

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL MANUAL SYSTEM

DPM CHAPTER 451

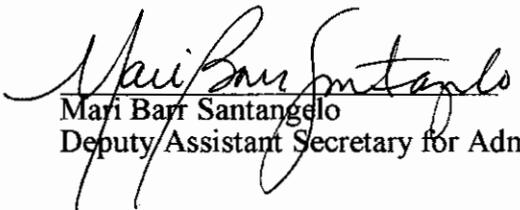
DATE: DEC 29 2009

SUBJECT: Awards and Recognition

This Chapter replaces all previous DPM Letters and other issuances in the 451 series, and is effective immediately.

It is the policy of the Department of Transportation that:

- Awards and recognition will be linked to organizational goals and objectives.
- Funding for monetary and non-monetary awards will be budgeted based on an established percentage of aggregate base salaries of employees covered by the Program.
- The contributions of high performers will be acknowledged, rewarded, and recognized.
- Awards and recognition will be used as an integral part of everyday supervision and management.
- Awards and recognition programs will have clear award criteria and a transparent process, which is communicated to employees.
- Awards and other forms of recognition will be granted without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, marital status, national origin, or disability or any other non-merit factor.


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Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration

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DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL MANUAL

Chapter 451 AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

**THIS DPM CANCELS AND REPLACES ALL PREVIOUSLY ISSUED
DPM-451 BULLETINS, LETTERS AND CHAPTERS RELATED TO
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION.**

DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL MANUAL 451

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Purpose
- Coverage
- Related Topics
- Authority and References
- Scope
- DOT Policy
- Responsibilities

SECTION 2. PAYMENT OF AWARDS

- Award Amounts
- Submission and Approval
- Payment Responsibility

SECTION 3. OA AWARD PROGRAMS

- Awards and Recognition Programs
- Reports
- Program Evaluation

SECTION 4. DEPARTMENTAL HONORARY AWARDS

- Honorary Recognition
- Honorary Awards
- Awards Nominations and Allocations
- Annual Awards Ceremony

SECTION 5. MONETARY AWARDS

- Special Achievement
- On-the-Spot Awards
- Time-Off Awards

SECTION 6. QUALITY STEP INCREASES

SECTION 7. CAREER SERVICE RECOGNITION

Length of Service
Distinguished Career Service Awards

SECTION 8. SUGGESTION AWARD PROGRAM

SECTION 9. SPECIAL SECRETARIAL AWARDS

APPENDIX A – INTERNAL AWARDS SCALES

APPENDIX B – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD OF OUTSTANDING
ACHIEVEMENT (GOLD MEDAL)

APPENDIX C – THE SECRETARY’S PARTNERING FOR EXCELLENCE
AWARD

APPENDIX D – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR MERITORIOUS
ACHIEVEMENT (SILVER MEDAL)

APPENDIX E – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

APPENDIX F – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR EEO/AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION

APPENDIX G – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE

APPENDIX H – THE SECRETARY’S TEAM AWARD

APPENDIX I – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR VALOR

APPENDIX J – SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

APPENDIX K – ON-THE-SPOT AWARDS

APPENDIX L – TIME-OFF AWARDS

APPENDIX M – DISTINGUISHED CAREER SERVICE AWARD

APPENDIX N – SUGGESTION AWARD PROGRAM

APPENDIX O – LEADERSHIP AWARD

APPENDIX P – EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD

APPENDIX Q – PEER RECOGNITION AWARD

APPENDIX R – ORGANIZATIONAL AWARD

APPENDIX S – THANKS-A-MILLION AWARD

SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Purpose

This Chapter establishes the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Awards and Recognition Program. It sets forth policy for establishing awards and recognition programs within DOT. Departmental Personnel Manual (DPM) Letter No. 451-8, The Department of Transportation Awards and Recognition Systems, dated October 10, 2000, containing policy and instructions is canceled. However, OAs (OA) shall continue to use their existing awards and recognition systems until new systems created under this directive are approved for implementation by the Departmental Office of Human Resource Management.

Coverage

The DOT Awards and Recognition Program covers all employees of OAs within DOT, with the following restrictions:

- a. During Presidential election periods (June 1 of a Presidential election year through January 20 of the following year), Schedule C and non-career Senior Executive Service (SES) employees are not eligible for cash or time-off awards by law.
- b. A cash award or time-off award for political appointees must be approved by Secretary, or his designee, through the Departmental Office of Human Resource Management.

Related Topics

The DOT Awards and Recognition Program interfaces with:

1. Department of Transportation Performance Appraisal System, DPM Chapter 430.
2. Department of Transportation Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance Management System, DPM Letter 920-24.

Authority and References

- a. This chapter is based upon and conforms to the policies and requirements set forth in 5 U.S.C. Chapter 45, and 5 CFR Part 451.
- b. This chapter supplements policies and requirements contained in the references cited in (a) above. It is not self-contained, and must be read in conjunction with the references cited, and any collective bargaining agreements.

- c. A “Supervisory Toolkit” has been developed to assist managers and supervisors in the performance of their supervisory duties. It can be found at:
<http://dothr.ost.dot.gov/Toolkit/toolkit.html>.

Scope

- a. This chapter sets forth the responsibilities, procedures, and guidelines for the establishment and administration of awards and recognition programs within the Department.
- b. It provides flexibility to OAs to establish awards and recognition programs that sustain and improve performance, increase morale, improve recruitment and retention, and support and enhance Departmental and OA missions, goals, and objectives.
- c. This chapter provides procedures for nominating employees for Departmental awards given at the Secretary of Transportation’s (Secretary) Annual Awards Ceremony.

DOT Policy

It is DOT policy that the OAs’ awards and recognition programs will be consistent with current laws, applicable regulations, Departmental policies, and applicable collective bargaining agreements. In addition, awards and recognition programs will be administered in accordance with the following principles:

- a. Awards and recognition will be linked to organizational goals and objectives.
- b. Awards and recognition programs will have clear award criteria and a transparent process which will be communicated to employees.
- c. Funding for monetary and non-monetary awards will be budgeted based on an established percentage of aggregate base salaries of covered employees consistent with the OA’s awards and recognition strategy.
- d. Awards and recognition will be used as an integral part of everyday supervision and management to motivate, recognize, and reward individuals or groups for achieving results or contributing to the efficiency, economy, or other improvements in Government operations.
- e. The contributions of higher performers (individuals or groups) will be acknowledged, rewarded, and recognized.

- f. Awards and recognition will be granted only in recognition of contributions that are both significant and beyond the scope of achievement normally expected as part of the job, and will be proportionate to the value of the contribution to the Department or OA.
- g. Awards and recognition will not be used as a substitute for overtime pay, promotion, or any other purpose not compatible with the criteria for the awards described in this chapter.
- h. Awards and other forms of recognition will be granted without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, marital status, national origin, or disability or any other non-merit factor.
- i. Individuals who have been officially identified by the agency or a third party as discriminating officials shall not be eligible for monetary or honorary awards for performance or achievement for the period for which the award is given.
- j. All Departmental honorary awards recommendations which are above the level an Administrator may approve will be reviewed by the OA for approval or disapproval.
- k. Administrators may re-delegate approval authority for awards within their own approval authority.
- l. Administrators may not delegate nomination authority for honorary awards over which the Secretary of Transportation has final approval authority.
- m. Nominations for the Department's honorary awards must clearly show how the factors warranting nomination linked to the Department's mission, goals or objectives.
- n. Supervisory and management officials will be trained in the effective use of awards to motivate, retain, and recognize employees.

