

Governor's Awards for Excellence Policy

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§ 1. Policy

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 was 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 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.

§ 2. Award Categories

Awards may be made in the following categories:

- Customer Service: Provided exceptional service that left the customer fully satisfied with their experience. Exceeded expectations to meet the needs of the customer. Added value to the customer experience.
- Efficiency and Innovation: 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,

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- engineering, productivity, agriculture, medicine, natural resources, the social science, etc.).
- 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).
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Spirit of North Carolina: Exemplified state motto "To be, rather than to seem." Mentored others in the pursuit of excellence. Served as an ambassador for the State of North Carolina. This special award is reserved for exceptional circumstances and for accomplishment and achievements of the highest caliber.

§ 3. 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.

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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.

§ 4. 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.

§ 5. Eligibility Criteria

The following persons are eligible for nomination:

- Employees who have a permanent or time-limited appointment.
 - This includes, but is not limited to, the managerial and administrative levels.
- A deceased employee, former employee, or an 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.

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- Temporary employees may be nominated if, and only if, they are part of a team that also includes permanent or time-limited employees.
 - 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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§ 6. Employees Not Eligible

The following employees are not eligible for nomination:

- Contractors;
 - 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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§ 7. Program Administration

The Awards Program is administered by the Office of State Human Resources.

§ 8. 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 Human Resources. At a minimum, at least one member from the State Employees Credit Union will be on the Selection Committee. Terms of appointment will be evaluated each year.

§ 9. 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.

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- 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 Human Resources will plan and conduct an appropriate ceremony in keeping with the significance of the awards.

§ 10. Agency Responsibilities

Departments and universities policies and procedures for selection will be monitored by the Office of State Human Resources. Agencies and universities may design their selection process to include the following:

- Establish a program to recognize annually, within the agency, meritorious or outstanding performance or special act or distinguished accomplishments within the seven 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 Human Resources Act shall be at the discretion of 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 Human Resources annually based on the total number of permanent employees in subject positions that are eligible at the beginning of the nomination process.

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Suggested guidelines for number of nominations:

If your agency/university has:	You are eligible for no more than:
Less than 300 employees	3 nominations
300 employees but less than 2,000	6 nominations
2,000 employees but less than 10,000	8 nominations
10,000 or more employees	12 nominations

- Following prescribed guidelines and the standard nomination form, submit to the office of State Human Resources 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.

§ 11. Awards Ceremony

Awards will be presented annually by the Office of State Human Resources Director at a ceremony in keeping with the importance of this award.

§ 12. Type of Award

The award will be representative of the significance of this award as being the highest honor a State employee can receive.

§ 13. Number of Awards

The number of awards presented by the Office of State Human Resources 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;

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however, the number of recipients must be in keeping with the nature of the award as the highest honor available to State employees.

§ 14. Sources of Authority

This policy is issued under any and all of the following sources of law:

- [N.C.G.S. § 126-4\(15\)](#)

It is compliant with the Administrative Code rules at:

- [25 NCAC 01C .0900](#)

§ 15. History of This Policy

Date	Version
January 1, 1989	First version
August 2, 1993	Revises committee membership
December 1, 1995	Revised Program
April 1, 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award Categories: Definitions of the Award Categories have been clarified. • Award Ceremony: The award ceremony is no longer held during Employee Appreciation Week. The policy has been changed to "Awards will be presented annually during the week proclaimed by the Governor as 'Excellence in State Government Week.'" • Type of Award: The award is no longer a mounted plaque. The policy is changed to "The award will be representative of the significance of this award as being the highest honor a state employee can receive." • Number of Awards: The number of awards should not be limited to a specific number. The policy has been changed to "The number of awards presented by the Governor 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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November 1, 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorandum, State Personnel Manual Changes – Revision No. 3, dated 3-7-2000 advised: “The advisory note at the bottom of Section 6, Page 25 was omitted from some of the Personnel Manual copies. If it is already included in the copy you have, disregard this change.”
January 1, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name changed from Governor's Award for Excellence to State Employee Awards for Excellence. Revision 8 Corrects “Employee Appreciation Week” to “Excellence in State Government Week.”
March 1, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name changed from State Employees' Awards for Excellence to Governor's Awards for Excellence.
August 4, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the policy to include two new award categories. There are seven award categories total now, instead of five. Customer Service category and Efficiency and Innovations have now been added to the policy. Also added to the policy a suggested guidelines chart that displays number of nominations per Agency or University, based on size.
March 2, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deleted Advisory note referencing special leave policy because it is misleading. There is no special leave associated with winning a Governor's Award. Travel time and time to attend the Ceremony and events are all granted and addressed at the bottom of page 9 and the top of page 10 where it is noted that: “Agencies submitting nominations to the Governor's Awards Selection Committee shall commit, by signing of the nomination form, to support the nominees/recipients by providing time and travel to attend the Governor's Awards Ceremony.”
September 3, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corrected typographical errors (i.e. use of ;) and consist use of Office of State Human Resources from Office of State Personnel.
June 4, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy reviewed by the Recruitment Division to confirm alignment with current practices and by the Legal, Commission, and Policy Division to confirm alignment with statutory, rule(s), and other

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	<p>policies. No substantive changes. Reported to SHRC on June 4, 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General editorial changes to text, grammar, and language. All changes were minor wording and format changes for clarification.
July 14, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification that time-limited employees are eligible. • Clarification that contractors are not eligible. • Policy revised to provide that temporary employees are eligible if and only if, they are part of a team that also includes permanent or time-limited employees. • Shortened text about eligibility of executive staff, so that it is not misunderstood as suggesting that the award is primarily intended for executive staff.