



KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KENTUCKY HISTORY AWARDS



2026 AWARD NOMINATION PACKET



The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) is an agency in Kentucky's Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet. The KHS campus has three sites in historic downtown Frankfort: the Old State Capitol; the Kentucky Military History Museum; and the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History serving as KHS headquarters with a signature museum, exhibits, library, research facilities, object & archival collections, museum store, and more. KHS is a Smithsonian Affiliate and has full American Alliance of Museums accreditation.

Each year, the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) sponsors the *Kentucky History Awards*, recognizing the outstanding achievements of history-related organizations and the people connected with them. KHS encourages nominations for projects and people who promote Kentucky history through awareness, preservation, and appreciation of state and local history.

NOMINATION RULES

- Nominations must pertain to some aspect of Kentucky state or local history or must have been a project sponsored by or initiated to benefit a museum, historical society, library, genealogical society, or other history-related organization in Kentucky.
- All nominated projects must have been initiated or completed from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025.
- Nomination deadline is close of business at **5:00 pm EST Friday, January 30, 2026**.
- KHS does not accept late entries or consider incomplete nominations.
- KHS encourages self-nominations for projects, programs, or publications.
- One may nominate more than one project or person. There is no limit to the number of nominations one may submit; however, no organization or individual will be given multiple awards.
- Current individuals of KHS staff, Governing Board members, and Foundation Board members are ineligible to receive an award; organizations with which they may be associated are eligible.
- KHS reserves the right to disqualify any nomination that does not meet the minimum requirements, as determined by the staff or award judges.

AWARD CATEGORIES

(One recipient will be selected from each category.)

SERVICE AWARDS

Thomas D. Clark Award of Excellence – presented to a local history-related organization for outstanding achievement throughout the year.

Award of Distinction – presented to a non-paid individual for significant contribution as a volunteer, board, or other member of a history-related organization.

Frank R. Levstik Award for Professional Service – presented to a recently retired (within the last two years) paid staff member of a Kentucky history-related organization.

Dr. James C. Klotter Lifetime Dedication to Kentucky History Award – presented to an individual who demonstrates a consistent, long-term commitment to Kentucky history through work, activities, or support of Kentucky history-related organizations.

Brigadier General William R. Buster Award – presented to an individual for significant contribution to Kentucky's military history through work, activities, or support of Kentucky history-related organizations.

GENERAL AWARDS

History Projects

Projects that have contributed to Kentucky history in the form of an exhibit, program, program series, preservation (of objects and archives only, does not include buildings), or other special projects. Classes will be divided by organization budget.

Publications

Projects that have contributed to Kentucky history in the form of books, pamphlets, or other printed materials, websites, online indexes, audio-visual, oral history, or other digital media.

PREPARING A NOMINATION

Nominees may be individuals, organizations, museum professionals, volunteers, board members, business and civic leaders, historians, librarians, community representatives, and history-related organizations.

For each nomination, you must complete a packet that includes **one full set** of the following:

- **Checklist** showing the submission includes all required components of the nomination packet
- **Nomination form** providing information on the nominee, nominator, and award category
- **Descriptive narrative** explaining how the nominee meets the award category criteria. *The descriptive narrative may not exceed two pages. See page 4 for more information.*
- **Supporting materials**, such as photographs, flyers, articles, videos, or other materials documenting the project or person's work **Supporting materials will not be returned to the nominee and remain property of the Kentucky Historical Society.*
- **Digital photograph of the nominee (service awards)** to be used during the award ceremony, if selected
- **Three digital photographs (general awards)** of the nominated project, program, or publication demonstrating the individual or group's contributions **KHS reserves the right to use these photographs in promotional materials related to KHS or the Kentucky History Awards program.*

Additional nomination requirements for the **GENERAL AWARDS** category:

- **Printed Publication** nominations must include a copy of the work (book, pamphlet, poster, catalog, newsletter, or journal).
- **Electronic Publication** nominations must include a live link to the work (website, database, index, etc.) on the nomination cover sheet.
- **Program** nominations must include supporting documentation in the form of photographs, attendance figures, exhibit drawings or outlines, exhibit label text, flyers, brochures, newspaper articles, evaluations, scripts for audio/visual presentations, oral history transcriptions, etc.

OPTIONAL MATERIAL – You may submit up to three (3) letters of support for the nomination.

DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVES

In two pages or fewer, describe how the nominee or project meets or exceeds the criteria within the appropriate award category. **Narratives may not exceed two pages.**

SERVICE AWARDS

Thomas D. Clark Award of Excellence

Explain how the nominee has:

- Raised the visibility and relevance of history within its community through programs, exhibitions, publications, and services
- Presented balanced and varied programs, exhibits, and publications throughout the year
- Based programs, exhibits, and publications on strong historical content
- Been engaged with and supported by its local community
- Include the number of staff and volunteers involved in the organization.

