

USGS Honor Awards Guide

USGS and DOI Honor Awards

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U.S. Geological Survey

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Introduction

This award and recognition guide is provided as a tool to assist in selecting the appropriate award or recognition for employee or group achievement and identifies the steps required in processing the nomination through the final presentation of the award or recognition.

Recognition of Achievements

Achievements should be recognized at the time of the accomplishment, and acknowledgement of progress toward achieving individual, team, or organizational results should be a continuous process. **Nominations must be submitted and approved within 6 months of an employee's departure from USGS in order to be considered.**

Award Certification Form ([DI-451](#))

This form is available as a fillable form at: [DI-451](#)

Presentation of Awards

Awards should be presented in a way that supports the significance of the recognition. Award presentations may be occasions for the serving of light refreshments of a reasonable charge such as punch, cake, doughnuts, or bagels by using appropriated funds. [65 Comptroller General Decision (CG) 738 and CG B-223319, dated July 21, 1986]. See also [Survey Manual 402.3.7C](#) for certification and procurement requirements. Travel for presidential, departmental, or major bureau award ceremonies may be paid for award recipients and an individual of the recipient's choosing [CG decision B-233607, dated October 26, 1989].

Program Authority

- The authority for the Program is Title 5, United States Code, Chapters 43 and 45, and Executive Orders 11438 and 12828 and 13589
- DM: 5CFR Parts 430 and 451; Comptroller General Decisions B-223319 July 21, 1986, and B-235163.11, February 13, 1996

Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator

Amy Bradley

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USGS Honor Awards Review Team

Purpose. The USGS Honor Awards Review Team, comprised of Director's Office staff, and the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, Human Capital Office, ensures that a consistent approach is applied in the review, evaluation, and recommendation of honor award nominations prior to their submission for final approval to the USGS Director, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science (ASWS) or to the Department.

Honor Awards Review Team Responsibilities. The Team reviews all honor award nominations to ensure their technical and editorial quality and that they meet the spirit and intent of the DOI/USGS honor awards guidance. They provide the bureau-level perspective that is needed to ensure consistent application of criteria as well as fairness and objectivity using supplemental bureau criteria/guidance.

Nominating Office Responsibilities. Offices have responsibility for submitting high-quality write-ups that follow the appropriate guidelines, formatting, grammatical and punctuation accuracy, and meaningful strength of content that meet both the spirit and the intent of these awards and that can be easily understood by the lay person. All nominations must go through supervisory channels and be endorsed by a member of the ELT **prior** to being submitted to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator.

Criteria for Evaluation. The DOI honor awards guidance and supplemental USGS awards guidance serves as the criteria against which nominations are reviewed. Each nominating office certifies that the individual achievements match the award levels in terms of the work of their organization.

Honor Award Vetting Policy and Process

The Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator conducts a review of the nominee's electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) to ensure that there is no derogatory information. Potential derogatory information may include issues such as discriminatory actions, garnishment orders, suitability, and security findings.

Additionally, the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator requests vetting from the Office of Science Quality and Integrity, the DOI Office of Civil Rights, the Office of the Inspector General, and the DOI Ethics Office, to determine whether there are any known findings of discrimination, wrongdoing, or other derogatory information resulting from investigations on the proposed awardees.

All potential derogatory information will be forwarded to the DOI Office of Human Resources for evaluation to determine if there is justification to disapprove the award. In this evaluation, the Office of Human Resources will consider recency, seriousness, relationship to the award, notoriety, and impact of the incident, and other relevant factors. The determination will be forwarded to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator.

Travel Costs to Attend USGS and DOI Award Ceremonies

It is the responsibility of the award recipient's office to cover the cost of all travel and per diem for the award recipient (this includes retirees in which instance the office corporate card can be used). It is permissible for that office to also pay the travel and per diem for one guest to attend with the recipient (day incoming, day of the ceremony, day outgoing), if the budget allows. If the recipient must stay extra days to attend meetings (TDY), the per diem for the guest is not allowed to be paid with government funds but is an out-of-pocket expense for the recipient and guest for those extra days.

Providing Food and Flowers at Government Expense--Government Employee Awards Ceremonies

Appropriated funds may be used to provide light refreshments subject to the following.

GAO has ruled that the Government Employee Incentive Awards Act (GEIAA) authorizes the use of appropriated funds for light refreshments in connection with government employee awards ceremonies that are "ceremonial" and involve "a measure of public recognition" (B-223319, July 21, 1986). Formal occasions such as the annual USGS Honor Awards presentation or a district's largest annual awards event meet the "ceremonial" test. GAO has disallowed refreshments at government expense at awards ceremonies (1) attended by no one other than the recipient(s) and the presenter because the "public recognition" test was not met, and (2) "[where] the awards are purely incidental to an unrelated social or recreational event and appear on close scrutiny to be no more than an artifice" to sanction the purchase of refreshments. (B-247563.4, December 11, 1996.)

Light refreshments such as coffee, tea, punch, cookies, donuts, chips or similar snack items are permitted not exceeding \$500 or \$2 per person, whichever is less. The following documentation is required to justify the purchase, and must be retained with the purchase records:

- Date of the event;
- Purpose;
- Number of awardees;
- Number of attendees (must be greater than number of awardees);
- Refreshments served;
- Cost of refreshments;
- Cost of incidental expenses;
- Cost Center Chief's approving signature and date (must be approved & signed BEFORE the event).

