

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy regarding employee recognition and awards.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory VA procedures on employee recognition and awards. The pages in this issuance replace the corresponding page numbers in VA Handbook 5017. Revised text is contained in [brackets]. This change renames the Secretary's Equal Opportunity Awards as the Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program. This change will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5017 that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management Web site](#).
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Employee Relations and Performance Management Service (051), Office of Human Resources Management
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Handbook 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** None.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
Roger W. Baker
Assistant Secretary for
Information and Technology

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/
John U. Sepúlveda
Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and Administration

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SECRETARY'S HONOR AWARDS (CONTINUED)

Type of Award	Eligibility	Criteria	Form of Award	Due Date
Award for Valor	Any VA employee or group of VA employees.	For exhibiting great courage with voluntary risk of personal safety to prevent the loss of human life or government property. Contributions typically will be job related although non-job related acts of heroism may be considered. For those contributions representing good deeds where personal safety and welfare of employee is not threatened, a Secretary's Commendation can be considered. A commendation can also be considered more appropriate for non-work related acts of heroism.	A plaque from the Secretary. An honorarium of up to \$1,500 can also be awarded by the employee's key official.	As soon as possible after such an act or deed occurs.
Certificate of Commendation	A VA employee or group of employees. May also be granted to private citizens.	Granted for special efforts in the public interest in relation to official employment of such outstanding merit that recognition at the Secretary's level is appropriate. It may also be used at retirement or departure from VA to recognize outstanding career achievements that approach but do not meet the criteria for the Secretary's Distinguished Career Award (DCA).	Certificate of Commendation with citation signed by the Secretary.	At any time that criteria are met.
Certificate of Appreciation	A VA employee or group of employees. May also be granted to private citizens.	This is a general purpose award that may be granted to an individual VA employee, group of employees or private citizens for special contributions in the public interest that is related to official employment and is of such outstanding merit that an honor award granted at a lower organizational level would be inadequate. This award may also be granted for work-related or non-work-related acts of heroism in which the employee's life was not endangered. It may also be granted at time of retirement to recognize cumulative career achievements which approach but do not meet the standards for the Secretary's DCA. The award is a certificate with citation.	Certificate of Appreciation signed by the Secretary.	At any time to serve as an official thank you.

Nominating Procedures: VA Form 4659, along with appropriate narrative justification, must be submitted through appropriate channels and approved (or concurred in) by the organization's key official, prior to being forwarded to the Office of Human Resources Management for processing.

*Additional competitive awards, such as Olin E. Teague, Hands & Heart, [Diversity and Inclusion Excellence], etc. are announced throughout the year. Brief descriptions of such awards appear in the internal and external awards chart.

**PART IV
APPENDIX A**

Secretary's Annual [Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards]

A VA award program to recognize and highlight [the achievements made by a VA employee, manager, or team who promotes equal employment opportunity, diversity and inclusion in the VA workforce to enhance work processes, workplace quality, organizational culture, and stakeholder satisfaction. The award may be a plaque or cash award, or both].

**Executive Excellence Awards/
Senior Executives Association**

To recognize career senior executives who have made significant contributions to improving the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of the Federal Government as well as those whose performance has improved the image of the career Senior Executive Service. The awards are honorary.

Secretary's Hands and Heart Award (VA)

A program to recognize an employee in each medical facility who consistently does the most to provide emotional support, help, and guidance to patients, above and beyond the call of duty. It is emphasized that eligibility for this award encompasses the whole spectrum of personnel involved in direct patient care. The awards are honorary.

**IPMA Leading Edge Awards/
International Personnel Management Association (IPMA)**

To recognize Federal employees in the personnel administration career field for singular accomplishments, and to encourage greater achievement among all Federal employees in the personnel administration field. The awards are honorary.

Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership/The American University

To recognize career executives in the Federal Government whose Leadership has resulted in outstanding organizational achievement and who have successfully fostered the development of managers and executives for career service. The awards are honorary.

Executive of the Year Award/Federal Executive Institute Alumni Association

To recognize extraordinary achievement in executive management and leadership in Federal, state and local governments. The award is honorary.

**Donald L. Scantlebury Memorial Awards/
Joint Financial Management Improvement Program**

To recognize senior financial management executives who, through outstanding and continuous leadership in financial management, have been principally responsible for significant economies, efficiencies and improvements in Federal, state, or local government. The awards are honorary.