

**For Immediate Release**

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**Nominations now open for the 38th annual Governor's Volunteer Awards****Governor's Volunteer Awards honor those who have made a difference through service across Texas**

*Austin, Texas* — Nominations are open for the [38<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Volunteer Awards](#). The Governor's Volunteer Awards are administered by [OneStar Foundation](#) and are an opportunity for the state of Texas to honor the exemplary service and volunteerism of individuals and organizations making a significant impact in communities across Texas.

"Texans truly are generous by nature," said Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott. "And Greg and I are so inspired by the selfless service shown by so many volunteers all across this great state this past year. As our communities continue to grow more resilient each day, we are reminded that the true strength of the Lone Star State is found in our people. We are pleased to once again celebrate that spirit of service through the Governor's Volunteer Awards."

Nominations for the awards are open in nine categories:

- Governor's Lifetime Volunteer Achievement Award
- First Lady's Youth Volunteer Rising Star Award
- Volunteer of the Year Award
- Volunteer Family of the Year Award
- Corporate Volunteering Champion Award
- Service-Learning Champion Award
- Innovation in Volunteerism Award
- Excellence in Disaster Volunteerism Award
- National Service "Make a Difference" Award

For descriptions of the award categories or to nominate an individual or organization, visit [onestarfoundation.org/governors-volunteer-awards](https://onestarfoundation.org/governors-volunteer-awards).

A list of last year's 2020 Governor's Volunteer Award winners can be found at [onestarfoundation.org/first-lady-cecilia-abbott-onestar-foundation-announce-2020-governors-volunteer-awards-recipients](https://onestarfoundation.org/first-lady-cecilia-abbott-onestar-foundation-announce-2020-governors-volunteer-awards-recipients). (Previous award winners may be available for media interviews upon request.)

"We are grateful to the Governor and First Lady for recognizing and celebrating the impact of volunteers in Texas," said Chris Bugbee, OneStar CEO. "Each year we are inspired by the incredible acts of service from our Governor's Volunteer Award winners."

The past year has been a challenge for nonprofits engaging volunteers and has required extraordinary adaptability and innovation. OneStar surveyed Texas nonprofit organizations in late 2020 with a goal of better understanding how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their work and missions ([Texas Nonprofit Leaders' COVID-19 Impact Report](#), December 2020). The survey showed that:

- 42% of respondents faced increased demand for services from their clients and communities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 76% of respondents endured moderate to severe reductions in volunteer engagement for delivering their programs and services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Though the last year has been unlike any other we have known, volunteers have demonstrated incredible resilience and remained committed to giving their time and talent to support communities across Texas,” Bugbee said. “We all recognize the heightened needs and challenges the pandemic has brought. We look forward to recognizing those who continued serving others and provided light in what has been a dark time for so many.”

This year, the Governor’s Volunteer Awards is introducing three new award categories:

- **Volunteer Family of the Year Award**

Volunteering together as a family is a special experience that extends care from within the household out into the community. This new award category celebrates families that prioritize service as a core personal value.

- **Excellence in Disaster Volunteerism Award**

As the most disaster-prone state in the nation, Texas relies on volunteers in all phases of disaster response and are key to creating sustainable and meaningful impact. Disaster volunteers deserve recognition for providing hope and stability in the midst of stressful and vulnerable circumstances and for ensuring our state is resilient to future disasters.

- **Innovation in Volunteerism Award**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, nonprofits developed incredible innovations—including virtual service opportunities and heightened safety protocols—to ensure continued volunteer engagement and service delivery. Volunteerism is always evolving to the shifting needs of our communities, and this award category highlights organizations that excel in adapting to these demands.

Nominations will close July 16, 2021. Awardees will be honored in the fall at an evening reception at the Governor's Mansion hosted by Honorary Chair of the Governor's Volunteer Awards, Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott. For more information visit [onestarfoundation.org/governors-volunteer-awards](https://onestarfoundation.org/governors-volunteer-awards).

-- 30 --

### **About OneStar**

OneStar strengthens Texas communities by creating pathways for individuals and organizations to engage, connect and accelerate their impact. We advance service and volunteering as effective solutions to our state’s toughest social challenges. We are recognized as a statewide voice for the Texas nonprofit sector and a respected partner to foundations, state agencies and the business community. Born from state government in 1974, we carry out our mission with direction and guidance from the Office of the Texas Governor. Learn more at [onestarfoundation.org](https://onestarfoundation.org).