NIH Policy Manual

2300-451-1 - NIH Employee Awards Program

Issuing Office: OD/OM/OHR/WRD **Phone:** (301) 402-9203

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Transmittal Notice

1. **Explanation of Material Transmitted:** This chapter establishes policy and describes the requirements for administering the NIH Employee Awards Program. This chapter is revised to include information on employee performance awards, update the issuing office, phone and references links.
2. **Filing Instructions:**

   Remove: NIH Manual 2300-451-1 dated 07/23/07.
   Insert: NIH Manual 2300-451-1 dated 05/22/09.

PLEASE NOTE: For information on:

- Content of this chapter, contact the issuing office listed above.
- NIH Manual System, contact the Division of Management Support, OMA, OM, on 301-496-2832, or enter this URL: http://oma.od.nih.gov/manualchapters.

A. Purpose

This manual chapter states NIH policies and requirements for administering the NIH Employee Awards Program.

B. Coverage

- All NIH employees are covered by this manual chapter. Specific eligibility requirements are located in **Appendices A and B**.
- Former employees and their legal heirs or estates of deceased employees are eligible for awards for contributions made during Government employment with the NIH.
- Contractors are eligible for honorary and non-monetary informal awards.
- Employees of other Federal agencies are eligible for NIH awards based on contributions that benefit the NIH mission.
- Private citizens who contributed to the mission of NIH are eligible only for honorary awards.

C. Policy

It is the policy of NIH to fairly and equitably recognize and reward individuals and groups for excellence in service to the overall mission of NIH and the missions of its Institutes and Centers (IC). This program provides various means of demonstrating, through monetary and non-monetary recognition, the high value NIH sets on employee contributions and achievements that enhance organizational performance, support organizational goals and objectives, and improves organizational quality.

D. References

- 5 United States Code (USC) Chapter 45, 4501 through 4507 (Incentive Awards) https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title5/part3/subpartC/chapter45&edition=prelim
- 5 USC 5336 (Quality Step Increase) https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title5/USCODE-2011-title5-partIII-subpartD-chap53-subchapIII-sec5336
- 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 451 (Awards) https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2012-title5-vol1/CFR-2012-title5-vol1-part451
- 5 CFR Part 430 (Performance Management) https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2012-title5-vol1/CFR-2012-title5-vol1-part430
- 5 CFR Part 531, Subpart E (Quality Step Increase) https://ecfr.io/Title-05/sp5.1.531.e
- 5 USC Chapter 45, 4501 through 4503 and 5 USC 4505, 4508 (SES Recognition) https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title5/part3/subpartC/chapter45&edition=prelim
- 15 USC 3710c(a)(1)(B) (Disposition of Royalties) https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title15/USCODE-2011-title15-chap63-sec3710c
- 45 CFR Part 7 (Employee Inventions) https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2007-title45-vol1/CFR-2007-title45-vol1-part7
- HHS Performance Management Appraisal Program (PMAP), dated December 19, 2007: https://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/asa/ohr/hr-library/430-1/index.html
- Senior Executive Service Organizational and Performance Management System, dated July 2007: https://ohr.od.nih.gov/intrahr/Pages/ses.aspx
- NIH Manual Chapter 2300-451-3 – Employee Suggestion Program
- PHS Commissioned Corps' Award Program: https://hr.nih.gov/workforce/commissioned-corps and http://dcp.psc.gov/PDF_docs/CCPM_P67.pdf
- NIH Awards Handbook, February 2002: https://hr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/public/documents/workforce/awards/pdf/awardshandbook.pdf

- Delegation of Authority for Monetary Awards, including compensation limits: https://delegations.nih.gov/DOADetails.aspx?id=3656
- Delegation of Authority for Non-Monetary Awards: https://delegations.nih.gov/DOADetails.aspx?id=2104

