

CD20-OWI-016

Revision A

Effective Date: April 3, 2003

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# ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUANCE

## EMPLOYEE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### INCENTIVE AWARDS

APPROVING  
AUTHORITY

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DOCUMENT HISTORY LOG

Status (Baseline/ Revision/ Canceled)	Document Revision	Effective Date	Description
Baseline		05/23/02	This document replaces CD20-OWI-012, which was cancelled. This baseline incorporates new procedures and office structure.
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## **1. PURPOSE**

This OWI provides information on the Incentive Awards Program that recognizes superior accomplishments of MSFC employees. MSFC strives to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Government operations and to stimulate the participation of employees in this effort by utilizing the full authorities in the Federal Government's awards program.

## **2. APPLICABILITY**

This document is applicable to all MSFC organizations requesting Incentive Awards that are within scope as stated in MPD 1280.1, "Marshall Management Manual."

## **3. APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS**

5 CFR, Part 430 - Performance Management

5 CFR, Part 451 - Awards

5 CFR, Part 531 - Pay Under General Schedule

5 USC, Part III, Chapter 43 - Performance Appraisal

5 USC, Part III, Chapter 45 - Incentive Awards

5 USC, Part III, Chapter 53 - Pay Rates/Systems

Executive Order 11438, dated December 3, 1968 - Prescribing Procedures Governing Interdepartmental Cash Awards to the Members of the Armed Forces

MPD 1280.1 Marshall Management Manual

MPD 1200.3 Power and Authority Directive for MSFC Operations

NPG 3451.1 NASA Awards and Recognition Program

NPD 3410.2 NASA Policy Directive

NPG 1441.1 Records Retention Schedule

MPG 1440.2 MSFC Records Management Program

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#### 4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 Adoption of a suggestion: The evaluator believes it to be a good idea and that steps are being taken to determine if the idea can be implemented.

4.2 Award or incentive award: A monetary or non-monetary award for a contribution resulting in tangible benefits or savings and/or intangible benefits to the Government.

4.3 Call Letter: Information distributed among organizations providing information regarding the announcement of award(s), including award requirements and dates.

4.4 Contribution: An accomplishment achieved through an individual or group effort in the form of a suggestion, an invention, or a special act or service in the public interest connected with or related to official employment, which contributes to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement of Government operations, or achieves a significant reduction in paperwork.

4.5 External awards: Are called for on forms supplied by the sponsor and may be granted by both private and government organizations to selected NASA nominees.

4.6 Honorary award: A medal, certificate, plaque, citation, badge, or other similar item having award or honor connotation--should not exceed the price range of the items normally used for honorary recognition.

4.7 Implementation of a suggestion: Suggestion is in effect--the idea is in use.

4.8 Intangible savings: An improvement in morale, working conditions, safety, or in other daily operations that cannot be reduced to specific monetary terms. (See Page 11, Awards Desk Guide).

4.9 Interagency award: An award granted by the head of an agency for an approved contribution from an employee or employees of another agency, or to a member of the Armed Forces under the provisions of Executive Order 11438.

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4.10 Performance award: A performance-based cash payment to an employee based on the employee's rating of record and does not increase base pay.

4.11 Presidential award: An award granted by the President under 5 USC Sections 4504 and 4507.

4.12 Space Act Award: A monetary award for a scientific or technical contribution granted by NASA pursuant to the authority of the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 as amended. (Ref: 42 USC 2458.)

4.13 Special act or service: A contribution or accomplishment in the public interest which is of a non-recurring nature either within or outside of job responsibilities, is a major scientific achievement, or is an act of heroism.

4.14 Tangible savings or hard savings: The result of actions that reduce the cost or projected level of expenditures for a workload, project, program, or activity. (See Appendix A)

## 5. INSTRUCTIONS

### 5.1 Payment Of Awards

5.1.1 A cash award may be paid to an employee, a former employee, or to the estate of a deceased employee who by his or her suggestion, invention, superior accomplishment, or other personal effort contributes to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement of Government operations, provided the contribution was made prior to the departure of the employee. Contractor and Intergovernmental Personnel Act employees are not eligible for cash awards, but may be given honorary recognition. Senior Executive Service (SES) employees are not eligible for cash awards at the Center. Cash awards for SES employees must get approval from a NASA Headquarters review committee.

5.1.2 Members of the Armed Forces detailed to NASA may receive cash awards for outstanding suggestions, inventions for scientific achievements that contribute to the efficiency or economy, or for other improvement of operations.

