



APA Virginia's 2025 Awards Program

Let's Celebrate Outstanding Planning in Virginia!

Call for Nominations

The American Planning Association's Virginia Chapter honors outstanding contributions to the field of planning throughout the Commonwealth with its annual Awards Program. APA Virginia convenes a panel of peers each year for its Awards Committee, representative of the profession's depth and diversity, to identify, acknowledge, and promote exceptional planning.

APA Virginia's Awards Program strives to accomplish the following:

- **Helping Planners Plan**, by highlighting best practices and inspiring our members;
- **Helping Virginia Plan**, by promoting sound planning and decision-making in the Commonwealth;
- **Making Planning and Planners Matter**, by promoting the value and enhancing the credibility of planners among elected and appointed officials, the public and related professions;
- **Meeting Membership Needs**, by endorsing our members and their work;
- **Getting Planners Involved**, by engaging volunteers to serve on the Awards Committee and evaluate the work of their peers; and
- **Making Great Places Happen**, by helping members and communities replicate and build on the success of others.

Awards Categories

The Chapter's Awards Program recognizes Virginia's great planning efforts, individuals, and communities working to make communities of lasting value for all.

Please note that some awards may not be granted every year.

Please note the 2025 Awards Program will not award any honorable mention certificates.

Individual

The Individual Award categories honor great practitioners and advocates of planning in Virginia.

Foxhound Award - Distinguished New Professional

This award is named for the state dog of Virginia, the American Foxhound, and is awarded to an outstanding new planner with less than five years of experience. Just as the Foxhound is known for its good nature, reliability, and exceptional hunting abilities, this award recognizes a planner at the outset of their career who exhibits strong ethical conduct and a positive, collaborative spirit; produces high-quality work that meets professional standards and exceeds expectations; and demonstrates strong analytical skills and creative solutions in their planning approaches.



Larson Award - Distinguished Professional

In honor of [Glenn Larson, FAICP](#), who has dedicated his career to advancing the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Certified Planners, and Virginia communities by championing initiatives that promote integrity, diversity, equity, and volunteerism. This award recognizes a planner who is a model to the profession for their experience, their breadth of knowledge, their high ethical standards, as well as their exceptional skill and achievement.

Moeser Award - Outstanding Servant Leader

In honor of the late [Dr. John V. Moeser](#), our esteemed colleague who was described as an “advocate for a more just society and an urban studies trailblazer,” this award recognizes a planner who has contributed to the growth of the profession and the improvement of their community. This award recognizes a remarkable planner who has embodied APA’s mission statement of *Creating Great Communities for All* with their individual efforts.

Bluebell Award - Virginia’s Planning Advocate of the Year

New in 2025! Named for the Virginia Bluebell, this award celebrates individuals who cultivate the roots of effective planning in the Commonwealth - community-driven, inclusive, and equitable. This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advocating for historically underrepresented and marginalized communities, including those who have been excluded due to race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, or other systemic barriers. The successful nominee exemplifies a strong dedication to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in planning and community development, ensuring that all voices are heard, valued, and actively engaged in shaping the future of Virginia's communities.

Chandler Award – Virginia’s Citizen Planner(s) of the Year

In honor of [Dr. Mike Chandler](#), who over his 43-year career has educated more than 15,000 Virginians in matters involving land use and zoning practices. Dr. Chandler is “an icon in Virginia Planning” who “left a lasting impression on the Commonwealth.” This award recognizes an outstanding local board or commission, an individual board or commission member, a community leader, or a civic organization that has made a significant contribution to advancing planning in the Commonwealth.

Cardinal Award – Legislator of the Year

Named for the State bird, the Cardinal Award recognizes elected officials who can see the big picture and find solutions through the field of planning. National, local, and state legislators are eligible for this recognition.



Planning Efforts

The Planning Efforts Award category recognizes planning documents, programs or initiatives that make great places happen in the Commonwealth. *Depending on nominations received, submissions may be split into two sub-categories with a potential winner from each:*

- *Localities with a population under 100,000; and*
- *Localities with a population over 100,000.*

Breaking Barriers in Planning Award - Inclusion

This award recognizes planning efforts in Virginia that actively promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. The successful nominee will be a planning process, plan, program, and/or initiative that meaningfully addresses the needs and concerns of historically underrepresented and marginalized communities related to planning and planning adjacent efforts.

Holzheimer Award - Economic Development

In honor of [Dr. Terry Holzheimer](#), our esteemed former colleague who was described as “one of the deans of the economic development profession,” the Chapter will recognize great planning efforts for improving Virginia’s economic development. The successful nominee will show how their study, initiative, program, or even site development yielded economic development results for their locality, region, or state.

Old Dominion Award - Innovative Approaches

Virginia has many unique challenges, where innovative planning solutions are critical for making great places happen. The Innovative Approaches Award recognizes pioneering planning efforts in the Commonwealth. Nominees may include innovative planning processes, plans, programs, initiatives, or site developments that have or will result in real results.

Commonwealth Connectors Award - Transportation

Planners diligently work, sometimes over many years, to implement new ideas to solve the Commonwealth’s transportation challenges. From distribution centers to autonomous vehicles, each community is finding creative ways to meet the diversity of today’s modern-day transportation needs. This award highlights innovative and exceptional transportation-focused planning.

