

CHAPTER 10

INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM

Section I - General

1-1. **General.** The National Guard Incentive Awards Program is designed to motivate technicians of the National Guard to increase productivity, creativity and to achieve greater efficiency, economy, and improvement of operations. It provides a method for rewarding employees whose job performance and ideas are substantially above normal job requirements and performance standards, and provides for consideration of performance contributions throughout the National Guard.

1-2. **Responsibilities.**

a. Human Resources Specialist (Employee Benefits)

- (1) Serve as the program manager for the state Awards Program.
- (2) Provide advice, assistance, and training to commanders, managers and supervisors on effective use and participation in the program.
- (3) Provide training and orientation to all technicians and military members on how they may earn awards.
- (4) Arrange for payment and presentation of awards and ensure appropriate publicity.
- (5) Evaluate the state Awards Program and develop feedback to management and technicians.

b. Commanders, Managers and Supervisors

- (1) Provide support for and participate in the state Awards Program.
- (2) Determine what type of recognition will best motivate a technician to greater productivity and match recognition with performance.
- (3) Ensure that awards for special acts or services are recognized immediately and that all award presentations are conducted in a timely manner.

Section II - Awards

2-1. Sustained Superior Performance Awards (SSPA).

a. **Purpose.** An SSPA is a monetary award in recognition of significant superior performance of duties and responsibilities that clearly exceed the Technician's assigned position requirements.

b. **Eligibility.** An SSPA is available for both permanent and indefinite GS and WG Technicians. The Technician's current overall performance appraisal must be Excellent (level 4) or higher. Sustained superior performance on which the award is based must have been maintained for at least 6 months in the same job and grade level, unless the technician was demoted during the period for reasons other than for cause. Temporary promotions, details, or LWOP of less than 30 days will not interrupt the 6-month waiting period, but temporary promotions, details and LWOP of 30 days or more will be considered a break. Reassignment to the same job and grade but in another location is considered continuous service. Award eligibility will not be affected by position changes occurring after the period covered by the recommendation. However, an SSPA is not appropriate if a technician is about to receive, or has received a promotion within the last 6 months.

(1) Technicians may only be awarded an SSPA after 2 years from the last SSPA or Irregular Performance Pay Increase (formerly QSI). Two years should be counted from the effective date of the last award as shown on the SF 50.

(2) An SSPA is not appropriate when a Technician is within 6 months of separation from Federal Service.

(3) Performance appraisals must be current prior to submission of NGB Form 32.

c. **Procedures and Approval Authority.** The Technician's immediate supervisor is responsible for initiating the nomination using NGB Form 32 dated 15 April 2006, along with written justification that demonstrates how the Technician has carried out his/her duties and responsibilities in a superior manner. The justification can be either the Technician's most recent performance appraisal, if it is less than 60 days old, or a narrative justification in the Remarks Section, page 2, NGB Form 32 or on plain bond paper. The nominations should be submitted through channels to JFHQ-AL, ATTN: HRO-ERS. Signatures on the NGB Form 32 will be as follows: The nominee's immediate supervisor will sign block 9. Block 10 will be signed by a manager or supervisor at the next higher level. Section IV "Local Commander" block will be signed by the next higher headquarters for ARNG awards and by the Base/Station Commander for ANG awards. The individual who signs in block IV will also check the appropriate block for approval or disapproval. The Adjutant General or his designated representative will approve or disapprove the request. The nomination will be returned through supervisory channels to the nominating official with a suitable explanation if disapproved. When a nomination is disap-

proved the technician must complete a new 6-month performance period before being recommended for another SSPA. The new period begins immediately following the period the disapproved recommendation was based upon.

d. **Amount Of Award:** All SSPA's will be in the amount of \$1,500.00. Total dollar amount of annual awards to be given will be decided by the Human Resources Officer for ARNG Awards or the appropriate base financial manager for ANG Awards.

e. Approved SSPA's are effective at the beginning of the next regular pay period following the date of final approval.

