

**TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION STAR AWARD
FOR HELPING TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF *60x30TX*
2019 APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDELINES**

Purpose

The Texas Higher Education Star Award was originally established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Coordinating Board or THECB) in 2001 to recognize exceptional contributions toward achieving one or more of the goals of the former long-range Texas higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. The state's current long-range higher education plan, *60x30TX*, adopted by the board of the THECB in July 2015, builds on the success of *Closing the Gaps* and is designed to establish a globally competitive workforce in Texas by 2030.

The board of the THECB approved continuing the Star Award program at its quarterly meeting in April 2016, with revised guidelines to recognize exceptional contributions toward meeting one or more of the goals of *60x30TX*— Educated Population, Completion, Marketable Skills, and Manageable Student Debt. Finalists are recommended by a THECB staff review panel, and winners are selected by a review committee consisting of board members of the THECB, out-of-state higher education experts, and Texas community leaders. Recipients receive a custom-designed award and public recognition for their efforts in the fall at the annual Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference. A maximum of three awards are presented annually. The year's Star Award winners are featured in the THECB's annual *60x30TX Progress Report* and *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac* as applicable.

Changes for the 2019 Star Award Program

Revisions to Categories and Criteria

1. The categories "Groups and Organizations in Texas" and "Partnerships" for the Star Award have been combined into one "Texas Groups, Organizations, or Partnerships" category.
2. The number of potential finalists annually has been reduced from an unlimited number of finalists, regardless of Star Award category, to "up to eight (8) finalists, to include at least one (1) finalist from each of the following categories of applicants:
 - a. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas four-year institutions of higher education;
 - b. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas two-year institutions of higher education; and
 - c. Texas groups; organizations; or partnerships among higher education institutions, public/private schools/districts, businesses, or community organizations."
3. The criteria for the 2019 Star Award have been revised to include the provision that programs/projects/activities and groups/organizations/partnerships must have been in operation for at least two years.

Additions to "Groups Sent Announcement" List

1. The Call for Star Award Nominations (Call) has been revised to include sending the announcement and Call to the 20 Education Service Centers in Texas.
2. The Call for Star Award Nominations has been revised to include sending invitations and the Call from the Commissioner of Higher Education to:
 - a. The president of each public and independent institution of higher education in Texas to encourage each president's nomination of at least one program, project, or activity at the institution; and
 - b. The lead member of each of the 10 advisory committees for the *60x30TX* Regional Targets to encourage each advisory committee's nomination of at least one group/organization/partnership within the region.

Revisions to Winners

1. The number of potential winners annually has been reduced from “a maximum of seven” to “a maximum of three.”
2. To clarify, although the Internal Staff Review Panel’s list of recommended Star Award finalists must include at least one finalist from each category of applicant, the External Review Panel does not have to pick a winner from each category.

Additions to Application Process and Guidelines

1. In addition to being included on the application form, the following provision has been incorporated into Step Four of the *2019 Application Process and Guidelines*: Before an application is considered by the THECB, it must be authorized by the institution’s chief executive officer as appropriate (i.e., president, chancellor, superintendent, principal, or CEO) through his or her signature.
2. In addition to being sent to Star Award nominees as part of Star Award application instructions, the “Tip Sheet: What Makes a Good Star Award Application?” has been revised and included as “Appendix A” in the *2019 Application Process and Guidelines*.
3. To further assist Star Award nominees in preparing their Star Award applications, the 2019 Star Award Application Review Form has been revised and included as “Appendix B” in the *2019 Application Process and Guidelines*.
4. The THECB’s practice of featuring the year’s Star Award winner(s) in the annual *60x30TX Progress Report* and *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac*, as applicable, has been included in the *2019 Application Process and Guidelines*.
5. The timeline for the Texas Higher Education Star Award program has been updated for 2019.

Categories for the 2019 Star Award

1. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas four-year institutions of higher education.
2. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas two-year institutions of higher education.
3. Texas groups; organizations; or partnerships among higher education institutions, public/private schools/districts, businesses, or community organizations.

Eligibility for the 2019 Star Award

1. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas four-year institutions of higher education that are helping to meet one or more of the goals of *60x30TX*, including those at:
 - a. Public and independent four-year colleges and universities;
 - b. Public and independent health science centers; and
 - c. Career colleges and schools that offer bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degrees.
2. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas two-year institutions of higher education that are helping to meet one or more of the goals of *60x30TX*, including those at:
 - a. Public and independent two-year community colleges;
 - b. Public and independent two-year technical and state colleges; and
 - c. Career colleges and schools that offer certificates or degrees up to the associate level.
3. Texas groups, organizations, or partnerships in Texas that are helping to meet one or more of the goals of *60x30TX*, including:
 - a. Businesses;
 - b. Community organizations; and

- c. Partnerships among higher education institutions, public/private schools/districts, businesses, or community organizations.