Virginia Award - Plan of the Year

The Virginia Plan of the Year Award honors the best planning document of the year. A successful nomination will show that the effort included outstanding planning processes, vision, implementation strategies, and innovative approaches. The planning document can be a local, regional or statewide effort.



Great Places

The Great Places Award category recognizes great places, developments, and communities in Virginia. *Depending on nominations received, submissions may be split into two sub-categories with a potential winner from each:*

- *Localities with a population under 100,000; and*
- *Localities with a population over 100,000.*

Sustainable Virginia Award - Resilient Community of the Year

This award recognizes a community's effort and commitment to build resilience through responsible planning practice and innovation. Successful nominees will present real-world solutions for buffering their community from the adverse effects of critical changes related to, for example, inadequate infrastructure, climate change, natural disasters, food and water shortages, economic restructuring, or institutional/organizational capacity changes.

Jamestown Award – Locality of the Year

In honor of the first local government in Virginia, the Chapter will recognize a locality that has undertaken sound and innovative planning practices, not in a single plan but through various efforts. This award recognizes a town, city, or county dedicated to the principles of planning.

Red Clay Award – Development of the Year

Virginia's red clay is the Commonwealth's traditional building material, making it an appropriate name for Virginia's Development of the Year Award. This recognition honors a development that exhibits the values of great planning, helping to create a great place in Virginia. Eligible nominees include infill developments, building rehabilitation projects, brownfield redevelopments, downtown redevelopment, and other similar projects.

Open Submittals

The Awards Committee leaves room for flexibility in the Awards Program. If there is a remarkable individual, place, effort, or initiative that does not neatly fall within the defined award categories, please submit a nomination for Open Submittal consideration. The Awards Committee reserves the right to grant special recognitions and/or awards.



Nomination Requirements

You are encouraged to submit nominations that include planning projects, initiatives, efforts, and individuals that exemplify the objectives and the Award Categories listed above. The following is required for each [award nomination submission](#):

1. **Abstract:** Only PDF or Word document accepted (2-page maximum) that includes:
 - a. A summary of the nominated individual, planning effort, or great place;
 - b. Why this is worthy of statewide recognition; and
 - c. How this advances planning in the Commonwealth.
2. **Nominator Contact:** Name, title, employer, mailing address, email address, and phone number of nominator
3. **Nominee(s) Contact:** Name, name pronunciation, title, employer, mailing address, email address, and phone number of nominee(s)
4. **Nominee Photo:** Only JPEG or PNG format accepted
 - a. For Individual Awards, headshot of the nominee (optional)
 - b. For Planning Efforts/Great Places Awards, 1-3 photos representative of the nominee
5. **Supporting Material:** Only PDF, Word, JPEG, and/or PNG documentation accepted to help the Awards Committee review the nomination (i.e. public outreach materials, maps, plans, brochures, press clips, and/or links to related content)

Nomination Submissions

The Call for Nominations for the 2025 Awards Program is open **now**, and will end on **February 28th at midnight**.

- Submit all award nominations using the [awards submission Google Form](#). If you have issues with the Google Form, please submit award nominations to awards@apavirginia.com.
- Award nominations will be reviewed in March, ranked, and then selected by the Chapter's 2025 Awards Committee.
- The nominator for the award winners (and nominees that were not chosen) will be notified in May to ensure availability of award winners to attend the Awards Ceremony luncheon at the in-person [2025 APA Virginia Annual Conference](#) July 20-23, 2025 in Portsmouth.
- Winners of the planning effort and great place awards will be invited to present a 15-minute overview of their award winning submission as part of a Quick Take session during the [2024 APA Virginia Annual Conference](#), as well as at a "Your Hour with APA Virginia" webinar following the conference.



Incentives

- Each award nomination submission will receive **one FREE APA Virginia t-shirt!** Whether or not the nomination is an award winner, we want to acknowledge the time and effort it takes to pull together the nomination.
 - Please indicate preferred unisex t-shirt size in the awards submission Google Form.
 - T-shirts will be available for pickup only at the [2025 APA Virginia Annual Conference](#).
 - If multiple people are submitting one award nomination, only one person is eligible for a free APA Virginia t-shirt.
- All award winners will be eligible to register for the **full** [2025 APA Virginia Annual Conference](#) at the **discounted Speaker rate!**
 - Please note that your APA Virginia membership status applies to Conference registration. Award winners who are APA Virginia members may register with the Member Speaker rate and those who are not members may register with the Non-Member Speaker rate.
 - For group award winners, a maximum of **THREE** people are eligible to register at the discounted Speaker rate.
 - The Awards Ceremony is included in the full conference registration fee.
 - If an award winner is unable to attend the full conference but would like to attend the Awards Ceremony, the Chapter will cover the cost of the luncheon. For group award winners, a maximum of **three** individuals are eligible for this incentive.
 - We highly encourage nominators to attend the Awards Ceremony luncheon and the [2025 APA Virginia Annual Conference](#). However, the Chapter is not able to cover the cost of the luncheon or a discounted conference rate for nominators.

NOTE: APA Virginia reserves the right to use information or graphics from awarded applications for awards program, website, social media, emails, or newsletter publication.