Responsibilities

- a. The Secretary's Departmental Office of Human Resource Management provides overall policy and program direction.
- b. Within each OA, Administrators will provide leadership and direction by:
 - 1. Developing awards and recognition strategies consistent with Departmental policy and the needs of the OA.
 - 2. Administering an awards and recognition program consistent with Departmental

policy.

3. Designating adequate resources for awards and recognition program administration and training.
 4. Establishing an annual awards budget for payment of monetary and non-monetary awards.
 5. Ensuring that current concepts in recognition are integrated when implementing organizational award programs.
 6. Establishing a review process for all Departmental honorary award nominations made by Administrators.
 7. Ensuring that Administrators have sole authority for Departmental honorary award nominations.
 8. Delegating approval authority for awards to appropriate organizational levels.
 9. Ensuring that the awards and recognition program is evaluated periodically to identify specific strengths and weaknesses, develop improved procedures, and establish goals and objectives to direct future program efforts.
- c. Managers, Supervisors, and Group/Team Leaders are responsible for:
1. Ensuring that employees are aware of the purposes and criteria for awards.
 2. Identifying and recommending awards promptly for employees whose performance, contributions, or ideas merit recognition.
 3. Using awards in a consistent, prompt, and equitable manner.
 4. Encouraging employees to submit suggestions and assisting them in the development and testing of ideas, when requested.
 5. Approving and disapproving, if authorized, awards for employees within their organizations.
- d. The DOT Awards Review Board (Board) is responsible for reviewing nominations and making recommendations for awards to the Secretary, where the Secretary's endorsement or approval is required or desired.

1. The Board is comprised of three members, with the Assistant Secretary for Administration as a permanent member and Chairperson.
2. The Board shall meet periodically at the discretion of the Chairperson to review nominations within its scope.
3. The Departmental Director of Human Resource Management (Director) will serve as the Executive Secretary to the Board.
4. The Assistant Secretary for Administration will nominate and the Secretary will designate an Administrator or Deputy Administrator of an OA and a Departmental Officer to serve two-year terms on the Board. If required, additional members of the Board may be selected from the OAs or Departmental Offices on an ad-hoc basis.

SECTION 2. PAYMENT OF AWARDS

Award Amounts

OAs covered under Title 5 of the U.S. Code may establish internal award scales, consistent with the provisions of this chapter. See [Appendix A, Tangible and Intangible Benefits](#).

Submission and Approval

- a. Awards up to and including \$10,000. OAs are authorized to grant cash awards for any amount up to \$10,000 per individual. However, internal OA strategies must include procedures to maintain reasonable consistency for similar achievements.
- b. Awards over \$10,000 and through \$25,000. Awards over \$10,000, and no more than \$25,000, must be forwarded to the Secretary through the Director and must contain the endorsement of the recommending OA Administrator. The Director will review and forward the recommendation to the Secretary for endorsement to send the recommendation to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for approval.
- c. Awards over \$25,000. Awards over \$25,000 to an individual employee must be forwarded to the Secretary through the Director and must contain the endorsement of the recommending OA Administrator. The Director will review and forward the recommendation to the Secretary for endorsement to send to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for review. If approved, OPM will submit the recommendation to the President for final approval.

Payment Responsibility

The Administrators of each OA shall allocate a percentage of the aggregate base salaries of covered employees in order to allocate adequate funds to assure prompt payment of cash awards. Nominations will be reviewed to ensure that award payments do not exceed statutory compensation caps.

SECTION 3. OPERATING ADMINISTRATIONS' AWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

Awards and Recognition Programs

- a. OAs are strongly encouraged to design awards and recognition programs to support organizational needs, goals, and objectives. These programs should be simple to use, transparent, provide for award approval at the lowest practical level, and link most forms of recognition (monetary, non-monetary and time-off) directly to the achievement of:
 1. Organizational goals and objectives;
 2. Specifically defined organizational initiatives such as improved customer service, innovative practices, quality initiatives, elimination of unnecessary work processes or procedures; or
 3. Organizationally defined values such as courtesy, employee empowerment, responsiveness to customers, risk taking.
- b. In planning and developing an awards and recognition program, involvement of employees and supervisors at all levels is encouraged to create not only awareness and understanding of the program's goals and objectives, but to facilitate employees' acceptance of the program. Employee input is also useful to ensure that the type of recognition being proposed is meaningful to employees and will serve as a motivator.
- c. The awards and recognition programs of OAs should include:
 1. The objective of the awards and recognition program (what the awards are suppose to achieve);
 2. The types of contributions that will be recognized (describe criteria and provide concrete examples whenever possible);
 3. The specific information that nominations must contain (a standardized nomination format will simplify the nomination, review, and selection process);
 4. Who is eligible for an award (e.g., certain pay plans, occupations, work units);

5. The type of recognition or award item that will be provided;
 6. The frequency and number of awards that will be granted and the award consideration period (e.g., monthly, quarterly, annually); and
 7. The nomination, screening, and approval process and how, where, and/or when the award(s) will be presented.
- d. OAs should construct innovative awards and recognition programs that reflect organizational culture. Benchmarking what other OAs are doing is one way of developing an effective awards and recognition program. Some examples of the types of awards that OAs have established are located in the appendices. See Appendices [O](#), [P](#), [Q](#), and [R](#).
 - e. To reinforce the effectiveness of the awards and recognition program, it is important to widely publicize employees recognized under the program. The level at which awards are presented, and the involvement of the nominating and approving officials in the presentation of the award, are also important considerations. Newsletters, bulletin boards, articles in local newspapers can all serve as effective vehicles for the purpose of publicity.

Reports

- a. OAs shall submit an annual statistical and narrative report on the effectiveness of their award and recognition strategy. The report is due to the Director by the end of October.
- b. Additional reports on suggestion activity may be requested as necessary.

Program Evaluation

One year from the date of implementation of this chapter, each OA will evaluate their strategies and procedures to identify best practices, lessons learned, and challenges for collective problem solving. The findings will be provided to the Director for inclusion in an overall study of the Department's Awards and Recognition Program

SECTION 4. DEPARTMENTAL HONORARY AWARDS PROGRAM

Honorary Recognition

The Department's Honorary Awards Program provides for several categories of awards to DOT employees. These awards are linked to Departmental mission, goals and objectives.

Honorary Awards

- a. The Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement (Gold Medal)
 - This is the Department's highest honor, granted in recognition of exceptionally outstanding leadership or service that is distinguished by achievements of marked national or international significance, which reflect great credit on the Department and the Federal Government. This award may be given to an individual or a group. The Secretary selects the recipient of this award and nominations are not solicited. See [Appendix B](#).

- b. The Secretary's Partnering For Excellence Award
 - This is the second-highest award within the Department. It recognizes inter-modal teams/groups that have used the Partnering for Excellence model to further ONE DOT activities supporting one or more of the Strategic Goals as provided in the Department's Strategic Plan. Departmental Officers and OA Administrators may nominate teams/groups for the Partnering for Excellence Award. Teams/groups may also nominate themselves, but must be endorsed by a sponsoring Departmental Officer or OA Administrator. Nominations require the concurrence of all modes represented on the team/group. See [Appendix C](#).

