



HOSPITALITY RECOGNITION LUNCH – NOMINATION FORM

Deadline to nominate: September 3, 2026

This recognition program celebrates exceptional individuals in the hospitality industry who consistently go above and beyond in their roles.

Nominations are now open for the following categories:

- **Excellence in Hospitality** – Hourly team associates only
- **Leadership Impact Award** – Hourly supervisors only
- **Hospitality Recognition Honor** – Recognition for outstanding performance

You may submit multiple nominations by accessing the form link as needed.

Eligibility: Nominations are open to employees of any business that is a current member of MCHA.

Save the Date for the Hospitality Recognition Lunch: November 12, 2026 from 12noon to 2pm at the Monterey Conference Center.

Recognition Categories and Award Criteria

Who is eligible? Hourly employees and supervisors by category. Please consider all employees, whether individuals have guest contact or support the team in other areas. Past award recipients may not be nominated by the same organization within the past three years of winning an award. Eligibility requirement does not apply to the Recognition Honorees. These individuals will receive a commemorative pin, name in program and acknowledgement in the Monterey Herald.

How many employees may I nominate? You may nominate as many employees as you wish. This is a wonderful way to acknowledge your many employees that have made contributions to your business and to the hospitality industry.

Does each employee need a write up? No. If you simply want to recognize an employee, enter names for Hospitality Recognition Honors for recognition only in the Monterey Herald. No additional write up is necessary. However, if you want your employee to be considered for a judged award, please complete the appropriate nomination forms.

How will my employees be acknowledged? All nominated employees will receive a commemorative pin, recognition in the Monterey Herald and event program. Individuals nominated for one of the specific awards below will be recognized as Distinguished Nominees in the Tourism Report. Should one of your employees be selected as one of the top finalists, they will receive numerous plaques, as well as gift certificates to area attractions, restaurants and/or accommodations.

Who judges the awards?

Six impartial individuals will meet confidentially to determine the winner. Each judge is selected based on past and current involvement in the hospitality industry. Judges may not nominate individuals for awards. All nominations reviewed blind. Please note that entries received after September 5 are not guaranteed for submission.

How do judges select a winner? Judges will receive all nominations one week prior to deliberations for individual review. During a scheduled roundtable meeting, judges will discuss the top candidates and vote to determine the

finalists and winners in each category. Judges reserve the right to reassign nominees to a different award category if deemed more appropriate.

Selections are based on a well-rounded evaluation of each nominee's contributions. Key criteria may include—but are not limited to—tenure, performance consistency, ability to navigate unique or challenging situations, positive influence on team culture, and interactions with colleagues and guests. The goal is to recognize individuals who demonstrate exceptional impact, dedication, and alignment with our core hospitality values per specific award category. Longevity in the industry will be considered when reviewing awards but is not the determining factor for award recipients.

If you were serving as a judge, what makes this individual deserving of the award over others?

Helpful hints to make your nomination stand out.

Awards are for hourly, non-exempt employees only; do not submit a nomination if your employee is exempt.

As tempting as it may be, avoid using AI to write your submission. The judges are seasoned hospitality professionals who appreciate heart-warming, transparent and unique submissions.

Read each prompt carefully and submit different content for each section. This is your opportunity to make your nominee shine!

If you have one specific "story" to tell, that answers all application prompts and is greater than 250 words, you are welcome to combine multiple sections for a complete story. If this path is chosen, be certain that the form questions are all answered to qualify.

EXCELLENCE IN HOSPITALITY AWARDS (for hourly team associates) - Winners will be selected from the categories below based on submitted nominations and demonstrated excellence. Multiple awards may be given for each category based on type of MCHA member business (Lodging > 51 employees, Lodging < 50 employees, Restaurants, Other Hospitality-related Business).

