

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise and reissue the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy regarding employee recognition and awards.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** The significant revisions to this directive are as follows:
 - a. Updates references to award eligibility for podiatrists;
 - b. Clarifies award authorities; and
 - c. Updates responsibilities of key officials.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness (HRA/OSP) (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) (05), Employee Relations, and Performance Management Service (051).
4. **RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 5017, "Employee Recognition and Awards."
5. **RESCISSION(S):** VA Directive 5017 dated April 15, 2002, and subsequent revisions.

CERTIFIED BY:

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/
Guy T. Kiyokawa
Assistant Secretary for
Enterprise Integration

/s/
Cassandra M. Law
Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and
Administration/Operations, Security, and
Preparedness

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EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

1. **PURPOSE.** This directive establishes VA's policy [for] employee recognition and awards[, including] special advancements for achievement and performance for title 5, title 38 and [hybrid-t]title 38 [] employees [and monetary] awards for registered nurses[, nurse anesthetists[, and physician assistants]. Procedures for implementing the policies in this directive are found in VA Handbook 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards.
2. **POLICY.**
 - a. [T]he Department['s policy is] to recognize [] [title 5, hybrid-title 38 and title 38] employees who make contributions in support of the mission, organizational goals and objectives, and VA's Strategic Plan.
 - b. The Department shall provide the opportunity for full-time, part-time, and intermittent physicians, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, registered nurses, nurse anesthetists, physician assistants and expanded-function dental auxiliaries appointed under authority of 38 U.S.C. [§§] 7401(1) or 7405(a)(1)(A) to be considered for a superior performance award as authorized by 38 U.S.C. [§] 7404A(a)].
 - c. The Department shall also provide [] opportunities for [Special Advancements for Achievement and Performance for] full-time, part-time and intermittent [] optometrists, chiropractors, registered nurses, nurse anesthetists, physician assistants and expanded-function dental auxiliaries appointed under authority of 38 U.S.C. [§§] 7401(1) or 7405(a)(1)(A); and, [hybrid-t]title 38 [] employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. [§§] 7401(3) or 7405(a)(1)(B). Such advancement opportunities shall be [based on] professional attainment[, demonstrated high-level performance, and assumption of greater responsibility] as determined by [] the employee's individual record. [] In addition, VA's recognition and awards programs shall include [monetary] awards for full[-]time, part[-]time, and intermittent registered nurses[, nurse anesthetists[, and physician assistants] appointed under 38 U.S.C. [§§] 7401(1) and 7405.
 - d. VA's recognition and awards programs will be administered using the following principles and practices:
 - (1) Recognition has its greatest impact when it is provided as soon as possible following the contribution or achievement.
 - (2) The views of employees and employee representatives are critical to the program's effectiveness in motivating employees.
 - (3) The form of recognition used should be appropriate to the contribution [] made.

- (4) When a desired outcome results from a group [] effort, all contributing members of the [group] should be recognized. The amount of recognition per [group] member may vary depending on the level of contribution.
- (5) Appropriate presentation and adequate publicity are important to the program.
- (6) Employee representatives should be involved in [] develop[ing], implement[ing], and review[ing] of specific recognition programs.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. **Secretary of Veterans Affairs.** The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has overall responsibility for providing leadership in the Department's Employee Recognition and Awards Program.
- b. **Under Secretary for Health [(USH)]. The [USH], or [] designee[s],** shall approve advancements of title 38 and [hybrid-title 38] employees covered under the scope of this directive.
- c. **Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration[/Operations, Security, and Preparedness (ASHRA/OSP)].** The [ASHRA/OSP] is responsible for the overall implementation and administration of VA's Employee Recognition and Awards Program. [This] delegation [includes the] authority to approve all honorary awards granted by the Secretary.
- d. **[The Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness].** The [CHCO] is responsible for:
 - (1) Providing program policy and guidance.
 - (2) Consulting with VA organizations on the appropriate use of awards and the development and implementation of organizational awards programs.
- e. **[Under Secretaries], Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials, and Field Facility Directors[, (including Network and Regional Directors)].** [These officials] will provide leadership to VA's employee recognition and awards program by:
 - (1) Providing [] support by [ensuring the availability of] adequate resources for program administration and training.
 - (2) Ensuring [] the latest concepts in recognition are integrated when implementing organizational award programs.
 - (3) [Adhering to statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements when approving awards.]

- (4) [Ensuring awards are approved in a fiscally responsible manner.]
- (5) Delegating to lower[-]level officials appropriate authority to develop recognition programs and to act on award[] recommendations.
- (6) Evaluating the[ir] employee recognition and awards program periodically to identify specific strengths and weaknesses, develop improved procedures, and establish goals and objectives to direct future program efforts.
- (7) Giving due weight to an award granted under this program [when] qualifying and selecting a title 5 employee for promotion as required in [5 U.S.C. §] 3362 and [] VA Handbook 5005, Staffing.
- (8) Designating [a] [] liaison[] who will provide advice, assistance, and other support to ensure the effective administration of organizational awards and recognition programs.

f. **Managers, Supervisors, and Group and Team Leaders.** [] [M]anagers, supervisors, and group and team leaders are responsible for:

- (1) Being knowledgeable about the employee recognition and awards program and sharing this knowledge with employees to support the achievement of organizational goals.
- (2) Identifying and recommending awards promptly for employees whose performance, contributions[,] or ideas merit formal recognition [in accordance with statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements in a fiscally responsible manner].
- (3) Supporting the employee recognition and awards program by [recommending and approving] awards in a consistent[, timely,] and equitable manner.
- (4) Encouraging employees to submit suggestions and [when applicable,] assisting in the development and testing of ideas [] .

4. AUTHORITIES. The provisions for awards for title 38 employees are regulations promulgated pursuant to 38 U.S.C. §§ 7304, 7306, 7401, 7403, [7404A(a),] 7405, [] and 7452.

5. REFERENCES.

- a. 5 U.S.C., Chapter 45
- b. 5 CFR, Part 451
- c. 5 U.S.C. § 5336
- d. 5 CFR, Part 531, Subpart E

- e. 5 U.S.C. § 5307
- f. 5 CFR, Part 530, Subpart B
- g. 38 U.S.C. §§ 7304, 7306, 7401, 7403, [7404A(a),] 7405 and 7452