



2026 State Awards Categories and Criteria

AGENCY AWARDS

Purpose: To recognize exemplary agencies who deliver recreation, park or leisure related services. Awarded per population category.

Who May Nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is Eligible? Any agency who is a member in good standing of GRPA and has not received the award in the last year. (Agencies may not win in two consecutive years.)

Categories: An award may be presented to an agency from each population category. (Under 10,000; 10,001 to 20,000; 20,001 to 40,000; 40,001 to 80,000; 80,001 to 150,000; 150,001+)

The following information is required to be completed; however, no points will be given for this information. It is strictly used by the judges to get a better overview of the Agency:

- a. Describe internal and external staff development opportunities and staff's involvement within national, state and local organizations.
- b. Describe your agency's budget sources and department structure.
- c. Provide information on your agency's facilities as well as the acreage you maintain.
- d. Photo and agency logo must be submitted with award nomination.

The two questions below will be used to judge your Agency for Agency of the Year. The information provided must cover the period as specified (August 1, 2025, to July 31, 2026). (20 points possible)

1. Discuss new or outstanding programs offered during the specified time frame. (10 points possible)
2. Discuss major accomplishments other than programs that have taken place during specified time frame. (10 points possible)



DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Purpose: To recognize individuals who have made outstanding and lasting contributions to the field of recreation, leisure services, parks or conservation. This is the highest award GRPA can bestow on one of its members.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible?

- a. Any current member of GRPA with a minimum of five (5) years of membership.
- b. Has a minimum of five (5) years professional service in the field of recreation, leisure services, parks or conservation.
- c. Has not received the award previously.
- d. Nominees are also not being submitted for Mike Daniel Award.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

Career-long activities and shall be weighed toward service, leadership and accomplishments in the following order:

1. Describe the nominee's involvement in professional and civic organizations. (5 possible points)
2. Describe the nominee's professional and community achievements and recognition. (5 possible points)
3. Why is this person deserving of being recognized as GRPA's Distinguished Professional? (10 possible points)



MIKE DANIEL AWARD

Purpose: This award is presented to honor the memory of Mike Daniel, a leader in our field, who strived during his career for the highest level of achievement in programming. This award is given to the professional that exemplifies excellence at the programming level and in situations where they are primarily responsible for the supervision or implementation of recreation, parks or leisure programs.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible?

- a. Any current member of GRPA with a minimum of five (5) years of membership.
- b. Has a minimum of five (5) years professional service in the field of recreation, leisure services, parks or conservation.
- c. Has not received the award previously.
- d. Nominees are also not being submitted for the Distinguished Professional Award.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Describe the nominee's involvement in professional and civic organizations. (5 possible points)
2. Describe the nominee's involvement in programming and/or athletics within their community, agency, and state organizations. (5 possible points)
3. Why is this person deserving of being recognized as a Mike Daniel Award recipient? (10 possible points)



PROMISING PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Purpose: To recognize an individual who has made an exemplary impact in their current role and shows tremendous potential for future contributions in the field of parks and recreation.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible?

- a. Any current professional member of GRPA who has two (2) to five (5) years of full-time experience in the park and recreation field.
- b. Has not received this award previously.

The following information is required to be completed; however, no points will be given for this information.

- a. Describe the nominee's educational background.
- b. List the nominee's current and past employers.

The following must be answered within the nomination submission: (20 Points Possible)

1. Describe nominee's activities and accomplishments in each of the following. (5 possible points)
 - Leadership and service for GRPA.
 - Leadership and service in other organizations.
2. Show a clear sense of growth and success in their current role. (5 possible points)
 - Specific examples outlining skills, responsibilities, and accomplishments.
3. Describe the nominee's potential for advancement. (5 possible points)
4. Summary of the nominee's efforts or service not covered in the areas above. (5 possible points)



GRPA STATE VOLUNTEER AWARD

Purpose: Recognizing volunteers whose efforts have had lasting effects in the field of recreation, leisure services, parks, or conservation. A maximum of one volunteer may be selected for each population category.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any person, business, civic club, organization, or agency not officially connected professionally in the recreation industry/field and not receiving any monetary value for services rendered.

Categories: An award may be presented to an agency from each population category. (Under 10,000; 10,001 to 20,000; 20,001 to 40,000; 40,001 to 80,000; 80,001 to 150,000; 150,001+)

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Official Title or Business Name
2. Number of years or service dates
3. Describe the nominee's work with the agency, their promotion of recreation/parks/conservation and assistance to the agency and community. (10 possible points)
4. Why is this person/group deserving of being recognized as a GRPA State Volunteer recipient? (10 possible points)



HALL OF FAME AWARD

Purpose: To recognize any Individual/Organization who has made unusual and extraordinary contributions to the Recreation, Park or Conservation in Georgia. To provide paramount recognition for an individual/organization at our Annual Conference. The Hall of Fame will be located in the GRPA Office and portraits or plaques suitable to the surroundings will be displayed in an attractive and conspicuous manner. Honorees will receive an additional award at the GRPA Annual Conference.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible?

