



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

2026 Bureau of Land Management Mineral Development Awards Program

Call for Nominations due by April 30, 2026



Mineral Development Awards Program

The Department of the Interior (DOI) is the nation's principal conservation agency that protects America's natural resources and heritage, honors our cultures and tribal communities, and supplies the energy to power our future. The DOI manages more than 500 million acres of surface land, or about one-fifth of the land in the United States. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for approximately 245 million surface acres, as well as more than 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate. Much of this land is managed for resource protection, but other lands are managed for multiple-use benefits including mineral development.

The DOI created the awards program to showcase some of the finest examples of responsible mineral resource development. The DOI, through the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), has presented reclamation awards to coal operators since the initiation of the awards program in 1986. In 2002, the DOI requested that the

BLM institute its own annual awards program open to nationwide solid mineral operations (non-coal), without regard to land ownership.

The underpinning of the BLM awards program is sustainable development—development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The five award categories are: ***Hardrock Mineral Leadership Award, Hardrock Mineral Community Outreach and Economic Security Award, Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award, Hardrock Mineral Director's Award, and Mine Legacy Steward Award***. The purpose of the awards is to recognize work in any of the three components of sustainable development: resource management, community impact, and economic security. Coal operators are not eligible for recognition through this program but are encouraged to participate in the reclamation awards program managed by the OSMRE.

2019 Hardrock Mineral Award winner,
Graymont Western US (Montana)



The Hardrock Mineral Leadership Award

highlights leadership in sustainable development that relates to resource management. This award recognizes achievements demonstrating continuous or repeated efforts to successfully meet or exceed federal, state, or local reclamation requirements with minimal oversight. Candidates may qualify for this award if they have demonstrated outstanding efforts in working with the public, the DOI, or other regulators to further multiple-use objectives in a solid minerals area. In addition to high-quality reclamation, an operator may have undertaken extraordinary measures to reduce the footprint of the operation on the land, decreasing the need for reclamation. When evaluating nominations in this category, judges will consider the extent to which the operator consulted and cooperated with other stakeholders to determine the goals of reclamation and post-mining

land use. This award may be granted to operators or organizations that provide outstanding examples of any of the following:

- Adopting best practices to limit mining impacts and adapting them to local conditions as necessary
- Preventing pollution and minimizing noise and dust during operations
- Handling hazardous materials safely
- Reclaiming the land to prevent erosion and planting native species, targeting the same plant communities that existed prior to mining
- Being a leader in developing, establishing, and implementing good reclamation practices

2019 Hardrock Mineral Community Outreach and Economic Security Award winner,
Barrick Goldstrike Mines, Inc. (Nevada)



The Hardrock Mineral Community Outreach and Economic Security Award

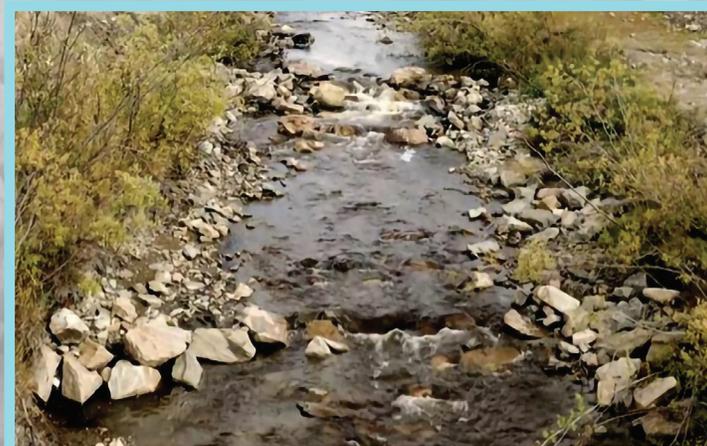
highlights the component of sustainable development that relates to concern shown for community responsibilities and the economic benefits of mineral development. This award recognizes the successful coordination of projects with local and regional stakeholders. Projects that contribute to the quality of life or demonstrate concern for the long-term health of the local community can be recognized in this category. When evaluating nominations in this category, judges will also consider any particularly creative ways operators or organizations incorporated community concerns in their development or closure plans. Particularly notable examples of the following kinds of activities may qualify a nominee for this award:

- Engaging local communities and other affected organizations in an open, honest, and effective consultation process for the entire project life
- Promoting health and safety both on and off the project site
- Investing in programs that improve the skills and productivity of the workforce
- Developing strategies for sustaining the local economy after mine closure
- Being a constructive partner in advancing the economic and community infrastructure

The Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award

recognizes land resource stewardship achievements of operators with less than 15 employees. Like the Hardrock Mineral Leadership Award, this award recognizes operators or organizations who have demonstrated continuous or repeated efforts to successfully meet or exceed federal, state, or local reclamation requirements with minimal oversight. Candidates may qualify for this award if they have demonstrated outstanding efforts to work with the public, the DOI, or other regulators to further multiple-use objectives in a solid minerals area. In addition to high-quality reclamation, an operator may have undertaken extraordinary measures to reduce the footprint of the operation on the land, reducing the need for reclamation. When evaluating nominations in this category, judges will consider the extent to which the operator consulted and cooperated with other stakeholders to determine the goals of reclamation and post-mining land use. For examples of activities that may merit this award, please see the earlier description for the Hardrock Mineral Leadership Award.

2019 Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award winner,
Race Family Mining Operation (Alaska)



The Hardrock Mineral Director's Award

will be awarded to one operator for outstanding achievement in a particular area of sustainable development. This award recognizes an operator whose dedication and commitment to excellence has resulted in the use of a new or innovative design or technique that allows or enhances successful operations in technically challenging conditions or in critical land resource settings. The nomination should include specific information about the innovative design or technique, as well as reasons why the award is merited.

The Mine Legacy Steward Award

recognizes partnership activities that assist in addressing hardrock abandoned mine land (AML) features across the American West. High-use areas where accidents are occurring include recreation areas, such as off-highway vehicle/motorcycle lands, trails, campgrounds, and special-use permit areas. Individuals or organizations can be nominated for this award. Examples of activities that may be eligible for recognition with the Mine Legacy Steward Award include one or more of the following:

- Efforts aimed at discovery of AML features not yet in the BLM AML inventory, which may also include organizing efforts to locate and report open AML features
- Assisting in installing warning signs, fencing, and other access controls at AML features
- Conducting required biological and cultural surveys in order to meet National Environmental Policy Act obligations
- Assisting in organizing, constructing, and installing bat gates/grates/cupolas
- Public education and outreach about AML dangers
- Assisting in organizing and completing hard closures related to AML features
- Performing remediation of mine sites, such as building repositories, stream restoration, or other related activities
- Operations that propose mining and processing abandoned mine rock dumps and tailings in an effort to produce resource from waste and reclaiming an AML site to modern standards
- Providing assistance to the BLM in any of the above listed activities

In addition to any of these activities, providing funding or in-kind contributions to support the activities or providing funding in support of mitigation should also be noted on a nomination, provided that the mitigation actions occur on private land.

Nominations should provide a succinct description of the challenges related to the nominated project or initiative, the nominee's achievements or contributions, and the subsequent results. Estimated cost savings to the government may be included.

2019 Mine Legacy Steward Award winner,
Newmont USA Limited (Nevada)



Who is eligible for an award?

Operators or organizations in the solid mineral industries (non-coal) can be nominated for the Hardrock Mineral Leadership Award, Hardrock Mineral Community Outreach and Economic Security Award, Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award, Hardrock Mineral Director's Award, or Mine Legacy Steward Award. Solid mineral development includes mining for a wide variety of commodities including precious metals, base metals, industrial minerals,

and construction materials. Nominees must clearly demonstrate a commitment to excellence. Please note that nominations are not limited to operations on BLM-managed land, even though the BLM is providing administrative support for this award to the DOI. In furtherance of the BLM and U.S. Forest Service "Service First" initiative, operators or organizations conducting activities on lands administered by the Forest Service are encouraged to apply, as are those operating on private lands.

How do I nominate an operator or organization for an award?

Nominations are the beginning of the selection process. Mining companies, regulatory authorities, nearby landowners, and members of the general public may nominate operators or organizations for these awards. Company officials and employees may nominate their own operations for recognition.

Nominations must contain all of the information listed in the "Required Information" section of this

announcement and indicate the award category. If a candidate is being nominated for more than one award category, please submit a separate nomination package for each award category. Nominations should be mailed to the BLM state office (Attention: Solid Minerals) that has jurisdiction of public lands in the state the operation is located. Nominations must be received by the appropriate BLM state office by **April 30, 2026**. State offices are listed at the end of the brochure.

