

***A MANAGER'S DESK REFERENCE
ON
HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITIES***



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INTRODUCTION

MEETING THE HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

The Department's overarching mission is to advance the national, economic, and energy security of the United States, to promote scientific and technologic innovation in support of that mission, and to ensure the environmental cleanup of the national nuclear weapons complex. More specifically, the Department's principal programs include: insuring the integrity and safety of the country's nuclear weapons; promoting international nuclear safety; advancing nuclear non-proliferation; continuing to provide safe, efficient, and effective nuclear power plants for the United States Navy; cleaning up contaminated sites and disposing of radioactive waste left behind as a byproduct of nuclear weapons production, nuclear powered naval vessels, and commercial nuclear energy production; reducing America's dependence on foreign oil by developing energy efficient technologies for buildings, homes, transportation, power systems, and industry and establishing other reliable energy sources; and overseeing the Nation's research programs in high-energy physics, nuclear physics, and fusion energy sciences.

The Department of Energy (DOE) regularly undergoes significant changes in programs, organization, and staffing structure due to shifts in the Department's strategic plans, national policies and priorities, and changes in resource capabilities. Ensuring and enhancing the competence of DOE's Federal staff is fundamental to the accomplishment of the Department's priorities. Line managers are challenged to hire, develop, and retain staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote competitive, productive, and efficient work practices based on sound security, environmental, health, and safety standards. To accomplish that, they have to make the maximum use of available human capital management flexibilities or "tools" to recruit, reward, and retain a high-quality, diverse workforce.

PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide DOE managers and supervisors with information on available flexibilities that can be used in day-to-day human capital management activities, especially those bearing on the recruitment and retention of high-quality staff. Each section of the document includes a basic description of a particular tool as well as Frequently Asked Questions related to how to best use it in a given set of circumstances or in combination with other flexibilities, unless they are available elsewhere, in which the web link is listed under References for that section. At the end of each section are references with web links that provide more detailed information on the given subject.

This document does not include information on the following internship programs because a comprehensive document on them is available at <http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources.htm>: The Federal Career Internship Program (FCIP), Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program, Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), and Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP).

ABOUT THE FLEXIBILITIES

The flexibilities listed in this document are most of the commonly used ones available, and the descriptive material provided has been written to be “user-friendly.” In using any of these flexibilities, managers should consult with their servicing Human Resources Office (HRO). The HR staff can provide details and “hands-on” assistance on the use of these and other human resource programs and tools for improving workforce excellence, as well as advice on site-specific considerations, policies, and procedures that might affect managerial decisions in particular situations. Approval for use of various administrative flexibilities may involve local supervisors and managers, the servicing HRO, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), or the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

You should consult with your servicing HRO, as additional information may be required to support the need for the use of these tools and to support the selection of the particular technique or group of techniques to be used for the positions in question.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

CFR -- Code of Federal Regulations
CHCO-- Chief Human Capital Officer
CHRIS-- Corporate Human Resources Information System
DCPS -- Defense Civilian Payroll System
DFAS -- (Department of) Defense Finance and Accounting Service
DOE -- Department of Energy
ERB -- Executive Resources Board
FAQs -- Frequently Asked Questions
FLSA -- Fair Labor Standards Act
FTR -- Federal Travel Regulation
GS -- General Schedule
GM -- Merit Pay position
GSA -- General Service Administration
HCM -- Human Capital Management
HR -- Human Resources
HRO -- Human Resources Office
NNSA -- National Nuclear Security Administration
OPM -- Office of Personnel Management
OTS -- On-The-Spot (award)
SAS -- Special Act or Service (award)
SES -- Senior Executive Service
SL/ST -- Senior-Level Scientific or Professional
TDY -- Temporary duty
TOA -- Time-Off Award
U.S.C. -- United States Code

RECRUITMENT INCENTIVE

Overview: Recruitment incentives of up to 25% for an employee (up to 50% with OPM approval) of basic pay (which includes locality pay) may be paid per year to a highly qualified non-Federal candidate when the position is hard to fill without the use of the incentive. A service agreement is required. The length of the service period varies depending on the amount of the incentive and whether relocation expenses are paid, but must be at least 6 months or not more than 4 years. The maximum amount that may be paid is 100% of the employee's first-year basic pay, including locality pay, and is subject to the aggregate limit on compensation.

Applicability: The recruitment incentive may be used for positions in all DOE pay plans, including GS, excepted service, wage grade, (career) SES, and SL/ST, but may not be used for Schedule C political appointments. It may be used for temporary and permanent appointments and former Federal employees who have had at least a 90-day break in service.

Considerations: Managers who wish to use recruitment incentives must demonstrate that they have experienced difficulty in recruiting for a specific position or a position similar to the one for which an incentive is being considered. Factors include a history of difficulty in filling similar positions; employment trends and labor-market conditions; non-Federal compensation, including benefits for similar positions; special or unique competencies required; use of other flexibilities, such as a superior qualifications appointment, or non-pay benefits, such as special training programs or alternative work arrangements; and the desirability of the duties, organizational environment, or location of the position. Consistency in the use of the incentive and available funding are other considerations. The incentive is not part of basic pay for any purpose, e.g., retirement or life insurance.

Basis for Amount: The amount is based on the criteria in the local incentive plan and should be the least amount necessary to recruit the candidate. The basis for the amount of the incentive and service period must be documented.

Combined Use: The incentive may be used in combination with a superior qualifications appointment, special salary rate, waiver of dual compensation reduction (but it's difficult to justify), repayment of student loans, training agreement, and payment of relocation expenses, if applicable, but not a relocation or retention incentive.

Payment: The incentive may be paid as a lump sum upon the employee's entry on duty or at a later time, or in installments during the service period.

Authorization Level: The Executive Resources Board for career SES and SL/ST or equivalent positions; for all other positions, Heads of Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority, with the concurrence of the servicing HRO.

RECRUITMENT INCENTIVE FAQs

Q1. What can I tell a prospective employee at a job fair regarding recruitment incentives?

A1. (Note: You should attend the fair knowing whether a position is eligible for the incentive, i.e., it is considered difficult to fill, and whether funds will be available if needed. For career intern programs, this incentive is usually preapproved.) If these issues are satisfied, then you may tell the prospective employee 1) that you have to prepare a justification for the use of the incentive that must be approved before a written offer of employment includes the incentive, 2) that the prospect would have to sign a service agreement, and 3) that the service period would be between 6 months and 4 years depending on the amount of the incentive and whether relocation expenses may be paid (in which case the minimum service period will be 12 months). In no event should you commit to the incentive or indicate a definite amount. If the issues have not been satisfied in advance, then you should tell the prospect 1) that you would need to pursue approval of the use of the incentive, 2) that recruitment incentives are not used solely to match or exceed the prospect's current compensation, and 3) that payment of the incentive would entail a service period of 6 months to 4 years depending on the amount of the incentive to be paid and whether relocation expenses may be paid. It would be appropriate to use the opportunity to ascertain what amount of compensation the prospect is interested in.

Q2. Can I offer a recruitment incentive to a prospective employee who will probably move on to the private sector in a couple of years?

A2. Yes, even an individual who receives a temporary appointment may be eligible as long as the appointment lasts at least the duration of the service agreement. A recruitment incentive may be a better alternative than a more long-range recruitment option such as a superior qualifications appointment.

Q3. If I offer a recruitment incentive for one position, do I have to offer it for all positions under recruitment at that time? Should recruitment incentives be a regular feature for all vacancies?

A3. No, the recruitment incentive should only be used when considered necessary to attract highly-qualified candidates who might otherwise not accept a job offer; however, you may target groups of positions that have been difficult to fill in the past or that are likely to be difficult to fill in the future, and may make the required written determination to offer a recruitment incentive on a group basis.

Q4. Can a recruitment incentive be paid over a period of time, such as during a formal training program, or to minimize tax consequences to the recipient?

A4. Yes, recruitment incentives may be paid in installments. The installments may be paid at any interval(s) that you consider appropriate, e.g., prior to coming on board (like a signing bonus), at the completion of a segment of a training program, or over more than one calendar year to spread out the impact on the employee's income taxes.

Q5. How is the length of the service period determined?

A5. You need to check your local recruitment plan for specific information. The service period is based on the percentage (of basic pay) which is determined by applying the criteria in the plan.

Q6. Can a service agreement required for a recruitment incentive be combined with another service agreement (such as one required for a student loan repayment) and be served concurrently?

A6. That depends on the other incentive. It may be done concurrently with a student loan service agreement or relocation expenses agreement, but not with a retention incentive agreement (see the Combined Use section on page 5 and Appendix A).

Q7. Is a recruitment incentive paid only after the employee joins the Federal service?

A7. No, it may be paid prior to that date; however, there must be a signed service agreement before payment may be made.

Q8. If an employee signs a service agreement for 2 years, but leaves the agency after 1 year, would the employee owe the agency any money?

A8. It depends on why the service agreement is terminated. The employee's service agreement should be reviewed to determine if any portion of the payments are subject to recovery.

