

Frequently Asked Questions 2025

Eligibility

- **Q: What are the eligibility requirements?**

A: BECU members (including employee members) can nominate one or more eligible 501(c)(3) nonprofit(s) they support with their time, talents or money for the People Helping People Awards via the entry form. Member must be a legal resident of the United States and 18 years or older.

- Eligible nonprofits must be a registered 501(c)(3) and currently in operation. The organization must have a direct impact to the communities within BECU's service area, which includes Washington state (see www.becu.org/awards for details), Oregon, Idaho and South Carolina; and whose work is focused in one of our seven giving areas:

- **Advancing Education (Pre-K through College):** Access to education, mentoring, educational materials and programming, classroom/school and PTSA funding for educational programs/materials/experiences
- **Arts & Culture:** Equitable access to arts experiences, underrepresented arts and cultural organizations, cultural programs
- **Creating Economic Opportunity:** Living-wage jobs, small startup businesses, job quality for low-wage workers
- **Preserving Health and Promoting Wellness:** Access to healthcare, illness prevention/cure, mental health, patient support, disabilities, veteran advocacy
- **Preserving or Restoring the Environment:** Conservation, stewardship, sustainability
- **Providing for Basic Human Needs:** Affordable housing, homelessness, senior advocacy, infant/child advocacy, food/diaper/clothing banks
- **Strengthening Local Communities:** Neighborhoods, public safety, search and rescue, outdoor spaces, rotary/chambers of commerce

- Social service or community programs provided by religious or faith-based organizations are eligible when the following conditions are met: Registered US-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; programs have a formal mission statement and separate program budget; secular programs or services are offered to eligible participants without regard to their faith or willingness to participate in religious activities; and, the group ensures that BECU contributions do not fund religious activities such as worship or proselytization.

- **Ineligible organizations include:** political organizations; religious or sectarian programs for inherently religious purposes (including but not limited to religious worship or proselytization); churches, synagogues, mosques, ministries, other houses of worship or religious organizations unless for specific social programs that meet the criteria identified above. We are unable to award funds that do not fall into the categories/sub-categories above, including, but not limited to: sport teams, animal rescue, and organizations that are unable to confirm the award will have a direct impact in Washington state, Oregon, Idaho, and South Carolina.

- **Q: I'm a small business member; can I still nominate a nonprofit?**

A: Yes! We welcome nominations from any BECU member.

- **Q: Are there any types of nonprofits that you will not fund? Why?**
A: We are unable to award funds to nonprofits that do not fall into the giving areas/sub-categories listed on the application, including, but not limited to: sport teams, animal rescue, religious organizations that fund religious activities such as worship or proselytization, political campaigns/lobbying and organizations that are unable to confirm the award will have a direct impact in Washington state, Oregon, Idaho, and South Carolina.
- **Q: Can I nominate a nonprofit that has received a People Helping People Award in the past?**
A: Yes, although we do have a 3-year waiting period for past recipients to receive another award. Example: If your nonprofit received an award in 2020, their organization is eligible to be nominated again in 2023. 2021 recipients are eligible to be nominated again in 2024, and 2022 recipients are eligible to be nominated again in 2025.
- **Q: Can I nominate my church's food bank?**
A: It depends; you can nominate the food bank if it complies with our eligibility requirements. The food bank must:
 - Be associated with a registered US-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
 - Have a formal mission statement and separate program budget
 - Provide services offered to eligible participants without regard to their faith or willingness to participate in religious activities
 - Ensure that BECU award funds do not fund religious activities such as worship or proselytization
- **Q: Can I nominate a nonprofit that I created?**
A: Yes, as long as you have a BECU membership and the nonprofit meets all of the eligibility criteria.
- **Q: My child is a wonderful volunteer, but they are not 18. Can they apply? If not, can I apply on behalf of my child?**
A: Per our criteria, you must be 18 years or older to nominate a nonprofit. As a parent/guardian, if you and your child are both involved with the same nonprofit, you are welcome to apply. Please note the award will be in your name as the nominator, not your child's.
- **Q: I'm not a BECU member; can I apply anyway?**
A: PHPA is the member-inspired pillar of BECU's philanthropic giving strategy. In order to nominate a nonprofit, you must be a BECU member. To learn more about membership visit becu.org/join. Voting for the People's Choice Award opens in October and is open to the public.
- **Q: I'm not a BECU member, but my nonprofit has an account with BECU. Can I nominate them?**
A: Since the nonprofit is a member, they could submit a nomination, but unless you are a member, you are not eligible to submit a nomination on behalf of the nonprofit organization.
- **Q: My nonprofit was just founded. They filed for a 501(c)(3) number but haven't received one yet. Can I still nominate them?**
A: Unfortunately, the organization must be a registered 501(c)(3) at the time of nomination or be fiscally sponsored by a "parent" organization that is a 501(c)(3).

