



## **PLUS: PART II - JEFFERSON AWARDS WEBSITE – TURNKEY FOR MEDIA PARTNERS**

To assist our Media Partners, we have created a special section related to Jefferson Awards nominations. This is presented in four parts:

First, we offer a **Turnkey Format for our Media Partner Websites** that invites your readers/viewers to send in nominations. This includes simple instructions, criteria, sample nominations, and a standard nomination form.

Second, we offer you a discussion of **Eligibility** – volunteers only and/or paid professionals who go beyond.

Third, we offer you **“Best Practices” Seeking Nominations**. Ideas that might help you get a steady flow of quality nominations.

Fourth, we offer you options related to:

**Selecting a Panel of Judges**  
**Year-Round Format vs. 90 to 120-Day Promotion**  
**Instructions and Criteria for the Judges**  
**Electronic Nominations**

- **Turnkey Format For Our Media Partner Websites**

See the four pages above for the Turnkey Format for our Media Partner Websites

- **Eligibility – Defining “Unsung Hero” –  
Volunteers vs. Paid Professionals**

Over the years, about two thirds of Jefferson Awards honorees are volunteers only, and one third are unrecognized, but paid professionals who go beyond what they are being paid to do. From the Jefferson Awards viewpoint, the key is “Unsung.” The honorees should not be broadly known newsmakers such as elected officials, mayors, state senators, or prominent business or community leaders.

Recipients can be volunteers only, or paid going well above and beyond their job description.

If the Media Partner wishes to include paid workers, the Jefferson Awards' requirement is that at least half of the honorees remain volunteers only. **This choice is left up to the Media Partner.**

Option A: Some Media Partners restrict their Jefferson Awards winners to volunteers only. If a paid professional volunteers outside the scope and time of their salary, they are eligible. As an example, a government worker or teacher who volunteers at a neighborhood association in their free time.

Option B: Paid professionals are eligible. Yes, they are paid, but they have gone well beyond their job description. The defining characteristic is community recognition.

In discussing this issue with Magid Associates, their research shows that viewers/readers react to the outstanding personal acts of the individual and then their measurable impact in the community. Magid believes that unrecognized, paid professionals going beyond are more likely to have an important impact in the community and their stories are more likely to be more compelling. This can strengthen the Media Partner branding and localization.

## • **“Best Practices” Seeking Nominations**

Newspapers can include small, two-line “Send in Nominations” reminders on a frequent basis. You can put in larger “Send in Nominations” forms. You can link these to articles and features. A kick-off feature can be tied with a send in nominations. You can run an article about the selection of your panel of judges and request nominations. Your commercial sponsor pay for nomination ads.

The most effective for television is for the major news anchors or weather person to call for nominations. This can be supported by 15 or 30-second ads - commercially sponsored or public service announcement ads.

In addition, our Media Partners have done the following:

- Select one or two organizations that has strong and proven community ties. Ask them to play a lead (not exclusive) role in assuring a steady flow of quality nominations. This can be any umbrella organization with extensive outreach. They include: the United Way, the Community Foundation, the local Association of Non-Profit Administrators, Kiwanis, Lions, the Volunteer Center. List them on your website and applaud their assistance.
- Ask your past winners and past judges to nominate.
- Send a mailing to 250 to 1,000 community service organizations that depend on their volunteers.
- Send a mailing to all local governments – counties, small town mayors and schools.
- Build a strong community-based e-mail list of opinion makers and community activists.

## • **Selecting a Panel of Judges**

## **Keep It Simple.**

Some Media Partners select their Jefferson Awards honorees by creating an internal committee selected from the newsroom and the editorial board. This is satisfactory, but concerns the Jefferson Awards. We recommend that you select an outside panel of 5 to 8 community leaders. If there are any questions about how one honoree was selected vs. another, you gain credibility and you eliminate any possibility of favoritism.

Over the years, these panels of judges are diverse from age and ethnicity and include: past winners, local mayors, religious representatives, business leaders (possibly representatives from your Jefferson Awards commercial sponsors), and heads community service organizations - United Way, the NAACP, the volunteer center, etc.

### **• Year-Round Format vs. 90 to 120-Day Promotion**

In a 90 to 120-day promotion, select your panel of judges and invite them to a 2-hour working luncheon. They select the 5 to 6 Jefferson Award winners.

In a year-round format, where you select a winner per month or per week, we are concerned about overtaxing your volunteer judges. We recommend that your panel of judges meets twice per year. At the first meeting, they select the winners for the first half of the year. At the second meeting, they select the winners for the second half of the year. At the second meeting, they select the top 5 to 6 winners for recognition at your local ceremony.

An alternative is to have an internal committee from the Media Partner select the winner once per week or once per month, and then have a single panel of judges as stated above meet for a 2-hour working luncheon to select the top 5 to 6 for your local ceremony.

### **• Instructions and Criteria for the Judges**

The instructions and criteria for the judges are the same as the criteria for anyone who makes a nomination. The basic instruction to the judges is that the best stories sell themselves. Over the years, compelling stories leap off the page. The criteria are simple and are twofold:

#### **1. Outstanding Personal Acts**

Select an ordinary individual performing outstanding personal acts. This individual stands out for taking extra steps. The individual acts were “outstanding”... “unique”... “heroic.”

#### **2. Community Impact - Helping On Others**

Beside the heroic acts of the individual, review how the individual has positively impacted the community. Look at the change or improvement that this individual has had on others and how important issues facing your community were addressed.

### **• Electronic Nominations**

One of the goals is to drive readers/viewers to your website. Please set up your website so that you can receive nominations electronically. In addition, the Jefferson Awards will seek to invite people all across the country to make nominations and ask them to respond via e-mail.