5.1.3 Awards are in addition to regular pay of the recipient and are subject to the withholding of income taxes. Awards should never be broken below \$5 increments. The amount of an individual award for a Special Service Award (SSA)/Group Achievement Award

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(GAA) can be determined by either the tangible/intangible scales. (See Appendix A for tangible scales. See Awards Desk Guide, page 11 for intangible scales.) The minimum amount of an award for an SSP is determined by the SSP scale. (See Appendix B for the SSP scale.)

5.1.4 Acceptance of a cash award constitutes an agreement that the use by the Government of an idea, method, or device for which the award is made does not form the basis of a further claim of any nature against the Government.

5.1.5 To be awardable, a contribution must:

5.1.5.1 Benefit the Government.

5.1.5.2 Be made while employed with NASA.

5.1.5.3 Be described in writing.

5.1.5.4 Be approved by the benefiting organization at a management level higher than the individual who recommended the award or use of the suggestion or invention, unless the recommendation is made by the Center Director. (See Appendix C for delegation of approval authority.)

5.1.5.5 Be recognized within 6 months following completion of task.

5.1.6 In addition to any award granted initially upon local application of a contribution, a further award may be granted if there is wider application or greater benefits than originally determined.

5.2 NASA HONOR AWARDS (NON-MONETARY)

5.2.1 Purpose

The NASA Honor Awards are the most prestigious awards granted by NASA and are used to bestow singular honor as official recognition of achievement. It is intended that this Agency-level recognition encourages similar outstanding achievements from across the entire spectrum of the NASA workforce. Except for occasions warranting immediate recognition, recipients of these top NASA awards are selected annually. Nominations are reviewed by the NASA Incentive Awards Board and are approved by the NASA Administrator.

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## 5.2.2 Description

The NASA Honor Awards include a gold medal, a gold lapel emblem, a ribbon rosette, and a framed certificate bearing the official seal of NASA and signed by the NASA Administrator.

## 5.2.3 Criteria

5.2.3.1 NASA's most prestigious honor awards are presented to a number of carefully selected individuals and groups of individuals, both Government and non-Government, who have distinguished themselves by making outstanding contributions to the NASA mission. Recognition should be extended to deserving candidates from NASA's total workforce. Incumbents of all occupational groups and all grade levels are eligible in accordance with the individual award criteria.

5.2.3.2 NASA employees and employees of other Federal agencies may be nominated for the Distinguished Service, Outstanding Leadership, Exceptional Achievement, Exceptional Service, Exceptional Scientific Achievement, Exceptional Engineering Achievement, Equal Employment Opportunity, Exceptional Bravery, and Space Flight Medals, Exceptional Technology Achievement Medal, Exceptional Administrative Achievement Medal, and the Group Achievement Award. Certificates of Appreciation may also be granted.

5.2.3.3 Non-Government personnel may be nominated for the Distinguished Public Service, Exceptional Scientific Achievement, Exceptional Engineering Achievement, Public Service, Exceptional Technology Achievement Medal, Exceptional Bravery Medals, and the Public Service Group Achievement Award or Group Achievement Award as appropriate. Certificates of Appreciation may also be granted.

## 5.3 NASA Medals and Criteria

5.3.1 A Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) is awarded to any person in the Federal service who, by distinguished service, ability, or courage, has personally made a contribution representing substantial progress to the NASA mission in the interests of the United States. The contribution must be so extraordinary that other forms of recognition by NASA would be inadequate. This is the highest honor that NASA confers.

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5.3.2 A Distinguished Public Service Medal (DPSM) is awarded to any individual who is not an employee of the Federal Government or was not a Government employee during the period in which the service was performed. The award is granted only to individuals whose distinguished accomplishments contributed substantially to the NASA mission. The contribution must be so extraordinary that other forms of recognition by NASA would be inadequate. This is the highest honor that NASA confers to a non-Government individual.

5.3.3 An Outstanding Leadership Medal (OLM) is awarded for notably outstanding leadership, which has had a pronounced effect upon the technical or administrative programs of NASA. The leadership award is given for an act of leadership or for sustained contributions based on an individual's effectiveness as a leader, the productivity of the individual's program, or demonstrated ability to develop the administrative or technical talents of other employees.

5.3.4 An Exceptional Achievement Medal (EAM) is awarded for significant, specific accomplishment or contribution clearly characterized by a substantial and significant improvement in operations efficiency, service, financial savings, science, or technology that contributes to the mission of NASA.

5.3.5 An Exceptional Service Medal (ESM) is awarded for significant, sustained performance characterized by unusual initiative or creative ability that clearly demonstrates substantial improvements in engineering, aeronautics, space flight, administration, support, or space-related endeavors that contribute to the mission of NASA.

