

For: FSA Employees

FSA Awards Program

Approved by: Administrator



1 Overview

A Background

A performance management and awards program is critical to the success of any organization. According to OPM, performance management **must** effectively differentiate between high and low performance, and the awards system **must** reward top performers with meaningful and appropriate recognition.

FSA supervisors will be able to recognize FY 2014 employee performance with cash awards, time off awards (TOA's), or a combination cash award/TOA.

For rating-based awards, there is a direct correlation between employee performance and awards, and a standardized method for granting and distributing rating-based awards.

B Purpose

This notice:

- provides guidance for:
 - FY 2014 (October 1, 2013, to September 30, 2014) performance awards for rating-based awards
 - FY 2015 extra effort and spot awards
 - calculating rating-based award cash amounts
 - non-rating-based TOA's
 - supervisors to recognize the workforce fairly and equitably for the level of performance being delivered
- obsoletes Notice PM-2924.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2015 2-19-15	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

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1 Overview (Continued)

C Authorities

The following legal authorities govern employee recognition programs:

- 5 U.S.C. 45 and 5 CFR Part 451 provide the authority to establish employee recognition programs
- Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990, Section 201 (Pub. L. 101-509) provides Federal agencies authority to grant employees time off from duty, **without** loss of pay or charge of leave, as employee recognition
- 5 CFR Part 531 provides the regulatory requirements for quality step increases (QSI's).

D Coverage

FSA's awards policy:

- applies to all FSA employees nationwide, including temporary employees under a performance plan
- does **not** apply to the following:
 - individuals in the Senior Executive Service
 - STC and COC members
 - individuals **excluded** from coverage by statute, OPM regulation, or Departmental determination, including SED's.

E Labor-Management Obligations

Where exclusive representation exists, bargaining may be requested to the extent allowed by applicable statutes and according to contract language. Negotiation issues raised **must** be resolved before implementation of this notice for employees in that collective bargaining unit.

F Effective Date

This FSA awards policy is effective immediately. Awards shall be processed by pay period (PP) 8, 2015, for employees on board as of PP5, 2015, with FY 2014 performance ratings.

Note: FY 2014 performance rating **must** be entered in EmpowHR or the Entry, Processing, Inquiry and Correction (EPIC) System before entering the performance cash award. See Notice PM-2920.

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1 Overview (Continued)

G Contacts for TOA’s, Cash Awards, or QSI’s

If there are questions about processing TOA’s or cash awards contact the appropriate SPO as follows.

IF supervisor is located in...	THEN contact...
Washington, DC	Debbie Lee, HRD, EmpowHR Help Desk by either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-mail to debbie.lee@kcc.usda.gov • telephone at 816-823-3997.
other than Washington, DC, or State or County Office	one of the following in HRD, Employee, Labor Relations, and Benefits Branch (ELRBB), Benefits and Performance Management Section (BAPMS): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dana Candler by either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-mail to dana.candler@kcc.usda.gov • telephone at 816-926-6117 • Patricia Gepford by either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-mail to patricia.gepford@kcc.usda.gov • telephone at 816-926-6259 • Kedra Watts by either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-mail to kedra.watts@wdc.usda.gov • telephone at 202-401-0678.
State or County Office	State Office, Administrative Branch or the Southwest Area (SWA) Regional Service Office, Human Resources Team.

2 FY 2014 Rating-Based Awards

A General Information

Rating-based awards are based on employee performance accomplishments over the course of the rating cycle, as documented on the employee’s rating of record.

B Outstanding and Superior Ratio

The value of a cash award or TOA for an employee rated “superior” **must** be one-half the amount of the cash award or TOA for an employee rated “outstanding”. All awards **must** adhere to this 2:1 ratio when granting rating-based awards.

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2 FY 2014 Rating-Based Awards (Continued)

C Types of Rating-Based Awards

Employees may receive **1** of the following types of awards in recognition of their FY 2014 performance rating of record:

- cash award (lump-sum) **only**
- TOA **only**
- combination of cash award and TOA.

It is the employee's choice as to which authorized award they receive. Document the employee's choice by e-mail and on the FSA Awards Calculation Worksheet (Exhibit 1).

Note: See paragraph 3 for opportunity to offer QSI's instead of awards listed above to select employees with outstanding ratings.