2-2. **Irregular Performance Pay Increases (formerly QSI).**

a. **Purpose.** Irregular Performance Pay Increases should be used only by management officials as recognition of service that significantly exceeds high quality job performance by General Schedule Technicians. An Irregular Performance Pay Increase is not to be repeated on a purely automatic basis, but should clearly show that the technician's performance is deserving of such recognition. If a technician has received an Irregular Performance Pay Increase, the justification for another such increase in the same grade and position must provide specific evidence of increased quality of performance over and beyond that on which the previous increase was warranted.

b. **Eligibility.** A Technician must have a minimum of 12 months in the same job and grade level to be considered for an Irregular Performance Pay Increase. Temporary promotions, details, or LWOP of less than 30 days will not interrupt the 12-month period, but temporary promotions, details and LWOP of 30 days or more will be considered a break. Reassignment to the same job and grade but in another location is considered continuous service. To be eligible for an Irregular Performance Pay Increase, the technician's current overall performance appraisal must have been Outstanding (Level 5) rating. Such performance must also be expected to continue at the same level of effectiveness.

(1) An Irregular Performance Pay Increase is not appropriate when a Technician is about to receive a promotion.

(2) An Irregular Performance Pay Increase is not appropriate when a Technician is within 6 months of separation from Federal Service.

(3) An Irregular Performance Pay Increase may not be granted when it is based in whole or in part upon a specific act or any period of service that served as the basis for a previous cash award.

(4) Technicians may only be awarded an Irregular Performance Pay Increase after 1 year has elapsed since the last Irregular Performance Pay Increase or SSPA. The waiting period should be counted from the date of the last award as shown on SF 50.

(5) Performance appraisals must be current prior to submission of NGB Form 32.

c. Procedures: The Technician's immediate supervisor is responsible for initiating the nomination using NGB Form 32 dated 15 April 2006, along with written justification that describes the Technician's exceptional performance and the fact that this high quality performance is expected to continue in the future. The justification can be either the Technician's most recent performance appraisal, if it is less than 60 days old, or a narrative justification in the Remarks Section, page 2, NGB Form 32 or on plain bond paper. The nominations should be submitted through channels to JFHQ-AL, ATTN: HRO-ERS. Signatures on the NGB Form 32 will be as follows: The nominee's immediate supervisor will sign block 9. Block 10 will be signed by a manager or supervisor at the next higher level. Section IV "Local Commander" block will be signed by the next higher headquarters for ARNG awards and by the Base/Station Commander for ANG awards. The individual who signs in block IV will also check the appropriate block for approval or disapproval.

d. Approval Authority: The Adjutant General or his designated representative will approve or disapprove the recommendation. The nomination will be returned through supervisory channels to the nominating official with a suitable explanation if disapproved. When a nomination for an Irregular Performance Pay Increase is disapproved, a new period of consideration must be completed (12 months from the previous period of service) prior to being nominated for another Irregular Performance Pay Increase.

e. Effective Date: Approved Irregular Performance Pay Increases are effective at the beginning of the next regular pay period following the date of final approval.

2-3. **Suggestions.**

a. All permanent, indefinite and temporary technicians are eligible to participate in the suggestion program. Air National Guard personnel should follow the instructions found in ANGI 38-401, dated 12 April 2001. Army National Guard personnel should follow the instructions in the Army Suggestion User Guide located on Army Knowledge Online (AKO) at <https://armysuggestions.army.mil>.

b. Suggestion must meet the following requirements:

(1) Is submitted in writing before or within 90 days after the date the suggestion is adopted.

(2) Involves a proposal that is original to the National Guard as a whole.

(3) Does not substantially duplicate a suggestion already under consideration or a suggestion for which the ownership rights have not expired.

(4) Is outside the individuals job responsibilities or, if within, are so superior that it warrants special recognition.

(5) All information available (stock number, form title, numbers of parts, type of aircraft, address of Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) if known, photographs, sketches, drawings, blueprints, etc. must be listed. Classified material must be properly controlled.

c. Army National Guard Suggestions will be submitted via website at <https://armysuggestions.army.mil>. The Army Suggestion Program (ASP) is an application within the AKO website where AKO users can upload suggestions for consideration for adoption. The application is available to support the submitting individuals by retaining suggestions made, processing new suggestions and administering control lists pertaining to each suggestion. The suggestions are dispersed to evaluators dependent upon what the suggestion pertains to, best effort to process all suggestions and functional requirements. DA standards require the receipt, evaluation, and disposition of an idea completed within 30 calendar days at each command level; however, sometimes a test/analysis period is needed which will require additional time.

d. Air National Guard Suggestions will be submitted on AF 1000 in legible handwriting or typewritten. They must give an outline of the specific area for improvement, state the potential workable solution in detail and give the benefits that can be expected. More than one solution may exist, but they should cite enough potential benefits to warrant a change.

