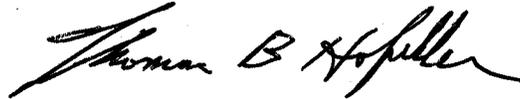


For: FSA Employees

FY 2008 FSA Awards Program

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



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.

In 2005, FSA moved from a 2-tier (Pass/Fail) performance appraisal system to a 5-tier performance appraisal system. The new 5-tier performance appraisal system makes meaningful distinctions in employee performance. This was just the first step. Early in 2007, FSA assembled a cross-agency task force to develop an improved awards policy that would not only meet all OPM requirements, but would also be appropriate for FSA. The task force reviewed various facets of employee recognition and many other agencies' programs as part of that policy development.

This new awards policy provides supervisors with the tools to recognize the workforce fairly and equitably for the level of performance being delivered. There is now a direct correlation between an employee's performance and awards. This policy provides for a standardized method for granting and distributing rating based awards. Further, by making the awards system transparent, employees can have an insight as to how they can achieve a higher standard of performance. This new policy also provides for a revitalization of the Quality Step Increase (QSI), offering supervisors another recognition option.

Disposal Date	Distribution
December 1, 2008	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

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1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice provides the FY 2008 FSA policy on the following:

- Rating Based Awards
- Superior Accomplishment Awards.

C Authorities

The following legal authorities govern employee recognition programs:

- Chapter 45 of 5 U.S.C. and 5 CFR Part 451 provide the authority to establish employee recognition programs
- Section 201 of the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (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 QSI's.

D Coverage

The FSA 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 or by OPM regulation.

E Effective Date

The FY 2008 FSA awards policy was effective October 1, 2007.

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2 Allocating Award Funds

A Award Funds

Award funds will be allocated to the Deputy Administrators and States on a **per capita** basis. Each Deputy Administrator and State (Federal and non-Federal) award allocation will be divided as follows:

- 75 percent of the allocation for Rating Based Awards
- 25 percent of the allocation for Superior Accomplishment Awards.

Funds for Rating Based Awards will be made available as soon as practical after FSA receives its FY 2008 budget. These funds are to be used to recognize employees whose Rating of Record is “Outstanding” or “Superior” for FY 2007.

Funds for Superior Accomplishment Awards will be made available in the second quarter (January through March) of FY 2008. These funds are to be used to award employees for their **short-term** accomplishments or contributions using Extra Effort and Spot Cash Awards.

3 Rating Based Awards

A General

A Rating Based Award is an award based on the employee’s performance accomplishments over the course of the rating cycle, as documented on the employee’s Rating of Record. The award may be in the form of 1 of the following:

- QSI
- lump-sum cash
- lump-sum cash and time off.

The value of a cash or cash/time off award for an employee rated “Outstanding” must be 3 times that of a cash or cash/time off award for an employee rated “Superior”. All Award Pools must adhere to this 3:1 ratio when granting Rating Based Awards.

B Eligibility

All FSA employees (Federal and non-Federal) with a Rating of Record of “Outstanding” or “Superior” are eligible for a Rating Based Award. All employees with a Rating of Record of “Outstanding” are eligible for a QSI. Employees rated “Fully Successful” or below are **not** eligible for Rating Based Awards.

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3 Rating Based Awards (Continued)

C Award Pools

For Rating Based Award purposes, FSA funds will be divided into Award Pools, each of which will be given a Rating Based Award budget. The Award Pools are as follows:

- Office of the Administrator (immediate Office of the Administrator and staff offices reporting to the Administrator)
- Farm Programs
- Farm Loan Programs
- Commodity Operations
- Field Operations, excluding State and County Offices
- Management
- each State Office.

Notes: Each State Office, including Puerto Rico, will have 2 Award Pools – 1 for Federal (GS) employees and 1 for non-Federal (CO) employees.

The U.S. Virgin Islands will be included with the Florida Award Pools.

Only the Office of the Administrator Award Pool may create sub-pools, to be determined by the Award Pool Executive.

D Award Pool Executive and Responsibilities

Each Award Pool will be headed by an Award Pool Executive. The Award Pool Executive will be:

- the Associate Administrator for Operations and Management for the Office of the Administrator Award Pool
- SED for each State Office Award Pool (both GS and CO)
- the Deputy Administrator for the other Award Pools.

