



2025 ERG IMPACT AWARDS

# Application Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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# ERG Impact Awards Application Guidelines

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## General Eligibility

### Eligibility to Apply

Groups and individuals from organizations with an Employee Resource Group (ERG) are eligible to apply, regardless of industry, geographic location, or Seramount membership.

### Groups Eligible for an ERG Impact Award

[Employee Resource Groups \(ERGs\)](#) are eligible to apply under the Group Categories: [Business Impact](#), [Community Impact](#), [Workforce Impact](#), [Workplace Culture Impact](#), [ERG Collaboration](#), and [Trailblazer](#). See below for specific [Guidelines per Award Category](#). The same ERG may not apply to multiple group categories, with the exception of the ERG Collaboration category. See [Application Limitations](#) for more.

Group applications must be completed on behalf of the overall ERG on an [enterprise level](#). While different chapter-specific activities and achievements can still be indicated in the nomination, we ask that chapters consolidate their efforts into a single submission under the overarching enterprise ERG per award category.

Centers of Excellence, DEI Councils, Human Resources, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) offices/teams are not considered ERGs and will not be eligible to be nominated in the Awards. See [Ineligible Submissions](#) for more examples.

### Individuals Eligible for an ERG Impact Award

Individuals are eligible to apply under the Individual Categories: [ERG Leadership](#) and [Valued Partner \(formerly Valued Ally\)](#). Individuals may apply to either category, but not both.

Individuals, such as ERG leaders, committee leads, and members are eligible to apply under the ERG Leadership Award. Individuals such as executive sponsors, ERG program directors and managers, DEI and HR team members, and business/functional leaders who serve as valued allies and partners to the ERG are eligible to apply for the Valued Partner Award.

### Consideration Period

For the 2025 Awards cycle, we are considering and recognizing **ERG efforts completed from July 2023 through June 2024**. Work done before or outside of this consideration period will not be eligible. However, if your ERG conducted a specific program, activity, or event during July 2023 –June 2024 that built on an effort before July 2023, it may be indicated in the nomination as long as the work was also sustained, fulfilled, and measured within the consideration period.

## Work that can be Submitted for an ERG Impact Award

**Work submitted under any of the Group Categories must be created, driven, and carried out directly by the ERG.** The Awards are intended to recognize projects and initiatives where the ERG played a central and demonstrated leading role. The initiative's success should be directly attributable to the ERG's efforts, vision, and leadership. While we highly encourage cross-ERG collaboration and partnerships with internal functional departments and business units, the submission must outline leading contributions from the ERG(s) within these partnerships.

### Ineligible Submissions:

- **Entire ERG Programs:** We will not consider a collective submission on behalf of a DEI Office's entire ERG program, or all ERGs from an organization, where the ERGs did not actively collaborate and make distinct leading contributions toward a specific initiative. For example, if a DEI office leads and implements an ally program across all its ERGs, that effort would not be eligible. If, however, ERGs collaborate to build and execute an ally program with input from the DEI office, that could be eligible, particularly in the ERG Collaboration category.
- **DEI Office Mandates:** We will not consider nominations for initiatives solely required or mandated by the DEI Office.
- **Collective Submissions for Siloed ERG Work:** We will not consider a collective submission from a group of ERGs who independently worked on the same or similar initiatives without any collaboration. For example, we will not consider a collective submission where different ERGs each worked on separate scholarship programs that focused on their respective demographics. In this case, we recommend each ERG submitting their own application.
- **ERG Coalitions:** We will not consider submissions from a group of ERGs representing different organizations that do not roll up to the same parent organization.
- **DEI Councils:** DEI Councils are not ERGs. We will not consider DEI Council submissions, even if the council consists of various ERG leaders. Collaborative work must be carried out by the ERGs themselves, instead of the council.
- **Organization-Driven Initiatives:** We will not consider initiatives spearheaded by the enterprise organization or functional departments (HR, Communications, Learning & Development, etc.), with the ERG playing a minimal support role.

## Application Limitations – New Rules for 2025

### Number of Applications Per Nominee

An ERG or Individual **can only apply to one category**, with the exception of the ERG Collaboration category.