1. Nominees must be individuals/organizations who have not been previously recognized for this award.
2. An individual/organization whose efforts have made lasting contributions to the Recreation & Parks field in Georgia.
3. A Park and Recreation Professional who was a member of GRPA for at least twenty (20) years.
4. Achievements on the local, state or national level, including but not limited to:
 - Board of Trustee Participation
 - Section/Committee/Network Participation
 - State, Local and National Board Participation
 - District Participation & Other areas
5. A Park and Recreation professional active in the profession for 30 years or a Park and Recreation professional that has retired or become inactive for at least two (2) years.
6. Any Hall of Fame nominee that has never received the award in previous years, is automatically a candidate. All nominations shall be kept at the GRPA state office for consideration in following years. Committee may choose from current nominees or previous nominees to ensure the best and most qualified candidate is selected.

Additional Information:

1. There is no limit to the number of words or pages of information.
2. The committee reserves the right to request additional information as it deems necessary.
3. A maximum of two (2) recipients may be honored (with President and/or Executive Director Approval).
In any year, the committee may make no award. Awards may be made posthumously.
4. Nominations should be submitted to GRPA State Office and forwarded to GRPA Hall of Fame Committee Chair by the Executive Director.
5. A black and white or color photograph must accompany the nomination.



6. No nomination will be considered, which is not postmarked prior to midnight, August 31, of the current year.

Determination is based on:

1. Support information explaining why an individual/organization deserves this Award.
2. A summary of the contributions and efforts of this individual/organization that had significant influence on the Recreation Field in Georgia.
3. A statement on any vital or profound impact the individual/organization has accomplished within the profession or in support of the field.
4. A summary of the contributions and efforts of this individual/organization that had significant impact or influence on the Georgia Recreation & Park Association.

SERVICE AWARDS

Purpose: Recognizing professionals who have served as a member of GRPA, giving their time and energy to make the profession better for those we serve.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any GRPA member in good standing who has served in the field of recreation for a minimum of twenty (20) years. Members are recognized after twenty (20) years and in five (5) year increments.

Determination is based on:

1. Number of years of service and dates (with GRPA).
2. Agencies employed by during this time.
3. Present place of employment and capacity or title.



NETWORK AWARDS – ADMINISTRATIVE/LEADERSHIP

DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF

Purpose: Recognizing individuals who have made outstanding and lasting contributions in administrative support to their recreation agency.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any full-time administrative support staff person who is employed by an agency member of GRPA; which is in good standing and has not received this award previously.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Describe contributions made as an administrative support staff which improved and enhanced the effectiveness of the department. (5 possible points)
2. Describe the nominee's outstanding customer service to citizens as well as fellow co-workers. (5 possible points)
3. Through their work in the agency and community served, why is this person deserving of this award? (10 possible points)



DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Purpose: Recognizing full-time individuals serving in administration and leadership who have made outstanding and lasting contributions to the field of recreation, parks and leisure services within the Administrative/Leadership Network.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any full-time administrative or leadership person who is a member in good standing of GRPA; as well as a member of the Administrative/Leadership Network; and has not received this award previously. Nominee is not also being nominated for Distinguished Professional in other networks.

Determination is based on: (10 Points Possible)

4. Describe the nominee's involvement in professional and civic organizations. (5 possible points)
5. Describe the nominee's professional and community achievements and recognition.
6. (5 possible points)
7. Why is this person deserving of being recognized as the Administrative/Leadership Network Distinguished Professional? (10 possible points)



NETWORK AWARDS – ATHLETICS/AQUATICS NETWORK

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Purpose: Recognizing fulltime individuals serving in athletics/aquatics who have made outstanding and lasting contributions to the field of recreation, parks and leisure services within the Athletic/Aquatics Network.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any fulltime athletic/aquatics person who is a member in good standing of GRPA; as well as a member of the Athletic/Aquatics Network; and has not received this award previously. Nominee is not also being nominated for Distinguished Professional in other networks.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Describe the nominee's involvement in professional and civic organizations. (5 possible points)
2. Describe the nominee's professional and community achievements and recognition. (5 possible points)
3. Why is this person deserving of being recognized as the Athletic/Aquatics Network Distinguished Professional? (10 possible points)