e. Each suggestion received by the Alabama National Guard Program Manager, will be checked against current award files for duplication. After submission on line (Army only) using AKO, National Guard Bureau (NGB) receives the suggestion. NGB then assigns a control number and notifies the Human Resources Office. The individual will also receive confirmation of receipt via e-mail. If a suggestion is incomplete or not considered eligible, it will be returned to the individual with an appropriate explanation.

f. Suggestions that are accepted will be processed as follows:

(1) Suggestions for Army will be sent via e-mail and will direct the Regional Program Manager to assign a Functional Proponent. The Program Manager will receive a final e-mail that will inform them of the evaluation and its findings. All suggestions originally enter the ASP application at level one, and it is always the Coordinators responsibility to close out a suggestion by notifying the submitting individual.

(2) Suggestions for Air will be evaluated on AF 1000-1 with full consideration given to any developments directly attributed to the suggestion. To approve or disapprove a suggestion, the responsible official must have the authority to implement the suggestion. Total processing time must not exceed 30 calendar days. Processing time starts when JFHQ-AL-HRO receives the suggestion and ends when JFHQ-AL-HRO notifies the submitting individual that the suggestion is approved, in concurrent (approval pending implementation) status, being forwarded to a higher authority or disapproved. If a suggestion requires extensive study or testing,

the HRO may grant extensions to complete the evaluation. The organization responsible for the study or test must provide the rationale for the extension and an estimated completion date on or prior to the processing times established by ANGI 38-401 dated 12 April 2001.

(3) When a suggestion is determined by the OPR to require modification or updating of aircraft, systems, or equipment, it must be converted to the appropriate format and sent through appropriate channels. Once the OPR makes such a determination, that office holds the suggestion in abeyance until that channel of processing is complete. A suggestion may not be processed under the provisions of TPR 451 until final approval of the modification or updating change is received and documented as to date and method of implementation and benefits to be derived. To facilitate finalization of the suggestion and ensure proper credit for any resulting changes, the modification request/equipment improvement recommendation should state: "This action is the result of Suggestion (indentifying symbol and number, date and name of suggesting individual(s))." If adopted, the implementing OPR will provide a completed AF 1000-1 reflecting proper credit for the source of the original idea.

(4) When a suggestion is within the authority of the evaluator to adopt and is considered useful and practicable, the AF 1000-1 will state how and when the suggestion could be placed into operation and an estimate of the annual savings and benefits, together with an explanation of the method used in making the determination. For Army, after the submitting individual has submitted a suggestion, the submitting individual can check his/her status by logging into the application on the AKO website or at <https://armysuggestions.army.mil> and click the "Suggestion Submitters" tab on the navigation bar on the left hand side of the Home Page. The OPR will evaluate tangible and/or intangible benefits. The OPR will return the suggestion to the Program Manager with recommendation as to level of adoption. When the suggestion is recommended for implementation beyond the local level, the Program Manager will forward the original suggestion to NGB-HR for processing.

(5) When a suggestion is not within the authority of the evaluator to adopt and considered useful and practical, the OPR will return the AF 1000-1 to the Program Manager who will forward the suggestion to NGB-HR for processing.

(6) A suggestion that is not considered useful or practical may be rejected at any level. The Program Manager, in coordination with the OPR, should not forward suggestions to NGB-HR unless they are considered to be fully useful and beneficial improvements. If the evaluator is uncertain of the suggestion's value, the suggestion should be returned to the Program Manager for further action.

(7) When an Army suggestion has been disapproved, the submitting individual will receive an email stating the suggestions disapproved status. The submitting individual may resubmit a disapproved suggestion within 60 days of receiving their first disapproval. The submitting individual will then be given the specific reason for disapproval and at which level it was disapproved. To resubmit a suggestion the submitting individual will need to provide updated information and/or explain in detail why the suggestion should be reconsidered for adop-

tion. When an Air Suggestion has been disapproved, the OPR will return the suggestion to the Program Manager with an appropriate explanation. The Program Manager will return the suggestion with the OPR recommendations to the suggesting individual(s).

(8) Suggestions received by NGB-HR will be given an NGB number and sent to the appropriate OPR for evaluation. NGB-HR will inform the program manager of the status of a suggestion. Once the evaluation is completed, NGB-HR will advise the state program manager of the approval or disapproval of the suggestion along with a copy of the evaluation. Approvals will also provide cash award information, if appropriate.

g. Authority To Grant Suggestion Awards.