Purchase of light refreshments may be made by government charge card if within the cardholder's single purchase limit; otherwise a purchase order must be issued by a warranted Contracting Officer. Anytime that food or beverages are to be purchased, advance consultation with the Office of Acquisition and Grants or your servicing acquisition office is highly encouraged.

Please note that this authority does not apply to ceremonies solely for the purpose of presenting awards to volunteers, former employees, or other members of the public.

Cost Center Managers should use judgment when approving refreshments at government expense. The quantity of refreshments should be commensurate with the scale of the ceremony and not so elaborate as to be potentially embarrassing to the USGS. Examples of inappropriate use of this authority would be ordering meals under the pretense of "refreshments" or providing food for a social gathering by adding an awards ceremony.

Flowers are also an approved purchase per OPM guidelines at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/performance-management/performance-management-cycle/rewarding/awards-ceremony-suggestions/> under Suggestions for Having a Successful Formal Ceremony.

DOI and USGS Honor Awards

Aviation Safety Award (DOI)

It is the policy of DOI to recognize individuals, groups, and organizations for exceptional acts or service in support of aviation safety and aircraft accident prevention. Please see the following list of aviation safety awards offered by the Department of the Interior.

- **Department's Aviation Safety Award**
Established to recognize an individual, group, or organization for outstanding contribution to aviation safety or aircraft accident prevention within DOI. This award is restricted to DOI employees and only one such award shall be presented annually at the DOI Convocation in the Main Interior Building, Washington D.C. Award includes a plaque and citation. Travel and logistical support are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Other Department of Interior aviation awards follow. These awards are presented at local duty stations.

- **Award for In-Flight Action**
Established to recognize onboard flight crewmembers, aircrew members, and passengers who, through outstanding airmanship, courage, or other action, materially contribute to the successful recovery from an emergency, or who minimize or prevent aircraft damage or injury to personnel during a DOI aviation-related occurrence. The award may also be presented to non-DOI personnel. Award includes a plaque and citation or appropriate recognition item.
- **Award for Safe Flying**
Established to recognize DOI pilots who have distinguished themselves by safe flying for the period considered. DOI pilots are eligible to receive this award. Award includes a plaque and citation or appropriate recognition item.
- **Award for Significant Contribution to Aviation Safety**
Established to recognize an individual, group, or organization for a significant contribution to aviation safety or aircraft accident prevention within DOI. DOI individuals or groups are eligible to receive this award. Award includes a plaque and citation or appropriate recognition item.
- **Airwards**
Established to provide timely recognition to any individual who has demonstrated positive behavior or actions promoting DOI aviation safety, such as correcting a hazardous situation, submitting a good idea, or just making a difference. Any individual is eligible to receive this award. Along with the nomination, a photograph of the recipient and a short paragraph, suitable for publication in the *Airward News* (<http://amd.nbc.gov/safety/airwards>), **should be submitted to the Acting Bureau Aviation Safety Manager, Timothy Saucier**. Award includes a citation and an embroidered baseball cap.

Eligibility

This program applies to all DOI employees and other individuals, groups, or organizations involved with DOI aviation activities. Any individual having sufficient knowledge of the contribution may submit a nomination through appropriate channels.

Criteria

The circumstances being considered must clearly demonstrate an outstanding contribution to aviation safety or aircraft accident prevention within DOI. The circumstances being considered must be verified and attested to for the substance and accuracy of the proposal by individual(s) other than those being considered for recognition.

Process

Nominations are solicited in January of every year by the HRO on behalf of the Department's Aviation Safety Program. Nominations for this award will be in narrative form identifying, in detail, the act or service to be considered and why the act or service is deserving of recognition. The nominating office submits an award narrative addressing who, what, when, where, how and why to the **Acting Bureau Aviation Manager (BAM), Timothy Saucier at saucier@usgs.gov**, who reviews the nomination for validity and then submits to the DOI Office of Aviation Services (OAS) Safety Division Chief for the appropriate award. The DOI-OAS Safety Division Chief reviews the nomination and after making the selection(s) bestows award items for presentation in coordination with the BAM, the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, and the nominating office.

See Appendix 1

Citizen's Award for Bravery (DOI)

The Citizen's Award for Bravery was established in 1996 and is the highest honor granted by the Department of the Interior to a private citizen for a heroic act.

Eligibility

The Citizen's Award for Bravery is given to private citizens who risk their lives to save the life of a Departmental employee serving in the line of duty or the life of any other person while on property owned by or entrusted to the Department. **The award should be submitted no more than six months after the date of the heroic act, unless special justification is provided.**

Process

Nominations may be made by any individual or group of individuals in the USGS who have knowledge of the heroic act. The nomination must be prepared in citation format for the **Secretary's signature (single-spaced on one page, Times New Roman 12 Font, justified, 350 words maximum)** and submitted in **Word format** through supervisory channels.

Preparation of the [DI-451](#) Award Certification Form

The citation is downloaded into the Justification Section of the [DI-451](#) Award Certification form as an attachment and appropriate signatures are acquired. The signature format for completing the Award Certification, DI-451 is as follows: (1) the supervisor of record will always sign "Supervisor Concurrence"; (2) the appropriate ELT member will always sign as the "Recommending Individual" and submit the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator at gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Director's and Assistant Secretary for Water and Science (AS/WS) signature.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Each recipient receives a certificate and citation signed by the Secretary. The award is presented by the Secretary at a Departmental Awards Convocation. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office.

