

Idaho Bulletin: ID 360-13-3

Subject: Performance Awards Nominations for FY 2012

Date: 11/01/2012

### **Actions Required By:**

**November 16** -Performance Bonus, including Quality Step Increase (QSI's) and Extra Effort Award nominations due to ASTC/Principal Staff

**November 21** -ASTC/Principal staff submit nominations for Performance Bonus, including Quality Step Increase (QSI's,) and Extra Effort Awards nominations to Deborah Howerton, Human Resources Officer

**Purpose.** To Provide guidance for Fiscal Year 2012 Performance Award Nominations.

**Expiration Date.** March 31, 2013

**Background.** The *NRCS Employee Recognition Program* is designed to fairly and equitably recognize and reward individuals for excellence in enhancement, support and service to the Agency's mission through consistently high levels of performance. To view the policy on the NRCS Employee Recognition Program, please visit [General Manual 360-Part 414](#) .

**Explanation.** *Performance Bonus Awards* are lump-sum cash payments for recognition of accomplishments that exceed expectations as documented in the employee's annual performance plan and are based on the employee's most recent rating of record. Performance Bonus Awards are intended to recognize individual performance and may not be given for group contributions.

Rating Officials are responsible for requesting performance bonus awards for staff. The following may be used as a guide when deciding potential bonus awards.

- ◆ Performance Awards for Employees Rated Outstanding will include Quality Step Increase (QSI's) or cash equivalent if QSI is not applicable.
- ◆ Performance Awards for Employees Rated Superior are not to exceed \$1,500.

When determining the amount of a performance bonus award, consider the employee's rating for each element; consistency of awards given to other employees with similar ratings, and the scope and complexity of the position.

Employees who have one or more elements rated at "marginal" or lower are not eligible for any performance bonus awards.

***Quality Step Increase (QSI) - QSI's must be approved by NHQ before being processed.***

Awards may be granted when an employee's final rating is "outstanding". Rating officials should consider whether a QSI is appropriate or advantageous to the employee. A QSI may not be appropriate or advantageous to an employee if the employee is about to receive a promotion or vacate his or her position. Employees may receive only one QSI during a 52-week period, and not in conjunction with a Performance Bonus Award. A QSI Award is an individual award given as an additional within-grade increase (WGI) for outstanding performance, without regard to required waiting periods, that increases an employee's base pay. If the employee is in the 10<sup>th</sup> step of the grade, he/she will receive the monetary equivalent to a step increase. QSI nominations can only be submitted by the nominee's supervisor.

To nominate an employee for a ***performance bonus award***:

- Prepare an AD-287-2, Recommendation and Approval of Awards. Supervisor should sign as the "Recommending Individual and (Attachment 1).
- Include an AD-435-A Summary Rating sheet.
- Prepare a Justification Outline, not to exceed two pages (Attachment 2).
- Submit nominations through the appropriate ASTC by November 16, 2012. ASTC signs as "Reviewing Official".
- The ASTC will forward to Human Resources by November 21, 2012.

The performance bonus award system provides an opportunity to recognize employees for their overall performance during the fiscal year. Justification cannot include recognition that was previously given to an employee through a Spot Award or an Extra Effort Award during FY12.

An ***Extra Effort Award*** is a one-time lump sum cash award which is appropriate when an employee or group of employees performs substantially beyond expectations on a specific assignment, for a single project, or similar one-time achievement of a non-recurring nature. Amounts for Extra Effort awards must be based on tangible and/or intangible benefits to the government. Any employee may nominate another employee for an Extra Effort Award. If you nominate an employee that you do not supervise, the supervisor must be informed of the nomination.

***Group Awards – Must be sent to NHQ for approval***

This is a reminder that an extra effort award may be given to a group of individuals. An example would be if a group of employees performed beyond expectations on a specific assignment the entire group could be given an extra effort award.

To nominate an employee/group for an ***extra effort award***:

- Prepare an AD-287-2; Recommendation and Approval of Awards (Attachment 1).
- Prepare a Justification Outline, not to exceed two pages (Attachment 2).
- Submit award package to the nominee's supervisor. Supervisors are to comment on nominations they receive for the purpose of providing clarification and strength to the substance of the written justification. Supervisors should sign/date the AD-287-2 in the section for Recommendation and Approval block 21.
- Supervisors (if not the ASTC/principal staff) should forward nominations to the respective ASTC/principal staff by November 16, 2012.

- ASTC/principal staff must include their comments and forward the nominations to Human Resources by November 21, 2012.

The justification for an Extra Effort Award cannot include an assignment or achievement that was recognized with a Spot Award during FY12.

The ***Spot Cash Award recognition program*** is to be used throughout the performance year for a one time noteworthy achievement such as using personal initiative and creativity to solve an unusual problem or producing an excellent work product under a tight deadline. Recognition in these instances should usually be within 4-6 weeks of the contribution. Maximum Spot Cash Award cannot exceed \$750.00.

Human Resources will forward all award nominations to State Conservationist and Assistant State Conservationist (Management) for final approval. Our goal is to have the Human Resources staff process all approved awards through EmpowHR for receipt of awards by employees by mid-late December 2012.

For assistance, refer to Idaho Employee Recognition Delegation Chart (Attachment 3).

Make certain your nomination is routed in a timely fashion in order to meet the established deadlines. The deadlines are to ensure timely preparation and processing of cash awards. **Late nominations will not receive consideration.** If you have any questions or comments, please contact Deborah Howerton at 208-378-5733.

Supervisors, as well as, employees, who witness excellent, mission-oriented accomplishments, are encouraged to recognize the excellent work by submitting award nominations. Please remember that confidentiality should be maintained throughout the nomination process.

**Contact.** If you should have questions please contact Deborah Howerton, Human Resources Officer at (208) 378-5733 or by email at [deborah.howerton@id.usda.gov](mailto:deborah.howerton@id.usda.gov) .

/s/

**Clint Evans**

Acting State Conservationist

Attachments (also posted on the Idaho NRCS Share Point site; Idaho [Administration-Personnel Employee Recognition - Awards](#)

1. AD-287-2, Recommendation and Approval of Awards
2. Justification Outline for Award Nominations
3. Idaho Employee Recognition Delegation Chart