All nominations should clearly describe what makes the accomplishment truly unique or exceptional with exception of category 9.

CATEGORY 1 – Champion of Change
This category recognizes employees who advocate, promote and institute a change that aligns with the agency’s vision and motivates employees towards elevating organizational performance.

Contribution(s) should be described so as to specify the specific problems and/or challenges, and the impact of the innovation on the agency and/or Commonwealth of Virginia. The description should include any pertinent measures, as well an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributor(s). It should also describe how it serves as a model within the respective agency or across agency lines.

CATEGORY 2 - Courageous Leader
This category recognizes employees who demonstrate the courage to make bold moves that transform their workplace by improving the efficiency of state government services.

Contribution(s) should be described so as to specify what responsible risks were taken that went against the grain of their unit/office/department and/or Agency, which resulted in revolutionary change in their particular mission-related program or activity, and/or the customers served. The description should include any pertinent measures, as well an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributor(s).

CATEGORY 3 - Innovative Spirit
This category recognizes employees who demonstrate a spirit of innovation by creating something new, improving an existing technology or process, or adapting a tried and true idea to a new context.

Contribution(s) should be described so as to specify the impact on the particular mission-related program or activity, and/or the customers served. If the nominee is a supervisor, specify how in addition to being innovative themselves, they support and encourage their employees to think outside the box and become creative problem solvers. The description should include specific agency-level performance indicators and/or other pertinent measures, as well an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributor(s).

CATEGORY 4 – Administration Excellence
Contribution(s) should specify the impact on such things as increasing efficiencies and alignment, transforming the culture of the Commonwealth of Virginia, significantly reducing overhead costs, implementing strategic process improvement, and/or the furtherance of the Governor’s plan of building a stronger Virginia and its related objectives. The description should include specific performance indicators and/or other pertinent measures, as well as an account of
the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributor(s). It should also describe how it serves as a model within the respective agency or across agency lines, as applicable.

The relative span of control of the individual or team nominees will be taken into consideration. For example, a small office that implemented innovative cost-saving measures at the local level will be evaluated on equal footing with a headquarters-level organization that implemented a more comprehensive cost-savings approach on an agency-wide basis.

**CATEGORY 5 - Personal and Professional Excellence**

This category recognizes individuals and teams who have demonstrated an exceptional level of accomplishment in furthering the mission of the Commonwealth of Virginia in areas that are not specifically included in the first four categories. It includes notable achievements in such program areas as scientific research, economic analysis or any other mission-related activity of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Contribution(s) should specify the impact on the particular mission-related program or activity, and/or the customers served. The description should include specific agency-level performance indicators and/or other pertinent measures, as well as an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributor(s).

**CATEGORY 6 - Support Service**

This category recognizes employees who demonstrate an exceptional level of accomplishment in providing administrative support. This category includes employees in administrative and clerical occupations, usually pay band 4 or equivalent and below, whose dedication and contributions enhance administrative excellence. Achievements include, but are not limited to, such things as system benefits, increased productivity, cost savings and improved procedures or techniques.

Contribution(s) should specify the impact on the particular administrative program or activity, and/or the customers served. The description should include any pertinent measures, as well as an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributor(s).

**CATEGORY 7 - Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach**

This category recognizes employees who demonstrate exceptional commitment to the value of diversity, inclusion and outreach in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the furtherance of the Governor’s plan of building a stronger Virginia. The category includes demonstrating significant progress in the workforce demographics of an agency and enhancing access to Commonwealth of Virginia services for the communities we serve.

Contribution(s) should specify its impact on the particular community or Agency and the Commonwealth of Virginia as a whole, and the furtherance of outreach or workforce diversity and inclusion objectives.

Nominations for diversity and inclusion will be based on several areas, including having created a singularly welcoming and inclusive work environment, success in leading and enhancing diversity and inclusion efforts, actively promoting and enhancing the diversity and inclusion
goals of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and effecting positive change where the contributions serve to benefit the entire Commonwealth of Virginia workforce.

Nominations for contributions specific to outreach must describe the under-served community’s programmatic challenges and will include accomplishments related, but not limited to, such things as the following (1) improving access to Commonwealth of Virginia programs for historically underserved communities, (2) improving job opportunities for veterans, and (3) closing the professional achievement gap by providing opportunities to talented and diverse young people to support the Commonwealth of Virginia 21st century economic development priorities.

**CATEGORY 8 – Creative Customer Service**
This category recognizes outstanding contributions in support of the Governor’s plan of building a stronger Virginia, as well as individuals and teams who have otherwise demonstrated an exceptional level of accomplishment and innovation in serving their customers.

Contribution(s) specify the specific challenges to customer service, and the impact of the innovation on the customers served. The description should include any pertinent measures, as well as an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributor(s). It should also describe how it serves as a model within the respective agency or across agency lines.

The relative span of control of the individual or team nominees will be taken into consideration. For example, a small office that implemented innovative cost-saving measures at the local level will be evaluated on equal footing with a headquarters-level organization which implemented a more comprehensive cost-savings approach on an agency-wide basis.

**CATEGORY 9 – Heroism**
This category recognizes employees who voluntarily risk his/her life in the line of duty. This category also recognizes employees who demonstrate exceptional heroism by exhibiting outstanding judgment or courage in an emergency, or displaying meritorious action to prevent injury, loss of life, or preventing damage to or loss of property in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**CATEGORY 10 – Public Service**
This category recognizes employees who have made outstanding contributions by participating in or implementing community and public service projects (such as volunteering with various non-profit organizations) that have made a beneficial and sustainable effect on the quality of community life for citizens in the Commonwealth.

Nominations for contributions specific to public service must describe the community’s challenges and will include accomplishments and evidence of change.

**CATEGORY 11 – Pandemic Response**
This category recognizes individuals and teams who have demonstrated an exceptional level of accomplishment in furthering the mission of the Commonwealth of Virginia during the COVID19 pandemic. The accomplishment should not fall entirely within the scope of normal duties, but are in the nature of a major contribution reflecting credit on the person or team because it is so singularly outstanding that special recognition is justified.

Contribution(s) should specify the impact on the particular mission-related program or activity, and/or the customers served. The description should include specific agency-level performance indicators and/or other pertinent measures, as well as an account of the initiative and/or resourcefulness demonstrated by the contributor(s) during the pandemic.