

# VIRTUS

## Goodness Uncovered!

VIRTUS Award was established in 2007 as Serbia's first and most significant philanthropy award. Today, this prestigious award aims to acknowledge and publicly name businesses and individual donors who have provided strategic and long-term support to nonprofit initiatives or organizations working for the common good over the past year in the most effective, sustainable and impactful way. By doing so, they have significantly contributed to the philanthropy development in their local communities.

### **What is the purpose of the competition?**

VIRTUS Award highlights companies, enterprises and individual donors who provide strategic and long-term support to community development, thus setting the best example for others to follow. Through this competition, organizations and citizens - final beneficiaries of donations can publicly express their gratitude to donors, while corporate and individual donors may receive broader public support for the initiatives they believe in. Our aim is to make philanthropy more visible and encourage even more people and companies to get involved in driving a positive change.

### **Who is eligible to participate and how can nominations be submitted?**

The award is open to nominations of the following entities:

- Domestic and international corporations,
- Branches of foreign companies operating in Serbia,
- Small and medium-sized private enterprises,
- Public and state-owned companies,
- Media companies,
- Corporate funds and foundations,
- Individual donors.

Eligible nominees must have provided support to a social or nonprofit initiative or organization in the previous calendar year.

Nonprofit organizations, public institutions, and government bodies are not eligible for this award. They may only be listed in the application as partners of the business or individuals leading the philanthropic activity.

Trag Foundation operates in the public interest and for the common good, working to support a society grounded in justice and openness. As a member of the UN Global Compact network in Serbia, we are committed to ethical standards that uphold the values, integrity, and reputation of the United Nations. Accordingly, in 2023, Trag's Board of Directors adopted an Ethical Selection Decision that excludes industries whose core activities involve production and distribution of tobacco and alcohol, weapons manufacturing, and gambling from eligibility for the VIRTUS Award. Nominations from these sectors will not be considered or reviewed by the jury.

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Corporate and individual donors may be nominated for activities implemented during the previous calendar year.

A company may submit its social and philanthropic activities in one or more award categories simultaneously.

## **Who can nominate candidates for the award?**

Nominations for the award may be submitted by:

- Any interested individual,
- Nonprofit organizations,
- Media outlets,
- PR and marketing agencies,
- Companies and enterprises nominating themselves.

Trag Foundation announces the VIRTUS Philanthropy Award competition on its website.

Nominations can be submitted by completing the application form directly online at [virtusnagrada.rs](http://virtusnagrada.rs) or downloading the form from Trag's website, completing it, and sending it to [filantropija@tragfondacija.org](mailto:filantropija@tragfondacija.org). Application forms are available for download only during the nomination period.

**Entire application form must be completed. Additional supporting materials, such as photos, annual reports, and video content, may be submitted exclusively via file-sharing services such as WeTransfer, Dropbox, or Google Drive. Trag Foundation will consider only fully completed nominations submitted within the designated application period using the official form.**

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**In which categories is VIRTUS Award being given?**

**Enterprises and companies can be nominated in the following categories:**

## **VIRTUS Award for Corporate Philanthropy**

This award is presented to a company with over 500 employees that supports activities and projects of general social importance in a systematic and thoughtful way. This company has an established corporate giving strategy and invests consciously in a few areas of particular interest. Its philanthropic approach can serve as a positive and inspiring model for strategic community investment, and the most important and significant projects the company supported during the year reflect this approach.

## **VIRTUS Award for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises**

This award is given to businesses that demonstrate responsibility toward the community by investing in non-profit projects and organizations of public interest. These are entities with up to 50 employees (small enterprises) or up to 500 employees (medium enterprises), well connected with their communities, aware of local problems and needs; they know local organizations and are always ready to act as "good neighbors" by helping where they can. This award is intended to strengthen the bonds between businesses, local communities, and organizations that work together for a better tomorrow. Branches or subsidiaries of large corporate systems or foreign companies whose parent companies have more than 500 employees are not eligible for nomination in this award category.

