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Bulletin

Title: Non-Monetary Award Items

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This Bulletin is issued to remind employees of appropriate items to purchase for non-monetary award recognition.

A recent review of purchase card transactions disclosed that purchase cardholders are purchasing inappropriate items for non-monetary award recognition.

According to guidance in the USDA Guide for Employee Recognition, non-monetary awards cannot exceed \$250 on any one item and should be appropriate for Federal recognition, suitable for display, and display the Agency's logo. Further defined from the Department, the keepsake item should clearly symbolize the employer-employee relationship and be something that the recipient could reasonably be expected to value, but not something that conveys a sense of monetary value, i.e., luxury item.

When ordering non-monetary items, please keep in mind that public funds are being used to purchase them. Agency officials must take responsibility for assuring that the authority to incur necessary expenses for non-monetary recognition is used in a manner that shows good judgment and preserves the credibility and integrity of USDA and the Federal Government's recognition program.

Some examples of appropriate items for non-monetary award recognition are portfolios, plaques, certificates, lapel pins, pens, paper weights, jackets, shirts, or hats that display the Agency's logo. Some examples of items that convey a sense of monetary value (luxury items) are digital cameras, jewelry, DVD players, palm pilots, etc.

Cardholders are reminded to follow the guidance in the USDA Guide for Employee Recognition and Human Resources Division (HRD) guidance at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/awards/index.htm> for purchasing non-monetary award items. Failure to follow this guidance may result in suspension or cancellation of your purchase card and the purchase forwarded to HRD for disciplinary action. A good rule of thumb to follow would be if you would be embarrassed to read about it in the paper, don't buy it.

Questions concerning the appropriateness of an item for non-monetary award recognition should be addressed to Helene Saylor, Performance Awards Staff, HRD, on 301-504-1432. Any questions concerning the purchase card should be addressed to Linda Wilson, Acquisition and Property Division, Policy Branch, on 301-504-1733.

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