- **Q:** *Can I nominate an organization that doesn't have their own EIN, but is fiscally sponsored by a "parent" nonprofit?*

A: Yes, you will have the opportunity to specify this in the nomination form.

- **Q:** *Can I nominate a nonprofit that I work for?*

A: Yes, assuming you are a BECU member, and you volunteer with or donate to the nonprofit outside of your work functions, you are welcome to nominate a nonprofit you work for. You must nominate the nonprofit as a volunteer, not as an employee, and the information on your nomination form must refer only to your role as a supporter or volunteer. If you have an uncompensated role at the organization, that will count as volunteer work.

Member Nominations

- **Q:** *The nonprofit that I'd like to nominate fits under more than one of the giving areas – how do I choose?*

A: You can choose the category that you think best describes the organization's work. If selected as a semi-finalist, the nonprofit will be asked to complete a companion application, and they will also have the opportunity to select the category in which they want to be considered.

- **Q:** *Can I nominate more than one nonprofit?*

A: Yes! Please fully complete the application for each 501(c)(3) you'd like considered for an award.

- **Q:** *Can I tell my favorite nonprofit about this award program?*

A: Of course! Share info about this program with your favorite eligible nonprofits by sending them to becu.org/awards. Please note that all nominations must have unique answers written by the member. Nominations containing responses that were clearly copied and pasted from the nonprofit's website or other communication materials will be disqualified. The number of nominations received for a nonprofit has no bearing on the likelihood that they will receive an award. The review process is based on the quality of the application.

- **Q:** *Can employees of the nonprofit I nominate assist with or write up the nomination?*

A: You're welcome to use them as a resource for statistical information while filling out the nomination, but the nomination must be written and submitted by someone who meets our eligibility criteria (a BECU member). Additionally, nominations containing responses that are clearly copied and pasted from a nonprofit's website or other communication materials will be disqualified.

- **Q:** *How do I know if my nonprofit is registered 501(c)3?*

A: Check the organization's website or contact them and ask. You can also search nonprofits via the IRS Select Check Tool found here: <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Nonprofits/Exempt-Organizations-Select-Check>

- **Q:** *I have a lot to say – will the word limit/character count be enforced?*
A: We are excited to hear about your nominated organization. The system we use to manage the nomination form will not allow submissions that exceed the character count. **Character counts do include spaces and punctuation.**
- **Q:** *Will I be notified of my progress throughout the process?*
A: You will receive a confirmation email that your submission was received. If selected to move forward as a semi-finalist, you and the nonprofit will be notified in mid-May, and finalists will be notified by the end of July.
- **Q:** *Where can I send additional questions?*
A: Please review all the FAQs. If your question is not answered here, feel free to email any additional questions to communityrelations@becu.org
- **Q:** *I have some great photos of me volunteering with my nonprofit. Can I send them to you?*
A: Photos will not be considered as part of the nomination process, but we encourage members to share their BECU experience through stories and photos [via our website](#).
- **Q:** *I don't use the internet; can you send me a paper application?*
A: The award nomination process is only available electronically. Paper/hard copy applications are not available, but most public libraries offer free public internet access, if needed.
- **Q:** *The nonprofit I would like to nominate is not headquartered in your listed service areas but does serve and/or have an impact in those areas. Are they eligible?*
A: Yes, as long as they meet our eligibility criteria, and their work directly impacts the listed service areas.
- **Q:** *I submitted my nomination(s). Now what?*
A: If you haven't already, it is a good idea to let the nonprofit know that you have nominated them. You can let them know that organizations selected as semi-finalists will be notified in mid-May, and will be asked to complete a supplementary application to provide additional information about their work.