5.3.6 An Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal (ESAM) is awarded for unusually significant scientific contributions toward achievement of the NASA mission. This award may be given for individual efforts that have resulted in a contribution of fundamental importance in this field or have significantly enhanced understanding of this field.

5.3.6.1 Accomplishments are far above others in quality or excellence, rare, outstanding, clearly superior achievement.

5.3.6.2 This is a prestigious scientific award for specific/concrete scientific achievement(s).

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5.3.6.3 More credit will be given for recent contribution(s) (except in unusual circumstances when a contribution was overlooked at the time it occurred).

5.3.7 An Exceptional Engineering Achievement Medal (EEAM) is awarded for unusually significant engineering contributions toward achievement of the NASA mission. This award may be given for individual efforts or application of engineering principles/methods that have resulted in a contribution of fundamental importance in this field or have significantly enhanced understanding of this field.

5.3.7.1 Accomplishments are far above others in quality, scope and impact.

5.3.7.2 Accomplishments are explicit, demonstrate results and are perceived as outstanding or significant by peers and impacted target groups.

5.3.7.3 More credit will be given for recent contribution(s) (except in unusual circumstances when a contribution was overlooked at the time it occurred).

5.3.8 An Equal Employment Opportunity Medal (EEOM) is awarded for outstanding achievement and material contribution to the goals of NASA's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs either within the Government or within community organizations or groups.

5.3.8.1 Accomplishments are clearly superior in quality, scope, and impact.

5.3.8.2 Accomplishments are explicit, demonstrate results, and are perceived as outstanding or significant by peers and impacted target groups.

5.3.8.3 More credit will be given for recent contribution(s) (except in unusual circumstances when a contribution was overlooked at the time it occurred).

5.3.9 An Exceptional Bravery Medal (EBM) is awarded for exemplary and courageous response to an emergency in NASA activities by an individual who, independent of personal danger, has acted to prevent the loss of human life or Government property.

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5.3.10 A Public Service Medal (PSM) is awarded to any individual who was not an employee of the Government during the period in which the service was performed. The award is granted for exceptional contributions to the mission of NASA.

5.3.11 A Space Flight Medal (SFM) is awarded to STS flight crew members (civil and military astronauts, mission specialists, payload specialists, civilians) to recognize individual participation in a Space Transportation System (STS) flight mission. The medal is granted for participation in initial flight. The NASA Space Flight Cluster is awarded for subsequent flight(s).

5.3.12 Exceptional Technology Achievement Medal (ETAM) is awarded to both Government and non-Government individuals for technology contributions achieved in one of the following: Early technology development significantly contributing to the NASA mission; exemplary collaborative effort in achieving significant technology transfer, or exceptional utilization of a NASA-developed technology resulting in a significant commercial application.

5.3.13 Exceptional Administrative Achievement Medal (EAAM) is awarded to any person in the Federal service (NASA Classification 500 Group clerical/assistant and related support positions only) for a significant, specific accomplishment or contribution characterized by unusual initiative or creativity that clearly demonstrates a substantial improvement in administrative support contributing to the mission of NASA, such as: Exceptional initiative in carrying out office/program support activities that resulted in improved processes and operations; development and improvement of administrative support methods and processes that resulted in substantial benefit to the office or program; or notable competence and resourcefulness in accomplishing and improving office/program processes and operations.

#### 5.4 NASA Certificates

5.4.1 The following Honor Awards consist of a framed certificate bearing the official NASA seal and signed by the NASA Administrator:

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5.4.1.1 A Group Achievement Award (GAA) is given in recognition of outstanding accomplishment that has been made through the coordination of many individual efforts and has contributed substantially to the accomplishment of the NASA mission. This award may be used to recognize the accomplishments of either a total Government employee group or a group comprised of both Government and non-Government personnel as a team award.

5.4.1.2 Groups should be identified and nominated at the lowest level possible to assure recognition of true working team and/or homogenous performance.

5.4.1.3 Individuals who have made significant, noteworthy contributions should be included, and those whose contributions or associations are brief, peripheral, or limited should not be included.

5.4.1.4 Groups should have participated in programs or projects that were particularly significant to NASA, not routine events.

5.4.2 A Public Service Group Achievement Award (PSGAA) is an award given to a group of non-Government employees in recognition of an outstanding accomplishment that has contributed substantially to the mission of NASA.

5.4.2.1 Groups should be identified and nominated at the lowest level possible to assure recognition of true working teams and/or homogenous performance.

5.4.2.2 Individuals who have made significant, noteworthy contributions should be included; those whose contributions or associations are brief, peripheral, or limited should not be included.

