

Pamela Austin Thompson Emerging Leader Award

Scoring Guide

How Applications Are Scored

Applications are evaluated across seven objectives linked to AONL Nursing Leadership Competencies and Strategic Plan. Each objective is scored on a scale of 0-10, for a maximum score of 70 points.

Evaluation Priorities

Leadership

1.1 Leadership Within Their Organization

Nominee demonstrates exemplary leadership within their organization, defined by influence and outcomes. Evidence may include leadership of councils or shared governance, unit- or department-level projects, change initiatives, quality and safety improvements or formal leadership responsibilities that have produced measurable results early in the nominee's leadership career.

1.2 Leadership Within Their Community

Nominee demonstrates measurable impact or influence within their local, regional or state community such as addressing health disparities, health education, health behaviors or health outcomes. Evidence may include community partnerships, volunteer leadership, outreach or education initiatives or civic engagement that extends nursing's influence beyond the walls of the organization.

1.3 Leadership Within the Nursing Profession

Nominee demonstrates leadership within the nursing profession. Evidence may include engagement in professional organizations, publications or presentations, advocacy, certification attainment or contributions that advance nursing practice beyond the nominee's immediate role.

Service

2.1 Early-Career Leadership Verification

Nominee has five years of experience or less as a nurse in a formal leadership position (e.g., nurse manager, director, or equivalent leader of others). As an eligibility requirement, this item is verified Yes or No and is not scored on the zero-to-ten scale.

Verification: Yes or No — not scored.

2.2 Support for AONL's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Priorities

Nominee demonstrates interest in assisting AONL in achieving its objectives, mission, vision and strategic plan. Evidence may include championing AONL strategic priorities within their organization, promoting AONL membership and programs or applying AONL competencies in leadership practice.

2.3 Engagement and Contribution to AONL

Nominee participated in an AONL fellowship or education program, annual conference, advocacy day or committee/taskforce or has been named to the AONL Emerging Professional Voices. Evidence reflects active, meaningful engagement rather than membership alone. Reviewers should weigh the depth of engagement, for example, completion of an AONL fellowship or appointment to the Emerging Professional Voices warrants higher scores than conference attendance alone.

Impact

Whenever possible reviewers should prioritize documented outcomes over descriptions of activities. Examples of outcome include improvements in quality, safety, workforce engagement, operational performance, patient experience, professional development or advancement of nursing practice. Consider how the nominee's early contributions signal readiness for expanded scope, influence and responsibility as a future healthcare leader.

3.1 Potential as a Future Healthcare Leader

Nominee exhibits significant potential as a future healthcare leader. Evidence may include progressive responsibilities, leading significant improvements across unit/department, pursuit of advanced education and professional development reflecting a commitment to continuous improvement, selection for fellowships or succession opportunities or recognition by senior leaders of readiness for expanded roles.

3.2 Role Model for Other Emerging Leaders

Nominee serves as a role model, preceptor and mentor to newer and emerging leaders. Evidence may include mentoring or precepting peers and new leaders, visible professionalism that others emulate or contributions to developing the next generation of nurse leaders within and beyond their organization.