

**Distinguished Daughters of PA**  
**ORGANIZATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS RULES**

**Distinguished Daughters of PA: Who We Are**

The Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania (DDPA) organization was initiated in 1949 by Governor James H. Duff to honor Pennsylvania women who have given distinguished service through their professional and voluntary service. The mission of the organization continues this tradition by recommending to the Governor extraordinary women to be honored for their outstanding service and contributions to the Commonwealth. Women leaders are honored from diverse backgrounds, including education, science, law, medicine, business, public service, philanthropy, humanities and the arts.

To date, almost 574 talented, dedicated, and influential women from every part of the state have been honored for the significant, positive impact their work and service have had in improving the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians. About 214 of those women are living today.

DDPA annually celebrates and promotes each Daughter's accomplishments which reflect the richness of Pennsylvania's past and her promise for the future. Through their impressive lifetime achievements, the Daughters enhance the good name of the Commonwealth that they have called home.

**DDPA Organization Structure:**

The DDPA is organized in Eastern, Central and Western regions of Pennsylvania, with a chair for each region. The organization is led by officers—Chair, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer—who are elected on a statewide basis to coordinate the group's work together with the Regional Chairs. The officers rotate every two years through the three regions.

**Overview of Nomination and Selection Process:**

Only a few such women are named by the Governor each year. Women proposed to receive this honor must be nominated by a non-profit organization within the Commonwealth in recognition of outstanding accomplishments of regional, statewide and/or national importance. They need not be native to Pennsylvania, but must have lived in the Commonwealth and be identified with it.

Each January, invitations for nominating a Distinguished Daughter are mailed to civic, cultural, professional, and educational non-profit organizations throughout the state. The nominations must be submitted electronically to the President of DDPA by March 15. A thorough nomination and selection process is conducted that documents the careers and accomplishments of nominees, demonstrating that each has earned regional, statewide and/or national recognition and that her work provides benefits to a wide community with meritorious service of value to the public. The official DDPA website and form can be found at the link: <http://distinguisheddaughtersofpa.org>.

The accomplishments of the proposed candidates are first reviewed at Regional Meetings in April with the DDPA from the region originating the nomination. At that meeting, each region selects two finalists and identifies 2-4 semi-finalists. At the statewide Annual meeting in May, the semi-finalists are then reviewed together with the finalists from each region. The final selections are made by the membership participating either in person or via teleconference. Generally, no more than 7-10 women are nominated to the Governor in May. Upon the Governor's approval, the finalists are notified by the Governor's office in July-August. The finalists are inducted in September-October at the Governor's Residence in Harrisburg.

1/15/2026

*Distinguished Daughters is a project of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities, fiscal sponsor. The official registration and financial information of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.*

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**Objectives of Nomination Process**

- Each year, current Distinguished Daughters of PA (DDPA) help identify the best candidates for consideration in their region. They are responsible to help ensure integrity in the process. The following guidelines apply to each of the three regions:
  - Encourage widespread participation of non-profit organizations across the Commonwealth
  - Foster diversity in nominations from the regions
  - Encourage nominating organizations to emphasize the breadth and depth of the experiences and accomplishments of their nominees
  - Utilize current DDPA knowledge to help identify best candidates
  - Promote awareness of DDPA throughout the community.

**Nomination Process – Who is Eligible for Nomination?**

- A Pennsylvania connection is essential. A nominee is eligible if she was not born in the Commonwealth but has achieved notable accomplishments in her professional career and her community service while a resident of the Commonwealth.
- A nominee also is eligible if she has lived in Pennsylvania but has achieved notable accomplishments outside of the state.
- A woman who is a declared candidate for public office is not eligible.
- A woman may be nominated three times. If she is not selected after the third time, she is not eligible for re-nomination unless there are significant additions to her experiences and accomplishments.

**Nomination Process – Who Can Nominate And Second?**

- Nominations must be submitted by non-profit organizations in PA. Nominations may be made by stand-alone non-profit entities or affiliates of larger non-profit organizations. Each non-profit organization/affiliate may nominate only one candidate a year. (See discussion below for further clarification.)
- The nomination must come from authorized individual leading the organization – typically the CEO, Executive Director, Dean or a member of the Board of Trustees.
- The nominee can be, but does not need to be a member of the nominating organization.
- Individuals may NOT nominate a candidate.
- Family members may NOT nominate a candidate
- Candidates may NOT nominate themselves.
- Current DDPA Members are NOT eligible to serve as nominating sponsor or offer seconding letters of support.
- Employees of a DD Contractor are not eligible.

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**Nomination Process – Rules for Non-Profit Institutions**

- Non-profit organizations in Pennsylvania are eligible to nominate candidates. The DDPA maintains a list of eligible organizations covering a wide range of missions – education, medicine, science, business, law, public service, philanthropy, humanities and the arts.
- Non-profit organizations, either stand-alone entities or affiliates of larger organizations, may nominate one candidate.
  - For larger non-profit organizations based in Pennsylvania, each of the organization's primary affiliates (Schools, Hospitals, Centers for example) may nominate one individual.
- If the same person is nominated by more than one organization in the same year, the first nomination received will be considered the primary nomination; others will be regarded as seconding.
- The nomination must be submitted on the Official Notification form, with a concise but comprehensive review of qualifications, with emphasis on statewide and national impact. The form can be found at <http://www.distinguisheddaughtersofpa.org/Nominations>.
- In addition to the official form, supplementary material and endorsement letters (not more than two) may be submitted. Current DD may not submit letters of support.
- If there are questions, please contact the DDPA President, Executive Assistant, or your Regional Chair. <http://www.distinguisheddaughtersofpa.org/Contact>.

**Approval by Governor and Notifications**

- Following the regional meetings in April and the statewide Annual Meeting in May, the finalist nominations are forwarded to the Governor's Office. Typically, in July, the Governor's Office notifies those selected as well as their sponsoring organization.
- The Annual Presentation Luncheon is held in the fall (September-October) at the Governor's Residence in Harrisburg with the finalists, the nominating sponsor and a guest in attendance. That day, a formal announcement is made of the new Distinguished Daughters.
- Confidentiality throughout the process must be maintained. In no instance, should the nomination be discussed with the nominee. Following the notification and the announcement by the Governor's Office, the DDPA will work with the finalists to aid in publicity with local media.

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