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**Individuals, depending on their age, can be nominated in one of the following categories:**

## **VIRTUS Award for Individual Philanthropy**

This award is given to a person over 30 who has consistently supported local nonprofit initiatives and/or civil society organizations in a community located within the Republic of Serbia's territory. The main criteria for this award are the nominee's motivation to support civil society organizations and/or initiatives in areas such as culture, social protection, education, environmental protection, human rights, and community development, as well as the level of support, number of beneficiaries reached, and long-term impact. Preference will be given to individual donors who have made a significant financial and material contribution to these organizations and/or initiatives, however non-material support, such as volunteer work or transfer of specific knowledge, will also be considered. Nominees may include individual donors, entrepreneurs, and other company employees, provided the donations come from their personal resources and the support is provided outside their professional activities.

## **VIRTUS Award for Young Philanthropists**

This award is given to an individual or group of young people up to 30 years of age, who have inspired positive change through their philanthropic actions and mobilized their peers and broader community to act for the common good. A wide range of initiatives is considered – from donating and organizing fundraising campaigns for a specific cause, to volunteering activities that improve the lives of all generations in the community. Preference will be given to young philanthropists who have repeatedly initiated such efforts or whose actions have contributed to solving a significant social issue over the long term.

VIRTUS Award jury also reserves the right to present additional special recognitions to outstanding donors beyond the listed award categories.

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## Who Decides on the Awards and How?

After a thorough review of all nominations, the independent jury - composed of distinguished professionals from business, academia, activism, media, and marketing - makes the final decision on the awardees for the given year. The jury evaluates nominations according to a set of unique criteria.

Composition of the VIRTUS Award jury for the current year is announced annually at the same time the call for nominations is published.

In making its decisions, the jury considers a range of criteria for selecting the award winners:

- **Donation Purpose:** Donation from a company or individual is directed to a non-profit organization or institution for an activity or project of public benefit and significance (for example, in areas such as environmental protection, cultural heritage, human rights protection, education, support for vulnerable and at-risk groups, local community development, etc.);
- **Recipient's Project Completion:** Donation recipient - a non-profit organization or institution - has recently completed or is in the process of completing a project with clear and measurable results;
- **Use of Funds:** Donation recipient uses the funds received to implement a project or program essential for the community in which the recipient operates or for the area of focus in which the organization specializes;
- **Donation as Social Investment:** Donor views their contribution as a "social investment" or "investment in the community" rather than a marketing tool, PR strategy, or sponsorship;
- **Interest in Outcomes:** Donor is engaged with the outcomes of their investment and interested in results of the supported projects;
- **Additional Support Beyond Financial Aid:** In addition to financial support, donor helps the recipient in other practical ways (e.g., through knowledge and skills transfer, providing goods and materials, volunteer work, or other forms of support);
- **Legality and Ethics:** Donating company generates its profits legally, in compliance with societal and ethical standards, and respects principles of corporate social responsibility, including fair treatment of employees and clients, and environmental protection;
- **Individual Donations Outside of Business:** Donors provide support separate from their business activities. Their contributions benefit a broad range of recipients and contribute to the community's long-term development;

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- **Exclusion of Certain Industries:** Donating company's core activities do not involve production or sale of tobacco or alcohol, weapons manufacturing, or participation in the gambling industry;
- **Preference for Repeat Supporters:** Candidates who have provided support to non-profit organizations and public benefit projects multiple times are given preference.

## What Does the Award Represent?

The winners of the competition receive:

- A specially crafted sculpture - an artistic work symbolizing the spirit of giving for the common good, and/or a certificate of recognition.
- Media and digital promotion by the Trag Foundation.

Winners in the corporate donor categories also have the right to use the official VIRTUS award logo for the year for which the recognition was given on all their products, promotional materials, and official documents.

**The complete list of previous corporate and individual VIRTUS Award winners, along with descriptions of the awarded philanthropic projects and initiatives, is available on the VIRTUS Award webpage.**

For additional information about the award, please contact [filantropija@tragfondacija.org](mailto:filantropija@tragfondacija.org).