The Award Pool Executive shall:

- select the Awards Pool Manager

3 Rating Based Awards (Continued)

D Award Pool Executive and Responsibilities (Continued)

- determine which Rating Based Awards system the Award Pool will use

Note: The options are listed in subparagraphs 5 B and 5 C and paragraph 6. Only 1 option may be selected and it **must** be applied to the entire Award Pool.

- ensure that all annual ratings are completed within 30 calendar days of the end of the rating cycle
- ensure that QSI criteria is followed
- be the approving official for QSI awards.

E Award Pool Manager Responsibilities

The Award Pool Manager shall:

- ensure that the Awards Pool includes all eligible employees
- calculate award amounts
- ensure that consistency is applied throughout the Awards Pool
- notify supervisors of their employee's award amounts
- ensure that all allocated awards money is used
- ensure that spending does not exceed allocated awards money
- provide the Servicing Personnel Office (SPO) with a list of awards granted, by name and amount.

F Supervisor Responsibilities

The supervisor (rating and reviewing officials) shall:

- review the employee's work and reward noteworthy accomplishments and contributions
- complete the annual appraisal (Rating of Record) for each employee within 30 calendar days of the end of the rating cycle
- consider employees rated "Outstanding" and "Superior" for recognition
- ensure that recognition documentation for awards is processed.

3 Rating Based Awards (Continued)

G Types of Rating Based Awards

Employees may receive **1** of the following types/combinations of awards in recognition of the performance throughout the rating period:

- QSI
- Cash Award (lump-sum) only
- Cash Award (lump-sum) and Time-Off Award in combination.

H Prorating Award Amounts

Supervisors shall prorate Rating Based Awards for either of the following:

- new employees with less than 1 year of service with FSA
- all part-time employees.

Award amounts should be prorated depending on the numbers of months the employee has been with FSA.

Example 1 for Full-Time Employee:

The employee starts working and is put on a Performance Plan on February 1, 2008. Therefore, the employee has been on the rolls for 8 months by the end of the rating period (September 30, 2008). The award amount is \$1,789.

$$\frac{8 \text{ months}}{12 \text{ months}} = 2/3 \text{ (or .66666)} \quad \$1,789 \times .66666 = \$1,192$$

The prorated award amount is \$1,192 (round to the nearest dollar).

Example 2 for Part-Time Employee:

The employee works approximately 2½ days per week. The part-time employee's calculation must be based on the actual hours worked. During the rating period, the employee worked 1,080 hours. The award amount is \$1,789.

$$\frac{1,080}{2,087 \text{ annual hours}} = 0.5174892 \quad \$1,789 \times 0.5174892 = \$926$$

The prorated award amount is \$926 (round to the nearest dollar).

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4 QSI

A Overview

QSI is a faster-than-normal Within Grade Increase used to reward employees at any GS or CO grade level who receive a Rating of Record of “Outstanding”. This award is earned by employees who have far exceeded job expectations and their performance is expected to continue into the future.

B Allocation

QSI's are handled separately from the Cash Award allocation. Each Award Pool may give a number of QSI's up to 1½ percent of the total number of ratings given that year. Fractions of 0.5 or greater shall be rounded up; those of less than 0.5 shall be rounded down.

Example: An Award Pool gives 210 ratings. 1½ percent of 210 = 3.15. A maximum of three 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.

The Award Pool Executive will make all decisions concerning QSI's.

The QSI value is **no longer** deducted from the Cash Award allocation.

C Criteria

QSI is the highest Rating Based Award that an employee can earn. FSA has established stringent criteria for QSI's to maintain the integrity of the award. 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.

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4 QSI (Continued)

D Employees at Step 10

Employees at Step 10 of their grade who are selected by the Award Pool Executive for QSI, which will be of no value to them because they are at Step 10, will be given a Cash Award that is equivalent in value to QSI they should have received. The QSI cash value will be the difference between Step 9 and Step 10 of the employee's grade.

The cash value of the QSI award will not reduce or impact the Rating Based Award Pool allocation (subparagraph 3 A); however, it will count against the 1½ percent QSI Award Pool (subparagraph B).

E Effective Date

QSI's will be made effective the first day of the pay period **after** receipt in SPO. The effective date may be delayed up to 4 pay periods 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 or Time-Off Award.

5 Cash Award Only Option

A Overview

When giving a Cash Award only, determining the individual award amounts may be accomplished by using option 1 or 2 in subparagraph B or C.