IF rating is....	THEN award can be 1 of the following...
outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 percent of the employee's base salary, including locality pay• 40-hour TOA• 2 percent of the employee's base salary, including locality pay, and 20-hour TOA.
superior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.5 percent of the employee's base salary, including locality pay• 20-hour TOA• 1 percent of the employee's base salary, including locality pay, and 10-hour TOA.

Cash award amounts are determined based on the employee's base salary, including locality pay as of PP1, 2015, or as of September 30, 2014, whichever salary is higher. This includes salary rates because of a temporary promotion that is or was in place for 6 months or more. If temporary promotion is or was for less than 6 months, then use the appropriate rate for the position of record as of PP1, 2015 or as of September 30, 2014, whichever salary is higher.

Notes: Exceptions to salary used to calculate award amount **must** be approved by the appropriate Deputy Administrator or AAOM.

Example: Employee was on a temporary promotion for 1 year that ended on August 23, 2014. Consideration could be given to using the salary rate in place as of August 23, 2014, if higher than salary as of PP1, 2015.

Separate instructions for processors will be provided after issuance of this notice.

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2 FY 2014 Rating-Based Awards (Continued)

D Eligibility

All FSA employees, Federal and non-Federal, rated “superior” are eligible for a rating-based award. All employees rated “outstanding” are eligible for QSI consideration. Employees rated “fully successful” or below are **not** eligible for rating-based awards.

3 QSI's

A Overview

QSI's are a faster-than-normal within-grade increase (WGI) used to reward employees at any GS or CO grade level rated “outstanding”. Receiving a QSI will **not** affect receiving the next WGI, **unless** the employee is in step 3 or step 6 **before** receiving QSI, in which case receiving WGI will be pushed back exactly 1 year. QSI's are earned by employees who have far exceeded job expectations and their performance is expected to continue into the future. QSI may be granted, instead of the award options listed in subparagraph 2 C, for employees with a rating of record of “outstanding”.

B Allocation

For QSI rating-based award purposes, allocation of QSI will be divided into award pools. The award pools are as follows:

- Office of the Administrator (immediate Office of the Administrator and staff offices reporting to the Administrator)
- OBF
- DACO
- DAFLP
- DAFO, excluding State and County Offices
- DAFP
- DAM
- ITSD
- each State Office.

Note: The U.S. Virgin Islands are included with the Florida award pool.

3 QSI's (Continued)

B Allocation (Continued)

Each award pool may give a number of QSI's up to 3 percent of the total number of ratings of record given that year within that award pool. Fractions of 0.5 or greater shall be rounded up; fractions less than 0.5 shall be rounded down.

Example: An award pool gives 210 ratings of record, 3 percent of 210 = 6.3; therefore, a maximum of 6 QSI's may be given in this award pool.

For small award pools where this percentage would not allow any QSI's, one QSI per award pool may be given.

All decisions about QSI's will be made by:

- AAOM for the Office of the Administrator award pool
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Information Officer
- Deputy Administrator for all other associated award pools
- SED for each State Office award pool.

C Criteria

QSI's are the highest rating-based award that an employee can earn. FSA has established stringent criteria for QSI's to maintain QSI integrity. The following criteria **must** be met to be considered for QSI:

- rating of record **must** be "outstanding"
- employee has **not** received QSI within the last 52 weeks
- employee is **not** at step 10 of their grade level
- employee demonstrates sustained performance of high quality significantly above expectations and is expected to continue in the future
- employee has held the same grade and type of position, or similar position, in a pay status for at least 6 months **before** the end of the appraisal cycle.

Note: If an employee is in the process of being promoted within 60 calendar days after the effective date of QSI, check the next salary level to ensure that QSI will **not** be lost.

D Employees at Step 10

Employees at step 10 of their grade **cannot** receive QSI. Employees at step 10 of their grade rated "outstanding" will receive their award of choice as listed in subparagraph 2 C.

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3 QSI's (Continued)

E Effective Date

QSI's will be made effective the first day of PP after written notification is received in SPO that QSI should be processed. Written notification may take place through EmpowHR, by submitting a completed AD-287-2, or by using some other form of written communication, such as a spreadsheet or a memorandum. The effective date may be delayed up to 4 PP's when advantageous to the employee.

Note: Employees may **not** receive both of the following based on a rating of record for the same appraisal period:

- QSI
- cash award, TOA, or combination cash award/TOA.

4 Cash Award Only Option

A Overview

When giving a cash award **only**, determining the individual award amounts may be accomplished by using the spreadsheet in Exhibit 1.

