



The Alan T. Waterman Award Call for Nominations

Alan T. Waterman Award Tips for submitting a strong nomination



Background

- The U.S. National Science Foundation's (NSF) annual Alan T. Waterman Award honors outstanding young U.S. scientists or engineers in the fields that the agency supports.
- Public Law 94-86 of the 94th Congress established the Waterman Award in 1975 to mark the 25th anniversary of the NSF and to honor its first director, Alan T. Waterman.
- Each awardee (up to 3) receives a grant of \$1 million over 5 years for scientific research or advanced study in any field of science, plus a medal and other recognition.

Eligibility & Criteria

- Each candidate must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Each candidate must be 40 years of age or younger, **OR** not more than 10 years beyond receipt of the Ph.D. degree, **BY** December 31st of the year in which they are nominated.
- Candidates should have demonstrated exceptional individual achievements in scientific or engineering research of sufficient quality to be placed at the forefront of their peers.
- Their research should demonstrate originality, innovation and a significant impact on the fields of science or engineering.

Selection Process

NSF receives ATW nominations via Fastlane, the NSF proposal and reviewer system

Phase I: Individual committee member review (November – January)

- Review of all nominations by disciplinary experts
- Each member identifies top candidates

Phase II: Disciplinary panel review (January)

- Review of all top-ranked candidates within the domains of a directorate
- Disciplinary subgroup selects small number of top candidates

Phase III: Full committee review (Half-day meeting in late January)

- ATW Committee reviews all top candidates
- Recommends up to three ATW awardees to NSF Director and NSB Chair



Seeking Excellent and Diverse Nominations

NSF is proud of the Alan T. Waterman award history.

We seek a pool of nominees that reflects the diversity of America.

We look for nominees from all domains of science represented in NSF's directorates, including research that crosses disciplinary boundaries.



Submitting Nominations

Telling the Nominee's Story

Addressing the nomination questions:

- Help reviewers get to know the candidate and their work.
- Taken together, the items in the nomination package should tell a complete story.
- Emphasize and explain the impacts of the contributions within and across disciplines; go beyond what is in the CV.
- Contact letter writers early and share your nomination with them in plenty of time for them to submit a complementary letter before the nomination period closes.
- Select a secondary research area, if appropriate, when submitting the package in Fastlane.

Strong letters
of support
are **vital**.



Examples of Impactful Statements*

IMPACTFUL	NOT IMPACTFUL
<p>The core of the nominee's work is captured in the two books, ... and five seminal papers, These established the mechanism that links binary black holes with the evolution of star clusters, the structure of quantum foam in the interstellar medium, and the spatial distribution of galaxies older than five billion years.</p>	<p>The nominee has published two books and twenty papers in the past eight years.</p>
<p>The nominee's breakthroughs in the theory of surface charge distributions on nanoparticles led her to develop a unique additive manufacturing process for fabricating complex ceramic components that has been widely adopted in the manufacture of aircraft engines.</p>	<p>The nominee developed a new additive manufacturing process.</p>
<p>The nominee served on three strategic committees of the National Society of X. On each, he served in a leadership role. As one example, the nominee used his experience on the Meetings Committee to implement novel forms of outreach, resulting in a growth of 80% in the participation of scientists from underrepresented groups at the annual national conference.</p>	<p>The nominee served on three committees of the National Society of X.</p> <p>*These are fictional examples</p>



One way to think about it –

Similar to a research proposal:

Intellectual merit – What did the person do, why is it important, and why is it relevant to the award?

Broader Impacts – What more does this person do or how large of an impact have their contributions had?



Key things reviewers look for...

- The impact of the nominee's body of work on the current state of their field, e.g., unique significant achievements on the development of thought in their field.
- Uniquely distinguished and impactful service in the advancement of science or engineering for the Nation at this point in their career.
- Is the nominee recognized by peers within their community?
- Is the nominee recognized for substantial impact in fields in addition to their discipline, if appropriate?
- Are there contributions to innovation and industry, if appropriate?
- Have the nominee's contributions created significant positive impact for the Nation?
- Are the letters of reference from leaders in the field?
Do they describe why the nominee stands out from peers?



Reviewers often look for...

- What makes this nominee unique?
- Scientific impact
 - Is the research used?
 - How broadly?
- Other aspects of the candidate
 - Service, mentoring, leadership
- Specific requirements of the award
 - Focus on the last 10 years
- Emphasize the contributions of the nominee, not a group or institution



Tips for Letters of Support for the Nomination

1. Letters should be from people who know the nominee or their contributions well and are widely recognized leaders in their discipline.
2. Strong sets of letters will be from diverse institutions and roles, to provide a more complete picture of the nominee.
3. Letters should complement the nomination and provide specific examples. They should not duplicate the nomination. (Share the nomination text in advance, not at the last minute.)
4. No need to repeat what is in nominee's CV.
5. Nominators should supply letter writers a draft of the nomination at least two weeks before nominations close, to enable the supporters to write strong, complementary letters.



Timeline

Award site: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/honawards/>
Site open for nominations: **Mid-July – Mid-September**

WHEN <i>(before deadline)</i>	WHAT
4 months	Identify potential candidate. Check eligibility. Prepare brief outline of accomplishments and qualifications.
3 months	Contact potential letter writers. Share brief outline and confirm interest in writing a strong supporting letter. Draft nomination statement.
2 months	Share draft nomination statement with letter writers; solicit feedback on nomination statement and revise as needed to emphasize the impact. ATW site opens.
1 to 2 months	Upload nomination statement to Fastlane. Select primary and secondary research areas. Enter letter writer information. Remind letter writers of the deadline.
1 week	Double check that letters have been submitted; if not, send reminders.





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Thank you for your efforts in
submitting award nominations 😊

