
SUBJECT: Awards for Excellence Program

EFFECTIVE: June 3, 2004

EXPIRES: October 1, 2005

FOR ACTION BY: State Statistical Offices and Headquarters Units

SEND RESPONSE TO: SSO and Headquarters Award Committees

DUE DATE: See Section III. Due Dates

PROJECT CODE: None

REFERENCE: Policy & Standards Memorandum 59

Approved by: _____

Associate Administrator

- I. GENERAL: The NASS Recognition and Awards Program is intended to create an environment in the NASS workplace where all can recognize and celebrate employee excellence in effort and output. The NASS awards system should be administered as a fair and equitable tool for expressing appreciation for outstanding work. Accomplishments should be recognized via the awards process throughout the year, soon after superior performance has been demonstrated.

NASS supervisors should encourage their staff to provide input to the nomination process. Staff can assist in identifying award nominees and in the preparation of award justifications. However, any award recommended or prepared by the staff (peer) must be reviewed and approved by the employee's supervisor, with the supervisor's signature on the award form as the Recommending Official. Managers should meet quarterly with their award committees to facilitate staff recognition (particularly team accomplishments) and to plan for end-of-year processes.

An integral part of the NASS Awards Program is the annual Awards for Excellence recognition for those employees whose outstanding achievements during the year greatly contributed to the attainment of Agency and/or unit goals, performance, or core values. An annual awards ceremony provides a means to honor and celebrate the outstanding efforts and contributions of NASS employees by their peers and management.

Individuals or groups may be nominated for an Award for Excellence for either outstanding accomplishments or for special innovations and initiative. Nominations for employees in single-interval and double-interval job series will be evaluated separately -- allowing all nominees to compete among their peers. A proportional number of nominations, relative to the make-up of the staff, are expected for these two groups from each Division.

- II. AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE PROCESS AND DOCUMENTATION: The NASS Incentive Awards Committee (IAC) is comprised of the chairpersons of each of the HQ Division Award Committees, plus one additional member from the Field Offices (FO) Committee. Division Award Committees should select their chairpersons in January to serve for the coming year. The IAC recommends to the Administrator for approval selections for the Administrator's Award for Excellence, the Circle Awards, and the Cooperator of the Year. The IAC also serves as an advisory panel to the Administrator for the awards program. A planning and transition meeting including the outgoing IAC and the incoming IAC members is held in late January.

NASS recognizes outstanding staff achievements with four awards. The Gold Awards (\$2,500) recognize outstanding staff in each Division and form the nomination pool for the Administrator's Awards for Excellence (\$5,000). The NASS Circle Awards recognize outstanding accomplishments by teams. The Cooperator of the Year Awards salute the outstanding efforts of staff assigned by local cooperators to the NASS staff.

An employee is eligible to receive one individual "Award for Excellence" annually. Employees are eligible to receive NASS Circle Awards for teamwork in addition to an individual Award for Excellence. The following forms and information must accompany each award submission. For additional details on processing, policies and guidelines for NASS awards and the Awards for Excellence Program, please refer to PSM-59 and the NASSNet.

Nomination evaluation criteria (NASS Values):

The Awards for Excellence should focus on the characteristics we value most as an Agency. The four criteria for evaluating nominations are documented below and are explained in detail on the NASSNet under Human Resources. The corresponding characteristics imbedded in the NASS Core Values are attached in parentheses below to provide a framework for the justifications. These criteria should be used to assess how well an individual performed in the context of his/her individual job. All jobs and job series are important to the mission of NASS. The following criteria will be used in reviewing and rating nominations and should be clearly addressed within the nomination.

- Quality improvement by employing unusual creativity (Innovation and Promoting NASS)
- Completion of a project(s) under unusually tight or difficult time constraints; saving time, money, or material (Leadership, Efficiency, Mutual Respect, and Trust)
- Increased productivity and/or increased program effectiveness (Teamwork and Service)
- Overcoming adverse obstacles, or working under unusual circumstances, and the breadth of impact of improvements (Dependability, Dedication, and Initiative)

Rating Period Accomplishments: All staff (single-interval and double-interval) are expected to submit a list of accomplishments in preparation for the annual evaluation to their supervisor by September 30. The accomplishments can be listed on the NASS Performance Rating Form 435C or a document providing comparable information. This information may be used by the supervisor to prepare for the annual performance discussion.

