



# Guidance for Fair Distribution of Superior Accomplishment Awards



## Introduction

The intent of Superior Accomplishment Awards (e.g. Special Act/Service Awards, On-the-Spot Awards, and Time Off Awards) is to recognize high levels of performance through (1) Special Act or Service Awards and not routine work, (2) Recognize day to day accomplishments in the form of an on-the-spot cash award, (3) Time Off Awards used alone or in combination with monetary or nonmonetary awards to recognize the same kinds of employee contributions that directly support the Army mission or result in benefits to the Government. In keeping with the DCIPS philosophy, awards should be used to recognize individuals and teams that advance organizational goals, thereby aligning strategy and awards. Identifying top performers can be difficult in a complex organizational environment, but is critical to maintaining the integrity of the awards program. Note that it can be de-motivating for top performers to see average or poor performers receiving similar recognition to their own.

This guide has been developed to assist supervisors in the consistent application of the Agency's cash awards process. The guide provides (1) a step-by-step review of the awards process for supervisors and (2) charts to help them establish appropriate Superior Accomplishment award amounts when recognizing deserving employees.

The information in this guide will help supervisors understand the awards process and ensure that awards levels are commensurate with the value of the achievement or contribution. Providing similar award levels for achievements of similar value is critical in promoting equity, accountability and transparency. To promote accountability and transparency – Agency Core Values – in the awards process, awards data will be routinely monitored to check for consistency and fairness. In addition, on a quarterly basis, a publication should be issued at the level at which decisions have been made, highlighting sample achievements, that have earned awards.

## Award Determination Process

Following decisions to grant Superior Accomplishment Awards for achievements, supervisors should follow the process below; otherwise, they should consider recognizing employees using nonmonetary awards.

Step 1: Ensure that the achievement or related achievements has not been recognized with other awards.

Step 2: Identify the organizational goal to which the achievement most clearly maps. It is acceptable if the award-worthy achievement relates more directly to a larger Agency goal or another organizational's goal.

Step 3: Identify the Awards Category that best describes the achievement (e.g. Special Act or Service Award, or On-the-Spot Award)

Step 4: Determine the appropriate amount for the dollar amount or number of hours of the award using the charts below which are derived from Army Regulation 672-20, "Incentive Awards", and approved for use by DCIPS Army Policy Volume 2008 "DCIPS Awards and Recognition". The charts provide examples and dollar and hour ranges for cash awards 1) based on the tangible monetary savings based upon estimated first year benefits, or 2) intangible benefits based upon value of benefit and extent of application, or 3) the value to the organization for the single act performed when determining time off is being considered as the award

Step 5: Compose the award justification, following instructions on the awards coversheet. It is essential that the justification supports the dollar amount of the award. Periodic spot-checks may be conducted to ensure the individual awards merit the dollar amount in the justification and that there is consistency in award amounts for achievements of similar value.

Step 6: Follow chart guidance and organizational procedures for review and approval of awards.

On-The-Spot Cash Awards (OTS)

The OTS cash award is a small Special Act or Service Award (\$50 to \$500) which may be given by a supervisor for day to day accomplishments of subordinate employees.

Cash Awards for Contributions that Result in Tangible Monetary Savings

Tangible Benefits–Example Scale of Award Amounts

Benefits	Awards
Estimated First-Year Benefits	Amount of Award to Employee
Up to \$100,000 in benefits	10% of benefits
\$100,001 and above in benefits	\$10,000 plus 1% of benefits above \$100,001 up to \$25,000 with OPM approval

Notes:

HQDA G-2 endorsement and Army Incentive Awards Board approval is required for awards above \$10,000.

Presidential approval is required for award amounts exceeding \$25,000 and must be submitted to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD (P&R)) for endorsement to the OPM. While the amount of savings may suggest an award exceeding \$25,000 based upon a DoD Component's awards scale, the savings cannot be the sole basis for requesting Presidential consideration. Only meritorious ideas or accomplishments of extraordinary, national significance that would otherwise warrant attention of the President may be endorsed to the President for approval

## Cash Awards for Contributions that Result in Intangible Benefits

### Intangible Benefits-Example Scale of Award Amounts

Value of Benefit	Extent of Application			
	Limited	Extended	Broad	General
	Affects functions, mission, or personnel of one facility, installation, regional area, or an organizational element of a headquarters. Affects small area of science or technology.	Affects functions, mission, or personnel of an entire regional area, command, or bureau. Affects an important area of science or technology.	Affects functions, mission, or personnel of several regional areas or commands, or an entire department or agency. Affects an extensive area of science or technology.	Affects functions, mission, or personnel of more than one department or agency or is in the public interest throughout the Nation and beyond.
<b>Moderate</b> Change or modification of an operating principle or procedure with limited use or impact.	\$25 to \$125	\$126 to \$325	\$326 to \$650	\$651 to \$1,300
<b>Substantial</b> Substantial change or modification of procedures. An important improvement to the value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public.	\$125 to \$325	\$326 to \$650	\$651 to \$1,300	\$1,301 to \$3,150

<b>High</b> Complete revision of a basic principle or procedure; a highly significant improvement to the value of a product or service.	\$325 to \$650	\$650 to \$1,300	\$1,301 to \$3,150	\$3,151 to \$6,300
<b>Exceptional</b> Initiation of a new principle or major procedure; a superior improvement to the quality of critical product, activity, program, or service to the public.	\$650 to \$1,300	\$1,301 to \$3,150	\$3,151 to \$6,300	\$6,301 to \$10,000

## Time Off Awards

**Table**  
**Time Off Awards scale for a single contribution—**

Value to organization	Number of hours
<b>Moderate:</b>	<b>1 to 10</b>
A contribution to a product, activity, program, or service to the public which is of sufficient value to merit formal recognition.	
Beneficial change or modification of operating principles or procedures.	
<b>Substantial:</b>	<b>11 to 20</b>
An important contribution to the value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public.	
Significant change or modification of operating principles or procedures.	
<b>High:</b>	<b>21 to 30</b>
A highly significant contribution to the value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public.	
Complete revision of operating principles or procedures, with considerable impact.	
<b>Exceptional:</b>	<b>31 to 40</b>

A superior contribution to the quality of a critical product, activity, program, or service to the public.	
Initiation of a new principle or major procedure with significant impact.	

On a recurring basis, supervisors should consider the contributions of all employees to determine if their achievements merit a Superior Accomplishment Award in the form of cash or time off. Reviewing all employees is important in promoting a fair awards process. To make these determinations, supervisors may also consider whether the achievements match with the example contributions described below, as well as any achievements that may have aligned with any organizational awards guidance that has been provided (e.g., awards strategy, emphasis areas):

**Increasing Efficiency or Effectiveness:** Substantially improving operational efficiency or effectiveness by developing or modifying methods, procedures, or products or instituting best practices, including reductions in financial or administrative costs, at the team, organization, Agency, or government level.

**Demonstrating Innovation:** Demonstrating creative or innovative thought or translating ideas into actions that make significant contributions toward solving important challenges facing teams, organizations, the agency or the government.

**Demonstrating Initiative:** Launching and sustaining the drive to successfully implement needed change or to solve a persistent problem.

**Achieving High-Quality Results:** Achieving high-quality results beyond those expected at the employee's work level in service of advancing team, organizational or Agency goals; or achieving high-quality results by executing assigned duties under extremely challenging circumstances like short time-lines, high pressure, or minimal resources.

**Exemplifying Leadership:** Displaying excellent leadership at any level to improve productivity and engagement through selfless actions, positive attitudes, and inclusive behaviors.