The same ERG or individual may not apply to multiple categories. ERGs may only apply to one of the following group categories: Business Impact, Community Impact, Workforce Impact, Workplace Culture Impact, or Trailblazer. The ERG Collaboration Category is the only exception where an ERG may submit another application if they already apply under one of the other group categories. For example, an ERG may apply to both the Community Impact category and the ERG Collaboration category (with another ERG), but it may not apply to both the Community Impact and the Business Impact categories nor both the Community Impact and Trailblazer categories. An individual may apply to the ERG Leadership category or the Valued Partner category, but not both.

While implementing this limitation to make the Awards more equitable, we want to emphasize the importance of intentional efforts toward a focused area of impact. We recommend prioritizing *quality over quantity* and selecting a category where the ERG had the greatest [measurable impact](#). If the ERG Impact Awards Committee believes your submission is stronger in another category, we will reach out to the nominators to suggest recategorization and move it on our backend.

There must be only one submission per ERG or per individual. If your ERG completed multiple accomplishments under the same category, combine those efforts into a single nomination to tell a holistic story of the impact of your ERG's efforts. We recommend coordinating within your ERG, and perhaps in collaboration with your DEI team and/or communications team, to craft your nomination and ensure only one application is submitted.

### Number of Applications Per Organization

You can nominate multiple groups and/or individuals from your organization in the different award categories. However, there can only be one application per ERG or per individual per category. Again, the same ERG or individual may not apply to multiple categories, except for the ERG Collaboration Category.

We recommend prioritizing quality over quantity when determining nominations. The standards are raised every year by the nominees and their incredible work, so it is best to choose a small number of nominees who meet the standards of a category and demonstrate measurable impact, as opposed to submitting many nominees who may not be quite there yet.

### 2023 Winners

[2023 ERG Impact Award Winners](#) are not eligible to submit within the same category they won in, but can still apply to another category. This limitation is only applied to one award cycle after winning in a category.

2023 Honorable Mentions are still eligible to win in the same category they were recognized for. However, their initiatives must be different or significantly evolved from what they were already recognized for.

# Submitting a Nomination Application

## **Nomination Form**

All nominations must be submitted via the online form. Word file applications will not be accepted.

## **Supplemental Materials**

Supplemental materials are *optional* to support your nominations. You may include one supporting PDF document and/or a video or website link within the nomination form. This document may be *supplemental* to your nomination; it should not contain the nomination or application question responses themselves.

## **Application Nominators/Submitters**

For each submission, there must be two nominators. At least one of the nominators must be someone other than the nominee. Individuals and ERG members can nominate themselves or their own ERG for an award. However, there must be an outside individual, such as an ERG program manager, DEI or HR team member, or executive sponsor, who will review and second the nomination. We highly recommend aligning with your ERG program manager or DEI team on your application before submitting it.

## **Word Count**

There is a 2500-character limit on the nomination form, which includes spaces. When entering your nomination into the online form, a counter at the bottom of the text box indicates how many characters you have left. Your submission will be cut off if you exceed the limit.

# Guidelines per Award Category

## GROUP CATEGORIES

### Impact-Specific Group Categories

Groups may apply to only one of the four impact-specific categories. We recommend prioritizing quality over quantity and selecting a category where the ERG had the greatest measurable impact.



### Business Impact

Groups nominated in this category have made a clear and significant contribution to their organization’s business goals. Examples of work in this area of impact include, but are not limited to, product insights, development, and innovation; supplier diversity; marketing and market penetration; brand positioning and reputation; and other business operations impacting the “bottom line.”

### Community Impact

Groups nominated in this category have made a clear and significant contribution to the external communities in which their organization does business. Examples of work in this area of impact include but are not limited to, educational and vocational opportunities for historically excluded populations, environmental sustainability, disaster relief, overall health of a community, volunteerism and philanthropy, and external partnerships with community-based organizations.

Charitable foundations are not ERGs and are not eligible to apply for the Awards. Community Impact initiatives submitted cannot solely be based on monetary donations.

## Workforce Impact

Groups nominated in this category have made a clear and significant contribution to their organization's efforts to recruit, retain, and advance diverse talent. Examples of work in this area of impact include but are not limited to, pipeline development, recruitment, onboarding, mentorship and sponsorship, frontline and hourly workforce development, and internal leadership development programming.

## Workplace Culture Impact

Groups nominated in this category have made a clear and significant contribution to their organization's inclusive culture. Examples of work in this area of impact include, but are not limited to, employee engagement; promotions of inclusive behaviors, benefits, policies, and procedures; workplace design and accessibility; spaces of belonging; and opportunities to increase cultural competency.

