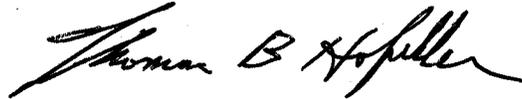


For: FSA Employees

**FY 2009 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 FY 2008, FSA implemented a new program that met OPM’s standards. Overall, the program was a success, but there was room for improvement. Based on lessons learned, FY 2009’s awards policy is an improved version. FY 2009 changes include the following:

- the Rating Based Award amount ceilings have been reduced from \$5,000 to \$3,200
- Outstanding to Superior ratio has been reduced from 3:1 to 2:1.

This awards policy provides supervisors with the tools to recognize the workforce fairly and equitably for the level of performance being delivered. 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 the FY 2009 FSA policy on the following:

- Rating Based Awards
- Superior Accomplishment Awards.

<b>Disposal Date</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
November 1, 2009	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

## Notice PM-2685

### 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 (includes SED's).

#### E Effective Date

The FY 2009 FSA awards policy is effective October 1, 2008.

## 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.

Rating Based Awards funds are to be used to recognize employees whose Rating of Record is “Outstanding” or “Superior” for FY 2008.

Funds for Superior Accomplishment Awards will be issued once FSA receives its FY 2009 budget and after a review of available funds has been conducted. Superior Accomplishment Awards 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 Information

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

### B Outstanding-Superior Ratio

The value of a Cash or Cash/Time Off Award for an employee rated “Superior” **must** be one-half the amount of the Cash or Cash/Time Off Award for an employee rated “Outstanding”. All Award Pools **must** adhere to this 2:1 ratio when granting Rating Based Awards. When calculating this ratio, use the amounts employees rated “Outstanding” actually received.

**Example:** If the employee’s award would have been \$6,000, but was reduced to \$3,200 because of the limitations in subparagraph 5 B, use \$3,200 for the 2:1 ratio calculations.

### C Types of Rating Based Awards

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

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

## Notice PM-2685

### 3 Rating Based Awards (Continued)

#### D 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 QSI. Employees rated “Fully Successful” or below are **not** eligible for Rating Based Awards.

#### E Award Pools

For Rating Based Award purposes, FSA funds will be divided into Award Pools, each Award Pool 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)
- DAFP
- DAFLP
- DACO
- DAFO, **excluding** State and County Offices
- DAM
- 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 Federal employees will be included with the Florida Federal Award Pool. U.S. Virgin Islands non-Federal employees will have their own, separate Pool.

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

### 3 Rating Based Awards (Continued)

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

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

- ensure that all annual ratings are completed by November 30
- ensure that QSI criteria is followed
- be the approving official for QSI awards.

#### G 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 (or as much as possible) 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.

## Notice PM-2685

### 3 Rating Based Awards (Continued)

#### H Supervisor Responsibilities

The supervisor (rating and reviewing officials) shall:

- review the employee's work and reward noteworthy accomplishments and contributions
- complete the annual AD-435 (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 Rating Based Awards is processed.

#### I 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 worked for FSA.

**Example 1 for Full-Time Employee:** The employee started working and was put on a Performance Plan 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.

8 months divided by 12 months = 0.66666 (2/3 Year)

$\$1,789 \times 0.66666 = \$1,192.65$  (round to the nearest dollar).

The prorated award amount is **\$1,193**.

**Example 2 for Part-Time Employee:** The employee worked approximately 20 hours 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.

1,080 hours divided by 2,087 work hours per year = 0.5174892 (about 1/2 Year)

$\$1,789 \times 0.5174892 = \$925.79$  (round to the nearest dollar).

The prorated award amount is **\$926**.

## Notice PM-2685

### 4 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 who receive a Rating of Record of "Outstanding". Receiving QSI's will **not** effect 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.

#### B Allocation

QSI's are handled separately from the Cash Award allocation. Each Award Pool may give a number of QSI's up to 1 ½ percent of the total number of Ratings of Record given that year. 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. 1 ½ 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 about QSI's.

The QSI value shall **not** be deducted from the Cash Award allocation.

#### C Criteria

QSI's are the highest Rating Based Award that an employee can earn. FSA has established stringent criterion 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.

## Notice PM-2685

### 4 QSI's (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 the employee 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
- will **not** reduce or impact the Rating Based Award Pool allocation (subparagraph 3 A); however, it will count against the 1 ½ percent QSI Award Pool (subparagraph B).

**Note:** If an employee at Step 10 receiving a Cash Award instead of QSI results in the employee receiving a smaller award than other employees in the same location receiving Cash Awards for "Outstanding" ratings, the Step 10 employee shall be placed in the Rating Based Awards Pool and receive a Cash Award equivalent in amount with everyone else in the Award Pool with an "Outstanding" rating is to receive. In this case, the Cash Award does **not** count against the 1 ½ percent QSI Award Pool and this "slot" can be used for another employee.

