



# Virginia Department of Corrections

## Human Resources

### Operating Procedure 165.2

#### *Employee Appreciation and Recognition*

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Directive 165, *Staff Development and Recognition*

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None

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### REVIEW

The Content Owner will review this operating procedure annually and re-write it no later than three years after the effective date.

*The content owner reviewed this operating procedure in August 2024 and determined that no changes are needed.*

### COMPLIANCE

This operating procedure applies to all units operated by the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC). Practices and procedures must comply with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, American Correctional Association (ACA) standards, Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards, and DOC directives and operating procedures.

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## DEFINITIONS

**DOC Funds** - Any funds the DOC has a fiduciary responsibility for including but not limited to: Agribusiness, Virginia Correctional Enterprises, grants, general funds, or special funds.

**Immediate Recognition Programs** - Recognition at any time for demonstration of behaviors and values of the organization, contributions to the goals and objectives of the organization or work unit and to acknowledge individual or team accomplishments.

**Leave Year** - A 365-day period running from January 10 of one year to January 9 of the next year.

**Non-Monetary Awards** - Non-monetary recognition awards include, but are not limited to, non-refundable gift certificates; meals; trips; plaques; trophies; certificates; pencils, pens and desk items; cups and mugs; personal items of clothing such as caps, shirts, and sweatshirts; and other items such as tools, electronics, radios, sports equipment and timepieces.

**Planned Recognition Programs** - Prearranged ways of acknowledging contributions and accomplishments of an individual or team; this approach provides more frequent opportunities to recognize employees than more formal recognition events, such as Service Awards and Virginia Public Service Week.

**Senior Leadership** - Senior Leadership includes the Director, the Chief Deputy Director, the Senior Deputy Director, the Deputy Director for Institutions, the Deputy Director for Community Corrections, the Deputy Director for Health Services, the Deputy Director of Programs, Education, and Reentry, and the Chief of Staff.



## PURPOSE

This operating procedure provides guidance for the establishment and administration of planned activities and awards that recognize Department of Corrections (DOC) employees and convey the Department's appreciation for their performance, dedication, and commitment to public service and public safety in the Commonwealth. Such activities and awards should support the DOC mission, promote the Healing Environment, and create an incentive for employees to continue good performances.

## PROCEDURE

- I. Events That May Be Funded With DOC Funds
  - A. Annual Employee Service Recognition Awards Program
  - B. Annual Director's Value Awards Program
  - C. Public Safety Week
  - D. National Employee Recognition Weeks (e.g., Corrections Offices, Probation and Parole Officers, Nurses, etc.)
  - E. Organizational Unit Level Awards Programs
  - F. Retirement Celebrations
- II. Awards That May Be Purchased With DOC Funds
  - A. Value Awards at Department, Regional, or Organizational Unit Level
    1. Annual Governor's Honor Awards
    2. Director's Value Awards
    3. Other Value Awards, such as: Employee of the Year and Healing Environment
  - B. Mementoes that may be purchased with DOC Funds:
    1. Predetermined Service Awards mementoes.
    2. Predetermined Retirement mementoes.
    3. Event tickets that are consistent with DOC values limited to \$25 per ticket and two tickets per award.
    4. Purchases from VCE, such as pins, plaques, trophies etc., for up to \$50.00 dollars per person, per fiscal year.
    5. Purchases from the DOC Culinary Arts Program such as gift certificates or baked goods etc., for up to \$50.00 per person, per fiscal year.
    6. Tokens of appreciation such as challenge coins, tumblers, cups, folio pads etc., for up to \$50.00 dollars per person, per fiscal year.
- III. Administration of Employee Recognition
  - A. Recognition events and awards will be managed by Facility Unit Heads and Chief P&P Officers in accordance with Implementation Memorandums approved by the Regional Administrator.
  - B. The Human Resource Officer (HRO) for each unit Organizational Unit should be consulted in the development, administration, and evaluation of any employee recognition program, whether the recognition is immediate or planned in nature. This includes handling each case where employee recognition is awarded and use of *Employee Recognition Award 165\_F1* is necessary.
  - C. Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) Policy 1.15, *Employee Recognition and Engagement*, restricts the value of monetary and non-monetary recognition that an employee may receive



during a fiscal year to \$5,000.00.