See Appendix 3

Citizen's Award for Exceptional Service (USGS) (non-employees)

The Citizen's Award for Exceptional Service is a USGS honor award that recognizes outstanding performance by a private citizen, organizational partner, or volunteer who has contributed significantly to the Bureau's mission. Nominations are made by the office having the most knowledge of the contribution made by the individual(s).

Process

Nominations may be made by any individual in the USGS. The nomination must be prepared as a Word document in citation format for the **Director's signature (single-spaced on one page, Times New Roman, 12 Font, justified, 350 words maximum)** and submitted through supervisory channels prior to submitting it to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator.

Preparation of the [DI-451](#) Award Certification Form

Because the nominee is not an employee the [DI-451](#) won't recognize the person and, therefore, will not load any information. A blank DI-451 must be printed out and filled in manually with signatures of the Supervisor (USGS Project Lead), Recommending Official (i.e. Center Director) and Reviewing Official (ELT member), scanned and emailed, along with the citation in **Word format**, to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Director's signature as the Approving Official.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

An individual recipient will receive a certificate and citation signed by the Director. If the award is for a group, one certificate with the group's name will be presented and every one of the group will receive their own citation. The award is presented at an appropriate function at the local duty station or Regional Director's office. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office and can be paid using the office's corporate card.

See Appendix 2

Dallas Peck Outstanding Scientist Emeritus Award

[USGS Emeritus Program | U.S. Geological Survey](#)

This award recognizes significant contributions made to the USGS mission by an individual while volunteering as a Scientist Emeritus. Possible contributions are listed in the above website. A Scientist Emeritus may only receive the Dallas Peck Award one time. One or more awards will be given out each year at the USGS Honor Awards Ceremony.

Guidance in writing and processing this award can be found in the USGS Emeriti Awards section of the above website.

Distinguished Service Award (DOI)

The Distinguished Service Award (DSA) was established in 1948 and is the highest award that can be granted to a career employee within the Department of the Interior. The award recognizes employees for outstanding contributions to science; outstanding skill or ability in the performance of duty; an eminent career in the Department; an outstanding record in administration; an outstanding contribution to equal opportunity in government; an outstanding contribution to energy conservation; or any other exceptional contribution to the public service.

Eligibility

Any employee of the Department of the Interior is eligible for this award. Normally the recipients of this award will have received a Meritorious Service Award (MSA), but a DSA may be granted to an employee who has not been awarded an MSA. **Nominations are not considered six months after the date of retirement or separation of an employee. An employee may receive only one DSA during their career.**

Process

Nominations are solicited annually by the Human Resources Office on behalf of the Director. An email goes out to all USGS employees. The nomination must be prepared as a **Word document** in citation format for the **Secretary's signature (single-spaced on one page, Times New Roman 12 Font, justified, 350 words maximum)** and submitted through supervisory channels before submitting it to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator.

Preparation of the DI-451 Award Certification Form

The citation is downloaded into the Justification Section of the DI-451 Award Certification form as an attachment and appropriate signatures are acquired. The signature format for completing the Award Certification, DI-451 is as follows: (1) the supervisor of record signs "Supervisor Concurrence"; (2) the appropriate ELT member signs as the "Recommending Individual" and submits the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Director's and AS/WS signature.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Each recipient receives a certificate and citation signed by the Secretary of the Interior along with an engraved gold medal and gold lapel pin. Awards will be scheduled for presentation at the Departmental Awards Convocation in Washington D.C. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office.

See Appendix 3

Doug D. Nebert NSDI Champion of the Year Award (FGDC)

<http://www.fgdc.gov/nebertaward>

This award recognizes an individual or a team representing Federal, State, Tribal, regional, and local government, academia, or nonprofit and professional organization that has developed an outstanding, innovative, and operational tool, application, or service capability used by multiple organizations that furthers the vision of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). The award honors Doug D. Nebert who was a respected colleague, technical visionary, and recognized national leader in the establishment of spatial data infrastructures (SDI). The vision of the NSDI is to assure that spatial data from multiple sources-Federal, State, Tribal, regional, and local governments, academia, and the private sector are available and easily integrated to enhance the understanding of our physical and cultural world.

Please see the above website for more information about this award, eligibility, nomination process and contacts.

Excellence in Leadership Awards (USGS)

[USGS Excellence in Leadership Award | U.S. Geological Survey](#)

The Excellence in Leadership Award is a USGS honor award that recognizes an employee, or group of employees, for their outstanding acts, services, or achievements that exemplify and support the USGS goals of developing a leadership-centered culture throughout the Bureau. The Early Career Award was implemented for employees with 10 or fewer years of federal service (includes all federal service including student, term, and temporary appointments).

Eligibility

Nominee(s) must be a USGS employee or group of employees. Nominee(s) as a group or as an individual must not previously have received this award. However, if an individual has received the award individually, they can receive the award as a member of a group and vice versa. The contribution(s) being recognized must have occurred in the past two years (from the date of the nomination deadline) for both the Leadership and the Early Career awards.

