

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Non-Monetary Awards
Purpose:	This Directive and Standard (D&S) provides Bureau of Reclamation required procedures, limitations, and requirements for approval and purchase of non-monetary awards. The benefit of this D&S is that it promotes consistency of the non-monetary awards program.
Authority:	<i>Department of the Interior Volunteer Recruitment Act of 2005</i> (Pub. L. 109-125); 5 U.S.C. 4303, 4501-4506; 5 CFR 451.102, 104; and Departmental Memorandum, Non-Monetary Awards Policy 02-13 .
Approving Official:	Director, Policy and Administration
Contact:	Human Resources (HR) Policy and Programs Division, 84-58000 and Acquisition and Assistance Management Division, 84-27800

1. **Introduction.** The purpose of non-monetary awards is to provide recognition to employees of Reclamation for their superior accomplishment of regularly assigned duties, exceptional achievement of project goals, noteworthy accomplishments over a sustained period, and/or specific contributions to Reclamation's mission. This D&S establishes the requirements and criteria that apply to all non-monetary awards. Managers and supervisors must exercise care in selecting appropriate items for non-monetary recognition to avoid the potential appearance of misuse of government funds. Additionally, managers and supervisors may use Special Thanks for Achieving Results (STAR) and time-off awards, when possible and appropriate.
2. **Applicability.**
 - A. This D&S applies to all Reclamation managers, supervisors, servicing HR offices, and acquisition personnel including purchase cardholders.
 - B. This D&S does not apply to contractors, contractor employees, private-sector organizations and their employees, customers, and private citizens whose contributions directly or indirectly support the Department of the Interior's mission; these individuals cannot receive non-monetary awards (Pub. L. 109-125).
3. **Definitions.**
 - A. **Items that Exceed Nominal Cash Value.** Non-monetary recognition valued at more than \$50, but less than \$250.
 - B. **Nominal Cash Value Items.** Non-monetary recognition valued at \$50 or less.

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4. Responsibilities.

- A. **Deputy Commissioners, Directors, and Regional Directors.** Deputy commissioners, directors, and regional directors are responsible for concurring and agreeing to the purchase of any non-monetary award items valued over the nominal cash value by signing as the Approving Official on the Recommendation and Approval of Awards form, DI-451 (see special considerations in Paragraph 5.D.).
- B. **Managers and Supervisors.** Managers and supervisors are responsible for:
- (1) nominating deserving employees in a timely fashion for their accomplishments;
 - (2) tracking issued employee non-monetary awards ensuring compliance with established threshold limits (see Appendix A for tracking criteria);
 - (3) validating that non-monetary award item(s) selected meet award requirements (see criteria in 5.A. through D.); and
 - (4) concurring and/or approving the purchase of non-monetary award item(s), valued at \$50 or less, by signing the DI-451 as the “Approving Official.”
- C. **Purchase Cardholders.** Purchase cardholders are responsible for ensuring they have the authority to purchase non-monetary item(s) (see information in Paragraph 5.B.).
- D. **Servicing HR Offices.** Servicing HR offices are responsible for:
- (1) validating compliance with non-monetary award processes by reviewing submitted award nomination forms for completeness and ensuring appropriate approvals are obtained; and
 - (2) establishing a tracking mechanism for non-monetary awards for validating compliance with established threshold limits and responding to requested data calls (see Appendix A for tracking criteria).

5. Criteria. Employees at all grade levels are eligible to receive a non-monetary award in accordance with the criteria established below:

A. Non-Monetary Award Selection.

- (1) Nominal cash value non-monetary awards are limited to items that can be used in an office setting, such as, business card holders, framed certificates, portfolios, lapel pins, pens, paperweights, and pen and pencil sets. A list of approved items is found at the Acquisition and Assistance Management Division’s Intranet site by choosing “Quicklist - Intranet,” “Acquisitions,” “Integrated Charge Card,” and

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“Purchase Card.” Items that can be easily converted to cash (i.e., gift cards, gift certificates, U.S. Savings Bonds, tickets, or similar items), are not authorized as non-monetary awards. Additionally, clothing (i.e., jackets, caps, T-Shirts, etc.) is not authorized as non-monetary awards.

- (2) Non-monetary award items that exceed the nominal cash value and include items similar to those listed in Paragraph 5.A.(1) must:
 - (a) be reserved to recognize the most valued achievements made by an employee or group of employees (e.g., a plaque or framed certificate with Reclamation’s or the Department’s logo awarded for retirement or length of service);
 - (b) be something that the recipient could reasonably be expected to value, but not something that conveys a sense of monetary value;
 - (c) have lasting display value and be displayed or presented as “recognition” given in appreciation of superior work; and
 - (d) clearly symbolize the employer–employee work relationship in some fashion.
- (3) Items must be of a suitable nature to be presented in public and avoid the appearance of misuse of government funds. Electronic and similar entertainment items, e.g., Kindle™, NOOK®, iPad or iPod® cannot be purchased. Non-monetary award items will contain Reclamation’s or the Department’s name, logo, award title, and/or mission, where appropriate. Reclamation requirements concerning visual identity must be followed [see Reclamation Manual Policy, *Visual Identity* ([ADM P05](#))].

B. Purchase. Non-monetary awards must be purchased from Reclamation’s Corporate Material Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs), and purchased only by each region’s designated ordering officials as identified in the BPAs. If Reclamation offices order supplies of specific award items to affect cost savings and provide for immediate recognition, the volume purchases must also be coordinated with the Corporate Material BPAs.

C. Thresholds. The following thresholds apply for awarding non-monetary awards:

- (1) Non-monetary award spending is not included within the annual fiscal year (FY) budgetary award limitations; however, spending for non-monetary awards must be done judiciously.
- (2) The upper limit for items used for non-monetary award recognition is a nominal cash value, i.e., \$50 within a given FY (e.g., Oct. 1, 2014, to Sept. 30, 2015) per employee. If a non-monetary award item exceeds the nominal cash value and is

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an item that meets the requirements in Paragraph 5.A.(2), it is considered to have significant value and its entire value must be included in the employee's gross wages for tax purposes.

D. **Documentation.**

- (1) For purchases of nominal cash value items, the DI-451 must be signed by the supervisor or manager as the "Approving Official" and forwarded to the servicing HR office for payroll processing and tracking.
- (2) For purchases of items which exceed the nominal cash value threshold (i.e., \$50), or a purchase that will put the employee above the nominal cash value annual non-monetary award threshold, the DI-451 must be signed by the supervisor or manager as the "Reviewing Official" and signed by the deputy commissioner, director, or regional director as the "Approving Official." The DI-451 must be forwarded to the servicing HR office for processing and tracking.
- (3) If a charge card is used as the method of payment, a DI-451 must be attached and filed with the monthly charge card statement.

E. **Accountability.** Review of non-monetary award requirements outlined within this D&S will occur during servicing HR office Accountability Reviews.

F. **Recordkeeping.** Servicing HR offices will maintain non-monetary award files on a FY basis. Files will be destroyed when 3 years old or sooner, if no longer required for current business needs.

6. **Related References.**

- A. [Comptroller General \(CG\) Decision B-243025](#),
[CG Decision B-256399](#)
- B. [Internal Revenue Service Taxable Fringe Benefits, EP Examination Process Guide - Section 3 - Initiation of an Examination - Regulations on Gifts From Outside Sources](#)
- C. [5 U.S.C. 4501](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4502](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4503](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4504](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4505](#)
[5 U.S.C. 4506](#)
- D. [5 CFR 451.102, 104](#)