

NFPA Awards and Scholarships Nominations Process (2017 Award Year)

For our member associations' convenience, 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. Nominations for awards must be submitted in the form of a letter. Scholarship applications should use the appropriate application 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. Submit all nominations to managingdirector@paralegals.org with the subject line including the specific award, *i.e.* Association Pro Bono Award or Individual Pro Bono Award.

All submissions must be emailed by July 1, 2017. Neither NFPA nor the management company acknowledge receipt of individual submissions, so use a mailing method with tracking if you would like a receipt confirmation from the delivery service. Incomplete submissions are reviewed "as is" with no opportunity to supplement.

All award 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. **All** awards and scholarships (except for the Association Pro Bono Award) may include paid expenses to attend the NFPA Annual Convention to receive the award/scholarship, dependent upon sponsorship for any individual award. Should such expenses be paid, the expenses shall include coach airfare, a hotel room for Friday and Saturday nights, social events and meals per diem for travel days and dinner on Saturday night for only the award/scholarship recipient. All reimbursement requests must be submitted to NFPA Headquarters Attn: Leslie Monahan (with final approval by the Treasurer) no later than 45 days after the end of the Annual Convention. Registration fees for the Policy Meeting shall be waived for each recipient (if the recipient is not a delegate for a local association).

ASSOCIATION PRO BONO AWARD

Purpose: This award recognizes NFPA member association that has exhibited outstanding dedication and service in the area of *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;
- Time line 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, the award may also fund a \$500 donation 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 services and accomplishments of the nominee in the area of *Pro Bono* services.

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.

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 be accompanied by a letter of nomination by the nominating member or Association detailing how the nominee meets the criteria for eligibility. The letter may also contain the following:

- a. Clippings from newspapers, professional publications, etc.; and/or
- b. Photograph of the nominee; and/or
- c. Resume or vitae 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 an NFPA member association or an individual sustaining member of NFPA for this award. Nominations for this award must include no more than two pages describing how the nominee has taken the initiative beyond typical job duties to contribute to expansion of the paralegal profession; how an expanded role has served the paralegal's employer and/or others for whom the paralegal has performed additional duties, contributed to 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 for whom the paralegal performs paralegal duties.

Eligibility/Criteria for Selection: Nominees for this award must be members of an 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. All nomination forms must be signed by the individual making the nomination.

Judges for this award will consider the two page description 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 his/her 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
- Information that confirms the candidate 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(S)

Background: NFPA and a selected sponsor (or sponsors) (“Sponsor(s)”) will award one PACE and/or PCCE scholarship each year.

Award: Provided that sponsorship is obtained, NFPA will award one (1) PACE and/or one (1) PCCE Scholarship each year.

This award will include the PACE or PCCE Exam fee; the PACE Application and Handbook fees; the PACE or PCCE Study Manual; enrollment in the NFPA online practice exam; 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 PACE/PCCE Scholarship (must be eligible or the submission will not be considered).
 - ii. An essay of four pages or less on a topic to be determined by the vice president and director of paralegal certification with the concurrence of the NFPA Board of Directors. Essays must be double spaced, typewritten and provided in no smaller than a 12-point font. Margins must be 1 inch on all sides. Each page of the essay must include a header with the applicant's name. Each page must be numbered as “page ___ of ___.”
 - iii. An Affidavit from the applicant (part of the application) attesting that he/she (i) meets the eligibility requirements for the PACE/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 PACE/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 PACE/PCCE within one year of the scholarship award.
- d. Must acknowledge that the scholarship is to be used solely and exclusively for the purpose of taking PACE/PCCE. The scholarship recipient will be asked to sign a statement acknowledging this fact.
- e. Prior unsuccessful attempts to take PACE/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 PACE/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/Affidavit – 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 PACE/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 PACE/PCCE Scholarship Application or plagiarism of any part of the essay.
- d. Failure to meet the PACE/PCCE eligibility criteria or dishonesty in the Affidavit accompanying the application.

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

Default:

- a. In the event that the scholarship recipient does not meet PACE/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 PACE/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/THOMSON-REUTERS SCHOLARSHIPS

NFPA and Thomson-Reuters will award annual scholarships totaling **\$5,000.00 to paralegal students in the United States.** The number and amount of scholarships to be given shall be determined annually by the NFPA Board of Directors at its Winter Board Meeting upon the recommendations of the NFPA education coordinator who shall meet at the discretion of the NFPA president. The amount of money allocated each year for scholarships may be increased or decreased by either NFPA or Thomson-Reuters, with the party increasing the fund responsible for contributing the increased amount.

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 RECEIPIENTS BY NFPA FROM THE FUNDS PROVIDED BY THOMSON REUTERS.

The scholarship essay topic for 2017 is:

Many professional organizations have adopted positions on the issues of diversity and anti-discrimination. How have these issues of diversity and anti-discrimination affected the legal profession and what can you do as a paralegal to support the issues?

An original and three copies of the application form and accompanying documentation are required, except for one original transcript and two copies. The **application includes two references, a letter of recommendation from the program director, the essay, transcripts, participation in extracurricular and paralegal activities and financial needs.** Incomplete applications will be reviewed "as is" with no opportunity to supplement. No applications will be accepted via fax or email.

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.

Scholarship recipients will be advised to contact the NFPA managing director regarding travel arrangements and such arrangements must be made by the scholarship recipients as soon as practicable. NFPA will send the travel stipend to the winners as soon as possible.

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