

**Region 6 Supplement to Article 35 (Awards) of the  
Master Collective Bargaining Agreement Between EPA and AFGE  
(R6 - Supplement #1)**

**AWARDS BOARD**

This Region 6 Supplement No. 1 (Supplement) to the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement Between EPA and AFGE dated September 1994, (National Agreement) is entered into by and between the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, herein referred to as Management, and the American Federation of Government Employees, Local 1003, herein referred to as the Union. The purpose of this Supplement is to set forth the parties agreement with respect to the establishment of Awards Boards under the National Agreement.

**Section 1. INTRODUCTION.** The EPA Recognition Program reflects a commitment to promote continuous improvement in organizational performance. It is recognized that the use of both monetary and non-monetary awards has a significant effect on employee morale, motivation, and performance. The EPA Recognition Program is an incentive program that provides recognition based on employee contributions to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement of EPA operations or for noteworthy achievements in the public interest.

**Section 2. AUTHORITIES.** In administration of all matters covered by this MOU, Management, the Union, and employees shall be governed by 5 USC Chapter 45, 5 CFR Parts 451 and 531, and 3130 Recognition Policy and Procedures Manual, and the National Agreement.

**Section 3. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS.** Recognition will be granted in accordance with the Recognition Policy and Procedures Manual with the following provisions:

- a. **AWARDS BOARD COMPOSITION.** Region 6 will establish an Awards Board, herein referred to as the Board, consisting of one standing member appointed by Management, one standing member appointed by the Union, and one bargaining unit member from each Division/Office that has bargaining unit employees. The members representing Divisions/Offices will be chosen by "lottery" from volunteers in the respective organizational units. If the lack of volunteers for a particular Division/Office results in the total number of bargaining unit members dropping below five (5), then additional bargaining unit members will be selected at large, bringing the total back to 5 bargaining unit employees. All positions vacated during a term will be filled by "lottery." Initially, half of the members chosen by lottery will serve one-year terms while the other half will serve two-year terms. Thereafter, half of these members will rotate off the Board each year. There must be a separation of two years between terms. The initial terms for each Division/Office will be decided by the Board. The Board Chair will be rotated between the two standing members beginning with the Management appointed member.



b. BOARD FUNCTIONS. The Board shall perform the following functions:

- Operate only as an advisory and recommending body for awards being considered for bargaining unit employees. Management officials with delegated authority will retain final approval on all award and recognition matters.
- Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the awards and recognition program and make periodic recommendations to the approving officials. This evaluation may include statistical and narrative year-end reports.

c. BASIC BOARD PROCEDURES. The Board, as a first order of business, will establish, consistent with this supplement, operating procedures (e.g., how often to meet, awards information to be requested by the Board, etc.). The following procedures will be used by the Board regardless of award type:

(1) All meetings shall be closed and confidential. The Board shall, at a minimum, meet quarterly. All meetings shall be held when scheduled as long as a quorum of five (5) is present. Board members who miss three (3) consecutive meetings may be replaced.

(2) Management will be responsible for sending out calls for and collecting award nominations, arranging meeting logistics including scheduling, distributing award nomination packages (e.g., EPA Form 3130 - Recommendation for Incentive Recognition) to Board members, etc., in accordance with the operating procedures and EPA guidelines.

(3) Nominations for awards may be made at any time. There will also be solicitations for nominations for awards for which formal cut-off dates will be specified. Nominations received by the specified cut-off dates, including all those received since the most recent previous review of nominations, will be forwarded to the Board. The Board will treat nominations and all discussions pertaining to them confidentially.

(4) In preparing award recommendations and in making any other decisions related to its activities, the Board will rely on a majority vote in any case where consensus is lacking. Board members must recuse themselves from discussions or voting on any nominations in which they are either the nominator or the nominee, or related to the nominator or nominee. In preparing recommendations, the Board members will rely on the information provided by the nominator in the nomination package.

(5) The Board may, on a semi-annual basis, prepare written comments and recommendations to the Deputy Regional Administrator on the overall working of awards processes, including those awards not under the Board's jurisdiction. Recommendations may address any aspect of the award process that might be conducted differently in the

future in order for those processes to be more effective or more efficient in fulfilling their intended purpose. Before the Board's comments are finalized and forwarded to the DRA, approving officials will meet with the Board to discuss any of the Board's concerns that are specific to their Division/Office. If there are no concerns specific to a particular Division/Office, a meeting with that approving official is not required.

