



Venturing Leadership Award Best Practices & SOPs

**National Venturing Awards and Recognition Committee
February 2022**



Venturing Leadership Award (VLA)

In order to recognize Venturers, Venturing Advisors, those who have made exceptional contributions to Venturing and who exemplify the Scout Oath and Law, Councils, Territories, and the BSA National Venturing Committee may present individuals with the Venturing Leadership Award.

The Venturing Leadership Award (VLA) is administered on each tier of the Venturing program; council, territories and national. Awards are selected by a selection committee at their respective levels via nominations submitted by the public. Once the committee discusses the Venturing Leadership Award nominations; it is reported to the respective Advisor and Staff Advisor. The Venturing Leadership Award is accompanied by a certificate, medal and knot that should be presented by the appropriate tier.

How to use this Best Practices and SOPs

What is the Venturing Leadership Award Standard Operating Procedures about?

- Why give out VLA?
- How to collect nominations
- How to process the nominations
- Who makes a VLA committee
- What are best practices on selecting awardees
- How to process the VLAs
- How to present the VLAs

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Best Practices

Why give out the VLA?

The Venturing Leadership Award is given out to those Venturers, Venturing Advisors, and other Venturing leaders who have made exceptional contributions to Venturing and who exemplify the Scout Oath and Law. As well as...

- The VLA is an award to recognize someone who excels above expectations for their participation in furthering the Venturing program.
- The VLA is an award to recognize someone who is a servant leader, helps others grow, and one who puts others above themselves.
- The VLA is an award to recognize someone who has made a direct impact on the Venturing Program.

However, there are many things that the Venturing Leadership Award isn't...

- The VLA isn't an award to give someone for completing a term of office.
- The VLA isn't an award that should be given to someone who did what was required and didn't push the boundaries.
- The VLA isn't an award that should be biased based on rank, position, or personality.

Writing Nominations

Writing a nomination can be a very time consuming task. There are a couple of different approaches to handling it. You can write the nomination yourself and have others write letters of recommendation or you can co-write with others. It is highly recommended to attach letters of recommendation from the candidate's Scout leaders, Scouting peers, school teachers, administrators, place of worship, clubs, etc.

- Individuals shall not nominate themselves.
- Nominations for the Venturing Leadership Award can only be submitted using the current nomination form found under the Award section of scouting.org/venturing.
- A nomination can be handwritten or typed, but must be submitted before the final submission date.

Collecting Nominations

Nominations must be submitted to the respective person listed at scouting.org/venturing, by the corresponding date per tier of award.

If someone is nominated for the VLA at multiple tiers, the nomination should be submitted separately to each tier's respective person.

- Nominations for the National and Territory level should be sent to Venturing.NationalOfficers@scouting.org.
- Nominations for the Council level should be sent to the Council VOA Advisor or the Council Venturing Committee Chair. If your council does not have either of these, the nomination can be sent to the Council Advancement Chair. Call the council office or check the council website to find contact information.

If there are letters of recommendation that are accompanying the VLA nomination, they should be attached to the nomination in some form (scanned and in the PDF, or as attachments in the email). It is important to fill out the field that asks how many letters of recommendation are included for tracking reasons. It's recommended that the email subject states the nominee's name and Venturing Leadership Award Nomination. After the nominations are received, processing can begin.

Processing the Nominations

Once the nominations are received, the Advisor should double check the nominations to make sure they are complete and that no pertinent information has been omitted or if any letters of recommendation are missing. Once nominations have been double checked for completeness, all forms should be passed to the VLA Selection Committee Chair. No forms should have been removed from the passing of the Advisor to the VLA Selection Committee Chair even if the nomination doesn't seem applicable for that tier. No nominations can be received after the posted dates for the respective tier.

Redact personal information fields from the nomination forms for youth and adult nominees.

The Venturing Leadership Committee

The VLA Selection Committee Chair

- **National VLA:** The VLA Selection Committee Chair serves at the request of the Venturing Awards and Recognition Committee and is also approved by the Venturing Committee Chair and the Staff Advisor.
- **Territory VLA:** The Venturing Advisor/Coordinator will select the VLA Selection Committee Chair who will serve at their request and must also be approved by the National Venturing Advisor.
- **Council VLA:** If the Council Venturing Advisor also serves as Council Venturing Chair, the VLA Selection Committee Chair will serve at their request and must be approved by the Council Venturing Staff Advisor. If no Council Venturing Advisor or Council Venturing Committee Chair is present the VLA Selection Committee Chair will serve at the request of the Council Advancement Chair.
- The Chair may be a youth or adult.

- The Chair has the discretion to invite the Venturing Advisor/Coordinator, Venturing Committee Chair, and Venturing Officers' Association President to be on the selection panel.
- The Chair of the National and Territory Venturing Leadership Award Committee should have previously been awarded the VLA for the respective tier or a tier higher.
- Council Venturing Leadership Award Committee Chairs are not required to have been awarded the VLA, but it is recommended.

*** Territory VLA Selection Committee Chairs can have previously earned a Regional or Area Venturing Leadership Award.***

****If no one in the Territory has a Regional or Area VLA, they can ask other Territories or the NVOA to provide a Selection Committee Chair. ****

VLA Selection Committee Chair Responsibilities

- Oversees the selection of the Selection Committee and ensures the SOPs are upheld.
- Oversees the preparation of VLA Nominations for the Selection Committee.
- Decides the timeline for the building of the Selection Committee, selection, submission of awards, and presentation.
- Oversees planning and execution of the selection.
- Selects members to be on the Selection Committee. (See VLA Selection Committee Section for details)
- Oversees and runs the VLA selection meeting.
- Communicates with the Staff Advisor (or National Advisor for Territories) for the final approval of VLA awardees.
- Coordinates the collection of the VLA certificates, medals, and knots.
- Prepares, oversees, and presents the awards to the awardees at a public presentation.

