BUPERS INSTRUCTION 12450.4A

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 the policies and procedures for the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) Civilian Awards Program per references (a) through (e). Major revision to this instruction includes the provision for continuous rewards and recognition throughout the year and not at the end of the annual performance cycle.

2. Cancellation. BUPERSINST 12450.4.

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

4. Policy. Ensure an active civilian awards program be implemented and integrated 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.

   d. Establish awards criteria for granting monetary or non-monetary awards for individual, team, or organizational achievements or contribution, and ensure that criteria for awards do not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin or disability.
5. Responsibilities

a. Chief of Naval Personnel

(1) Endorses award nominations that require Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) approval.

(2) Delegates authority for BUPERS civilian awards program per references (a) through (e) to Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel (DEP CHNAVPERS).

b. DEP CHNAVPERS

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

(2) Ensures the subordinate activity awards program is in place and that awards are used to motivate, recognize, and reward eligible employees.

c. 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) Identify an awards coordinator to manage the budget and act as a liaison between the activity, command or department, and BUPERS 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.).

d. Awards Board

(1) Provides final approval for time-off awards exceeding 24 hours cumulative, Federal Executive Association (FEA) awards, 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.

e. **BUPERS-05**

(1) Acts as the BUPERS Awards Program Manager.

(2) Advises and provides guidance of civilian awards to the DEP CHNAVPERS, activity heads, COs, OICs, DHs, managers, and supervisors.

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

(4) Reviews, processes, and finalizes all awards packages.

(5) Endorses award submissions per references (a) through (e) prior to submission for DEP CHNAVPERS approval.

6. **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, the 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 of 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.

(4) Recognize and reward employees as soon after the achievement as possible and not at the end of the annual performance rating cycle.

b. Nominations

(1) Awards are to be completed on NAVPERS 12451/3 Civilian Award Recommendation form. 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 awards board for final review and approval before submission to BUPERS-05.

7. 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 be onboard at least 90 days to be considered for an award.

8. Award Types

a. BUPERS Monetary and Time-off Awards

(1) Performance Awards. Awards recognize employee outstanding performance achievements and accomplishments. Recognition should be made as soon after the achievement as possible and not at the end of the annual performance rating cycle. BUPERS-05 will send quarterly reminders to assist managers in recognizing employees throughout the year. Performance recognition is appropriate when an employee performs substantially beyond expectations. Accomplishments may include, but are not limited to:

(a) Exceptional program or project management;

(b) Individual contribution or teamwork that results in a high-quality product or service to a customer.

(2) Quality Step Increase (QSI). 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.

(c) 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 the final approving authority for QSIs.

(3) Incentive and Financial Awards

(a) On-the-Spot Awards

1. This award is utilized to quickly recognize and provide immediate reinforcement of one-time achievements by employees that have resulted in service of an exceptionally high quality or quantity. This award is particularly appropriate for rewarding and recognizing employee efforts that might otherwise go unrecognized.

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 Awards

1. This award is utilized to recognize 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 financial awards up to $2000 cumulative within a fiscal year.
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. 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 within a fiscal year.

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 may only be awarded 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.
(3) Awards Board Voting. The awards board members 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) Accomplishments which show unusual management abilities, innovative thinking, and or outstanding leadership that benefit the command.

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

c. Recognition Awards

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

(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. BUPERS issues LOS certificates based on the official service computation date of the civilian employee.

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

d. Honorary awards. References (b) and (c) list Department of the Navy 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 award 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 the high caliber of devoted and dedicated civilian and military employees in the Federal service to the public and the Federal community.
(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 (months do not have to be consecutive) in Federal service, at least 6-months of which must have been in the activity or command region, e.g., Memphis, TN metropolitan area.

(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.

9. 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 guidance 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 authority.

c. The total yearly cost of a QSI (3 percent of salary), regardless of when awarded, will count against the awards budget.

d. The COQ and COY awards will come from the head of the organizational unit’s award budget. Award amounts as follows: 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.

10. Questions. Questions may be directed to the BUPERS frequently asked questions (FAQ) email box at MILL_BUPERS-05_FAQ@navy.mil.
11. **Records Management.** Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per SECNAV Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

12. **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 be in effect for 5 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 5-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.

13. **Form.** NAVPERS 12451/3 Civilian Award Recommendation. NAVPERS 12451/3 is available at:

![Signature](signature)

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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