Criteria for the 2019 Star Award

Programs/projects/activities and groups/organizations/partnerships must:

1. Have been in operation for at least two years;
2. Clearly demonstrate within the application successful outcomes in one or more of the following areas: (a) the educational attainment of the state's 25- to 34-year-old population; (b) student completion of a certificate or degree; (c) the number of programs with identified marketable skills; or (d) the implementation of programs or cost efficiencies that help to ensure that undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages;
3. Clearly demonstrate within the application successful outcomes using benchmarks and other comparison data that allow progress to be monitored and evaluated, and that clearly demonstrate that the successful outcomes are attributable to the program/project/activity or group/organization/partnership; and
4. Clearly demonstrate an efficient cost/benefit ratio per student for the purpose of potential replication by others.

Review Process

Step One – Announcement and Call for Star Award Nominations

1. The 2019 Star Award program will be announced by May 6, 2019.
2. THECB staff will send the general announcement and Call for Star Award Nominations to the following groups:
 - a. Public and independent institutions of higher education (chancellors and presidents; chief academic officers; instructional officers; institutional research directors; deans of education; workforce deans; technical deans; registrars; reporting officials; continuing education officers; public relations officers; community, state, and technical college liaisons; and universities and health-related institutions institutional liaisons);
 - b. Degree-granting career colleges and schools (presidents and executive officers);
 - c. The 20 Education Service Centers in Texas for distribution to their school districts;
 - d. Local government and business organizations (African American Chambers of Commerce of Texas, Texas Association of Business, Texas Regional Council of Governments, County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas, Texas High School Project, Texas Association of Mexican-American Chambers of Commerce, Texas Municipal League, and Texas City Management Association); and
 - e. Chambers of Commerce of Texas' larger cities.
3. The Commissioner of Higher Education will send invitations and the Call for Star Award Nominations to:
 - a. The president of each public and independent institution of higher education in Texas to encourage each president's nomination of at least one program, project, or activity at the institution; and
 - b. The lead member of each of the 10 advisory committees for the 60x30TX Regional Targets to encourage each advisory committee's nomination of at least one group/organization/partnership within the region.

Step Two – Nominations

To be considered for the 2019 Star Award, completed nominations (including self-nominations) must be received electronically by the THECB by June 10, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. Nominations [maximum three (3) pages, including cover sheet] must be submitted electronically as a pdf file via email to: StarAward@theqb.state.tx.us.

Step Three – Notifications to Nominees

THECB staff will notify Star Award nominees that they have been nominated and that a formal application must be received by the THECB for the nominee to be considered for a Star Award.

Step Four – Applications for Star Award

A formal application form must be completed by (or for) each nominee for the Star Award and must be authorized for consideration by the THECB by the institution's chief executive officer as appropriate (i.e., president, chancellor, superintendent, principal, or CEO) through his or her signature. To be considered for the 2019 Star Award, completed applications must be received electronically by the THECB by July 15, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. Applications [maximum thirteen (13) pages, including cover sheet and at least one letter of recommendation] must be submitted electronically as a pdf file via email to the following address: StarAward@theqb.state.tx.us.

Step Five – Internal Staff Review Panel Reviews All Applications

A THECB Internal Staff Review Panel, consisting of Coordinating Board staff leaders, will review all applications to determine if the requested information is complete and adheres to application requirements. The Internal Staff Review Panel will forward a list of up to eight (8) recommended finalists to the Commissioner of Higher Education based on criteria established for the 2019 Star Award. The recommended finalists will include at least one (1) finalist from each of the following categories of applicants:

1. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas four-year institutions of higher education.
2. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas two-year institutions of higher education.
3. Texas groups; organizations; or partnerships among higher education institutions, public/private schools/districts, businesses, or community organizations.

The Commissioner will recommend up to eight (8) finalists to the Chair of the Coordinating Board. The Commissioner and the Chair of the Coordinating Board will make actual finalist determinations.

Step Six – External Committee Reviews All Finalists' Applications

An External Review Panel, consisting of three board members of the THECB, three Texas business and community leaders, and three out-of-state higher education experts, will review the applications of the finalists and determine which of these finalists will be honored with the Star Award based on criteria established for the 2019 Star Award. The External Review Panel will agree by consensus on up to three (3) winners. Although the Internal Staff Review Panel's list of recommended Star Award finalists must include at least one finalist from each category of applicant, the External Review Panel does not have to pick a winner from each category.