- c. The Secretary's Award for Meritorious Achievement (Silver Medal)
 - This is the third-highest award within the Department for employees and is given to those who have made meritorious contributions of high value to the Department in meeting one or more of the strategic goals outlined in the Department's Strategic Plan. See [Appendix D](#).

- d. The Secretary's Award for Excellence
 - This is an award for outstanding achievements of all major duties especially those linked to DOT's Strategic Goals performed by employees in clerical, administrative, technical and general support positions whose work is basic to meeting the Department's goals. See [Appendix E](#).

- e. The Secretary's Award for EEO/Affirmative Action
 - This award is to recognize individuals who have actively and effectively enhanced the Department's efforts in the areas of EEO and Affirmative Action. See [Appendix F](#).

- f. The Secretary's Award for Volunteer Service
 - This award recognizes employees who have made significant contributions

through any of the volunteer programs for which the Department provides support or sponsorship, or service to organizations within his or her community. See [Appendix G](#).

g. The Secretary's Team Award

- This award is given to groups and teams which have made meritorious contributions of high value to the Department in meeting one or more of the Strategic Goals, and whose exceptional performance results in the improvement, reinvention, or reengineering of practices, operations, and customer services. See [Appendix H](#).

h. The Secretary's Award for Valor

- This award is given to employees for acts of heroism or courage involving great personal risk by employees under unusual circumstances. See [Appendix I](#).

Award Nominations and Allocations

- a. Each year, the Assistant Secretary for Administration will issue a memorandum requesting nominations for honorary awards to be presented at the Secretary's Annual Awards Ceremony. The memorandum will include an OA allocation of the number of nominations each may submit for each award. The allocation is strictly for the number of nominations that may be submitted for consideration, and it does not reflect the number of awards an individual OA will receive.
- b. Nominations will be submitted in twelve (12) copies on DOT Form 3200.2, Recommendation for Secretarial Award. Justifications must conform to the space allotted on the form, except in special circumstances.
- c. When there is more than one nomination from an OA for a specific award, the OA should provide a statement of the relative rank order of the nominations.
- d. Nominations based primarily on years of service, or constituting retirement testimonials, will not be considered.

Annual Awards Ceremony

- a. The Departmental Awards Ceremony will be held in the Fall of each year in Washington, D.C. The ceremony is designed as a showcase of Departmental activities that merit recognition.
- b. Details of the Awards Ceremony will be provided to OAs approximately 90 days prior to the ceremony.

- c. Personnel attending the Awards Ceremony shall be considered on duty if otherwise in a duty status. Award recipients from field units who are authorized to attend the ceremony will be authorized necessary travel and per diem.

SECTION 5. MONETARY RECOGNITION

Each OA is granted authority to establish parameters for monetary recognition consistent with Departmental policy and the limitations set forth for the following monetary awards:

- a. Special Achievement Awards
 - The Special Achievement Award is recognition through a cash award or time off award that may be granted to an individual employee, or group or team of employees in recognition of: 1) a contribution, act, service, or achievement that benefits DOT because it either achieves results or contributes toward the achievement of results, or 2) overall sustained results-based performance beyond normal job requirements. See [Appendix J](#).
- b. On-the-Spot-Awards
 - An on-the-spot award is a monetary award designed to grant “immediate” recognition to individuals or groups of employees for their day-to-day extra efforts and contributions. See [Appendix K](#).
- c. Time-Off Awards
 - A Time-Off Award is an excused absence that is granted without loss of pay or charge to leave for a specific act or special contribution, or to recognize sustained high-level performance, including end-of-year performance ratings. See [Appendix L](#).

SECTION 6. QUALITY STEP INCREASES

- a. A quality step increase (QSI) is an increase to an employee’s rate of basic pay from his/her current step of the grade to the next step that is granted in recognition of excellence in performance during the last appraisal cycle. The purpose of such an increase is to recognize consistently high achievers by granting faster than normal step increase. No more than one QSI may be granted within any 52-week period.
- b. The recommendation to grant a quality step increase must be supported by the employee's most recent appraisal or when the appraisal is more than 60 days old, by a supplemental written statement setting forth the reasons for granting the increase.
- c. A QSI can only be granted when the most recent performance appraisal supports the conclusion that overall performance of the employee's assigned duties and responsibilities substantially exceeds an acceptable level of competence, and

performance of all critical job elements or core competencies have been at least satisfactory or pass in the case of an individual covered by a pass/fail performance appraisal system.

- d. A quality step increase may be granted to an employee only when at the time it becomes effective, the employee is expected to remain at least 60-days in the same or a similar position at the same grade level in which his or her performance can be expected to continue at the same level of effectiveness.
- e. QSIs are appropriate when an employee's sustained high level of achievement merits faster than normal advancement of basic pay and the employee is not in step 10 of the current grade. Justification of a QSI must be documented fully. A QSI not only increases an employee's base pay, but also increases the amount of retirement benefits, the amount of Government life insurance for covered employees, and often results in a higher basic pay adjustment upon promotion of the employee. Because a QSI represents an increase in base pay, this type of recognition should be carefully considered prior to recommendation.

SECTION 7. CAREER SERVICE RECOGNITION

Length of Service Certificate

- a. The Department shall recognize employees for their total creditable service with the Federal Government. The service does not have to be continuous. Military service creditable toward an employee's service computation date and Federal service with other agencies must be included. Career recognition will be granted at the completion of the following years of service: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50.
- b. All DOT employees retiring under any provision of the Civil Service Retirement or Federal Employees Retirement Acts are eligible to receive a DOT retirement certificate. The signature of the OA Administrator or Departmental Officer will usually appear on retirement certificates. However, if the Secretary's signature is desired on a retirement certificate, it must be submitted to the Office of the Secretary at least two weeks prior to the anticipated presentation. The certificate must be pre-inscribed in the retiree's name, years of service, and clearly show where the Secretary is to sign.

Distinguished Career Service Award

A Distinguished Career Service Award may be granted by the Secretary, an OA Administrator or Departmental Officer to a retiring employee with more than 20 years of Federal service who is deemed to have made significant contributions to the Federal service during his/her career. Military service creditable toward an employee's service computation date is creditable time for this award. See [Appendix M](#).

SECTION 8. THE SUGGESTION PROGRAM

The Suggestion program aims to improve Government operations and services. The program is designed to motivate employees to increase productivity and creativity by rewarding those whose accomplishments and adopted ideas benefit the Federal Government.

See [Appendix N](#).

SECTION 9. SPECIAL SECRETARIAL AWARDS

As a good management practice, former and current Secretaries of the Department have initiated their own personal employee recognition awards program, i.e., “Way to Go,” “Find the Good and Praise It,” and “Thanks A Million.” For information on the current initiative see [Appendix S, Thanks A Million](#).

