

## Chapter 24

### Awards

ARS encourages employees to identify deserving candidates and submit nominations for awards. Recognizing worthy individuals or teams is one of our most valuable tools in professional development. Also, when an employee receives an award, each Management Unit is to provide the Area Office with information on each award received. Below are the contacts for the various awards. When either nominating an employee or team for an award, or recognizing someone for receiving an award, please fill out the proper form and forward it to the contact.

Acronyms: See [Chapter 22](#) for a comprehensive list of commonly used acronyms.

References: [P&P 468.5](#) - Acceptance of Non-Federal Awards and Recognition  
[P&P 418.3](#) - Performance Awards

Cross References: [Chapter 2](#) - Civil Rights  
[Chapter 7](#) - Ethics  
[Chapter 10](#) - Human Resources - Performance Awards Section

Forms: Request for Approval to Receive a Reward from a Non-Federal Source  
NPA Awards of Excellence Nomination Form  
ARS Awards Newsletter Information Form

Web Site: USDA Guide for Employee Recognition  
<http://www.usda.gov/da/employ/recog.htm>

SharePoint: [NPA SharePoint Site – Awards](#) (login required)

Forms: Request for Approval to Receive a Reward from a Non-Federal Source  
NPA Awards of Excellence Nomination Form  
ARS Awards Newsletter Information Form

Points of Contact: See page 2

Points of Contact:

<p>USDA &amp; Non-Federal Awards</p>	<p>NPA Awards &amp; ARS Newsletter Information Form</p>
<p>Tim Sharkey  Program Support Assistant  USDA-ARS-NPA  2150 Centre Ave., Building D, Suite 310  Fort Collins, CO 80526-8119  Telephone: (970) 492-7048  Fax: (970) 492-7065  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:tim.sharkey@ars.usda.gov">tim.sharkey@ars.usda.gov</a></p>	<p>Olga Lee  Management Analyst  USDA-ARS-NPA  2150 Centre Ave., Building D, Suite 300  Fort Collins, CO 80526-8119  Telephone: (970) 492-7057  Fax: (970) 492-7065  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:olga.lee@ars.usda.gov">olga.lee@ars.usda.gov</a></p>
<p>Non-Federal Monetary Awards \$200 and up (Ethics)</p>	<p>NPA Area Ethics Advisor</p>
<p>Carol Durflinger  Secretary to the Associate Directors  USDA-ARS-NPA  2150 Centre Ave., Building D, Suite 300  Fort Collins, CO 80526-8119  Telephone: (970) 492-7058  Fax: (970) 492-7065  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:carol.durflinger@ars.usda.gov">carol.durflinger@ars.usda.gov</a></p>	<p>Dr. Michael McGuire  Associate Area Director, Ethics Advisor  USDA-ARS-NPA  2150 Centre Ave. Building D, Suite 300  Fort Collins, CO 80526-8119  Telephone: (970) 492-7058  Fax: (970) 492-7065  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:michael.mcguire@ars.usda.gov">michael.mcguire@ars.usda.gov</a></p>