Step Seven – Notification to Finalists

THECB staff will notify finalists on or about September 25, 2019. Finalists will be invited to attend a special ceremony during which they will be honored and Star Award winners announced.

Step Eight – Awards Presentation

The 2019 Star Awards will be presented at the THECB's annual Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference, on a date still to be determined.

Timeline for the 2019 Texas Higher Education Star Award Program	
Dates in 2019	What Occurs
May 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nomination forms and supporting materials are posted to the THECB's website.
May 6 – May 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2019 Star Award program is announced. The Call for Star Award Nominations is sent to specified groups. Invitations and the Call for Star Award nominations are sent from the Commissioner of Higher Education to institutions' presidents and the lead members of each of the 10 advisory committees for the 60x30TX Regional Targets.
June 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nomination deadline
June 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominees notified
July 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application deadline
July 19 (on or about)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Staff Review Panel Planning Meeting
July 19 – August 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Staff Review Panel reviews all applications.
August 2 (on or about)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Staff Review Panel evaluations are due. Internal Staff Review Panel Meeting
August 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Staff Review Panel recommends up to eight (8) finalists to the Commissioner of Higher Education.
August 9 – August 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commissioner recommends up to eight (8) finalists to the Chair of the Coordinating Board; actual finalists are determined.
August 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalists' applications are sent to the members of the External Review Committee.
August 19 – September 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Review Committee reviews all finalists' applications.
September 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Review Committee evaluations are due.
Week of September 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Review Committee holds telephone conference on a date to be determined.
September 25 (on or about)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalists are notified and invited to attend the Texas Higher Education Star Awards Ceremony.
Fall 2019 (date to be determined)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019 Star Awards are presented at the Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference.

APPENDIX A

TIP SHEET

What makes a good Star Award application?

To assist Star Award nominees in preparing their Star Award applications, the Coordinating Board staff provides the following tips:

TIP 1: Addressing the Goals of 60x30TX

Reviewers evaluate applications solely on the *content of the application*. Because application reviewers may not be familiar with a program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership, the narrative description should be clearly articulated. Cutting and pasting from promotional brochures may not adequately convey how a candidate helps address the goals of the long-range Texas higher education plan, 60x30TX. Also, inaccurate grammar, incorrect punctuation, and the use of acronyms should be avoided so that application reviewers will be better able to read and understand the narrative description.

Applicants should clearly address *one or more goals, or a specific target within a goal*, as identified in 60x30TX. Rather than describing in broad terms a general collection of efforts that contribute to meeting 60x30TX goals/targets, applicants are encouraged to focus on the primary goal or target of a particular program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership.

- Educated Population Goal. Program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership that helps to increase the postsecondary educational attainment level of the state's 25- to 34-year-old population.
- Completion Goal. Program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership that helps to increase the number of students completing a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.
- Marketable Skills Goal. Program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership that helps to increasing the number of programs with identified marketable skills at Texas public institutions of higher education.
- Student Debt Goal. Program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership that implements programs or cost efficiencies that help to ensure that undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

TIP 2: Including Outcomes Data

Application reviewers need **straightforward evidence** that the goal/target of 60x30TX is being addressed by the program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership. **Insufficient evidence of positive outcomes is the single most common reason that applicants are not recommended as finalists.** So, *clearly detailed historical outcome evidence* attributable to the program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership is needed. The presentation of outcomes data should show evidence of serving a large number of students who might otherwise not be served, or that the impact is beyond a single program, institution, or geographic area. When providing outcomes data, both **numbers and percentages** should be provided. Data should be specific and constitute appropriate evidence of the goal or target identified.

TIP 3: Providing Evidence of an Efficient Cost/Benefit Ratio

One of the primary interests of the Coordinating Board is to enable the replication of successful programs/projects/activities or represent an increase in the involvement of the organizations/groups/partnerships that will help address the goals/targets of 60x30TX. This is possible only if the cost/benefit ratio per student is known. Application reviewers need evidence that the program/project/activity or involvement by the organization/group or partnership is *cost efficient*. While there is no formal definition of "cost efficiency" for purposes of a Star Award application, as an "optimum," the application should provide evidence of cost per student, and evidence that the cost/benefit ratio is worth the investment.

TIP 4: Showing Improvement and Excellence

Benchmark data should illustrate the *value added* by the program/project/activity or involvement by the organization/group/partners. Ideally, data should show a comparison of outcomes for participants versus non-participants for each year since the implementation of the program/project/activity or involvement by the organization/group/partners, versus outcomes prior to implementation/involvement (or data should provide information on what was happening before implementation/involvement). General statements such as "the retention rate for this program is above the state and national average for similar programs" should be avoided. Rather, the specific state and national averages should be stated, with data provided on how the program/project/activity (or involvement by the organization/group/partners) helps exceed those averages.

