From: Chief of Naval Personnel

Subj: CIVILIAN AWARDS PROGRAM FOR THE BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL

Ref: (a) 5 CFR 451
     (b) DoD Instruction 1400.25 of 4 November 2013
     (c) DON Civilian Human Resources Manual (CHRM), 451.1, Awards of September 2005
     (d) DON Human Resources Implementation Guidance 451-02, Guidance on Implementing Awards Program of September 2005
     (e) OPNAVINST 1650.8D

1. Purpose. The purpose of this instruction is to document policies and procedures for the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) Civilian Awards Program per references (a) through (e).

2. Scope and Applicability. This instruction applies to BUPERS commands and applicable subordinate activities.

3. Policy. Ensure an active civilian awards program be implemented and integrated within the command per references (a) through (e) and this instruction. The following policies must be in place:
   
   a. Establish a command awards board and ensure it reviews and endorses proposed civilian awards. The awards board must provide oversight of the Civilian Awards Program.

   b. Evaluate and assess award programs and ensure awards are used to motivate, recognize, and reward eligible personnel.

   c. Grant awards commensurate with the value of the employee’s contribution and or accomplishment.

4. Responsibilities

   a. Chief of Naval Personnel

      (1) Issues guidance and procedures, per references (a) through (e), on the implementation and oversight of the awards programs to subordinate commands.

      (2) Endorses award nominations that require Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) approval.
(3) Ensures subordinate activities awards programs are in place and that awards are used to motivate, recognize, and reward eligible employees.

b. Head of the Organizational Unit, Commanding Officer (CO), Officer in Charge (OIC), or Department Head (DH)

   (1) Establishes an awards board and or serves as a member of the awards board for their activity.

   (2) Designates an award coordinator to manage the budget and act as a liaison between the activity, command or department, and Total Force Human Resources and Manpower Office (BUPERS-05).

   (3) Encourages recognition of top civilian performers throughout the year.

   (4) Rewards superior performance and presents cash awards or other tangible incentives (e.g., time-off, certificates, etc.).

c. Awards Board

   (1) Provides final approval for time-off awards exceeding 24 hours cumulative; Federal Executive Association (FEA) awards; quality step increase (QSI); civilian of the quarter (COQ) and civilian of the year (COY) awards; military cash and beneficial suggestion awards; and monetary awards exceeding or totaling over $2,000, whether individually or as a result of multiple awards;

   (2) Reviews all awards for equity and consistency in the awards systems;

   (3) Meets as necessary, at the convening of the chairperson; and

   (4) Reviews recommendations for all honorary and non-monetary awards, as needed or as requested by BUPERS-05.

d. BUPERS-05

   (1) Advises and provides guidance on civilian awards to Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel (DEP CHNAVPERS), activity heads, COs, OICs, DHs, managers, and supervisors.

   (2) Communicates and solicits nominations to BUPERS DHs for recurring award programs.

   (3) Maintains accounting of all award data for the awards board.

   (4) Reviews, processes, and finalizes all awards packages.
(5) Prepares career service recognition and retirement award certificates for employees per reference (d).

5. Procedures

a. The BUPERS Civilian Awards Program is established to increase productivity by recognizing creativity in the workplace and by rewarding employees and groups of employees when significant contributions are made. To achieve this objective, awards program is designed to:

   (1) Recognize outstanding or exceptional personnel performance, and special achievements as a single contributor or member of a team;

   (2) Encourage positive participation from personnel at all levels in improving business operations; and

   (3) Award cash payments, grant time-off, or incur necessary expenses for both honorary and informal recognition of personnel, either individually or as a member of a group, on the basis of:

      (a) Superior accomplishment or other personal effort that contributes to the efficiency, economy or important business operations, or achieves a significant reduction in paperwork;

      (b) Special acts or service in the public interest in connection with or related to official employment; and

      (c) Exceptional performance as reflected in the employee's departmental recommendation.

b. Nominations

   (1) Awards are to be completed on NAVPERS 12451/3 Civilian Award Recommendation. NAVPERS 12451/3 is available at: https://www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Forms/NAVPERS/

   (2) Nomination packages must be endorsed by the head of the organizational unit.

   (3) Award packages requiring awards board review must be forwarded to the BUPERS awards board for final review and approval before submission to BUPERS-05.

