

TeamNebraska

# Excellence in

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Opportunity.

# Recognition



# AGENCY TEAMMATE RECOGNITION GUIDELINES AND TOOLKIT FOR STATE AGENCIES

[Section 81-1307\(7\)](#) Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and Chapter 18, of the Nebraska Classified System Personnel Rules, requires that all teammate recognition programs, including those at the agency level, be approved by the DAS - Director of State Personnel.

In an effort to comply with these provisions, we have outlined the requirement for each category and the corresponding monetary limits which should be applied. We have also outlined various other recognition criteria that should be a guide to you when completing your agency's Teammate Recognition Program Plan.

If you choose to implement a teammate recognition program, please submit a copy of your agency's Plan to DAS - State Personnel for approval prior to its implementation.

## Excellence in State Service

Agencies may recognize their teammates for Years of Service both with the State of Nebraska and Agency Service Years. Years of Service awards may include items such as certificates, plaques, pins, or items which are of more personal value to the honoree. However, ***no gift cards/certificates or monetary awards can be given to teammates for Years of Service.***

**Below are the Expenditure Levels for Awards for Years of Service:**

5 – 19 years	\$50*
20 – 39 years	\$75*
40 years and over	\$100*

*\*Please see page 9 for Federal Tax Requirements for Awards*

Receptions should cost no more than \$5 per person which includes food and appropriate tableware.

## Achievement Recognition Awards<sup>1</sup>

These awards recognize behaviors and performance that are linked to the agency's organizational mission. Examples include but are not limited to: Excellence in Leadership (Month or Quarter), Customer Service, Teammate Appreciation, Safety, Creating Efficiencies, Innovation, Outstanding Achievement or Project Recognitions, Special Project Coordinator Recognition, and Individual or Team Achievement Awards.

**Each agency recognition plan must list:**

- Purpose and/or explanation of each award
- Appropriate selection criteria, requirements or guidelines for each award and the identification of the individual(s) selecting the honoree
- Reward items including monetary amounts and types of awards<sup>2</sup>

Agency's may create their own achievement awards, use the achievement awards that follow, or a combination of both. All achievement awards must be clearly detailed in your recognition plan and approved by DAS.

### Achievement Awards include:

**Excellence in Leadership** – *Enterprise-level recognition*. Agencies should have an internal process in place to select their honorees.

**Excellence in Nebraska Recognition Program** (Customer Service, Innovation, Achievement and Performance, Mentorship and Safety) – *Agency-level recognition*. Agencies may choose to implement the program into their existing recognition plans.

**On the Spot Recognition** (Director/Manager/Teammate Levels) – *Agency-level recognition*. Agencies may choose to implement the program into their existing recognition plans.

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<sup>1</sup> *NOTE: Achievement recognition awards are not considered bonuses as defined in Chapter 7 Rule 006, Title 273 - Nebraska Classified System Personnel Rules.*

<sup>2</sup> *Please indicate the amount of the monetary reward. If providing a reward item, the exact item does not have to be specified (an appropriate item can be selected for each teammate) however the expenditure amount needs to be listed.*

**Agency specific recognition – *Agency-level recognition.*** Agencies may create their own achievement recognition based on their mission, vision, and goals. Agency specific achievement recognition must be outlined in the agency’s recognition plan and approved by DAS.

## **Recognition Items**

Recognition may include a combination of monetary awards and/or appropriate recognition items (certificates, plaques, or pins). The total combined value of monetary or award items will not exceed the following:

### **Appropriate Expenditure Levels:**

\$100 for monthly awards\*

\$250 for quarterly awards\*

\$250 annual reward nominee runner-ups\*

\$500 for annual award recipients\*

*\*Please see page 9 for Federal Tax Requirements for Awards*

**A teammate may be honored no more than two times during each calendar year for any of the above mentioned achievement with monetary awards.**

Receptions should cost no more than \$5 per person which includes food and appropriate tableware.

## **Excellence in Leadership Luncheon**

A lunch for those teammates being honored as Excellence in Leadership and one guest each may be allowed. The meal is limited to \$20 per meal.<sup>3</sup> The cost of the meal for all other attendees must be paid for by the attendees.

## **Excellence In Nebraska Recognition Program**

### **Excellence In Leadership**

*(Executive Level Recognition – Agencies will select honorees based off criteria provided and submit it to DAS during nomination time periods. Agencies may do a monthly or quarterly Excellence in Leadership/Teammate of the Month/Quarter program)*

Excellence in Leadership Award is designed to recognize and celebrate the professional achievements of our teams whose performance and customer service exceeds all expectations. Honorees will be recognized by the Governor on an annual basis however agencies may have monthly or quarterly recognitions for teammates at the agency level.