B Option 1 - Award Amount Based on Employee Salaries

FSA has developed a spreadsheet containing a formula that:

- provides consistency throughout the Program Area/State
- shows distinctions based on levels of performance
- is based on the employee's Annual Base Pay. In this case, Annual Base Pay is considered to be GS Pay plus Locality Pay.

The spreadsheet can be found at

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/hrdapp?area=home&subject=erpm&topic=emr>.

An example of the spreadsheet and the steps the spreadsheet uses for determining the Cash Award amount are in Exhibit 1.

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5 Cash Award Only Option (Continued)

C Option 2 - Award Amount Based on “Share” Concept

The following are steps taken to calculate the award amount.

Step	Action
1	Determine the aggregate number of employees rated “Outstanding”. Note: Do not include those employees rated “Outstanding” who received QSI.
2	Multiply the number in step 1 by 3.
3	Determine the aggregate number of employees rated “Superior”.
4	Add the aggregate amounts from steps 2 and 3 together. This is the number of “pieces” the awards budget must be divided into.
5	Divide awards budget by the number from step 4. This is the value of 1 “share”. Round the value to the nearest dollar.
6	To determine the Cash Award for employees rated “Outstanding”, multiply the “share” value from step 5 by 3.
7	To determine the Cash Award for employees rated “Superior”, take the “share” value from step 5.

The following is an example of these calculations.

Example: Division “A” has an awards budget of \$19,551, with 14 employees who were rated “Outstanding” and 28 employees who were rated “Superior”.

Step	Action
1	14 “Outstandings”
2	$14 \times 3 = 42$
3	28 “Superiors”
4	$42 + 28 = 70$
5	$\$19,551 \div 70 = \279.30 Note: Round to \$279.
6	$\$279 \times 3 = \837 Note: This is the amount that employees who were rated “Outstanding” will receive.
7	\$279 Note: This is the amount that employees who were rated “Superior” will receive.

D Effective Date

The Cash Award will be made effective the first day of the pay period **after** receipt in SPO.

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5 Cash Award Only Option (Continued)

E Cash Award Limits

An employee's Cash Award based on a Rating of Record may **not** exceed \$5,000. If an employee's Cash Award calculation exceeds \$5,000, the employee will be awarded the \$5,000 and the excess funds will be transferred to the Award Pool's Superior Accomplishment Awards funds. This money may be used immediately for Superior Accomplishment Awards.

6 Cash Award and Time-Off Award in Combination Option

A Cash Award and Time-Off Award

FSA recognizes time off is a valuable tool in rewarding the workforce. Time off given along with cash also enhances what in certain circumstances might be a minimal Cash Award amount.

Cash Awards given under paragraph 5 may be enhanced by providing a Time-Off Award along with the cash. Up to 40 hours of time off may be given. However, approving officials must ensure that meaningful distinctions are made when doing this. Employees rated "Outstanding" must receive 3 times the amount of time off as those rated "Superior". This ratio mirrors that of the cash given under paragraph 5.

Note: Although an employee may only receive 40 hours for a single Time-Off Award, a full-time employee may be granted 80 hours of time off total during a leave year. A part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty may be granted up to the average number of hours worked in a pay period or the employee's scheduled tour of duty. These limits cover time off given as both Rating Based and Superior Accomplishment Awards.

7 Superior Accomplishment Awards

A General

A Superior Accomplishment Award is **not** a rating based award; it is an award given based on an employee's accomplishments or contributions on a **short-term** assignment, project, or detail. Superior Accomplishment Awards can be in the form of an Extra Effort Award, a Spot Award, or a Time-Off Award.

- An **Extra Effort Award** is a monetary award that recognizes an individual or group who makes a **significant** 1-time contribution (special project, assignment, detail) to FSA's mission or goals. The award amount 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.

7 Superior Accomplishment Awards (Continued)

A General (Continued)

- A **Spot Award** is a monetary award 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. Spot Awards will be issued immediately and taxes will be added to the award amount. For budgetary purposes, supervisors should deduct the award amount plus taxes (for this, add 60 percent to the award amount) from their award budget.

Example: \$500 award + \$300 taxes = \$800 amount to be deducted from awards budget

- A **Time-Off Award** is an award granted to employees in the form of time off from work without loss of pay or charge to leave. A full-time employee may be granted up to 80 hours of time off total during a leave year. A part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty may be granted up to the average number of hours worked in a pay period or the employee's scheduled tour of duty. A full-time employee may **not** be granted more than 40 hours for a single achievement. This figure should be prorated for a part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty. These limits cover time off given as both Rating Based and Superior Accomplishment Awards.

