

Governor's Awards for Excellence

Purpose

The State of North Carolina has long been noted for loyal, efficient and dedicated employees who provide valuable services in all areas of State government. The Governor's Awards for Excellence were created to acknowledge and express appreciation for outstanding accomplishments made by employees of the State. The accomplishments need not fall entirely within the scope of normal duties, but shall be in the nature of a major contribution reflecting credit on the person and State service. The meritorious service or accomplishment must be so singularly outstanding that special recognition is justified. The award is the highest honor that a State employee may receive for noteworthy service to State government and the people of North Carolina.

Award Categories

Awards may be made in the following categories:

- **Outstanding State Government Service** - Exhibited unselfish devotion to duty far and above normal requirements and has contributed significantly to the advancement of State service to the citizens of North Carolina.
 - **Innovations** – Initiated fruitful study and investigation or has successfully established new and outstanding methods, practices, plans or designs (such as pioneering or research and development work in administration, engineering, productivity, agriculture, medicine, natural resources, the social sciences, etc.)
 - **Public Service** – Made outstanding contributions by participating in or implementing community and public service projects (such as volunteering with various non-profit organizations.)
 - **Safety and Heroism** - Demonstrated outstanding judgment or courage in an emergency; voluntarily risking his/her life, or exhibited meritorious action to prevent injury, loss of life or prevented damage to or loss of property.
 - **Human Relations** – Made outstanding contributions toward enhancing the quality and morale of the workplace or creating a better public image of State government (such as positive personal interaction with other employees, public awareness, working on relations internally within an agency, or collaboration between different agencies).
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Governor's Awards for Excellence, Continued

Definitions

Meritorious or Outstanding Performance – performance which surpasses the range of normally expected performance. The possibilities for varying levels of performance above normal expectation are infinite. An employee might be superior as to quality of work and be satisfactory in all other respects; or, be superior on quality and quantity and be satisfactory in meeting other requirements. When the employee becomes superior in all factors, performance is in the upper range of superior and may be considered in the area of meritorious or outstanding performance; for example, a level of performance in all aspects of work which exceeds normal requirements to such an extent that each is considered worthy of special commendation.

Establishing the upper limit of performance beyond which awardable performance begins can seldom be done with a precision which will substitute for human judgment in each specific instance. It can be said in general that the minimum required level should not be so high as to be unattainable by employees who are generally recognized as performing in an outstanding manner, nor so low that awards lose their significance by being easily obtainable.

Special Act or Distinguished Accomplishment - a singular contribution which may be relatively easy to identify and relates to generally known human experience and standards of public service. This might be an act of heroism. A definition of a standard would not be necessary for such cases, and it should not be difficult for a person having knowledge of the accomplishment to prepare a recommendation for consideration.

Permanent Appointment - employees in the executive departments, staff on small boards and commissions designated as subject, staff in the university system designated as subject and at the discretion of each university may include exempt faculty and exempt administrative.

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Governor's Awards for Excellence, Continued

**Selection
Criteria**

Nominations may be made for meritorious or outstanding performance or for a special act or distinguished accomplishment. The performance upon which the selection is based must be clearly above and beyond that which would be expected from dedicated employees who are fully and competently discharging all of the duties and satisfying all of the requirements of their job. When the accomplishment is closely connected with the performance of normal duties, it may be necessary to consider how it was beyond the scope of normal activity.

**Eligibility
Criteria**

The following persons are eligible for nomination:

- Employees who have a permanent appointment, including the managerial and administrative levels such as:
 - Deputy and Assistant Department Heads
 - Division Directors;
 - Deputy and Assistant Directors of major divisions in the larger departments;
 - Key assistants to the Department Head or University Chancellor who exert major policy influence.
 - A deceased, retired, or employee on leave-without-pay may be nominated provided the achievement for which the nomination is made occurred during State employment within the award year.
 - Employees who were nominated, but did not receive the Governor's Awards for Excellence, may be nominated again in a succeeding year.
 - Nominations may be made for an individual or a team.
 - Nominations may be made for achievements at any level of employment with consideration given to the relative opportunities for accomplishment afforded by the individual's position. Employees may nominate peers and/or managers and vice versa.
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**Employees Not
Eligible**

The following employees are not eligible for nomination:

- Elected officials, department heads and university chancellors;
 - Employees of the public school system or community colleges;
 - Employees of the judicial branch; and
 - Employees of the General Assembly.
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Governor's Awards for Excellence, Continued

Program Administration

The Awards Program is administered by the Office of State Personnel.

