

2026 TOPS Awards Nomination Criteria and Questions Per Award Category

Overview:

All nominees will be judged by industry employees who work outside the state of North Carolina. Each award category specifies the required items and judging criteria, which may include:

- Submittal of the online nomination
- Confirmation of approval from the nominee's supervisor
- Submittal of the online supplemental nomination by the nominee (*select categories)

The Nominee must:

- Team Category
 - Have been in operation April 1, 2025 - Present
 - Have been a TAA Member April 1, 2025 - Present
 - Be a current TAA Member Company or Sole Proprietor in good standing
- Individual Category
 - Be a full-time employee of a current TAA Member Company in good standing
 - Have been employed with the job title in the nominated category during the period of April 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026 (hired *before* nomination period). They are not required to be at the same community or company.
 - Rookie Individual is an exemption (Office, Service, and Supplier). These individuals should have been hired *during* the nomination period, between April 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026

The Person Submitting the Nomination (Nominator) must:

- Be a full-time employee of a TAA Member in good standing
- Complete the nomination in full

Please note: You may not nominate yourself for an individual award. You can nominate your own community or team for a team award.

The nomination period is defined as April 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

Deadlines:

- Nominators may submit nominations until Sunday, October 11, 2026 at 11:59 PM.
- Nominees may submit their Supplemental Nomination Forms until Sunday, October 18, 2026 at 11:59 PM.

Award Category: OUTSTANDING ROOKIE SERVICE INDIVIDUAL

Requirements:

- Completion of nomination
- Nominee must be new to the role of Owner/Operator in the Multifamily Housing Industry, hired during the nomination period.
- Completion of supplemental nomination by nominee

Judged on:

- Nomination
- Supplemental nomination

Information needed for Nomination:

Nominator details (person submitting the nomination):

- Full name
- Title
- Apartment community or company
- Cell phone number
- Office phone number
- Email address
- Working relationship to Nominee
- Supervisor approval (Check box if you obtained approval from the nominee's supervisor to submit this nomination. Applicable to all award categories except for Outstanding Supplier Individual or Team)

Nominee details:

- Nominee's full name
- Apartment community or company
- Cell phone number
- Email address

Nomination Form:

1. Describe how this nominee displays the following characteristics: Professionalism, Integrity, and Dependability.
2. Why do you feel this person deserves to be nominated for this award?
3. Describe how this person has gone above and beyond their "job description" to demonstrate that they are deserving of this award.
4. Describe the impact this person has had on their company or other team members?

Supplemental Nomination Form:

1. What sets you apart from others in your same position in the industry?
2. Tell us about a time when a resident was unsatisfied, and you went above and beyond to make them happy.
3. If you could implement a new initiative or program at your property, what would it be, and how would it add value to your property?
4. When you were hired, you were a “rookie” to the industry. What piece of advice would you now give to the industry newcomer, the “rookie”?
5. What was your greatest professional challenge during your first year in the industry? How did you overcome it?
6. How were you involved in the Triangle Apartment Association during nomination period? (Select all that apply)
 - Served as a Board Member
 - Served as a Committee Chair
 - Served as a Sub-Committee or Task Force Chair
 - Served on a Committee
 - Instructed an Educational seminar (in-person or virtual)
 - Attended an Educational seminar (in-person or virtual)
 - Attended an event
 - Participated in a Collection Event or Day of Service
 - Encouraged staff participation in TAA
 - How?
 - Referred a new member
 - PAC (Political Action Committee) Contributor
 - Other _____