

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
Indian Health Service**

Refer to: DPM

ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 96-03
TIME OFF AS AN INCENTIVE AWARD

Sec.

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1. **PURPOSE:** This circular establishes a policy for Time Off as an Incentive Award for Civil Service employees and sets forth the objectives and criteria to recognize Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service (AAIHS) employees. Time Off Awards are intended to increase Federal employees' productivity and creativity by rewarding their contributions to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations.
2. **POLICY:** Managers and supervisors are encouraged to utilize innovative ways to recognize employees' creativity and productivity through the Incentive Awards Program. The AAIHS supports Time Off Awards for this purpose and intends that the process be simplified as much as possible by granting approval authority to first line supervisors and reviewing officials. The granting of Time Off Awards, as well as other incentive awards, is an exercise of management discretion excluded from the administrative grievance procedure.
3. **AUTHORITY:** The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990, Public Law 101-509, provides Federal Agencies authority to grant employees time off from duty as an incentive award under 5 U.S.C. 4502. The Office of Personnel Management has provided regulations under 5 CFR 451.301-307.
4. **DEFINITION:** A Time Off Award is an excused absence granted to a Civil Service employee without charge to leave or loss of pay, as a means of recognition of a personal effort that contributes to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations.

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5. **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- A. The Area Director is responsible for establishing an Area Awards Program which will meet the specific needs of the AAIHS and for providing resources needed to support such a program.
- B. The Personnel Officer is responsible for developing and executing the AAIHS Awards Program through a designated Area Awards Coordinator.
- C. The Area Awards Coordinator is responsible for:
 - 1. Developing policies and procedures.
 - 2. Interpreting policies.
 - 3. Developing the operating budget for the program.
 - 4. Implementing and coordinating promotion of the program.
 - 5. Training supervisors and managers in the effective use of awards as motivators.
 - 6. Evaluating and suggesting improvements in the operation of the program.
 - 7. Preparing and presenting or issuing reports to management, supervisors, and employees.
 - 8. Maintaining and updating the Area Awards Manual as necessary.
- D. Supervisors and managers are responsible for assuring effective use of the Incentive Awards Program by recognizing employees who have made significant contributions.

6. **CRITERIA:**

Nominees must demonstrate high quality accomplishments which contribute to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations. The following are a few examples of high quality accomplishments:

- 1. Making a high quality contribution involving a difficult or important project or assignment.

2. Displaying special initiative and skill in completing an assignment or project before the deadline.
3. Using initiative and creativity in making improvements in a product, activity, program, or service.
4. Ensuring 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 workload.
5. Recognition as Area or service unit employee of the month or year.

A. Granting Time Off Awards. There are two types of Time Off Awards:

1. An award can be given at the discretion of the supervisor subject to the criteria outlined above. This category of award may be given any time during the fiscal year.
2. An award associated with receiving the honor of employee of the month and/or year.

The minimum Time Off Award is eight (8) hours. The maximum award is determined by the following:

1. Full-Time Employees. An employee may be granted up to 40 hours of time-off from duty as an incentive award for a single contribution. The total amount of time-off an employee may be granted during a leave year is 80 hours.
2. Part-time Employees and Those with Uncommon Tours of Duty. In determining the total amount of hours that such employees may be granted, AAIHS should use the average number of hours of work in the employee's biweekly scheduled tour of duty over a period of one (1) year, if available. For a single contribution involving a part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour, AAIHS may award one-half (1/2) of the maximum number of hours that could be granted during the leave year.
3. AAO/Service Unit Employee of the Month. The employee will be awarded eight (8) hours. The scheduling of Time Off Award will be at the discretion of the supervisor.

4. AAO/Service Unit Employee of the Year. The employee will be awarded 16 hours. The scheduling of Time Off Award will be at the discretion of the supervisor.
5. Area-Wide Employee of the Year. The employee will be awarded 24 hours. The scheduling of Time Off Award will be at the discretion of the supervisor.

A Time Off Award is based on the employee's work schedule at the time the award is approved.

