

MS 662 Peace Corps Incentive Awards Program

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Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources Management, M/HRM

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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 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, 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, Procurement of Personal Services of Host Country Residents by Contract contains guidance on cash awards for personal service contractors.

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 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 Associate Director for Management will serve as the Chair of the Committee. All Associate Director-level staff (AD/SS, AD/OGO, AD/VRS, AD/VS, CFO, CIO, and GC) are voting members of the Committee.

5.3 Incentive Awards Administrator

The Incentive Awards Administrator will be appointed by the Associate Director for Management 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 least quarterly 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 at least 30 days prior to the meetings.

5.4.2 Quorum

A quorum will consist of at least three members of the Committee and 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 a minimum of two members of the Committee review and vote on each Incentive Award proposal. 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.

5.5 Approval of Awards

The Committee must approve all Meritorious Step Increases and cash awards exceeding \$2,000. Time-off awards and cash awards not requiring Committee approval must be approved by an A Delegate. Incentive Awards exceeding \$5,000 must be approved by the Director or his or her designee, and cash awards exceeding \$10,000 must be approved by the Office of Personnel Management.

Nonmonetary or recognition Incentive Awards must be approved by the Committee, an A Delegate, or the Director, as described in the Handbook.

In evaluating Incentive Award proposals, the Committee, A Delegate, or the Director will take into account the following factors:

- (a) Conformance with established criteria;
- (b) Relationship of the proposed award to the actual meritorious performance of the employee;
- (c) Consistent and equitable distribution of awards across the organization;
- (d) The 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 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.

If the Committee decides that an Incentive Award proposed by an A Delegate should be modified, the Committee will return the proposal with Committee modifications to the A Delegate who proposed it. If the A Delegate accepts the modifications, the modified proposal will be sent to the Incentive Awards Administrator for implementation.

The A Delegate may revise the Incentive Award proposal and resubmit it to the Committee for reconsideration. If the Committee accepts the revised proposal, the revised proposal will be sent to the Incentive Awards Administrator for implementation.

If the A Delegate and the Committee cannot agree on a proposed Incentive Award, the A Delegate may ask the Incentive Awards Administrator to initiate an appeal process. The Incentive Awards Administrator will schedule a meeting for the Director, the A Delegate, the Chair and a member of the Committee elected by its members. The appeal meeting should take

place as soon as reasonably possible. The Director's decision will be in writing and transmitted to the A Delegate and the Incentive Awards Committee.

5.7 Special Fund

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. The OCFO will also maintain a central Special Awards Fund. This Fund will be used primarily for awards of more than \$2,000. The Fund will be administered by the Committee and will be subject to criteria set forth in the Handbook. The Fund will 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

The Incentive Awards Administrator is responsible for arranging appropriate quarterly awards ceremonies and a special, annual public recognition ceremony for staff who have received Incentive Awards. Incentive Awards for staff at post and in regional offices will 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 Resource Management

The Director of the Office of Human Resources Management 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;
- (f) Attending Committee meetings;
- (g) Implementing the decisions of the Committee with respect to the Incentive Awards Program;
- (h) Processing proposals for Meritorious Step Increases;
- (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; and
- (k) Submitting information to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management as requested and/or required, on the agency's Incentive Awards Program.

8.0 Effective Date

The effective date is the date of issuance.