APPENDIX A – INTERNAL AWARDS SCALES

<i>Estimated First-Year Benefits to Government</i>	<i>Amount of Award</i>
Up to \$10,000	10 percent of benefits
\$10,001 through \$100,000	\$1000 for the first \$10,000, plus 3 percent of benefits over \$10,000
\$100,001 or more	\$3,700 for the first \$100,000, plus .5 percent of benefits over \$100,000

Quick Guide for Calculating Awards Based on Tangible Benefits

Benefits	Award	Benefits	Award	Benefits	Award	Benefits	Award	Benefits	Award
Up to \$10,000	10%	\$50,000	\$2,200	\$90,000	\$3,400	\$170,000	\$4,050	\$1,800,000	\$12,200
\$11,000	\$1,030	\$51,000	\$2,230	\$91,000	\$3,430	\$175,000	\$4,075	\$1,900,000	\$12,700
\$12,000	\$1,060	\$52,000	\$2,260	\$92,000	\$3,460	\$180,000	\$4,100	\$2,000,000	\$13,200
\$13,000	\$1,090	\$53,000	\$2,290	\$93,000	\$3,490	\$185,000	\$4,125	\$2,100,000	\$13,700
\$14,000	\$1,120	\$54,000	\$2,320	\$94,000	\$3,520	\$190,000	\$4,150	\$2,200,000	\$14,200
\$15,000	\$1,150	\$55,000	\$2,350	\$95,000	\$3,550	\$195,000	\$4,175	\$2,300,000	\$14,700
\$16,000	\$1,180	\$56,000	\$2,380	\$96,000	\$3,580	\$200,000	\$4,200	\$2,400,000	\$15,200
\$17,000	\$1,210	\$57,000	\$2,410	\$97,000	\$3,610	\$225,000	\$4,325	\$2,500,000	\$15,700
\$18,000	\$1,240	\$58,000	\$2,440	\$98,000	\$3,640	\$250,000	\$4,450	\$2,600,000	\$16,200
\$19,000	\$1,270	\$59,000	\$2,470	\$99,000	\$3,670	\$275,000	\$4,575	\$2,700,000	\$16,700
\$20,000	\$1,300	\$60,000	\$2,500	\$100,000	\$3,700	\$300,000	\$4,700	\$2,800,000	\$17,200
\$21,000	\$1,330	\$61,000	\$2,530	\$101,000	\$3,705	\$325,000	\$4,825	\$2,900,000	\$17,700
\$22,000	\$1,360	\$62,000	\$2,560	\$102,000	\$3,710	\$350,000	\$4,950	\$3,000,000	\$18,200
\$23,000	\$1,390	\$63,000	\$2,590	\$103,000	\$3,715	\$375,000	\$5,075	\$3,100,000	\$18,700
\$24,000	\$1,420	\$64,000	\$2,620	\$104,000	\$3,720	\$400,000	\$5,200	\$3,200,000	\$19,200
\$25,000	\$1,450	\$65,000	\$2,650	\$105,000	\$3,725	\$425,000	\$5,325	\$3,300,000	\$19,700
\$26,000	\$1,480	\$66,000	\$2,680	\$106,000	\$3,730	\$450,000	\$5,450	\$3,400,000	\$20,200
\$27,000	\$1,510	\$67,000	\$2,710	\$107,000	\$3,735	\$475,000	\$5,575	\$3,500,000	\$20,700
\$28,000	\$1,540	\$68,000	\$2,740	\$108,000	\$3,740	\$500,000	\$5,700	\$3,600,000	\$21,200
\$29,000	\$1,570	\$69,000	\$2,770	\$109,000	\$3,745	\$550,000	\$5,950	\$3,700,000	\$21,700
\$30,000	\$1,600	\$70,000	\$2,800	\$110,000	\$3,750	\$600,000	\$6,200	\$3,800,000	\$22,200
\$31,000	\$1,630	\$71,000	\$2,830	\$111,000	\$3,755	\$650,000	\$6,450	\$3,900,000	\$22,700
\$32,000	\$1,660	\$72,000	\$2,860	\$112,000	\$3,760	\$700,000	\$6,700	\$4,000,000	\$23,200

\$33,000	\$1,690	\$73,000	\$2,890	\$113,000	\$3,765	\$750,000	\$6,950	\$4,100,000	\$23,700
\$34,000	\$1,720	\$74,000	\$2,920	\$114,000	\$3,770	\$800,000	\$7,200	\$4,200,000	\$24,200
\$35,000	\$1,750	\$75,000	\$2,950	\$115,000	\$3,775	\$850,000	\$7,450	\$4,300,000	\$24,700
\$36,000	\$1,780	\$76,000	\$2,980	\$116,000	\$3,780	\$900,000	\$7,700	\$4,360,000	\$25,000**
\$37,000	\$1,810	\$77,000	\$3,010	\$117,000	\$3,785	\$950,000			
\$38,000	\$1,840	\$78,000	\$3,040	\$118,000	\$3,790	\$1,000,000			
\$39,000	\$1,870	\$79,000	\$3,070	\$119,000	\$3,795	\$1,050,000			
\$40,000	\$1,900	\$80,000	\$3,100	\$120,000	\$3,800	\$1,100,000			
\$41,000	\$1,930	\$81,000	\$3,130	\$125,000	\$3,825	\$1,150,000			
\$42,000	\$1,960	\$82,000	\$3,160	\$130,000	\$3,850	\$1,200,000			
\$43,000	\$1,990	\$83,000	\$3,190	\$135,000	\$3,875	\$1,250,000			
\$44,000	\$2,020	\$84,000	\$3,220	\$140,000	\$3,900	\$1,300,000			
\$45,000	\$2,050	\$85,000	\$3,250	\$145,000	\$3,925	\$1,350,000			
\$46,000	\$2,080	\$86,000	\$3,280	\$150,000	\$3,950	\$1,400,000			
\$47,000	\$2,110	\$87,000	\$3,310	\$155,000	\$3,975	\$1,500,000			
\$48,000	\$2,140	\$88,000	\$3,340	\$160,000	\$4,000	\$1,600,000			
\$49,000	\$2,170	\$89,000	\$3,370	\$165,000	\$4,025	\$1,700,000			

*Awards over \$10,000 require the approval of the Office of Personnel Management

**Maximum award authorized by the Office of Personnel Management. A Presidential Award of up to \$10,000 may be paid in addition to the \$25,000.

Scale of Awards Based on Intangible Benefits

Value of Benefit	Extent of Application			
	Limited	Extended	Broad	General
	Affects functions mission, or personnel of one office, facility, installation, or an organizational element of a headquarters. Affects a small area of science and technology.	Affects functions mission, or personnel of several offices, facilities, or installations. Affects an important area of science or technology.	Affects functions mission, or personnel of entire regional area of command. May be applicable to all of an independent agency or a large bureau. Affects a broad area of science and technology.	Affects functions mission, or personnel of several regional areas or commands, or an entire department or large independent agency, or is in the public interest throughout the nation or beyond.
MODERATE VALUE— Change or modification of an operating principle or procedure which has moderate value sufficient to meet the minimum standard for a cash award: an improvement to the value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public	\$25-100 (Compare with \$250-1,000 tangible benefits)	\$100-250 (Compare with 1,000-2,500 tangible benefits)	\$250-500	\$500-1,000
SUBSTANTIAL VALUE— Substantial change or modification of an operating principle or procedure: an important improvement to the value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public	\$100-250 (Compare with 1,000-2,500 tangible benefits)	\$250-500 (Compare with 2,500-5,000 tangible benefits)	\$500-1,000 (Compare with 5,000-10,000 tangible benefits)	\$1,000-2,500