B Award Amount Based on Employee Salaries

Issuing awards based on a percent of the employee's salary:

- provides consistency throughout the Program Area and/or State
- shows distinctions based on levels of performance
- is based on the employee's annual base pay; that is GS or CO pay, plus locality pay.

Note: See contacts listed in subparagraph 1 G for assistance in determining award amounts.

C Effective Date

Cash awards will be made effective the first day of PP after written notification is received in SPO. Award requests should be submitted no later than PP5, 2015, to allow for processing by PP8. Written notification may take place through EmpowHR, by submitting a completed AD-287-2, or by using some other form of written communication such as a spreadsheet or a memorandum.

Note: FY 2014 performance rating **must** be entered in EmpowHR or EPIC before entering the performance cash award. See Notice PM-2920.

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5 TOA's

A Award Preference

FSA recognizes that time off is a valuable tool in rewarding the workforce. TOA's may be preferred by employees instead of cash awards.

B TOA Hour Limitations

TOA's are granted to employees in the form of time off from work without loss of pay or charge to leave. Full-time employees may:

- be granted up to 80 hours of time off during a leave year
- not be granted more than 40 hours for a single achievement.

TOA's **must** be scheduled and used within 26 PP's from the effective date of processing. After 26 PP's, unused time off will be automatically forfeited and may **not** be restored or otherwise substituted.

Part-time employees or employees with uncommon tours of duty may be granted up to the average number of hours worked in PP or the employee's scheduled tour of duty. This figure should be prorated for part-time employees or employees with uncommon tours of duty.

Note: All FY 2014 performance appraisals **must** be entered into NFC **before** processing FY 2014 performance TOA's. Managers **must** check with their State Office or HRD for Federal employees, to ensure that the FY 2014 appraisal has been entered **before** entering TOA's for performance.

6 Processing TOA's Using EmpowHR

A Recommendation Responsibilities

Only the supervisor may be the recommending official for a rating-based TOA. Recommending individuals using EmpowHR shall take the following steps to nominate an employee for TOA. See paragraph 7 for making recommendations **without** using EmpowHR.

Step	Action	
1	Prepare TOA recommendation in EmpowHR (Manager Self Service - Tasks - Awards).	
2	IF the recommendation...	THEN EmpowHR forwards TOA recommendation...
	is within supervisor's approval authority (up to 10 hours time off)	directly to SPO for processing.
	exceeds supervisor's approval authority (10 or more hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to the supervisor's supervisor for approval • to SPO for processing after approval.

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6 Processing TOA’s Using EmpowHR (Continued)

B Supervisor Review and Approval or Disapproval

After receiving notification from the approving official:

- the recipient’s supervisor shall inform the employee of the decision
- SPO will notify the supervisor after TOA is approved. The supervisor will notify the employee of TOA and let the employee know TOA will be reflected on their Employee Personal Page (EPP) (subparagraph 8 F).

C Approval Official Responsibilities

The approving official shall review TOA recommendation and make 1 of the following decisions.

IF approving official...	THEN...
approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EmpowHR forwards recommendation to SPO for processing • notify, verbally or by e-mail, the recipient’s supervisor and recommending individual of action.
modifies and approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note changes • EmpowHR forwards recommendation to SPO for processing • notify, verbally or by e-mail, the recipient’s supervisor and recommending individual of action.
disapproves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EmpowHR forwards recommendation to SPO where it will be canceled • notify, verbally or by e-mail, the approving official.

7 Processing TOA’s Not Using EmpowHR

A Recommendation Responsibilities

The recommending individual shall take the following steps to nominate an employee for TOA.

Step	Action
1	Prepare TOA recommendation on AD-287-2.
2	If recommending for a rating-based TOA, use the write-up accompanying the rating.
3	Sign AD-287-2.
4	Forward AD-287-2 and all supporting documents to the recipient’s supervisor.

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7 Processing TOA's Not Using EmpowHR (Continued)

B Action After Approval Received

After receiving notification that TOA has been approved from the approving official:

- inform the employee of the decision
- let the employee know TOA will be reflected on their EPP after SPO processing.

8 Extra Effort and Spot Awards

A General

Extra effort and spot awards are non-rating-based awards that are given based on employee accomplishments or contributions on a short-term assignment, project, or detail.

