

STARS

LeadingAge Ohio **YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE**

Nomination Guidelines

The LeadingAge Ohio STARS Awards honor frontline staff who make our member organizations extraordinary. These awards celebrate the individuals who bring skill, compassion, and commitment to their daily work—not managers or leadership roles, but the essential team members who keep communities running. Past honorees have included certified nursing assistants, bus drivers, maintenance technicians, dietary aides, housekeepers, activities coordinators, and more.

How to Submit

1. Download and complete the [fillable PDF nomination form](#).
2. Save your file, use this format: NomineeFullName_Organization.pdf **Example:** JaneSmith_Organization.pdf
3. Upload the completed form to the [shared OneDrive folder here](#).
4. Deadline for submission: March 12 - late or incomplete nominations will not be considered.
5. Complete the [STARS Awards Ceremony RSVP form](#).

Tips for Writing a Strong Nomination

A strong nomination tells a story. Instead of listing duties, describe the impact your nominee has. **Share a story** - give a specific example of how the nominee made a difference. **Include important voices** - a short testimonial from a resident, client or colleague makes the story more powerful. **Show character** - Highlight kindness, problem-solving, patience, or dedication. **Connect to mission** - Reflect how the nominee lives out your organization's mission.

Sample Nomination: *"I was new to Kendal, to Oberlin, to Ohio; everything was new, including being without a car. Driver Brian Milligan did all he could to make me feel comfortable on my first shopping trip on the Kendal bus, explaining at every step what the routine was. Now, he always remembers that I need a small shopping cart and goes out of his way to find one for me. Typical. Brian does this for every Kendal resident he serves; he is unfailingly friendly, attentive, willing, and caring. He's a master at coordinating multiple destinations and getting everyone back on time. He knows all the 'regulars' on the bus and what their needs and tendencies are. If someone he is expecting doesn't show up, he will call or even go knock on their door to make sure they're OK. He is ever watchful when any unsteady resident is on the move. Homeward bound, he will stop at the best places for the residents to reach their cottages most safely and easily. 'I'm here for you,' Brian said the first time I got on the bus. Those words could be considered his "theme song," and I have witnessed him living them many times."* – Kendal at Oberlin resident

Special Recognition: The Changemaker Award

The Changemaker Award winner will be celebrated at the STARS event and at the LeadingAge Ohio Annual conference, where Changemakers will be the theme. Their story will be highlighted with a photo on the conference center floor, inspiring attendees with their extraordinary impact. When submitting your nomination, consider whether your nominee's story demonstrates this level of transformative change. If so—and if the nominee would feel comfortable being recognized in this way—please include the word "Changemaker" in your nomination for them to be considered.



Preparing for the Awards Ceremony

The STARS Awards Ceremony is one of the most joyful days of the year. It's our chance to roll out the red carpet for the frontline staff who keep our communities strong. To make the day as special as possible for your nominees, here's what you need to know:

RSVP and Attendance

After you've submitted your nominations, don't forget to complete the [STARS Awards Ceremony RSVP form](#). Each organization may nominate up to six STARS. Organizations can bring up to six guests to accompany the STARS, for a total of sixteen people per organization. Think of it as a built-in cheering section—friends, family, coworkers, and leadership are all encouraged to attend! Having leadership there adds an extra layer of celebration, showing nominees how much their work matters.

Keep Us in the Loop

Plans change—we understand! If a nominee or guest can't make it, please let LeadingAge Ohio staff know right away. That way, we can update the host site and make sure our meal counts are spot-on. Communication helps us make sure the day goes smoothly for everyone.

Dress to Celebrate

This is your time to shine. We recommend wearing slightly dressier attire, but it can range from jeans to dresses and slacks. The important thing is that your nominees feel celebrated, comfortable and confident—this day is all about them.

Make It a Day to Remember

Many organizations turn the STARS Awards into a full-day celebration. Some travel together by activities bus, while others plan something fun after the ceremony to keep the excitement going. Because the event is held in late winter or early spring, we recommend indoor activities. Popular ideas include stopping together for coffee or ice cream, going bowling, visiting an arcade, or another shared team activity.

Keepsakes and Celebration Extras

The day is filled with photo opportunities, so come ready to smile! Each award recipient will receive:

- A copy of their nomination to treasure.
- A STARS Awards certificate to display with pride.
- A custom STARS Awards enamel pin to mark their achievement.

To make the ceremony even more festive, we'll also provide:

- Paper copies of the program as a keepsake.
- Pom-poms so every guest can cheer, wave, and celebrate their STARS in style.

The STARS Awards are about more than recognition—they're about creating memories with the people who make our organizations extraordinary. With thoughtful planning and a spirit of celebration, your STARS will feel like the true VIPs they are.