6. Eligibility. Each award may have various eligibility policies per references (a) through (e) and must be reviewed prior to nominating an employee for an award. At the very least, Federal civilian employees assigned to BUPERS commands must have been onboard at least 90-days to be considered for an award.
7. Award Types

a. BUPERS Monetary and Time-off Awards Programs:

   (1) Performance Awards. Award recognizes long-term performance and achievements significantly above that expected at the “acceptable” level.

      (a) In order to provide an equitable starting point across BUPERS, the head of the organizational unit will be provided a baseline award amount, which is determined by Department of the Navy (DON) annually.

      (b) Awards exceeding $2,000 (whether individually or as a result of multiple submissions) must be submitted to the awards board for review and approval.

   (2) QSIs. Because of long-term fiscal costs to the Navy and command, QSIs will be the exception, vice the rule, and must be endorsed by the head of the organizational unit.

      (a) QSIs are awarded for sustained superior performance.

      (b) The most important consideration in determining whether a QSI should be awarded is whether the employee made a significant and lasting contribution to the command or Navy mission. Otherwise, a performance award or incentive award is appropriate in most cases.

      (c) If a QSI is awarded, no other performance award will be awarded to that employee during the year. Under no circumstances will a QSI be awarded if an employee has received a promotion during the same fiscal year.

      (d) All QSIs will be submitted to the awards board for approval. The awards board will review the employee’s performance history for a period of 3 years prior to the approval of any QSI.

      (e) DEP CHNAVPERS is final approving authority for QSIs.

   (3) Incentive and Financial Awards

      (a) On-the-Spot Award

         1. This award provides immediate acknowledgment for specific and exceptional performance outside the normal bounds of an employee’s job.

         2. On-the-Spot awards range from $100 to $750, commensurate with the nature of the service or act being recognized.

         3. The head of the organizational unit, CO, OIC, or DH may approve on-the-spot awards.
4. Awards will be reviewed by BUPERS-05 to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations. BUPERS-05 may choose to forward any awards to the BUPERS Awards Board for review and final approval.

(b) **Special Act or Service Award**

1. This award is given to an individual or a group of personnel for a non-recurring, specific exemplary contribution within or outside normal job responsibility.

2. The head of the organizational unit, CO, OIC, or DH may approve on-the-spot awards up to $2000.

3. Awards will be reviewed by BUPERS-05 to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations. BUPERS-05 may choose to forward any awards to the BUPERS Awards Board for review and final approval.

(c) **Time-Off Awards**

1. The monetary cost of time-off awards will not be counted against the awards budget.

2. The head of the organizational unit, CO, OIC, or DH must consider daily labor costs, the impact on use-or-lose leave, and the amount of worked overtime. CO, OIC, or DH is authorized to approve time-off awards up to 24 hours cumulative.

3. Time-off awards granted in excess of 24-hours cumulative must be submitted to the awards board for review and approval.

4. Time-off awards must be submitted for 4 hours or more.

b. **COQ and COY.** The COQ and COY Program is designed to recognize and reward General Schedule (GS) civilian employees whose accomplishments, performance, and conduct are above the normal standards of excellence.

(1) **Eligibility.** Civilian employees may be selected only once in any 24-month period as the command civilian employee of the quarter and year and only once in a 12-month period at the department level in any of the below categories.

(2) Smaller commands and activities may have a different COQ and COY organization structure than larger commands. For example, a selection of only one COQ per quarter and one COY per year may be more appropriate because of the smaller number of civilians onboard and smaller award budget. An example for a larger command structure is a selection of three civilians per quarter and year as indicated:
(a) Senior Civilian Employee. All permanent or term civilian employees in grades GS-11 through GS-13, who have been employed by the nominating command for at least 1 year prior to the quarter in which they are being nominated.

(b) Mid-Grade Civilian Employee. All permanent or term civilian employees in grades GS-07 through GS-09, who have been employed by the nominating command for at least 1 year prior to the quarter in which they are being nominated.

(c) Junior Civilian Employee. All permanent or term civilian employees in grades GS-04 through GS-06 who have been employed by the nominating command for at least 1-year prior to the quarter in which they are being nominated.