- Extra effort awards are monetary awards that recognize individuals or groups who make a significant 1-time contribution (special project, assignment, detail) to FSA's mission or goals. Extra effort award amounts can range from \$50 to more than \$10,000, depending on the value of the benefits and the application of the contributions to the Government. Award amounts over \$5,500 require approval of the Under Secretary.
- Spot awards are monetary awards designed to grant immediate recognition to individuals or teams of employees for their day-to-day extra efforts and contributions. Spot awards range from \$50 to \$500, will be issued immediately, and taxes will be included. For budgetary purposes, supervisors should deduct, from their extra effort and spot award budget, the spot award amount plus taxes. For taxes, add 55 percent, if the State has no income taxes and 60 percent, if the State has income taxes.

Example: \$500 award + \$300 taxes = \$800 deducted from the extra effort and spot award budget.

Note: TOA's can be granted, instead of cash, to recognize employee accomplishments or contributions. TOA's are subject to the limitations in subparagraph 5 B.

B Award Amounts

Funds for extra effort or spot awards will be allocated by OBF memorandum to each award pool identified in subparagraph 3 B. These awards funds shall **only** be used to award employees for their short-term accomplishments or contributions using extra effort and spot cash awards.

8 Extra Effort and Spot Awards (Continued)

C Justification

Extra effort and spot awards require written justification regardless of the award amount. Written justification **must**:

- accompany the award recommendation
- describe the employee's accomplishments or contributions
- clearly reflect to the approving official where the award falls on the Non-Measurable Benefits Scale (Exhibit 2)
- follow the format in Exhibit 3.

D Current Practices

If an office currently has a system in place for handling extra effort or spot awards, such as a review committee, the system may be kept as long as the provisions of the system comply with this notice.

E TOA and Transfer Between CO and GS

If an employee is transferred between the FSA CO and GS systems and they have unused TOA hours, the TOA hours will be dropped by NFC. To restore TOA hours, SPO will process another TOA, in the amount of the unused hours, for the employee after their transfer is complete.

Note: SPO will **only** process another TOA if the employee is transferring **within FSA**.

F Connecting to NFC's EPP

To access EPP, go to <https://www.nfc.usda.gov> and under "Application Launchpad", CLICK "My EPP" icon. On the Employee Personal Page Warning Screen, read message and then CLICK "I Agree".

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8 Extra Effort and Spot Awards (Continued)

F Connecting to NFC’s EPP (Continued)

On EPP Log-In Screen, follow directions to log into EPP using 1 of the following options:

- enter user ID and password and CLICK “**Log In**”
- CLICK “**New User Sign Up**”
- CLICK “**eAuth Log In**”.

Note: For user ID or password assistance, contact EPP Help Desk directly, as follows:

- CLICK either “**Forgot Your User ID?**” or “**Forgot Your Password?**”
- e-mail osc.etix@usda.gov
- telephone toll free at 800-767-9641
- telephone at 504-426-6435.

To view leave balances in EPP, under “Home”, “Personal Info”, CLICK “**Leave**”.

Note: To ensure privacy, close all other tabs on the screen.

9 Processing Awards Other Than TOA’s Using EmpowHR

A Recommending Individual Responsibilities

Anyone may be the recommending individual for an extra effort or spot award. Recommending individuals using EmpowHR shall take the following steps to nominate an employee for an award. See paragraph 10 for making recommendations without using EmpowHR.

Note: Only the recipient’s supervisor may be the recommending individual for a rating-based award.

Step	Action	
1	Prepare the award recommendation in EmpowHR.	
2	IF the recommendation is by a...	THEN forward award recommendation...
	nonsupervisor	to recommending individual’s supervisor.
	supervisor and recommended amount is within supervisor’s approval authority (up to \$500 in cash and up to 10-hour TOA)	directly to SPO for processing.
	supervisor and recommended amount exceeds supervisor’s approval authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to the supervisor’s supervisor for approval • then to SPO for processing after approval.
	Note: In all cases, before creating the award recommendation, the recommending individual must notify the recipient’s supervisor of the award recommendation for concurrence.	

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9 Processing Awards Other Than TOA’s Using EmpowHR (Continued)

B Supervisor Review and Approval/Disapproval

The recipient’s supervisor shall review the award recommendation and notify the recommending individual of their decision.

After receiving notification from the approving official, the recipient’s supervisor shall:

- inform the employee and recommending individual of the decision
- if the award was approved, let the employee know the award will be reflected on their EPP after processing by SPO.

C Approving Official Responsibilities

When an award is recommended by a supervisor that exceeds the amount authorized for supervisory approval, an approving official is required. The approving official shall review the award recommendation and make 1 of the following decisions.