Q9. Can I pay a recruitment incentive to an employee who will receive a special salary rate, such as an Information Technology Specialist?

A9. Yes, if all other requirements are met and the special salary rate alone fails to attract qualified candidates. Unlike the special salary rate, however, a recruitment incentive is not considered part of an employee's rate of basic pay for any purpose.

Q10. Do recruitment incentives count toward the Executive Level I annual aggregate limitation on pay?

A10. Yes; however, a recruitment incentive that will result in an employee's pay exceeding the aggregate limit will be deferred to the first full pay period in the next calendar year with any other discretionary payment that is deferred.

References: 5 U.S.C. 5753 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

5 CFR 575 Subpart A (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

OPM web site (<http://www.opm.gov/ses/performance/incentive.asp>)

DOE Handbook on Recruitment and Retention Incentives
http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_overtime.htm

Your organization's recruitment incentive plan/directive

RELOCATION INCENTIVE

Overview: Relocation incentives of up to 25 % for an employee (up to 50% with OPM approval) of basic pay (which includes locality pay) per year may be paid to attract high-quality, current Federal employee candidates to positions that are difficult to fill or to keep filled. A service agreement is required. The length of the service period varies depending on the amount of the incentive and whether relocation expenses are paid, but must be at least 6 months or not more than 4 years. The maximum amount that may be paid is 100% of the employee's first-year basic pay, and is subject to the aggregate limit on compensation.

Applicability: The incentive may be used for positions in all DOE pay plans, including GS, excepted service, wage grade, (career) SES, and SL/ST, but may not be used for Schedule C political appointments. It may be used for temporary and permanent appointments. The incentive may be paid only when the employee's rating of record for the position held immediately before the move is at least "Fully Successful" or equivalent.

Considerations: Managers who wish to use relocation incentives must demonstrate that they have experienced difficulty in recruiting for a specific position or a position similar to the one for which an incentive is being considered. Factors include a history of difficulty in filling similar positions; employment trends and labor-market conditions; non-Federal compensation, including benefits for similar positions; special or unique competencies required; use of other flexibilities, such as a superior qualifications appointment, or non-pay benefits, such as special training programs or alternative work arrangements; and the desirability of the duties, organizational environment, or location of the position. Consistency in the use of the incentive and available funding are other considerations. The incentive is not part of basic pay for any purpose, e.g., retirement or life insurance.

Basis for Amount: The amount is based on the criteria in the local incentive plan and should be the least amount necessary to recruit the candidate. The basis for the amount of the incentive and service period must be documented.

Combined Use: The incentive may be used in combination with a previously established advanced step or rate, special salary rate, repayment of student loans, training agreement, and payment of relocation expenses, if applicable, but not a recruitment or retention incentive, except when an employee is receiving a retention incentive and subsequently is authorized a relocation incentive.

Payment: The incentive may be paid as a lump sum upon the employee's entry on duty or at a later time, or in installments during the service period, but not until the employee establishes a residence in the new commuting area.

Authorization Level: The Executive Resources Board for career SES and SL/ST or equivalent positions; for other positions, Heads of Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority, with the concurrence of the servicing HRO.

RELOCATION INCENTIVE FAQs

Q1. What is the difference between payment of relocation expenses/allowances and a relocation incentive? When should either or both be paid?

A1. Relocation expenses, more properly referred to as relocation allowances, may be paid to a current Federal employee in accordance with the FTR and DOE M 552.1-1, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TRAVEL MANUAL to move the employee's family and household goods. This option is normally the priority, if appropriate. If an additional incentive is needed to persuade a highly-qualified candidate to accept an offer and the position is considered difficult to fill, then a relocation incentive may be used. The service period for payment of relocation expenses is 12 months, whereas the service period varies from 6 months to 4 years for a relocation incentive.

Q2. Can relocation incentives be paid to employees receiving a special rate or retained rate?

A2. Yes.

Q3. Are relocation incentives only for current Federal employees?

A3. Yes.

Q4. Can a relocation incentive be paid prior to an employee's entry on duty?

A4. No.

Q5. Can a relocation incentive be paid to an employee who is temporarily appointed to a position in a different commuting area?

A5. Yes, it may be paid to an employee who is appointed without a break in service to a position in a different commuting area or whose duty station has changed permanently or temporarily to a different commuting area, assuming all other conditions are met.

Q6. Can a relocation incentive be paid in lieu of reimbursing an employee for relocation expenses under GSA's FTR?

A6. It depends on what management has decided prior to filling a position and what the vacancy announcement states or doesn't say regarding relocation expenses. If a decision has been made that no relocation expenses will be paid, then the incentive may still be used. If the vacancy announcement is silent on payment of relocation expenses or states that they will be paid, then certain expenses must be paid. A relocation incentive may also be paid. (For more information on this issue, see the FAQs on Relocation Expenses in the DOE Handbook on Recruitment and Retention Incentives at http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_overtime.htm.)

Q7. Can relocation incentives be paid for groups or categories of employees?

A7. Yes, when the employees belong to a group subject to a mobility agreement and relocation incentives are necessary to retain such employees, or when a major organizational unit is relocated to a different commuting area and relocation incentives are necessary to ensure the

continued operation of that unit without undue disruption to the organization's mission or service to the public. Each employee may be paid up to 25% (up to 50% with OPM approval) of basic pay.

Q8. What happens if an employee does not fulfill a relocation incentive service agreement?

A8. It depends on why the service agreement is terminated. The employee's service agreement should be reviewed to determine if any portion of the payments are subject to recovery.

Q9. Are relocation incentives considered part of an employee's rate of basic pay for retirement and other purposes?

A9. No.

Q10. Do relocation incentives count toward the Executive Level I aggregate limitation on pay?

A10. Yes; however, a relocation incentive that will result in an employee's pay exceeding the aggregate limit will be deferred to the first full pay period in the next calendar year with any other discretionary payment that is deferred

Q11. What constitutes "establishing a residence"?

A11. An employee who is relocating to a new commuting area must establish a temporary or permanent residence before s/he is eligible for a payment. See the guidance available on the HC web site in the reference section below.

References: 5 U.S.C. 5753 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

5 CFR 531.212 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

5 CFR 575 Subpart B (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

OPM web site (<http://www.opm.gov/ses/performance/incentive.asp>)

HC web site (http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_overtime.htm)

DOE Handbook on Recruitment and Retention Incentives
(http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_overtime.htm)

Your organization's relocation incentive plan/directive

RETENTION INCENTIVE

Overview: Retention incentives of up to 25% (10% for a group or category of employees or 50% with OPM approval) of basic pay may be paid to unusually high or uniquely qualified employees who are likely to leave and whose services the Department considers essential to retain, and is subject to the aggregate limit on compensation. A service agreement is not required if the incentive is paid in equal installments, otherwise a service agreement is required; there is no minimum or maximum service period or maximum payment amount.

Applicability: The retention incentive may be used for positions in all DOE pay plans, including GS, GM, excepted service, wage grade, (career) SES, and SL/ST, but may not be used for Schedule C political appointments. It may be used for temporary and permanent appointments.

Considerations: Managers can demonstrate the need for a retention incentive by determining first that a particular employee is likely to leave 1) Federal service for any reason, including retirement, or 2) for another agency when a closure or relocation of the employee's office, facility, activity, or organization is planned; then determine if the employee's leaving would adversely affect the organization's ability to conduct essential activities/functions. Also, a manager should consider data on the success of recent efforts to retain employees with qualifications/competencies held by the employee and the turnover, i.e., number and/or frequency of losses, in the occupation or function. Retention incentives must be reviewed at least annually.

Basis for Amount: The initial amount is based on the criteria in the local incentive plan and should be the least amount necessary to retain the candidate. The amount may be reduced or terminated at any time that the need is not as significant or no longer exists. The basis for the amount of the incentive and service period must be documented.

Combined Use: The retention incentive may be used in combination with a special salary rate, repayment of student loans, training agreement, payment of relocation expenses, and a quality (step/range) increase, but not a recruitment or relocation incentive, except when a relocation incentive is authorized while an employee is receiving a retention incentive.

Payment: The incentive may be paid as a lump sum at the end of a service period or in equal or variable installments during the service period, but not at the beginning of the service period. The incentive is not considered part of basic pay for any purpose.

Authorization: The Executive Resources Board for career SES and SL/ST or equivalent positions; for other positions, Heads of Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority, with the concurrence of the servicing HRO.

RETENTION INCENTIVE FAQs

Q1. If I pay a retention incentive to an employee in a mission-critical position who is considering leaving to work for a contractor, can I insist on a service agreement, even if the payments will be made in equal installments?

A1. Yes, and the agreement may specify a service period.

Q2. Can I offer a retention incentive to a group of employees in a particular occupational group, such as Facility Representatives?

A2. Group retention incentives are permissible for specific occupational groups that are historically difficult to retain. A retention incentive of up to 10% of basic pay (up to 50% with OPM approval) may be authorized.

Q3. An employee just completed her advanced degree; can I offer her a retention incentive for this?