- B. Approval of Awards. The immediate supervisor is authorized to approve eight (8) hours within one fiscal year without further review. The next higher level official is authorized to approve up to 40 hours for a single Time Off Award. The immediate supervisor and/or approving official should determine the number of hours to be granted for a Time Off Award by considering the benefits realized by the Government in terms of value of the contribution and the extent of application and/or impact of the employee's contribution (see Exhibit A).
- C. Relationship to Other Awards. Time Off Awards are another form of recognition to be used to encourage and recognize exceptional employees for contributions that benefit the Government. They do not replace existing cash or honorary awards. Time Off Awards are for specific accomplishments that are generally of a one-time, non-recurring nature. Time Off Awards are not intended for continuing high level performance; are not to replace or conflict with performance awards; nor are they to be based on performance appraisal ratings. Time Off Awards may be used in combination or in conjunction with Special Act cash or honorary awards. As with other incentive awards, Time Off Awards will be given due weight when rating and ranking an employee for promotion.
- D. Relationship To Leave. Time Off Awards are types of new employee incentives rather than a category of leave. They cannot be converted to a cash payment under any circumstance. Therefore, they cannot be converted, like accrued annual leave, to a cash payment upon separation from the Federal Service. Time Off Awards cannot be transferred when the employee transfers to another Federal agency. However, a Time Off Award may be transferred within the IHS if (1) the employee was unable to use the award because of unusual circumstances and (2) the new supervisor agrees to allow the employee to use the Time Off Award in the new position.

7. **PROCEDURES:**

A. Employee of the Month

Any manager/supervisor or employee can nominate an individual for Employee of the Month. The Employee Honor Award Program Nomination Form (see Exhibit D) must be completed and submitted to the Awards Committee. The individual submitting the nomination must state on the nomination form, in a clear and concise manner, the contribution or accomplishments made by the employee. Selection of the Employee of the Month is made by the Awards Committee. The Awards Committee shall complete the Time Off Awards Notification Form (see Exhibit B) and forward it to the employee's supervisor for approval. The Employee of the Month is automatically awarded the applicable "Time Off Award" (see Section 6-A).

B. Employee of the Year

The Awards Committee will select the Employee of the Year from the nominees who were awarded the Employee of the Month Award during the current year. The Awards Committee shall complete the Time Off Award Notification Form and forward it to the employee's supervisor for approval. The Employee of the Year is automatically awarded the applicable "Time Off Award" (see Section 6-A).

C. Area-Wide Employee of the Year.

1. Each Service Unit Awards Committee will recommend one nominee for the Area-Wide Employee of the Year to the Area Awards Committee, Albuquerque Area Office (AAO) no later than December 31 of each year.
2. The Area Awards Committee, AAO will recommend one nominee from among the AAO Employees of the Month as a candidate for Area-Wide Employee of the Year.
3. The Area Awards Committee, AAO will select one nominee for the Area-Wide Employee of the Year from among the nominees received from the AAO and Service Units. The Area Awards Coordinator will forward the committee's recommendation for the Area-Wide Employee of the Year to the Area Director for final approval.

4. The Area Awards Committee, AAO shall then complete the Time Off Award Notification Form and forward it to the employee's supervisor for approval.
5. The Area-Wide Employee of the Year is automatically awarded the applicable "Time Off Award" (see Section 6-A).

D. Time-Off Awards

The immediate supervisor prepares a brief written statement on the Time Off Award Notification Form (see Exhibit B) describing, in a clear and concise manner, the contribution or accomplishments made by the employee. If the award amount exceed eight (8) hours, the award nomination will be referred to the next higher level official for review and approval.

E. Distribution of Employee Time Off Award Notification Form

1. The employee's supervisor will retain a copy of the Time Off Award Notification Form to be used for preparation of a SF-52, Request for Personnel Action (see Exhibit C).
2. The employee's supervisor will forward the SF-52, a copy of the Time Off Award Notification Form, and the Employee Honor Awards Program Nomination Form, if selected as employee of the month or year, (see Exhibit D) to the Area personnel office.
3. A copy of the Time Off Award Notification Form will be provided to the Area Awards Committee for tracking purposes.
4. A copy of the Time Off Award Notification Form will be furnished to the Timekeeper for recording on the Time and Attendance Record.
5. The original Time Off Award Notification Form and the Time Off Award Program Certificate (see Exhibits F & G) will be presented to the employee by his/her immediate supervisor.

F. Documenting Use of Time Off Award. The Area personnel office is responsible for preparing an SF-50B, Notification of Personnel Action (see Exhibit E). The original SF-50B is sent to the employee with a copy to his/her immediate supervisor. A copy is also retained in the employee's official personnel folder. An SF-50B is required for each award occurrence.