5.4.2.3 Groups should have participated in programs or projects that were particularly significant to NASA but were not routine events.

5.4.3 A NASA Certificate of Appreciation (NCOA) is awarded in recognition of an outstanding accomplishment that has contributed substantially to the mission of NASA.

5.5 Exceptional Achievement Medal in Support of the Agency's Small Disadvantaged Business Program.

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5.5.1 NASA Headquarters awards the Exceptional Achievement Medal for advocacy and distinction in three categories: Program Support, Procurement, and Small Business.

5.5.2 NASA Headquarters, Centers and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory may nominate up to three individuals, one in each of the following categories: program/support, procurement and small business.

5.5.2.1 Selection Criteria:

a. Nominee must be either a civil service employee of NASA or an employee of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

b. Nominee must have made significant contributions to the development of minority enterprises in their organization.

c. Nominee must possess an understanding of the minority business community and its impact on the economic and technological development of the Agency.

d. Furnish examples of how the nominee has supported Agency outreach activities in order to expand the national industrial contractor base with high technology minority business.

5.5.3 Accomplishments:

5.5.3.1 Specific Duty Achievements: Describe in detail each specific achievement separately. Explain the positive impact the accomplishments have had on the mission of the nominee's organization. Highlight the particular aspects of the achievement such as quality, timeliness, creativity, and productivity that warrant special recognition.

5.5.3.2 Professional Qualities: Describe specific instances where the nominee has demonstrated initiative in process improvement, teamwork, adaptability, and sensitivity to customer needs and objectives, which relate to solving Small Disadvantaged Business problems.

5.5.4 Endorsements:

Include a statement confirming the preceding information, incorporating the signature of the endorsing official.

5.6 Procedures

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5.6.1 A request for nominations for the NASA/MSFC Honor Awards is sent to directorate and Center staff offices in August of each year by the Incentive Awards Office. All nominations, except for the Exceptional Achievement Medal in Support of the Agency's Small Disadvantaged Business Program, are to be submitted on NASA Form 1644. The above Exceptional Achievement Medal has a unique format, which the Incentive Awards Office will make available for the organizations. Nominations are due to the Incentive Awards Office 4 to 6 weeks after the date of the request. The MSFC nominations are submitted on MSFC Form 507, Incentive Award Nomination

5.6.2 Nominations must be made in writing by directorate or Center staff office heads and should be submitted in priority order. Nominations from across the Center are compiled by the Incentive Awards Office for review by the Personnel Management Advisory Board. The panel recommends to the Director those nominations to be forwarded to Headquarters.

5.6.3 The Distinguished Service Medal and Distinguished Public Service Medal are presented at a special ceremony held in May of each year at NASA Headquarters. Similarly, the Exceptional Achievement Medal in support of the Agency's Small Disadvantaged Business program is given at the annual Minority Business and Advocates Awards Ceremony which the Agency hosts in September in D.C. during Minority Enterprise Development Week.

5.6.4 NASA Honor Awards, except for the three referenced above, are presented locally at the Center Annual Honors Day Ceremony, normally held in the summer. The NASA Administrator or his designee makes the presentations.

## 5.7 Center-level Honor Awards

5.7.1 The Director's Commendation Certificate (DCC) is the highest award given at the Center. Awarded to an individual whose job performance and or special accomplishments merit recognition where other avenues of recognition are not sufficient. The award is primarily given to civil service employees but contractor employees are eligible when there has been significant achievement. The DCC is non-monetary. The award is processed on an MSFC Form 507 and approving official is always the Center Director. A certificate is prepared for presentation to the recipient by the Center Director if possible.

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5.7.2 The MSFC Certificate of Appreciation (MCOA) is awarded to an individual in recognition of outstanding accomplishment which contributed substantially to the mission of MSFC. Civil service and contractor employees are eligible. The MCOA is non-monetary. The award is processed on an MSFC Form 507. A certificate is prepared for presentation to the recipient.

### 5.7.3 Procedures

A request for nominations for the NASA/MSFC Honor Awards is sent to directorate and Center staff offices in August of each year by the Incentive Awards Office. Nominations are due to the Incentive Awards Office 4 to 6 weeks after the date of the request.

## 5.8 Types Of Performance Awards And Other Recognition

5.8.1 A Sustained Superior Performance (SSP) Award is based on the most recent rating of record and must be processed within 120 days of its receipt. Employee's performance must have been rated at "Meets Expectations" level for the current performance appraisal period. An SSP can be granted only once in a 52-week period and cannot exceed 10 percent of the employee's annual rate of base pay (Center approval authority does not exceed \$7,500.) See Appendix B for the monetary scale for each grade with corresponding minimum cash award amounts. The award is processed on an MSFC Form 507 with an attached copy of the employee's performance appraisal. A certificate is prepared for presentation to the recipient.