## ARS Major Award Programs

<i>Name of Program</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Send Call for Nominations</i>	<i>Announce to:</i>	<i>Send Reminder</i>	<i>Nominations Due in HRD</i>	<i>Date of Ceremony</i>
<b>ARS Administrator's Equal Employment Opportunity /Civil Rights</b>	To annually recognize individuals/groups for exemplary achievements in promoting EEO/CR and promoting an awareness and commitment to workforce diversity.	Mid March	ARS-All	Mid April	May	* February
<b>ARS Excellence in Information</b>	To recognize outstanding contributions to the creation and/or distribution of information products and technologies that support agricultural research and education.	Early June	ARS-All	Mid July	Early August	* February
<b>ARS Science Hall of Fame</b>	To annually recognize one or more outstanding ARS scientists who have made a major impact on agricultural research.	Mid January	ARS-All	Early March	Early May	September United States National Arboretum, Washington, DC  (In conjunction with AC meeting)
<b>ARS Scientist of the Year</b>	To annually recognize the creative efforts of ARS research scientists.  Note: The individual selected as the ARS Herbert L. Rothbart Outstanding Early Career Scientist will be eligible for a Presidential award. Historically, the nomination is due to the White House Point-of-Contact by August 1.	Early February	ARS-All	Early April	Early June  (Due to the Area Director May 1)	* February
<b>ARS Secretary of the Year</b>	To annually recognize the outstanding achievements and creative efforts of ARS secretaries.	Early June	ARS-All	Mid July	Early August	* February
<b>ARS Technology Transfer</b>	To annually recognize individuals/teams who have done outstanding work in transferring technology to outside users.  Note: The nominations of the Outstanding Effort winners from this program are forwarded to the Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC) for consideration in their annual awards program. Nominations are due to the FLC by September. (OTT submits these nominations.)	Early February	ARS-All	Early April	Early June  (Due to the Area Director May 1)	* February
<b>ARS T. W. Edminster Research</b>	The top rated Research Associate proposal is approved for the T. W. Edminster Award.	Early to mid September, the Administrator's office will notify the Awards Staff of the winner.				* February

<i>Name of Program</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Send Call for Nominations</i>	<i>Announce to:</i>	<i>Send Reminder</i>	<i>Nominations Due in HRD</i>	<i>Date of Ceremony</i>
<b>Associate</b>						
<b>AFM Award for Diversity</b>	This program recognizes AFM employees for special achievements in promoting EEO and workforce diversity through actions that clearly exceed the responsibilities of their position.	Mid December	REE	Mid Jan	Early Feb	Mid March <small>(In conjunction with AFM All Hands)</small>
<b>AFM Support Awards for Excellence</b>	To annually recognize outstanding achievements which have increased efficiency in the administrative support activities of ARS.	Early June	REE	Mid July	Early August	* February
<b>ARS Annual Recognition Program</b>	To recognize the winners of the Scientist of the Year, the Administrator's EEO/CR Awards, the Technology Transfer Awards, the T. W. Edminster Awards, the Excellence in Information Awards, the ARS Secretary of the Year, and the AFM Support Awards for Excellence.	* The Ceremony is held in conjunction with the February AC Meeting. Awards presentation held in BARC Auditorium, Beltsville, MD				
<b>USDA Secretary's Honor Awards</b>	To annually recognize outstanding contributions to agriculture; to the consumers of agricultural products; and to the ability of the Department to serve rural America. The Honor Awards are the most prestigious awards that the Department can give. Employees at all grade levels and private citizens are eligible to receive these awards.	September	REE	October	November  December (To OHRM)	June/July  Ronald Reagan International Trade Center, Washington, DC



United States Department of Agriculture  
Research, Education and Economics  
Agricultural Research Service

## Example Only

Refer to current year's memo

August 19, 2002

SUBJECT: Northern Plains Area Awards of Excellence

TO: Center/Laboratory Directors  
Research Leaders  
Location Administrative Officers

FROM: W. H. Blackburn, Director, NPA /s/

It is once again time to submit nominations for the NPA Awards of Excellence. Enclosed is nomination information on the following categories to be considered:

- Administrative Management Support
- Secretarial
- Scientific Support
- Equal Employment Opportunity - Diversity
- Safety, Health and Environmental
- Information Technology

I encourage you to identify deserving candidates and submit nominations. Recognizing worthy individuals or teams is one of our most valuable tools in professional development.

Nominations may be submitted by any employee -- please make sure this information is made available to all your employees.

Please forward your nominations to Garnet Francesca by October 18, 2002.

Enclosure

cc:

Area Office Employees



Northern Plains Area • Office of the Area Director  
2150 Centre Ave, Building D, Suite 300 • Fort Collins, CO 80526-8119  
Voice: 970-492-7057 • FAX: 970-492-7065 • E-MAIL: will.blackburn@ars.usda.gov  
An Equal Opportunity Employer

**USDA-ARS-NPA  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT AWARD**

**PURPOSE**

To annually recognize outstanding achievement which has increased efficiency in the administrative management support activities of the Agricultural Research Service.