A3. Possibly; completion of an advanced degree by itself does not qualify an employee for a retention incentive; however, if the employee occupies a hard-to-fill position or has skills that meet a critical need of the organization and possession of the advanced degree makes the employee more attractive to prospective employers so she is likely to leave the Federal service, then, yes, with justification, approval from the appropriate management official in your chain of command, and concurrence from your servicing HRO.

Q4. One of my employees is leaving for a position with another Federal agency; can I offer a retention incentive to this employee?

A4. If your organization is going through closure activities or being relocated, then yes; otherwise no, the employee must be leaving the Federal service.

Q5. Can I offer a retention incentive to someone who already receives a special salary rate, such as an Information Technology Specialist?

A5. Yes, if all other requirements are met and it is determined that the special salary rate alone will fail to retain a needed employee. Unlike the special salary rate, however, a retention incentive is not considered part of an employee's rate of basic pay for any purpose.

Q6. I know of a highly specialized person in the private sector who will not come to work in the Federal service unless we offer her a retention incentive; is that allowable?

A6. A retention incentive may not be part of an offer for employment. A recruitment incentive, possibly in combination with a special salary rate and/or a superior qualifications appointment, should be the first consideration for attracting such an employee. Payment of a retention incentive could be appropriate for such an employee either after the service period established in a recruitment incentive service agreement had expired or, in situations where retention has been a problem, after the employee's entry on duty. The latter situation should be applied consistently for all employees in similar positions.

Q7. Can I offer a retention incentive to someone who is considering retirement?

A7. Yes, since by retiring the employee would be leaving Government service, a retention incentive would be a way of retaining that employee's presumably critical skills.

Q8. Can I agree to pay a retention incentive indefinitely?

A8. No, retention incentives are appropriate only as long as the condition giving rise to the original determination to pay the incentive still exists. Retention incentives must be reviewed at least annually to determine whether payment or the amount is still warranted. You should develop a plan for regularly reviewing retention incentives and for reducing or eliminating them at the earliest date possible.

Q9. Do retention incentives count toward the Executive Level I aggregate limitation on pay?

A9. Yes; however, a retention incentive that will result in an employee's pay exceeding the aggregate limit will be deferred to the first full pay period in the next calendar year with any other discretionary payment that is deferred.

References: 5 U.S.C. 5754 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

5 CFR 575, subpart C (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

OPM web site (<http://www.opm.gov/ses/performance/incentive.asp>)

DOE Handbook on Recruitment and Retention Incentives
(http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_overtime.htm)

Your organization's retention incentive plan/directive

REPAYMENT OF STUDENT LOANS

Overview: Eligible student loans may be repaid up to \$10,000 per calendar year/\$60,000 total amount per agency to assist in the recruitment and retention of candidates for and employees in hard-to-fill positions.

Applicability: This authority applies to employees covered under the GS and excepted service pay plans, except Schedule C political appointments, who are appointed on a permanent appointment, an appointment that will lead to conversion to a term or permanent appointment (including Career Intern and Presidential Management Fellow) with a duration of at least 3 years, or a term appointment with a duration of at least 3 years.

Considerations: An approving official must take into consideration the need to maintain a balanced workforce in which women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups are appropriately represented and should consider past problems, or other information, on recruiting highly qualified candidates in similar occupations; labor market conditions; any special qualifications, skills, or education need for the subject position; if employed, demonstrated proficiency in performing the tasks and functions required by the subject position; the appropriateness of this incentive in lieu of, or in addition to, other incentives; the availability of funds; if attending school, the candidates' grade point average (GPA); and, if a current employee, the cost of training already given compared to what would be needed by a new employee who does not possess the skills. Current Federal employees may not be offered this incentive until they are on-board. A minimum three-year service agreement must be signed.

Basis for Amount: In determining the size of the loan payments, an approving official should consider the value of the candidate to the need of the organization and how far in advance the organization can commit funds. Local implementation plans address the maximum amount authorized and the service period associated with the size of the payment. The basis for the amount of the incentive and service period must be documented.

Combined Usage: This incentive may be used in conjunction with any other incentive.

Payment: Payments must be made directly to lenders/note holders, rather than the employee. Payments may be made by the payroll office on a one-time basis each calendar year or through biweekly distributions.

Authorization: Heads of the Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority, with the concurrence of the servicing HRO.

REPAYMENT OF STUDENT LOANS FAQs

Q1. Can any employee who has an outstanding student loan receive repayments under this authority?

A1. Only if your organization has established a plan and has determined that a position has been or is difficult to fill without the use of the incentive. Priority must be given to balancing your workforce in terms of women and minorities.

Q2. What is the amount of payments that can be made for a prospective employee?

A2. Up to \$10,000 per year may be paid. The maximum total payments may not exceed \$60,000 while at DOE.

Q3. How much can a prospective employee who would be transferring to DOE receive when the candidate has been receiving repayments?

A3. The maximum amounts apply to each agency; however, it may be necessary to “buy out” the candidate’s existing agreement if the candidate has not completed the service period with his/her current agency to “seal the deal”, but that cannot be in the offer letter. When it is necessary to “buyout” an agreement, any amount paid to the other agency on behalf of the employee would be deducted from the maximum amount that could be paid by DOE.

Q4. How long must an employee work at DOE to satisfy a service agreement?

A4. The minimum service period required by law is 3 years. Service periods may last longer than that. An organization’s plan should identify the maximum service period based on the total amount to be paid.

Q5. What happens if the employee doesn’t complete his/her service period in DOE?

A5. If the employee will be terminating his/her agreement because of a management-initiated action, such as a directed reassignment or transfer of function, then the gaining organization will be responsible for continuing to make payments, if applicable, and the employee must complete the service period with the gaining organization. However, if the employee voluntarily separates or transfers to another Departmental element or agency, then, if the gaining organization doesn’t want to continue to make payments or reimburse the losing organization, the employee must refund all payments made unless the program office waives its right to recover the money.

Q6. Can this authority be used in conjunction with recruitment, relocation, or retention incentives?

A.6 Yes, it may be used in conjunction with, or in lieu of, those incentives; however, because the program is administratively burdensome, it is often considered as a “last resort” incentive.

Q7. Can a current employee receive this benefit?

A7. Yes, if the organization has an established plan and the employee is eligible under it.

References: 5 U.S.C. 5379 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

5 CFR Part 537 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

DOE Handbook on Recruitment and Retention Incentives
(http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_overtime.htm)

Your organization's student loan plan/directive

SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS APPOINTMENT

Overview: Candidates who have unusually high or unique qualifications the Department needs may be offered pay at a step within the GS grade rate range above the first step or above the minimum pay level in an excepted service pay band/range.

Applicability: A superior qualifications appointment (also referred to as “advanced-in-hire”) applies to new hires in positions at GS-15 or equivalent and below. Former Federal employees must have had a break in service of at least 90 days unless the employment was with the District of Columbia government beginning on or after October 1, 1987, as an expert or consultant, a selected temporary appointment made in connection with completing an advanced academic degree, or under certain student programs (or other employment programs not associated with DOE).

Considerations: The use of a recruitment incentive must also be considered, as it will normally be more cost-effective. Documentation on why the superior qualifications appointment should be used instead of, or in addition to, a recruitment incentive is required. The candidate’s qualifications must be superior and/or DOE must have a special need for the candidate’s qualifications. Recruitment efforts that have been undertaken to fill the position must evidence the need to use this authority.

Basis for Amount: Payment is established within the rate range (steps 2 through 10 of the applicable GS grade or at an appropriate level in a pay band) for which the candidate has been selected. The advanced pay rate is based on a comparison of total compensation, exclusive of a housing allowance (unless the position is located overseas where it would be appropriate to consider the housing allowance), that the candidate’s currently receiving, or formerly received, and the proposed position, as well as on the candidate’s unwillingness to accept the job offer at less than an advanced pay rate. The basis for the amount must be documented.

Combined Use: Superior qualification appointments may be used in combination with recruitment incentives, dual compensation waivers, special salary rates, repayment of student loans, and payment of relocation expenses, but not relocation incentives, which are for current Federal employees.

Payment: Recipient of a superior qualification appointment is paid a salary commensurate with the higher level of the applicable pay schedule or band/range, including locality pay.

Authorization: Heads of Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority, with the concurrence of the servicing HRO.

SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS APPOINTMENT FAQs

Q1. Can I offer a superior qualifications appointment to a recent college undergraduate who graduated with a grade point average of 3.9 or higher?

A1. Possibly, but not because of the grade point average alone. Superior qualification appointments are based on unusual skills, such as specialized certification; not academic standing. A college graduate, however, with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher may be initially appointed to a GS-7 or equivalent advanced level trainee position as opposed to a GS-5 or equivalent beginning level trainee position. Thus, a graduate with a 3.9 GPA who also has a specialized certification, such as LAN Administrator, may be a candidate for a superior qualifications appointment.

Q2. Would a recipient of this type of appointment need to sign a service agreement?

A2. No, not based on the superior qualifications appointment; however, when another incentive is used in conjunction with this authority that requires a service agreement, e.g., a recruitment incentive, a service agreement of at least 6 months would be required.