(6) It is understood that, in Region 6, the approving official for awards has not been redelegated below the Division Director level. If redelegation below the Division Director level occurs, all communication between the Board and the approving official will flow through the Division Director.

d. HONOR AWARDS. The following procedure will be used by the Awards Board for honor awards:

(1) The Board will review, at least annually, all national and region-wide honor award nominations for bargaining unit employees.

(a) In the event both bargaining unit and nonbargaining unit employees are being considered for the same individual award, and a limited number of selections will be made, the board will review copies of all nominations with personal identifiers removed.

(b) When a team nomination consists of both bargaining and nonbargaining unit employees, the Board will review the nominations (with personal identifiers) and make recommendations on the overall nomination to the approving official.

(2) Nominations for honor awards are submitted to the Board by each Division Director (or equivalent) in accordance with the operating procedures and EPA guidelines. The Division Director submits his/her nomination package in priority order for each type of award.

(3) The Board will review the nominations for each award type and submit an alphabetical list with recommendations to the approving official.

(4) The approving official will send to the Board a final list of the employees selected for Regional awards and a list of employees forwarded to EPA Headquarters as recommendations for National awards.

e. MONETARY AWARDS. The Board will review all cash awards, as described in the Agency's Recognition Policy and Procedures Manual, for bargaining unit employees at or above the median amount. The initial median amount is established at \$500 based on April 25, 1998 data. The parties agree to review, every April and October, the awards paid during the preceding period. If the median award amount changes more than 10% from the

preceding period, a new amount to be reviewed by the Board may be determined and publicized. The following procedures will be used by the Board for recommending monetary awards under its jurisdiction:

- (1) The Board will review, at least quarterly, nominations for monetary awards for bargaining unit employees.
  - (a) In the event both bargaining unit and nonbargaining unit employees are being considered for the same individual award, and a limited number of selections will be made, the Board will review copies of all nominations with personal identifiers removed.
  - (b) When a team nomination consists of both bargaining and nonbargaining unit employees, the Board will review the nominations (with personal identifiers) and make recommendations on the overall nomination to the approving official.
- (2) Nominations for monetary awards are submitted to the Board by each Division Director (or equivalent) in accordance with the operating procedures and EPA Guidelines.
- (3) The Board will review the nominations for each type award and submit an alphabetical list with recommendations to the approving official.
- (4) The approving official will send to the Board a final list of the employees chosen to receive awards and the amounts they are to receive.

f. PEER NOMINATIONS FOR MONETARY AWARDS. The nominator and the nominee must have an established working relationship whether in or out of the same Division/office, or on the same team, work group, self-directed team, or variation thereof. The following procedures will be used by the Board for peer nominations:

- (1) The Board will review, at least quarterly, all peer nominations for bargaining unit employees.
- (2) Peer nominations are submitted to the Board by each Division Director (or equivalent) in accordance with the operating procedures and EPA guidelines.
- (3) The Board will review the nominations for each award type and submit an alphabetical list with recommendations (no dollar amount is specified) to the approving official.
- (4) The supervisor of the nominee, or the supervisor with the delegated authority, decides on the amount of money for the recommended nominee. The approving official sends to the Board a final list of the employees chosen to receive awards and the amount each will receive.



g. AWARDS EXCLUSIONS. The Board will not consider quality-step increases; time-off awards; on-the-spot awards; employee suggestions; career service recognition; patents; inventions; and non-EPA awards.

h. AWARDS EQUALITY. The Board shall ensure that all recommendations are made without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, political affiliation, marital status, physical or mental handicap, age, or membership or non-membership in labor or professional organizations.

i. CONFIDENTIALITY. The Board will maintain strict confidentiality regarding award nominations/nominees, the reason(s) for a nomination, and Board deliberations and discussions. A breach of confidentiality could be considered misconduct and would, therefore; be subject to potential disciplinary or adverse action. In addition, such breach will be cause for immediate removal from the Board.

**Section 4. REOPENER.** In January, 2000, the parties will reconvene to evaluate whether the Board process in Region 6 should be continued as written, modified, or discontinued. Additionally, this supplement may be reopened at anytime by mutual consent of the parties.

**Section 5. IMPLEMENTATION.** The awards and recognition program as described herein will be implemented in conjunction with PERFORMS effective July 1, 1998. Joint briefings for all employees and supervisors will be offered on the requirements and provisions of the new program.

The parties agree to the supplement as written above.

Signature/Date: Linda Thompson  
Linda Thompson  
Chief Negotiator,  
AFGE Local 1003  
8/18/98

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