**CATEGORY**

Recognizing the diversity of the administrative management support functions and the importance of both headquarters and field personnel in support of scientific research in ARS, this segment of the program will recognize employees at locations -- specialists and support.

**ELIGIBILITY**

- All employees performing administrative support functions, supervisory and non-supervisory, are eligible to be nominated for this award.
- Nominees must be permanent employees and have worked for ARS at least 3 years.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

1. Sustained performance above the Fully Successful Level -- latest performance appraisal must be Superior or above.
2. There must be evidence of at least one contribution which has significantly improved the efficiency and economy of operations in an administrative or financial management function.
3. The contribution(s) must have increased program effectiveness or resulted in cost reduction. Achievements may reflect dollar savings, systems benefits, increased productivity, or have been the result of an intensive effort to address a problem.
4. There must be a clear showing that the contribution(s) in the management area has (have) positively impacted the ARS mission.

## **NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

1. Any ARS employee may submit a nomination.
2. See Exhibit for format. Justification should clearly demonstrate how the nominee meets the criteria.
3. The nominations will be forwarded through supervisory channels to the Area Director's Office. The supervisor should verify that the information contained in the nomination is correct and that the nominee's overall performance has been exemplary.
4. All nominations will be forwarded to the Area Director's Office by no-later-than October 15, 2010.
5. An evaluation panel will be appointed to evaluate the nominations. The panel's recommendations will be submitted to the Area Director for final approval.

## **NATURE OF RECOGNITION**

Winner will receive a cash award and be recognized at an appropriate recognition ceremony.

**USDA-ARS-NPA  
OFFICE PROFESSIONAL AWARD**

**PURPOSE**

To annually recognize the outstanding achievements and creative efforts of ARS secretaries.

**CATEGORY**

Nominees must be classified in a secretarial, Program Support Assistant, or clerical position.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Nominees must be permanent employees and have worked for ARS at least 3 years.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

1. Nominees must have received an outstanding or superior rating during their last performance evaluation.
2. The nomination must show evidence of achievements well beyond normal job performance during the past year and must indicate how work performed has substantially improved the operation of an organizational unit.
3. Achievements may include:
  - a. Organizational Achievement - overall achievement; such as initiatives taken in successfully reorganizing office procedures, improving filing or other systems, or mastering or promoting use of new office equipment, etc., which resulted in improved productivity.
  - b. Skill Advancement - initiatives taken to substantially improve or acquire skills beyond job qualifications, such as individual education pursuits or taking the lead in the relationships that assist a unit in accomplishing its mission, training co-workers and others and promoting teamwork.
  - c. Person-to-Person Relationships - Employee sets an example for others by establishing of exceptional inter- and intra-unit relationships that assist a unit in

accomplishing its mission, by training co-workers and others, and by promoting teamwork

### **NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

1. Any ARS employee may submit a nomination.
2. See Exhibit for format. Justification should clearly demonstrate how the nominee meets the criteria.
3. The nominations will be forwarded through supervisory channels to the Area Director's Office. The supervisor should verify that the information contained in the nomination is correct and that the nominee's overall performance has been exemplary.
4. All nominations will be forwarded to the Area Director's Office by no-later-than October 15, 2010.
5. An evaluation panel will be appointed to evaluate the nominations. The panel's recommendations will be submitted to the Area Director for final approval.

### **NATURE OF RECOGNITION**

Winner will receive a cash award and be recognized at an appropriate recognition ceremony.

**USDA-ARS-NPA  
SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT AWARD**

**PURPOSE**

To annually recognize the outstanding achievements and creative efforts of individuals in the scientific support categories who have contributed significantly to the mission of the Agricultural Research Service.

**CATEGORY**

Wage Grade, Support Scientists, Scientific Technicians, Computer Support and Clerical Positions not covered by other recognition programs, i.e., Office Professional or Administrative Support Awards.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Nominees must be permanent employees and have worked for ARS at least 3 years.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

1. Nominees must have received an outstanding or superior rating during their last performance evaluation.
2. The nomination must show evidence of achievements well beyond normal job performance during the past year and must indicate how work performed has substantially improved the operation of an organizational unit.

**NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

1. Any ARS employee may submit a nomination.
2. See Exhibit for format. Justification should clearly demonstrate how the nominee meets the criteria.
3. The nominations will be forwarded through supervisory channels to the Area Director's Office. The supervisor should verify that the information contained in the nomination is correct and that the nominee's overall performance has been exemplary.
4. All nominations will be forwarded to the Area Director's Office by no-later-than October 15, 2010.

5. An evaluation panel will be appointed to evaluate the nominations. The panel's recommendations will be submitted to the Area Director for final approval.

#### **NATURE OF RECOGNITION**

Winner will receive a cash award and be recognized at an appropriate recognition ceremony.

**USDA-ARS-NPA**  
**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY - DIVERSITY AWARD**

**PURPOSE**

To annually recognize employees for special achievements in promoting equal employment opportunity and workforce diversity through actions that clearly exceed the responsibilities of their positions or assignments.

**CATEGORY**

Recognizing individual(s) who have enhanced the Agency's equal employment opportunity program objectives through notable efforts and achievements within or outside the Agency that have a significant impact and a positive outcome on the Area's EEO program.

**ELIGIBILITY**

All employees of the Agricultural Research Service, Northern Plains Area, are eligible. Nominations may be for individuals or for groups.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

Nominees must show evidence of commitment to equal employment opportunity and civil rights and an awareness and commitment to workforce diversity. Examples of ways supervisors and managers can meet this commitment are:

1. Motivation of employees through direct encouragement and assistance toward developing their full potential and toward utilizing their skills to the maximum.
2. Effective employee utilization as evidenced by one or more of the following supervisory activities:
  - a. Awareness of employees, skills, abilities, needs, interests, and structuring their jobs to best utilize and build on these.
  - b. Meeting periodically with employees to set challenging work goals that are achievable by employees and are productive to the Agency.
  - c. Effective integration of all employees into the organization.

- d. Promotion and use of a variety of special employment programs to further EEO objectives.
3. Sensitive treatment of all employees. This could be demonstrated by concern for providing equal opportunity in all phases of management-training, promotion, awards, etc.

Examples of achievements that would qualify employees without supervisory/managerial or specific EEO duties are:

- a. Commitment and efforts to further EEO objectives and workforce diversity through participation in agency activities to raise awareness.
- b. Participation with management in the creative development of, and assistance in, training programs for lower grades and under-utilized employees.
- c. Working with educational institutions to assist students to prepare for Federal employment and to inform students about careers in science.
- d. Providing outstanding leadership and full participation in activities that foster a better understanding of EEO in Government.

There are employees and/or groups of employees who have specific assigned EEO responsibilities within ARS. Examples of this are individuals with collateral duty assignments, members of EEO committees or members of the NPA Diversity Taskforce. Some examples of qualifying achievements are:

- a. Provide counsel, guidance, and innovative ideas and approaches to enhance the Agency's EEO objectives beyond that which would be expected in the assignment.
- b. Documented evidence that through the individuals' personal efforts, significant accomplishments were made in reaching the Agency's equal employment goals.
- c. Counseling and guidance to employees which assist them in achieving career goals.
- d. Leadership in developing and implementing EEO programs.
- e. Establishing and maintaining respect and confidence of all employee groups through advancing Agency's EEO Program.

Any of the criteria shown above may be considered for any or all nominees. These are merely examples and other criteria may also be used.

## **NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

1. Any ARS employee may submit a nomination.
2. See Exhibit for format. Justification should clearly demonstrate how the nominee(s) meets the criteria. Nominations should be made only with full knowledge and careful review to assure that individuals nominated meet the criteria for the recognition. The nominations shall be evaluated strictly on merit. Any job-related performance must have been substantially above normal job performance. The justification portion of the nominations must document one or more of the criteria listed.
4. All nominations will be forwarded to the Area Director's Office by no-later-than October 15, 2010.
5. The Area Director, in conjunction with the NPA Diversity Taskforce, will appoint an ad hoc screening panel to review the nominations. This panel will evaluate the nominations and rank candidates under each award category. The Area Director may select the individual or group in each category whose contributions warrant recognition.
6. Previous nominees may be re-nominated. However, an award may be received by an individual no more frequently than once every three years.