Process

A call for nominations is made annually through the Human Resources Office on behalf of the Director. Specific award criteria and nominee information will be provided with the annual solicitation memorandum. Nominations will be evaluated, and award recipients selected by a panel consisting of one Deputy Director, one Associate Director, one Regional Director, the Associate Director for Administration, and one graduate of Leadership 201. One individual recipient and/or a group of employees will be selected annually for each award (Excellence in Leadership and Early Career Excellence in Leadership).

Preparation of the [DI-451 Award Certification Form](#)

In the Recommendation and Approval section of the [DI-451 Form](#):

Select bureau-specific award and check the “other awards” box and fill in Excellence in Leadership Award or Early Career Excellence in Leadership. The nomination is downloaded into the Justification Section of the DI-451 Award Certification form as an attachment and appropriate signatures are acquired. The signature format for completing the Award Certification, DI-451 is as follows: (1) the author/nominator of the award signs as the “Recommending Individual”; (2) the supervisor of record will sign “Supervisor Concurrence”; (3) the appropriate ELT member signs as the “Reviewing Official” and submits the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Each recipient receives a certificate and citation signed by the Director. The award is presented by the Director at a USGS Honor Awards Ceremony. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Exemplary Act Award (DOI)

The Exemplary Act Award is a Department of the Interior honor award and recognizes an employee who attempts to save the life of another, or for a private citizen who attempts to save the life of a departmental employee serving in the line of duty or any other person while on property owned by or entrusted to the Department, when risk to their own life is **not** an issue. The act does not have to be related to official duties and the site of the incident does not have to be the official duty station. The award is based on the nature of the act and is given to individuals or to a group. The award should be submitted no more than six months after the exemplary act occurred.

Eligibility

Employees at all levels in the Department are eligible for this award. An employee can receive the award more than once. In exceptional instances, the award may be given to a private citizen or group of citizens.

Process

Nominations may be made by any individual or group of individuals who have knowledge of the heroic act. The nomination must be prepared as a Word doc in citation format for the **Director's signature (single-spaced on one page, Times New Roman 12 Font, justified, 350 words maximum)** and submitted through supervisory channels of the office or discipline aware of the heroic act.

Preparation of the DI-451 Award Certification Form

The citation is downloaded into the Justification Section of the DI-451 Award Certification form as an attachment and appropriate signatures are acquired. The signature format for completing the Award Certification, DI-451 is as follows: (1) Supervisor of record signs "Supervisor Concurrence"; (2) the Center Director signs as the "Recommending Individual"; (3) the appropriate ELT member signs as the "Reviewing Individual" and submits the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Director's signature.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Each recipient receives a citation and certificate signed by the Director. The award is presented at an appropriate occasion such as the annual USGS Honor Awards Ceremony. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office.

See Appendix 3

Gary L. Hill Watercraft Safety Award

This award honors Gary Hill, a respected colleague, technical visionary, and leader of the USGS Watercraft Safety Program. The award recognizes those individuals who have made significant contributions towards the enhancement of the USGS Watercraft Safety Program through the development or contribution to safe work practices associated with watercraft operations; the conduct of effective training and/or implementation of watercraft safety requirements; and by providing exceptional customer service to watercraft stakeholders and those who use watercraft to perform work activities.

Eligibility

All USGS employees are eligible nominees for these awards, either individually or collectively.

Process

Nominations are solicited annually by the HRO on behalf of the USGS Safety and Health Council. An email goes out to all USGS employees. The nomination must be prepared in Word format (**Times New Roman, 12 Font**) and attached to the Justification section of the DI-451. Nomination must be in citation format (like the sample in appendix 10). The USGS Safety and Health Council will review and select nominations for Director's approval.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Individual Award recipients receive a citation signed by the Director, a certificate, and a medallion. **Group Award** recipients receive a letter congratulating each employee in the group signed by the Director and a certificate and medallion for each employee in the group. **Organization Award** recipients (for an entire Center) receive a letter signed by the Director and a plaque. Presentation of the award will be at the annual Bureau awards ceremony. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Preparation of the DI-451 Award Certification Form

The signature format for completing the Award Certification, DI-451 is as follows: (1) The supervisor of record signs "Supervisor Concurrence"; (2) the author of the nomination signs as the "Recommending Individual"; (3) the appropriate ELT member signs as the "Reviewing Official" and submits the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Director's signature, and, if the award goes to the Department, for Assistant Secretary for Water and Science signature.

Going the Extra Mile (GEM) Award (USGS) (National Center Employees)

The GEM Award recognizes USGS employees located at the National Center in Reston, Virginia, for outstanding contributions or performance. The award honors employees who have “gone the extra mile” and have performed above and beyond normal job duties.

Eligibility

Any USGS employee may nominate any USGS employee located at the National Center for this award with the exception that employees cannot nominate their own supervisors. **Contractors and volunteers are not eligible for this award.**

Process

Any employee or group of employees may initiate a nomination for any National Center employee at any time. Nominations must have the concurrence of the individual’s supervisor who submits the DI-451 with justification included to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator for processing.

Preparation of the [DI-451](#) Award Certification Form

The signature format for completing the Award Certification, [DI-451](#) is as follows: (1) the supervisor of record will sign “Supervisor Concurrence” and submit to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov for processing.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Award recipients receive a certificate and parking pass in the F lot beginning the first day of the month for that month (28-31 days depending on the month). A total of eight parking passes are available to National Center recipients. The supervisor of the recipient will present the award.