5.8.1.1 If nomination is proposed more than 120 days after the end of the appraisal period, an SSP confirmation form should accompany the nomination. This form can be obtained from the Incentive Awards Office.

5.8.2 A Special Service Award (SSA) is for a one-time special act, service, or achievement of a non-recurring nature in the public interest connected with or related to official employment. The SSA should be recommended as quickly as possible following the contribution being recognized. The amount of the award is in direct proportion to the benefits derived by MSFC or the Government as a result of the contributions (See Appendix A for tangible benefit scale and the Awards Desk Guide, page 11, for intangible benefits scales). The award is processed on a MSFC Form 507. A certificate is

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prepared for presentation to the recipient. Award amount range is \$525-\$7,500.

5.8.3 A Group Achievement Award (GAA) recognizes a one-time task of a non-recurring nature for a group of individuals. The criteria for a GAA are the same as an SSA. A GAA can be monetary or non-monetary. Team members may share equally in the award or in proportion to their contribution to the team effort. The GAA is processed on an MSFC Form 507 with an attached list of team members including their organizational code, social security number, title, and grade. When contractor employees are included, their names and company names are all that is required. A certificate is prepared for presentation to the recipient.

5.8.4 An On-the-Spot Award (OTS) is intended to quickly recognize one-time and short-term efforts by employees that result in service of exceptionally high quality. It is designed to encourage supervisors and managers to give immediate recognition for a job well done. The OTS is processed on an MSFC Form 507 and does not include a certificate. After receiving funding authorization and second-level supervisory approval, the immediate supervisor may present the award to the employee immediately (the Incentive Awards Office recommends within 48 hours of the completion of the task). A maximum of 3 OTS awards may be presented to an employee in a 12-month period. Award amount range is \$100-\$500.

5.8.5 A Time Off Award (TOA) is an excused absence granted to an employee without charge to leave or loss of basic pay. It is designed to encourage increased productivity by recognizing superior accomplishments or other personal efforts that contribute to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations. A TOA can be used in combination with a monetary or non-monetary award based on the same contributions. It continues to allow for swift recognition of employees. It is primarily for, but not limited to, non-recurring tasks. This award can be used for recognition of high level performance for an extended period of time. All civil service and SES employees are eligible for the TOA. A full-time employee may be granted up to 40 hours of time off for a single contribution, but not more than 80 hours of time off during a leave year. Part-time employees can be awarded up to 40 hours during a leave year. Only the employee's certifying official may grant the TOA. After receiving second-level supervisory approval, the certifying official may present the award to the employee

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immediately. A TOA cannot be converted to a cash payment under any circumstances or transferred to another employee under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program. The TOA is processed on an MSFC Form 507 and does not include a certificate.

5.8.6 A Travel Savings Incentive Award uses frequent flyer points to obtain airline tickets, which is a great approach to saving Center travel dollars. In an effort to encourage the use of the frequent flyer points, MSFC has implemented a process that rewards travelers who collect and use their official Government travel points for obtaining airline tickets. Travelers who collect and use their frequent flyer points towards official TDY will be awarded 50% (not to exceed \$500) of what it would have cost the government to purchase the ticket. For example, if the contract fare to Washington, DC is \$412, the traveler's award would be \$206. Employees are not required to participate in this program.

5.8.6.1 The enrollment process can be accomplished by phone or at the airline ticket counters. Phone numbers for the various airlines can be found on the Inside Marshall web page under the Travel/Transportation heading. After enrolling in the program with the airlines, travelers should then update their profile with the Travel Office. Travelers will receive a monthly statement from the airline(s) with the accrued frequent flyer miles.

5.8.6.2 The redemption process is just as simple. The traveler contacts the airline for seat availability and issuance of ticket. The award process consists of the traveler notifying his/her supervisor of when they have utilized the frequent flyer points for TDY. The supervisor then issues the traveler the Travel Savings Incentive.

5.8.6.3 Funding for the Travel Savings Incentive is covered by the Awards Office. Cash award amounts may be broken below the \$5 increment for this award category only. No certificates are printed for this award. Civil Service, Military, and Foreign Service employees are allowed to use frequent flyer miles obtained on Government travel for personal use.

## 5.9 General Processing Of Center-Level Awards

5.9.1 The SSA, OTS, TOA, and GAA awards should be submitted and processed October through August of each fiscal year. SSP awards are given July through August of each fiscal year. The

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TOA award can be given at any time during the year. MSFC Form 507 should be processed for the upcoming pay period, unless otherwise indicated by the requesting organization.

