

How to Prepare a Winning Awards Package

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Federal Women's Program

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Agenda

- Performance Related Awards (See CEHNCR-690-1-4)
- Honorary Awards (See CEHNCR-690-1-4)
- Organization Day Awards
- National Awards
- Package Preparation



Performance Related Awards

Annual Performance Awards

- **Cash Award**

- ▷ Normally given shortly after finalization of appraisals
- ▷ For the last several years, the Center's awards dollars have been capped
- ▷ Amount is generally tied to your rating

- **Quality Step Increase (QSI)**

- ▷ An additional within-grade increase based on exceptional performance
- ▷ Employee must receive Successful Level 1
- ▷ Each Directorate can give to no more than 3% of their workforce
- ▷ An employee may not receive more than one QSI in any 52 week period
- ▷ Cannot receive a QSI and a cash award for annual performance rating



Performance Related Awards

Other Performance Awards

- **Special Act or Service Awards**

- ▷ To recognize a meritorious personal effort, act, service, scientific, or other achievement
- ▷ Must result in either tangible or intangible benefits to the government
- ▷ Amount ranges from \$25 to \$25,000. Use the table of benefits to determine amount
- ▷ Difficult to do in recent years since the Center's award budget has been capped
- ▷ Director or Separate Office Chief can approve up to \$2000, Commander approves \$2001 to \$8000, Chief of Engineers approves \$8001 to \$10,000

- **On-the-Spot Awards**

- ▷ To recognize day-to-day worksite accomplishments, typically for a specific one-time or special assignment that required extra effort
- ▷ Amount ranges from \$50 to \$500
- ▷ Not normally for groups, but if done, total is limited to \$500
- ▷ Process time is short. Nominate within 15 days of accomplishment and total time for processing within 30 days
- ▷ Counts towards the Center's cap on monetary awards



Performance Related Awards, Continued

Time Off Awards

- ▷ To recognize superior accomplishment typically for a short-term achievement
- ▷ A single award can range from 1-40 hours of time off, no more than 80 hours total in a leave year
- ▷ See table for determining appropriate amounts
- ▷ Second line supervisor can approve up to 8 hours; Director or Separate Office Chief must approve awards greater than 8 hours

Honorary Awards

- ▷ Can use a Commander's Award to recognize superior performance

Common requirements for Special Act or Service, On-the-Spot, and Time-off Awards

- ▷ Must include a written justification for the award, including period of time covered for award (usually just one paragraph)
- ▷ DA Form 1256
- ▷ EEO/MER Review (Standard Form signed by Supervisor, EEO Officer, and Labor Counselor certifying that the employee is not under investigation or upon whom a disciplinary or adverse action is pending or has been the subject of a disciplinary action with the proceeding 180 days)
- ▷ For Special Act or Service Awards must include an analysis of tangible or intangible benefits that show how the amount was derived

General Tip: Anyone can provide a supervisor with a few sentences of appreciation for an employee that can be used to support a performance award



Honorary Awards

Hierarchy of Honorary Awards and Approval Levels

- Certificate of Appreciation: Supervisor
- Civilian Award for Humanitarian Service: Commander and civilian equivalent
- Certificate of Achievement: Directors and Separate Office Chiefs
- Achievement Medal for Civilian Service (5th highest DA honorary award): Commander
- Commander's Award (4th highest DA honorary award): Commander
- Superior Civilian Service Award (3rd highest DA honorary award): Director of Military Programs, HQUSACE
- Meritorious Civilian Service Award (2nd highest DA honorary award): Chief of Engineers
- Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service (highest DA honorary award): Secretary of Army



Honorary Awards

General Instructions for Honorary Awards

- ▶ Most require a substantial justification, 1-2 pages
- ▶ Most require a separate citation that is limited to a specific number of words
- ▶ For awards that are approved at HQUSACE or above, nominations require 4-6 months for approval
- ▶ Honorary awards are great recognition for significant achievements when funding constraints constrict the use of monetary awards



Organization Day Awards

- These are given once a year during the Center's organization day
- Great way to recognize your best employees
- There are awards for nearly every type of position
- Generally a two page narrative addressing the specific criteria for each award
- Specific awards include:
 - ▶ Administrative Support Employee of the Year
 - ▶ Commander's Leadership Award
 - ▶ Commander's Diversity Award
 - ▶ Commander's Diversity Leadership Award
 - ▶ Contracting Professional of the Year Award
 - ▶ Employee of the Year Award
 - ▶ Engineer of the Year Award
 - ▶ Innovator of the Year Award
 - ▶ Resource Management Employee of the Year Award
 - ▶ Volunteer of the Year Award
 - ▶ Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees



- The key to writing good nominations is to specifically address the individual criteria. You can usually improve your nomination if you talk to the nominee about criteria you may not have sufficient information to address.