VLA Selection Committee

- The Selection Committee is appointed by the VLA Selection Committee Chair and approved at the National level by the Venturing Committee Chair and Staff Advisor. At the Territory level the Selection Committee is approved by the Territory Coordinator, and National Advisor. At the Council level the Selection Committee is approved by the Staff Advisor.
- The Selection Committee shall consist of no less than 5 members and no more than 10 members.
- The Selection Committee shall consist of diverse representation from within the level of the award if possible. For a council this means multiple districts represented, for a territory this means multiple councils represented, and for national it means multiple territories represented.
- Members of the selection committee will first be filled with recipients of that tier, or higher, VLA. In the case that the selection committee does not meet the minimum

number of members with VLA recipients, non-recipients may be asked to sit on the selection committee.

- No family members of nominees can sit on the tier's VLA selection committee. Family is defined as any person by blood, marriage, or partnership.

Tier Representative (National and Territory only)

- The Tier Representative is someone from the tier level above that sits on the Selection Committee to observe and see that the VLA selection was done according to these SOPs.
 - A National Awards and Recognition Committee representative sits on the National Selection Committee. A National Venturing Officers' Association representative sits on the Territory Selection Committee.
- The Tier Representative has a vote and can speak on the selection call.
- This does not apply to Councils.

Selection Best Practices

Selection Call/Meeting Coordination

- Selections should happen soon after the nominations are received by the VLA Selection Committee Chair and the selection committee has been approved.
- A time/date and location (if needed) should be set in advance to give members time to review nominations.
- Before the VLA selection; nominations should be sent to the committee with personal information redacted to protect all nominees.
- The VLA selection meeting should be an open forum to hear about each nominee.
- The point of the selection is to not pit candidate against candidate, but to choose the most worthy.

Example Questions to Ask About Each Candidate.

These questions are meant to be thought provoking, not requirements for earning the VLA.

- What has this person done for the tier they were nominated for?
- Has this person been a friend to all and have they lived the Scout Oath and Law?
- Council Level: How did they provide exceptional leadership and service to their council for the past 18 months?
- Territory: How did they provide exceptional leadership and service to two or more councils in their Territory?
- National: How did they provide exceptional leadership and service to three or more territories?
- Is there work that this person has done outside their position that should be considered?

Who Can Receive the Award?

- Only one selection may take place per calendar year for each tier presenting the award.
- Youth and adults who are currently registered in the Boy Scouts of America organization.
 - There can not be more adult awardees than youth awardees.
- The awardees do not have to have a position that corresponds to the tier they are nominated for, just that they have shown noteworthy leadership.
- The awardees should have shown exceptional dedication, given outstanding leadership and service to Venturing and to Venturers at the tier the selection is for.
- The award is not a participation award for serving in a position but instead is an award for those who go above and beyond the call of duty.

Voting

- All members of the selection committee shall have a vote, including the chair.
- Secret ballot is the method of voting. The VLA Selection Committee Chair and Staff Advisor (or National Advisor for Territories) should both be able to see the votes and verify the results.
- Committee members will decide whether each nomination shall be a recipient by a two thirds majority vote.
- If there are more nominations than available awards, the candidates with the greatest number of votes over majority shall be selected. If a tie still exists, the selection committee shall vote amongst the candidates who are tied to determine the selection.

Processing the Venturing Leadership Award

- After the selection process, the awards should be processed by the VLA Selection Committee Chair.
- The Staff Advisor (or National Advisor for Territories) and Venturing Committee Chair (or Territory Advisor/Coordinator for Territories) should give their final approval of the awardees.
- Unsuccessful nominations shall not be rolled over for the Committee consideration in the future years. Individuals who have been nominated in the past, but not selected, must be re-nominated in full pursuant to these instructions.
- The Committee Chair should go to scouting.org/venturing and fill out and print the blank Venturing Leadership Award Certificate.
- Award medallions can be bought at the local service center or Scout Shop. Awards are no longer sent out from the National Office.
- Presentation of the VLA should be made at an appropriate level such as Council Annual Banquet, Venturing Officer Orientations, and the National Annual Meeting.

Presentation

- Presentation should only be made when award medallions and certificates are ready to be presented.
 - In case of a virtual presentation, medallions and certificates should be sent to candidates before the presentation.

Venturing Leadership Award Deadlines

Venturing Leadership Award level	Nomination deadline	Selection deadline	Quota
Council VLA	Set by the Council Venturing Committee or Council Advancement Committee.	Set by the Council Venturing Committee or Advancement Committee.	Set by Council Venturing Committee, Council VOA or Council Advancement Committee.
Territory VLA	March 1st	April 15th	Up to six awards may be presented.
National VLA	February 15th	April 1st	Up to twelve awards may be presented.

Venturing Leadership Award Supply Information

VLA Level	Medallion	Description	VLA Award Knot For all VLA levels (youth and adult)	VLA Certificate
Council		Purchase Supply item #4220 Blue and white ribbon	 Purchase Supply item #14220	 Printable VLA Certificate available on scouting.org/venturing
Territory		Purchase Supply item #606782 Green and white ribbon		
National		Provided Supply item #4222 Red and white ribbon		