HIGH VALUE— Complete revision of a basic principle or procedure; a highly significant improvement to the value of a product, major activity, or program, or service to the public.	\$250-500	\$500-1,000 (Compare with 5,000-10,000 tangible benefits)	\$1,000- 2,500 (Compare with 10,000-60,000 tangible benefits)	\$2,500-5,000 (Compare with 60,000-360,000 tangible benefits)
EXCEPTIONAL VALUE— Initiation of a new principle or procedure; a superior to the quality of a critical product, activity, program, or service to the public.	\$500-1,000	\$1,000-2,500	\$2,500-5,000 (Compare with 60,000-360,000 tangible benefits)	\$5,000- 10-000 (Compare with 360,000-1,360,000 tangible benefits)

- 1) The minimum award for tangible benefits may be granted only when the benefits reach or exceed \$250
- 2) Contributions recognized by cash awards based on intangible benefits must be comparable, in value to the Government, with those based on tangible benefits. Comparisons are shown in parenthesis below the award amount in the above chart.
- 3) When a contribution has both tangible benefits, the amount of the award must be based on the total value of the contribution to the Government, i.e. a combination of the award amount based on tangible, and the award amount based on intangible benefits.

**APPENDIX B – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
(GOLD MEDAL)**

This is the Department’s highest honor, granted in recognition of exceptionally outstanding leadership or service that is distinguished by achievements of marked national or international significance, which reflect great credit on the Department and the Federal Government. This award may be given to an individual or a group. The Secretary selects the recipient of this award and nominations are not solicited.

APPENDIX C– THE SECRETARY’S PARTNERING FOR EXCELLENCE AWARD

- a. This is the second highest award within the Department. It recognizes inter-modal teams/groups that have used the Partnering for Excellence model to further ONE DOT activities supporting one or more of the Strategic Goals as provided in the Department’s Strategic Plan. Departmental Officers and Administrators of OAs may nominate teams/groups for the Partnering for Excellence Award. Teams/groups may also nominate themselves, but must be endorsed by a sponsoring Departmental Officer or Administrator. Nominations require the concurrence of all modes represented on the team/group.
- b. Nominations must specifically address each element included in the following criteria.
 - Teamwork - Describe how the members of the team/group work together effectively in coordinating and carrying out assignments to achieve common objectives. At least one example of an activity, which displays cooperation, coordination and group process skills, is required.
 - Problem Solving - Describe how the members of the group or team effectively use problem-solving methods, techniques, and tools as appropriate to achieve desired objectives and/or integrate objectives, procedures, etc., of participating administrations.
 - Customer Focus – Describe the link between the work of the team and the benefits derived by the customers; how customer input and feedback was obtained; and how it was used to identify trends, opportunities and performance gaps, integrating it with other performance data to target areas needing improvement; and identify resulting corrective actions taken to improve services to the customers. Where appropriate, describe how using an inter-modal approach enhanced customer service.
 - Creative and Innovative Techniques - Describe creative and innovative techniques used by the team to develop recommendations for improvements. The work of the team should reflect an awareness of evolving methods, procedures and technologies. Highlight techniques that promote cooperation and collaboration across administrations.
 - Results - Describe results accomplished by the team – objectives met, solutions found, and processes changed or improved.
- c. Narrative supporting the nomination is limited to one page per criterion/element, and/or Strategic Goal. Attachments will not be considered. The Departmental Office of Human Resource Management will convene a panel to evaluate and rank nominations.

APPENDIX D – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT (SILVER MEDAL)

- a. This is the third highest award within the Department for civilian employees. Departmental Officers and Administrators of OAs may nominate individuals for the Meritorious Achievement Award, which is conferred by the Secretary.
- b. Nominations for this award will be granted for meritorious contributions of high value to the Department in meeting one or more of the Strategic Goals, as provided in the Department’s Strategic Plan. Examples of such contributions include:
 - A valuable scientific or technological contribution consistent with the strategic direction of the Department;
 - Accomplishment of assigned duties in such an outstanding manner as to be clearly exceptional among all those who have performed similar duties;
 - Development and improvement of methods and procedures which have accomplished extraordinary results in moving toward the attainment of the Department’s Strategic Goals;
 - Eminent authorship in one or more areas directly related to the Department’s Strategic Goals;
 - Exceptional leadership which resulted in the successful accomplishment of the Department’s strategic mission, the major redirection of objectives or accomplishments to meet unique or emergency situations;
 - Contributions to the Department’s Equal Employment Opportunity Program of an outstanding or distinctive character;
 - Leadership, accomplishments or actions that make a significant contribution to building a strategic ONE DOT;
 - Demonstrated outstanding ability to manage diversity by creating an organizational environment that allows every employee to reach his or her full potential and fully contribute to the Department’s mission;
 - Excelled and embraced the spirit and intent of the Department’s Managing Diversity Order (Order Number 3200.1 dated January 21, 1998) and its implementing Diversity Action Plan; or

- Excellent customer service and improved customer satisfaction with transportation systems and Departmental services.

APPENDIX E – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

- a. Throughout the Department, there are employees in clerical, administrative, technical and general support positions whose work is basic to meeting the Department’s goals. Some of these employees are high achievers, yet go unrecognized in the honorary awards program because the meritorious and superior achievement awards require wider impact for achievements than are generally available to this group of employees. Departmental Officers and Administrators of OAs may nominate individuals for this award. In addition to the honorary award, each recipient of the Excellence Award will receive an On-the-Spot award of \$250.
- b. Nominations are limited to career employees in grades GS-1 through GS-9 and wage grades WG-1 through WG-8.
- c. Nominations will be based on outstanding achievements of all major duties. All aspects of performance must not only far exceed normal requirements, but also deserve special commendation. In addition, an employee can be recognized, wholly or in part for accomplishments or actions that contribute to a stronger ONE DOT. An employee need not have received the highest performance rating in the last rating period to be nominated for the Secretary’s Award for Excellence providing he/she is performing at the level to earn such a rating at the time of the nomination. If the performance at the time of the nomination has increased from the time of the last appraisal, the nominating official must clearly address the employee’s outstanding performance in the nomination.

APPENDIX F – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR EEO/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

- a. Departmental Officers and Administrators of OAs may nominate individuals for this award, which demonstrates the value top-level management places upon employees, supervisors and managers who actively and effectively enhance the Department’s efforts in the areas of EEO and Affirmative Action. Employees whose primary job responsibility is in the area of EEO and Affirmative Action are not eligible for this award. They should be considered for the meritorious achievement award.
- b. This award recognizes the Department’s highest level of honor and recognition to those employees who have excelled in promoting equal opportunity/affirmative action while serving in positions that are not primarily EEO related.

APPENDIX G – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- a. Departmental Officers and Administrators of OAs may nominate individuals for this award, which represents the Department’s high level of interest in recognizing volunteer services. Employees at all grades and organizational levels are eligible for consideration. The Secretary’s Award for Volunteer Service will be presented to the employee who has made significant contributions through any of the volunteer programs for which the Department provides support or sponsorship, or service to organizations within his or her community.
- b. Criteria for selecting the awards recipients should include the length of volunteer service; number of volunteer hours per week, month or year; innovation or initiative in improving conditions of the organization being served; type of service rendered; and benefits to the community.

