

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

I. Purpose

A. This Directive implements Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 451, "Awards," by assigning responsibilities and establishing policies for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Employee Recognition Program (the Program). It does not cover honorary awards, which are more specifically covered in [DHS Directive 255-01](#).

B. Recognition for employee achievement has a positive impact on employee morale and retention. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to make full use of the Employee Recognition Program to reward exemplary performance, outstanding achievement or suggestions and inventions that make the Department more efficient and effective.

II. Scope

A. The Program applies to all DHS employees who meet the definition of "employee" under 5 U.S.C. § 2105, except as excluded in paragraph B.

B. In addition to the specific exclusions set forth in 5 CFR § 451.105, the Program does not apply to:

1. Individuals in the Senior Executive Service (SES), except with respect to honorary awards. Performance awards may be paid to SES employees only under 5 CFR § 534.403.
2. Members of the uniformed military services except for monetary awards for suggestions, inventions and scientific achievements as provided for under 10 U.S.C. § 1124.
3. Employees paid from non-appropriated funds.
4. Private citizens and organizations (including DHS contractors), except for honorary awards.

C. Pursuant to 5 CFR § 451.104, awards for contributions made by an individual when employed by DHS may be paid to a former employee or the estate or legal heirs of a deceased employee. Awards to separated or deceased military members for contributions made while the member was on active duty may be paid to the former member or to the member's estate or legal heirs.

III. Authorities

A. Core authorities for this Program are specified at 5 U.S.C. Chapter 45 (Incentive Awards), at 5 CFR Part 451 (Awards)

B. DHS Directive 255-01, "Honorary Awards"

IV. Responsibilities

A. The **Secretary of Homeland Security** has overall responsibility for the Program.

B. The **Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security**:

1. Designs, implements, supervises and evaluates the overall Program.

2. Reviews and, if approved, forwards to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recommendations for awards of more than \$10,000 to an individual for a suggestion, invention or scientific achievement that would grant more than \$10,000 to an employee.

C. The **Under Secretary for Management**, acting through the **Chief Human Capital Officer**:

Provides administrative support for the Department's Employee Recognition Program.

D. **Heads of the Seven DHS Operating Components**:

1. Provide leadership, direction and supervision over the Program within their Component, including program planning, budgeting and evaluation.

2. Link performance recognition to strategic plans and results.

3. Approve individual monetary awards up to \$6,000, which authority may be delegated. Monetary awards greater than this amount must be approved by the Deputy Secretary.
4. Establish supplemental recognition devices adapted to their mission and organization.

E. **Heads of Other DHS Components:**

1. Provide leadership, direction and supervision over the Program within their Component, including program planning, budgeting and evaluation.
2. Link performance recognition to strategic plans and results.
3. Approve individual monetary awards up to \$6,000, which authority may be delegated. Monetary awards greater than this amount must be approved by the Deputy Secretary.
4. Establish supplemental recognition devices adapted to their mission and organization.

V. Policy and Requirements

- A. By recognizing employee achievements, this Program is an important tool for sustaining and improving performance, increasing morale and supporting retention of a high quality workforce.
- B. The Program provides a means for encouraging the values of the Department.
 1. Components may create awards that recognize the benefits of cross Component cooperation and teamwork in meeting individual Component goals, and by extension, the overall goals and objectives of the Department.
 2. Components will encourage and reward employee inventions and/or suggestions for how to perform Component missions more efficiently and effectively.
- C. The criteria for employee recognition awards and the granting of such awards shall be free from discrimination regardless of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, marital status or disability.

D. Generally, awards are recognition of employee contributions that are both significant and beyond the scope of achievement normally expected as part of the employee's job.

E. Only one monetary award may be granted for each achievement or contribution. However, employees may receive both a monetary and non-monetary award for the same contribution. Receipt of a Component-level honorary award does not preclude award of a DHS honorary award recognizing the same act or contribution.

F. Employees may not grieve or appeal a decision not to grant an award or the amount of the award. This does not extinguish or lessen any right or remedy under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 12, subchapter II, 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71, or any of the laws referred to in 5 U.S.C. § 2302.

G. A monetary award is subject to applicable tax rules, such as withholding tax. It must be paid as a lump sum and may not be considered to be part of the basic pay of an employee.

H. Awards shall be given due weight in qualifying and selecting employees for promotion as required by 5 U.S.C. § 3362.

I. Requirements and procedures for the granting of employee recognition shall be governed by [DHS Instruction Guide 255-02-001](#).

VI. Questions

Address any questions or concerns regarding this Directive to the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer.



Michael Chertoff
Secretary of Homeland Security

10/31/09
Date