

Teens Serving Texas

Recognition Program | 2025-2026

Recognizing Excellence in Service and Leadership by High School Seniors

Application & Guidelines

What is Teens Serving Texas?

The Texas Association of Secondary School Principals and its members recognize that students' achievements often go beyond academic accomplishments. The TASSP Teens Serving Texas Recognition Program was established to honor and recognize high school **seniors** who have demonstrated excellence in areas of community service, leadership, and personal accomplishment through unique endeavors, obstacles overcome, or special talents. The program will recognize five graduating Texas seniors with an unrestricted scholarship of \$500. These students will be introduced at the general session of the TASSP Summer Workshop held at the Hilton Anatole in Dallas in June and honored at a luncheon with their parents and principals. In addition, twenty-five finalists will be recognized locally with plaques provided by Jostens.

Who is Eligible?

Each Texas high school whose principal is a member of TASSP may nominate ONE graduating senior for this recognition. Each student nominated should meet the following qualifications:

- Has a minimum cumulative grade point average equivalent to 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the previous three years (freshman, sophomore, and junior years).
- Is required to be pursuing a Distinguished Graduation Plan.
- Submits the application packet according to the guidelines and by the specified deadline.

What is the Procedure for Completing the Application Packet?

1. All Sections of the Application Form must be completed and arranged in the order designated in the checklist on the following page. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

2. **The Goals Paragraph:** On a separate page from the criteria statement, the student must describe his/her educational plans immediately after high school and describe his/her intended career. Be sure to connect goals to career and service aspects. This paragraph must be no longer than 200 words, must be typewritten, and clearly titled Goals Paragraph.

3. **The Criterion Paragraphs:** The student applicant must write three criterion paragraphs that describe the skills, talents, and accomplishments that make him/her eligible for a Teens Serving Texas Award. Applicants should write descriptively and give specific examples. Grade point average will not affect the judging, so please do not include the G.P.A. in this statement. The criterion paragraphs must be no longer than two typewritten, single-sided, single-spaced.

4. **Reference Letters:** Two reference letters must be included. Each letter must be written by one adult (who is at least 21 years old and not a legal guardian or relative) and must state that he/she knows the student and for how long. The letter writers must be the same two adults listed on the application form. Each letter must be typewritten or written legibly, must be no longer than one single-sided page, must be written within the last six months specifically for this program, and must include the writer's address. Both reference letters must be included in the application packet. If any are sent separately, the application will be disqualified. Refer to the checklist on the following page for guidance on organizing your application packet.

5. **Official Transcript of Grades:** One copy of the official transcript or permanent record showing final grades through the junior year is required. The document must clearly show a cumulative grade point average (GPA) equivalent to a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the freshman, sophomore, and junior years.

6. **Submitting the Application:** The application must be uploaded to the TASSP website by Friday, March 6, 2026. All pages and materials must be on 8.5" by 11" paper. The font used for the criteria statement, goals paragraph, and reference letters should be no smaller than a 12-point font. All materials should be clear and legible.

JUDGING

A complete definition of each criterion is detailed below. Winners are chosen by a panel of judges representing members of the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals. Decisions are based on the information in the student's application packet. The judges' decisions are final. In the event, there is an insufficient number of applications or if those received do not meet the established criteria, awards will not be given.

2025-2026 TASSP Teens Serving Texas Application

Instructions for Writing the Criteria

Statement/Paragraphs

Each applicant must write on Community Service and Leadership for your criteria statement. In addition, the applicant must select one area from Unique Endeavors, Obstacles Overcome, or Special Talents to comprise the criteria statement. On a separate sheet of paper, you will also write a paragraph about your future plans for your education and your intended career. This is to be entitled, Goals Paragraph.

Criterion Descriptions

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Required. (50% of the total points will be based on Community Service. Emphasis will be on originality and scope of endeavor.) Describe volunteer work you have done to benefit individuals, groups, non-profit organizations, agencies, schools, or the community. Simply attending regular meetings of organizations does NOT qualify as community service. Describe your outstanding community service contributions since September of your freshman year. Describe the role you played and give examples of those who benefitted from your community service. Give the number of hours you gave to each community service activity. Did you initiate or develop the activity? If so, include that in your statement. Community service must be verified, or your application will be disqualified. On a separate sheet, not in your statement, include the following typewritten statement for each activity you describe:

"I (name of person verifying activity), verify that (your name) was involved in and completed the (name or type of activity/activities) on (date or dates of activity) as described in his/her criteria statement."