(1) The Adjutant General may approve cash awards up to and including \$3,000.00 for locally adopted suggestions resulting in tangible/intangible benefits or combination of both. Cash awards for locally approved suggestions in excess of \$3,000.00 will be sent to NGB-HR with a recommendation for the additional award. All cash awards for suggestions will be processed on an NGB Form 50.

(2) The amount of a cash award approved by the State Adjutant General must be determined based on the benefits derived. The total amount of a cash award to a group may not exceed the total award. If individuals in the group made a substantially equal contribution, each will receive an equal share of the award. If their contributions differ significantly, each receives a share proportionate to their contributions to the suggestion. When submitting a group suggestion, the group should indicate the sharing ratio for any cash award.

(3) The Chief, National Guard Bureau, is authorized to approve cash awards up to and including \$10,000, inclusive of tangible/intangible benefits or a combination of both.

(4) NGB-HR will forward recommendations for cash in excess of \$10,000 through the appropriate military service Secretary for submission to the Office of Personnel Management.

h. The suggesting individual(s) retains "ownership" of an idea during its evaluation and for 1 year after the date of the final action (date of approval of an award or written notification of non-adoption).

2-4. Inventions.

a. All permanent, indefinite and temporary technicians are eligible.

b. Inventions are a new useful process, machine or other item that may be patentable under the patent laws of the United States. If adopted, inventions submitted as suggestions, or in connection with scientific achievements, are eligible for cash awards. By law, if an invention is published or used publicly or an article embodying it is sold or is placed on sale more than 1

year before filling of a patent application in the US Patent and Trademark Office, a US Letters Patent may not be granted. Therefore, to protect the rights of the Government and the inventor, any suggestion or other contribution that appears to be an invention must be promptly sent to NGB-HR for review and processing. NGB-HR will forward the suggestion, or scientific achievement that incorporates the invention, to the Patents division of the Departments of the Army or the Air Force Judge Advocate General.

c. The Judge Advocate General's office will determine whether the contribution is an invention, what the inventor's rights are, explain what their rights are and whether they will process the invention for patenting.

d. Upon notification from the appropriate Judge Advocate General's Office that an invention has been approved for implementation, NGB-HR will notify the State Program Manager to arrange for payment of a cash award based on benefits to the Government. When an invention award is paid, the inventor must complete the required forms acknowledging the payment of the award. When the inventor accepts an award based upon the approved inventions, the acceptance will constitute waiver of any claim against the Government. Cash awards for inventions will be processed on an NGB Form 50.

2-5. **Special Act or Service Awards.**

a. All permanent, indefinite and temporary technicians are eligible.

b. A special act or service award is a monetary award in recognition of an act of heroism, or similar one-time special act, service, or scientific achievement that contributes to the efficiency, economy or other improvement of Government operations or is otherwise in the public interest. The act, service or scientific achievement may or may not involve measurable monetary benefits and may include an individual or group of individuals.

c. A supervisor having a direct knowledge of the special act or service should initiate the nomination immediately on an NGB Form 32 along with a narrative justification.

d. The amount of the award will be decided by the Adjutant General, designee or designated awards committee based on the tangible and/or intangible benefit to the government. The nomination will be returned through supervisory channels to the nominating official with a suitable explanation if disapproved.

2-6. **Time Off Awards.**

a. Purpose: A time off award is time off from duty as an incentive award without loss of pay or charge to leave. It is recognition of superior accomplishment or other personal effort that contributes to the quality, efficiency or economy of Government operations. Time-off awards may be granted for the same reasons as other awards, including superior job performance over a long period of time.

b. The intent and purpose of this award is to reward a technician for going above and beyond the ordinary job performance and not to replenish an annual or sick leave account.

c. Eligibility:

(1) This applies to all Technicians (Excepted and Competitive).

(2) Must be solely attributed to full time technician position (not military assignment).

(3) Must be eligible to accrue leave.

(4) A Time Off Award is not appropriate when a Technician is within 6 months of separation from Federal Service.

(5) Performance appraisals must be current prior to submission of NGB Form 32.

d. Criteria: Examples of technician achievement that might be considered for such an award are:

(1) Make a high quality contribution involving a difficult or important project or assignment.

(2) Display special initiative and skill in completing an assignment or project before the deadline.

(3) Use initiative and creativity in making improvements in a product, activity, program, or service.

(4) Ensure the mission of the organization is accomplished during a difficult period by successfully completing additional work or a project assignment while maintaining the employee's own work load.

