



Creating U.S. Postage Stamps



Stamps show the depth and breadth of American culture. They honor our heroes, celebrate our achievements, and reflect our national identity.

The United States Postal Service® receives more than 40,000 pieces of correspondence about the stamp program each year. The creation of a stamp, from concept to production, involves a variety of talents and processes.

Keep reading to learn more about how U.S. postage stamps are created and how you can be involved.

What if I have an idea for a stamp subject?

The Postal Service™ welcomes suggestions for stamp subjects that celebrate the American experience. Any proposal that meets the established criteria will be considered. If you are interested in submitting an idea, please follow these four steps:

1. Carefully consider the criteria for appropriate stamp subjects. (See “What are the selection criteria for stamp subjects?” on pages 4–5).
2. Submit your proposal in writing by U.S. Mail®. No materials can be returned. No in-person appeals, phone calls, or e-mails are accepted.
3. Include pertinent historical information and important dates associated with the subject in your proposal.
4. Mail your suggestion (one idea per letter) to the following address:

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
c/o Stamp Development
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW Room 3300
Washington DC 20260-3501

What is the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee?

Established in 1957, the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) serves the Postmaster General of the United States. Using their collective expertise in history, science, technology, art, education, sports, and other areas of public interest, CSAC members consider and then recommend stamp subjects to the Postmaster General, who makes the final selections.

CSAC meets quarterly. Meetings are closed and deliberations are confidential.

The Postal Service's stamp development staff handles all administrative matters and correspondence for the Committee.

How does the subject selection process work?

All suggestions that meet the necessary criteria and submission guidelines are presented to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee at the next quarterly meeting. Each proposal is presented without attribution and receives the same level of consideration.

If the Committee decides not to recommend a subject for issuance as a stamp, the proposal can be submitted again for reconsideration following a three-year interval.

Proponents are not notified and no credit or compensation is given for the submission of a stamp subject that is selected.

What are the selection criteria for stamp subjects?

The U.S. Postal Service and the members of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee have set certain basic criteria used to determine the eligibility of subjects for commemoration on all U.S. stamps and stationery:

1. U.S. postage stamps and stationery will primarily feature American or American-related subjects. Other subjects may be considered if the subject had significant impact on American history, culture, or environment.
2. The Postal Service will honor extraordinary and enduring contributions to American society, history, culture, or environment.
3. U.S. stamp programs are planned and developed two to three years in advance. In order to be considered, subject matter suggestions should be submitted 3 or more years in advance of the proposed stamp for issuance.
4. Living people will not be considered at the present time. Beginning in 2018, proposals for a deceased individual could be considered 3 years following his/her death.
5. A memorial stamp will be issued honoring U.S. presidents after they are deceased.
6. Events of historical significance will be considered for commemoration on anniversaries in multiples of 50 years.
7. A balance of stamp subjects that includes themes of widespread national appeal and significance will be considered for commemoration. Official postal

cancellations, which may be arranged through the local postmaster, may be requested for significant local events or commemorations.

8. Commemorative statehood stamps will be issued at intervals of 50 years from the date of the state's first entry into the Union.
9. The stamp program commemorates positive contributions to American life, history, culture, and environment; therefore, negative occurrences and disasters will not be commemorated on U.S. postage stamps or stationery.
10. Due to the limitations placed on annual postal programs and the vast number of locales, organizations, and institutions in existence, it would be difficult to single out any one of the following for commemoration: government agencies, localities, non-profit organizations, associations, and similar entities. Stamps or stationery items will not be issued to honor religious institutions or individuals whose principal achievements are associated with religious undertakings or beliefs. However, these subjects may be recognized with commemorative postmarks.
11. Stamps may be issued for the five active-duty branches – Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy. This includes Reserve/Guard components of the current organizational structure. Stamps for the major service academies will be considered on a case-by-case basis for 50-year anniversaries (or multiples thereof).

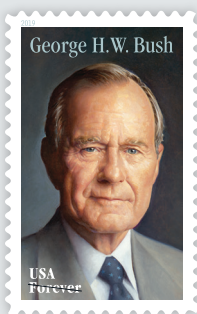
Who designs the stamps after they are approved?

When CSAC approves a proposed stamp subject, Stamp Development is assigned the task of developing the stamp design.

Stamp Development has professional art directors under contract to oversee the creation of stamp designs. The art directors, in turn, work with professional designers, artists, illustrators, and photographers to produce what has become one of the most publicly visible forms of art.

Because extensive verification is performed on each detail of a stamp's design and because production procedures are complex, design development usually begins several years in advance of issuance.

Approximately 25 stamp subjects are assigned to artists each year. While only a small percentage of artists are new to the Postal Service, Stamp Development is continually searching for new talent.



★ ★ ★

The Postal Service will honor extraordinary and enduring contributions to American society, history, culture, or environment.

SELECTION CRITERION NO. 2

In order to have your work considered, please use the following submission guidelines:

1. Submit a portfolio of samples in print form (tear sheets, color copies, etc.) that best represent your style of work. Samples are not returned; neither original art nor slides will be accepted.
2. Do not submit artwork or photographs for specific consideration as a stamp. Unsolicited stamp designs will not be reviewed or considered. Interviews are not granted.
3. Mail your portfolio to the following address:

U.S. Postal Service
Stamp Development
ATTN: Stamp Design
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW Room 3300
Washington DC 20260-3501

When a portfolio meets the requirements of stamp design and receives approval from Stamp Development, it is placed in a talent file. This file is reviewed periodically as new stamp subjects are assigned. Stamp Development makes artist selections in consultation with CSAC and the art directors. If the design staff is interested in commissioning a service, it will contact the selected photographer, illustrator, artist, or designer.

Stamp Development assigns each contract. Contracts are a flat fee; there is no competitive bid process.

Reproducing stamps

U.S. postage stamp designs are copyrighted by the Postal Service. If you wish to reproduce stamp designs, you must contact the Postal Service.

For information and permission, visit: about.usps.com/doing-business/rights-permissions/stamp-use-information.htm.



Conclusion

We hope this brochure addresses all of your questions. The U.S. Postal Service strives to create a stamp program that reflects the diversity of our nation and provides wide national appeal. Thank you for your interest.

- To view the information in this brochure online, visit: about.usps.com/who-we-are/csac/welcome.htm.
- To order stamps and stamp products online, visit: usps.com/stamps.
- To receive free quarterly copies of *USA Philatelic*, the official source for the complete listing of U.S. Postal Service stamps and stamp products, call 1-800-782-6724 or visit: usps.com/philatelic.

