2022 Federal Energy and Water Management Awards – Frequently Asked Questions: Nomination Review Process for Agency Coordinators

Q. How do I access FEMP's nomination site to review and approve award nominations?

A. Go to https://fempcentral.energy.gov. If you previously created a Google account associated with your federal email address (same address FEMP uses to send emails related to this program), click "Sign in with Google," and use your Google account to access FEMP Central. If you are new to the Awards program and FEMP Central and do not already have a Google account associated with your federal email address, per the Log In box on the right, create a Google account using that address. Once you create the account, you can use it to sign into FEMP Central. If you have questions, contact Dylan Adler, dylan.adler@ee.doe.gov.

If your agency is restricted from logging into the system using Google, please contact FEMP_Communciations@ee.doe.gov to discuss a workaround.

Q. I created my own user account. Why can't I find the list of my agency's nominations for review?

A. Agency Coordinators require special accounts that link to nominations submitted by other nominators in your agency. You will not be able to access these nominations through a Google account that uses a different email address from your FEMP Central account. Please see answer above.

Q. I have logged in using a Google account associated with my federal email address. Why can't I see any nominations?

A. As soon as you sign in, your personal dashboard will load, including a table that shows any nominations started or submitted for your agency. If no nominations appear in the dashboard, none have been started. If your dashboard does not include a header showing a nomination deadline, a review deadline, and a subheading with your agency's name, double check that the Google account uses the federal email address associated with the correct FEMP Central Coordinator account (see answers above), and contact dylan.adler@ee.doe.gov for assistance.

Q. I see the list of nominations in my dashboard. How do I review them?

A. From the nomination list, click on the nomination title or "View" to see the nomination details. The "Attachments" section will include the narrative and optional attachments. Click to view a file on screen, or right click to download to your computer. At the top right of the page, you may click "Download PDF" to save the on-screen nomination information as a PDF file, however you will still need to view or download the attachments as separate files.

Q. How do I know when a nomination is ready for my review and approval?

A. As soon as a nomination is started by someone in your agency, the nomination will appear in your account while under development (it will show "Started" as the status). The system allows you to edit/submit a "started" nomination yourself just in case a nominator is unable to complete/submit a nomination for any reason before your agency's/FEMP's deadline. Once the nominator has completed and submitted a nomination, you will receive a notification e-mail that includes the nomination title, letting you know that nomination is ready for review, and the nomination will show "Nominator Submitted" as the status.

Q. I am reviewing a nomination and would like to make some changes. What should I do?

A. If you'd like to make the edits yourself, scroll to the top of the review screen and click the "Edit Nomination" button at the top left. This will restore the nomination to edit mode, and you can progress through the nomination steps to make your changes prior to approving the nomination for FEMP review. If you would prefer to unlock/return a nomination so the nominator can make recommended edits, select the "Return" radio button at the bottom of the review screen. The system will provide a text box for you to include a brief note on the reason for the return and the changes you are requesting; then click the "Confirm Review" button. The nominator will then be able to access the nomination and resubmit it to you after making the edits. If you wish to contact a nominator directly via email to discuss your recommendations prior to unlocking/returning a nomination, the nominator's name appears in the "Nominator" column of your dashboard nomination table and is linked to their email address.

Q. What is the difference between Return and Decline? Aren't they the same thing?

A. The system now differentiates between a "Return" and a "Decline." Select "Return" to unlock a nomination that you would like the nominator to edit/correct. However, if you determine a nomination is ineligible for the current competition and will not be submitted to FEMP, select "Decline" to provide a brief note back to the nominator and to permanently close the nomination. *Be careful: when selecting "Decline" and closing the nomination, no further edits can be made by you or the nominator.*

Q. What is the Leadership Nomination Approval Form, and who should sign it?

A. The intent of the [Leadership Nomination Approval Form](#) is to confirm that your agency's senior leadership has awareness of nominations being submitted to FEMP. The form should be signed by your agency's "headquarters director for energy programs" for each nomination (or one form can be signed that lists all the agency's nominations). If the Agency Coordinator for the Awards is also considered your headquarters director for energy programs, the next highest level of signature is required. Please consider this step when developing your internal deadlines and review schedules.

Q. As the Agency Coordinator, I have one or more contractors assisting me in entering pre-approved nominations into the system. Do I need to obtain Federal Lead Certification forms for every nomination?

A. No, contractors who directly support the Agency Coordinator's review process are not subject to this requirement. The form and review requirement applies to contractors or private sector partners in the field developing nominations on behalf of federal staff, to ensure the federal staff leading the effort agrees with the information being provided by the private entity. If your process includes collecting nominations outside of the portal, forms should be provided to you with any nominations developed by private sector partners, and then uploaded when you enter the approved nominations into the system (as if the private sector partner had entered it into the system). However, when HQ support contractors are entering nominations on behalf of federal nominators, they may select the "I am a federal employee" radio button. Please contact dylan.adler@ee.doe.gov to let him know of any contractors on your Coordinator review team who require Agency Coordinator access to the system.

Q. I have reviewed my agency's completed nominations. How do I approve them?

A. When you are ready to approve one or more nominations for FEMP review and evaluation, you must open each nomination one at a time by first clicking "Perform Review." For each nomination, select the "Approve" radio button, upload a signed and dated [Leadership Nomination Approval Form](#), then and click the "Confirm Review" button at the bottom of the review screen. In an attempt to prevent the approval of nominations that have not been reviewed, the system does not allow for approval of multiple nominations at the same time. If you have a large number of nominations to review in the online system and you don't plan to make further edits after conducting a review, you may wish to hit approve immediately to save time later. You must approve each nomination before FEMP will review and approve it for evaluation.

Q. An award nomination was submitted to me after FEMP's June 10, 2022 nomination deadline. Can I still approve the nomination for FEMP review?

A. The Awards portal now shows two separate deadlines in your dashboard, the nomination deadline and the approval deadline. The nomination deadline of June 10, 2022 is the final deadline for all nominators to submit nominations into FEMP's system. Agency Coordinators then have until the approval deadline of June 24, 2022 to review and approve nominations. No new nominations should be submitted from the field into FEMP's nomination system after June 10. However, with advanced notice, FEMP will allow Agency Coordinators (and/or their contractor support) **only** to submit pre-approved nominations into the system between June 11, 2022 and June 24, 2022. FEMP may consider other special circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Q. What if FEMP's approval deadline is close and I do not have the signed Agency Leadership Nomination Approval Form? Can I still approve the nomination for FEMP review?

A. FEMP recommends taking this approval step into consideration when developing an internal deadline and review schedule. However, if this step will result in delays beyond the June 24, 2022 approval deadline, please notify Terry Reid and Dylan Adler, and proceed with submitting the nomination for FEMP review. The signed form must be received by FEMP prior to any winner notification or announcement.

Q. What if FEMP's deadline passes and I forgot to review/approve my agency's nominations?

A. Prior to FEMP's approval deadline of June 24, 2022, the system administrator will send you an e-mail notification reminding you to approve any completed nominations that are still outstanding in your account. Please let FEMP know as early as possible of any special circumstances that may cause you to miss the approval deadline. FEMP will try to work with you to ensure that your nominations are reviewed and approved in time for evaluation, but due to our own tight deadlines we cannot guarantee that late nominations will be accepted for evaluation.

For more information please contact dylan.adler@ee.doe.gov