

2026 NEA ESP OF THE YEAR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION REQUIREMENTS

- This document summarizes the requirements for letters of recommendation. Individuals writing letters of recommendation should review this document to ensure all requirements are met.
- When complete, letters should be submitted to the nominee or affiliate point of contact (POC).
- To learn more about the NEA ESP of the Year (ESPOTY) Award, visit www.nea.org/espoty-nomination. If you have questions, contact Jennie Young at jyoung@nea.org.

Nominees must submit three (3) letters of recommendation (no more, no less). Nominees should seek letters of recommendation from individuals who can cite specific examples of how the nominee has impacted one or more of the four criterion areas. Letter writers should be from the nominee's school/worksite (e.g., fellow ESPs, teachers or other colleagues; principals, superintendents), local/state affiliate/union (e.g., elected leaders, fellow members, staff), and community (e.g., current or former students; parents/families/guardians of students; representatives of charitable, faith-based, non-profit or other community-based organizations) as these capacities align with the award criteria.

Letters should note how long the writer has known the nominee and describe the capacity (e.g., school/worksite, local/state affiliate/union, community) through which the writer is commenting on the nominee's accomplishments and impact.

What should letters address/include?

Letters of Recommendation should further demonstrate the nominee's accomplishments and impact in the following award criteria. Letters can address/include accomplishments and impact in more than one criterion area.

- **Impact on students.** Describe specific actions you have taken and how those actions positively impacted student learning, social-emotional well-being, health and/or safety.
- **Impact on families and the community.** Describe specific actions you have taken and how those actions have positively impacted families and/or the local community.
- **Union engagement and activism, with a focus on ESP workforce issues.** Describe how your engagement and activism with the local or state union/association have positively impacted ESPs' professional stature (e.g., importance and reputation), stability (e.g., wages, benefits, and job security), and/or effectiveness (e.g., professional practice).
- **Impact on colleagues.** Describe specific actions you have taken and how those actions have positively impacted colleagues at your school campus, school district, or worksite.

What are the formatting requirements?

- Letters **must be typed, one page maximum**, with **one-inch margins** and **minimum 11-point font**. Handwritten letters will not be accepted.
- Letters can be submitted as a **PDF or Word document**.
- Letters should include the **writer's signature (typed or handwritten), first and last name, title/position, and phone number or email address** if we have questions.
- Letters can be addressed to the selection committee or "to whom it may concern," but it is not required.

Questions? Email Jennie Young at jyoung@nea.org.

All award materials can be downloaded from www.nea.org/espoty-nomination.