We will follow up with you in May regarding the status of your nomination(s).

Member Volunteer of the Year

- **Q:** *I have a friend who is amazing and should be Member Volunteer of the Year, but I'm not sure they will nominate themselves. Can I nominate them?*
A: We require self-nomination for the Member Volunteer of the Year Award. The award funds are granted to the nonprofit organization that was nominated by the member.

- **Q:** *Can I still apply if I've been granted the Member Volunteer of the Year Award in the past?*
A: Organizations may only receive the Member Volunteer of the Year Award once in their lifetime. However, you may nominate a nonprofit for other award consideration if they have not been a recipient of an award in the last three years, and they have not previously received any People Helping People award three times.

We have a three-year waiting period for past recipients to be able receive another award.
Example: If your nonprofit received an award in 2021, the organization is eligible to be nominated again in 2024. 2022 recipients are eligible to be nominated again in 2025, and 2023 recipients are eligible to be nominated again in 2026.

Nonprofit Application

- **Q:** *As an organization, we have no affiliation with BECU. Is this required to receive this award?*
A: No. Organizations are nominated by BECU members, and as long as the member has supported your organization and you meet the eligibility requirements, you can apply for and receive a People Helping People Award. Organizations that have received \$15,000 or more from BECU in the last three years do not qualify for People Helping People Awards consideration.
- **Q:** *What is expected of my organization, and what are my reporting requirements as a recipient of this award?*
A: People Helping People Award grants are considered unrestricted funds. BECU does not have a formal process requiring reporting from recipients.

As a recipient, you would join our growing People Helping People community of nonprofits that are supported by BECU members. Past recipients are invited to our annual People Helping People Award celebration to meet new recipients and share their stories. Nonprofit recipients are eligible for \$2,500 glidepath funding for the two years following their award. For more information on the PHPA event or glidepath funding, contact communityrelations@becu.org.

Recipients and Awards

- **Q:** *How will finalists be notified?*
A: Nonprofit finalists and the members who nominated them will be emailed using the email addresses submitted during the nomination/application process.
- **Q:** *When will the winners be announced?*
A: Winners will be announced in December 2025 at our People Helping People Awards celebration event and may be published on social media live from the event. Recipient information will be updated on becu.org within one week following the event.
- **Q:** *If my nonprofit is selected as a recipient, does the money come to me (the member nominator) or directly to the nonprofit that I nominated?*
A: Award funds will be provided to the nonprofits by the end of December. Awards go directly to the nonprofit organization; there is not a monetary award for the member nominator.

- **Q:** *If I nominate a nonprofit, and they receive an award, what do I (the member nominator) get?*
A: You and a guest will be invited to attend the award ceremony honoring our nonprofit recipients (Event date and format TBD).

- **Q:** *If my nonprofit is selected as a finalist, what does that mean?*
A: We will select a minimum of 18 finalists, and those finalists will be guaranteed a minimum award of \$15,000. All members who nominated nonprofit finalists will be asked to speak on camera about their nonprofit. All finalist organizations will be asked to provide photography to be used for PHPA marketing, including People's Choice Award voting. All finalists will also be considered for our Choice Awards voting in October. Public voting for the People's Choice award will be posted online at www.becu.org/awards during the voting window. The final award amounts for each finalist will be revealed at the People Helping People Award celebration event in December.