#### E Effective Date

QSI's will be made effective the first day of the pay period 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 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.

## Notice PM-2685

### 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 (subparagraph C) or option 2 (subparagraph D).

#### B Cash Award Limits

An employee's Cash Award based on a Rating of Record may **not** exceed \$3,200. If an employee's Cash Award calculation exceeds \$3,200, the employee will be awarded the \$3,200 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.

**Note:** See the additional restriction on award amounts if using Option 1 (subparagraph C).

#### C 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; Annual Base Pay is considered to be GS or CO Pay plus Locality Pay.

To obtain the sample spreadsheet, go to

**<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/hrdapp?area=home&subject=erpm&topic=emr>** and under Sample Awards Spreadsheet, CLICK "Sample".

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

**Note:** If using Option 1, award amounts **cannot** exceed the value of QSI at the employee's grade. See Exhibit 1 for QSI amounts at each grade.

**Notice PM-2685**

**5 Cash Award Only Option (Continued)**

**D Option 2 - Award Amount Based on “Share” Concept**

The following are steps taken to calculate the Cash Award amount.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Determine the total number of employees rated “Outstanding”.  <b>Note:</b> Do <b>not</b> include employees rated “Outstanding” who received QSI.
2	Multiply the number in step 1 by 2.
3	Determine the total number of employees rated “Superior”.
4	Add the amounts from steps 2 and 3 together.
5	Divide Award Pool 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Superior”, take the “share” value from step 5</li> <li>• “Outstanding”, multiply the “share” value from step 5 by 2.</li> </ul>

**Example:** Division “A” has a Cash Award budget of \$19,551, with:

- 14 employees rated “Outstanding”
- 28 employees rated “Superior”.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Total employees rated “Outstanding” is 14.
2	$14 \times 2 = 28$
3	Total employees rated “Superiors” is 28.
4	$28 + 28 = 56$
5	$\$19,551 \div 56 = \$349.125$ (round to nearest whole dollar).  Value of 1 “share” is \$349.
6	Cash Award for employees rated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Superior” is \$349</li> <li>• “Outstanding” is <math>2 \times \\$349 = \\$698</math>.</li> </ul>

**E Effective Date**

Cash Awards will be made effective the first day of the pay period **after** written notification is received in SPO that it 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.

## 6 Cash Award and Time Off Award in Combination Option

### A General Information

FSA recognizes that 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.

### B Cash Award and Time Off Award

Cash Awards given under paragraph 5 may be enhanced by providing a Time Off Award along with the Cash Award. Up to 40 hours of time off may be given. However, approving officials **must** ensure that meaningful distinctions are made when giving Time Off Awards. Employees rated “Outstanding” **must** receive 2 times the amount of time off as employees rated “Superior”. This ratio mirrors the Cash Award ratio in paragraph 5.

**Note:** Although employees may only receive 40 hours for each Time Off Award, full-time employees may be granted a total of 80 hours as Time Off Awards during a leave year. Part-time employees or employees 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. Total Time Off Award limits include time off given as both Rating Based and Superior Accomplishment Awards.

### C Cash Award and Time Off Award in State Offices

The Pool Executive could mitigate differences in award amounts, for the same rating, between the State’s 2 award pools, by adding time-off awards to the lesser award pool recipients’ monetary award levels. This would result in similar award values for both groups.

**Example:** If a superior rating results in different award values for the GS and CO award pools within the State (that is, \$1000 and \$500) the Pool Executive could mitigate some of the difference by adding a time-off award to the lesser award value (that is, add 16 hours to the \$500 award to bring the award value closer to the \$1000).

## 7 Superior Accomplishment Awards

### A General

Superior Accomplishment Awards are **not** Rating Based Awards; Superior Accomplishment Awards are given based on employee accomplishments or contributions on a **short-term** assignment, project, or detail. Superior Accomplishment Awards can be in the form of Extra Effort Awards, Spot Awards, or Time Off Awards.

- **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.

7 Superior Accomplishment Awards (Continued)

A General (Continued)

- **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. Spot Awards will be issued immediately and taxes will be included. For budgetary purposes, supervisors should deduct from their Superior Accomplishment 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 Award budget.

- **Time Off Awards** are awards 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 total during a leave year. Part-time employees or employees with uncommon tours 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. 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 giving Time Off Awards.

**Note:** Full-time employees may be granted up to 80 hours of time off total during a leave year. Part-time employees or employees with uncommon tours 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. Time Off Award limits cover time off given as both Rating Based and Superior Accomplishment Awards.

7 **Superior Accomplishment Awards (Continued)**

**D Justification**

Superior Accomplishment Awards **require** written justification regardless of the award amount. Written justification **must**:

- accompany the award recommendation
- describe the accomplishments or contributions the employee performed
- follow the format in Exhibit 3
- be clear to the approving official where on the Nonmeasurable Benefits Scale (Exhibit 2) the award falls.