OUTSTANDING PROGRAM AWARD

Purpose: Recognizing outstanding programs promoting the field of recreation, parks and leisure services within the Athletic/Aquatics Network.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any program directed by a member in good standing of GRPA; as well as a member of the Athletic/Aquatics Network; and has not received this award previously. Program is not being nominated in Programmers Network.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Describe the outstanding program to include a purpose, goals and number of participants. (5 possible points)
2. Describe the agency's budget sources, program structure and any cooperative efforts that contributed to the success of this program. (5 possible points)
3. Describe the program's impact and contribution to both the participants and community. (10 possible points)

OUTSTANDING SPECIAL EVENT

Purpose: Recognizing outstanding special events promoting the field of recreation, parks and leisure services within the Athletic/Aquatics Network.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any special event directed by a member in good standing of GRPA; as well as a member of the Athletic/Aquatics Network; and has not received this award previously. Events are not being nominated in Programmers Network.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

4. Describe the special event to include a purpose, goals and number of participants. (5 possible points)
5. Describe the agency's budget sources, program structure and any cooperative efforts that contributed to the success of this event. (5 possible points)
6. Describe the special event's impact and contribution to both the participants and community? (10 possible points)



NETWORK AWARDS – PROGRAMMERS

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Purpose: Recognizing full-time individuals serving in programming who have made outstanding and lasting contributions to the field of recreation, parks and leisure services within the Programmers Network.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any full-time programming person who is a member in good standing of GRPA; as well as a member of the Programmers Network; and has not received this award previously. Nominee is not also being nominated for Distinguished Professional in other networks.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Describe the nominee's involvement in professional and civic organizations. (5 possible points)
2. Describe the nominee's professional and community achievements and recognition. (5 possible points)
3. Why is this person deserving of being recognized as the Programmers Network Distinguished Professional? (10 possible points)



OUTSTANDING PROGRAM AWARD

Purpose: Recognizing outstanding programs promoting the field of recreation, parks and leisure services within the Programmers Network.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any program directed by a member in good standing of GRPA; as well as a member of the Programmers Network; and has not received this award previously. Program is not being nominated in Athletics/Aquatics Network.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

4. Describe the outstanding program to include a purpose, goals, and number of participants. (5 possible points)
5. Describe the agency's budget sources, program structure and any cooperative efforts that contributed to the success of this program. (5 possible points)
6. Describe the program's impact and contribution to both the participants and community? (10 possible points)

OUTSTANDING SPECIAL EVENT

Purpose: Recognizing outstanding special events promoting the field of recreation, parks and leisure services within the Programmers Network.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any special event directed by a member in good standing of GRPA; as well as a member of the Programmers Network; and has not received this award previously. Events are not being nominated in Programmers Network.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

7. Describe the special event to include a purpose, goals and number of participants. (5 possible points)
8. Describe the agency's budget sources, program structure and any cooperative efforts that contributed to the success of this event. (5 possible points)
9. Describe the special event's impact and contribution to both the



participants and community? (10 possible points)

OUTSTANDING PROGRAMMING SUPPORT STAFF

Purpose: Recognizing individuals who have made outstanding and lasting contributions in recreation programming support to their recreation agency.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any seasonal, part-time and full-time recreational programming support staff person who is employed by an agency member of GRPA; which is in good standing and has not received this award previously.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Describe the nominee's professionalism and dedication to their role, including reliability, attitude, work ethic and initiative. (5 points)
2. Describe the nominee's resourcefulness, versatility and ability to work collaboratively across the agency. (5 points)
3. Describe how the nominee's assistance with recreation programs contributed to the success and/or enhancement of recreation programs and mention any program support, innovation and positive outcomes they help facilitate. (10 points)



NETWORK AWARDS – PARKS MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Purpose: Recognizing full-time individuals serving in programming who have made outstanding and lasting contributions to the field of recreation, parks and leisure services within the Parks Maintenance/Operations Network.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible? Any fulltime parks maintenance/operations person who is a member in good standing of GRPA; as well as a member of the Parks Maintenance/Operations Network; and has not received this award previously. Nominee is not also being nominated for Distinguished Professional in other networks.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Describe the nominee's involvement in professional and civic organizations. (5 possible points)
2. Describe the nominee's professional and community achievements and recognition. (5 possible points)
3. Why is this person deserving of being recognized as the Parks Maintenance/Operations Network Distinguished Professional? (10 possible points)



CAPITAL PROJECT AWARD (>\$500,000)

Purpose: Awarded in recognition of a new facility, park, park amenity, or significant renovation which depicts innovative design and construction. *One (1) project which displays the most efficient use of resources and greatest overall impact on community will be awarded.*

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible?

- Both nominators and nominees must be current GRPA members in good standing.
- Facility, Park, Park Amenity, or Renovation must have opened to public operations during awards year.
- Requires ten (10) photographs, showing features and overall look of the project.

