

Change

Makers

2026
Awards Program
"Stars Among Us"

Call for Nominations

Deadline:
Thursday, December 4, 2025

LeadingAge[®]
South Carolina
the voice of aging services



Dear LeadingAge Members,

The 2026 *Stars Among Us Awards* are now open for nominations!

Each year, these Awards honor the individuals and teams who lead with purpose and elevate the quality of life for older adults across our state. These are the caregivers who show up early and stay late. The leaders who inspire progress. The programs that turn bold ideas into daily impact.

The *Stars Among Us Awards* offer us something truly special, a chance to pause, reflect, and celebrate the people at the heart of our mission.

Across every LeadingAge SC organization, remarkable work is being done; often quietly, often without expectation of recognition but always with deep compassion and commitment to older adults. These awards recognize the everyday excellence of staff who step up without being asked, leaders who uplift others without seeking attention, volunteers who show up week after week, and programs that solve problems with creativity and care.

By submitting a nomination, you're giving someone more than an award. You're giving them a moment of pride, validation, and joy. You're letting them know their work matters and that someone noticed.

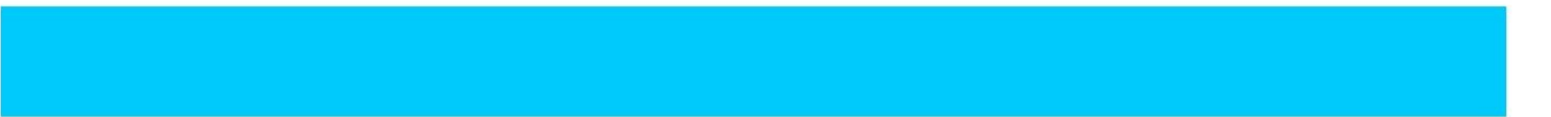
We invite you to celebrate the shining stars within your community. You may nominate as many individuals as you'd like. Every nominee will be honored at the 2026 Annual Conference & Trade Show, and their stories will help inspire others.

As you review this year's award categories, think about the people and programs in your organization who deserve to be recognized. From the volunteers, support staff, administration, residents, to employers, board members, and community connections. These awards aren't just acknowledgments, they're tributes to those shaping a stronger, more compassionate future for aging in South Carolina.

The deadline for all awards nominations is Thursday, December 4, 2025.

We look forward to hearing your stories and celebrating the people who make our mission possible. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful nominations and for helping us honor excellence in aging.

Warm regards,
Leslie Anzalone
LeadingAge SC Awards Committee Chair



HOW TO SUBMIT A NOMINATION

Individuals, organizations or groups are encouraged to submit nominations for the award categories. A nomination form is enclosed and may be photocopied for multiple nominations. Please use a separate form for each nomination.

Each nomination should include:

- A completed nomination form
- A cover letter explaining why you believe the nominee should be considered for the award
- Letters of recommendation and other materials supporting the nomination

THE AWARDS PROCESS

The LeadingAge South Carolina Awards Committee reviews the nominations and selects the winners. The Committee is comprised of a cross-section of Association members. Award recipients will be notified following approval by the Committee. All nominations must be received at the LeadingAge South Carolina no later than Thursday, December 4, 2025 in order to be considered.



AWARD CATEGORIES

1) Award of Honor

The Association's most prestigious award will be presented to an individual who has made a unique and/or exceptional contribution to LeadingAge South Carolina and their work has impacted the industry of aging services with excellence.

Criteria:

- The nominee may be a Board member, employee of a member organization or other party who has made a significant contribution to LeadingAge South Carolina
- This award recognizes exceptional and unique service and may not necessarily be given every year
- Award winner will be announced at the 2026 Annual Conference & Trade Show

2) Business Member of the Year Award

Presented to a LeadingAge South Carolina Business Member that has contributed to the work of the Association and/or its members.

Criteria:

- Participation on LeadingAge SC committees
- Support or sponsorship of programs and events
- Contributions to the well-being of South Carolina's seniors through corporate charitable work and volunteer efforts

3) Excellence in Caring Award – Caregiver

Presented to a caregiver employed by a LeadingAge South Carolina member organization who has demonstrated an exceptional proficiency in the delivery of quality resident care services to the residents of the organization. This category includes, but is not limited to, RNs, LPNs, and CNAs.

