

**TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION STAR AWARD**  
**FOR HELPING TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF *60X30TX***  
**2016 APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDELINES**

**Purpose**

The Texas Higher Education Star Award was originally established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board 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*, which brought Texas from 2000 to 2015. The state's new higher education plan, *60x30TX*, adopted by the Coordinating Board on July 23, 2015, builds on the success of *Closing the Gaps* and is designed to establish a globally competitive workforce in Texas by 2030.

Given the success of the Star Award program, the program is being continued, albeit with revised guidelines to recognize exceptional contributions toward meeting one or more of the goals of the new Texas higher education plan. As with the original Star Award for Closing the Gaps program, recipients will receive a custom-designed award and public recognition for their efforts in the fall at the annual Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference.

**Changes for the 2016 Star Award**

- The number of potential awards annually has been reduced from "up to 12" to "up to 7," based on the maximum number of Star Awards presented in any given year during the period 2001 to 2015.
- Recognition for exceptional contributions toward meeting one or more of the goals of *Closing the Gaps by 2015* – Participation, Success, Excellence, and Research – has been revised to reflect recognition for exceptional contributions toward meeting one or more of the goals of *60x30TX*:
  - a. Increasing the postsecondary educational attainment level of the state's 25- to 34-year-old population (The Overarching Goal).
  - b. Increasing the number of students completing a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas (Completion Goal).
  - c. Increasing the number of programs with identified marketable skills at Texas public institutions of higher education (Marketable Skills Goal).
  - d. Implementing programs or cost efficiencies that help to ensure that undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages (Student Debt Goal).
- The category of groups and organizations in Texas eligible for the Star Award has been revised from "groups and organizations in Texas (such as those that help promote a college-going culture)" to "groups and organizations in Texas (such as those that help promote student completion of a certificate or degree, or help reduce student loan debt)."
- The criteria for the Star Award have been revised to reflect the goals of *60x30TX* as stated above, and in recognition that programs, projects, and activities; groups and organizations; and partnerships will not yet have been helping to achieve the goals of the new plan for a period of three years. Instead, programs/organizations/partnerships will need to clearly demonstrate improvement and excellence through the use of benchmarks and other comparison data that allow progress to be monitored and evaluated.

### **Categories for the 2016 Star Award**

1. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas institutions of higher education;
2. Groups and organizations in Texas (such as those that help promote student completion of a certificate or degree, or help reduce student loan debt); and
3. Partnerships (among higher education institutions, public/private schools/districts, businesses, or the community).

### **Eligibility for the 2016 Star Award**

1. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas institutions of higher education that are helping to meet one or more of the goals of *60x30TX*, including those at:
  - public and independent two- and four-year colleges and universities;
  - public technical and state colleges;
  - public and independent health science centers; and
  - degree-granting career colleges and schools.
2. Groups and organizations in Texas that are helping to meet one or more of the goals of *60x30TX* (such as those that help promote student completion of a certificate or degree, or help reduce student loan debt), including:
  - businesses; and
  - community organizations.
3. Partnerships in Texas that are helping to meet one or more of the goals of *60x30TX*, including partnerships among:
  - public and independent higher education institutions as noted in eligibility category #1;
  - public and private schools or districts;
  - businesses; and
  - community organizations.

### **Criteria for the 2016 Star Award**

1. Programs/projects/activities, groups/organizations, and partnerships must:
  - demonstrate successful outcomes in areas of: (1) the educational attainment of the state's 25- to 34-year-old population; (2) student completion of a certificate or degree; (3) the number of programs with identified marketable skills; or (4) 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;
  - clearly demonstrate improvement and excellence through the use of benchmarks and other comparison data that allow progress to be monitored and evaluated and that are attributable to the efforts of the program/organization/partnership; and
  - clearly demonstrate an efficient cost/benefit ratio per student.

## **Review Process**

### **Step One – Announcement and Call for Nominations**

The 2016 Star Award Program is announced by May 9, 2016. Coordinating Board staff will send the announcement and call for Star Award nominations to the following groups:

- 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, and public relations officers);
- Degree-granting career colleges and schools (presidents and executive officers);
- 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
- Chambers of Commerce of Texas' larger cities.

### **Step Two – Nominations**

To be considered for the 2016 Star Award, completed nominations (including self-nominations) must be received at the Coordinating Board's offices by 5:00 p.m. on June 13, 2016.

Nominations must be submitted electronically as a pdf file via email to the following address: [StarAward@thecb.state.tx.us](mailto:StarAward@thecb.state.tx.us).

### **Step Three – Notifications to Nominees**

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

### **Step Four – Applications for Star Award**

A formal application form must be completed for (or by) each nominee for the Star Award. To be considered for the 2016 Star Award, completed applications must be received at the Coordinating Board's offices by 5:00 p.m. on July 18, 2016. Applications, including at least one letter of recommendation, must be submitted electronically as a pdf file via email to the following address: [StarAward@thecb.state.tx.us](mailto:StarAward@thecb.state.tx.us).

### **Step Five – Internal Staff Review Panel Reviews All Applications**

A Coordinating Board Internal Staff Review Panel 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 recommended finalists to the Commissioner of Higher Education on the basis of criteria established for the 2016 Star Award. The Commissioner will recommend finalists to the Chair of the Coordinating Board. The Commissioner and 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 Coordinating Board members, three Texas business and community leaders, and three out-of-state higher education experts, will review the applications of all finalists and determine which of these finalists will be honored with the Star Award on the basis of criteria established for the 2016 Star Award.

### **Step Seven – Notification to Finalists**

Coordinating Board staff will notify finalists by early September and invite them to attend a special ceremony during which Star Award winners will be announced and honored.

### **Step Eight – Awards Presentation**

The 2016 Star Awards will be presented at the Coordinating Board's annual Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference, on a date still to be determined.

<b>Timeline for the 2016 Texas Higher Education Star Awards</b>	
<b>Dates in 2016</b>	<b>What Occurs</b>
May 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nomination forms and supporting materials are posted to the Coordinating Board's website</li></ul>
May 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Announcement of the 2016 Star Award Program</li><li>• Call for Star Award nominations</li></ul>
June 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nomination deadline</li></ul>
June 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nominees notified</li></ul>
July 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application deadline</li></ul>
July 22 (on or about)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal Staff Review Panel Planning Meeting</li></ul>
July 22 – August 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal Staff Review Panel reviews all applications</li></ul>
August 5 (on or about)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal Staff Review Panel ballots due</li><li>• Internal Staff Review Panel Meeting</li></ul>
August 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal Staff Review Panel recommends finalists to the Commissioner of Higher Education</li></ul>
August 12 – August 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Commissioner recommends finalists to the Chair of the Coordinating Board; actual finalists are determined</li></ul>
August 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finalists' applications are sent to the members of the External Review Committee</li></ul>
August 19 – September 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• External Review Committee reviews all finalists' applications</li></ul>
September 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• External Review Committee ballots due</li></ul>
Week of September 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• External Review Committee holds telephone conference on a date to be determined during the week of September 7</li></ul>
September 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finalists are notified and invited to attend the Texas Higher Education Star Awards Ceremony</li></ul>
Fall 2016 (Date To Be Determined)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2016 Awards presented at the Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference</li></ul>