APPENDIX H – THE SECRETARY’S TEAM AWARD

- a. Departmental Officers and Administrators of OAs may nominate groups and teams (within an Administration or across Administrations) in recognition of meritorious contributions of high value to the Department in meeting one or more of the Strategic Goals, and whose exceptional performance results in the improvement, reinvention, or reengineering of practices, operations, and customer services. Groups and teams include cross-functional teams, natural work groups, design project groups, and process/quality action teams who work together as a unit to achieve shared objectives or missions. In cases where the nomination is for a cross modal team, the award will not count against the nominating administration’s allocation.
- b. Nominations must specifically address each element included in the following criteria:
 - Teamwork - Describe how the members of the team/group work together effectively either within an administration or across administrations in coordinating and carrying out assignments to achieve common objectives. At least one example of an activity, which displays cooperation, coordination and group process skills, is required.
 - Problem Solving - Describe how the members of the group or team effectively use problem-solving methods, techniques, and tools as appropriate to achieve desired objectives and/or to integrate objectives, procedures, etc., of participating administrations.
 - Customer Focus - Describe the link between the work of the team and the benefits derived by the customers; how customer input and feedback was obtained; and how it was used to identify trends, opportunities and performance gaps, integrating it with other performance data to target areas needing improvement; and identify resulting corrective actions taken to improve services to the customers. Where appropriate, describe how using an inter-modal approach enhanced customer service.
 - Creative and Innovative Techniques—Describe creative and innovative techniques used by the team to develop recommendations for improvements. The work of the team should reflect an awareness of evolving methods, procedures and technologies. Where appropriate, highlight techniques that promote cooperation and collaboration across administrations.
 - Results - Describe results accomplished by the team, objectives met, solutions found, and processes changed or improved.

APPENDIX I – THE SECRETARY’S AWARD FOR VALOR

- a. Departmental Officers and Administrators of OAs may nominate individuals for this award, which is the highest Departmental Award for acts of heroism or courage involving great personal risk by employees under unusual circumstances.
- b. To be eligible for nomination, an employee must have demonstrated outstanding courage and voluntary risk of personal safety in the face of danger in an emergency while on or off duty.

APPENDIX J– SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

- a. A Special Achievement Award is recognition through a cash award or time off award that may be granted to an individual employee or group or team of employees in recognition of a contribution, act, service, or achievement that benefits DOT because it either achieves results or contributes toward the achievement of results, or for overall sustained results-based performance beyond normal job requirements. The type and amount of award will be based on the value of the contribution to the organization.
- b. Because recognition has its greatest impact as a motivational tool when it follows closely by the contribution being recognized, every effort should be made by supervisors and managers to submit a recommendation immediately after the contribution is made. Such achievements may involve:
 - Individual or group achievement involving scientific or technological advances;
 - Achievement, which contributed significantly to more efficient or economical operations involving tangible savings;
 - High-level performance on a particular assignment, project or over a sustained period of time or performance which has resulted in overcoming unusual difficulties;
 - Exemplary or courageous action in an emergency situation related to official employment;
 - Acceptance of articles for publication, presenting technical papers to professional organizations, or performing other similar personal projects which can be shown to have significantly increased public understanding and interest in Departmental operations or to have contributed significantly to a mission of the Department;
 - Improving service to the public in a specific or measurable way;
 - Notable improvement in the public relations of the Department; or
 - Enhanced service delivery to customers through reengineering of work processes or procedures.

APPENDIX K – ON-THE-SPOT AWARDS

- a. An on-the-spot award is a monetary award designed to grant “immediate” recognition to individuals or groups of employees for their day-to-day extra efforts and contributions.
- b. Examples of this type of recognition may include:
 - A one-time noteworthy achievement, which may not meet the criteria for other types of awards;
 - Volunteering for an extra or emergency assignment while maintaining own workload; or
 - Using personal initiative and creativity to solve an unusual problem; producing a work product of exceptionally high quality under tight deadlines, etc.
- c. A supervisor or manager may grant no more than two on-the-spot awards per year at the maximum amount of \$300 dollars each to any employee for an act or service. If a supervisor-or manager grants an award of less than \$300, the employee receiving the award may receive as many on-the-spot awards during the year as it takes to reach a cumulative total of \$600 during the year.
- d. A minimum justification will be needed to grant an On-the-Spot award. Each OA shall have procedures established in their internal strategy to ensure that the employee’s contribution is recognized as quickly as possible after the act or service warranting an award. On-the-Spot Awards may be cash, time-off, or both.
- e. OAs have the option of adapting on-the-spot awards that allow for non-monetary recognition also. If a time-off award is used as an On-the-Spot award, employees may be granted only one time-off award per quarter. The time-off award may not exceed one day.

APPENDIX L – TIME-OFF AWARDS

- a. A Time-Off Award is an excused absence that is granted without loss of pay or charge to leave for a specific act or special contribution, or to recognize sustained high-level performance, including end-of-year ratings. It can be given in lieu of cash or in combination with a cash award. Full-time employees may be granted up to 40 hours of time-off for any single contribution with no more than 80 hours of time-off being granted in any 52-week period. Employees with a part-time schedule may be granted a single award maximum in an amount equal to the number of hours typically worked in one week. Their total bi-weekly hours will serve as an annual maximum.
- b. Time-off awards must be used within a year of the date of the award. Awards not used within that timeframe are lost and cannot be converted to cash. In considering whether to grant a cash award, time-off award, or a combination of the two, supervisors should consider such things as the employee's achievement, whether the employee may be spared from the job, the employee's leave balance, and, most importantly, what the supervisor believes would benefit the employee most.

APPENDIX M – DISTINGUISHED CAREER SERVICE AWARD

- a. This award is granted to retiring employees with more than 20 years of Federal service who are deemed to have made significant contributions to the Federal service during their careers. The Secretary, an OA Administrator or a Departmental Officer may issue the award. Military service creditable toward an employee's service computation date is creditable time for this award.
- b. Criteria for Distinguished Career Service Award are as follows.
 - Clear identification of specific accomplishments throughout the employee's career, not just while in DOT; and
 - Service previously recognized by two or more of the following:
 - Outstanding Performance Rating, or the equivalent.
 - Quality Step Increases, or the equivalent.
 - Special Achievement Awards.
 - The Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement or Meritorious Achievement (Silver Medal), or the equivalent.
 - The Award for superior Achievement (Bronze Medal), or the equivalent.

Procedures for Nomination

- a. Individual OAs shall include appropriate procedures in their internal strategies for Distinguished Career Service Awards to be granted by Departmental Officers and Administrators of OAs.
- b. When desired, the Distinguished Career Service Award may be granted by the Secretary. Nominations shall be submitted in four copies and forwarded to the Secretary through the appropriate Administrator or Departmental Officer, at least four weeks prior to the anticipated presentation date in the following format:
 - Name of nominee.
 - Title, series, and grade of current position.
 - Brief biographical sketch.

- Listing of previous honors and awards.
- A statement describing the employee's career achievements.
- The endorsement of the Departmental Officer or Administrator of the OA.