Q3. If one person is offered an “advance-in-hire,” won’t others expect the same thing?

A3. Others may expect the same and managers should consider this; however, there is no entitlement to an “advance-in-hire.” Further, an advance in-hire means that although the new person’s starting pay may be different for people in the same grade or level, his/her responsibilities will be the same; managers should carefully consider the implications—both budgetary and human—of the incentives that they are considering. “Advance in-hire” presumes a shorter “learning curve” for new employees because of the qualifications they bring to the job.

Q4. Why are superior qualification appointments offered by some offices and not by others?

A4. The need to use superior qualifications appointments may be based upon the mission of the organization, local market conditions, and their history of attracting and retaining certain types of employees. For example, a fairly remote DOE site may need to offer an “advance in-hire” to attract an employee to that remote location. Budgetary considerations may also play a role.

Q5. If a superior qualifications appointment results in an employee being hired at the fourth step of a grade, would that person have to wait 2 years for a within-grade increase? Wouldn’t that be a problem, too?

A5. Yes, the employee would have to wait 2 years to move to step 5; however, there may be other flexibilities that can be used in your organization such as Quality Step Increases, or special act awards for individual projects.

References: 5 U.S.C. 5333 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

5 CFR 531.212 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

CREDIT FOR DIRECTLY-RELATED EXPERIENCE FOR ANNUAL LEAVE

Overview: This benefit is available for crediting military, previous Federal, and non-Federal service to assist in securing a prospective selectee when matching their current leave/vacation benefit is an important concern to the selectee. Such credit will adjust their service computation date which determines the hours of annual leave that they will earn per year when they begin employment.

Applicability: This benefit is for newly appointed or reappointed employees who will not accept employment without this benefit.

Considerations: A statement from the prospective selectee that they will not accept employment without this benefit is needed (this statement can be provided by the supervisor or HR Specialist who has communicated with the selectee), along with a statement of the impact that the declination will have on the organization and a copy of their current leave benefit. The justification must also address how the candidate's experience meets each of the competencies for the position.

Basis for Amount: The dates of employment for the work that is creditable is calculated just as any Federal employee's service computation date is determined based on their Federal experience.

Combined Usage: This benefit may be used with a recruitment incentive and special qualifications appointment.

Authorization: The Director, Office of Human Capital Management for non-NNSA organizations and the Director, Office of Human Capital Management Programs for NNSA.

References: Section 202(a) of the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-411) (<http://thomas.loc.gov/>)

5 CFR 630.205 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

OPM Guidance (http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2005/2005-07_QA.asp)

DOE Supplemental Guidance http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_overtime.htm)

WAIVER OF DUAL COMPENSATION REDUCTION

Overview: The restriction on a Federal civilian retiree being hired and receiving dual compensation (i.e., retirement and full salary) may be waived to 1) fulfill functions critical to the mission of the Department or a Departmental element; 2) assist in the implementation or oversight of the American Recovery And Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009; 3) assist in the development, management, or oversight of procurement actions; 4) promote appropriate training and mentoring of employees; 5) assist in the recruitment or retention of employees; or 6) respond to an emergency involving a direct threat to life or property or other unusual circumstances.

Applicability: This benefit applies to Federal civilian retirees, who are also referred to as “reemployed annuitants,” for any pay plan or position.

Considerations: The manager must show that there is a compelling need to use this flexibility. There are 3 different authorities that may be used. 1) Section 4 of P.L. 109-313 [41 U.S.C. 433(i)] provides for full-time and part-time appointments; this authority expires December 31, 2011. 2) Section 1122 of P.L. 111-84 limits appointments to 1 year or less and hours worked are limited to 520 hours during the first 6 months of retirement, 1,040 hours during any 12-month period, and a total of 3,120 hours during any period of reemployment; this authority expires October 27, 2014. 3) 5 CFR 553 does not have any expiration; time restrictions are determined by OPM on a case-by-case basis, but are normally limited to 2 years.

Basis for Amount: If approved, the employee receives basic pay plus his or her full Federal retirement annuity, with no salary offset (this is why this authority is called dual compensation).

Combined Use: A waiver of dual compensation reduction may be used in combination with other flexibilities, such as recruitment or retention incentives, superior qualifications appointments above the minimum rates (although such justifications will be difficult because of the annuity being paid), and special salary rates.

Payment: The employee receives his or her full pay biweekly.

Authorization: 1) The DOE Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) approves requests submitted under P.L. 109-313; 2) the DOE CHCO approves requests submitted under Section 1122 of P.L. 111-84; and 3) OPM approves requests submitted in accordance with 5 CFR 553.

WAIVER OF DUAL COMPENSATION REDUCTION *FAQs*

Q1. Who can help me prepare the request?

A1. The Office of Strategic Planning and Policy will assist your servicing HRO in preparing a request. Templates are available on the OPM web site (see the link in the References below) that will facilitate preparing a request, although the templates don't address all the situations that may be addressed under Section 1122 of P.L. 111-84.

Q2. Is this waiver permanent?

A2. No. Section 1122 of P.L. 111-84 limits the use of the authority to 3,120 hours during the period of reemployment, these hours must be spread out over a minimum of 3 years, and a request must be approved by October 27, 2014. Requests approved by OPM in accordance with 5 CFR 553 are normally approved for 2 years in which the second year the annuitant is expected to be mentoring a replacement, but extensions may be approved beyond that period.

References: 5 U.S.C. 5531 & 5533 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

Section 1122 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010,
P.L. 111-84

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php?&n=PublicLaws&c=109>

5 CFR 553 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

Templates for waiver requests

<http://www.opm.gov/StaffingPortal/DCWTemplates/index.asp>)

WAIVER OF THE BIWEEKLY PAY LIMITATION

Overview: There is a biweekly pay cap that limits the amount of premium pay that can be paid during a biweekly pay period. It may be waived for an emergency situation or to perform work that is critical for an organization.

Applicability: This applies to GS or equivalent employees (including law enforcement officers and other covered employees) who are required to perform overtime work. This limitation does not apply to wage grade employees or to FLSA overtime pay.

Considerations: DOE currently has “standing” waivers in effect for 1) emergency work performed in connection with the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on the U.S., as declared by the Presidential Proclamation of September 14, 2001; 2) emergency work performed in response to the global (threat) situation (other than that covered by paragraph 1); and 3) natural disaster relief assistance activities.

Requests to meet a critical need must address the following criteria: 1) the work must directly affect a Departmental element’s core business activity; 2) the work must be urgent and unavoidable, i.e., it cannot be delayed or extended over a longer period of time; 3) additional human resources with the expertise needed cannot be added due to the immediacy of the business need; and 4) no other appropriate compensation option is available.

Basis for Amount: Premium pay cannot be paid when it will cause an employee’s basic pay, overtime pay, the dollar value of compensatory time off, night pay, Sunday pay, and holiday pay to exceed the greater of the biweekly rate for 1) GS-15, step 10 (including any applicable special salary rate or locality rate of pay), or 2) Level V of the Executive Schedule, which is the maximum payable amount. Standby duty pay, administratively uncontrollable overtime pay, availability pay for criminal investigators, and overtime pay for hours in the regular tour of duty of a firefighter may not be waived. With a waiver, the cap is the annual aggregate pay cap for total compensation, which is Level I of the Executive Schedule.

Combined Use: A waiver of the biweekly pay limitation may be used in combination with other flexibilities, such as recruitment, relocation, or retention incentives; superior qualifications appointments above the minimum rates; and special salary rates.

Payment: Payment is made biweekly.

Authorization: The Director, Office of Human Capital Management or, for NNSA, the Associate Administrator for Management and Administration approves waivers.

WAIVER OF THE BIWEEKLY PAY LIMITATION FAQs

Q1. What is the difference in the biweekly pay cap and the annual pay cap?

A1. The biweekly cap applies only to certain types of premium pay, whereas the annual cap is the aggregate of all compensation, including performance awards and incentives in addition to premium pay.

Q1. Can the annual pay cap be waived?

A1. Yes, Congress has authorized agencies to approve such waivers up to the Vice President's salary for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the annual National Defense Authorization Acts.

Q1. I have a GS-15 employee who is unable to get compensatory time off for overtime. Will a waiver resolve this situation so the employee is not working for free?

A1. It may, but if the employee's salary is at the maximum of that pay range, no.

References: 5 CFR 550.106 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

DOE waivers: http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_overtime.htm

CRITICAL PAY

Overview: OPM, in consultation with OMB, may grant authority to fix the rate of basic pay up to Level I of the Executive Schedule, or higher with the President's approval, for a position that requires a very high level of expertise in a scientific, technical, professional or administrative field and that is critical to the accomplishment of an important DOE mission.

Applicability: Critical pay is limited to SES, Senior-Level Scientific or Professional, and Executive Schedule positions.

Considerations: Individuals must possess an extremely high level of expertise and the position must be critical to an important DOE mission. OPM reports to Congress annually on the number of such positions and recipients, by name and rates of pay for each one. Unlike other incentives, this one does affect an employee's benefits since it is basic pay.

