State of Delaware

Cultivating Excellence in Agriculture

Employee Recognition Plan

Department Head: Secretary Wm. Donald Clifton II

Recognition Coordinator: George Class-Peters

Department Recognition Chairperson: Jimmy Kroon

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**Purpose:** To acknowledge and celebrate the contributions our employees make to the success of DDA and Delaware Agriculture, foster a culture of improving our programs and outcomes for our constituents, and reinforce our commitment to agriculture.

**Goals:**

* Recognize employee activities that provide lasting improvements in our programs, increase efficiency, reduce costs, or improve the quality of our services.
* Recognize employees who make a difference for DDA constituents.
* Celebrate collaboration between DDA and other organizations which improves government services.
* Align DDA recognition with statewide programs to provide a pathway for DDA employees to win statewide recognition.
* Encourage continuous improvement and innovation in DDA programs.

**Quarterly and Annual Awards:**

***Quarterly Awards for Excellence***

**Eligibility:** All full-time (merit and exempt) Department employees are eligible for nomination.

**Team Nominations:** Teams may be nominated and collaborating staff from other agencies may be included as part of the team. Teams of five or fewer may qualify for the *Delaware Excellence and Commitment in State Service* or *Statewide GEAR P3 Trailblazer Award*. Teams of 6-20 employees may qualify for the *Governor’s Team Excellence Award*.

Each quarter, employees may be nominated for the following award categories. Up to three awards may be given each quarter. Depending on the nominations received, the committee may recognize multiple recipients in the same category (and none for another), if appropriate.

Note that nomination are typically made for accomplishments made prior to the current quarter and may be for projects that took place over an extended period. Nominations can be for completed work or for ongoing work where significant benefits have already been realized.

**Quarterly Award Categories:**

1. **Innovation and Collaboration Award**

**Criteria:** Recognizes an employee or team who demonstrate commitment to improving DDA’s programs by completing projects that enhance our programs, increase efficiency, reduce costs, or improve quality.

* + Implementing new technology, protocols, or other work methods, participating in problem-solving initiatives, establishing best practices, or identifying and resolving inefficiencies.
  + Exceptional team collaboration where teamwork has produced identifiable results for DDA programs. Teams may include members outside DDA if they are significantly involved in a DDA project.
  + Producing verifiable results that are sustainable. May serve as an example for other programs by being scalable or adaptable.
  + Serving as a role model by encouraging a culture of continuous improvement or teamwork at DDA.

1. **Service to Agriculture Award**

**Criteria:** Recognizes an employee or team who demonstrate outstanding dedication to DDA’s constituents though excellent customer service. This could include:

* + Dedication to providing responsive, knowledgeable, and professional service to program customers and constituents.
  + Exhibiting initiative or problem solving which improves public interactions with DDA or increases transparency of DDA programs.
  + Proactively or creatively addressing challenging situations, anticipating constituent needs, demonstrating compassionate customer service to resolve issues.
  + Suggesting and implementing improvements that enhance DDA’s constituent relationships.
  + Advocating for the importance of agriculture, forestry, or DDA programs within the community.

1. **Employee Excellence Award**

**Criteria:** Recognizes an employee who consistently exceeds expectations in their job performance, demonstrates a strong work ethic, and consistently supports DDA and Delaware Agriculture. This could include:

* + Consistently achieving or exceeding performance goals.
  + Demonstrating exceptional quality in their work.
  + Completing a project “above and beyond” their normal work.
  + Being a role model for other employees.
  + Earning an advanced degree or professional certification.
  + Perseverance and integrity through a difficult situation.

**Quarterly Awards for Excellence** winners will receive -

(Includes Innovation and Collaboration, Service to Agriculture, & Employee Excellence)

* A certificate of recognition, signed by the Cabinet Secretary.
* An e-mail notice will be sent to all DDA users congratulating the award winner.
* A copy of the certificate will be placed in the recipients’ personnel file.
* Consideration for Employee of the Year.
* Possible nomination for statewide awards.

**Other Quarterly Awards**

1. **Rising Star Award**

**Eligibility:** All DDA staff (full-time and C/S)

This award seeks to recognize outstanding new talent and is non-competitive. It may be awarded to all deserving nominees.

