recipient does not meet PCCE eligibility criteria, the scholarship shall be forfeited.
- b. If, during the nine months following the scholarship date, the scholarship recipient is not able to use the scholarship, he/she must notify the vice president and director of paralegal certification immediately. In the case of a default by the scholarship recipient, the applicant with the next-highest score from the Judges shall receive all previously unused benefits of the scholarship.
- c. In the event that a PCCE scholarship recipient does not either (a) use the scholarship in the year after he/she is awarded the scholarship at the awards luncheon during Convention for any reason, or (b) does not notify the vice president and director of paralegal certification within nine months of receiving the scholarship of the inability to use the scholarship for any reason, that person shall be ineligible to reapply for the scholarship.

NFPA STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

NFPA will award annual scholarships totaling \$5,000.00 to paralegal students in the United States. The first place recipient will receive \$3,000 and the second place recipient will receive \$2,000; both scholarships will be paid directly to the students' schools. Recipients will also receive complimentary registration and a \$1,000 travel stipend to attend the NFPA Annual Convention.

NOTE: SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS ARE TO BE USED TO PURSUE A PARALEGAL EDUCATION. CHECKS WILL BE MADE PAYABLE TO THE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS AND THE RECIPIENT'S PARALEGAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS. TRAVEL EXPENSE CHECKS WILL BE PROVIDED DIRECTLY TO RECIPIENTS BY NFPA FROM THE FUNDS PROVIDED BY THOMSON REUTERS.

The scholarship essay topic for 2019 is:

With the changing legal industry, the paralegal profession faces constant evolution and expansion into unfamiliar territories, such as: the Limited Licensed Legal Technicians in Washington, the Licensed Paralegal Professionals in Utah, and freelance or contract paralegals providing their services to attorneys in non-traditional methods. Explain voluntary paralegal certification's role and necessity in the continued evolution of the paralegal profession.

Applications must be submitted via the online form. Email, mail, or fax submissions will not be considered. The application must include:

- two references;
- a letter of recommendation from the program director;
- the essay;
- transcripts;
- participation in extracurricular and paralegal activities;
- and statement of financial need.

Incomplete applications will be reviewed "as is" with no opportunity to supplement.

Candidates may be disqualified for any one of the following reasons:

- a. Conviction of a felony or comparable crime as defined by an individual state that does not have felony designations; or
- b. Currently under the suspension, termination, or revocation of a certificate, registration of a certificate, registration or license to practice by a professional organization, court, disciplinary board or agency in any jurisdiction.

The criteria listed below will be utilized in selecting scholarship recipients. The applicant:

- a. Must be a full- or part-time student enrolled in a paralegal program;
- b. Must demonstrate and maintain a B average;
- c. May demonstrate active participation in extracurricular activities and/or community service;
- d. May demonstrate active participation in paralegal program clubs or activities; and
- e. May demonstrate financial need.

Scholarship winners will be notified of the award by early September, either by the VPPD or Education Coordinator. Scholarship winners are asked to keep their achievement confidential until the award has been given. Thomson Reuters will provide a travel stipend for each scholarship recipient so that he/she may receive his/her scholarship at the NFPA Annual Convention during the Saturday awards luncheon.

Scholarship recipients will receive a travel stipend and are expected to make their own travel arrangements to attend the awards luncheon on the Saturday of the NFPA Annual Convention.

A copy of the winning essays and biographies will be sent to Thomson Reuters. The scholarships and commemorative plaques will be presented to the recipients during the awards luncheon at the NFPA Annual Convention.

The winning essays, biographies and photographs may be posted on NFPA's website, as well as publicized through other media as deemed appropriate by the NFPA Board of Directors.