IF approving official...	THEN...
approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• forward the award recommendation to SPO for processing• notify, verbally or by e-mail, the recipient’s supervisor and recommending individual of action.
modifies and approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• note changes• forward the award recommendation to SPO for processing• notify, verbally or by e-mail, the recipient’s supervisor and recommending individual of action.
disapproves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• forward the award recommendation to SPO where it will be canceled• notify, either verbally or by e-mail, the recipient’s supervisor.

Note: The extra effort and spot award amount will be deducted from the approving official’s extra effort and spot awards allotment.

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10 Processing Awards Other Than TOA’s Not Using EmpowHR

A Recommending Individual Responsibilities

Anyone may be the recommending individual for an extra effort or spot award. The recommending individual shall take the following steps to nominate an employee for an award.

Note: Only the recipient’s supervisor may be the recommending individual for a rating-based award.

Step	Action	
1	Prepare the award recommendation on AD-287-2.	
2	IF recommending for...	THEN...
	an extra effort or spot award	prepare a written justification.
	a rating-based award	use the write-up accompanying the rating.
3	Sign AD-287-2.	
4	Forward AD-287-2 and all supporting documents to the recipient’s supervisor.	

B Recipient’s Supervisor

The recipient’s supervisor shall review the award recommendation and make 1 of the following decisions.

IF recipient’s supervisor...	THEN...
approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sign AD-287-2 • forward the award recommendation to the approving official.
modifies and approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note changes • sign AD-287-2 • forward the award recommendation to the approving official.
disapproves the recommendation	attach a note to AD-287-2, or note can be done by e-mail, and return to the recommending individual.

After receiving notification that the award has been approved from the approving official:

- inform the employee of the decision
- let the employee know the award will be reflected on their EPP after processing by SPO.

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10 Processing Awards Other Than TOA’s Not Using EmpowHR (Continued)

C Approving Official Responsibilities

The approving official shall review the award recommendation and make 1 of the following decisions.

IF approving official...	THEN...
approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sign AD-287-2 • forward the award recommendation to SPO • notify the recipient’s supervisor and recommending individual of action.
modifies and approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note changes • sign AD-287-2 • forward the award recommendation to SPO • notify the recipient’s supervisor and recommending individual of action.
disapproves the recommendation	attach a note to AD-287-2, or note can be done by e-mail, stating the reason for disapproval, and return 1 copy to the recipient’s supervisor and 1 copy to the recommending individual.

11 Additional Information

A Purchasing Mementos for Employees

It is recognized that many employees value a memento more than other types of recognition, including cash awards or TOA’s. With this in mind, offices may spend up to 15 percent of their extra effort and spot awards pool on mementos for employees. Before purchasing mementos; however, offices **must** develop a written memento program and submit it to the National Office for approval. The award pool executive **must** submit the proposal to HRD, ELRBB, Attn: Charlotte Moment.

Purchasing all employees a polo shirt, jacket, or other memento awards all employees equally, the high performers and low performers, and does **not** make distinctions based on the level of performance. This practice does **not** meet OPM requirements.

11 Additional Information (Continued)

B Length of Service (LOS) Keepsakes for 45+ Years of Service

FSA has designed a separate program to recognize employees with up to 40 years of service for their dedicated commitment to USDA. Therefore, award funds shall **not** be used for recognizing employee's LOS up to 40 years. However, offices may spend up to \$200 per employee from their extra effort and spot awards pool for a keepsake that recognizes 45+ years of service, pending funding availability. The keepsake **must**:

- be something that the recipient could reasonably be expected to value, but **not** something that conveys a sense of monetary value
- have a lasting value as a symbol of excellence
- contain the USDA or FSA logo
- take an appropriate form to be:
 - used in the public sector
 - purchased with public funds.

Example: Purchasing a firearm would be inappropriate.

C Retirement Recognition

Employees should **not** be recognized monetarily when they leave FSA, either through retirement or separation. However, offices may consider providing some form of honorary or nonmonetary recognition of the employee's efforts in support of FSA's mission. Items such as certificates, plaques, and pins are considered appropriate and may be presented. These items should be charged to the office's supply allotment.