Henry Gannett Award (USGS) (topographic mapping)

<http://nationalmap.gov/gannett/process.html>

The Henry Gannett Award recognizes sustained and distinguished contributions to USGS topographic mapping of the Nation. This award is given for activities which result in significant gains or improvements in advancing the mission of the National Geospatial Program and the interests of the geospatial community in general.

Please see the above website for eligibility, award criteria, nomination and selection process, award presentation and recipients.

James R. Balsley, Jr. Award for Excellence in Technology Transfer

This Award recognizes outstanding contributions that further technology innovation and transfer. The purpose of this award is to recognize USGS scientific, engineering, technical, and science support employees for (1) inventions or other outstanding scientific or technological contributions of value to the United States due to commercial applications and (2) exemplary activities that promote the domestic transfer of science and technology developed within USGS and result in the use of such science and technology by American industry or business, universities, State or local Government, or other non-Federal parties.

Please email gs-bfa_opa@usgs.gov for information on eligibility, award criteria, the nomination and selection process, award presentation and recipients.

John Wesley Powell Award (USGS) (non-employees)

The John Wesley Powell Award is a USGS honor award that recognizes an individual or group, **not employed by the Federal Government**, whose contributions to the USGSs objectives and mission are noteworthy. Five awards may be given each year, with one recipient selected from each of the following categories:

- Industry
- Educational institution
- State and local government
- Societies and associations
- Private citizens, groups, or organization

Eligibility

Any individual or groups not employed by the Federal Government whose contributions are noteworthy to the objectives and programs of the USGS are eligible for the John Wesley Powell Award. Individuals or organizations working under contract to the Federal Government are **not** eligible for this award.

Process

Nominations are solicited annually by the Human Resources Office on behalf of the USGS Director. An email goes out to all USGS employees. The nomination must be prepared as a Word doc in citation format for the **Director's signature (single-spaced on one page, Times New Roman, 12 Font, justified, 350 words maximum)** and submitted through supervisory channels with the endorsement by the ELT member prior to submitting it to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator who will prepare a Letter of Commendation for Director's signature. There can only be one selection per category for this award.

Preparation of the [DL-451](#) Award Certification Form

Because the nominee is not an employee the DL-451 won't recognize the person and, therefore, will not load any information. A blank [DL-451](#) must be printed out and filled in manually with the citation attached to it and sent to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Director's signature. The author of the nomination signs in the Recommending Individual box and the ELT member signs as Reviewing Official. The Approving Official box is saved for the Director's signature.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

The award consists of a brass benchmark set in a wooden plaque engraved with the recipient's name, a letter of commendation and citation signed by the Director. The award is presented at an appropriate occasion such as the annual USGS Honor Awards Ceremony. In some cases, there may be an opportunity to make such presentation in conjunction with meetings or organized groups with which the honoree may be associated, such as chambers of commerce, civic clubs, professional organizations, conservation groups, State geologic groups, and similar organizations. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office. Contact Joanne Jones (jjones@usgs.gov) at the HIF for Benchmark plaque information.

See Appendix 5

Length of Service (LOS) Recognition

The USGS uses the service computation date annual leave as the basis for LOS certificates with the exception of honorably discharged retired military whose service computation dates must be manually calculated by the Human Capital Office to capture length of service for the purpose of the LOS awards. This calculation will have no effect on leave categories or retirement dates. **USGS recognizes employees in 10-year increments.**

NOTE: It is the sole responsibility of the submitting office to remember to write the congratulatory letters for their 30+ LOS award recipients. Please ensure accuracy of content, grammar and format before the letters are submitted up the line for signature. Please take some time in writing these letters. Your people have dedicated their lives to the Federal government. Please show them you appreciate them.

See Appendices 6 and 7 for more information

Meritorious Service Award (DOI)

The Meritorious Service Award (MSA) was established in 1948 and is the second highest Departmental award that can be granted a career employee. The MSA may be granted for an important contribution to science or management; a notable career; superior service in administration or in the execution of duties; innovation in devising new and improved work methods and procedures; superior achievement in improving safety or health of workers or employee morale; superior accomplishments in fostering the objective of equal employment opportunity; or important contributions to energy conservation.

Eligibility

The award is for career employees of the Department typically in mid-career who may have received one or more Superior Service Award (SSA). However, prior receipt of a SSA is not a prerequisite for a MSA. Employees should be considered and nominated for the MSA at the time an important contribution is made. The MSA can be granted and presented throughout the year and can also be given to an employee at a retirement ceremony. **Nominations are not considered six months after the date of retirement or separation of an employee. An employee can only receive one MSA in their career.**

Process

Nominations are solicited annually by the Human Resources Office on behalf of the Director. An email goes out to all USGS employees. The nomination must be prepared in citation format for the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science signature (**single-spaced on one page, Times New Roman 12 Font, justified, 350 words maximum**) and submitted in **Word format** through supervisory channels. The Word document is downloaded into the DI-451 Award Certification form as an attachment and appropriate signatures are acquired.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Each recipient receives a certificate and citation signed by the AS/WS along with an engraved silver Meritorious Service Award medal and silver lapel pin. Awards will be scheduled for presentation at the annual USGS Honor Awards Ceremony. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Preparation of the [DI-451](#) Award Certification Form

The signature format for completing the Award Certification, [DI-451](#) is as follows: (1) the supervisor of record signs "Supervisor Concurrence"; (2) the appropriate ELT member signs as the "Recommending Individual" and submits the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Assistant Secretary for Water and Science signature.