## **NATURE OF RECOGNITION**

The winner(s) will receive a cash award and be recognized at an appropriate recognition ceremony. If a group of individuals is selected, the award will be disbursed equally among the members of the group.

**USDA-ARS-NPA  
SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD**

**PURPOSE**

To annually recognize individual employees or teams for outstanding contributions to the Safety, Health and Environmental Program through actions that clearly maintain or increase productivity through the elimination or substantial reduction of recognized hazards, accidental injuries, illnesses, worker compensation costs and property damage.

**CATEGORY**

This award is open to all Area employees regardless of affiliation with past or present collateral duties for safety, health and environmental programs.

**ELIGIBILITY**

All Northern Plains Area employees, including part time and temporary appointments are eligible. Nominations may be for individuals, teams, or groups.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

Substantial contribution to the ARS Safety and Health and Environmental Program effort above and beyond what is normally required may include the following activities.

**Cost Reduction:**

Overall reduction in injury and illness frequency and severity rates by Center, Location, employee, or employee groups.

Achievement of target activities selected during the previous year based upon ARS accident/illness/injury reduction goals.

**Leadership and Commitment:**

Describe how support for safe practices is frequent, visible and, by example, has resulted in other employees being motivated to aggressively seek ways to fully achieve a safe and healthful work environment for themselves, as well as those around them. Describe leadership which demonstrates that safety is a value, not an obligation.

**Integration of Safety Program:**

Provide evidence that safety is viewed as a basic responsibility with safety objectives and planning actions being fully integrated within the direct mission program planning.

**Resolution of Safety Hazards:**

Provide evidence that the employee or group pursues the correction on minor hazards at a local level. The employee continually assesses the need to develop new ways of operating to eliminate conditions that contribute to and/or cause hazards. It is a self-motivated person.

**Adaption of Challenges:**

Provide evidence of swift adaptation to challenges created by recognized hazards, by either individual or others. Adaption to challenges includes taking necessary actions to eliminate the hazard so that disruption of work is minimized.

**Person-to-Person Relationships:**

The employee fosters an exceptional work relationship which assists the location in accomplishing a safe work environment for all employees.

**Pollution Prevention:**

The location must have a written plan that states specific goals. Substantial progress toward the planned goals must be accomplished.

**NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

1. Any ARS employee may submit a nomination.
2. See Exhibit for format. Justification should clearly demonstrate how the nominee(s) meets the criteria. Nominations should be made only with full knowledge and careful review to assure that individuals nominated meet the criteria for the recognition. The nominations shall be evaluated strictly on merit. Any job-related performance must have been substantially above normal job performance. The justification portion of the nominations must document one or more of the criteria listed.
4. All nominations will be forwarded to the Area Director's Office by no-later-than October 15, 2010.

5. The Area Director will appoint an ad hoc screening panel to review the nominations. This panel will evaluate the nominations and rank candidates under each award category. The Area Director may select the individual or group in each category whose contributions warrant recognition.
6. Previous nominees may be re-nominated. However, an award may be received by an individual no more frequently than once every three years.

## **NATURE OF RECOGNITION**

The winner(s) will receive a cash award and be recognized at an appropriate recognition ceremony. If a group of individuals is selected, the award will be disbursed equally among the members of the group.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### PURPOSE

To annually recognize individual employees, teams, or groups for outstanding contributions to the Information Technology program through actions that clearly maintain or increase productivity in support of research and administration.

### CATEGORY

Nominees must be classified in the Information Technology series.

### ELIGIBILITY

- Nominees must be permanent employees and have worked for ARS at least 3 years.
- Nominations may be submitted for individuals, teams, or groups.

### SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Sustained performance above the Fully Successful Level -- latest performance appraisal must be Superior or above.
2. The primary basis for selection will be sustained effective program leadership or creativity in one or more of the following areas:
  - Improved customer service in delivery of information technology
  - Effective training and/or outreach to customers
  - Innovative use of information technology and media
  - Dissemination of information through telecommunications, networking, etc.

### NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

1. Any ARS employee may submit a nomination.
2. See Exhibit for format. Justification should clearly demonstrate how the nominee(s) meets the criteria.
3. The nominations will be forwarded through supervisory channels to the Area Director's Office. The supervisor should verify that the information contained in the nomination is correct and that the nominee's overall performance has been exemplary.

4. All nominations will be forwarded to the Area Director's Office by no-later-than October 15, 2010.
5. An evaluation panel will be appointed to evaluate the nominations. The panel's recommendations will be submitted to the Area Director for final approval.

#### **NATURE OF RECOGNITION**

Winner(s) will receive a cash award and be recognized at an appropriate recognition ceremony. If a group of individuals is selected, the award will be disbursed equally among the members of the group.

**GENERAL NOMINATION FORMAT**

**RECOGNITION PROGRAM:**

**CATEGORY:**

**NAME:**

**POSITION/GRADE:**

**LOCATION:**

**EDUCATION:** (Include date of graduate degree)

**LENGTH OF FEDERAL SERVICE:**

**EXPERIENCE:** (last 10 years only)

Dates

Title, grade, location, organization

**PUBLICATIONS:** (if appropriate)

**PREVIOUS AWARDS:** (last 5 years)

**CITATION:** (25 words or less, beginning with "For...")

**JUSTIFICATION:**

(Submit a separate sheet, limited to 1-2 pages, single-spaced, and demonstrate how nominee meets criteria).

**NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF NOMINATOR:**

**CONCURRENCE OF SUPERVISOR:** \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **NON-FEDERAL AWARD RECIPIENT REQUEST**

It is the policy of REE to foster interest in non-Federal awards and recognitions and to recognize those employees who have been rewarded. Supervisors, managers, and employees are encouraged to participate in the non-Federal awards process. Employees, who are recipients of such awards or who are nominated, must avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest in the conduct of official duties. Employees may accept awards and recognitions, other than cash or an investment interest, with an aggregate market value of \$200 or less in certain situations. These situations include presentation as a legitimate award or incident to a legitimate award that is given for (a) meritorious public service, (b) achievement by a person who does not have interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's official duties, or (c) by an association or other organization consisting of prohibited sources. Awards given in the above situations **do not require** formal review by an agency ethics official. However, gifts given in connection with awards and recognitions with an aggregate market value in excess of \$200 and awards of cash or investment interests, such as bonds or stocks, **do require** formal review by an agency ethics official.

## REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO ACCEPT AN AWARD FROM A NON-FEDERAL SOURCE

(Provide all attachments from awarding organization and use supplemental sheets, if necessary)

Name of Awardee	Agency/Area/Region/Division/Location	
Name of Awarding Organization		
Purpose/Mission of Organization		
Name of Award and Value		\$ _____
Is the organization : (circle one)	Profit making	Nonprofit/Professional
Who are the members of the Organization?		
Are they prohibited sources? (Use definition at 5 CFR 2635.203(d)) (circle one)	YES	NO
Is this an established awards program? (circle one)	YES	NO
How is this award funded (where does the money come from)?		
If the award is funded by private industry, do they have authority to approve or disapprove receipt of award?		
Are other than Federal employees eligible? (circle one)	YES	NO
Who is eligible to nominate candidates?		
What are the nominating procedures?		
Are the selection standards in writing? (If so, please provide a copy) (circle one)	YES	NO
Who is on the selection panel, and who appoints them?		
Is the selection panel a one or two-tier system?		
Who makes the final decision?		
<b>ETHICS ADVISOR REVIEW:</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>APPROVAL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISAPPROVAL</b>		
Signature of Designated Area/Agency Ethics Advisor:		Date:
<b>CONCURRENCE:</b>		
Signature of Science Ethics Branch Advisor:		Date:

SEB103