National Awards

Types

- Individual
- PDT
- Annual
- Career Achievement
- Diversity

HQs Award Calendar -

<https://cops.usace.army.mil/sites/hr/at/Lists/Calendar/calendar.aspx>



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DIVERSITY OUTREACH AWARDS

- Federal Asian Pacific American Council Military Meritorious Service Award
- HENAAC Cadet Role Model Award
- National LATINA Style Distinguished Service Award
- Women of Color (WOC) STEM Award
- Federally Employed Women (FEW) Military Recognition Award
- National IMAGE Meritorious Service Award
- Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) Meritorious Service Award
- Blacks in Government (BIG) Meritorious Service Award
- NAACP Roy Wilkins Renown Service Award
- National Organization for Mexican American Rights (NOMAR) Meritorious Service Award
- League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Award
- Great Minds in STEM (GMIS) Awards
- Outstanding DoD Employees or Service Members with a Disability Award



2015 USACE ANNUAL AWARDS CALENDAR (Tentative Dates)

<u>Suspense to HQ's</u>	<u>Award Type</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
09 Mar 2012	National Image, Incorporated Meritorious Service Award (IMAGE)	DOD
16 Mar 2012	Federal Asian Pacific American Council Meritorious Service Award	DOD
30 Mar 2012	Women of Color Technology Award	CCG
11 May 2012	Society of American Indian Government Employees Meritorious Service Award	DOD
11 May 2012	National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Roy Wilkins Renown Service Award	DOD
18 May 2012	Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Award (HENAAC)	HENAAC
07 Jun 2012	Chief of Engineers EEO Trophy	USACE
15 Jun 2012	Army's Best Disability Award Army's Outstanding Employee with a Disability	DOD
06 Jul 2012	Black Engineer of the Year (BEYAC)	CCG
7 Dec 2012	Secretary Army Achievement Award in EEO	DA

All awards listed above must be staffed through chain of command and the HQ's EEO Office.



Package Preparation

General Tips for Award Winning Packages

- ▶ Read the evaluation criteria before selecting the nominee
- ▶ Understand the submittal requirements
- ▶ If you are unclear about the award criteria or submittal requirements, ask for clarification
- ▶ Allow sufficient time to put the package together
- ▶ Interview the nominee and others knowledgeable of the nominee
- ▶ Review examples of other nominations that have been competitive at the National level



Package Preparation-cont.

Writing Tips for Award Winning Packages

- ▶ Write short sentences that are concise and give specific detail
- ▶ Explain technical details in such a way that non-experts will understand, and spell out/define any unfamiliar acronyms
- ▶ Share examples of how your nominee has served as a role model and/or mentor for others
- ▶ Anecdotes, quotations from colleagues or patrons, specific numbers or statistics, etc. help strengthen your nomination
- ▶ Avoid sweeping generalities and make every sentence count
- ▶ Have someone proofread the nomination
- ▶ Remember, it's not the quantity of the nomination. It's the quality!



Package Preparation-cont.

Examples:

Specific - She has calculated fragmentation distances and developed engineering controls to mitigate fragmentation effects and blast pressures during detonations. Her development of Calculation methods to specific fragmentation distances rather than using default distances is resulting in a \$24,000 cost savings per site with total cost avoidances of \$1.37 million for 57 sites.

Quotes - FBI Hazardous Devices School – *“Excellent support. Quality work, reasonable cost and knowledgeable project management. She has developed a reputation with us as the person of choice for assistance in developing our explosive safety site plans.”*

Leadership - She leads by example, communicating openly, honestly and professionally and encourages team members to make independent decisions within their authority and capability and to come to her if they have questions.

Professional Development - To improve her knowledge and abilities within the OE Program, she went to the field with HNC’s lead geophysicist and was trained in the operation of the geophysical sensors and navigation equipment. She also attends OE conferences and seminars and taught herself MicroStation in order to analyze and evaluate geophysical data.



Package Preparation-cont.

- **Answer the “what” and “how.”**

- ▶ WHAT did the nominee(s) do?
 - Projects and/or activities above and beyond job descriptions
 - Any challenges or issues encountered and overcome
- ▶ HOW did the nominee(s) do it?
 - Initiative and/or leadership
 - Teamwork
 - Creativity and/or innovation
 - Behaviors and/or attitudes
- ▶ WHAT were the results and/or impacts?
 - What did the nominee(s) accomplish?
 - Are there specific benefits derived from those efforts?



Package Preparation-cont.

Tips for Great Letters of Recommendation

- ▶ Communicate sincerity and personal commitment
- ▶ Solicit letters of recommendation from others whose reputations will help the nominee be considered favorably
- ▶ Supply helpful information to the writers of letters
 - Nominee's resume
 - A sample letter of recommendation
 - An actual letter of recommendation for the nominee
- ▶ Volunteer to proofread the draft letter



Sample Letter

CEHNC

DATE

MEMORANDUM FOR Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ATTN: CEEO (Wanda Christian), 441 "G" Street,
Washington, DC 20314-1000

SUBJECT: Nomination for 2003 Hispanic Engineer of the Year

1. It is an honor to nominate Mr. Severo A. Lopez for the Hispanic Engineer of the Year in the category of "Professional Achievement". Mr. Lopez is currently assigned to the Specifications Branch of the Directorate of Engineering where he is the Team Leader. Mr. Lopez is responsible for developing and maintaining the Unified Facilities Guide Specifications for the Development of Defense used for construction projects worldwide.
2. Mr. Lopez is a conscientious, dedicated, hard working engineer who makes exceptional contributions to every activity with which he is involved. He has 45 years of professional engineering experience, 18 in private industry and 27 with the U. S. army Corps of Engineers. His career includes numerous noteworthy achievements such as pioneering computer-aided design of highways, designing test facilities and equipment that helped put the first man on the moon, designing major interstate systems, assisting with reconstruction efforts in Kuwait after the Gulf War and emergency relief efforts after Hurricane Andrew. In addition to these professional accomplishments, Severo is actively involved with numerous cultural and charitable causes through his work, community and church.
3. Mr. Lopez is an outstanding employee and individual. Severo has always set high professional and moral standards for himself, and is a worthy role model for his team members. I believe him to be a worthy candidate for this prestigious award.



HARRY L. SPEAR
COL, EN
Commanding



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Questions?

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**"Are all of these letters of recommendation
from your mother?"**



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