G. Time and Attendance Recording.

(1) Civil Service Employees

The timekeeper shall receive a copy of the notification form for each Time Off Award granted. Based on this information, the timekeeper will establish a Time Off Incentive Award Account Record for the award recipient (see HHS Instruction 451-1 and Chapter 25 of the Timekeeping Manual). The timekeeper shall record on the Time Off Award Leave Record form the employee's hours granted under the Time Off Awards Program. When the Time Off Award is taken by the employee, the timekeeper will record the time off award hours on the time card (Time and Attendance Report Form (NHS-402). All time off award leave will be posted on the time card as "administrative leave".

H. Using Time Off Award. The immediate supervisor has the authority to schedule the use of the Time Off Award. The Time Off Award should be scheduled so that it will not adversely affect the workload. Therefore, the employee and the immediate supervisor will agree on the use of the Time Off Award.

A Time Off Award must be scheduled and used within one year of the effective date of the award, which is the date the approving official signs the award. The Employee should be informed of the 1-year limitation when the award is presented. Any time off not used within the 1-year period will be lost. The expiration date is inserted on the notification form for this purpose.

Time Off Awards should be scheduled and used so as not to adversely affect an employee who is in an annual leave "use or lose" situation. In addition, if the employee becomes physically incapacitated during the use of the Time Off Award, the immediate supervisor may grant sick leave for the period of incapacitation and reschedule the use of the award.

Time Off Awards do not convert to cash under any circumstances.

I. Reviewing and Reporting Time Off Awards. Proper use of this authority will be monitored during personnel management evaluations and management reviews. Time Off Awards will be reported on the Incentive Awards Annual Program Report. Special reporting may be required as necessary.

8. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** This circular is effective upon date of signature.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Dupree', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dorothy Dupree
Acting Area Director
Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service

TIME-OFF AWARDS SCALE FOR A SINGLE CONTRIBUTIONValue to OrganizationNumber of Hours**Moderate:**

1 to 10

- (1) A contribution to a product, activity, program, or service to the public, which is of sufficient value to merit formal recognition.
- (2) Beneficial change or modification of operating principles or procedures.

Substantial:

11 to 20

- (1) An important contribution to the value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public.
- (2) Significant change or modification of operating principles or procedures.

High:

21 to 30

- (1) A highly significant contribution to the value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public.
- (2) Complete revision of operating principles or procedures, with considerable impact.

Exceptional:

31 to 40

- (1) A superior contribution to the quality of a critical product, activity, program, or service to the public.
- (2) Initiation of a new principle or major procedure, with significant impact.

EXHIBIT B

**ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE
TIME OFF AWARD
NOTIFICATION FORM**

NAME OF
AWARDEE: _____

EMPLOYEE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:

TITLE/GRADE: _____

WORK LOCATION:

NUMBER OF HOURS AWARDED:

- 8 hours (AAO/SU Employee of the Month)
- 16 hours (AAO/SU Employee of the Year)
- 24 hours (Area-wide Employee of the Year)
- 8 hours (supervisor discretion)
- 16-40 hours (supervisor discretion and approved by next level supervisor)

REASON FOR AWARD

- AAO/SU Employee of the Month
- AAO/SU Employee of the Year
- Area-wide Employee of the Year
- Supervisor's/next level supervisor's discretion. If checked describe below the special accomplishments, contributions or activity which merits the time-off award (see Section 6)

Approved by Immediate Supervisor

(Date) (Name)

Approved by Next-level Supervisor

(Name) (Date)

TIME OFF AWARD MUST BE USED BY:

approval) (No later than 1 year after date of

EXHIBIT D

**ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE
EMPLOYEE HONOR AWARDS PROGRAM**

NOMINATION FORM

1. _____ 2.

NAME OF AWARD
MONTH/YEAR

3 _____ 4.

TITLE, GRADE, WORK LOCATION

NAME OF EMPLOYEE

5. DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS
WHICH MERIT
SPECIAL HONOR:

6. CITATION: (25 words or less) BEGIN WITH THE WORD "FOR...":

7. _____ 8. _____
DATE PREPARED BY: TITLE

9. AWARDS COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATION: _____

SIGNATURE DATE

CHAIRPERSON

10 _____
SIGNATURE, TITLE

11. _____
APPROVED
DATE

APPROVING OFFICIAL