Award of Distinction

Explain how the nominee has:

- Contributed significant time and energy to preserving and promoting Kentucky state or local history in their community or the commonwealth
- Helped to make the organization a more effective service provider in the community
- Made a significant impact on the study of Kentucky state or local history at the local, regional, state, or national level.

Frank R. Levstik Award for Professional Service

Explain how the nominee has:

- Demonstrated exemplary work and dedication to their institution
- Been instrumental in raising the overall excellence and professionalism of an institution
- Contributed to the overall professionalism of history organizations and museums in Kentucky through participation and leadership roles in professional organizations
- Been in active service to other organizations through workshops, presentations, research, publications, or other activities.

Dr. James C. Klotter Lifetime Dedication to Kentucky History Award

Explain how the nominee has either consistently shown support for history and history projects in their community, region, or state or initiated/participated in a special project that has brought wide recognition to some facet of state or local history.

Brigadier General William R. Buster Award

Explain how the nominee has either consistently shown support for military history and history projects in their community, region, or state, or initiated/participated in a military history project that has brought wide recognition to some facet of state or local history.

GENERAL AWARDS

Explain how the nominated project in either category (projects or publications) demonstrates value, rigor, relevance, and accessibility.

- Value - contributes significantly to Kentucky or local history
- Rigor - content is accurate, balanced, and meets established state and national standards
- Relevance - program is meaningful, accessible, and beneficial to the targeted audience
- Accessibility - availability, ease of use, and adherence to established industry accessibility standards.

SUBMISSIONS

Completed nominations may be submitted by mail, digitally via file sharing service (such as Dropbox or Google), or in person. Publication nominations must be mailed or dropped off.

Nomination deadline is close of business at 5:00 pm EST Friday, January 30, 2026. Hours of operation are Tues-Sat, 10 am – 5 pm. Please submit questions in writing to Ashley Spenneberg-Perkins at ashley.spenneberg@ky.gov.

For mail-in entries and drop-off entries, please send/deliver to:

Kentucky History Awards Nomination
Attn: Ashley Spenneberg-Perkins
Kentucky Historical Society
100 W Broadway
Frankfort, KY 40601

Digital submissions:

File sharing submissions must be emailed to ashley.spenneberg@ky.gov.

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD WINNERS

All award recipients will be notified **by email on Friday, May 1, 2026**. Award recipients should plan to attend the *Kentucky History Awards* presentation on **Saturday, June 6, 2026**, at the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort, KY. If a recipient cannot attend to accept the award, a representative should be sent in their place. One julep cup is awarded per winning group.

Questions? Contact Ashley Spenneberg-Perkins at ashley.spenneberg@ky.gov.

NOMINATION CHECKLIST

I nominate _____ for the _____ award.

I enclose the following supporting documentation:

Checklist

Nomination form

Descriptive narrative

Supporting materials specific to the award category

High-resolution digital photograph of the nominee (service awards)

High-resolution digital photograph(s) of the nominated project, program, or publication demonstrating the contributions of the individual or group (general awards)

For mail-in or drop-off entries, **digital material must be submitted on a USB drive.**

AWARD CATEGORY

Choose the ONE category appropriate to your nomination.

SERVICE AWARDS

Thomas D. Clark Award of Excellence

Award of Distinction

Frank R. Levstik Award for Professional Service

Dr. James C. Klotter Lifetime Dedication to Kentucky History Award

Brigadier General William R. Buster Award

GENERAL AWARDS - HISTORY PROJECT

Class A: Organizations with operating budgets of less than \$50,000 per year

Class B: Organizations with operating budgets of \$50,001 to \$200,000 per year

Class C: Organizations with operating budgets of \$200,001 to \$1,000,000 per year

Class D: Organizations with operating budgets of more than \$1,000,000 per year

GENERAL AWARDS - PUBLICATIONS

Class A: University Press - Books

Class B: Local/Private Press – Books/Pamphlet/Newsletter

Class C: Website/Online Indexes/Digital Media/Audio Visual/Oral History



KENTUCKY HISTORY AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Nominee (organization, group, or individual)

Project title (if applicable)

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Nominee Email Address

(Both nominator and nominee
will be notified via email)

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Nominator's Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Nominator Email Address

Name of person who will accept award if nominee is selected:

(This person MUST attend the Kentucky History Awards presentation on
Saturday, June 6, 2026 in Frankfort, KY)

Email Address

Phone

Name of nominee's local media outlets (newspaper, websites, etc.) for KHS promotional opportunities