

MAINE INSTRUCTION 360-382 – EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

ME360-1. INTRODUCTION:

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Employee Recognition Program is designed to fairly and equitably recognize and reward individuals and groups for excellence in enhancement, support, and service to the Agency's mission through extra efforts leading to instances of significant one-time contributions or through consistently high levels of performance. The program acknowledges contributions that lead to the achievement of organizational, team, partner, and individual results, which contributed to the efficiency, effectiveness, and mission of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Timely recognition provides a source of motivation for continued excellence.

ME360-2. PROCESS:

TYPES OF AWARDS:

SPOT AWARD:

RECOGNITION: Recognizes employees either individually or as a group for special accomplishments outside the employee(s) normal scope of assigned duties, i.e., assisting another division by completing a significant task, acting in a higher capacity for a considerable duration, etc. This award is a one-time cash award of \$750.00 or less, recognizing a specific achievement.

PROCESSING: Spot Awards are processed in such a way that the employee receives the entire award amount. Awards must be requested using the attached Form AD- 287-2 and Instructions and should be forwarded to HR within a reasonable time of the act. Nominations must clearly outline the accomplishment for which the employee(s) is nominated and will be reviewed by the State Administrative Officer (SAO) to ensure the accomplishment(s) warrant the prescribed amount. Final approval/denial for the requested award will be given by the State Conservationist.

EXTRA EFFORT AWARD:

RECOGNITION: Recognizes employees either individually or as a group for performance above and beyond the normal call of duty within their assigned functions, i.e., processing excessive transactions within a specific timeframe, developing a more efficient process for streamlining duties, etc. This award is a one-time cash award generally for achievement(s) that requires substantial effort and significantly contributes to the mission of the agency.

PROCESSING: Extra Effort Awards are processed so that all applicable taxes are subtracted from the award amount. Awards must be requested using the attached Form AD- 287-2 and Instructions and should be forwarded to HR within a reasonable time of the act. Nominations must clearly outline the accomplishment for which the employee(s) is nominated and will be reviewed by the SAO to ensure the accomplishment(s) warrant the prescribed amount. Final approval/denial for the requested award will be given by the State Conservationist.

TIME OFF AWARD:

RECOGNITION: Recognizes employees either individually or as a group for special accomplishments or efforts above and beyond on a particular project or assignment, or for performance/commitment for regular and recurring efforts.

PROCESSING: This award is given in time off increments of one to forty hours. Awards must be requested using the attached Form AD- 287-2 form and Instructions and should be forwarded to HR within a reasonable time of the act. Nominations must clearly outline the accomplishment for which the employee(s) is nominated and will be reviewed by the SAO to ensure the accomplishment(s) warrant the prescribed amount. Final approval/denial for the requested award will be given by the State Conservationist

PERFORMANCE AWARD:

RECOGNITION: Recognizes employees for their overall performance as provided on their year-end Performance Appraisal and Summary Rating. These awards are given according to the level of performance indicated in the following increments and are reflected on the Form AD-435:

- **Meritorious Fully Successful** To be eligible, the employee must have at least one element that is in the Exceeds Fully Successful category.
- **Superior**
- **Outstanding**

PROCESSING: Supervisors and managers must print a signed Form AD-435, Performance Appraisal, which appears as the final page of the Summary Rating in EmpowHR. Awards must be requested using the attached Form AD-287-2 and Instructions, using the signed Form AD-435 as supporting documentation. The State Conservationist will review performance awards and may modify or disapprove the monetary value if necessary.

NOTE: Employees may only receive one performance award within any 52 week period.

QUALITY STEP INCREASE (QSI):

RECOGNITION: Recognizes employees for an "Outstanding" performance appraisal as provided on their Form AD-435, Performance Appraisal. This award is given as a within-grade step increase that can be requested by the manager or supervisor in lieu of a percentage based monetary award.

PROCESSING: Supervisors and managers must print a signed Form AD-435, Performance Appraisal, which appears as the final page of the Summary Rating in EmpowHR. Awards must be requested using the Form AD- 287-2 and Instructions, using the signed Form AD-435 as supporting documentation. The State Conservationist approves all QSI requests and may modify the award to a monetary value if necessary. Approval of the QSI must be obtained prior to notifying the employee. A QSI does not affect the normal waiting period for the employee's next scheduled Step increase, but it could put them into a new waiting period category (e.g. Step 4 or Step 7). Human Resources will verify that the employee is eligible for a QSI i.e., if they are not already at the Step 10 of their grade, or that they have not had another Performance Award within the past 52 weeks.

Contact. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Brian Vigue, State Administrative Officer at 207-990-9567 or email brian.vigue@me.usda.gov.