## Group-Specific Categories

### ERG Collaboration

Groups nominated in this category have made a significant collaborative effort to contribute to their organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in relation to business, community, workforce, and/or workplace culture impact. To be considered for this award, at least two or more ERGs must have collaborated on an initiative within one of the areas of impact above.

Cross-ERG collaborations must be internal. Submissions from external coalitions and groups of ERGs representing different organizations that do not roll up to the same parent organization are ineligible. Collaboration must be intentional between two or more ERGs, each with distinct contributions. Initiatives must be carried out directly by ERGs, not DEI councils made up of various ERG leaders, nor the DEI teams overseeing the ERGs.

### Trailblazer

Groups nominated in this category have made a significant trailblazing effort to contribute to their organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in relation to business, community, workforce, and/or workplace culture impact despite their size, limited resources, and age since initial ERG charter. Only ERGs from small organizations with *less than 2,500 [total employees](#)* AND/OR *have two or fewer years of [ERG maturity](#) at an [enterprise level](#)* are eligible to submit to the Trailblazer category.

Groups submitting to the Trailblazer category may not submit to any of the four impact-specific categories (Business Impact, Community Impact, Workforce Impact, Workplace Culture Impact).



## INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

### **ERG Leadership**

A candidate for the ERG Leadership Award is an individual whose resilience and determination have led to the creation, success, and/or turnaround of their ERG. Examples of exemplary leadership include, but are not limited to, a deep understanding of the organization's DEI and business goals; the skill to forge partnerships with other ERGs, business leaders, and external organizations to create meaningful impact; and the ability to influence multiple aspects of the company's culture, business, and the community.

The category is not limited to only ERG Chairs; ERG committee leads and highly engaged members are also eligible to be nominated.

### **Valued Partner (Formerly Valued Ally)**

An individual nominated for the Valued Partner Award must be an executive sponsor, ERG program manager, DEI or HR team member, or a business/functional leader who serves as a valued partner to one or more ERGs within their organization. These individuals contribute to the success of ERG(s) by providing support, outstanding guidance, and exposure. Examples of ways individuals contribute as valued allies include, but are not limited to, leveraging their position within the company to influence senior leadership and build engagement of the C-suite in DEI and ERG work, showing a commitment to DEI beyond involvement in an ERG, and seeking opportunities to expand a knowledge base to better support the ERG and the business.

# ERG Impact Awards Frequently Asked Questions

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## Definitions

### **What is considered an Employee Resource Group (ERG)?**

ERGs are employer-recognized workplace groups voluntarily led by employees. These groups are formed around a common dimension (similar backgrounds, experiences, or interests) or a shared identity, generally focusing on historically excluded groups. They serve as a safe space where employees can meet, support, share views, learn from others, and empower each other to further personal growth, achieve career goals, and drive business. While recognizing ERG nomenclature varies depending on maturity and organizational preference, for the Awards, we use “ERGs” broadly and synonymously with affinity groups, business resource groups, employee networks, etc.

### **What do you mean by “enterprise level” and “ERG chapters”?**

ERG chapters usually apply to larger organizations in which they have the same ERG across different regions (domestically and/or globally) and each chapter is a region-based subset of the ERG. We define “enterprise level” in terms of if an ERG has multiple chapters, in which the enterprise ERG would be considered the overarching “parent”/governing ERG. While different chapter-specific activities and achievements can still be indicated in the nomination, we ask that chapters consolidate their efforts into a single submission under the overall ERG.

### **What is considered by “total employees”?**

We define “total employees” as the total number of permanent employees (global, if applicable), including part-time employees, but not including contractors or interns.

### **What do you mean by “ERG maturity”?**

ERG maturity is how old (in years) the ERG is since its conception and formal recognition at the organization at its top-most enterprise level. Changes in ERG strategy or leadership does not consider the group “new.” For example, if an ERG has been dormant for the past three years but was originally formed 10 years ago, the maturity is still considered 10 years.

### **Why is this Awards cycle the “2025 Awards” when the last one was the “2023 Awards”?**

The ERG Impact Awards underwent a timeline adjustment in 2023 —with applications opening in June, as opposed to January like in previous years— to align with the EmERGe conference and Awards Ceremony timeline adjustment. [The 2023 ERG Impact Awards](#) highlighted work submitted in Summer 2023 and was recognized in Spring 2024 at EmERGe. To ease confusion, we are now aligning the Awards with the year of recognition (2025), instead of the year of nomination submission (2024).