- **Spirit of Hospitality Award**
 - Celebrating the Heart and Soul of Guest Service
 - Awarded to the team member who exemplifies genuine warmth, care, and attentiveness—delivering exceptional service that turns first-time visitors into loyal guests. This individual consistently goes the extra mile to create memorable moments.
- **Heart of the House Award**
 - Recognizing Outstanding Behind-the-Scenes Excellence
 - Awarded to a back-of-house team member whose dedication and work ethic keep the operation running smoothly. This award honors those who may not be front-and-center but are absolutely essential to success.
- **Collaboration Champion Award**
 - Honoring Teamwork that Transcends Departments
 - Recognizing an associate who actively fosters collaboration and cross-functional teamwork. This individual strengthens culture by helping others succeed and ensuring seamless service across teams.
- **Rookie of the Year Award**
 - Celebrating a Newcomer's Immediate Impact
 - Awarded to a new team member (hired within the past 12 months) who has quickly become a standout contributor. This individual brings energy, initiative, and a positive spirit to the team and is already making waves.
- **Resilience in Action Award**
 - Thriving Through Change and Challenge

- Honoring a team member who remains calm, confident, and committed in fast-paced or unpredictable situations. This individual is a problem-solver who embraces change, adapts quickly, and leads by example under pressure.
- **Emerging Leader Award**
 - Recognizing rising stars who lead with purpose, passion, and potential, showing exceptional growth, and leadership promise.
 - Nominees take initiative, motivate their team positively, prioritize guest satisfaction, and demonstrate a strong commitment to operational excellence.
- **Papa Vince Award** - One outstanding individual from all honorees across the above categories will be selected to receive the prestigious Papa Vince Award—recognizing the *best of the best* in hospitality excellence.

LEADERSHIP IMPACT AWARD (hourly supervisors only) Honoring supervisors who demonstrate outstanding achievement in key areas that shape the success of our teams and guest experience. Nominees will be recognized in one of the following distinction categories:

- **Innovation Impact:** Awarded to a supervisor who introduces creative, forward-thinking solutions that improve operations, elevate service, or enhance the guest experience.
- **Culture Champion:** Recognizes a leader who actively builds a positive, inclusive, and team-first work environment—strengthening morale, engagement, and collaboration.
- **Crisis Leadership:** Honors a supervisor who shows exceptional leadership under pressure—guiding their team through high-stress situations or unexpected challenges with confidence and care.

Nomination Form Details:

EXCELLENCE IN HOSPITALITY- hourly employees only

1. *Name/Company/Contact/Position*
2. *Type of member Business, select one:*
 - *Lodging >51 employees*
 - *Lodging <50 employees*
 - *Restaurant*
 - *Other Hospitality-related Business*
3. *Photo submission*
4. *Confirm that this individual is NOT a past award winner.*
5. *Has this individual been nominated in past?*
6. *Years in Hospitality?*
7. *Years at your company?*
8. *Nominating for the following category (select one)*
 - Spirit of Hospitality Award**
 - Heart of the House Award**
 - Collaboration Champion Award**
 - Rookie of the Year Award**
 - Resilience in Action Award**
 - Emerging Leader Award**
9. ***Why are you nominating this team member for this specific award?***
Describe the key qualities, actions, or achievements that make this individual an ideal candidate. Focus on how they embody the purpose of the award and why they stand out as a top contender. Consider if you were a judge, what would make you select this particular candidate? (250 words max)
10. ***Share a quote or comment from a coworker about the nominee.*** *Provide a brief quote that captures the nominee's value, attitude, or impact on the team.*

11. In what ways does this nominee consistently exceed expectations in their role?

Provide one or more concrete examples of how this team member goes above and beyond compared to peers in similar positions. Highlight their impact, consistency, and any unique contributions that elevate your operation. (250 words max)

LEADERSHIP IMPACT AWARD – hourly supervisors only

1. 1 to 6 same as above, plus:

2. **Tell us why you are nominating this team member**

Describe why you're nominating this individual based on one of the three distinction categories: Innovation Impact, Culture Champion or Crisis Leadership (500 words)