- **AD-287-2 (7/94) Awards Form:** All information must be completed. The **citation** for the award should capture the tone of the employee's (or team's) achievements and **MUST be limited to**

25 words or less. To indicate an Award for Excellence, check “Extra Effort” and type “Gold” in the space below Extra Effort under Item 12. All Gold award selectees are nominated for the Administrator’s Award. Final nominees for the Administrator’s Award will be recommended by the NASS Incentive Awards Committee (IAC) based on the written justifications.

The Awards for Excellence is a multi-step review process. The nominating official will sign the AD-287-2 before submission to the Division Awards Committee. After the Awards Committee approves the “Gold” nomination, the Chair of the Division Awards Committee will sign as a reviewing official (leaving space for the IAC signature). The Director of the Division will sign as the approving official (leaving space for the Administrator’s signature).

The nominations for Quality Step Increases (QSI) must be recommended by senior managers and will be submitted through their Division Award Committee to the IAC for review. The Administrator has final approval. Each Division Director may nominate one person for a QSI, except Field Operations may nominate six. The IAC serves as the reviewing official. Recipients of the QSI will receive the Administrator’s Award for Excellence plaque.

QSI nominations should document the outstanding achievements (one year or more) of the nominee so that the justification will score among the best of the Gold Award Selectees and expectations for continued superior performance. Division award committees should review the nominations and discuss justifications with managers, for inclusion of additional performance outcomes to support the nomination.

All Group Awards approved during FY 2004 are eligible for the Circle Award and will be automatically nominated by the IAC using the Budget Administration Services Office (BASO) file copies. The nominations will be reviewed by the IAC prior to October 15. The IAC will initiate a new AD-287-2 for Circle Award selectees with “Extra Effort” checked, “Circle” typed in the space below Extra Effort and the original group award forms and justification attached. Each individual in the group will receive a cash award equal to the amount received for the Extra Effort Group Award received during FY 2004.

For Cooperator of the Year Awards, check “Keepsake” and type in “Cooperator” in the space below keepsake under Item 12.

Nominations recommended and prepared by staff (peer) must have the supervisor’s signature on the awards form as the Recommending Official. The justification should be reviewed by the supervisor(s) for inclusion of all aspects of the individual’s assignments and performance.

- **Awards for Excellence Committee Action Form:** The Committee Action Form is attached to this directive and must be completed and submitted for all Awards for Excellence. This form will serve as an official record for documenting committee actions and official signatures for approval and will also document the final award determination. The Committee Action Form must be attached to each AD-287-2 recommending an Award for Excellence. A copy of this form is maintained on the NASSNet under Human Resources.

- **Award Justification:** A quality justification (limit to one page, if possible) must be submitted covering the four evaluation criteria (or core values) previously listed for the Awards for Excellence, to fully explain and cover the scope of accomplishments, contributions, or creativity of the project(s) considered to be outstanding. Justifications prepared by staff (a peer) should be reviewed and enhanced by supervisors to ensure that all aspects of the nominee's annual performance are included in the justification.

III. DUE DATES:

- **Team Awards must be approved by September 28, 2004**

Teams recognized with Group Extra Effort Awards during FY 2004 are eligible for the NASS Circle Award. **All NASS teams that achieved their goals, objectives, and assignments during FY 2004 should be evaluated for recognition. The IAC will issue a call for group award nominations to be submitted by September 21, 2004. New group awards must be prepared, reviewed by Division/FO Committees, approved, and received by BASO by September 28, 2004.**

- **Awards for Excellence Recommendations due on or before October 15, 2004**

HQ Divisions and Field Operations (FO) Awards Committees must receive recommendations for Awards for Excellence (including updated Circle Awards justifications) and the Cooperators of the Year no later than October 15, 2004. The Award Committees will rank the Gold Award nominees and submit the rankings to their Director for final approval and signature. Single-interval and double-interval job series selectees should be ranked independently. The ranking will then be submitted to the IAC. The FO Awards Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet in Headquarters the week of October 18-22, 2004 to review all SSO award nominations.