## Submitting a Nomination Application

### **Is there a cost to submit a nomination?**

No, there is no cost to submit any nominations.

### **Are the awards limited only to ERG efforts in the United States?**

No, the awards are global. Nominations are accepted for ERG work done worldwide.

### **What language can applications be submitted in?**

We are only accepting applications in English, as Seramount is a US-based organization and majority of our judges are US-based. Seramount unfortunately does not offer translation services; translation will be up to and at the expense of the submitter.

### **Does the submission have to be done all in one sitting, or can progress be saved along the way?**

Progress cannot be saved via the online form prior to submission. All the nomination forms will be provided in Word files on the [ERG Impact Awards website](#) starting June 10, so you can save and work on your submission offline and over time via the Word document. We recommend using the Word file to draft your nomination and only filling out the online forms by copying and pasting your content when it is final and ready for submission. Only nominations submitted via the online forms will be accepted.

### **What happens if I don't answer the optional questions?**

Your application score will not be impacted if you choose to answer the optional questions. Some applications have optional questions around 1) ERG Budget and 2) ERG Operational Excellence. Answers to these optional questions will help the ERG Impact Awards Committee assess and make more equitable enhancements to our application and judging processes/procedures. Answers here will serve as additional knowledge sharing to provide the Seramount ERG Center of Excellence with aggregated data and potential anonymized case studies that can better inform their research and advisory.

### **What types of metrics should be included in the nomination?**

We heavily emphasize the usage of metrics to depict measurable impact. The type of metrics can vary depending on your initiative. Some examples include but are not limited to program participation rates, organizational dollars saved as a result of an initiative, amount of product users, demographic reach of a campaign, percent increase in average event attendance, participant programs/event ratings, membership growth, volunteer hours, amount of beneficiaries from a charitable program, advancement and promotional rates of employees or ERG members, percent increase of historically excluded talent within the organization, etc. If partnering with other functional departments (i.e. HR, Talent Acquisitions, Marketing, etc.) or external organizations (i.e. nonprofits, foundations, community-based organizations), we recommend gathering relevant metrics and data from them to

strengthen your nomination. We also encourage you to review best practices and measurable impacts from previous honorees ([2023](#), [2022](#), [2021](#), [2020](#)).

## Award Selection

### **Will I be notified about the status of my application even if I don't win an award?**

Yes, all nominators will be notified about their application status in March 2025, regardless of whether or not their submission was selected for an award.

### **How many winners are selected per category?**

One winner and one honorable mention will be selected per category.

### **What do the honorees receive as their award?**

In addition to a physical award, winners and honorable mentions will receive a complimentary ticket to the [EmERGe conference](#) in Spring 2025, where the Awards will be celebrated. Winners will receive one in-person ticket and honorable mentions will receive one virtual ticket. Honorees for the ERG category will receive as many tickets as necessary depending on the number of ERGs included in the submission; one ticket will be allotted per ERG. Aside from the conference tickets, being selected provides the honor of being publicly recognized and the opportunity for exposure across hundreds of DEI practitioners, ERG leaders, organizations, and industries. Honorees (both winners and honorable mentions) will also have their best practices featured on the Seramount website and in Seramount presentations to external partners. Award recipients may also have the opportunity to present at EmERGe.

### **How is the nomination content used once the honorees are determined?**

Seramount uses submitted nomination content for various communications, including but not limited to articles about the year's honorees and presentations/documentation to external partners on ERG best practices. Honoree submissions are published on our website for Diversity Best Practices members to learn from the great work that other ERGs are doing. Honorees are also showcased at our annual EmERGe conference, with potential opportunities to be presenters, providing external brand visibility and highlighting their winning practices.

### **Is attendance at the EmERGe conference in Spring 2025 required to win?**

Attendance is not required to win; however, it is encouraged. [EmERGe](#) is a two-day conference with many topics, presenters, networking opportunities, and activities focused on ERGs. Recognition for the Impact Award honorees is just one part of the event program. Award recipients may also have the opportunity to present at EmERGe. Winners will receive one in-person ticket and honorable mentions will receive one virtual ticket to attend and be recognized at the 2025 EmERGe conference.