1. This does not include the value of recognition leave.
2. The HRO will monitor recognition awards granted to employees under this and other recognition programs to comply with DHRM policy and ensure that expenditures for any employee with a single monetary award of \$500.00 or more per fiscal year do not exceed the maximum fiscal year limit per employee of \$5,000.00.

D. Recognition leave is treated separately from monetary and non-monetary awards; however, procedures allow an employee to elect to be paid instead of receiving grants of leave. If the employee request is to convert recognition leave to dollars, it is then treated as a monetary award and is taxable.

E. Individual Organizational Units incurring expenses for employee recognition must absorb the associated costs within existing resources. Organizational Unit Heads should request input on their planned spending for employee recognition programs and events from their Regional Business Manager or the DOC Chief Financial Officer.

#### IV. Recipient Attendance at Recognition Events (including Service Award Events)

- A. Attendance at the employee's respective designated ceremony is voluntary.
- B. If the award ceremony falls within business hours on an employee's scheduled day to work, attendance and appropriate travel will be considered work time.
- C. Employees who are on scheduled leave are allowed to substitute work time for scheduled leave time to attend the ceremony through schedule adjustments.
- D. Employees who are on rest day will not be paid for attendance at the ceremony.
- E. Schedule adjustments will be made to allow attendance for those employees who are being recognized and attend the ceremony.
- F. When guests are allowed, employee guests will be limited to one per recipient.
  1. Guests may be anyone the recipient chooses.
  2. If the guest is an employee of the DOC, attendance for that guest is considered paid work time, if it is during their work hours.
- G. The use of a state vehicle for attendance at events held away from the employee's workplace is considered official business and is authorized for award recipients and their guest.

#### V. Service Awards

##### A. Award Periods

1. Service anniversaries should be recognized in a timely manner for qualified employees. At minimum, awards should be presented annually for employees who have reached five years of state service and in five-year increments thereafter, e.g., 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, etc.
2. One and three-year Service Awards should be presented upon completion of the employee's service period at the Organizational Unit level.
3. Programs may be modified to provide recognition of other service milestones.

##### B. Qualification and Eligibility

1. Qualifying service will be a total of all state service, whether continuous or broken.
  - a. State service includes all periods of approved leave with and without pay.
  - b. Wage service and periods of non-working long-term disability do not qualify.
2. Recognition events and awards will be managed by Facility Unit Heads and Chief P&P Officers in



accordance with Implementation Memorandums approved by the Regional Administrator.

## VI. Immediate Recognition Programs

A. Immediate recognition may be provided at any time for individual or team exemplary accomplishment(s). The achievement(s) and contributions should reflect efforts made above and beyond normal and expected work duties.

### B. Non-Monetary Recognition

1. Non-monetary awards will be limited in cost to \$50.00 per award per employee.
2. The Organizational Unit Head will make non-monetary recognition awards after consultation with the unit's HRO.
3. Regional Administrator and members of Senior Leadership may establish other review requirements for non-monetary recognition.