(4) Awards Board Voting. The awards board will review and vote quarterly on recommended nominees. The awards board will evaluate the following areas:

(a) Achievement or service that is exceptional when measured against the position requirements of the individual, which should exceed the contributions and service of others with comparable responsibilities.

(b) A pattern of long-term, sustained high performance as evidenced by the nominee having previously received high honorary awards.

(c) Accomplishments which show unusual management abilities, innovative thinking, and or outstanding leadership that benefit the command.

(d) Indications of innovative leadership or highly successful programs or projects, which had impact beyond the command.

c. Recognition Awards

(1) Informal recognition awards are intended to recognize contributions informally such as a letter of appreciation.

(2) Length of service (LOS) certificate award is to recognize significant milestones in employees’ careers and emphasize service to the Government. LOS certificates are available in 5-year increments starting at the 10-year LOS.

(3) Retirement certificates are issued per reference (d).

d. Honorary Awards. References (b) and (c) list DON and Department of Defense (DoD) honorary awards in recognition of contributions to the Department’s national security, mission, humanitarian, or peacekeeping efforts. Examples include meritorious, superior, and distinguished civilian service awards. These awards will not be used as retirement awards.
e. **Military Cash Program and Beneficial Suggestion Program.** Beneficial suggestions that warrant adoption and cash awards up to $2,000 will be submitted to the awards board for approval. Reference (e) contains detailed information on this type of award.

f. **FEA Regional Awards Program.** The FEA regional awards program instruction will depend on the location of the BUPERS activity or command region. For the Mid-South region, the FEA announcement and solicitation is requested annually from the Federal agencies within the Memphis, TN area.

(1) The FEA Employee of the Year Award Program is an effective means of publicizing to the public and the Federal community the high caliber of devoted and dedicated civilian and military employees in the Federal service.

(2) The selected Federal employee(s) of the year, in each category, will receive on-stage recognition and a plaque at an awards luncheon.

(3) **Eligibility.** Nominees must be either civilian employees of the Federal government or uniformed military personnel. Eligibility excludes local heads of installations and agencies, Senior Executive Service civilians, 06 and above (military), and contractors in all categories.

   (a) All nominees must have served a minimum of 12 months in Federal service, at least 6-months of which must have been in the activity or command region, e.g. Memphis, TN metropolitan area (months do not have to be consecutive).

   (b) Award recipients from the previous year are eligible nominees for the following year’s nominations.

   (c) To ensure all deserving civilian and military employees in the Federal service receive recognition for exemplary job performance and contributions to the government, public or community, in some categories and according to the number of employees located at the agency or installation, multiple awards may be presented.

8. **Civilian Awards Budget.** The following policies apply concerning civilian awards program:

   a. The United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will establish the awards budget for each year. The comptroller of the organization will establish a budget and grant budgetary approval for awards and QSIs.

   b. The fiscal-year civilian awards budget is based on the total salary levels for all civilians on board 30 September of the previous fiscal year. No dollars will be associated with vacant positions or will be allocated as new civilians report on board throughout the fiscal year. Awards budget amounts may be changed during any year if mandated by higher level.

   c. The total yearly cost of a QSI (3 percent of salary), regardless of when awarded, will count against the awards budget.
d. A special act award of $500 will be presented to each employee receiving an FEA award during the FEA annual regional competition. The costs associated with this award will come from head of the organizational unit’s award budget.

e. The COQ and COY awards will come from the head of the organizational unit’s award budget. Award amounts are as follow: COQ departmental winners - $250 and 4 hours time-off; COQ command winners - $500 and 8 hours time-off; and COY command winners - $1,000 and 8 hours time-off.

9. Questions. Questions may be directed to the BUPERS frequently asked questions (FAQ) email box at MILL_BUPERS-05_FAQ@navy.mil.

10. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per Secretary of the Navy Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

11. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, BUPERS-05 will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, DoD, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will automatically expire 5 years after its issuance date unless reissued or canceled prior to the 5-year anniversary date, or an extension has been granted.

12. Form. NAVPERS 12451/3 Civilian Award Recommendation. NAVPERS 12451/3 is available at: https://www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Forms/NAVPERS/

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Releasability and distribution:
This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via BUPERS Web site. http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/Pages/default.aspx