- **Nominations from the HQ Division/FO Awards Committees are due to the IAC on or before October 22, 2004**

Nominations for the NASS Circle Awards, Cooperator of the Year Awards, Administrator's Awards and QSI's must be received by the IAC on or before October 22, 2004. All Gold Award selections will be given consideration by the Committee for the Administrator's Award. The IAC will convene during the week of October 25-29, 2004. The IAC will score the gold nominee justifications on a 0-1-3-5 scale, excluding the high and low committee scores. The IAC will rank nominees for the Administrator Award and submit the ranking to the Administrator.

- **Other Extra Effort Awards:** Managers are encouraged to recommend Keepsake, Time-Off, Extra Effort, and Spot Awards throughout the year. The awards to be processed during the 1st quarter of FY 2005 must be submitted through the HQ Division/FO Awards Committee to BASO on or before October 20, 2004. Award justifications are required for awards over \$500.
- **Group Spot Awards:** This award should be used to recognize a team or group for a specific accomplishment, superior contribution on a short-term assignment, or for efforts that achieve cost savings.

- **Final Approvals and Processing by November 4, 2004**

The Circle Awards, Cooperator of the Year Awards, and Administrator's Awards for Excellence are subject to final approval by the Administrator. All approved awards and paperwork must be received on or before November 4, 2004, by the Budget and Administrative Services Office (BASO), Room 4133-S, to ensure payment of awards during pay period 24 (to be received in employee checks the week of December 9, 2004).

- IV. PLAQUES: Plaques for the Administrator, Circle, and Gold Awards for Excellence will be coordinated with each Division by BASO and Administrative and Financial Management (AFM) staff. Clocks will be ordered for Cooperator of the Year recipients. Each Division will be responsible for preparing extra effort award certificates for their Division as needed. Certificates will be provided to the Divisions by BASO.

The Awards for Excellence ceremony is being tentatively planned for December 10, 2004. SSO and Headquarters award ceremonies should not be scheduled until they have been notified the plaques and certificates are available. BASO will notify committees of this schedule.

- V. BUDGET AND ACCOUNTING CODES: There will be an awards allocation made at the beginning of the fiscal year. Approximately 25 percent of the FY 2005 Division allocation will be used for the Gold Awards for Excellence. The remainder of the awards budget will be available to recognize employees in each HQ Division and Field Office through the remainder of the fiscal year. More information on final budget allocations and distributions will be announced later this year.

Each SSO should use their appropriate accounting codes for Awards for Excellence. The State's top award submitted during the Awards for Excellence processing period will be paid for by the Deputy Administrator for Field Operations (DAFO), up to the equivalent of one Gold Award for each State. NASS Circle Awards, Cooperator of the Year Awards, and the Administrator's Awards will be administered by the IAC and paid for by the Office of the Administrator. Committees should continue to process other types of awards through the normal awards processing channels. Any questions regarding the NASS awards program, budget, or policies should be directed to the 2004 IAC Chairperson, Brad Parks. Questions concerning processing of awards should be directed to Mary DeNardo, Staff Assistant, DAFO/HRSO.

ATTACHMENT: Awards for Excellence Committee Action Form

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AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE ACTION FORM

Employee or Team: _____

SSO or Division Committee: _____

Recommendation:

- G Nominated for Gold Award
- G Nominated for Cooperator of the Year Award
- G Nominated for Circle Award
- G Nominated for Quality Step Increase (QSI)

Signature of Supervisor

Date

Division/FO Awards Committee Action:

- G Selected for Gold Award
- G Recommended for Administrator's Award
- G Recommended for Cooperator of the Year Award
- G Recommended for Circle Award
- G Recommended for Quality Step Increase (QSI)
- G Not Selected for Gold Award

Signature of Awards Committee Chair

Date

NASS Incentive Awards Committee Action:

- G Selected for Administrator's Award
- G Selected for Cooperator of the Year Award
- G Selected for Circle Award
- G Approved for QSI
- G Not Selected
- G Not Selected
- G Not Selected
- G Not Approved

Signature of NASS Incentive Awards Committee Chair

Date

Administrator's Approval:

- G Approved
- G Not Approved

Signature of Administrator

Date

NOTE: This form must indicate the final award approval. It will be used to validate the final award on the AD-287-2.