**E Current Practices**

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

**F Time Off Awards and Transfer Between CO and GS**

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

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

**8 Processing Awards Using EmpowHR**

**A Recommending Individual Responsibilities**

Anyone may be the recommending individual for a Superior Accomplishment Award. Recommending individuals using EmpowHR shall take the following steps to nominate an employee for an award (see subparagraph 9 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	<b>IF the recommendation is by a...</b> nonsupervisor	<b>THEN forward award recommendation...</b> to recommending individual’s supervisor.
	supervisor and recommended amount is within supervisor’s approval authority (up to \$500 in cash, up to 10 hours time off)	directly to SPO for processing.
	supervisor and recommended amount exceeds supervisor’s approval authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to the supervisor’s supervisor for approval</li> <li>• to SPO for processing after approval.</li> </ul>
<b>Note:</b> In <b>all</b> cases, <b>before</b> creating the award recommendation, the recommending individual <b>must</b> notify the recipient’s supervisor of the award recommendation for concurrence.		

**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.

**Notice PM-2685**

**8 Processing Awards Using EmpowHR (Continued)**

**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.

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

**Note:** The award amount will be deducted from Approving Official's award allotment.

**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.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>	
1	Prepare the award recommendation on AD-287-2.	
2	<b>IF recommending for a...</b>	<b>THEN...</b>
	Superior Accomplishment Award	prepare a written justification.
	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.	

**Notice PM-2685**

**9 Processing Awards Not Using EmpowHR (Continued)**

**B Recipient's Supervisor**

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

<b>IF recipient's supervisor...</b>	<b>THEN...</b>
approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sign AD-287-2</li><li>• forward the award recommendation to the approving official.</li></ul>
modifies and approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• note changes</li><li>• sign AD-287-2</li><li>• forward the award recommendation to the approving official.</li></ul>
disapproves the recommendation	attach a note to AD-287-2 (note can be done by e-mail) 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.

Notice PM-2685

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"><li>• sign AD-287-2</li><li>• forward the award recommendation to SPO</li><li>• notify the recipient's supervisor and recommending individual of action.</li></ul>
modifies and approves the recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• note changes</li><li>• sign AD-287-2</li><li>• forward the award recommendation to SPO</li><li>• notify the recipient's supervisor and recommending individual of action.</li></ul>
disapproves the recommendation	attach a note to AD-287-2 (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.

10 Additional Information

A Purchasing Mementos for Employees

It is recognized that many employees value a memento above other kinds of recognition, including a Cash Award or Time Off Award. With this in mind, offices may spend up to 15 percent of their Superior Accomplishment 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, Employee Programs Branch, Attn: Stephanie Sybil Brown**.

Purchasing **all** employees a polo shirt, jacket, or other memento 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.

## 10 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 Superior Accomplishment 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 Department 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 the 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 (whether it is Rating Based or Superior Accomplishment), 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" 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 specific type of awards (QSI, Performance Bonus, etc.) by the recipients' names.

**Notice PM-2685**

**10 Additional Information (Continued)**

**E Contacts**

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

- Stephanie Sybil Brown at 202-401-0687 or [stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov)
- Angela Jackson at 202-401-0682 or [angela.jackson@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:angela.jackson@wdc.usda.gov).

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

<b>IF the supervisor is located in...</b>	<b>THEN contact...</b>
Washington, DC	HRD, EPB - AWARD ATTN: Stephanie Sybil Brown STOP 0595 1400 INDEPENDENCE AVE SW WASHINGTON DC 20250-0595 Phone: 202-401-0694 FAX: 202-205-9140.
Kansas City, St. Louis, or APFO	HRD, ELRS ATTN: Dana Candler or Patty Gepford BEACON FACILITY, MAIL STOP 8398 9240 TROOST AVE KANSAS CITY MO 64131-3055 Phone: 816-926-6643 FAX: 816-926-6156.
State and County Offices	State Office, Administrative Division.

Calculating Award Amounts

The following is an example of the Cash Award Example Worksheet.