Basis for Amount: Requests must provide the justification for the pay level deemed appropriate to recruit or retain the individual.

Combined Usage: Critical pay may be used in combination with other incentives.

Payment: As basic pay, it is paid biweekly.

Authorization: OPM, in conjunction with OMB, approves a request from the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or Chief Human Capital Officer. The Secretary may set pay at an amount up to Level II of the Executive Schedule. OMB must approve an amount above Level II.

References: 5 U.S.C. 5377 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

OMB Bulletin 91-09, Critical Pay Position Authority, dated March 7, 1991 [note: no link is available; for a copy of this publication, contact the Executive Resources Division (HC-31)]

EXCEPTED SERVICE APPOINTMENT AUTHORITIES

Overview: DOE has several excepted service appointment authorities available as important tools to recruit and retain high-quality staff. Use of the excepted service authorities can expedite the hiring process and provide pay flexibilities to enhance recruitment and retention of key technical and other critical staff. They also support the Department's commitment to achieve the highest standards of scientific, engineering, technical, and professional excellence in its workforce.

Applicability: Excepted service authorities may be particularly useful to organizations needing to attract exceptionally well-qualified employees in hard-to-fill positions or when offers must be made quickly to ensure competitive consideration by a highly qualified candidate. They may also be useful to organizations undergoing restructuring and associated skills mix concerns; in attracting highly technical employees when an organization needs to pay an employee a competitive salary, but doesn't want to attach managerial responsibilities to the position to enhance the grade and pay; or for "stand alone" projects that are expected to end within a year or two so that you can attract employees who are interested in government experience, but who do not want to make the Federal government a career.

Considerations: Each authority is limited by the number of positions and type of occupations. The demand currently exceeds the number of positions for which most of the authorities can be used, so decisions on their use are controlled by the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, except for NNSA's demonstration project positions (see Q&A 2 for more information on this).

Payment: Basic pay under the excepted service personnel authorities may be established up to an amount provided for by Executive Level III. Broad salary bands, in contrast to setting pay under the more traditional GS/SL/SES systems, govern pay administration in the excepted service.

Authorization: The Executive Resources Board (ERB) approves EJ and EK pay band IV (above GS-15/10) and V actions, which are equivalent to SL/ST positions, while NNSA's ERB approves actions that set pay at or above the mid-point of the appropriate SES range as well as all pay band V actions.

EXCEPTED SERVICE APPOINTMENT AUTHORITIES *FAQs*

Q1. What is the difference in excepted and competitive service and who determines when an agency can use excepted service authorities?

A1. Normally, OPM must approve exceptions to Title V, which establishes the competitive service; however, most of DOE's authorities have been established in legislation. Thus, DOE has determined which parts of Title V will not be applied and has provided alternative policies for them. For non-NNSA organizations, the excepted service policy addresses hiring noncompetitively and provides alternative pay plans in lieu of the GS and SL/ST pay systems. NNSA's authority addresses both of those areas, as well as provides for a pay-for-performance plan, which is also an exception to Title V.

Q2. What are the excepted service authorities and what positions are covered by them?

A2. The excepted service authority found in Section 621(d) of the DOE Act, which established DOE, may be used in hiring up to 200 high-quality employees who may otherwise be difficult to attract and retain under current competitive service rules. There is no restriction on the type of occupation. The pay plan for this authority is EJ.

Authority to fill up to 200 scientific, engineering, and technical positions performing activities relating to the safety of the Department's defense nuclear facilities and operations was initially included in the National Defense Authorization Act for 1995. This authority can only be used for scientific, engineering, or technical defense nuclear facilities safety-related positions. The pay plan for this authority is EK.

NNSA has an excepted service authority that may be used to facilitate the hiring of 300 scientific, engineering, and technical positions. The pay plan for this authority is EN. In addition, an OPM-approved demonstration project has been established for at least 5 years that uses an excepted service authority with several pay plans that start with "N" that cover most of NNSA's positions.

Q3. Could I appoint a current competitive service employee to a position in the excepted service?

A3. Yes, the employee should be advised of any differences between the competitive service and the excepted service, particularly that the employee does not have the same competitive rights under a reduction in force.

Q4. What types of pay setting flexibilities are available using the excepted service?

A4. Pay is set within pay bands that are much broader than the traditional GS system. Five pay bands are used that cover pay from the GS-5 level up to the ST/SL level. Managers can set pay at any point within each of the five pay bands within the limits established by implementing policies and guidance.

Q5. What types of hiring flexibilities are available using the excepted service?

A5. Hiring flexibilities include reducing or eliminating the formal vacancy announcement process and the use of targeted recruitment for hard-to-fill positions. You should consult your servicing HR office about these flexibilities.

Q6. Are there limitations on the type of positions that may be filled using excepted service?

A6. Yes, as an example, SES positions may not be filled as excepted service positions. Other limitations depend on which excepted service hiring authority is used. Consult your servicing HR office for specific information.

References: Section 621(d), P.L. 95-91, DOE Organization Act (<http://thomas.loc.gov/>)

Section 3161(a), P.L. 103-337, National Defense Authorization Act
(<http://thomas.loc.gov/>)

Section 3241, P.L. 106-65, National Nuclear Safety Administration (NNSA) Act
(<http://thomas.loc.gov/>)

Federal Register Vol. 72, No. 245, December 21, 2007 which established NNSA's demonstration project (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>)

PAYMENT OF EXPENSES FOR PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Overview: Expenses may be paid for employees of eligible occupations to obtain and maintain professional credentials, including accreditations, state-imposed and professional licenses, and certifications, and examinations to obtain and maintain such credentials when payment contributes to recruitment, retention, career development, or worker transition objectives.

Applicability: This authority may apply to all employees except Presidential appointees, non-career members of the Senior Executive Service, and excepted service employees appointed under Schedule C.

Considerations: A Departmental Element can decide which expense(s), if any, and occupation(s) should be paid based on the following factors: the organization's mission and budget; equity among employees; the value of a credential to the organization, including workforce succession planning purposes, or, in the case of a worker transition situation, to DOE or the Government; an employee's need for self-development; and the administrative burden on finance staffs.

Basis for Amount: While there is no limit on the amount of the payment(s), organizations may set an annual limit for budgetary purposes and/or to ensure consistency among employees.

Combined Usage: This incentive may be used in conjunction with any other incentive.

Payment: Payments should be made on a reimbursable basis through servicing finance offices. Any fee(s) for obtaining and maintaining a professional credential is(are) taxable to the employee if reimbursed.

Authorization: Heads of Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority, with the concurrence of the servicing human resources and finance staffs.

PAYMENT OF EXPENSES FOR PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS FAQs

Q1. What credentials are covered?

A1. A credential refers to a designation that is needed for an occupation to practice or provide a service. The designation is normally provided by a State or publicly recognized organization for the respective occupation. Credentials covered include professional accreditations, licenses, or certifications that are either directly related to an employees' current position or that are considered to further DOE interests (e.g., credentials that are desired for the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities in response to mission/function changes or that contribute to recruitment, retention, career development, or worker transition objectives).

Q2. What expenses are covered?

A2. 5 U.S.C. §5757 (Public Law 107-107, §1112) states that "(a)n agency may use appropriated funds or funds otherwise available to the agency to pay for:

- (1) expenses for employees to obtain professional credentials, including expenses for professional accreditation, state-imposed and professional licenses, and professional certification; and
- (2) examinations to obtain such credentials."

The following expenses associated with obtaining a professional credential may be covered:

- a. fee(s) for obtaining and maintaining (including renewal fees) a professional credential;
- b. fee(s) to take an examination or series of examinations;
- c. in limited instances, travel expenses (see Q&A 5 & 6); and
- d. in limited instances, membership fees (see Q&A 7).

Q3. Is there a limit on the amount of expenses that can be paid an employee?

A3. No; however, organizations may want to set an annual limit for budgetary purposes and/or to ensure consistency among employees.

Q4. What examinations are covered?

A4. Any examination or series of examinations that result(s) in obtaining or maintaining a professional credential are covered.

Q5. Does this authority cover travel expenses associated with obtaining or maintaining a credential or license?

A5. Any travel expense associated with taking an examination under this authority may be covered as an official travel expense in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations.

Q6. What is the distinction between expenses covered by this authority and authorized training expenses?

A6. The training expense authority is used when there is a course involved, including when there are associated travel expenses and/or an examination fee(s). If no course is involved, then associated travel expenses and/or an examination fee(s) are covered only under the professional credential authority.

Q7. When may membership fees be paid?

A7. Although the language in 5 U.S.C. §5757 does not specifically authorize payment for membership fees, the authority to include payment of membership fees may be assumed when membership is a prerequisite to obtaining or maintaining a credential.

Q8. Is a service agreement required when this authority is used?

A8. No, a service agreement is not required, but may be used if desired.

References: 5 U.S.C. 5757 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

Comptroller General Decision B-302548 dated August 24, 2005 and B-289219 dated October 29, 2005 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/gaodecisions/index.html>)

DOE Frequently Asked Questions (<http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources.htm>)

COMPENSATORY TIME FOR TRAVEL

Overview: An employee is entitled by law to earn compensatory time for certain “legs” of travel after regular duty hours. Travel to and from a residence and terminal that is within a 50-mile radius of the employee’s regular worksite is not eligible, even on non-duty days. Eligibility normally begins once an employee is in the departing terminal through arrival at the final destination at a TDY station and then upon returning to the employee’s local terminal, although there is a 2-hour limit (3-hours for international travel) on the waiting time in terminals. Travel time by auto is eligible outside the 50-mile radius.

Applicability: All employees are eligible except for SESs, employees covered by other forms of overtime compensation while traveling, and employees on intermittent work schedules.

Considerations: This benefit is derived from the employee’s specific travel plans. Thus, managers need to approve employees’ travel plans in addition to their travel authorizations and consider the impact of those plans on their accruing compensatory time off in addition to the travel and/or training costs involved.

Basis for Amount: An employee earns one hour (in 15-minute increments) for every hour eligible. Compensatory time cannot be earned if the employee is compensated in any other way, including salary, for the same time.

Combined Usage: This benefit may be used in conjunction with any other flexibility, including reimbursement for travel expenses.

Use: Time should be reported during the pay period in which it is earned, or as soon thereafter as possible, but not later than when the employee files their travel voucher. Employees have up to 26 pay periods from the pay period in which it is earned to use the time off, otherwise it is forfeited.

Authorization: Heads of Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority.

COMPENSATORY TIME FOR TRAVEL FAQs

Q1. An employee lives more than 50 miles from the airport. Can they get credit for the time driving to the airport?

A1. If the airport is within a 50-mile radius (this is a limit set by DOE) from the employee's regular worksite (not residence), then no.

Q2. An employee wants to travel on Saturday, but their conference doesn't begin until Monday morning. Is the employee eligible for compensatory time for travel? If so, how much?

A2. Eligibility for compensatory time is derived from whatever travel plans have been authorized. So if the Travel Authorization (TA) provides for travel on Saturday, then the travel to the TDY location on that day is eligible if it is a non-workday for that employee. Eligibility ends once the employee reaches the TDY destination.

Q3. How much time does an employee earn when a flight is delayed or cancelled?

A3. The total maximum wait time in a terminal that DOE authorizes is 2 hours, except for international travel, then it is 3 hours. Any time that an employee uses for personal purposes, such as shopping (but not eating), in a terminal, is not eligible to be earned.

Q4. Is there a maximum amount of compensatory time that can be earned when traveling internationally?

A4. No, there is no limit. All eligible time is earned and credited to the employee's compensatory time for travel account.

Q5. Is the time that is eligible for compensatory time for travel the same as the TDY time, since both deal with time in a travel status?

A5. No, this benefit is only available for time after an employee's normal work schedule for any particular day and only certain parts of the time for traveling to and from a TDY destination. Once the employee arrives at the hotel or office at the TDY location, then eligibility stops until such time as the employee is ready to travel back or to another TDY location.

Q6. When an employee who has a fear of flying is authorized to drive, even though it takes considerably longer, how is the eligible time determined?

A.6 Just as travel costs must be compared for both travel methods and the lesser expense used, the eligible time for flying must be estimated based on what would be reasonable flight schedules, then compared with the actual eligible time driving and the lesser time reported.

References: Section 203, P.L. 108-4, The Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004 (<http://thomas.loc.gov/>)

5 CFR Part 550 Subpart N (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

OPM Guidance (<http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2005/2005-03.asp>)

DOE Supplemental Guidance (http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_overtime.htm)

TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR INTERVIEWS

Overview: Reimbursement may be authorized for expenses of an individual traveling to and from a pre-employment interview for any Federal Service position that is not limited to 1 year or less. The purpose of the interview must be to assess the individual's qualifications for a position or, in the case of a shortage occupation, to interest a candidate in the position.

Applicability: This applies to individuals under consideration for a new appointment or relocation of a current Federal employee.

Considerations: The necessity of conducting an interview should be considered as well as the possibility of the interview being conducted by a Department official in the geographic location of the candidate. Other considerations include the availability of funds and assurance that this provision is being used equitably in a manner consistent with merit principles.

Basis for Amount: Reimbursement is based on FTR allowances for per diem and transportation.

Combined Usage: Reimbursement of travel expenses for interviews may be used in combination with all incentives.

Payment: Reimbursement is made after submission and approval of the travel expense form and required cost receipts.

Authorization: Heads of Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority, with concurrence from the servicing HR and finance staffs.

TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR INTERVIEWS FAQs

Q1. Is there any way that the job candidate can receive an advance?

A1. No. The Department will arrange payment of transportation and reimbursement for travel expenses in accordance with the Department's Travel Manual DOE M 552.1-1A, section DOE 301-75.5.

Q2. Do I have to give every candidate for a specific position travel reimbursement if I give reimbursement to one?

A2. No, this is your option based on funds available and the relative qualifications of the competing candidates.

Q3. If I select a candidate who was given travel reimbursement, can I require a service agreement?

A3. No, unless another recruitment incentive requiring a service agreement was offered or relocation expenses are paid in which case a service agreement is required for employment in the Federal service.

Q4. Can we pay for travel of a spouse to accompany a candidate to the interview site?

A4. No, payment may be made only for travel of the candidate.

References: 5 USC 5706 (b) (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

5 CFR Part 572.101 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

41 CFR Chapter 301, Temporary Duty Travel Allowances
(http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_OVERVIEW&contentId=14161)

DOE M 552.1-1, DOE Travel Manual
(<http://www.directives.doe.gov/pdfs/doe/doetext/neword/552/m5521-1a.pdf>)

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION ALLOWANCES FOR NEW HIRES

Overview: Reimbursement may be authorized for the expenses of a new hire's travel and transportation expenses, including shipment of household goods, to their first duty station for any position regardless of whether a shortage of candidates exists. The appointment cannot be limited to 1 year or less.

Applicability: This benefit can be used for new appointments and current Federal employees.

Considerations: A review should be made of the sufficiency of qualified candidates for the position within the local geographic area. The availability of funds must also be considered.

Basis for Amount: Expenses covered include transportation costs for the new hire and immediate family, per diem for the new hire while en route from old residence to first duty station, transportation of household goods, and temporary storage of household goods.

Combined Use: Reimbursement for a new hire's travel and transportation costs to the first duty station may be used in combination with all incentives except a retention incentive as part of an offer for employment.

Payment: Reimbursement is made after submission and approval of the required travel voucher and receipts. The employee must sign an agreement to remain in the Federal service for 12 months. An employee is indebted to DOE for 100% of the relocation expenses for failure to complete the 12 months employment unless a waiver is approved.

Authorization: Heads of Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority, with concurrence from HRO and finance staffs.

TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION ALLOWANCES FOR NEW HIRES *FAQs*

Q1. Can managers put a dollar limit on reimbursement of expenses?

A1. Yes; once the decision has been made to pay relocation expenses for a new hire, all mandatory relocation expenses must be paid, but the discretionary expenses do not have to be paid.

Q2. Can a new hire get an advance for this expense?

A2. Yes.

Q3. Does this cover a house-hunting trip?

A3. No, reimbursement of expenses for house hunting is not allowed.

Q4. Does the travel have to be from the new hire's home? Can the travel and transportation be from the new hire's university location?

A4. Travel and transportation expenses are paid from the employee's principle place of residence.

Q5. Does it make any difference if the new hire chooses to use a "U-Haul" mode or have a national company move his/her household goods?

A5. No, but reimbursement is limited to the cost of transporting the employee's household goods (not to exceed 18,000 pounds) by an approved carrier.

References: 5 USC 5723 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

5 CFR Part 572 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

40 CFR Part 302 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

41 CFR 302-1.10(b) (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

DOE O 552, Travel Policy and Procedures
(<http://www.directives.doe.gov/pdfs/doe/doetext/neword/552/m5521-1a.pdf>)

DOE M 552.1-1, DOE Travel Manual
(<http://www.directives.doe.gov/pdfs/doe/doetext/neword/552/m5521-1a.pdf>)

SES ENTITLEMENT TO RELOCATION ALLOWANCES AT RETIREMENT

Overview: An eligible employee is authorized relocation expenses when eligible for retirement if they were previously transferred or reassigned geographically in the interest of and at the expense of the Federal Government.

Applicability: This benefit applies only to career SESs, Presidential appointees who have elected to retain their SES retirement benefits, or, if deceased, their immediate family member.

Consideration: A review of the eligibility criteria must be conducted to confirm entitlement. All travel and transportation of household goods must begin no later than six months after date of separation or death of employee who died before separation. This should be included in annual budget submissions for an eligible who may retire in the following FY.

Basis for Amount: Relocation expenses are determined by the Federal Travel Regulation.

Payment: Reimbursement is made after submission and approval of the required travel voucher and receipts.

Authorization: Heads of Departmental elements, or whoever is redelegated the authority.

**SES ENTITLEMENT TO RELOCATION ALLOWANCES
AT RETIREMENT FAQs**

Q1. Who is entitled to SES separation relocation allowances?

- A1. a. A career appointee to the SES;
- b. a non-SES appointee who elects to retain SES retirement benefits and
- (1) has a basic rate of pay at Level V of the Executive Schedule or higher;
 - (2) was previously a career appointee in the SES; or
 - (3) elected under 5 U.S.C. 3392I to retain SES retirement benefits; or
- c. an immediate family member of an SES employee who died
- (1) in Government service, or
 - (2) after separating from Government service but before travel and/or transportation authorized under this subpart were completed.

Q2. Under what conditions may an SES receive separation relocation travel?

A2. An SES may receive separation relocation travel if

- a. the employee is a career appointee as defined in 5 U.S.C. 3132(a)(4), and was transferred or reassigned geographically in the interest of, and at the expense of, the Government from one official station to another for permanent duty from
- (1) an SES career appointment to another SES career appointment;
 - (2) an SES career appointment to an appointment outside the SES at a rate of pay equal to or higher than Level V of the Executive Schedule, and the employee elects to retain SES retirement benefits under 5 U.S.C. 3392; or
 - (3) a non-SES career appointment at the time of transfer or assignment, which includes an appointment in a civil service position outside the SES, to an SES career appointment;
- b. at the time of the transfer or reassignment the SES was
- (1) eligible to receive an annuity for optional retirement under section 8336(a), (b), (c), (e), (f), or (j) or subchapter III of chapter 83 (Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)) or under section 8412 of subchapter II of chapter 84 (Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)) of title, 5 U.S.C.;
 - (2) within five years of eligibility to receive an annuity for optional retirement under one of the authorities in paragraph (b)(1) of this section; or
 - (3) eligible to receive an annuity based on discontinued service retirement or early voluntary retirement under an OPM authorization, under section 8336(d) of

subchapter III of chapter 83, or under 8414(b) of subchapter II of chapter 84 of title 5, U.S.C.;

- c. the employee separated from Federal service;
- d. eligible to receive an annuity upon separation (or, in the case of death, met the requirements for being considered eligible to receive an annuity, as of the date of death) under the provisions of subchapter III of chapter 83 (CSRS) or chapter 84 (FERS) of title 5, U.S.C., including an annuity based on optional retirement, discontinued service retirement, early voluntary retirement under an OPM authorization, or disability retirement; or
- e. previously received separation relocation benefits from the Government for retirement.

Reference: 41 CFR, Chapter 302-3.304 through 315 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

EMPLOYEE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Overview: The Department's employee awards and recognition program is designed to provide the means to recognize and reward individuals and teams for their accomplishments and excellence in support of DOE's mission and goals. Recognition is in the form of monetary, nonmonetary, or honorary awards.

Applicability: This applies to all DOE employees, including SES, SL/ST, GS, GM, excepted service, and wage grade pay plans, as well as employees of other Government agencies, when his or her contribution is adopted by DOE and the award is concurred in by the employing agency, a former employee (or his or her estate) whose contribution occurred while employed with DOE, contractor employees, and private citizens. Contractor employees and private citizens are only eligible for nonmonetary recognition¹.

Considerations: Supervisors, managers, and employees are encouraged to recognize and reward individuals and/or teams for their efforts that contribute to improving the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of Departmental and Governmental operations by granting nonmonetary, monetary, and honorary awards to recognize high-level performance, exceptional one-time acts or service, adopted suggestions or inventions, training, education and development, and other noteworthy achievements.

Basis for Amount: The amount varies based on the recommended award and performance program available. Check with your servicing HRO for any award amounts and limitations.

Combined Usage: Monetary, nonmonetary, and honorary awards may be combined. Not more than one form of monetary recognition may be granted for the same contribution. When there is some degree of overlap, such as a special act which is difficult to distinguish from regular and recurring duties, every effort shall be made to determine the single most appropriate form of monetary recognition, to ensure the equity and cost-effectiveness of the awards program. Check with your servicing HRO for limitations on combining monetary and nonmonetary awards.

Payment: Monetary (and time-off) awards are processed as personnel actions. Gift cards, if available, are handled separately; check with your servicing HRO.

Authorization: See the tables at Appendix C.

¹ Appropriate recognition for contractors is given by communicating accomplishments "above and beyond" to your organization's contractor officer representative (COR) or the applicable DOE contracting officer. Whenever possible, the recognition should be in written format, either in the form of an e-mail or memorandum, and signed by the appropriate Federal team leader or manager.

EMPLOYEE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM FAQs

Q1. Who does the program apply to?

A1. All DOE employees, including SES, SL/ST, GS, GM, excepted service, and wage grade pay plans. In addition, employees of other Government agencies, when his or her contribution is adopted by DOE and the award is concurred in by the employing agency; a former employee or his or her estate, whose contribution occurred while employed with DOE; contractor employees; and private citizens. Contractor employees and private citizens are only eligible for nonmonetary recognition.

Q2. Who can recommend and approve recognition?

A2. Any employee who believes an employee, contractor, or private citizen has made a significant contribution may make a recommendation to the employee's supervisor or Departmental element official authorized to make nominations. For approval levels for each type of award, see Appendix C and check with your servicing HRO in the event that the authority has been re-delegated below the Head of the Departmental element.

Q3. What is an On-the-Spot award?

A3. An On-the-Spot (OTS) award allows supervisors and other individuals to grant employees (as individuals or in groups) immediate monetary recognition for a significant deed or accomplishment performed with exceptional and unanticipated speed and quality under difficult or unusual circumstances.

Q4. Is there a set amount for an individual or group OTS award?

A4. The amount of an OTS award can vary between \$50 and \$500 per employee. There is no ceiling on the total amount of any group OTS award. However, the award amount for each group member may not exceed \$500.

Q5. How many OTS awards can an employee or a group of employees receive?

A5. There is no restriction on the number of OTS awards an employee may receive within a one-year period, either individually or as part of a group.

Q6. Who can recommend and approve OTS awards?

A6. OTS awards are recommended and approved through normal management channels. See Appendix C.

Q7. What is a Special Act or Service?

A7. A Special Act or Service (SAS) award is monetary recognition for employees (as individuals or in groups) for accomplishments of acts or services that are of special benefit to the Department and are typically outside of the employee's job responsibilities and are non-recurring in nature. *Job responsibilities included in an employee's performance plan should be rewarded through the performance award process.*

Q8. Who can recommend and approve SAS awards?

A8. SAS awards are recommended and approved through normal management channels. See Appendix C.

Q9. How do I determine the amount of the monetary recognition to recommend?

A9. The amount of a cash award for a special act or service is based on tangible and/or intangible benefits. All nominations must contain a justification for the amount of the award based on either the tangible benefits table and/or the intangible benefits table at Appendix D. When a team or a group of employees receives monetary recognition, the amount given to each group member may be different. In such cases, the nominator can recommend how much each group member should receive based on their individual contribution.

Q10. What is a Referral Bonus Award?

A10. This award provides an incentive to employees who bring new talent into a Departmental element by referring persons who are subsequently selected and successfully employed for hard-to-fill positions.

Q11. Is there a set amount for a Referral Bonus Award?

A11. The maximum amount for any referral bonus award is either up to \$500 or 16 hours of time off. Referral Bonus Awards are paid in a lump sum payment and may not be paid to the employee until the person referred has served one year with the agency and their performance has been deemed successful.

Q12. How many Referral Bonus Awards can an employee receive?

A12. An employee may not exceed two (2) Referral Bonus Awards per year.

Q13. Who can recommend and approve a Referral Bonus Award?

A13. Awards are recommended by the referring employee's supervisor and are approved by a management official at least one level higher than the recommending official.

Q14. What is a Performance (or Performance-Based) Award/Bonus?

A.14. Performance awards/bonuses are lump-sum cash awards granted on the basis of an employee's most recent rating of record, commonly known as the annual performance appraisal.

Q15. Who is eligible for performance award?

A15. All employees in the excepted or competitive service who receive at least a Fully Successful or equivalent summary rating on their annual performance appraisal are eligible.

NOTE: Performance award guidance for SES is contained in the DOE Senior Executive Service Performance Management Plan and, for NNSA, in NNSA's Performance Management and Performance Pay Manual.

Q16. What type of justification is required for a performance award/bonus?

A16. The annual performance appraisal provides the basic justification for the award.

Q17. Can an employee receive a performance-based award if he/she does not have a rating of record?

A17. No, performance-based awards are based on an employee's official rating of record, which is the written justification for the award.

Q18. Who can recommend and approve a Performance Award?

A18. Awards are recommended by the employee's supervisor. See Appendix C.

Q19. What is a Quality Increase (QI)?

A19. It is an additional step or pay adjustment that may be granted in recognition of outstanding performance. Quality Step Increases (QSIs) apply to GS employees since that pay scale has steps, whereas a pay adjustment applies to excepted service pay bands.

Q20. Who is eligible for a QI?

A20. An employee whose most recent rating of record is Outstanding or the equivalent (i.e., Significantly Exceeds Expectations); is not in the maximum step of his or her grade or pay band; did not have another QI or WGI or equivalent pay adjustment in at least the last 52 weeks and for the entire appraisal period; is not at the full performance level of a career ladder; has not been promoted within the past year, including a transfer that results in a promotion; has been in the same grade or pay band level for the entire annual appraisal period; and is expected to continue to perform at that level is eligible.

Q21. Who can recommend and approve a QI?

A21. A QI is recommended by the employee's supervisor and approved by a management official at least one level higher than the recommending official. QI's are normally granted to coincide with the end of the performance appraisal period.

Q22. Can an employee receive a QI and a lump-sum performance award at the same time?

A22. An employee covered by DOE O 331.1C is not eligible for a combination of performance awards. Check with your servicing HRO.

Q23. Is there a limit on nonmonetary items?

A23. Yes, nonmonetary items conferred in connection with informal recognition are limited to \$50 or less.

Q24. What is a Time-Off Award?

A24. A Time-Off Award (TOA) may be granted to any employee or group of employees without "loss of pay" or "charge to leave" to encourage and reward superior accomplishment or other personal efforts that contribute to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations.

Q25. Can a TOA be converted to cash?

A25. No, the Office of Personnel Management prohibits converting time-off awards to cash.

Q26. Can a TOA be transferred if the employee leaves the agency?

A26. An unused time-off award is not transferable to another agency unless a special arrangement is made with the receiving agency to honor the time-off award.

Q27. How much time off should an employee receive as recognition?

A27. TOAs may be granted in increments of up to 40 hours for any single employee contribution. Employees may not receive more than 80 hours in TOAs during a 52-week period. The following chart is recommended, unless another scale is available from the servicing human resources office.

TIME OFF SCALE	
VALUE OF THE EMPLOYEE'S CONTRIBUTION	HOURS TO BE AWARDED
MODERATE – A contribution to a product, program or service to the public which is of sufficient value to merit formal recognition. Beneficial change or modification of operating principles or procedures.	1 - 10 Hours
SUBSTANTIAL – An important contribution to the value of a product, activity, program or service to the public. Significant change or modification of operating principles or procedures.	11 - 20 Hours
HIGH – A significant contribution to the value of a product, activity, program or service to the public. Complete revision of operating principles or procedures with considerable impact.	21 - 30 Hours
EXCEPTIONAL – A superior contribution to the quality of a critical product, activity, program or service to the public. Initiation of a new principle or major procedure with significant impact.	31 - 40 Hours

NOTE: Employees have one calendar year to use time granted under a "Time-Off Award."

Q28. What is the Secretarial Awards Program?

A28. The Department of Energy has a long-standing tradition of recognizing employees who go above and beyond the call of duty in their work endeavors. The program varies with each Secretary, but the James R. Schlesinger Award, named for the first DOE Secretary, is available annually. This award represents the highest non-monetary level of recognition an employee or

contractor can receive in the Department. It is bestowed upon one individual each year whose outstanding performance is responsible for contributions of national importance or for affecting significant improvement to the successful implementation of the Department's mission. For information on the current Secretarial Awards program, see the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer's web site at http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources_awards_dept.htm.

References: Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 43 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 45 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>)

5 CFR Part 430 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

5 CFR Part 451 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

5 CFR Part 531 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>)

DOE Order 331.1 (<http://www.directives.doe.gov/>)

DOE Senior Executive Service Performance Management Plan
(<http://humancapital.doe.gov/resources/Performance-Management-System-3.pdf>)

APPENDIX A: COMBINED USE OF FLEXIBILITIES

The following table shows how the most common flexibilities can be used in combination.

	Recruitment Incentive	Relocation Incentive	Retention Incentive*	Repayment of Student Loans	Superior Qualifications	Credit for Directly-Related Experience
Recruitment Incentive		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Relocation Incentive	No		No**	Yes*	Yes	Yes
Retention Incentive	No	No		Yes	Yes	Yes
Repayment of Student Loans	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Superior Qualifications	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Credit for Directly-Related Experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

* This incentive can be added to another incentive(s) that has been approved once the employee is on board, but cannot be included in an offer letter.

** The exception is when an employee is receiving a retention incentive and subsequently is relocated.

APPENDIX B: ELIGIBILITY FOR THE MOST COMMON FLEXIBILITIES

Some flexibilities can only be used for Federal employees; others for both Federal and non-Federal applicants. The following table shows the various flexibilities and for which group they can be used.

	Recruitment Incentive	Relocation Incentive	Retention Incentive	Repayment of Student Loans	Superior Qualifications	Credit for Directly-Related Experience
Current Federal Employees*	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Non-Federal Applicants	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

* For employees on time-limited appointments, use the Non-Federal Applicants information.

APPENDIX C: APPROVAL LEVELS FOR MONETARY AWARDS

The following tables show the approving official by type and amount of monetary award up to \$10,000, which is the limit for approval by an agency. For awards in excess of \$10,000 per individual, the Office of Personnel Management approves them up to \$25,000 and the President approves them if over \$25,000.

Non-SES Awards*

Approving Official	Performance	On-The-Spot**	Special Act Or Service**	Time-Off Award**	Referral Bonus	Quality Increase
Head of an HQs element	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$500	Up to \$7,500	Up to 80 hrs/yr; if a performance award, see the Collective Bargaining Agreement	Up to \$500 or 16 hrs time off	X
Administrator, NNSA	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$500	Up to \$10,000	Up to 80 hrs/yr; not for a performance award		
HC-1			\$7,501-10,000***			
Head of a Field element	Up to \$10,000	Up to \$500	Up to \$7,500	Up to 80 hrs/yr; if a performance award, see your local directive and/or Collective Bargaining Agreement	Up to \$500 or 16 hrs time off	X

SES Awards

Approving Official	Performance	On-The-Spot	Special Act Or Service**	Time-Off-Award**
Deputy Secretary/PRB	5% - 20% of basic pay			
Administrator, NNSA			Up to \$10,000	Up to 80 hrs/yr; not for a performance award
Head of a HQs element		Up to \$500	Up to \$7,500	Up to 80 hrs/yr; not for a performance award
HC-1			\$7,501-10,000*	
Head of a Field element		Up to \$500	Up to \$7,500	Up to 80 hrs/yr; not for a performance award

* Includes pay band V and SL/ST employees; (note: SL/STs are subject to change to the lower chart once the SL/ST performance management system is approved by OPM for certification)

** Per employee; there is no limit for a group of employees

*** For non-NNSA elements only

APPENDIX D: SPECIAL ACT OR SERVICE AWARD SCALES

The amount of a cash award for a special act or service is based on tangible and/or intangible benefits. All nominations must contain a justification for the amount of the award. The following tangible benefits scale and/or the intangible benefits scale are recommended, unless other scales are available from the servicing human resources office. When a contribution results in both tangible and intangible benefits, the amount of the award is in proportion to the total value of the contributions to the Government based on the combination of tangible and intangible benefits.

MONETARY AWARDS SCALE FOR INTANGIBLE BENEFITS FROM SUGGESTIONS, INVENTIONS, SPECIAL ACTS OR SERVICES				
VALUE OF BENEFIT	EXTENT OF APPLICATION			
	Limited Affects functions, mission, or personnel of one office (e.g., field site office or one office within a HQ Departmental element). Affects a small area of science or technology.	Extended Affects functions, mission, or personnel of several field site offices or HQ office within a Departmental element (e.g., more than one). Affects an important area of science or technology.	Broad Affects functions, mission, or personnel of an entire Departmental element or Departmental element with multiple site offices. Affects a broad area of science or technology.	General Affects functions, mission, or personnel of multiple Departmental elements or throughout the Department or is in the public interest throughout the Nation or beyond.
Moderate Change or modification of an operating principle or procedure with limited impact or use.	Up to \$120	Up to \$300	Up to \$600	Up to \$1,200
Substantial Change or modification of an operating principle or procedure; an important improvement to the value of product, activity, or program.	Up to \$300	Up to \$600	Up to \$1,000	Up to \$3,000
High Complete revision of a basic principle or procedure; a highly significant improvement to the value of a product, major activity, or program.	Up to \$600	Up to \$1,200	Up to \$3,000	Up to \$6,000
Exceptional Initiation of a new principle or procedure; a superior improvement to the quality of a critical product, activity, or program.	Up to \$1,200	Up to \$3,100	Up to \$6,000	Up to \$10,000 (awards over \$10,000 must be approved by OPM)

MONETARY AWARDS SCALE FOR TANGIBLE BENEFITS	
SAVINGS TO GOVERNMENT	AWARD AMOUNT
Up to \$10,000	10 percent of the benefits
\$10,001 – \$100,000	\$1,000 for the first \$10,000 in benefits, plus 3 percent of benefits over \$10,000

MONETARY AWARDS SCALE FOR TANGIBLE BENEFITS

SAVINGS TO GOVERNMENT	AWARD AMOUNT
\$100,001 or more	\$3,700 for the first \$100,000 in benefits, plus .005 of benefits over \$100,000 Award amount should not exceed recipient's annual salary