5.9.1.1 To submit the above awards, the supervisor determines the nominees, initiates the MSFC Form 507, and completes the applicable items (Parts I, II, and III).

5.9.1.2 The organization obtains the required signatures, as indicated on the MSFC Form 507, and forwards it to the organization's Administrative Officer.

5.9.1.3 The Administrative Officer verifies availability of funding (if it is a monetary award), then logs award nomination into the Centerwide Logging and Tracking System.

5.9.1.4 The Administrative Officer forwards the MSFC Form 507 to the Incentive Awards Office where it is reviewed for compliance, e.g., appropriate signatures.

#### 5.10 Suggestion Awards

5.10.1 The Employee Suggestion Program is intended to encourage employees to think about ways to improve MSFC and its operations. A suggestion is a constructive proposal, submitted in writing by one or more employees, that directly contributes to economy, or efficiency, or directly increases effectiveness of Government operations. It need not be new or original to be awardable and may result from the employee's previous work experience, research, or education. Ideas that deal with employee services, benefits, working conditions, housekeeping, routine safety practices or maintenance of buildings and grounds are not normally eligible for consideration as suggestions. When an idea, excluded for the above reasons, results in benefits to the Government, it may be accepted as a suggestion and an appropriate award may be granted. The amount of an award shall be in accordance with the tangible and/or intangible benefits scales.

5.10.2 Suggestions are submitted by employees to the Incentive Awards Office on MSFC Form 426.

5.10.3 The suggestion form, evaluation form, cost analysis form, cover letter, and instructions are forwarded to the appropriate organization for evaluation with a 2-week suspense.

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5.10.4 If the suggestion is adopted, the suggester is informed and asked to inform the Awards Office when the suggestion is implemented. If the suggestion is not adopted, the suggester is informed and encouraged to continue to support the Suggestion Program. Note: It is the evaluator's responsibility to inform the Awards Office of the implementation of the suggestion.

5.11 The following MSFC Honor Awards are also called for in the August call letter, but do not require review at NASA Headquarters. These awards for Annual Honors Day presentation are due to the Incentive Awards Office as requested in the August call letter:

- Director's Commendation Certificate (primarily MSFC)
- MSFC Certificate of Appreciation (NASA/non NASA)
- MSFC Group Achievement Award (NASA/non-NASA)
- Research and Technology Awards
- Technology Transfer Awards
- Inventor of the Year Award
- Patent Awards

5.11.1 The Research and Technology Award (R&T) is given in recognition of notable achievements in current research and technology development work, particularly for Research and Technology Operating Plan and Center Director's Discretionary Fund projects, with essential hands-on contributions to the success of these activities. Civil service and contractor employees are eligible; however, only civil service employees are eligible for monetary award. Nominations are submitted on a form included in the Phase IV call letter.

5.11.2 The Technology Transfer Award (TTA) is given in recognition of directly involved employees who have excelled in responding to government and NASA directives to transfer federal technology development, deployment, or adaptation. Only civil service employees are eligible for this monetary award. Nominations are submitted on a form included in the Phase IV call letter.

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5.11.3 The Inventor of the Year Award/Patent Awards are given for scientific and technical contributions which have been granted patent approval. The Office of Chief Counsel handles the processing of these awards.

## 5.12 External Awards

5.12.1 Each year, the Center is invited to submit nominations for various awards presented by private and Government organizations. These awards are generally coordinated through the NASA Headquarters Incentive Awards Board and in many cases require the approval of the NASA Administrator. The Incentive Awards Office is responsible for coordinating the submission of Center nominations. We receive these invitations as the *Quarterly Call for External Awards* (normally referred to as Phase Call Letters) four times each year with all documentation from each sponsor during a given call. Detailed information can be found in the documents forwarded to Administrative Officers during each call.

### 5.12.2 Procedures

The vast majority of non-NASA award programs are recurring and do not change significantly from year to year. The due date can usually be predicted. To give nominators enough time to write nominations and Headquarters enough time to review them, an award call is sent out to directorates at the beginning of each quarter for nominations expected to be due during the following quarter. Any information on new awards or changes to existing awards will be made available as soon as it is received. The Incentive Awards Office is responsible for obtaining the Director's decision on a Center nominee and for processing the nomination in accordance with all NASA and non-NASA award requirements. The nomination format is prescribed by each award sponsor and is furnished with the call letter. See the Employee and Organizational Development Department (E&ODD) Awards website for a complete planning guide of recurring non-NASA awards and the nomination timeframes.

