



FAQs, Nomination Questions, and Criteria

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. I/my organization won a sPARK Award previously. Can I/my organization submit a nomination again this year?

Yes, previous sPARK Award winners are eligible to submit nominations. However, the Selection Committee will prioritize submissions that are recent, relevant, and impactful. We discourage nominations for programs, organizations, or initiatives that have already received a sPARK Award unless they have significantly evolved or advanced since being recognized.

We encourage individuals/organizations that have previously been awarded to submit nominations for any specific programs/projects/initiatives that have not been previously selected or submitted for consideration.

2. Can I nominate an individual or organization without informing them?

No. If you are nominating someone other than yourself or your organization, you must provide their contact information in your submission so they can be notified. All nominees are required to review and confirm the accuracy of their nomination.

3. Can I encourage other individuals to submit multiple nominations for the same individual or program to increase their chances of winning?

No, we discourage submitting duplicate nominations and the Selection Committee will only review one aggregate nomination in the case of duplicates. Instead, you may include a document listing individuals who endorse the nomination. Please note that the Selection Committee evaluates nominations based on the quality and impact of the nominee's work, not the number of submissions received.

4. If I win a sPARK Award, can I accept the cash prize if I am not a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization?

No, the cash prize is awarded only to active 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that can provide proof of tax-exempt status. If the winner is not a 501(c)(3), they may choose a nonprofit organization to receive the cash prize on their behalf.

5. How are the sPARK Award winners selected?

The volunteer Selection Committee, composed of dedicated community leaders with diverse expertise and a passion for Balboa Park, reviews all sPARK Awards nominations. Their collective judgment ensures that the winning nominee best exemplifies the innovative work that is happening within each category.

Balboa Park is a place for everyone. We strongly encourage you to highlight any aspects of diversity, equity, inclusion, or accessibility related to your nomination for consideration.

Celebrating Culture Award – Nomination Questions, and Criteria

Celebrating Culture Award - This award honors exceptional contributions that showcase and provide access to art, performance, education, history, or civic participation to Balboa Park's diverse local, regional and international visitors.

- 1. List the names of all the individuals, organizations or entities being nominated for this award.**
- 2. Describe the project, program, or experience being nominated for this award.**
For consideration: What was it called? What did it do? Did it address a need? Who was involved? Where and when did it take place?
- 3. Describe how this effort highlighted art, performance, education, history and/or civic participation.**
For consideration: What cultural elements were used to create the effort (art, performance, etc.)? Did the effort introduce cultural elements to a new or different audience? Where various cultural elements combined to create a new experience? If so, how did combining different elements enhance the overall experience?
- 4. Describe the specific connection(s) to Balboa Park.**
For consideration: Was Balboa Park essential in some way or provide a catalyst to make this happen? Were the parties involved connected to Balboa Park or did it take place primarily in Balboa Park? Did it serve or benefit Balboa Park as a whole or its spaces, institutions, employees, visitors or other stakeholders?
- 5. Describe the outcome(s) or result(s) of this effort.**
For consideration: What were quantitative and/or qualitative outputs or outcomes? What was the overall impact or lesson learned? Were there challenges that were overcome? How did it benefit Balboa Park spaces, institutions, visitors, employees or other stakeholders? What were other benefits? Can it serve as a model to others or be scaled up?
- 6. Describe any diversity, equity, inclusion or accessibility activities that were part of this effort.**
For consideration: Was there intentional effort to incorporate or represent diverse points of view? Was there intentional effort to target or serve diverse audiences?
- 7. Describe why the effort was innovative, imaginative or creative.**
For consideration: Was it the first time it had been done or did it create something new by building upon other efforts? Was it conceptualized or developed in some unique way? Was it risky or did it push the envelope in any way? Did it make people view or experience Balboa Park differently than before?
- 8. Is there anything else you feel we should know about this effort?**

Uniting People Award– Nomination Questions, and Criteria

Uniting People Award - This award recognizes collaborative efforts across disciplines or sectors that strengthen connections within the Balboa Park community. Nominations highlight work that bridges organizational, demographic, or generational boundaries to increase park engagement.