See Appendix 4

Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence (USGS, DOI)

The DOI/USGS Safety awards program is a tiered safety award and health program. The award recognizes individuals or organizations that performed an outstanding service for or made a contribution of unusual value to the occupational safety and health of employees, visitors, and volunteers. The accomplishments of the individual or organization contribute toward the establishment of a safe and healthful environment within the DOI that builds a culture that will move it toward the goal of zero loss to personnel and material resources.

Eligibility

All DOI employees and volunteers are eligible nominees for these awards, either individually or collectively.

Process

Nominations are solicited annually by the Human Resources Office on behalf of the USGS Safety and Health Council. An email goes out to all USGS employees. The nomination must be prepared in **Word format (Times New Roman, 12 Font)** and attached to the Justification section of the DI-451. **Nomination must be in citation format (see attachment 10).** The USGS Safety and Health Council will review and select nominations for Director's approval. The USGS Safety and Health Council **may** submit USGS award winner(s) for the Department's award.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Individual Award recipients receive a citation signed by the Director (USGS Award) or signed by the Secretary of the Interior (DOI Award), a certificate and a medallion. **Group Award** recipients receive a letter congratulating each employee in the group signed by the Director or Secretary (whichever is appropriate), a certificate for each employee in the group, and a medallion for each employee in the group. **Organization Award** recipients (for an entire Center) receive a letter signed by the Director or Secretary (whichever is appropriate) and a plaque. Presentation of the award will be at a Departmental Awards Convocation or an annual Bureau awards ceremony depending on the level of the award. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office. DOI award nominations not selected for the DOI Secretarial Safety Award may be recognized by the DOI Office of Occupational Safety and Health (DOI OOSH). In those instances, recipients will receive a plaque and medallion issued by the DOI OOSH and mentioned in the USGS Honor Awards Ceremony program.

Preparation of the DI-451 Award Certification Form

The signature format for completing the Award Certification, **DI-451** is as follows: (1) The supervisor of record signs "Supervisor Concurrence"; (2) the author of the nomination signs as the "Recommending Individual"; (3) the appropriate ELT member signs as the "Reviewing Official" and submits the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, **gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov**. Nominations will be forwarded to the Bureau Safety Manager for USGS Full Time Safety and Health and USGS Safety and Health Council concurrence prior to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator for processing the form for Director's signature, and, if the award further goes to the Department, for Assistant Secretary for Water and Science signature.

For additional information see **USGS 445-2-H Chapter 8 "Occupational Safety and Health Awards. See Appendix 8**

Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals (Sammies) (DOI)

[Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals \(Sammies\)](#)

The Partnership for Public Service celebrates the achievement of federal employees whose work, performed to high standards of excellence, is essential to the health, welfare and security of American society. Dubbed the Oscars of government service, the *Sammies* honor our nation's talented and dedicated Federal workforce by shining a spotlight on the innovative and selfless individuals and teams who make our civil service the best in the world.

Nomination Guidelines

Nominator Eligibility

Nominators can be anyone—fed or non-fed, friend or family member, supervisor or employee. However, we do not accept self-nominations.

Nominee Eligibility

While nominators are not required to be federal employees, nominees must be career civilian federal employees of the Executive Branch of the U.S. government (which includes DOI bureaus). Similar employees of the Library of Congress, Government Accountability Office, Congressional Budget Office, Office of the Capitol Architect, Government Publishing Office, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Smith Institution and Botanical Gardens, plus commissioned office of the U.S. Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are all eligible.

For all medal categories, with the exception of Career Achievement, please identify an accomplishment that has occurred within the past three years. We want to share the most recent government success stories that will best resonate with the American public.

For Career Achievement, nominations should highlight a series of accomplishments or sustained achievement throughout the nominee's 20 or more years as a public servant.

Considering submitting a nomination in Call to Service or Career Achievement? Please review the medal category details below for additional eligibility requirements for those two awards.

Medal Categories

- *Federal Employee of the Year (see below)
- Paul A. Volcker Career Achievement
- Emerging Leaders
- Safety and Law Enforcement
- Management Excellence
- National Security and International Affairs
- Science and Environment

General eligibility requirements apply to all medal categories; special eligibility criteria apply to select categories as listed below.

***Federal Employee of the Year Medal:** This award recognizes a federal employee whose professional contributions exemplify the highest attributes of public service. **Special Guidelines:** This award is chosen by the Sammies Selection Committee from among the group of finalists of all medal categories. Nominations are not accepted for this category.

Paul A. Volcker Career Achievement Medal: This medal recognizes a federal employee who has led significant and sustained achievements during 20 or more years of public service.

Special Eligibility Criteria: Nominee must have worked in public service for at least 20 years as of January 1 during the current nomination cycle.

Emerging Leaders Medal: This nomination category is offered to encourage special consideration for young federal employees who have made an important contribution early in their professional career. Selected finalists will be assigned to other medal categories according to the nature of their work and accomplishments. **Special Eligibility Criteria:** Nominee must be 35 or younger as of January 1 during the current nomination cycle.