5.12.3 Not all external awards come to the Center through NASA Headquarters. Some are sent directly from the award sponsor. These awards are handled in the same process as above.

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### 5.13 Space Shuttle Flight Award

Flight mementos consist of such items as small, lightweight flags; patches, insignia; medallions; minor graphics; and similar items of little commercial value, especially suited for display by the individual or groups to whom they will be presented. MSFC Form 4025 is used to request this award. The Safety and Mission Assurance Office handles this program.

### 5.14 Scientific And Technical Contributions

NASA grants monetary Space Act Awards in accordance with NMI 5700.1. Contributions which have been used in a NASA program or adopted, sponsored, or supported by NASA and found to have significant value in the conduct of aeronautic and space activities are eligible for these awards. Minimum awards are granted for those contributions that result in their approval as a NASA Technical Brief or as a Patent Application. The Office of Chief Counsel receives these applications. The Awards Office distributes certificates and logs into the employee's awards history.

#### 5.14.1 Patent Application Awards

When an employee files through NASA for a patent covering an invention that bears a direct relationship to or is made in consequence of his or her official duties and the Office of the Chief Counsel has decided to file a patent application, an award will be granted.

#### 5.14.2 Tech Brief Awards

These awards are granted for technological innovations suitable for publication in NASA Tech Briefs which is a monthly magazine published under contract by NASA to transfer technology to industry. NASA or contractor employees prepare articles describing their technological innovation and send them to the Technology Transfer Department. The Technology Transfer Department reviews the articles and decides which contributions are suitable for publication and forwards them to the editor. The authors receive a monetary award following publication in NASA Tech Briefs.

#### 5.14.3 Space Act Award

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Employee awards for disclosure of scientific and technical contributions that are granted alone or approved in addition to a NASA Technical Brief or Patent Application. The NASA Inventions and Contributions Board and the NASA Administrator have the authority to recommend and grant up to \$100,000 for contributions when they are determined to have significant value in the conduct of aeronautical and space activities.

#### 5.15 Length-Of-Service Awards

5.15.1 Length-of-Service Awards are presented in honorary recognition of the completion of the prescribed periods of satisfactory service. A service emblem and certificate are presented for each 5-year interval of service. Following are the types of service emblems for each year of service as well as a guide for presentation:

5.15.1.1 bronze - 5 years - Presented by team lead or department level; no certificate given.

5.15.1.2 pewter - 10 years - Presented by team lead or department level.

5.15.1.3 gold - 15 years - Presented by department/project/office heads.

5.15.1.4 red stone - 20 years - Presented by department/project/office heads.

5.15.1.5 blue stone - 25 years - Presented by directorate/project/office heads.

5.15.1.6 green stone - 30 years - Center Director or designated representative.

5.15.1.7 amethyst stone - 35 years - Center Director or designated representative.

5.15.1.8 diamond stone - 40/45/50 years - Center Director or designated representative.

5.15.5 For service awards 30-50 years, certificates and pins are presented at a Center Director's All-Hands' Meeting.

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5.15.6 For service awards 40 years and above, certificates and letters from the Administrator are prepared at NASA Headquarters.

#### 5.16 Sick Leave Conservation Awards

5.16.1 Presented in recognition of the conservation of sick leave. Certificates are presented upon the accumulation of 1,000 hours through 4,000 hours of sick leave in 500-hour increments. Standardized certificates are distributed to the appropriate organizations for signature and/or presentation in accordance with the procedure outlined below:

5.16.1.1 1,000-hour certificates - signed by the department director, program/project manager, or office director, as appropriate, and presented by them or their designated representative.

5.16.1.2 1,500-hour certificate - signed by the directorate heads, program/project managers, or office directors, as appropriate, and presented by them or their designated representative.

5.16.1.3 2,000-hour and up certificate - signed by the Center Director and presented by the directorate heads, program/project managers, or office directors, as appropriate, or their designated representative.

#### 5.17 Organizational Award Ceremonies and Merchandise

5.17.1 Recognizing that individual and team performance is an important ingredient in creating a winning culture, award ceremonies are an integral part of supporting all the MSFC values. E&ODD manages the Center's awards program, including conducting various award ceremonies at many different levels.

5.17.2 EODD will assist Center organizations in planning and conducting award ceremonies. The following guidelines must be followed:

5.17.2.1 Multiple employees or teams are formally recognized and presented with an MSFC incentive award certificate.

5.17.2.2 The awards ceremony must be coordinated with the Awards Office at least 4 weeks prior to the event.

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5.17.2.3 The awards ceremony agenda and accompanying purchases are approved by EODD 3 weeks prior to the event. Any purchases must be appropriate and within the intent of the ceremony.