### C. Recognition Leave

1. Recognition leave should be directly related to an employee's exemplary performance that supports the DOC and unit's mission and objectives that goes beyond the normal and expected performance.
  - a. There is latitude in recommending the amount (hours or days) of recognition leave awards. For consistency, one should be able to distinguish between the contributions that result in smaller and larger recognition leave awards.
  - b. Suggested criteria for determining the amount of recognition leave awarded include exemplary efforts on specific projects (one hour up to one or two days) or quelling a disturbance (one hour up to five days).
2. Recognition leave may be awarded by hour(s) or by day(s) up to five workdays, i.e., 40 hours.
  - a. No more than 40 hours of recognition leave within a leave year may be awarded to an individual employee.
  - b. Recognition leave is not to be used to recognize the length of an employee's service, as a retirement bonus, as birthday bonus, or other reasons not in compliance with DHRM Policy, 1.15, *Employee Recognition and Engagement*.
3. Eligibility
  - a. Full-time and part-time classified and restricted employees with current performance evaluation ratings of "contributor" or above are eligible.
  - b. Wage employees are not eligible for recognition leave.
4. The *Employee Recognition Award 165\_F1* will be used to submit, review, approve, and process recognition leave awards. Members of Senior Leadership may establish other review requirements for recognition leave.
5. The completed *Employee Recognition Award* for recognition leave must be provided to the Human Resource Officer for keying into Cardinal.

D. The Spot Bonus Program recognizes employees who have delivered key results through individual contributions with one-time cash payments.

1. All full-time classified or wage employee of the DOC, other than the Director, are eligible for a Spot Bonus if they have delivered key results in achieving or supporting efforts in the following areas:
  - a. Department, region, or unit mission.
  - b. Department, region, or unit strategic plan.
  - c. Department, region, or unit operational plan.
  - d. Exemplary demonstration of one of the Department's core values or business practices.



- e. Providing credible information on how drugs or contraband are being introduced into DOC facilities.
2. The contribution recognized by the spot bonus must be the recognition of an individual's accomplishment; it is not and should not be used as recognition for all members of a team, group, or unit. The accomplishments of a team, group, or unit should be recognized utilizing another method other than a Spot Bonus.
3. Spot Bonuses must be documented on the *Employee Spot Bonus Nomination 165\_F7* with the supporting justification described in the narrative section or as an attachment, and must include the approval of the Director, appropriate Deputy Director, or Chief of Staff; see Attachment 1, *Spot Bonus Program*, for eligibility details and administrative guidance.

## VII. Planned Recognition Programs

- A. Each Organizational Unit Head has the authority to award recognition leave or the identified cash payment under a planned recognition program as these programs are approved in advance. The *Employee Recognition Award 165\_F1* should be used for all awards.
- B. Each employee recognized through a planned recognition program covered by this operating procedure will be given a certificate at a ceremony. A suitable certificate for employee recognition is available on the master forms list in the DOC Virtual Library; see *Employee Recognition Award Certificate 165\_F2*.
- C. After approval as outlined above, the *Employee Recognition Award 165\_F1* must go to the Human Resource Officer for keying into appropriate human resource information systems and then, if recognition leave, to the leave coordinator, or if cash payment, to the payroll department.
- D. Period Recognition
  1. More than one employee may be recognized for a period based on the workforce of the unit; i.e., a major institution might recognize a security and a non-security employee.
  2. Employees who receive recognition for a period will receive either of the following recognitions:
    - a. Specified hours of recognition leave, or
    - b. Specified amount of cash payment
  3. The specified recognition for Employee of the Month is eight hours of Recognition Leave or a cash payment of \$75; for Employee of the Quarter is 16 hours of Recognition Leave or a cash payment of \$150; for Employee of the Year is 32 hours of Recognition Leave or \$400.
  4. Upon recognition by the Organizational Unit Head, the employee may choose either recognition option.
  5. If the cash payment option is selected, it will normally be processed in the employee's compensation for the next regularly available payroll period, identified by a separate one-time item included on the pay stub. A cash payment under this program is taxable and may not be received in the form of deferred compensation.
  6. The *Employee Recognition Award 165\_F1* will be used to process the employee's choice.
- E. Initiation of New Planned Recognition Programs
  1. Submission for new planned recognition programs will be made to the DOC Employee Benefits Manager who will make a recommendation to the Chief Human Resource Officer Resources for final approval.
  2. The following guidelines for planned employee recognition programs should be provided in the submission to the Employee Benefits Manager and communicated to employees once the program is approved and initiated:
    - a. The purpose of the recognition program.