APPENDIX N - THE SUGGESTION PROGRAM

Purpose

It is the Department's policy to:

- a. Fully support and utilize suggestion programs to promote efficiency, economy, and mission effectiveness;
- b. Delegate authority for suggestion approval, implementation, and awards to the lowest supervisory levels practical;
- c. Promptly determine the merits of the individual suggestion and advise the originator of the outcome;
- d. Consider appropriate suggestions for Department-wide application;
- e. Refer suggestions which may be of benefit to other agencies, and consider suggestions referred from them on the same basis as suggestions originating within DOT; and
- f. Give weight to suggestion awards when selecting employees for promotion and in recognizing supervisors who have succeeded in motivating their employees' interest and participation in the suggestion program.

Responsibilities

- a. Each internal Awards and Recognition Strategy, for those OAs with a suggestion program, will contain provisions requiring that an effective suggestion program be implemented within the OA as an integral part of their management responsibility.
- b. The internal strategy will designate program administration offices at appropriate organizational and geographical levels to provide technical guidance on the suggestion program and monitor the referral of suggestions.

Submission

- a. Acceptable for consideration. Suggestions submitted under the program must both recommend an improvement and present a specific method of achieving the improvement.
- b. Not acceptable for consideration. Unless they are related to energy conservation, ideas relating to items such as employee benefits or services, working conditions, buildings and grounds, or routine safety practices, suggestions, which require legislation to implement,

are not acceptable for consideration. Those ideas should be handled through administrative channels other than the suggestion program.

Processing Suggestions

- a. Each OA having a suggestion system, must provide for the following:
 - Suggestions must be in writing. Appropriate acknowledgments will be made promptly to the individual making the suggestion.
 - Evaluation of suggestions should normally occur within 90 days. OA time frames for processing suggestions should allow for referral to higher levels in order to adhere to the overall 90-day time frame.
 - Referral channels will be described clearly.
- b. Wider application. In addition to the above, each suggestion system must provide that:
 - Suggestions concerning offices/organizations of the Department or other Government agencies outside of the office/organization in which the suggestion originates must be referred through the Suggestion Program Officer of that office/organization to the organization concerned.
 - Suggestions concerning matters having Department-wide application, having a Departmental policy impact, or which require contact with the Office of Personnel Management, the Congress, or the Office of Management and Budget, will be referred through the Suggestion Program Officer of the originating office/organization to the Suggestion Program Officer.
 - Before forwarding a suggestion to the Suggestion Program Officer, the organization considering submission must thoroughly evaluate it to determine the feasibility of adopting the suggestion within that organization should it be approved.
 - Identification numbers assigned to a suggestion will be entered as the subject heading for all correspondence related to the suggestion.

Awards for Adopted Suggestions

- a. Awards of cash may be granted to employees for suggestions, ideas or inventions, which directly contribute to the economy or efficiency of operations or increase effectiveness in carrying out Government programs or missions.

- b. Awards of cash and/or certificates will be granted only when final approval to implement the suggestion is obtained at a level authorized to issue awards under the suggestion program.
- c. Cash awards for suggestions should be paid in accordance with Section 2 – Payment of Awards.
- d. A supplemental cash award may be made to an employee if it is determined that the suggestion has a wider application or greater benefit than initially determined.

Approval Authority

- a. Adoption and implementation of suggestions are management functions. Authority to approve suggestion awards should be delegated to the same supervisory level that has authority to direct implement the suggestion.
- b. Use of standing or ad-hoc committees to evaluate or recommend approval of suggestions should be limited to situations where review by several technical/professional disciplines or program areas is needed to determine whether a suggestion is theoretically sound and implementation is feasible. Use of suggestion committees is not recommended.

Agency Financial Obligation

OAs must pay cash awards for suggestions adopted outside the office of origin, but within their area of authority in accordance with provisions contained in individual OA awards and recognition strategies.

- a. When an OA adopts a suggestion made by an employee of another OA, a transfer of funds for awards of more than \$150 is required.
- b. DOT suggestions adopted by other Departments or Agencies, or suggestions adopted by DOT that originated in other Departments will require a transfer of funds whenever the award amount exceeds \$200.
- c. Awards for suggestions referred by OPM and adopted by DOT may require a transfer of funds as recommended by OPM.

APPENDIX O– LEADERSHIP AWARD

Purpose

The purpose is to recognize notably outstanding leadership that has had a pronounced effect upon the technical or administrative programs of the OA. The Leadership Award is given for an act of leadership or for sustained contributions based on an individual's effectiveness as a leader, the productivity of the individual's program, or demonstrated ability to develop the administrative or technical talents of other employees.

This is one of four sample awards that an OA has adopted. OAs are free to adopt this award as they see fit.

Nominations

Nominations for this award should address the following elements:

- a. Describe the nominee's approach to leadership; show how the nominee has led by example.
- b. Discuss the leadership role the employee has played in advancing the agency goals and mission.
- c. Describe the employee's personal commitment and efforts (beyond their current job) that exemplify leadership.
- d. Describe how the nominee communicates with coworkers, partners, and team members. What special communication tools does the nominee employ to generate enthusiasm and support for goals and plans and influence the behavior and performance of others?
- e. Describe efforts to facilitate open exchange of ideas; efforts to foster open communication; provide examples of how the nominee obtains input and describe the nominee's responses to input.

APPENDIX P – EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Purpose

The purpose is to recognize annually, outstanding achievements by an employee in any career field for the period 1 January through 31 December. Employees in grades GS-4 through GS-15 and the wage grade equivalent who have demonstrated superior job performance or have made significant contributions to the community or charitable volunteer programs sponsored by the Department of Transportation, other Federal, State or Local governments, or National organizations are eligible for this award.

This is one of four sample awards that an OA has adopted. OAs are free to adopt this award as they see fit.

Selection Criteria

- a. Documented consistently outstanding job performance.
- b. Accomplished supervisory or non-supervisory duties in an outstanding manner, setting an example of achievement for others to follow.
- c. Demonstrated initiative and skill in devising new or improved equipment, work methods, and procedures, or for inventions that result in considerable savings in manpower, time, space, materials, or other items of expense, or improved safety and health of the workforce.
- d. Demonstrated leadership in performing duties that resulted in improved productivity, including customer focus, promoting teamwork and commitment to achieving excellence.
- e. Demonstrated courage or competence in an emergency while performing assigned duties resulting in benefits to the Federal government.

APPENDIX Q – PEER RECOGNITION AWARD

Purpose

The purpose is to recognize the achievements and contributions of peers by peers. It is based on the premise that employees are often the first to notice the achievements of their peers. Awards may be made for achievements related to mission, goals, objectives and values by individuals or groups.

This is one of four sample awards that an OA has adopted. OAs are free to adopt this award as they see fit

Nominations

Nominations shall be made by employees and be sent to and reviewed by a Peer Recognition Panel, which shall consist of employees from the organization.

- a. Anonymous nominations will not be considered, but nominators may request their names not be disclosed.
- b. Managers may neither nominate nor be nominated. Non-supervisory Team Leaders may participate.
- c. Self-nominations are prohibited.
- d. All nomination information will be made available to employees for review upon request.
- e. Employees whose appointments are not limited to one year or less are eligible to participate.

Criteria

Nominations should address any one of the following criteria:

- a. Teamwork – Describe how the individual/group works effectively either within an administration or across administrations in coordinating and carrying out assignments to achieve common objectives. At least one example of an activity, which displays cooperation, coordination, and group process skills, is required.
- b. Problem Solving - Describe how the individual/group effectively uses problem-solving methods, techniques, and tools as appropriate to achieve desired objectives and/or to integrate objectives, procedures, etc., of participating administrations.