(5) Performing substantially above normal job requirements for an extended period of time.

e. Procedures And Approval Authority: The Technician's immediate supervisor is responsible for initiating the nomination using NGB Form 32 dated 15 April 2006, along with written justification that defines the basis for the award. The justification can be either the Technician's most recent performance appraisal, if it is less than 60 days old, or a narrative justification in the Remarks Section, page 2, NGB Form 32 or on plain bond paper. Whichever justification is used should be attached to the NGB Form 32. Signatures on the NGB Form 32 will be as follows: The nominee's immediate supervisor will sign block 9. Block 10 will be signed by a manager or supervisor at the next higher level. Section IV "Local Commander" block will be signed by the next higher headquarters for ARNG awards and by the Base/Station Commander

for ANG awards. The individual who signs in block IV will also check the appropriate block for approval or disapproval. The justification and the NGB Form 32 must be routed through the supervisor's chain of command to JFHQ-AL-HRO for final approval. Supervisors may approve time off awards for one day or less but NGB Form 32 and justification must be forwarded to HRO for documentation prior to granting time off. Justification to grant a time-off award will not be duplicated in requesting a cash award. A special act or service may be used for only one type of award. A Standard Form 50 will be issued by the HRO granting each time off award regardless of number of hours. Time off may not be utilized prior to the processing of the SF 50.

f. Certified Time and Attendance Reports should be used to record usage, and it should be recorded as code "LY", Time Off Award.

g. Amount Of Award: A time-off award may be granted to any technician who meets the definition. A technician may be granted a maximum of 40 hours of time off from duty as an incentive award for any single contribution. Block 4 of NGB Form 32 should indicate number of hours recommended for time off. The maximum 40 hours should only be considered in exceptional cases. Time off granted under this authority must be scheduled and used within one year after the award is made. The total amount of time off a technician may be granted under this authority during any one leave year is 80 hours.

2-7. **On the Spot Cash Awards.**

a. Purpose of on the spot cash awards is to quickly recognize onetime and short-term efforts by technicians that result in service of an exceptionally high quality or quantity. These awards may provide either monetary or non-monetary recognition of employees. The program does not replace any existing incentive award, and technicians who receive a on the spot cash award can be considered for other awards.

b. Eligibility: All technicians (Excepted and Competitive) are eligible. Examples include situations where technicians:

- (1) Produce exceptionally high quality work under tight deadlines.
- (2) Perform added or emergency assignments in addition to their regular duties.
- (3) Demonstrate exceptional courtesy or responsiveness in dealing with clients or colleagues.
- (4) Exercise extraordinary initiative or creativity in addressing a critical need or difficult problem.

c. Procedures and approval authority: The technician's immediate supervisor is responsible for initiating the nomination, using NGB Form 32 dated 15 April 2006. A short narrative in

the Remarks Section, page 2, NGB Form 32 or on plain bond paper by the supervisor should be attached defining the basis for the award. The narrative and NGB Form 32 should be routed through the supervisory chain of command to JFHQ-HRO for final approval. It is recommended that employees be nominated no more than 2 weeks after the occurrence of the achievement being recognized, whenever possible.

d. These awards are appropriate for technicians who "go the extra mile" or who perform "above and beyond the call of duty". Do not use on the spot cash awards when monetary awards of a greater value are merited. Consider allowing non-supervisory technicians, clients, or customers to recommend (to the appropriate supervisory or managerial official) that a technician be granted an on the spot award.

e. Amount of the Award: \$50.00, \$100.00, \$200.00, \$300.00, \$400.00, or \$500.00, depending on the nature of the service or act being recognized.

f. Awards are subject to applicable tax rules.

2-8. **Civilian Honorary Awards**

a. Purpose: Encourage competitive civilian and excepted technician employees to take part fully in improving government operations. Recognize and reward competitive civilian and excepted technician employees that contribute significantly to efficiency and economy in Government operations.

b. Eligibility Requirements. All technicians are eligible for an Honorary Award.

2-9. **Length of Service Awards**

a. Purpose: Length-of-service emblems and certificates (NGB Form 52) will be awarded to all National Guard technicians as recognition for long faithful Federal service with the National Guard.

b. Eligibility: Technicians become eligible for recognition when they complete 10 years of creditable Federal service. Creditable service includes all service used in establishing the technician's service computation date. This award may be presented in 5 year increments up to and including 50 years.

c. Responsibilities: The HRO determines a Technician's eligibility; prepares the certificate for signature of the Adjutant General; and forwards certificate to supervisors for presentation of certificate and emblems.