

Deeper Dive: Annual Awards Planning

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Note: this Annual Awards process is specific to the Chapter, Regional and Affinity Group-led awards detailed in our [Volunteer Awards Guide](#). Specifically: LEAD, Legacy, Everest and Marie Curie Awards. [HBA's Global Leadership Awards](#) are also administered annually by HBA Central, but are separate from the Annual Awards.

High-level details for 2026 and key dates

- Annual Award nominations are collected in late summer/early fall each year, with awardees being recognized in late fall/winter.
- [Request an Awards Nominator via this form](#)
- Don't forget to submit final awardees via the Awards Portal (see guidance below)

Who does what?

The Awards process is led by the component (i.e. Chapter, Region or AG), and is usually driven by the volunteer experience and/or engagement team. Chapter-level awards should be shared with the Regional Volunteer Experience Department (who oversees the process for the whole region) to collate, and Global Affinity Group Awards should be shared with the Global AG Council leadership. Executive leadership at each component level should help support awardee determination as outlined in the [Volunteer Awards Guide](#)

Volunteer Recognition Guidance

Why is volunteer recognition so important?

The HBA's lifeblood is its volunteers, and our progress toward achieving our missions is accelerated mainly due to our volunteer's efforts. Recognizing volunteers is one small way the HBA can give back to these volunteers who give so much of their time and effort to the HBA. It is not just about showing gratitude; it's a strategic approach to enhance engagement, performance, and retention, ultimately strengthening the organization and its mission. Recognition:

1. Boosts Motivation and Engagement

- **Recognition and Appreciation:** Acknowledging volunteers' efforts helps them feel valued and appreciated, which can boost their motivation and commitment to the HBA.
- **Encourages Continued Participation:** Volunteers are more likely to stay engaged and continue their efforts when they feel their contributions are recognized and valued.

2. Enhances Volunteer Retention

- **Reduces Turnover:** Regular recognition can help minimize turnover by making volunteers feel more connected to the organization and its mission.
- **Builds Loyalty:** Volunteers who feel appreciated are likelier to stay long-term and take on more significant roles.

3. Promotes a Positive Organizational Culture

- **Fosters a Supportive Environment:** Recognition creates a positive atmosphere where volunteers are encouraged to collaborate and support each other.
- **Reinforces Values:** Acknowledging achievements enhances the organization's values and mission, creating a stronger sense of community.

4. Improves Performance

- **Increases Productivity:** Recognized volunteers often go above and beyond, improving the quality and impact of their work.
- **Encourages Best Practices:** Recognition can highlight and promote effective practices and behaviors, setting a standard for others.

5. Attracts New Volunteers

- **Enhances Reputation:** An organization known for valuing its volunteers is more attractive to potential new volunteers who want to contribute to a respected and supportive environment.
- **Word-of-Mouth Promotion:** Satisfied and recognized volunteers will likely spread the word about the positive experience, attracting others to join.

6. Builds a Stronger Team

- **Encourages Collaboration:** Recognizing team efforts rather than just individual achievements fosters a sense of teamwork and collective accomplishment.
- **Strengthens Relationships:** Positive recognition helps build stronger relationships between volunteers and the organization, enhancing teamwork and collaboration.

Best Practices for Volunteer Recognition

1. **Be Specific:** Highlight specific actions or achievements to make the recognition meaningful.
2. **Be Timely:** Recognize contributions soon after they occur to ensure fresh impact.
3. **Be Personal:** Tailor recognition to the individual's preferences and contributions.
4. **Celebrate Achievements Publicly:** Public recognition can enhance the sense of accomplishment and motivate others.
5. **Offer Tangible Rewards:** Certificates, awards, or small tokens of appreciation can complement verbal or written recognition.

HBA's Annual Awards Process

The HBA has four Annual Award types, which any HBA Component (e.g., Chapter, Region, or Affinity Group) may bestow upon deserving volunteers: *LEAD*, *Legacy*, *Everest*, and *Marie Curie Awards*. [Click here to view our complete *Volunteer Awards Guide*.](#)

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Please follow the [Award Process at a glance](#) to easily recognize your volunteers. This process can

be run at any time of year, but **nominations are usually collected each year in late summer/early fall, and awardees are recognized in late fall/winter.**

HBA Central can support the Annual Awards process by creating a Nominator Form to collect submissions across the component. **Please fill out this [request for an annual awards nominator form](#) if you need assistance.**

Remember to submit your final award winners to HBA Central via the Awards Portal in your HBA profile. Please note: Notification is sent to the awardee immediately (so be sure to wait until they know they won!).

Note: These awards are local/regional awards and separate from HBA [Global Leadership Awards](#), run annually by HBA Central