- c. Customer Focus - Describe the link between the work of the individual/group and the benefits derived by the customers; how customer input and feedback was obtained; and how it was used to identify trends, opportunities and performance gaps, integrating it with other performance data to target area's needing improvement; and identify resulting corrective actions to improve services to the customers. Where appropriate, describe how using an inter-modal approach enhances customer service.
- d. Creative and Innovative Techniques - Describe creative and innovative techniques used by the individual/group to develop recommendations for improvements. The work of the individual/group should reflect an awareness of evolving methods, procedures and techniques. Where appropriate, highlight techniques that promote cooperation and collaboration across administrations.
- e. Results - Describe results accomplished by the individual/group—objectives met, solutions found, and processes changed or improved.

APPENDIX R – ORGANIZATIONAL AWARD

Purpose

The purpose is to recognize organizational performance that is closely linked to higher-level goals.

This is one of four sample awards that an OA has adopted. OAs are free to adopt this award as they see fit

Criteria

Nominations must specifically address each element included in the following criteria:

- a. Leadership - This item addresses senior management's role in providing leadership and direction in building and improving organization performance and capabilities.
 - Provide a description of senior management's role in the quality effort. Include examples of visible and personal involvement in creating and reinforcing values throughout the organization; setting directions and performance excellence goals through strategic and business planning; and reviewing overall organization performance including customer related and operational performance.
 - Describe how the organization's customer focus and performance expectations are integrated into the organization's leadership system and structure; how the organization communicates and reinforces its values, expectations and directions throughout the unit; and how the overall organization performance is reviewed and how the reviews are used to improve performance.
 - Describe how the organization addresses its responsibilities to the public in its planning and operations. What does the organization do to proactively address possible environmental, health and safety impacts on society of its products, services and operations? Discuss efforts to promote legal and ethical conduct in your operations.
 - Describe efforts of the organization and its employees to be effective and contributing members of their key communities
- b. Strategic Planning
 - Describe the organization's business planning process for short and long-term overall performance and leadership. Describe how this process ensures the

deployment of the Strategic Plan throughout the organization, including the use of performance measures. Describe how the process relates the Strategic Plan to the work of individual employees. Describe how your organization has developed strategies and business plans to strengthen its customer related performance.

- Describe the processes by which long term plans are translated into short-term actions, including the allocation of resources to support achievement of agency goals.
 - Describe how the organization evaluates and improves its quality planning and plan deployment process.
 - Describe the process by which the organization plans for its human resource requirements to maintain alignment with the organization's strategic direction
- c. Customer Focus - This factor addresses the effectiveness of the organization's system to determine customer requirements.
- Describe how the organization determines near term and long-term expectations of customers.
 - Describe how the organization provides easy access for customers seeking information or assistance and/or to comment or complain. Describe how the organization builds and maintains its relationships with its customers.
 - Describe the means by which your organization measures the satisfaction of your major customer segments. Describe how the organization analyzes customer feedback and complaints, and takes corrective action as appropriate
- d. Information and Analysis - This factor addresses the organization's management of data and information for quality improvement and planning.
- Describe the measures used by your organization to track and improve operational and program performance. Describe your organization's sources of data and information, and the scope and types of data contained on customers, suppliers, internal operations, products or services.
 - Describe the organization's processes and uses of comparative information and data to support improvement. How are needs and priorities determined? What are the criteria for seeking appropriate information and data from within and outside the organization?

- Describe how the organization relates customer data, improvements in product/service quality, and improvements in operational performance to changes in overall indicators of performance. How is this information reviewed and analyzed to identify, prioritize and carry out improvement actions?
- e. Human Resource Focus - This factor examines how the workforce is enabled to develop and utilize its full potential, as a part of the organization's total quality strategy.
- Describe key strategies for increasing the empowerment, involvement, effectiveness, and productivity of all types of employees. Provide information related to current employee involvement efforts, such as participation in quality improvement teams.
 - What is the organization's approach for identifying and meeting its critical training and development needs? Describe the types of quality training provided for management and employees.
 - Describe how contributions of employees are evaluated and recognized. Indicate whether and how team and peer recognition are used.
 - What services, facilities, activities and opportunities does the organization make available to employees to support their overall well-being and satisfaction and/or to enhance their work experience and developmental potential?
 - How does the organization obtain feedback from employees about their level of satisfaction? How is the feedback used to identify improvement priorities?
- f. Process Management - This element is the focal point within the criteria for all key work processes. Built into this category are the central requirements for efficient and effective process management - effective design, prevention orientation, evaluation and continuous improvement, linkage to suppliers, and overall high performance.
- Describe how products, services and processes are developed and improved. How are customer requirements translated into product and service design requirements; how are product and service design requirements translated into efficient and effective processes including an appropriate measurement plan.
 - Describe how the organization's key support services are designed and managed so that current requirements are met and that operational performance is continuously improved. Include how key requirements are determined or set; and how these requirements are translated into efficient and effective processes, including operational requirements and appropriate measurement plans.

- Describe how the organization assures that materials, components, and services furnished by other organizations meet performance requirements. Explain how your organization determines whether or not its requirements are met and how performance information is fed back to suppliers/partners. Describe how your organization evaluates and improves its management of supplier/partner relationships and performance, including actions and plans to improve suppliers'/partners' abilities to meet requirements.
- g. Business Results - Provides a results focus for all processes and process improvement activities. This element has a dual purpose - superior value of offerings as viewed by customers, and superior organization performance reflected in productivity and effectiveness indicators.
- Address current levels and trends in satisfaction of major customer segments.
 - Address the operational and financial performance of the organization. Focus on the most critical requirements from the point of view of the organization.
 - Address current levels and trends in human resource results, including indicators such as employee satisfaction, safety, absenteeism, and turnover.
 - Address current levels and trends in key measures and/or indicators of supplier/partner performance.
 - Address current levels and trends in product and service quality using key measures and/or indicators of quality such as resource utilization, cycle time, and productivity. The measures and/or indicators selected should relate to requirements that matter to the customer.

APPENDIX S. THANKS A MILLION

- a. This award consists of a letter from the Secretary, and may also include a photo opportunity with the Secretary, and recognition by the Executive Management Team.
- b. Federal State or local government employees can be nominated for the Thanks a Million Award.
- c. Nominations. A memorandum must be processed through the local Thanks a Million Award Officer (TMAO) and signed by an Administrator, Assistant Secretary, or the Director of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. The memorandum needs to identify in the subject line, “Request for a “Thanks a Million” Award”, and be sent to the Thanks a Million Coordinator in the Office of the Secretary. The request needs to include the following:
 - Name of the Department, Secretarial or Administration program, project or initiative;
 - Short statement of the background and accomplishment;
 - Proposed verbatim language for the Secretary’s letter to the employee, not to exceed two short paragraphs, as an attachment; and
 - In alphabetical order, the full name(s) of the Departmental employee(s) who will receive the award.
 - The memorandum, name(s) and attachment need to be provided in both paper and a Word electronic file format (through e-mail).
- d. Thanks a Million ceremonies will be held in headquarters at the Executive Management Team meeting, and may be held at other times and locations depending upon the Secretary’s schedule.