- b. The criteria upon which recognition decisions will be based.
  - c. A description of the process for selection of employees for recognition awards.
  - d. The identification of the person(s) responsible for selecting recognition award recipients.
  - e. A description of the awards and the manner of presentation.
  - f. Use of the *Employee Recognition Award 165\_F1* must be included in the program.
3. There is latitude in recommending the amount (hours or days) of recognition leave or other awards.
    - a. For consistency, one should be able to distinguish between the contributions that result in smaller and larger recognition leave or other awards.
    - b. Based on unit practices, additional provisions unique to the unit that do not have any cash value may be included, e.g., reserved parking space.

#### VIII. Retirement Celebrations

- A. The retirement celebration of an active employee is a recognition event for the service and contributions of that employee. The *Retirement Certificate and Retiree ID Request 165\_F3* should be submitted to Headquarters Office of Human Resources Benefits preferably three months but no later than two months prior to retirement effective date.
- B. Attendance at the celebration during normal business hours by employees that have worked with the retiree and if approved by the employee's supervisor is considered official work time and official business; see Operating Procedure 110.1, *Hours of Work and Leaves of Absence*.
- C. The DOC will only allow supervisory approved work time at retirement celebrations that occur during normal business hours. No alcohol may be served at these DOC recognized retirement celebrations.
- D. State vehicles may be driven to retirement celebrations by employees from other work units with prior supervisory approval. Carpooling is encouraged to events of this kind and should occur as appropriate.
- E. Any retirement celebration held outside normal work hours is not a DOC function.
  1. The time spent organizing or attending such a function is not considered work time.
  2. State vehicles are not authorized to be used for such a function.
- F. DOC funds may only be used to pay for incidental food purchases and utensils at retirement celebrations.
  1. Examples of permitted incidental purchases include a cake, snacks, coffee, or bottled water.
  2. In the case of a retirement luncheon, it would be permissible to pay for the meal of the retiree only as a form of employee recognition.
  3. The purchase of full meals for all employees, and the purchase of table settings and flowers from private vendors, decorations, or alcohol are not permitted.
- G. Organizational Unit Heads may use their discretion when planning employee recognition events to ensure that only responsible expenditures of tax dollars is allowed.
- H. Generally, DOC funds may not be used to pay for any other expense associated with the celebration unless specifically authorized in this operating procedure.

#### IX. Other Recognition Programs

Other special awards of recognition, such as Meritorious Awards, Governor's Awards, etc., may be presented with the approval of the Director, or appropriate Deputy Director or, as consistent with Department of Human Resource Management Policy 1.15, *Employee Recognition and Engagement*.

#### X. Events and Awards That Will Not Be Funded With DOC Funds

- A. Commercial florist purchases: units may use DOC horticulture programs as allowable by DOC operating





procedures and as available.

- B. Books which will be personally owned by the employee.
- C. Personal snacks or refreshments not associated with a planned Unit, Regional, or Department level event.
- D. Holiday or other decorations
- E. Holiday celebrations
- F. Alcoholic beverages
- G. Charitable contributions
- H. Religious celebrations
- I. Birthday and personal anniversary celebrations
- J. Wedding and baby showers
- K. Separation events/celebrations; food and utensils for DOC supported retirement events are authorized.

## **REFERENCES**

Department of Human Resource Management Policy 1.15, *Employee Recognition and Engagement*  
Operating Procedure 110.1, *Hours of Work and Leaves of Absence*

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1, *Spot Bonus Program*

## **FORM CITATIONS**

*Employee Recognition Award* 165\_F1

*Employee Recognition Award Certificate* 165\_F2

*Retirement Certificate and Retiree ID Request* 165\_F3

*Employee Spot Bonus Nomination* 165\_F7

