Kansas
Department of Administration

State of Kansas

Employee Award & Recognition Program

Purpose

The program provides an employee award and recognition system authorized by K.S.A. 75-37, 105. The program is designed to recognize an employee's contribution to the objectives of the agency and state government through excellence in performance and service.

Award Categories

Agencies may select from the following award categories when establishing an award and recognition program depending on the agency mission, goals, and resources.

Distinguished Accomplishment: A notable event or achievement that is significant in scope, effort, or impact on government operations or service to citizens.

Meritorious Service: Execution of the duties of the position far beyond the service level commonly expected by the employees' customers that is of great benefit to, or reflects highly on, the agency or the state.

Innovation: Significant process improvement or removal of barriers that prevent improvement of products or services.

Kansas Quality Management: Exemplary use of the principles, practices, and tools of Kansas Quality Management.

Volunteerism: Outstanding levels of service outside the normal work hours to a non-profit organization dedicated to service, charitable, humanitarian, or philanthropic causes.

Length of Service: Recognition of notable anniversaries in service to the State of Kansas, which include at least 10, 20, 30 or 40-year anniversaries. Agencies may order service pins using the state contract or may use other forms of recognition. The Office of Personnel Services (OPS) in the Department of Administration will coordinate award presentations for 40 and 50 years of service.

These optional award categories indicate achievement well beyond the norm. In general, the minimum required level of achievement should not be so high as to be unattainable by employees who are generally recognized as performing in an outstanding manner, nor so low that the awards lose significance by being easily attainable.

Award Categories

All regular, classified and unclassified employees, and employees in unclassified temporary benefits eligible positions may be nominated and employees may be nominated for awards individually or as part of a group or team under each category. Probationary employees may be nominated only if they are nominated as part of a group.

Award Types

Agencies can provide monetary and/or nonmonetary awards to employees. The total gross value of all monetary and nonmonetary awards to a single employee under this program during a fiscal year must not exceed $3,500.

Monetary awards are cash awards and may be given for all award categories.

All monetary awards must meet the conditions for a discretionary bonus set out in 29 C.F.R. 778.211, except for the Innovation Award under the Employee Suggestion Program, which is nondiscretionary. The monetary award must meet each of the following conditions in order to qualify as a discretionary bonus:

- The agency head retains total discretion both as to the fact of an award and as to the amount and nature of any award;
- The amount or nature of an award, if any, is determined by the agency head without prior promise or agreement;
- The employee has no contract right, express or implied, to any award; and
- The award is not paid pursuant to any prior contract, agreement, or promise.

In effect, discretionary awards are not anticipated or expected by an employee. For example, if an employee, knows that an award will be given if he or she does “x, y, and z”, the award becomes nondiscretionary. This type of award is not allowed under the Employee Award and Recognition Program.

Nonmonetary awards include awards such as gift certificates, plaques, certificates of achievement, trophies, cups, mugs, shirts, sweatshirts, caps, and miscellaneous items such as tools, electronics, radios, etc. Nonmonetary awards can be used to recognize employees for all award categories.

Employee of the Quarter Program

Each agency shall implement an Employee of the Quarter Program, whereby an agency employee is recognized by the agency as the outstanding employee for that quarter. Employees will be recognized for their efforts in the previous quarter, as follows:

- Recognition in February for efforts and accomplishments in the 4th Quarter (October—December) of the previous year;
- Recognition in May for efforts and accomplishments in the 1st Quarter (January—March) of the current year;
- Recognition in August for efforts and accomplishments in the 2nd Quarter (April—June) of the current year; and
- Recognition in November for efforts and accomplishments in the 3rd Quarter (July—September) of the current year;

Employees recognized as the Employee of the Quarter will receive a monetary award presented to them by the agency head of the agency in which they work, and have the opportunity to meet and have their photograph taken with the Governor. The amount of the award shall be between $250 and $1,000, as determined by each agency. Once determined, the amount will remain fixed for each employee recognized as the Employee of the Quarter.

Agency Guidelines

Agencies may adopt the standard forms and process utilized by the Department of Administration or may develop and implement an agency-specific program. Agencies that decide to implement a program that differs from the standard program must develop guidelines which are subject to review by the Department of Administration. Such guidelines must include the following:

- A statement of the purpose of and eligibility for the agency's employee award and recognition program;
- A statement of the award categories to be recognized, including an Employee of the Quarter program and general criteria for awards in each category;
- A statement as to whether employees will be limited on the number of awards they can receive in a fiscal year;
- A statement as to whether certain award categories are limited to either monetary awards or nonmonetary awards;
- A description of the nomination process; and
- A description of the selection process, which must include provisions to safeguard against opportunities for abuse and to ensure objective decision-making procedures.

Recommended Nomination and Selection Process

In order to ensure a fair and objective award and recognition program, agencies should establish a detailed nomination and selection process. Agencies should also select a program coordinator to be the point of contact for their award and recognition program. The following is the recommended nomination process:

- Complete a nomination form and attach supporting documentation.
- Forward the nomination form to the agency program coordinator.
- The nomination will be reviewed for completeness by the coordinator. Incomplete nomination forms will be returned to the nominator for complete information.
- Nominations will then be forwarded to the selection committee for review.

Agencies should appoint a selection committee to review nominations and determine the nominees to recognize. The selection process must include provisions to safeguard against opportunities for abuse and to ensure objective decision-making procedures in agency award programs.

The selection committee should then forward recommendations for nominations that the selection committee deems appropriate to receive an award to the agency head for final approval. Such recommendations should include the type and amount of award that the selection committee deems appropriate.

Reporting

At the end of each fiscal year, agencies must provide a report to the Department of Administration identifying each nonmonetary award given. The report must at least include the following: recipient name, value of the award, the award category and the date awarded. In addition, at the end of each fiscal year, the Department of Administration will produce reports on monetary awards given.