B Award Amounts

Award amounts should be determined based on the benefits scales in Exhibit 2.

C Time-Off Award Given Along With Cash Award

To stretch limited budgets, time off may be given along with Superior Accomplishment Cash Awards. Up to 40 hours of time off may be given. However, approving officials must ensure that meaningful distinctions are made when doing this.

Note: A full-time employee may be granted up to 80 hours of time off total during a leave year. A part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty may be granted up to the average number of hours worked in a pay period or the employee's scheduled tour of duty. These limits cover time off given as both Rating Based and Superior Accomplishment Awards.

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7 Superior Accomplishment Awards (Continued)

D Justification

Superior Accomplishment Awards require written justification regardless of the award amount. The written justification must accompany the award recommendation and describe the accomplishments or contributions the employee performed earning the award. See Exhibit 3 for an example of an award justification.

E “Current Practices

If an office currently has a system in place for handling Superior Accomplishment Awards, such as a review committee, this may be kept as long as the provisions of the system comply with this notice.

8 Processing Awards Using EmpowHR

A Recommending Individual Responsibilities

Anyone may be the recommending individual for a Superior Accomplishment 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 in EmpowHR.	
2	IF the recommendation is by a...	THEN forward award recommendation...
	nonsupervisor	to the supervisor of the person making the recommendation.
	supervisor and recommended amount is within their approval authority (up to \$500 in cash, up to 10 hours time off)	directly to SPO for processing.
	supervisor and recommended amount exceeds their approval authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">to the supervisor’s supervisor for approvalto 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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8 Processing Awards 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.

Upon 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 show up on their Employee Personal Page once processed 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 (either 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, if modified• forward the award recommendation to SPO for processing• notify (either 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.

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9 Processing Awards Not Using EmpowHR

A Recommending Individual Responsibilities

Anyone may be the recommending individual for a Superior Accomplishment 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 a...	THEN...
	Superior Accomplishment Award	prepare a written justification.
	Rating Based Award	use the write-up accompanying the rating.
3	Sign the recommendation.	
4	Forward the award recommendation 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 the award recommendation • forward the award recommendation to the approving official.
modifies and approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note changes, if modified • sign the award recommendation • forward the award recommendation to the approving official.
disapproves the recommendation	attach a note to the recommendation and return to the recommending individual.

Upon 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 show up on their Employee Personal Page once processed by SPO.

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9 Processing Awards 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 the award recommendation• 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, if modified• sign the award recommendation• forward the award recommendation to SPO• notify the recipient's supervisor and recommending individual of action.
disapproves the recommendation	attach a note to the recommendation, stating the reason for disapproval, and return to the recipient's supervisor for forwarding to the recommending individual.

10 Additional Information

A Keepsakes and Momentos

OPM regulations require agencies to make distinctions in Rating Based Award amounts based on levels of performance. Purchasing all employees a polo shirt, jacket, or other momento is awarding all employees, the high performers and low performers, the same and does not make distinctions based on level of performances. This practice does **not** meet OPM requirements.

Note: Keepsakes and momentos shall **not** be used to recognize employee performance for either rating based or superior accomplishment performance.

FSA has designed a separate program to recognize employees for their dedicated service to USDA. Therefore, award funds shall **not** be used for recognizing employee's longevity or purchasing all employee momentos.

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10 Additional Information (Continued)

B 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 type of award (Rating Based or Superior Accomplishment), along with such information 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” summary 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”, which would include both QSI’s and cash or cash/time-off awards. In this example, do **not** disclose the type of awards by the recipients’ names.

C Contacts

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

- Stephanie S. Brown at 202-401-0687 or **StephanieSybil.Brown@wdc.usda.gov**
- Angela Jackson at 202-401-0682 or **angela.jackson@wdc.usda.gov**.

If there are questions about the processing of award actions, contact the appropriate SPO as indicated in the following table.

IF the supervisor is located in...	THEN contact...
National Office	HRD – EPB-AWARD ATTN: Stephanie S. Brown STOP 0595 1400 Independence Ave., SW Washington, DC 20250-0595 Phone: 202-401-0694 FAX: 202-205-9140.
KCCO, Kansas City Human Resources Office (KCHRO), or Financial Services Center	KCHRO, ELRS ATTN: Dana Candler STOP 8398 6501 Beacon Drive Kansas City, MO 64133 Phone: 816-926-6117 FAX: 816-926-6156.