EXAMPLE WORKSHEET				
Edited 10-27-2008			Awards Allotment =	\$9,700.00
CASH AWARD				
	Rating	Annual Salary=GS plus Locality Pay		Percentage of Base Pay Factor x Annual Salary
Employee 1	Superior	\$58,178		\$799.00
Employee 2	Superior	\$79,115		\$1,087.00
Employee 3	Superior	\$93,063		\$1,279.00
Employee 4	Superior	\$20,401		\$280.00
Employee 5	Superior	\$20,401		\$280.00
Employee 6	Superior	\$20,401		\$280.00
Employee 7	Superior	\$20,401		\$280.00
Employee 8	Superior	\$20,401		\$280.00
Employee 9	Superior	\$20,401		\$280.00
Employee 10	Superior	\$20,401		\$280.00
Employee 11	Superior	\$20,401		\$280.00
(Total Superior - rated employees salary)		\$393,564		
Employee 12	Outstanding	\$78,111		\$2,146.00
*Employee 13 (QSI)	Outstanding	\$0		\$0.00
Employee 14	Outstanding	\$78,111		\$2,146.00
(total Outstanding - H5-rated employees salary x2)		\$156,222		
Total Salary			\$312,444	\$706,008
Percentage of Base Pay			0.013739221	\$9,697.00
				\$3.00

Grade	2008 QSI Value
GS 1	Call HRD for Guidance
GS 2	Call HRD for Guidance
GS 3	697
GS 4	783
GS 5	875
GS 6	976
GS 7	1084
GS 8	1201
GS 9	1327
GS 10	1461
GS 11	1605
GS 12	1924
GS 13	2288
GS 14	2703
GS 15	3180

**Step 1-** Enter aggregate annual Base Pay for employees rated Superior. C 5 thru C 15

**Step 2-** Total salary for employees rated Superior.

**Step 5-** Multiple the annual salary for employees rated Outstanding by 2

**Step 3-** Enter aggregate annual base pay for employees rated Outstanding. C17 thru C19  
**Note** that the QSI is zeroed out.

**Step 4-** Total salary for employees rated Outstanding.

**Step 7-** Total awards budget (F2) divided by total salary amount in E21 (E21 includes Outstanding of \$312,444 + Superior of \$393,564):  
 $\$9700 / \$706,008 = 0.013739221$

**Step 12-** Reduce any award that exceeds the QSI value to the QSI value. Ensure the 2:1 Outstanding to Superior ratio is maintained for employees rated Superior who share the same grade as those rated Outstanding.  
  
This table expires on 12/31/08. After 1/1/09 please visit [www.OPM.gov](http://www.OPM.gov) (for 2009 QSI values) under the General Schedule (Base) Table. The "Within Grade Amounts" are used to determine the QSI values.

**Step 11-** Amount of the Rating Based awards budget left over after awards distributed. Any excess amount should be transferred to the Superior Accomplishment Awards Budget.  
(F2 minus F23 = F24)

**Calculating Award Amounts (Continued)**

The following are steps to be taken to calculate award amounts.

Step	Action
1	Determine the aggregate annual Base Pay as of September 30th of all “Outstanding” ratings.  <b>Notes:</b> Salary + Locality Pay = <b>Aggregate Annual Base Pay</b>  Do <b>not</b> include those employees rated “Outstanding” who received QSI.
2	Multiply the number in step 1 by 2.
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 2. 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”.  <b>Notes:</b> Award amounts <b>cannot</b> exceed the value of a QSI at the employee’s grade.  The following table reflects 2008 QSI amounts for each grade. If processing the award in 2009, see OPM’s web site at: <a href="http://www.opm.gov/">http://www.opm.gov/</a> for 2009 amounts.  Ensure that the <b>General Schedule (Base)</b> Table, Within Grade Amounts column is used to determine award amounts. The Locality Pay Tables shall <b>not</b> be used.

Grade	QSI Value
1	Varies
2	Varies
3	\$ 697
4	\$ 783
5	\$ 875
6	\$ 976
7	\$1,084
8	\$1,201
9	\$1,327
10	\$1,461
11	\$1,605
12	\$1,924
13	\$2,288
14	\$2,703
15	\$3,180

**Superior Accomplishment Award Benefits Scales**

The following table provides the benefits scale for Superior Accomplishment awards.

<b>Nonmeasurable Benefits Scale</b>			
<b>Value of Benefits</b>	<b>Application</b>		
	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Broad</b>	<b>General</b>
	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.
<b>Small/Moderate</b>	\$50 - \$325	\$325 - \$650	\$650 - \$1,300
<b>Moderate/Substantial</b>	\$325 - \$650	\$650 - \$1,300	\$1,300 - \$3,150
<b>Substantial/Extended</b>	\$1,000 - \$2,500	\$2,500 - \$5,500	\$5,500 - \$10,000 <b>1/</b>

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

<b>Measurable Benefits Scale</b>	
<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Award</b>
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 <b>not</b> exceed the recipient’s annual salary.

<b>Time off Scale</b>	
<b>Value of the Employee’s Contribution</b>	<b>Hours To Be Awarded</b>
<b>Small/Moderate</b> - Contributions that helped to ease a backlog or completion of a special project that benefited primarily the employee’s home office.	1 - 10 hours
<b>Moderate/Substantial</b> - 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 wording to justify an award:

**“During the period of (mmddyyyy to mmddyyyy) (Employee/Group Name) (description of accomplishment and/or 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).”