An adult (at least 21 years old and not your legal guardian or relative) responsible for the project, group, or organization for which the activity/activities were done, must sign and date this verification sentence and include his/her complete day and evening phone numbers. All your signed verification sentences must legibly fit on no more than two single-sided pages.

LEADERSHIP: Required. (25%) Describe your ability to guide, inspire, direct, or set examples for others and demonstrate how you've accomplished these in your personal, community, or academic life. Provide examples that show continuing leadership, not just a brief, one-time-only experience.

SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING: (25%)

• **UNIQUE ENDEAVORS:** Describe the special, creative, or challenging activities that you have accomplished in your personal, community, or academic life. Unique endeavors are specific activities or efforts completed in the past that demonstrate a special or creative ability. Examples of unique endeavors include the following: using a special talent to start or expand a program; taking or making an opportunity to visit or live away from your home community; completing a special course of study,

etc. Simply being a member of a club or honor society or achieving a class rank is not considered a unique endeavor. Remember, the unique endeavor must be fully completed by the time you send in your application.

• **OBSTACLES OVERCOME:** Describe a situation(s) where you have achieved a goal despite problems or challenges that required your courage, self-reliance, and determination. These challenges may have been economic, emotional, physical, or geographic. Give specific examples and discuss both the obstacle and how you overcame it.

• **SPECIAL TALENTS:** Describe the special skills, aptitudes, expertise, or abilities you possess (such as working with people, music, skill with your hands, computer skills, athletics, artistic talents, science, or math aptitudes, inventing, writing, public speaking, etc.). Give specific examples of your special talents and how you have demonstrated them in your personal, community, or academic life.

Checklist for the Application Packet

Please scan the Application Packet in the following order:

- ☐ 1. The 2025-2026 Teens Serving Texas Application Form and a JPEG photo.
- ☐ 2. The Goals Paragraph.
- ☐ 3. The Criterion Paragraphs.
- ☐ 4. Verification Statement(s) for Community Service.
- ☐ 5. Two Reference Letters.
- ☐ 6. High School Transcript or permanent record as the last document of the application packet.

Scan all pages together as one document in the order listed above. **(No Google Docs)**

DEADLINE: Upload by Friday, March 6, 2026, to TASSP.org

Questions? Email monica@tassp.org

Dos and Don'ts

- Do allow at least 2-3 weeks to complete the application package and upload it as EARLY as possible.
- Do send only one copy of each part of the application.
- Do include a picture with your application package.
- Do not send any documents or materials other than those requested, or your application will be disqualified.

*Applications become the property of TASSP Teens Serving Texas Program and will not be returned.

Teens Serving Texas Recognition Program

2025-2026 Official Application Form

This form by itself is NOT a complete application package. See previous pages for instructions for completing the application package. All applications must be uploaded by **March 6, 2026**. Failure to complete all portions of this form will result in disqualification.

Please click and type in the fields below

1. Applicant

Last Name		First Name/M.I.	
Student's Personal E-Mail		Home Address	
City/State/Zip		Parent/Guardian	
Home Phone		Parent/Guardian E-mail	

2. School

School Name		School Address	
School Phone		School City/State/zip	
Principal		Principal Email	

3. Grade Point Certification

This section must be fully completed and signed by a high school official only. DO NOT write in GPA or in any way change the information in this section, or the applicant will be disqualified.

I, _____, certify that _____, has a cumulative GPA equivalent to 3.0
(Print Name of High School Official) (Print Applicant's Name)

or above (on a 4.0 scale) and is pursuing the Distinguished Graduation Plan.

Signature of High School Official

Title

Date

Daytime Phone

I certify that this is the sole applicant representing our High School _____

(Signature of High School Principal)

4. Reference Letters

A letter from each of the adults listed below must be included in your application package. References may not be written by the applicant, his or her relative or legal guardian(s), or anyone under 21 years of age. At least one phone number must be included below for each reference.

A. Last Name First Name Prefix (Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr.) Association with applicant (e.g., teacher, counselor, minister, employer)

Daytime Phone

Evening Phone

B. Last Name First Name Prefix (Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr.) Association with applicant (e.g., teacher, counselor, minister, employer)

Daytime Phone

Evening Phone

5. Signature

Winners agree to the use of their names, likenesses, and information contained in their application packages for advertising and promotional purposes for the tribute Award program without further compensation or notification. The information on this form and contained in the application package is true and correct to the best of my knowledge as evidenced by these signatures.

Applicant's Signature

Date

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date

Parents/Guardian's Name (printed)

Daytime Phone