

2026 DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIST NOMINATION GUIDELINES & CRITERIA



The Distinguished Scientist award recognizes American Heart Association members who have made major and independent contributions to research anchored in cardiovascular, stroke, or brain health.

Please read the following guidelines and criteria carefully to ensure your nomination is completed in full. Nominations that do not follow the guidelines or meet the nominee requirements or are incomplete will not be considered.

COUNCIL NOMINATION ELIGIBILITY

- Nominees must be a Premium Professional or Premium Professional Plus member in good standing of the AHA (*dues up to date*) at the time of nominations; however, the nominee is not required to be a Fellow of the AHA (FAHA).
- Self-nominations will not be accepted.
- Nominees not selected in previous years are eligible for re-consideration. However, if a candidate has been submitted up to 3 times without being selected, we suggest a waiting period of at least 3 years before that candidate is submitted again.
- A list of previous nominations and election history is provided on the [Distinguished Scientist Nominations page](#) for your reference.
- Councils are encouraged to collaborate on nominations that cross disciplines.
- To confirm the proposed nominee's membership status, please contact your Council Account Manager or distinguishedscientists@heart.org.

NOMINATION PROCESS

- The nominator will be responsible for communicating with the nominee(s) to obtain his/her agreement to be nominated.
- The nominator will also collaborate with the nominee to ensure the nomination packet is fully completed.

PREPARATION OF NOMINATION MATERIALS

The nomination materials should convey a clear and concise message of worthiness. Make certain that the factual content of materials can readily be used to conduct a clear, uniform, objective and unbiased review.

The submitted nomination materials will provide the sole basis for the reviews. Please note that detailed contact information is required for the individuals submitting the nomination.

- Completed application form: Provides general demographic information about the candidate, must be completed in full.
- Two (2) recommendation letters (Proposer and Secondar) from individuals familiar with the nominee's work.
 - ✓ People writing the Proposer and Secondar letters must be active Premium Professional or Premium Professional Plus members of the American Heart Association (*dues up to date*) at the time of nomination.
 - ✓ People who write the letters should be familiar with the candidate's work and its impact on the field.
 - ✓ People writing the letters must articulate, as concretely as possible, the major achievements that the nominee has produced; what the subsequent impact has been, especially in the context of the assessment criteria; and where and how they have provided leadership and impact. The recommendation letters should not focus on volunteer experience with the Association, as it is not considered.
 - ✓ The Proposer's letter should not exceed 750 words.
 - ✓ The Secondar's letter should not exceed 350 words.
 - ✓ The Nominator may write the Proposer letter of recommendation.
- Up-to-date curriculum vitae.
- A bibliography of the nominee's 20 most significant publications.
- Printed versions of five (5) of the nominee's major publications.
- Recent head/shoulder photograph. The photograph must be submitted electronically in JPEG format.
- A citation, 100 words or less, summarizing and highlighting the nominee's achievement. (This is a section of the application form)

RECOGNITION

The elected Distinguished Scientists and Council Chairs will be notified in late May. The selections will be announced in the digital Council newsletter *Connections*, Professional Heart Daily web page, AHA journals and the Scientific Sessions program.

The selected candidates will be acknowledged by the American Heart Association President at Scientific Sessions, given complimentary VIP registration status, and receive a framed certificate at the nominating Council's dinner or reception. Distinguished Scientists who travel to Scientific Sessions will receive a stipend to help cover the cost of travel, lodging and meals.

NOMINATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions will be communicated by early 2026. Once determined, and due to strict timelines, no materials will be accepted after the submission deadline passes.

QUESTIONS

If you have questions about the American Heart Association Distinguished Scientist nomination criteria or process, please contact distinguishedscientists@heart.org.