Criteria:

- The recipient of this award will have demonstrated skills, both professional and interpersonal, that exceeded expectations
- Examples of a candidate's exceptional contributions to the organization, the organization's residents, or other staff members of the organization, which resulted in the delivery of quality services to the residents of the organization, must accompany nominations in this category.
- Caregiver employees must have been employed for the last two consecutive years with their current employer/member organization

AWARD CATEGORIES *(continued)*

4) Excellence in Caring Award – Support and Service Staff

Presented to a support staff member employed by a LeadingAge South Carolina member organization who has demonstrated an exceptional proficiency in the performance of his or her job responsibilities. This category includes, but is not limited to, dietary, housekeeping, laundry, maintenance, social services, pastoral care, activities personnel and office staff. **(Administrators, CEOs, Executive Directors, Housing Managers, and Service Program Directors are not eligible.)**

Criteria:

- The recipient of this award will have demonstrated skills, both professional and interpersonal, that exceeded expectations
- Examples of a candidate's exceptional contributions to the organization, in the performance of his or her job responsibilities, must accompany nominations in this category
- All support and service staff employees must have been employed for the last two consecutive years with their current employer/member organization

5) Innovation of the Year Award

Award recognizes an innovative “best practice” program or service in a long-term care or senior housing community.

Criteria:

- The program or service may focus on new directions in caregiving, expanding service options for residents and the local community, engaging outside agencies in mutually beneficial program, service or outreach partnerships, or other outstanding initiatives that promote and enhance quality of life for senior residents, staff and/or the surrounding community
- Winner(s) will be announced and invited to display their innovative program/service at the 2026 Annual Conference & Trade Show

6) Outstanding Leader Award:

Presented to an employee of a LeadingAge South Carolina provider member organization to honor a person whose leadership is demonstrated through vision, servanthood, mentoring others, and commitment to older adults. This leadership award is open to individuals in any service setting, at any level of the organization regardless of title, role or tenure. Think creatively about experienced and emerging leaders in all areas of your organization.

Criteria:

- Leadership expressed through vision, integrity and courage to improve the lives of older adults
- Actions that demonstrate characteristics of a strong mentor and motivator for others
- Specific example of this person engaging and influencing others in advancing change
- Share a story that illustrates this person's exceptional leadership in action
- One letter of support from the nominee's supervisor, site leader or board member
- One or more additional letters of support from team members, residents, or community members (minimum one; up to three)

7) Volunteer Service Award:

Presented annually to an individual or group who has given time and resources to a LeadingAge South Carolina member facility, simply for the love of giving, for the benefit of the home and community.

Criteria:

- The quality of services and proficient use of talents should be considered as important as the number of hours/years served or offices held
- May be an auxiliary, a concerned member of the community or a resident volunteer

LeadingAge South Carolina Award Nomination (Please duplicate this form for each nominee)



- ☐ 1. Award of Honor
- ☐ 2. Business Member of the Year Award
- ☐ 3. Excellence in Caring Award – Caregiver
- ☐ 4. Excellence in Caring Award – Support & Service Staff
- ☐ 5. Innovation of the Year Award
- ☐ 6. Outstanding Leader Award
- ☐ 7. Volunteer Service Award

All entries must be received at LeadingAge South Carolina or postmarked by **midnight December 4, 2025.**

Carefully follow the award criteria for your nomination in preparing your supporting documents. Be as specific as possible. Letters of recommendation from others are encouraged.

Nominee Information:

Name: _____ Title (if applicable): _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ FAX: _____ Email: _____

* If selected to receive this award, will your nominee be present to accept the award? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Nominator Information:

Submitted by: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Ways to Nominate:

Mail this form with your letter of nomination and support letters or other material as indicated in the award criteria to:

LeadingAge SC Awards Program Nomination Application
3022 S Morgan Point Road #250
Mount Pleasant, SC 29466

Email: KSouth@leadingagesc.org

Questions: Email: KSouth@leadingagesc.org or call 843.518.1131

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by midnight on Thursday, December 4, 2025.**