As noted in Tip 1, one of the criteria upon which applications are evaluated is whether the program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership is "exemplary" when compared to similar programs or peers. Reviewers are asked to consider excellence in terms of whether the program/project/activity or involvement by the organization/group/partners is either a new, groundbreaking kind of activity; or that creative strategies are being used to accomplish goals; or that the program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership is doing things in a way that makes the program/project/activity or involvement by the organization/group/partners more effective or successful than similar such activities, groups, or partnerships in the state. So, if what is being done isn't necessarily "groundbreaking," the application should include information about the way in which things are done that makes the program/project/activity or organization/group/partnership particularly effective, successful, and special.

TIP 5: Recognizing an Organization/Group

If an application is to recognize the *contributions of an organization or group*, data should illustrate how the organization/group has been focused on helping to meet one or more of the goals/targets of 60x30TX. Organization/group contributions should exceed typical job responsibilities demonstrating value added that is "above and beyond."

TIP 6: Recognizing a Partnership

If the application is to recognize the *contributions of a partnership*, data should illustrate how the partnership has been focused on helping to meet one or more of the goals/targets of 60x30TX. Partners and their respective roles in the program/project/activity should be identified. What makes this partnership exceptionally successful should be described.

TIP 7: Contacting Previous Star Award Finalists/Winners

For additional information, applicants may wish to contact previous Star Award winners (available online at: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/starawards>).

APPENDIX B

REVIEWER EVALUATION FORM FOR 2019 STAR AWARD APPLICATIONS

Applicant Category:

Name of Applicant's Institution: _____

_____ *Program, Project, Activity – Two-Year Institution*

Name of Program/Project/Activity/: _____

Group/Organization/Partnership

_____ *Program, Project, Activity – Four-Year Institution*

Reviewer's Name: _____

_____ *Group/Organization/Partnership*

FINAL SCORE (maximum 55 points): _____

I. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY FOR THE 2019 STAR AWARD

A. The candidate contributes to the following 60x30TX goals:

_____ Educated Population _____ Completion _____ Marketable Skills _____ Manageable Student Debt

B. The candidate strengthens an institution; benefits students; and/or describes a group, organization, or partnership that clearly contributes to achieving one or more of the goals and targets established in 60x30TX:

_____ Strengthens an institution _____ Benefits students _____ Group/Organization/Partnership

C. The program/project/activity or group/organization/partnership has been focused on helping to meet the goals of 60x30TX for at least two years. _____ Yes _____ No

Notes: _____

II. EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

A. The candidate clearly contributes to the 60x30TX goal(s) identified. Data are provided that clearly demonstrate successful outcomes in the areas of educated population, completion, marketable skills, or manageable student debt that are attributable to the candidate.

Small contribution:

Strongly contributes:

Score:

1 to 5 _____

or

6 to 10 _____

Notes: _____

- B. Data clearly demonstrate progress attributable to the candidate. The candidate serves a large number of students who might otherwise not be served or has an impact beyond a single program, institution, or geographic area.

Little evidence of success; small contribution:	Score: 1 to 5 _____
	or
Clear, well-detailed history of successful outcomes; strongly contributes:	6 to 10 _____

Notes: _____

II. EFFICIENT COST/BENEFIT RATIO

The candidate demonstrates an efficient cost/benefit ratio per student for purposes of being replicable. The overall cost would allow replication at peer institutions at a reasonable cost per student.

Not particularly cost efficient:	Score: 1 to 7 _____
	or
Cost efficient and replicable:	8 to 15 _____

Notes: _____

IV. IMPROVEMENT AND EXCELLENCE

- A. Benchmark data demonstrate the value added by the candidate that can be monitored and evaluated. Data provide information on what was happening before compared to what is happening now due to the candidate. (Or, data provide a comparison between program participants and non-participants, those served and those not served.) Outcomes go beyond what normally would be expected for a similar program/project/activity or group/organization/partnership.

Few documented outcomes/benchmarks; little value added:	Score: 1 to 5 _____
	or
Demonstrated outcomes/benchmarks; good or excellent value added:	6 to 10 _____

Notes: _____

- B. The candidate described is truly exemplary. It is a new, groundbreaking type of activity; if not new, it is innovative – creative strategies are used to accomplish goals. If neither new nor innovative, there is an indication that the candidate is doing things in a way that makes it more effective or successful than similar programs/projects/activities or groups/organizations/partnerships elsewhere in the state.

Common practice; not innovative or very successful:	Score: 1 to 5 _____
	or
Exemplary; innovative, effective/successful:	6 to 10 _____

Notes: _____
