

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To implement provisions of the “Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014” (Public Law 113-146, dated August 7, 2014) as it relates to an aggregate awards limitation for the Department.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook sets forth mandatory 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]. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5017 that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management Web site](#). This revision establishes a Departmental annual aggregate limit of \$360,000,000 on certain awards and bonuses for fiscal years 2015 through 2024.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Employee Relations and Performance Management Service (051), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
Stephen W. Warren
Executive in Charge and Chief Information Officer
Office of Information and Technology

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

/s/
Gina S. Farrissee
Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and Administration

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6. AWARD RESTRICTIONS

a. **[Department Aggregate Award Limitation.** In each of the fiscal years 2015 through 2024, the aggregate amount of awards and bonuses paid under the authority of chapter 45 or 53 of title 5, United States Code, or any other awards or bonuses authorized under such title shall not exceed \$360,000,000.

b.] **Aggregate Salary Limitation.** The amount of combined basic pay, allowance, differential, bonus award or other cash payment that an employee can receive during the calendar year is limited to the salary of Executive Level 1, except for title 38 physicians and dentists where the calendar year limitation is the salary of the President of the United States. Should this limitation be a concern when recommending recognition for an employee, consult with your organization's finance officer for assistance in determining the projected total compensation for that individual through the end of the calendar year.

c.] **Limitations during Presidential Election (5 U.S.C. 4508).** During the period beginning June 1 in a calendar year in which a Presidential election occurs, and ending January 20 following the date of the election, monetary awards may not be granted to:

(1) An individual in a Senior Executive Service position who is not a career appointee as defined in 5 U.S.C. 3132(a)(4); or

(2) An individual in an excepted service position of a confidential or policy-determining nature (schedule C).

d.] **Employees in Executive Schedule Positions (5 U.S.C. 4509).** In accordance with law, a cash award may not be granted to:

(1) An individual in an Executive Schedule position; or

(2) An individual for which pay is set in statute by reference to a section or level of the Executive Schedule.

7. AWARD AND SUGGESTION RECORDS

a. A case number will be assigned for identification and coding purposes to each cash, honorary and time off award.

b. Awards must be documented, filed and reported in accordance with OPM requirements. Each servicing human resources office will maintain employee recognition records, including the forms and the justification/documentation to support award actions, for a period of 2 years from the approval date. Records of employee suggestions and the action taken on them will be retained for a period of 2 years from the date of final action on the suggestion.

c. Form SF-50B, Notification of Personnel Action, which documents approved cash and honor awards will be filed on the left hand side of the personnel folder. Only Form SF-50B documenting Quality Step Increases will be permanently filed on the right hand side in the employee's personnel folder. A copy of VA Forms 4659/4659a, 4239 or equivalent form produced for use with a special award program, along with supporting documentation, must be retained by either the organization's award liaison for the HRM office for a period of 2 years from the approval date. A copy of VA Forms 4659, 4239, or equivalent, may be filed in the employee's Employee Performance File. See the General Records Schedule 1, items 12 and 13, for additional retention requirements related to incentive award.