

MS 662 Peace Corps Incentive Awards Program

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Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources

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MS 662 Peace Corps Incentive Awards Handbook

Attachments

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1.0 Authority

22 U.S.C. 2506, 22 U.S.C. 4013, 5 U.S.C. 4302, 5 U.S.C. 4501-9, and 5 CFR, Part 451

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this manual section is to establish the policies governing the Peace Corps Incentive Awards Program. Implementing procedures are contained in the MS 662 *Peace Corps Incentive Awards Program Handbook* (the “*Handbook*”).

3.0 Policy

The policy of the Peace Corps is to encourage all employees to participate in improving U.S. Government operations and service to the public. The Peace Corps promotes this objective through the Incentive Awards Program, which recognizes and rewards employees, individually or as a member of a group, for:

- (a) Exceptional performance;
- (b) Innovations, suggestions, or other personal efforts that contribute to the efficiency, economy, or other improvements of U.S. Government operations or achieve a significant reduction in paperwork; and,
- (c) Performing special acts or services related to their official employment.

The *Incentive Awards Committee* (the “*Committee*”) has oversight responsibility for the Incentive Awards Program. Supervisors, covered employees, and groups of covered employees may make nominations for Incentive Awards, which may be approved by the Committee, an A Delegate, or the Director, as more fully described in the *Handbook*.

4.0 Applicability

This manual section applies to all employees, including expert consultants and personal services contractors, as well as former employees and estates of deceased employees (if the Incentive

Award is based on service while employed). Employees may receive more than one Incentive Award in a given year, but the distribution of multiple Incentive Awards in the same year to the same individual deserves careful consideration. Employees of Peace Corps contractors and persons who perform volunteer work for the Peace Corps are not eligible for Incentive Awards. MS 743 *Personal Services Contracts with Host Country Residents* contains additional guidance on cash awards for personal service contractors. Additional guidance and procedures solely applicable to awards for employees of the Office of Inspector General has been issued by the Peace Corps Inspector General.

5.0 Incentive Awards Committee

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of the *Committee* is to oversee the Incentive Awards Program and approve certain types of Incentive Awards. The Senior Policy Committee has delegated to the Incentive Awards Committee the authority to consider and recommend revisions to policies governing the Incentive Awards Program and approve amendments to the *Handbook*, which may include the addition of new Incentive Awards or changes to the criteria and procedures governing existing types of Incentive Awards.

5.2 Membership

The Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) will serve as the Chair of the *Committee*. Additional voting members of the *Committee* include the Chief of Staff; Associate Director, Office of Management; Associate Director, Office of Safety and Security; Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Associate Director, Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; Associate Director, Office of Health Services; Associate Director, Office of External Affairs; Chief Financial Officer; Chief Information Officer and the General Counsel.

5.3 Incentive Awards Administrator

The Incentive Awards Administrator will be appointed by the Chief Human Capital Officer in the Office of Human Resources and will serve as technical advisor to the *Committee* and support the work of the *Committee*.

5.4 Meetings

5.4.1 Schedule

The *Committee* will meet at a time and place determined by the Chair. Notice of meetings and Incentive Award proposals will be given to members by the Incentive Awards Administrator as soon as possible prior to the meetings. The Chair, members, or the Incentive Awards Administrator may request additional meetings as needed.

5.4.2 Quorum

A quorum will consist of a majority of the *Committee* plus the Chair. A quorum will be required before the *Committee* may conduct business.

5.4.3 Voting

Incentive Award proposals that require approval by the *Committee* will be distributed to members of the *Committee* for review and decision. The Chair will assure that at least a quorum of the *Committee* review and vote on each Incentive Award proposal. Unless the *Committee* is acting as a whole, a member of the *Committee* may not participate in consideration of any Incentive Award proposal, which originated in or covers employees in such member's organization. In the event of a split vote on a proposed Incentive Award, the Chair will assign another member of the *Committee* to review and vote on the proposal. Any other matter that requires a vote of the *Committee* will be made by a majority of the voting members of the *Committee* at the meeting. *Committee* members may not send or designate another Peace Corps employee to vote in their absence for any Incentive Awards *Committee* proposal requiring approval of the *Committee*.

5.5 Approval of Awards

This section establishes the final approval required for the Director's Distinguished Service Award, Meritorious Service Award, and Award of Commendation. Other categories of awards as well as procedures for nominating and clearance of recommendations for awards are outlined in the Handbook.

5.5.1 Approval of Cash Awards

- (a) The Peace Corps Director must approve all cash awards for the Director's Distinguished Service Award (DDSA).
- (b) A supervisor at the Associate Director (or equivalent) or Regional Director level or higher, shall recommend the approval of cash awards for the Meritorious Service Award (MSA), which must be approved by the Incentive Awards Committee.
- (c) A supervisor at the A Delegate level or higher must approve all cash awards for the Award of Commendation.
- (d) Cash awards exceeding \$10,000 must be approved by the Office of Personnel Management.
- (e) Cash awards exceeding \$25,000 must be approved by the President.

5.5.2 Approval of Meritorious Step Increases

- (a) The Peace Corps Director must approve all Meritorious Step Increases (MSI) awarded under the Director's Distinguished Service Award.

- (b) A supervisor at the Associate Director (or equivalent) or Regional Director level or higher, shall recommend the approval of Meritorious Step Increases awarded under the Meritorious Service Award, which must be approved by the Incentive Awards Committee.
- (c) A supervisor at the A Delegate level or higher must approve all Meritorious Step Increases awarded under the Award of Commendation.

