



Awards and Recognition Program

Through the Awards and Recognition Program, supervisors can recognize employees' contributions to more efficient and effective OIG operations. They can recognize individuals' or groups' special and significant accomplishments, productivity increases, operational improvements, cost reductions, new ideas, and other exceptional benefits to the Government. This policy covers awards for and the recognition of employees at the GS-15 level and below.

What kinds of things make an employee eligible for award consideration?

High-quality work products, especially ones with highly visible/noteworthy achievements or severe time constraints.

Exceptional courtesy and responsiveness to customers.

Innovation and creativity in getting a job done.

Keep in mind that a set of accomplishments for one award cannot serve as the basis for another award.

How do supervisors nominate their employees for awards?

All awards are processed through the HR Connect program at <https://www.hrconnect.treas.gov/servlets/iclientservlet/prod/?cmd=login>.

To nominate one employee:

- 1) Initiate a personnel action by selecting the employee.
- 2) Under Personnel Actions, select the award type (we do not use Spot awards); enter dollar amount or number of days off; enter the from/to dates for the award period; enter the accounting code for your organization. To look up, click on the magnifying glass, insert your organization, e.g. audit, investigations, etc. and select "lookup." Enter the reason for the award, whether performance or other and provide a brief justification. Send the personnel action to the appropriate approving official and then to OIG Human Resources staff for coding and forwarding to BPD.

To nominate employees for a group award:

Select the "Mass Award" button under the Manager's Tab.

Select the type of award (we do not use Spot awards), enter the from/to dates for the award period; enter the reason and a brief justification for the award. You may check "notify me by email" to learn of the status of your request. Select "immediate organization" to show your entire unit or "direct reports" to show subordinate supervisors only. Enter the award value for each awardee. Send the personnel action to the appropriate approving official and then to OIG Human Resources

What types of internal OIG awards are available?

Five types: cash awards, individual or group special act/service; time-off awards, individual or group; performance awards, which may be cash or time-off; recognition items, quality step increases; and career service awards.

Special Act or Performance Cash Awards are lump sum payments (not “basic pay”). The approval levels are:

<u>Amount of Cash</u>	<u>Approval Level</u>
Individual Award Up to \$500	Employee’s GS-15 Level Supervisor
Individual Award \$501 to \$2,500	AIG/Counsel
Individual Award Over \$2,500	Deputy IG
Group Award Up to \$5,000	AIG/Counsel
Group Award Over \$5,000	Deputy IG

Special Act or Performance Time-Off Awards grant time off from duty, without loss of pay or charge to leave. Full time employees may receive up to 80 “time-off” hours in a single leave year. Other employees may receive up to the average number of hours in their biweekly schedule for a single leave year. The amounts of time-off and approval levels are:

<u>Amount of Time-off</u>	<u>Approval Level</u>
Up to 8 hours	Employee’s GS-15 Level Supervisor
Up to 16 hours	AIG/Counsel
Over 16 hours	Deputy IG

Once granted, recipients need to use time-off awards within one year from the approval date, or the awards will be forfeited. Time-off awards are not charged to the office’s annual awards budget. Also, time-off cannot be converted to a cash payment or transferred to leave recipients under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program.

Recognition Items include plaques, certificates, shirts with OIG insignia, lapel pins, other items of nominal monetary value, and letters of commendation, etc. The Office of Management maintains a small supply of these items. To arrange for these items, supervisors can contact the Office of Management by phone at (202) 927-5200 or email at oig-om@oig.treas.gov . A detailed record of all items awarded is maintained so the OIG can ensure a fair and consistent distribution. Only the Office of Management can procure recognition items with Government funds.

Quality Step Increases (QSI) recognize outstanding performance by granting faster than normal step increases. A QSI increases an employee’s rate of basic pay from one step of the grade to the next higher step within the grade. After a brief review by the OM-HRD Director, QSI nominations go to the IG for approval. Criterion for QSIs: (1) The employee received an “Exceptional” rating on his/her most recent performance evaluation and this performance is expected to continue; (2) the employee cannot be at the top step of his or her grade; and (3) at least 52 calendar weeks must have passed since the employee received a QSI. Only the Deputy IG can approve Quality Step Increases.

Career Service Awards recognize employees for 10 years of Federal Government service and each five-year period of service after that. These awards are initiated by the Bureau of Public Debt (BPD), who sends the certificates and pins directly to supervisors for presentation to employees.

Can supervisors nominate employees from another office (e.g., OI nominates an OM employee) for an award?

No. However, they can advise the employee’s supervisor of the efforts or accomplishments made.

How can supervisors recognize retiring employees?

Retirement gifts **may not** be purchased with appropriated funds. But you can recognize a retiring employee’s PERFORMANCE with a recognition item award AT AN AWARD CEREMONY. One recognition option is to have the employee’s credential (and badge if appropriate) embedded in Lucite.

This may be appropriate for departing employees as well. The Office of Management can suggest a service provider if you need one.

Another option is the Albert Gallatin Award, which is Treasury's highest career service award. The Secretary confers the Gallatin award upon the retirement or death of a Treasury employee who has served 20 years or more in the Department and whose record reflects loyalty to duty. BPD submits nominations for this award and generally needs about 4-6 weeks notice (via email) before the employee retires. The AIGs/Counsel present the Gallatin award for Headquarters employees. The Regional Inspectors General for Audit present the award for field employees.

Can employees buy the recognition items, such as OIG shirts and lapel pins, for their own use?

Yes, but not from us. By law, we cannot sell recognition items bought with appropriated funds. We can, however, share with you the vendors we use so that you can buy them directly with your own money and on your own time.

What are External Awards?

Treasury and other Government agencies or organizations (e.g., the President's Council for Integrity and Efficiency) sponsor awards. Nominations are solicited periodically throughout the year. The Office of Management usually provides awards criteria and nomination procedures by email.

If I have a question, whom can I contact?

For questions about the OIG's Awards and Recognition Program, please contact the Office of Management by phone at (202) 927-5200 or email at oig-om@oig.treas.gov.

For questions about the HR Connect system, please call (304) 480-7272.