

President Asks for Citizens Medal Nominations

✖ President

Barack Obama is looking for outstanding Americans to receive the Presidential Citizens Medal, the nation's second-highest civilian honor.

The president sent an email to the White House email list on Monday, stating that the White House is "looking for Americans who have performed exemplary deeds of service outside of their regular jobs and provided inspiration for others to serve."

Asking Americans to participate in the nomination process is a new tradition Obama started last year.

"I know there are thousands of citizens out there who meet these criteria—I read their letters every night, and I meet many of them in my travels around the country," he wrote. "I also know that many times their contributions go unrecognized. The 2011 Citizens Medal is a chance to recognize the everyday heroes in your community."

While past recipients have included such respected public figures as Colin Powell, Bob Dole and Muhammad Ali, unknown everyday heroes have been honored as well. Susan Retik Ger, a 2010 recipient and widow who lost

her

husband in the 9/11 tragedy, educates and trains Afghan widows and their children.

Public

nominations will be reviewed by White House staff, and additional

nominees may also be identified outside of the public nomination process. Obama will select the recipients of the 2011

Citizens Medal and honor them in a ceremony at the White House. More

than 6,000 nominations were sent to the White House last year, and 13

citizens were invited to receive the medal.

The

Presidential Citizens Medal, which has been awarded for more than 40

years, recognizes individuals:

- Who

have a demonstrated commitment to service in their own community or in communities farther from home.

- Who

have helped their country or their fellow citizens through one or more extraordinary acts.

- Whose

service relates to a long-term or persistent problem.

- Whose

service has had a sustained impact on others' lives and provided inspiration for others to serve.

A full list of the criteria may be viewed

here. Applications must be

submitted by Monday, May 30, 11:59 p.m. EST.