D Publishing Awards

FSA encourages supervisors to use the various resources available to them to publicize the accomplishments and contributions of their employees. When publicizing awards, the employee's name and the general type of award (rating-based, extra effort, or spot), along with information, such as a description of the accomplishments, can be published. However, do **not** publish the names of employees receiving QSI's. Employee appraisal information is protected under the Privacy Act. Therefore, because it is a requirement to have an "outstanding" rating to receive QSI, publishing the names of employees receiving QSI's would be effectively disclosing their annual appraisal information.

Example: An acceptable method for publishing awards would be a combined list titled, "Rating-Based Award Recipients List" that would include QSI's, cash awards, TOA's, or cash award/TOA. In this example, do **not** disclose the specific type of award (QSI, performance bonus, etc.) with the recipients' names.

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11 Additional Information (Continued)

E Contacts

If there are any questions about this notice, contact either of the following:

- Kedra Watts by either e-mail to **kedra.watts@wdc.usda.gov** or by telephone at 202-401-0678

- Dana Candler by either e-mail to **dana.candler@kcc.usda.gov** or by telephone at 816-926-6117.

If there are questions about processing award actions, contact the appropriate SPO, as follows.

IF the supervisor is located in...	THEN contact...
Washington, DC	HRD, ELRBB, BPMS ATTN: Charlotte Moment STOP 0595 1400 INDEPENDENCE AVE SW WASHINGTON DC 20250-0595 Telephone: 202-401-0516 FAX: 202-205-9140.
Kansas City, St. Louis, or APFO	HRD, ELRBB, BPMS ATTN: Dana Candler or Patty Gepford BEACON FACILITY, MAIL STOP 8398 2312 E BANNISTER RD KANSAS CITY MO 64131-3061 Telephone: 816-926-6259 FAX: 816-926-6156.
State or County Office	State Office, Administrative Branch or the SWA Regional Service Office, Human Resources Team.

Extra Effort and Spot Award Benefits Scales

The following table provides the benefits scale for extra effort and spot awards.

Nonmeasurable Benefits Scale			
Value of Benefits	Application		
	Limited	Broad	General
	Impacts the public interest, or a specific small work unit, including a division or region.	Impacts the public interest, several regional areas, or an entire agency.	Impacts the public interest, more than 1 Agency, or the entire Department.
Small to Moderate	\$50 - \$325	\$325 - \$650	\$650 - \$1,300
Moderate to Substantial	\$325 - \$650	\$650 - \$1,300	\$1,300 - \$3,150
Substantial to Extended	\$1,000 - \$2,500	\$2,500 - \$5,500	\$5,500 - \$10,000 <u>1/</u>

Measurable Benefits Scale	
Benefit	Award
Up to \$10,000	10 percent of the benefits.
\$10,001 to \$100,000	\$1,000 for the first \$10,000 in benefits, plus 3 percent of benefits over \$10,000.
\$100,001 or more	\$3,700 for the first \$100,000 in benefits, plus .005 of benefits over \$100,000. The award amount should not exceed the recipient's annual salary.

1/ Any award over \$5,500 **requires** the Secretary's approval.

TOA Scale	
Value of the Employee's Contribution	Hours To Be Awarded
Small to moderate contributions that helped to ease a backlog or completion of a special project that benefited primarily the employee's home office.	1 to 10 hours
Moderate to substantial contributions that helped an entire division, region, or other large geographic area.	11 to 40 hours

Note: These tables shall **not** be used when calculating rating-based awards.

Example of Extra Effort and Spot Award Justification

Notes: All extra effort and spot awards, regardless of amount **unless** otherwise specified in a Union Agreement, require a separate written justification.

All other awards justification will be entered in EmpowHR using the drop-down list choices, when supervisors input the award information.

The following is an outline that describes the sections and wording to justify an award:

“During the period of [mmdyyy to mmdyyy], [Employee/Group Name], [description of accomplishment and/or list of duties and accomplishment the employee has done to deserve this award].

This exceeded expectations as identified in the current performance plan by: [As applicable.]

- [Improving quality.]
- [Timely completion of the project.]
- [Increasing productivity.]
- [Overcoming adverse obstacles or working under unusual circumstances.]
- [Using unusual creativity.]
- [Saving the Government time and/or money.]
- [Increasing program effectiveness.]

As a result: [As applicable.]

- [Project acceptance.]
- [Savings in time, money, and/or material. More efficiency.]
- [Effectiveness.]
- [Technological advancement.]
- [Productivity increase.]
- [Improved levels of cooperation that will result in...]

Therefore, we propose an award of [amount and/or hours].”