**Criteria:** Recognizes an employee who is new to DDA or in a new role (generally less than two years, but no hard limit) and has demonstrated potential for future growth and leadership. This could include:

* + Making significant contributions to their team in a short period of time.
  + Demonstrating a strong desire to learn and grow.
  + Taking on new challenges and responsibilities.
  + Exhibiting leadership qualities, such as initiative, communication skills, and the ability to motivate others.

**Rising Star Winners** will receive -

* A certificate of recognition, signed by the Cabinet Secretary.
* As appropriate and available, consideration for opportunities such as networking with senior staff, training, mentorship, etc.

1. **Delaware Award for Heroism**

**Eligibility:** All DDA staff (full-time and C/S)

**Criteria:** <https://dhr.delaware.gov/training/award/heroism/>

**Delaware Award for Heroism** winners will receive -

* As soon as convenient, the Cabinet Secretary or designee shall visit and present the employee(s) with a framed certificate. Employee will also be recognized at the next Quarterly Awards ceremony.
* The employee(s) accomplishments will be reported in a department-wide email.
* Recognition at DHR’s statewide recognition ceremony.

1. **Service Awards**

**Criteria:** Awarded after five years of service and at each five-year milestone thereafter.

**Service Awards** will receive -

* + Lapel pin featuring the state seal with the years of service noted on the pin.
  + Framed certificate signed by the Governor and Cabinet Secretary.

***Annual Awards***

**Employee of the Year**

**Criteria:** One award winner selected from winners of the above quarterly awards representing the best example of DDA’s commitment to service.

**Employee of the Year** will receive -

* A Certificate of Recognition signed by the Cabinet Secretary.
* One day of annual leave in accordance with the Expenditures section.
* An e-mail notice will be sent to all DDA users congratulating the award winner.
* Designated parking spot for the year.
* A copy of the certificate will be placed in the recipient’s personnel file.
* Recipient of Employee of the Year Award shall be nominated for a statewide award, typically the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service. See Nomination for Statewide Awards section.

**Nomination for Statewide Awards**

Winners of DDA’s Quarterly Awards for Excellence will be nominated for statewide recognition as appropriate, following procedures outlined in the nominations section. Statewide recognition awards include.

* Delaware Award for Excellence & Commitment in State Service – Due Jan 31
* GEAR P3 Trailblazer Award – Due Jan 31
* Governor’s Team Excellence Award – Due Jan 15
* Delaware Award for Heroism – Submit nominations ASAP
* More information about statewide awards and criteria:

<https://dhr.delaware.gov/training/award/index.shtml>

**Nomination Procedures:**

**Quarterly Award Categories: (**Innovation and Collaboration, Service to Agriculture, Employee Excellence, and Rising Star)

* Any employee in the Department can nominate an individual or teams for awards.
* Nominations deadlines –
  + First Quarter (January – March) – January 31
  + Second Quarter (April – June) – April 30
  + Third Quarter (July – September) – July 31
  + Fourth Quarter (October – December) – October 31
* Nominations shall be submitted on the Employee Recognition Nomination Form to the Department Recognition Chairperson who is responsible for forwarding all nominations to the Department Recognition Committee for consideration. The Committee shall vote to select the Quarterly Awards for Excellence (up to 3 per quarter) and submit their recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary for approval.
* No employee with less than “meet expectations” on their performance review or under progressive discipline shall be eligible to receive the award.
* The Department Recognition Chairperson will send a reminder, via email, to all Department employees at least two weeks prior to the quarterly deadline for nominations.
* Nominations that were not chosen during the quarter for which they were nominated will be carried over through the last quarter of the year.

**Employee of the Year**

* Quarterly award recipients for Innovation and Collaboration, Service to Agriculture, Employee Excellence are automatically nominated for Employee of the Year.

**Delaware Award for Heroism**

* Any employee in the Department can nominate an individual(s) for the Award.
* The Recognition Coordinator and Cabinet Secretary will review and decide whether to endorse. It is then submitted to DHR for final approval. Nominations are accepted by DHR year-round and should be submitted ASAP.
* DHR nomination procedures -<https://dhr.delaware.gov/training/award/heroism/index.shtml>