#### **Nominee/Selection Criteria:**

- Nominees must have completed their probationary period, if required
- Nominees must have above satisfactory performance as documented in their most recent performance evaluation
- Nominees must be customer-focused teammate who embody the mission, vision, and values of the agency and the State of Nebraska
- Nominees must demonstrate exemplary performance of activities that are above and beyond the scope of assigned responsibilities.
- Nominee must set an example of knowledge, expertise, dedication, enhancing morale, and customer-service.
- Agencies are not required to submit nominations each year.
- Past honorees are not eligible to receive the recognition again for 5 years. If an agency feels that a teammate deserves recognition again within the 5 year timetable they may request special consideration to the Administrative Services – State Personnel office. This special consideration must include detailed justification on why the teammate should be honored again.

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<sup>3</sup> Under no circumstances will alcoholic beverages be authorized to be a part of any recognition program.

## **Character Traits/Core Values**

- Honorees must embody at least two of the following State of Nebraska core values/concepts and character traits:
  - Innovation/Forward Thinking/Continuous Improvement
  - Teamwork/Collaboration
  - Serving by Example
  - Customer Service Focused Excellence
  - Valuing People
  - Aligning Resources
  - Visionary Leadership/Proactive Management/Leadership by Example
  - Success-Focused, Ethics, Transparency Focus
  - Effective communication
  - Coach and develop team members/Staff Engagement

## **Award Criteria**

For the annual recognition program, agencies will be allowed to select up to two honorees for every 500 people employed by the agency. Honorees are to be selected based off of performance and merit and can be any makeup of teammates (teammates and manager/supervisors).

## **Excellence in Nebraska Recognition Program**

### ***(Agency Level Achievement Recognition)***

The Excellence in Nebraska Recognition Program is designed to recognize and celebrate teammates who embody the State of Nebraska's core values of integrity, respect, customer service, innovation, safety, mentorship, team work, and communication. Agencies may use one or all of the examples below, revise or add their own criteria based on their agency's mission, or add additional core values to their approved plan. All recognition plans must be approved by Department of Administrative Services – State Personnel prior to implementation.

### **Appropriate Expenditure Levels:**

\$100 for monthly awards\*

\$250 for quarterly awards\*

\$250 annual reward nominee runner-ups\*

\$500 for annual award recipients\*

*\*Please see page 9 for Federal Tax Requirements for Awards*

## **Nebraska Excellence in Customer Service**

We value our customers and the relationships we build with them. The purpose of the Nebraska Excellence in Customer Service is to recognize teammates who are dedicated to exceeding the expectations of our customers and enhancing the reputation of both the Agency and the State.

Examples of criteria may be:

- Consistently delivers a “Wow” factor for your customers
- Demonstrates a high-level of courtesy, sensitivity, professionalism and effective communication when working with customers
- Works to build trust and respect with both internal and external customers
- Actively listens and works to open lines of communication with your customers
- Dedicated to understanding the customer's needs and actively works to exceed their expectations
- Enhances the State/Agency's reputation with our customers by exceeding their expectations and their overall experience working with the State/Agency

## **Nebraska Excellence in Innovation**

We value individuals who look at ways to create efficiencies to increase our productivity, customer service, and work culture. The purpose of the Nebraska Excellence in Innovation award is to recognize teammates who are continuing to look at ways to create a more efficient, effective, customer-focused state government.

Examples of criteria may be:

- Streamline processes to continue to drive the State/Agency forward
- Identifies creative solutions to enhance or improve: efficiencies, productivity, customer service, cost savings, and/or work culture
- Encourages teammates to think of alternative solutions and develop more efficient streamlined processes
- Creates a work environment that supports the culture of innovation and encourages all teammates to contribute their thoughts and ideas to achieve goal objectives
- Teammate is respected and recognized as someone who demonstrates creative and innovative behaviors.
- Communicates and markets innovation process to his/her team and customers effectively
- Understands the customer's needs to facilitate improvements in products and services

## **Nebraska Excellence in Achievement and Performance**

We value teammates who embody integrity, respect, and accountability. The purpose of the Nebraska Excellence in Performance is to recognize teammates who are champions of our mission to provide the best services, products and efficiencies to grow Nebraska.

- Exhibits extraordinary service and produces high-quality products that enhances the reputation of the State/Agency
- Accepts responsibilities and duties that are above and beyond expectations
- Teammate is innovate and streamline processes and creates efficiencies to enhance customer service
- Relationship Architect: communicates openly and honestly with his/her team and customers
- Promotes and enhances workplace morale
- Takes initiative to improve individual skills and knowledge and also develops and recognizes others
- Teammate is accountable to his/her teams and customers
- "Walk the Talk" encompasses the values and mission of the State of Nebraska and his/her agency

## **Nebraska Excellence in Mentorship**

We value our Teammates. Our teammates are our number one resource. In order to create a more efficient, effective, customer-focused state government we need to empower our teammates to push the boundaries and continue to look for ways to build our reputation and streamline our services. The purpose of the Nebraska Excellence in Mentorship is to recognize teammates who foster a collaborative work environment, encourage personal and professional growth in their team members/teammates, and cultivate an environment of innovation to help grow Nebraska.

Examples of criteria may be:

- Facilitates and encourages professional development in their team members and teammates to develop individual talents and strengths
- Mentors and cultivates teammates creating a positive work culture that encourages innovation and creativity
- Relationship Architect: works to build strong relationships that creates a high level of trust, respect, accountability and credibility within their team
- Maintains accessibility by providing consistently open lines of communication
- Collaborates with others to identify and analyze problems and works to apply creative solutions to streamline processes and make organizational improvements

## **Nebraska Excellence in Safety Award**

Safety is a priority at the State of Nebraska. We strive to create safer roadways, workplaces and to continue to enhance our vigilance in the area of public safety and security. The purpose of the Nebraska Excellence in Safety Award is to recognize teammates who lead the way to support and enhance the safety of our citizens and teammates.

Examples of criteria may be:

- Demonstrates exceptional expertise, professional conduct, commitment, and innovation in the areas of public and/or workplace safety (that exceeds the expectations of the teammate's role)
- Initiates ideas and implements procedures to improve the delivery or minimizes the risk of injury in the areas of public and/or workplace safety
- Proven leadership skills that enhance a culture of safety
- Reduction in workplace or public safety concerns through safety education and planning
- Demonstrates proactive safety initiatives and work quickly to resolve safety deficiencies

## **On the Spot Recognition**

*(Agency Level Achievement Recognition)*

“On the Spot” recognition is a valuable resource that allows team leaders and teammates to recognize team members immediately for desired performance and behaviors that align with the State and Agency’s mission, vision, and values.

### **“On the Spot” Recognition Includes:**

- Director-Teammate
- Divisional Director/Work Team – Teammate
- Teammate - Teammate

## **On the Spot Agency Director’s Awards**

Agencies will have the ability to establish the appropriate criteria for the award. Prior to implementation, agencies will submit the criteria for approval in their Recognition Plans on file with State Personnel.

## **Director to Teammate Recognition**

- Kudos Cards (available on the Teammate Recognition page or an agency can create their own)
- Appropriate Monetary Award (agency-level monetary recognition if appropriate)

### **Appropriate Expenditure Levels:**

\$25 for monthly awards\*

\$100 for quarterly awards\*

*\*Please see page 9 for Federal Tax Requirements for Awards*

## **On the Spot Divisional Director/Manager Awards**

Agencies will have the ability to establish the appropriate criteria for the award. Prior to implementation, agencies will submit the criteria for approval in their Recognition Plans on file with State Personnel.

## Manager to Teammate Recognition

- Kudos Cards (available on the Teammate Recognition page or an agency can create their own)
- Appropriate Monetary Award (agency-level monetary recognition if appropriate)

### Appropriate Expenditure Levels:

\$25 for monthly awards\*

\$100 for quarterly awards\*

*\*Please see page 9 for Federal Tax Requirements for Awards*

## Teammate to Teammate

Agencies will have the ability to establish the appropriate criteria for the award. Prior to implementation, agencies will submit the criteria for approval in their Recognition Plans on file with State Personnel. (Non-monetary award)

## Teammate to Teammate Recognition

- Kudos Cards (available on the Teammate Recognition page or an agency can create their own)
- On Spot Recognition Items (agency-level gift item if appropriate)

## Retirements, Farewell, or Welcome to State Government

*(Agency Level Teammate Appreciation/Recognition)*

### Farewell or Retirement Celebrations

Receptions should cost no more than \$5 per person which includes food and appropriate tableware.

### Retirement Luncheon

A meal<sup>4</sup> (includes lunch or dinner) at Retirement Celebrations may be allowed only for the retiree and one guest, limited to \$30 per meal. No other meal will be provided for at the luncheon. The cost of the meal for all other attendees must be paid for by the attendees.

Retirement celebrations may also include gift items such as certificates, plaques, pins, or items which are of more personal value to the honoree. Retirement gifts should not exceed \$150. ***(No monetary awards can be given to teammates for Retirement/Farewell recognition).*** *\*Please see page 9 for Federal Tax Requirements for Awards*

Additional retirement expenses, such as printing of invitations and postage to mail invitations, will be allowed but should not exceed \$40.00.

### Welcome to State Government

New agency teammates may be recognized and welcomed to State Government. New teammates' items may include certificates, pins, or items which are representative of the agency (including pens, tablets, mugs etc. with the agency's logo or name). However, ***no gift cards or monetary awards can be given to teammates New Teammates.***

New Teammate Recognition Awards shall not exceed \$40.

### Teammate Appreciation

Agencies may host teammate appreciation days to recognize a group of teammates for their achievements. *(Please detail teammate appreciation information in your Agency Recognition Plan.)*

These events should cost no more than \$5 per person which includes food and appropriate tableware.

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<sup>4</sup> *Under no circumstances will alcoholic beverages be authorized to be a part of any recognition program.*

## Receptions for Recognition Events

Reception costs include items such as coffee, punch, cake, cookies and appropriate tableware. Under no circumstances will alcoholic beverages be authorized to be a part of any recognition program. Receptions (including food and appropriate tableware) should cost no more than \$5 per person.

**At no time shall the state pay for a meal of anyone that is a state teammate (except for Teammate, Supervisor/Manager of the Year and Retirement Celebrations).**

**Other gift items or monetary awards not included in this policy are not authorized.**

## Agency Plans

Agency level teammate recognition programs **are required** if the agency is recognizing teammates under any of the teammate recognition categories and/or using state funds.

Agency Plans must list teammate recognition events, receptions and awards. For each award, agencies need to provide:

- Purpose and/or explanation of each award
- Appropriate selection criteria, requirements or guidelines for each award and the identification of the individual(s) selecting the honoree
- Reward items including monetary amounts and types of awards<sup>5</sup>

Teammate recognition events that include a reception should be clearly indicated in the plan. Any request for receptions will be approved based on the current plan on file.

Completed plans should be submitted to the AS – State Personnel Director for approval. Once an agency plan is approved, a copy of the plan will be on file in the AS – State Personnel office.

Agencies will not be required to submit a new plan each year. Agencies will only need to re-submit a plan for approval if changes occur to their existing plan or to add a new recognition program. Addendums to existing plans will also be accepted.

## Education or Certification Awards

*(Agency Level Teammate Recognition)*

Teammates who successfully improve job expertise by taking education coursework or otherwise gain job related certifications may be recognized.

- Only one teammate monetary\* reward not to exceed \$500 per teammate is allowed per fiscal year.
- Agencies are responsible for posting clear requirements and selection criteria for this award in a manner that is available to all their teammates.

*\*Please see page 9 for Federal Tax Requirements for Awards*

## Teammate Suggestion System Recognition

Teammate Suggestion System awards (See Sections [81-1346](#), [81-1347](#), [81-1350](#), [81-3151](#), [81-3153](#), and [81-3154](#)) are the greater of one hundred dollars or ten percent of the amount of savings, limited to six thousand dollars unless a larger award is recommended by a resolution of the Legislature.

For more information on the Teammate Suggestion System please visit:

<https://das.nebraska.gov/personnel/sos/suggest.html>.

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<sup>5</sup> Please indicate the amount of the monetary gift. If providing a reward item, the exact item does not have to be specified (an appropriate item can be selected for each teammate) however the expenditure amount needs to be listed.



## **Gift Card Policy\***

Gift Cards are considered monetary awards and are prohibited in categories where monetary awards are not allowed (for example years of service awards). Generic cards such as VISA or MasterCard are recommended for purchase to avoid the State showing any favoritism to a particular company or store. *\*Please follow all Federal Tax Requirements for Awards*

## **Federal Tax Reporting Requirements for Awards**

According to the Administrative Services – State Accounting Manual

(<https://das.nebraska.gov/accounting/nis/am005.htm#awards>) the following is the federal tax reporting requirements for awards:

“38. Teammate Awards – Awards may be given to State Teammates based on a Recognition Program implemented with the approval of the Director of Personnel, AS State Personnel Division. The following defines the federal tax reporting requirements of such awards.

There are two classes of awards – Tangible and non-tangible.

- Non-tangible awards (include such things as cash, cash equivalents, gift certificates or cards, stocks, bonds or other forms of securities, vacations, meals, tickets to theatre or sporting events) are subject to taxation without limit in the amount of the award. These awards must be included on the teammate’s payroll and wage history for tax and W2 purposes. Agencies utilizing the ENTERPRISEONE System – use One Time Override DBA Code 5600 instructing the system to include the cash value of the awards in taxable income, subject also to social security and Medicare taxation. [University and Colleges won’t be doing the adjustment after July 1, 2009 as they will utilize SAP.]
- Tangible awards are considered to be those items of personal property (including such items as watches, clocks, coffee cups etc.) given to an teammate as an award for length of service or safety achievement, awarded as part of a meaningful presentation and awarded under circumstances that do not indicate that the payment is disguised compensation. Such low value tangible awards are excludable from federal income, social security or Medicare taxation.”