E. Definitions

1. **Employee Referral Award:** An award granted to an employee for referring a high quality external candidate for a "hard to fill", mission critical, and high value position.
2. **Federal Technology Transfer Act Award:** A cash award that recognizes scientific, engineering and technical personnel for inventions, innovations, computer software, or other outstanding scientific or technological contributions of value to the United States due to commercial application or contributions to the missions of NIH, HHS and/or the Federal Government, or for exemplary activities that promote the domestic transfer of science and technology development within the Federal Government resulting in use by American industry or business, universities, State or local governments, or other non-Federal parties.
3. **Honorary Award:** A non-monetary symbolic award bestowed on employees for significant accomplishments and contributions to the NIH, HHS and/or the Federal Government.
4. **Invention Award:** An award (cash and honorary) for an invention determined to be of value to the NIH and for which patent coverage is sought or obtained that contributes to an improvement in Government economy, efficiency, or operations. (Refer to **Appendices A and C** for information on the Federal Technology Transfer Act (FTTA) Award.)
5. **Monetary Award:** A cash award granted to an employee or group.
6. **Non-monetary Informal Award:** An award that recognizes a contribution made by an employee or group that does not meet the standard for a cash award or in cases where the supervisor chooses to not grant a cash award (e.g., T-shirt, mug, gift card). For additional information on non-monetary informal awards, including gift cards/certificates, refer to OPM Honorary Awards and Informal Recognition Awards FAQs .
7. **On-the-Spot Award (OTS):** A small cash award given by the supervisor to recognize an employee for a worthy accomplishment or for an unusual one time achievement.
8. **Performance Award/Bonus:** A lump sum cash payment given to an employee based on the employee's rating of record. A performance award does not increase base pay.
9. **Quality Step Increase (QSI)**: An increase in the rate of base pay equivalent to one step within the grade given to recognize exceptional performance in lieu of a performance award/bonus.
10. **Special Act or Service Award**: A lump-sum cash award used to recognize short-term accomplishments, meritorious acts, service, scientific or other achievements accomplished within or outside assigned job responsibilities. The act, service or achievement results in either tangible or intangible benefits to the government.
11. **Suggestion Award:** An award granted for an adopted idea, method or device, submitted through a formal documentation process for evaluation that directly

contributes to the economy, efficiency or effectiveness of Government operations. For additional information, refer to NIH Manual Chapter 2300-451-1, Employee Suggestion Program.

12. **Time-off Award:** An award given in the form of paid time off of up to 80 hours during the leave year without charge to leave that may be based on performance reflected in the rating of record or as a specific contribution.

F. Responsibilities

1. Director, NIH:

    - Overall authority and responsibility for the Employee Recognition and Awards Program.

2. Director, Office of Human Resources, NIH:

    - Develops, implements, and updates the recognition awards program;

3. Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management:

    - Monitors the equitable distribution of awards throughout the NIH.
    - Identifyies systemic barriers to the effectiveness of the awards program in recognizing NIH employees;
    - Recommends nominees for the Harvey Bullock and the NIH EEO Awards to the NIH Director; and
    - Advises NIH senior management on the overall EEO compliance of the program.

4. IC Directors:

    - Implement and administer the awards program within their IC;
    - Assure funding in the IC budget for recognition and awards;
    - Encourage recognition of employees through monetary, non-monetary, and other informal forms of appreciation; and
    - Ensure equity in the distribution of awards.

5. Institutes and Centers (ICs):

    - Provide advice and guidance to managers on awards mechanisms and policy;
    - Assist IC managers and supervisors in completing required forms for submitting awards; and
    - Submit awards requests for processing to OHR, Client Services Division (CSD).

6. Managers and Supervisors:

    - Recognize employees for specific contributions and achievements;
    - Ensure equity in the distribution of awards;
    - Recognize contributions and achievement promptly; and

- Use informal types of recognition to acknowledge employees' activities or services and provide personalized, immediate recognition (e.g., thank you, letter of appreciation, sign or banner, item of nominal value).

G. Recognition Categories

1. **Monetary Awards:** Include Special Act or Service Awards, On-the-Spot Awards, Invention Awards, FTTA Awards, Employee Referral Awards, and Suggestion Awards. **NOTE**: Employees should not receive more than one monetary award for the same activity. Refer to the Monetary Awards Categories Chart in **Appendix C**.