Safety, Security and International Affairs: This medal recognizes a federal employee for a significant accomplishment in fields such as civil rights, cyber-security, emergency preparedness and response, border security, counter-terrorism, defense and military affairs, intelligence or diplomacy

Management Excellence Medal: This medal recognizes a federal employee for demonstrating superior leadership and management excellence through a significant contribution to the nation that exemplifies efficient, effective and results-oriented government.

National Security and International Affairs Medal: This medal recognizes a federal employee for a significant accomplishment in fields such as border security, counter-terrorism, defense and military affairs, intelligence, nuclear nonproliferation, diplomacy, foreign assistance or trade.

Science and Environment Medal: This medal recognizes a federal employee for a significant contribution to the nation in activities related to science and environment (including biomedicine, economics, energy, information technology, meteorology, resource conservation and space).

Process

The annual call for nominations for these awards comes from the Office of Human Resources. Please visit the website listed above for more details on categories, past winners, etc. Anyone familiar with the nominee's accomplishments may submit a nomination. The award recipients are determined by the Partnership for Public Service based on the votes submitted by a Selection Committee consisting of national leaders representing government, business, entertainment, media, and the non-profit/foundation community.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

The recipients will be honored at a DOI awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. Awardees will receive a monetary award and will be featured in an issue of *Government Executive* magazine. The *National Journal* and *The Atlantic Monthly* will also profile the award recipients. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Shoemaker Communication Awards (USGS)

Go to @theCore, select A-Z Index, scroll to S, select Shoemaker Awards.

The Eugene M. Shoemaker Communications Awards were established in 1997 to recognize extraordinary examples of communicating and translating complex scientific concepts and discoveries into words and pictures that capture the interest and imagination of the American public and increase their knowledge and understanding of the USGS mission.

Process

Nominations are solicited annually by the Office of Communications and Publishing. Award criteria, eligibility guidelines, and instructions for preparing and submitting nominations are provided at the Shoemaker Awards webpage on @theCore. Any questions related to the Shoemaker Awards should be sent directly to internal_feedback@usgs.gov.

Award categories: Shoemaker Lifetime Achievement in Communications Award and Shoemaker Communications Product Excellence Award.

Lifetime Achievement in Communications

This award is presented to a scientist whose career exemplifies consistent efforts to create excitement and enthusiasm for science among non-scientists.

Eligibility: See Shoemaker webpage on @theCore for eligibility requirements. To access this page, go to @theCore, select A-Z Index, scroll to S, select Shoemaker Awards.

Selection Process: A committee of past Lifetime Achievement Award recipients and other USGS representatives review the nominees and sends the selected winner to the USGS director for awareness.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation: Winners are recognized at an annual USGS Honor Awards Ceremony and receive a personalized trophy. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of these awards are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Communications Product Excellence

These awards recognize information products developed for non-technical audiences and convey complex scientific concepts to non-science audiences. Each year, the Office of Communications and Publishing honors exceptional communications products in the Large Print, Small Print, Webpage/Website, Graphic, Audio/Visual, and Social Media Campaign categories.

Eligibility: See Shoemaker webpage on @theCore for eligibility requirements. To access this page, go to @theCore, select A-Z Index, scroll to S, select Shoemaker Awards.

Selection Process: Entries will be judged and selected by a panel of communications experts from other federal agencies and the private sector.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation: Winners are recognized at an annual USGS Honor Award Ceremony and receive a personalized trophy. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of these awards are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Superior Service Award (DOI)

The Superior Service Award (SSA) was established in 1971 and is a departmental honor award granted for significant acts, services, or achievements that materially aid or affect the successful accomplishment of the Department and the Bureau's mission. The SSA recognizes the employee's accomplishment of a particularly difficult or important mission operation or assignment/project in a manner that reflects favorably on the individual or the bureau; development of a new procedure or process that results in substantially increased productivity, efficiency or economy of operation; innovations of significance which further bureau programs; or for any other aspect of superior performance related to assigned duties and deemed to be deserving of special recognition. The SSA is signed by the Director.

Eligibility

Employees at all grade levels are eligible to be nominated for an SSA. The nomination must be based on the employee's contribution while he or she is actively employed and at the time a superior contribution is made. **Final action on the nomination must be completed no later than six months after retirement or separation of an employee. Employees may receive more than one SSA during their career because this award is project based.**

Process

Nominations are solicited annually by the Human Resources Office on behalf of the Director. An email goes out to all USGS employees. The nomination must be prepared in citation format for the **Director's signature (single-spaced on one page, Times New Roman 12 Font, justified, 350 words maximum)** and submitted in **Word format** through supervisory channels. The Word doc is downloaded into the DI-451 Award Certification form as an attachment and appropriate signatures are acquired.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Each recipient receives a certificate and a citation signed by the Director and a bronze lapel pin. SSA's are presented at an appropriate occasion such as an ELT-level awards ceremony with participation from supervisors, cost center managers, and others as appropriate. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Preparation of the [DI-451](#) Award Certification Form

The nomination will be submitted in Word format and attached to the Justification section of the [DI-451](#). The signature format for completing the Award Certification, DI-451 is as follows: (1) the supervisor of record signs "Supervisor Concurrence"; (2) the author of the nomination signs as the "Recommending Individual"; (3) the appropriate ELT member signs as the "Reviewing Official" and submits the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Director's signature.