**Award Selection Process:**

**Quarterly Award Selection Process**

* The Secretary shall designate a Recognition Chairperson.
* In addition to the Chairperson, the Recognition Committee shall be diverse and comprised of at least four (4) members to include: one at pay grade 10 or below, two at pay grade 11 and above, and the previous *Employee of the Year*. At least one employee must be in a supervisory position. Additional interested employees may be added to the committee.
* The Recognition Committee will review all nominations and vote to determine recipients.
* The Recognition Committee may award up to three category awards (Innovation and Collaboration, Service to Agriculture, Employee Excellence) per quarter. The Committee should recognize the best nominations, regardless of category. This may mean multiple winners in the same category (and none in another) depending on the nominations received.
* During the 4th quarter of the year, the Recognition Committee may provide “Honorable Mention” recognition to any nominees from that year who did not receive an award.
* Rising Star is not competitive and may be awarded to all deserving candidates.
* The Recognition Chairperson will forward the Committee’s recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary for approval and will plan for a formal presentation of the awards.

**Employee of the Year and Annual Awards Selection:**

* After the 4th quarter awards are selected, the recognition committee will review all quarterly award winners and vote to select the Employee of the Year.
* In addition to Employee of the Year, the recognition committee will select 3 additional Quarterly Awards for Excellence recipients to recognize the best work in those categories. This should include any nominated for statewide awards and other examples of exemplary work. The committee may recommend more than 3 such awards if merited for outstanding work.

These recipients will receive.

* + One day of annual leave in accordance with the Expenditures section.
* The Recognition Chairperson will forward the Committee’s recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary for approval and will plan for a formal presentation of the awards.

**Nominations for Statewide Awards:**

* Once the 4th quarter awards are selected, the Recognition Committee will review quarterly award recipients and the statewide awards criteria. The committee will determine who is qualified for each statewide award and vote on which qualified candidate to nominate for each award.
* Typically the Employee of the Year is nominated for the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service, unless the winner would prefer nomination for a different statewide award and meets those qualifications. In this case, a recognition committee will select another quarterly winner for this nomination.
* GEAR P3 Trailblazer and Governor’s Team Excellence nominations will be selected from DDA award winners who meet the criteria for those awards.
* Delaware Award for Heroism nominations are submitted to DHR for final approval once endorsed by the Cabinet Secretary.
* The Recognition Chairperson will submit each nomination for statewide award.

**Recognition Events:**

* Employees shall be invited to four (4) department-wide quarterly events to recognize quarterly awards and service award recipients. There may be cake and refreshments provided during these events.
* Employees shall be invited to a department-wide annual event. Specifics such as location, food, and gift will be determined by the Recognition Committee and approved by the Cabinet Secretary. During this event, there may be food provided and each employee may receive a thank-you gift from the department. An sub-committee may be formed to help plan the annual recognition event.
* During the annual event, Employee of the Year and nominations for statewide awards will be recognized.

**Public Service Recognition Week:**

* The Recognition Committee should work with DDA HR and Administration to plan fun, light-weight recognition activities during Public Service Recognition Week.
  + Public Service Recognition Week is the first week of May
  + Past activities have included email employee spotlights, recognition wall, seeds of gratitude, interactive games, team building activities, ice cream socials.

**Expenditures:**

* The **annual recognition budget** shall not exceed $75.00 per employee, including gifts, food, and space rental. Potentially, 207 employees (149 FTE’s including 2 DHR positions and 56 seasonal) shall attend the annual event.
* 207 employees X $75.00 per person = $15,525. Excess money (if entire $75 per person is not used at annual event) may be used throughout the year for recognition events such as: cake and refreshments for quarterly events).
* Miscellaneous costs incurred (such as certificate, certificate frames, plaques and engraving costs for the employee of the year [up to $200], certificate, certificate frames for employee of the quarter and award for heroism [$10], and service lapel pins [$2.95 each for approximately 40 employees per year]) = $668.00.
* **Annual Leave as an Award** – Employees may be awarded one day (7.5/8.0 hours) of leave with pay for certain awards. This leave will be requested and approved in accordance with statewide leave policies and procedures. Such leave must be used within one year of being awarded and is not subject to cash payments. An employee may only be awarded one day off per year. DDA can only award days off to full-time (leave-eligible) DDA employees.

Submission of Plans

Please forward plans electronically, accompanied by an endorsement email from the department head, to the Department of Human Resources for review and approval.

**Please submit forms electronically** to [Statewide\_Training@delaware.gov](mailto:Statewide_Training@delaware.gov)

**For Department of Human Resources Use Only**: Plan approved: