

15.1 Employee Recognition Policy

Policy Statement

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to recognizing employees for their achievements made in support of business objectives, high-quality client service and dedication to public service. Recognizing the accomplishments of employees contributes to a supportive work environment and supports the attraction and retention of committed and engaged employees.

This policy provides the foundation for corporate and departmental recognition programs within the Government of Nova Scotia.

Definitions

DEPUTY HEAD

The deputy of the member of the Executive Council presiding over a department and all others whom the Governor in Council from time to time designates as having the status of deputy head.

DEPARTMENTS

Any department, office or public service entity established by the Government of Nova Scotia, as identified under Category I in Appendix I-A of the Management Manuals Policy.

EMPLOYEE

An employee as defined in the *Civil Service Act*; an employee as defined in the *Corrections Act*; an employee as defined in the *Highway Workers' Collective Bargaining Act*; any other person directly employed by the Province of Nova Scotia.

RECOGNITION

Any word or deed towards making someone feel appreciated and recognized for what they do. Recognition covers a range of formal and informal practices in the workplace that support corporate and departmental values, goals, objectives and priorities.

FORMAL RECOGNITION

Structured, scheduled activities or events with specific criteria, which are used to recognize employee contributions and achievements.

INFORMAL RECOGNITION

Acknowledgment of day-to-day accomplishments in the workplace through gestures of appreciation, communication and/or feedback.

VALUES

Respect, integrity, diversity, accountability, and the public good, as defined in the 2005-2010 Corporate Human Resource Plan, and/or values as defined in department business plans.

CASH GIFT/AWARD

Cash or near-cash items such as bonuses, gift cards, and gift certificates, as defined by Canada Revenue Agency.

NON-CASH GIFT/AWARD

Plaques, certificates, greeting cards, coupons, vouchers, or merchandise as defined by Canada Revenue Agency.

Policy Objectives

To promote the recognition of employees for their achievements and contributions to public service.

To provide guidelines and parameters for corporate and department-specific recognition programs and activities.

To raise awareness of the value of recognizing employees and the positive effect it has on such things as employee engagement, client service, attraction and retention and overall organizational success.

Application

This policy applies to all civil servants whose terms and conditions are set out in accordance with the *Civil Service Act* and regulations and other direct employees of the provincial government including all bargaining unit employees.

Refer to guidelines (Appendix 15-B, Appendix 15-C) for specific eligibility information and criteria related to the Premier's Award of Excellence and Corporate Long Service Awards.

Policy Directives

Formal and informal recognition activities must recognize, reinforce or promote positive behaviours and performance that support corporate and/or departmental values, goals and objectives.

Events that are solely social in nature, such as office holiday socials, are not considered recognition activities under this policy.

In accordance with the employee recognition policy:

- The PSC will establish and maintain corporate employee recognition programs. (for specific guidelines related to corporate programs see Appendix 15-B and Appendix 15-C)
- Deputy heads are encouraged to establish and maintain department-specific employee recognition programs. (for specific guidelines related to department programs see Appendix 15-A)

Employees reaching service milestones of 25, 30 and 35 years will be recognized through a corporate program. Publicly-funded gifts for service milestones greater than 25 years will only be provided to recipients through the corporate program.

At a minimum, department's formal recognition programs will recognize employees for their 5, 10, 15 and 20 year service milestones. When acknowledging milestones in years of service, departments will recognize total years of government service.

Retirement gifts and celebrations shall be financed by contributions from fellow employees. The Deputy Head however, may deem it appropriate to fund a retirement gift from a department budget if he/she wishes to give special recognition to a particular individual for an extraordinary contribution or exceptionally long service. If public funds are used, the Deputy Head of the authorizing department is responsible for providing justification.

Costs related to department-specific recognition will be managed from within departmental budgets and must be compliant with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) rules. Deputy Heads are responsible for the costs associated with department recognition programs and must authorize all expenditures related to recognition activities.

Cash awards shall not be granted to employees as part of any recognition program and/or activity.

Public funds cannot be used to purchase alcoholic beverages for recognition gifts/ awards or at recognition events.

Award recipients will not be deducted for time taken to attend, or travel to, a recognition event held during their regularly scheduled hours of work. Time taken from regular work hours to attend, or travel to, a recognition event is treated as time worked in straight time hours. Award recipients who travel to attend a recognition event will be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with government's travel policy.

Recipients must be consulted before administering public forms of recognition, and consent should be obtained before publicizing names or photos of award recipients.

Policy Guidelines

To ensure employee recognition activities are effective, genuine and meaningful, departments should consider the following:

- Recognition should be fair, transparent, inclusive, frequent, timely and varied
- The form of recognition used should be appropriate to the contribution that was made
- Recognition should be meaningful and reflect the preferences of the recipient
- Recognition activities should be respectful of workplace diversity
- Employees at all levels should be involved in the development, implementation and review of recognition programs and practices
- When recognition is the result of a group or team effort, all contributing members of the team should be recognized
- Recognition activities should be communicated and promoted to foster a culture of recognition and pride among employees

Employee recognition programs should contain both formal and informal components, and may recognize employee accomplishments such as:

- Contributing to a more supportive work environment
- Excellent performance in the employee's own work, or as part of a team
- Practical suggestions for improvements
- Service excellence
- Improving safety
- Community or volunteer service
- Retirement or reaching milestones in years of service
- Going above and beyond in extenuating circumstances (e.g., pandemic, weather disaster)

Accountability

Public Service Commission is responsible for:

- providing advice and assistance to departments on the application of this policy
- providing tools to departments to support their recognition activities
- providing leadership with respect to networking and information sharing
- coordinating corporate award programs such as the Premier's Award of Excellence, Long Service Awards for years of service greater than 25 years, and Provincial Public Service Week
- maintaining an inventory of corporate and department formal recognition activities

Deputy Heads participating in recognition activities are responsible for:

- integrating the elements of this policy within their department's employee recognition programs, and complying with its directives
- communicating corporate and/or department values, goals and objectives when engaging in recognition activities
- authorizing, monitoring and recording expenditures related to recognition activities
- maintaining an inventory of formal recognition activities
- providing a supportive work environment by modeling the consistent practice of informal, day-to-day recognition

Monitoring

The Public Service Commission will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and consistent application of this policy. The Public Service Commission may periodically conduct audits of department practices and require access to data maintained by departments with respect to this policy.

Departments will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of their own recognition programs.

References

Civil Service Act

- General Civil Service Regulations

Highway Workers' Collective Bargaining Act

NSGEU Civil Service Master Agreement

Correctional Officers of Nova Scotia, NSGEU Local 480

Canada Revenue Agency – Gifts and Awards Fact Sheet

<<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca>>

Management Manual 100, Category I, Appendix I-A

Corporate Human Resource Plan 2005-2010

Travel Policy

Healthy Workplace Policy

Enquiries

Strategic Support Services

Public Service Commission

(902) 424-7660

Appendices

Appendix 15-A - Department Recognition Guidelines

Appendix 15-B - Premier's Award of Excellence Program Guidelines

Appendix 15-C - Corporate Long Service Award Program Guidelines

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Appendix 15-A

Department Recognition Guidelines

Purpose

To provide departments with guidance and the flexibility to develop and implement recognition programs that support department values, goals and objectives and that reflect the department's business needs, individual culture and work environment .

Guidelines

Recognition may be extended by co-workers, peers, clients, supervisors and/or employees.

To ensure recognition is meaningful to employees, care should be taken to consult with them and assess their needs and preferences in order to provide a form of recognition that is suitable and appropriate.

The Deputy Head may designate a recognition coordinator(s) to oversee the development and implementation of recognition activities in the department. The coordinator(s) may be supported by a committee.

FORMAL RECOGNITION

Separate guidelines exist for corporate recognition events such as the Premier's Award of Excellence and Long Service Awards for service greater than 25 years. (for eligibility criteria see Appendix 15-B and Appendix 15-C to the Employee Recognition Policy)

Within departments, formal recognition should be considered for individuals or teams who have made contributions which best reflect the department's corporate values, goals and/or objectives.

The establishment of a formal awards program must be authorized by the Deputy Head.

When developing formal recognition programs, departments should:

- ensure that the department/division business needs, culture and work environment are considered
- clearly communicate criteria and time-lines

- clearly define eligibility requirements
- ensure that any nomination process includes a fair evaluation of submissions against established criteria
- take reasonable care to consider the diversity of employees in all recognition activities, for example, when establishing committees and/or selection panels
- ensure program materials are accessible in different formats as required, to meet the needs of employees (e.g., web, print, braille)
- consider internal and public promotion of recipient achievements

SERVICE MILESTONES

Employees reaching service milestones of 25, 30 and 35 years will be recognized at a corporate event, co-hosted by the PSC and respective departments. Publicly-funded gifts for service milestones greater than 25 years will only be provided to recipients through the corporate program.

Departments are responsible for presenting the framed long service award certificates to their respective 25, 30 and 35 year recipients at an event of choice (e.g., luncheon, breakfast). In order for recognition to be meaningful it needs to be timely, therefore departments should present the certificates either before or soon after the corporate long service award event. (for an overview of the corporate long service award program see Appendix 15-C to the Employee Recognition Policy)

At a minimum, department's formal recognition programs will recognize employees for their 5, 10, 15 and 20 year service milestones. When acknowledging milestones in years of service, departments will recognize total years of government service, which may include combined years of service in multiple departments.

RECOGNITION EVENTS

Departments may choose to host recognition events. A recognition event is one where staff contributions and accomplishments, and/or milestones of service are recognized. Recognition events may be formal (ceremony, presentation) or informal (social gathering, potluck) in nature. Events that do not have a recognition component and are solely social in nature are not considered to be recognition events (e.g., holiday socials).

INFORMAL RECOGNITION

Informal recognition is encouraged as a means of providing a supportive work environment where employees feel valued. The acknowledgment of day-to-day accomplishments in the workplace is essential to building a recognition culture within government.

Although informal in nature, this type of recognition should acknowledge positive employee behaviours and performance and be linked to corporate and/or department values, goals and objectives.

Informal recognition not requiring an expenditure or the coordination of an event may be given at any time.

Training, and an employee recognition toolkit consisting of templates and tips is available from the Public Service Commission to departments to assist in the delivery of informal recognition, and the development of recognition programs and/or activities.

Enquiries

Strategic Support Services
Public Service Commission
(902) 424-7660

References

Employee Recognition Policy
Employee Recognition Toolkit

Appendix 15-B

Premier's Award of Excellence Program Guidelines

Purpose

The Premier's Award of Excellence recognizes outstanding on-the-job contributions of Nova Scotia government employees – both individuals and teams.

Who Is Eligible?

Employees are eligible to receive the Premier's Award of Excellence if they are currently employed by the Government of Nova Scotia (as of October 1st of each year) and in one of the following groups; an employee as defined in the Civil Service Act; an employee as defined in Schedule A to the Corrections Act or a regular employee pursuant to a collective agreement under the Highway Workers' Collective Bargaining Act. Recent retirees (within the 24 months preceding October 1st each year) of the Government of Nova Scotia in the above-mentioned groups are also eligible to be nominated.

Program Overview

The Premier's Award of Excellence is the highest honour awarded by the Nova Scotia Government to its employees. It encourages excellence by recognizing employees for outstanding contributions and achievements.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is responsible for coordinating the annual Premier's Award of Excellence program.

The Premier's Award of Excellence will be granted annually in the summer, with a call for nominations in the fall of each year.

Awards will be considered for individuals or teams who have made outstanding contributions which best reflect government's corporate goals, objectives and priorities. The following are examples of contributions that may lead to recognition:

- Innovation and Creativity
- Service Excellence
- Relationship Building

- Leadership Excellence
- Corporate Citizenship

NOMINATION PROCESS

The PSC launches the call for nominations by sending program materials to all employees and communicating the program details.

Nominations are made by employees for employees.

Employees may nominate themselves, however, in this case, the second nominator shall not be a nominee and letters of support may not be submitted by the nominee.

Nomination forms must be accompanied by a summary statement, a minimum of 2 letters of support, a detailed description of the achievement, the names of 2 nominators, and the name of the nominee's supervisor.

Nominees must acknowledge the nomination by signing the nomination form, agreeing to allow his/her name to go forward for this public form of recognition.

Employees submit nominations to the PSC for review and validation by the deadline date specified in the program materials.

The PSC will forward nomination materials, evaluation forms, and instructions to the external selection panel.

SELECTION PROCESS

The selection panel will be comprised of representatives external to the Nova Scotia government. The composition of the selection panel will support government's value of diversity. The Public Service Commissioner will sit on the panel as a non-voting member.

The selection panel will have no less than five members who will serve a minimum two-year term.

Expenses incurred by panel members while performing their required duties will be paid by the PSC in accordance with government's travel policy.

Selection panel members will be provided with an honorarium in recognition of their contribution.

The selection panel will review and evaluate all nominations and make recommendations to the Premier.

RESULTS

The PSC will communicate the results of the selection process to all nominees.

The PSC will send Deputy Heads a list of all employees that have been nominated from their respective departments. Nominees who are not selected for the Premier's Award of Excellence may be acknowledged for their contribution and/or achievement through the department recognition process.

The Premier will advise each recipient, by invitation, of the date and time of the Premier's Award of Excellence ceremony.

EVENT

Recipients will receive a framed certificate and award at a ceremony hosted by the Premier.

Where deemed appropriate by the Deputy Head, each department will be responsible for the cost of travel and accommodation for one night and meals of the recipient and one guest, provided the guest resides in Nova Scotia, in accordance with government's travel policy. The cost of an additional night accommodation may be approved by the Deputy Head.

The PSC will communicate recipient names and contributions both internally and publicly.

Consent will be obtained from award recipients before publicizing their names or photos.

The PSC will maintain a record of activity related to the Premier's Award of Excellence. Information collected will include:

- Nominee name(s)
- Department/Division
- Brief description of the contribution/accomplishment

Enquiries

Strategic Support Services
Public Service Commission
(902) 424-7660

REFERENCES

Civil Service Act

- General Civil Service Regulations

Highway Workers' Collective Bargaining Act

NSGEU Civil Service Master Agreement

Correctional Officers of Nova Scotia, NSGEU Local 480

Employee Recognition Policy

Travel Policy

Premier's Award of Excellence Program Materials

Appendix 15-C

Corporate Long Service Award Program Guidelines

Purpose

Corporate Long Service Awards recognize employees for their commitment and dedication to the Government of Nova Scotia for 25 years or more of service.

Who is Eligible?

Employees are eligible to receive the Long Service Awards if they are an employee as defined in the Civil Service Act; an employee as defined in Schedule A to the Corrections Act, or an Order-in-Council appointee. The entitlement of an employee to a Long Service Award is based on:

- the period the employee was subject to the provisions of the Province of Nova Scotia Public Service Superannuation Act, while functioning as a civil servant and/or Order-in-council appointee in the public service of the Province of Nova Scotia, or
- the period the employee was employed with the Province of Nova Scotia under the definition of service as it appears in the General Civil Service Regulations under the Civil Service Act, or
- service as defined in the collective agreements entered into with the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union.

Corporate long service awards will be presented to eligible employees during the calendar year in which the milestone year of service is attained.

Program Overview

Corporately, employees will be recognized for 25, 30 and 35 years of service at an annual Long Service Awards event.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is responsible for coordinating the annual Long Service Awards program.

The Long Service Awards event is held annually in the fall.

Employees do not have to make application for the award.

The PSC will work with departments to establish the list of eligible employees.

The PSC will advise each recipient, by invitation, of the date and time of the event.

Employees reaching service milestones of 25, 30 and 35 years will be recognized at a ceremony, co-hosted by the PSC and participating government departments.

Publicly-funded gifts for service milestones greater than 25 years will only be provided to recipients through the corporate program.

Prior to the Corporate Long Service Awards, the PSC forwards the framed long service award certificates to Human Resource Directors who have recipients in their departments.

Departments present the certificates to their respective employees at an event of choice (e.g., luncheon, breakfast). In order for recognition to be meaningful it needs to be timely, therefore departments should present the certificates either before or soon after the corporate long service award event. (For department guidelines related to service milestones, see Appendix 15-A to the Employee Recognition Policy).

All costs related to the long service awards event, including gifts, certificates and venue will be proportionally distributed to recipient departments. Departments will be invoiced by the PSC.

Where deemed appropriate by the Deputy Head, each department will be responsible for the cost of travel and accommodation for one night and meals, of the recipient and one guest, provided the guest resides in Nova Scotia, in accordance with government's travel policy. The cost of an additional night accommodation may be approved by the Deputy Head.

The PSC will maintain a record of activity related to the corporate Long Service Awards event. Information collected will include:

- Recipient name(s)
- Department/Division
- Length of service being acknowledged

Enquiries

Strategic Support Services
Public Service Commission
(902) 424-7660

References

Civil Service Act

- General Civil Service Regulations

Public Service Superannuation Act

NSGEU Civil Service Master Agreement

Correctional Officers of Nova Scotia, NSGEU Local 480

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