Required Information

Each nomination should include the following:

Cover sheet containing:

- Company, organization, or person submitting nomination
- Name and location of the nominated operation or organization
- Award category
- Name, address, phone number, and email address (if available) of a contact person in the company or organization and of the person submitting the nomination, if different

Narrative description including:

- Brief history and background of the mining practice, reclamation, or community activity nominated for the award
- Description of the specific activity or practice, including specifics on problems, solutions, benefits, and unusual circumstances

- Effectiveness of the work, quantified if possible
- Transferability of the work or value of the accomplishments to other mining or mineral management operations
- Long-term benefits to the landowner, neighboring properties, and the community
- Statement summarizing why the award is deserved

Photographs: Photographs should be included if they help to document the success of the nominated activity. Not all nominated activities can be photographed, but pictures should be included if available. Photographs should be 8 by 10 inches or smaller and include a description explaining what is illustrated and a date.

Format: Please submit seven copies of each nomination on 8½- by 11-inch paper. A copy of the nomination will be provided to each judge. There is no limit on the number of photographs you can include.

Note: Supporting documentation, such as letters of recognition from regulators or community officials, is not required but may be submitted with the nomination.

In addition, videos or DVDs highlighting the success of the nominated activity may also be submitted.

Selection of Award Winners

Each BLM state office will review the nominations it receives, verify the information contained in the nomination, and confirm that the operation or program complies with applicable regulations. All nominations will be accompanied by a statement of findings prepared by the BLM state office and will then be forwarded to the BLM headquarters office for referral to a panel of judges. The panel of judges will consist of mining experts and may be state or federal employees, employees of academic institutions, or members of the public. Each judge will rate each application based on the below criteria.

The judges will tally scores and select the finalists. Judges will be encouraged to use their personal experience to guide them when evaluating the unique aspects of each application. There may be situations in which the criteria do not adequately capture all of the unique characteristics; judges may then modify the criteria by consensus if there is a need to do so. Judges determine the number of finalists that are selected. Award winners will then be selected from the list of finalists. There is no minimum or maximum number of awards that may be granted in any year, and there also does not necessarily have to be a winner in each category every year.

Criteria	Maximum Points
Clarity and thoroughness of the nomination	10
Effectiveness of the project or program	25
Transferability of the technique, practice, or program	20
Difficulty of the problem addressed by the project or program	20
Extent to which the project or program exceeds regulatory requirements or public expectations	25

Important Dates

Nominations for the 2026 awards program are due to BLM state offices by **April 30, 2026**.

BLM state offices should complete their review and forward nominations to BLM Headquarters by **May 31, 2026**. The awards event will be held in the fall of 2026.



BLM State Office Mailing Addresses and Areas of Jurisdiction

BLM Alaska State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
222 West 7th Ave. #13
Anchorage, AK 99513
(907) 271-5960
Jurisdiction: Alaska

BLM Arizona State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
One North Central Ave.
Suite 800
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(602) 417-9200
Jurisdiction: Arizona

BLM California State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
2800 Cottage Way
Suite W-1623
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 978-4400
Jurisdiction: California

BLM Colorado State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 40
Denver, CO 80225
(303) 239-3600
Jurisdiction: Colorado

BLM Eastern States State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041
(703) 558-7754
Jurisdiction: Subsurface
federal lands in Alabama,
Arkansas, Connecticut,
Delaware, Florida,
Georgia, Illinois, Indiana,
Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana,
Maine, Maryland,
Massachusetts,
Michigan, Minnesota,
Mississippi, Missouri,
New Hampshire, New
Jersey, New York,
North Carolina, Ohio,
Pennsylvania, Rhode
Island, South Carolina,
Tennessee, Vermont,
Virginia, West Virginia,
and Wisconsin

BLM Idaho State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
1387 South Vinnell Way
Boise, ID 83709
(208) 373-4000
Jurisdiction: Idaho

BLM Montana/ Dakotas State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
5001 Southgate Dr.
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 896-5004
Jurisdiction: Montana,
North Dakota, and
South Dakota

BLM Nevada State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
1340 Financial Blvd.
Reno, NV 89502
(775) 861-6500
Jurisdiction: Nevada

BLM New Mexico State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
301 Dinosaur Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87508
(505) 954-2000
Jurisdiction: Kansas,
New Mexico, Oklahoma,
and Texas

BLM Oregon/ Washington State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
1220 SW 3rd Ave.
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 808-6001
Jurisdiction: Oregon and
Washington

BLM Utah State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
440 West 200 South
Suite 500
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 539-4001
Jurisdiction: Utah

BLM Wyoming State Office

Attn: Solid Minerals
5353 Yellowstone Rd.
Cheyenne, WY 82009
(307) 775-6256
Jurisdiction: Wyoming
and Nebraska