Selection Criteria: *Nomination should demonstrate that the facility contains the following significant elements:*

- Innovative nature of the design, funding, construction, handling of constraints, etc.
- Effectiveness in addressing the goals as defined in terms of community needs and demands, and successful completion.
- Efficiency in use of resources.
- Effectiveness of design factors such as: ADA accessibility, LEED Certification, maintenance consideration, aesthetics, security and safety, environmental concerns, etc.
- Projects resulting impact on community.
- General excellence of the facility, park, or park amenities

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Provide a description of the project including purpose, planning and partnerships. (3 pts)
2. Describe project funding as well as interagency and community contributions. (3 pts)
3. Describe any design factors used in consideration of the project (ADA accessibility, LEED Certification, maintenance consideration, aesthetics, security and safety, environmental concerns, etc.) (4 points)
4. Describe projects' success and impact on meeting the needs of the community. (10 pts)



CAPITAL PROJECT AWARD (<\$500,000)

Purpose: Awarded in recognition of a new facility, park, park amenity, or significant renovation which depicts innovative design and construction. *One (1) project which displays the most efficient use of resources and greatest overall impact on community will be awarded.*

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible?

- Both nominators and nominees must be current GRPA members in good standing.
- Facility, Park, Park Amenity, or Renovation must have opened to public operations during awards year.
- Requires ten (10) photographs, showing features and overall look of the project.

Selection Criteria: *Nomination should demonstrate that the facility contains the following significant elements:*

- Innovative nature of the design, funding, construction, handling of constraints, etc.
- Effectiveness in addressing the goals as defined in terms of community needs and demands, and successful completion.
- Efficiency in use of resources.
- Effectiveness of design factors such as: ADA accessibility, LEED Certification, maintenance consideration, aesthetics, security and safety, environmental concerns, etc.
- Projects resulting impact on community.
- General excellence of the facility, park, or park amenities

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Provide a description of the project including purpose, planning and partnerships. (3 pts)
2. Describe project funding as well as interagency and community contributions. (2 pts)
3. Describe any design factors used in consideration of the project (ADA accessibility, LEED Certification, maintenance consideration, aesthetics, security and safety, environmental concerns, etc.) (3 points)
4. Describe projects' success and impact on meeting the needs of the community. (10 pts)
5. Was the project completed (90%) by agency staff and/or volunteers? (2 pts)



INNOVATION IN PARKS MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Purpose: Awarded in recognition of a new technique, invention, or innovative process that improved the efficiency and/or safety of the maintenance staff.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may be nominated for this award.

Who is eligible?

- Both nominators and nominees must be current GRPA members in good standing.
- Technique, invention, or innovative process must have been implemented during awards year.
- Requires ten (10) photographs, showing features and overall look of the project.

Selection Criteria: *Nomination should demonstrate that the facility contains the following significant elements:*

- Submission must focus on an innovation, invention, or technique that aids in the maintenance and/or operations of parks or facilities.
- New innovation must comply with any safety standards and not pose any risk to staff, volunteers, and community.
- New Innovation should aid staff and volunteers and increase efficiency or safety in work practices.

Determination is based on: (20 Points Possible)

1. Provide a description of innovation, invention, or new techniques. Include up to 5 pictures if applicable (5 pts)
2. Verify that the innovation, invention, or new technique is safe and follows all applicable safety standards. (5 pts)
3. Describe how the innovation, invention, or new technique aids staff in increasing efficiency or safety (10 pts)



OUTSTANDING MARKETING CAMPAIGN AWARD

Purpose: To recognize outstanding marketing campaigns by GRPA agencies. Awarded by population category.

Who may nominate? Any member of GRPA who is in good standing may nominate a campaign for this award.

Who is eligible? Any GRPA member agency in good standing has not previously been awarded the same nomination.

Categories: An award may be presented to an agency from each population category. (Under 10,000; 10,001 to 20,000; 20,001 to 40,000; 40,001 to 80,000; 80,001 to 150,000; 150,001+)

Determination is based on: (20 possible points)

The information provided must cover a promotional period which occurs between August 1, 2025, to July 31, 2026.

1. Describe the campaign theme, purpose, goals, and promotional period. (3 possible points)
2. Describe all media used for the period of the campaign. (2 possible points)
3. Describe the agency's budget sources, marketing staff and other collaborative efforts that contributed to the success of the campaign. Include how much was completed in-house. (5 possible points)
4. Describe the campaign, its impact, and how success was measured. (5 possible points)
5. Submission to include marketing campaign images. (5 possible points)
 - URL address, location of media to access online references to the campaign and/or,
 - Upload PDF containing images of published materials, promotional items, and campaign media.

Marketing campaign examples: Single or multi events and programs, agency branding etc. Marketing materials consist of multi-media to include print, digital, audio visual etc. and feature flyers, brochures, posters, banners, calendars, postcards, apparel, videos, online media, social media posts, website features etc.