See Appendix 4

Unit Award for Excellence of Service (USGS)

The Unit Award for Excellence of Service is a departmental honor award granted to recognize a group or team of DOI employees who have worked together as a unit to perform a service above and beyond and what is considered superior. The Unit Award is signed by the Director.

Eligibility

Any group or teams of employees who work as a unit are eligible for nomination. The contributions must be made while employed by the Department of the Interior and accomplished during a period of performance that ordinarily does not exceed two years. **Nominations must be submitted within six months after the superior performance cited in the documentation.**

Process

Nominations are solicited annually by the Human Resources Office on behalf of the Director. An email goes out to all USGS employees. The award is recommended by the immediate supervisor or individual most familiar with the group contribution. The nomination must be prepared in citation format for the **Director's signature (single-spaced on one page, Times New Roman, 12 Font, justified, 350 words maximum)** and submitted in **Word format** through supervisory channels. The Word document is attached to the Justification section of the DI-451 and appropriate signatures are acquired.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

The award includes one large certificate for the group and a citation for each member of the group signed by the Director. The Unit Award is presented at an appropriate occasion such as the annual USGS Honor Awards Ceremony or a local duty station. Transportation expenses for recipients attending the ceremony are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Preparation of the [DI-451](#) Award Certification Form

Only one name can be inserted in the form so the Lead person should be selected just to make the form work. The citation and a list of awardees, their offices and duty stations are attached to the Justification section of the form. The signature format for completing the [DI-451](#) is as follows: (1) the supervisor of record signs "Supervisor Concurrence"; (2) the author of the nomination signs as the "Recommending Individual"; (3) the appropriate ELT member signs as the "Reviewing Official" and submits the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Director's signature.

See Appendix 9

USGS Community for Data Integration Leadership Award

<https://www.usgs.gov/centers/community-for-data-integration-cdi/usgs-community-data-integration-leadership-and>

The USGS Community for Data Integration (CDI) Leadership and Innovation Award is presented to a community member for outstanding leadership, innovation, and vision in guiding USGS data integration activities through the CDI community of practice. The award is meant to recognize an individual who brings new ideas to life and provides their unwavering leadership to produce tangible results that will improve data integration, access, and discovery.

Frequency

One award every two years (biennial)

Deadline for nominations

February 15 every two years beginning in 2021

Eligibility

This program applies to all USGS employees and other individuals involved with the USGS Community for Data Integration. Nominees must not have received the award previously.

Criteria

The nominee actively seeks collaborative approaches, embraces new perspectives, and provides a high-energy forum to address on-the-ground data integration needs of the community. Through their leadership, the nominee's contributions move the CDI, the USGS and its partners forward to a more integrated data landscape that ultimately advances USGS science.

Process

Any individual having sufficient knowledge of the contribution may submit a nomination to the CDI at gs_cdi@usgs.gov. Format for the citation: **Single-spaced, one page, Times New Roman Font 12, justified, 350 words maximum**. A committee consisting of CDI facilitators reviews the nominees and makes a recommendation to the executive sponsors of the CDI, who make the final selection of the winner.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

The award includes the citation, a certificate, and a trophy. It is presented at the biennial CDI meeting.

Valor Award (DOI)

The Valor Award was established in 1957 and is the highest honor granted by the Department for a valiant act by an employee. The Valor Award is granted to employees of the Department who demonstrate unusual courage involving a high degree of personal risk in the face of danger and risk their lives while attempting to save the life of another. The heroic act does not have to be related to official duties and the site of the incident does not have to be the official duty station. The award is based on the nature of the act and is given individually. The award should be submitted no more than six months after the date of the heroic act unless special justification is provided.

Eligibility

Employees at all levels in the Department are eligible for this award. An employee may receive a Valor Award more than once during their career.

Process

Nominations are solicited annually by the Human Resources Office on behalf of the Director. An email goes out to all USGS employees. Nominations may be made by any individual or group of individuals who have knowledge of the heroic act. The nomination must be prepared in citation format for the **Secretary's signature (single-spaced on one page, Times New Roman 12 Font, justified, 350 words maximum)** and submitted in **Word format** through supervisory channels. The citation is attached to the Justification section of the DI-451 and appropriate signatures are acquired.

Evidence of the Award and Presentation

Each recipient receives an engraved gold medal and citation signed by the Secretary. Valor Awards will be scheduled for presentation at the Department Awards Convocation in Washington D.C. Travel costs and logistical support associated with presentation of this award are the responsibility of the nominating office.

Preparation of the DI-451 Award Certification Form

The nomination will be submitted in Word format and attached to the Justification section of the DI-451. The signature format for completing the Award Certification, DI-451 is as follows: (1) the supervisor of record signs "Supervisor Concurrence"; (2) the appropriate ELT member signs as the "Recommending Individual" and submits the DI-451 to the Bureau Honor Awards Coordinator, gs-hc_honor_awards@usgs.gov who will process the form for Director's review and Assistant Secretary for Water and Science approval.

See Appendix 3

William T. Pecora Award (Remote Sensing) (DOI/NASA)

<http://remotesensing.usgs.gov/pecora.php>

The William T. Pecora Award is presented annually to individuals or groups that make outstanding contributions toward understanding the Earth by means of remote sensing. The award is sponsored jointly by the Department of the Interior and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Please see the above website for more information about this award, eligibility, nomination process and deadline, contacts, past winners and their contributions. You may also email: pecora@usgs.gov

See Appendix 10