5.17.2.4 Each organization must fund the awards ceremony (if funding is required) through their awards allocation and those funds will be transferred to EODD.

5.17.2.5 Refreshments, up to and including a modest meal, may be provided to those in attendance at an awards ceremony. The cost of refreshments, even if it involves an evening meal, should not exceed \$20 per person. NASA funds will not be used to purchase alcoholic beverages.

5.17.2.6 An awards ceremony may include the presentation of informal recognition awards (nonmonetary items of nominal value). Informal recognition awards may consist of things such as plaques, mugs, caps, etc., but should, in all cases, be under \$100 in value (per recipient).

5.17.2.7 The organization's awards money may not be used to fund awards for contractor employees (whether cash awards or informal recognition items). However, where it is appropriate to invite contractor employees to an organization's awards ceremony, they may be included in the refreshments.

5.17.2.8 On an exceptional basis, it may be appropriate to recognize the accomplishments of all the government employee members of the organization by presenting them with informal recognition awards. However, this should not be done on a routine or periodic basis. All aspects of awards ceremonies must be conducted in good taste and in a fiscally responsible manner, recognizing that taxpayers' money is involved.

## **6. NOTES**

None.

## **7. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND WARNING NOTES**

None.

## **8. APPENDICES, DATA, REPORTS, AND FORMS**

Appendix A	Tangible Benefits Scale
Appendix B	Minimum Monetary Scale

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Appendix C                      Delegation of Approving Authority

MSFC Form	426	Here's My Idea
MSFC Form	427	Suggestion Evaluation
MSFC Form	427-1	Comparative Cost Analysis
MSFC Form	507	Incentive Award Nomination
NASA Form	1644	Honor Award Nomination

**9. RECORDS**

Records will be maintained in accordance with NPG 1441.1, NASA Records Retention Schedule (NRSS).

**10. TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS**

None.

**11. PERSONNEL TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION**

None.

**12. FLOW DIAGRAM**

None.

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**APPENDIX A**

**TANGIBLE BENEFITS SCALE**

<b>TANGIBLE BENEFIT</b>	<b>AWARD</b>
Up To \$5,000	Give award of 10% of Tangible Benefits
\$5,001 to \$100,000	\$500 Plus 4% of the Excess \$5,000
\$100,000 Or More	\$3,350 Plus 1% of the Excess Over \$100,000

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**APPENDIX B**

**Minimum Monetary Scale  
Sustained Superior Performance Awards**

GRADE	AWARD AMOUNT
01	\$ 325
02	\$ 355
03	\$ 375
04	\$ 400
05	\$ 425
06	\$ 450
07	\$ 475
08	\$ 500
09	\$ 550
10	\$ 600
11	\$ 750
12	\$ 900
13	\$1,000
14	\$1,250
15	\$1,500

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### APPENDIX C - DELEGATION OF APPROVING AUTHORITY

TYPE OF AWARD	AMOUNT/CATEGORY OF AWARD AND APPROVAL AUTHORITY				
	Non-Monetary	Suggestion \$25-\$1000	Other Suggestions/Other Cash Awards \$25-\$2500    \$2501-\$5000    \$5001-\$7500		
Honor Awards (NASA/MSFC)	E				
SSP			C	D	E
QSI* (adjusted to base pay)	C				
SSA/GAA			C	D	E
OTS			B		
TOA	B				
Suggestions		A	C	D	E

The NASA Administrator approves awards not to exceed \$10,000. Awards in excess of that amount, but not to exceed \$25,000, are granted with the approval of the Office of Personnel Management.

\*inactive as of this revision

#### APPROVAL AUTHORITY CODE

- A     Chairperson, MSFC Suggestion Awards Committee
- B     First-level supervisor recommends/second-level supervisor approves
- C     Associate Director  
(Office of the Director-DA/DD/DE)  
Staff Office Directors and Office Directors reporting directly to basic organization head  
Department/Office Directors (reporting to Directorate Head)  
Project Managers and Office/Project Managers reporting to basic organization head
- D     Associate Director (Office of the Director-DA/DD/DE)  
Staff Office Directors  
Directorate Heads  
Project Managers (basic organizations)
- E     Center Director

Note: Associate Director will act as second level supervision on awards for all organizations as required.

Legend: SSP=Sustained Superior Performance Award; QSI=Quality Step Increase; SSA=Special Service Award; GAA=Group Achievement Award; OTS=On-the-Spot Award; TOA=Time-Off Award