5.5.3 Approval of Nonmonetary Incentive Awards and Time-Off Awards

- (a) Nonmonetary incentive awards must be approved by the appropriate supervisor, the *Committee*, an A Delegate, or the Director, as described in the *Handbook*.
- (b) An employee may receive up to 48 hours in Time-off Awards during a fiscal year. A Time-off award(s) for an individual employee may not exceed a cumulative amount of 48 hours a fiscal year. (For additional details, see the *Handbook*.)

5.5.4 Approval of Awards for an Employee in Another Office

An award nomination for an employee in another office that is outside the nominating supervisor's chain of command must be approved by an A Delegate at the Associate Director (or equivalent) or Regional Director level, or higher, in the recipient employee's chain of command.

5.5.5 Approval of Awards Factors to Consider

In evaluating Incentive Award proposals, the appropriate supervisor, *Committee*, A Delegate, Associate Director (or equivalent), Regional Director, or the Director will take into account the following factors:

- (a) Conformance with established criteria;
- (b) Relationship of the proposed Incentive Award to the actual performance or act of the employee;
- (c) Consistency and equitable distribution of awards across the organization;
- (d) Frequency of awards distribution to the same individual;
- (e) Sufficiency of the justification and documentation;
- (f) Equitable treatment of the tangible and intangible benefits of the performance or act to be rewarded; and,
- (g) Scope and impact of the performance or act to be rewarded.

5.6 Incentive Award Proposals Modified by the Committee

The *Committee* may modify a proposed Incentive Award under its consideration. Possible modifications include a change in the amount or type of the proposed Incentive Award.

5.7 Special Fund

- (a) The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) will establish in each office's budget a specific line-item for incentive awards. Offices will use this amount to fund cash awards of \$2,000 or less.
- (b) The OCFO will also maintain a central Special Fund to be used primarily for awards exceeding \$2,000. The Special Fund will be administered by the *Committee* and will be subject to criteria set forth in the *Handbook*. The Special Fund may permit supervisors to reward superior performance in an amount commensurate with an employee's contribution, but more than their budgetary resources would allow.

5.8 Incentive Awards Program Review

At least quarterly the Incentive Awards Administrator will present a list of award recommendations with an analysis and summary to the *Committee* on the Incentive Awards Program.

At least annually the Incentive Awards Administrator will present a statistical report and summary of all incentive awards, including the names and grades of recipients and amounts/types of awards, to the *Committee* on the Incentive Awards Program with a copy to the Peace Corps Employees Union.

On an annual basis, the *Committee* will review and evaluate the operation of the Incentive Awards Program and, if appropriate, recommend changes.

6.0 Awards Ceremonies

There will be a special, annual public recognition ceremony for staff who have received Incentive Awards. Incentive Awards for staff at post and in regional recruitment offices should be presented at a staff meeting or a public ceremony by the appropriate Associate Director or designee. Staff members being recognized may opt out of any public recognition.

7.0 Administration of Incentive Awards Program

7.1 Office of Human Resources

The Chief Human Capital Officer in the Office of Human Resources will be responsible for the following:

- (a) Operational management for the Incentive Awards Program;
- (b) Training supervisors and other management officials in the effective use of Incentive Awards;
- (c) Informing employees about the Incentive Awards Program;

- (d) Coordinating the Incentive Awards Program with other personnel management systems; and,
- (e) Designating the Incentive Awards Administrator.

7.2 Incentive Awards Administrator

The Incentive Awards Administrator will be responsible for:

- (a) Day-to-day administration of the Incentive Awards Program;
- (b) Ensuring that all Incentive Award proposals adhere to the criteria and follow the procedures established in this manual section and the *Handbook*;
- (c) Giving notice of *Committee* meetings to its members;
- (d) Delivering Incentive Award proposals and other materials to members of the *Committee*;
- (e) Ensuring that *Committee* members do not review and approve Incentive Award proposals originating in or covering employees in their respective organizations, unless the *Committee* is acting as a whole;
- (f) Attending *Committee* meetings;
- (g) Implementing the decisions of the *Committee* with respect to the Incentive Awards Program;
- (h) Processing approved Incentive Awards proposals;
- (i) Preparing information including the names of award recipients, the types of Incentive Awards each received, and the amounts of their cash awards; the information will be reviewed and approved by the *Committee* and distributed to all Peace Corps employees;
- (j) Arranging Incentive Awards ceremonies, to include a special, annual public recognition ceremony for staff;
- (k) Submitting information to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management as requested and/or required, on the agency's Incentive Awards Program; and,
- (l) Ensuring that actions pursuant to section 8.0 below are effectuated in a timely manner.

8.0 Union Consultation

8.1 Union Notification

The Peace Corps shall notify AFSCME, Local 3548 of proposed changes to the Incentive Awards Program in accordance with Article 5 of the Negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreement.

8.2 Review and Comment Period

The Peace Corps shall provide AFSCME, Local 3548 a period of 14 days to review and comment on MS 662 *Peace Corps Incentive Award Program* changes and the MS 662 *Peace Corps Incentive Awards Program Handbook* for consideration for incorporation, in accordance with Article 5 of the Negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreement.

8.3 Short or No Advance Notice

The Peace Corps shall notify the Union as soon as possible after the effective date of implementation in response to an unusual circumstance where there is short or no advance notice provided to the Union of changes or revisions to MS 662 *Peace Corps Incentive Awards Program*.

9.0 Effective Date

The effective date is the date of issuance.