Awards Committee Members

A Governor's Awards for Excellence Selection Committee shall make annual selection of those State employees to receive the Awards for Excellence.

The Committee shall consist of five members. All members shall be appointed by the Office of State Personnel. Of the five appointed, three members shall be current or former State employees and two shall be from the private sector or the public at large.

Terms of appointment will be for one year. Appointments for unexpired terms shall be for the duration of the term. The Committee annually appoints a member who shall serve as the Governor's Awards Selection Committee Chair.

Awards Committee Responsibilities

The Committee will select the employees to receive the Governor's Awards for Excellence from the nominations submitted by agencies as follows:

- Nominations will be ranked independently by each member of the Committee.
- Upon complete evaluation of all eligible candidates, selection of the award recipients will be made by a committee majority vote.

The Committee and the Office of State Personnel will:

- Plan and conduct an appropriate ceremony in keeping with the significance of the awards.
 - Recommend to the Governor a week in the fall of each year to be designated as "Excellence in State Government Week."
 - Coordinate a date for the Governor's Awards for Excellence ceremony as part of the Excellence in State Government Week.
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Governor's Awards for Excellence, Continued

Agency Responsibilities Departments and universities shall adopt policies and procedures monitored by the State Personnel Commission that will:

- Establish a program to recognize annually, within the agency, meritorious or outstanding performance or special act or distinguished accomplishments within the five designated categories. The program may provide for one or more awards depending on the organizational structure and size of divisions or major programs within the department or university.
 - Eligibility of employees exempt from the State Personnel Act shall be at the discretion of each university.
 - Designation for eligible employees shall be provided to the Office of State Personnel each January by each university.
- Provide for an Awards Committee to be responsible for the processing of awards; suitable ceremonies for presentation of awards; and, to promote participation in the program by all eligible employees.
- Select the most deserving of their nominees for submission to the Governor's Awards for Excellence Program for its consideration. The number of nominations that may be submitted by each department or university will be determined by the Office of State Personnel annually based on the total number of permanent employees in subject positions that are eligible at the beginning of the nomination process.
- Following prescribed guidelines and the standard nomination form, submit to the Office of State Personnel the nominees to be considered for the Governor's Awards for Excellence.
- Agencies submitting nominations to the Governor's Awards Selection Committee shall commit, by the signing of the nomination form, to support the nominees/recipients by providing time and travel to attend the Governor's Awards Ceremony.

Advisory Note: Agencies are recommended to grant leave as recognition for employees receiving an award under the Governor's Awards for Excellence Program. Please refer to the Special Leave Awards policy in this Manual.

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Governor's Awards for Excellence, Continued

Awards Ceremony	Awards will be presented annually by the State Personnel Director at a ceremony during the week proclaimed by the Governor as "Excellence in State Government Week."
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Type of Award	The award will be representative of the significance of this award as being the highest honor a state employee can receive.
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Number of Awards	The number of awards presented by the State Personnel Director will depend upon the nature of recommendations received and the Committee's evaluations and selections. Every effort will be made to recognize the most significant accomplishments; however, the number of recipients must be in keeping with the nature of the award as the highest honor available to State employees.
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Advisory Note: In addition to the Excellence in State Government Week, the Governor of North Carolina proclaims a week (usually in the fall) as State Employee Appreciation Week in recognition of the loyal and dedicated employees of the State. Individual agencies are encouraged to plan events during that week to express appreciation for the commendable service provided by State employees.