- 1. List the names of all the individuals, organizations or entities being nominated for this award.**
- 2. Describe the project, program, experience or endeavor being nominated for this award.**
For consideration: What was it called? What did it do? Did it address a need? Who was involved? Where and when did it take place?
- 3. Describe how the effort involved players from different sectors, disciplines or organizations.**
For consideration: Why was it necessary to have multiple players? How or why did they come together? What were their contributions or roles or perspectives? What were some tools or practices that helped this partnership or collaboration?
- 4. Describe the specific connection(s) to Balboa Park.**
For consideration: Was Balboa Park essential in some way or provide a catalyst to make this happen? Were the parties involved connected to Balboa Park or did it take place primarily in Balboa Park? Did it serve or benefit Balboa Park as a whole or its spaces, institutions, employees, visitors or other stakeholders?
- 5. Describe the outcome(s) or result(s) of this effort.**
For consideration: What were quantitative and/or qualitative outputs or outcomes? What was the overall impact or lesson learned? Were there challenges that were overcome? How did it benefit Balboa Park spaces, institutions, visitors, employees or other stakeholders? What were other benefits? Can it serve as a model to others or be scaled up?
- 6. Describe any diversity, equity, inclusion or accessibility activities that were part of this effort.**
For consideration: Was there intentional effort to incorporate or represent diverse points of view? Was there intentional effort to target or serve diverse audiences?
- 7. Describe why the effort was innovative, imaginative or creative.**
For consideration: Was it the first time it had been done or did it create something new by building upon other efforts? Was it conceptualized or developed in some unique way? Was it risky or did it push the envelope in any way? Did it make people view or experience Balboa Park differently than before?
- 8. Is there anything else you feel we should know about this effort?**

Sustaining Nature Award– Nomination Questions, and Criteria

Sustaining Nature Award - This award honors significant contributions to Balboa Park's environment, including ecosystem enhancement, increased environmental stewardship, or strengthening connections between natural spaces and community health.

- 1. List the names of all the individuals, organizations or entities being nominated for this award.**
- 2. Describe the project, program, experience or endeavor being nominated for this award.**
For consideration: What was it called? What did it do? Did it address a need? Who was involved? Where and when did it take place?
- 3. Describe how the effort improves the environmental health and sustainability of Balboa Park, and thus, the natural world.**
For consideration: What tangible improvements were made? Does the effort build upon previous environmental health and sustainability activities and/or does it support such activities in the future? What environmental conservation or sustainability educational, informational, or awareness-building efforts were involved? How does the effort support positive environmental impacts broadly?
- 4. Describe the specific connection(s) to Balboa Park.**
For consideration: Was Balboa Park essential in some way or provide a catalyst to make this happen? Were the parties involved connected to Balboa Park or did it take place primarily in Balboa Park? Did it serve or benefit Balboa Park as a whole or its spaces, institutions, employees, visitors or other stakeholders?
- 5. Describe the outcome(s) or result(s) of this effort.**
For consideration: What were quantitative and/or qualitative outputs or outcomes? What was the overall impact or lesson learned? Were there challenges that were overcome? How did it benefit Balboa Park spaces, institutions, visitors, employees or other stakeholders? What were other benefits? Can it serve as a model to others or be scaled up?
- 6. Describe any diversity, equity, inclusion or accessibility activities that were part of this effort.**
For consideration: Was there intentional effort to incorporate or represent diverse points of view? Was there intentional effort to target or serve diverse audiences?
- 7. Describe why the effort was innovative, imaginative or creative.**
For consideration: Was it the first time it had been done or did it create something new by building upon other efforts? Was it conceptualized or developed in some unique way? Was it risky or did it push the envelope in any way? Did it make people view or experience Balboa Park differently than before?
- 8. Is there anything else you feel we should know about this effort?**