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10 Additional Information (Continued)

C Contacts (Continued)

IF the supervisor is located in...	THEN contact...
APFO or Kansas City Administrative Services Branch, MSD	KCHRO, ELRS ATTN: Patty Gepford STOP 8398 6501 Beacon Drive Kansas City, MO 64133 Phone: 816-926-6259 FAX: 816-926-6156.
KC-ITSD	KCHRO, ELRS ATTN: Anne Wheeler STOP 8398 6501 Beacon Drive Kansas City, MO 64133 Phone: 816-926-6184 FAX: 816-926-6156.
State and County Offices	State Office, Administrative Division.

Example of the Spreadsheet

	Rating	Annual Salary=GS plus Locality Pay	QSI Value/Outstanding (See OPM base pay table and locate WGI value)	\$8600 Budget Award Amt Multiplied by Percentage of base pay
4	Employee 1	Superior	\$58,178	\$580.28
5	Employee 2	Superior	\$79,115	\$789.10
6	Employee 3	Superior	\$93,063	\$926.22
7	Employee 4	Superior	\$20,401	\$203.48
8	Employee 5	Superior	\$20,401	\$203.48
9	Employee 6	Superior	\$20,401	\$203.48
10	Employee 7	Superior	\$20,401	\$203.48
11	Employee 8	Superior	\$20,401	\$203.48
12	Employee 9	Superior	\$20,401	\$203.48
13	Employee 10	Superior	\$20,401	\$203.48
14	Employee 11	Superior	\$20,401	\$203.48
15	(Total Superior - rated employees salary)		\$393,564	
16	Employee 12	Outstanding	\$78,111	\$2,232.00
17	Employee 13 (QSI)	Outstanding	\$0	
18	Employee 14	Outstanding	\$78,111	\$2,232.00
19	(total Outstanding - H5-rated employees salary x3)		\$156,222	\$468,666
20	Total Salary			\$862,230
21	Percentage of Base Pay			0.009974137
22				\$8,389.44

The following are steps taken to calculate the award amount.

Step	Action
1	Determine the aggregate annual Base Pay as of September 30th of all “Outstanding” ratings. Definition: $Aggregate\ Annual\ Base\ Pay = Salary + Locality\ Pay$ Note: Do not include those employees rated “Outstanding” who received QSI.
2	Multiply the number in step 1 by 3.
3	Determine the aggregate annual Base Pay of all employees with “Superior” ratings.
4	Add the aggregate amounts from steps 2 and 3 together.
5	Divide awards budget by the number from step 4. This is the “awards percentage”.
6	For each employee rated “Outstanding”, multiply their base pay by the “awards percentage” from step 5.
7	Multiply the number from step 6 by 3. This is the award amount for employees rated “Outstanding”.
8	For each employee rated “Superior”, multiply their base pay by the “awards percentage” from step 5. This is the award amount for employees rated “Superior”.

Superior Accomplishment Award Benefits Scales

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, or several regional areas or an entire agency.	Impacts the public interest, or more than 1 agency or the entire Department.
Small/Moderate	\$50 - \$325	\$325 - \$650	\$650 - \$1,300
Moderate/Substantial	\$325 - \$650	\$650 - \$1,300	\$1,300 - \$3,150
Substantial/Extended	\$1,000 - \$2,500	\$2,500 - \$5,500	\$5,500 - \$10,000 ^{1/}

^{1/} Any award over \$5,500 requires the Secretary’s approval.

Measurable Benefits Scale	
Benefit	Award
Up to \$10,000	10 percent of the benefits
\$10,001 - \$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.

Time-Off Scale	
Value of the Employee’s Contribution	Hours To Be Awarded
Small/Moderate - Contributions that helped to ease a backlog or completion of a special project that benefited primarily the employee’s home office.	1 - 10 hours
Moderate/Substantial - Contributions that helped an entire division, region, or other large geographic area.	11 - 40 hours

Note: These tables are **not** to be used in calculating Rating Based Awards.

Example of Award Justification

Note: All awards (regardless of amount, unless otherwise specified in a Union Agreement) require a separate written justification.

The following is a step-by-step outline that describes the sections and verbage to justify an award:

“During the period of (MMDDYYYY to MMDDYYY) (EMPLOYEE/GROUP NAME)
(description of accomplishment-list the duties and accomplishment the employee has done to deserve this award).

This exceeded expectations as identified in the current performance plan by:

- 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:

- 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/hours).”