   Title 42 senior staff performance bonuses are governed by the IC Director/NIH Deputy Director Compensation Model.

   Guidance on compensation limits for Title 42 and SBRS are located at:

   - Title 42 Staff: Title 42 Pay Model.
   - SBRS Staff: Senior Biomedical Research Service (SBRS) Performance Management & Awards.

2. **Performance Award/Bonus:** A lump sum cash award based on the employee's most recent rating of record. A Quality Step Increase (QSI) is a monetary award that may be given to an employee in lieu of a performance award/bonus for performance rated Exceptional under PMAP. Refer to Performance Awards under the Monetary Awards Categories Chart in **Appendix C**. Performance Awards for employees are covered by the following:

   - Senior Executive Service (SES): HHS SES Organizational and Performance Management System.
   - Title 42 Senior-Level Scientist Performance Management Plan is pending Departmental issuance.
   - All other employees: DHHS Performance Management Appraisal Program.

3. **Non-Monetary Awards:** Include Time-off, Informal Non-monetary, NIH Director's Award, NIH Merit Award, Certificate of Service, and Retirement Certificate. Refer to the Non-Monetary Awards Categories Chart in **Appendix D**.
4. **Other Awards:** Refer to **Appendix F** for other awards administered by the DHHS, NIH/OEODM, and the Commissioned Corps.

H. Nominations, Documentation, and Approvals

Nominations and approval of awards must be in accordance with NIH and IC delegations of authority. For monetary awards, refer to the Tangible and Intangible Benefits Scales in **Appendix E** to help determine appropriate award amounts.

Nomination documentation and justifications must be submitted using the NIH Award Nomination Form, NIH 2833, with appropriate supporting documentation attached. Monetary awards must also be documented by a Notification of Personnel Action, SF-50.

I. Miscellaneous Provisions

Formal and informal recognition must comply with ethics and procurement restrictions as specified in agency, departmental and Federal regulations.

Employees may not appeal or grieve decisions to grant or not to grant monetary or non-monetary recognition or amounts of monetary recognition.

J. Records Retention and Disposal

All records (e-mail and non-e-mail) pertaining to this chapter must be retained and disposed of under the authority of NIH Manual 1743,"Keeping and Destroying Records, Appendix 1, "NIH Records Control Schedule," Item 2300-450-1.

NIH e-mail messages. NIH e-mail messages (messages, including attachments, that are created on NIH computer systems or transmitted over NIH networks) that are evidence of the activities of the agency or have informational value are considered Federal records.

These records must be maintained in accordance with current NIH Records Management guidelines. Contact your IC Records Officer for additional information.

All e-mail messages are considered Government property, and, if requested for a legitimate Government purpose, must be provided to the requester. Employees' supervisors, NIH staff conducting official reviews or investigations, and the Office of Inspector General may request access to or copies of the e-mail messages. E-mail messages must also be provided to Congressional oversight committees if requested and
are subject to Freedom of Information Act requests. Since most e-mail systems have back-up files that are retained for significant periods of time, e-mail messages and attachments are likely to be retrievable from a back-up file after they have been deleted from an individual's computer. The back-up files are subject to the same requests as the original messages.

K. Internal Controls

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance on the NIH Employee Recognition and Awards Program.

1. **Office Responsible for Reviewing Internal Controls Relative to this Chapter:** The Office of Human Resources (OHR), Workforce Relations Division (WRD) has operational responsibility for the NIH Employee Recognition and Awards Program.
2. **Frequency of Review:** On-going review.
3. **Method of Review:** An overall NIH-wide evaluation of the compliance with the policy.

4. **Review Reports:** Reports are sent to the Director, OHR, and the Deputy Director for Management upon request.

Appendices

Appendix A: Eligibility for Monetary Recognition

Appendix B: Eligibility for Non-Monetary Recognition

Appendix C: Monetary Awards Categories

Appendix D: Non-Monetary Award Categories

Appendix E: Tangible Benefits and Intangible Benefits Scales

Appendix F: Other Awards