



USDA OFFICE OF ETHICS – REE MISSION AREA

Request for Approval to Accept an Award from a Non-Federal Source

This form is to be used for awards which bestow gifts consisting of cash or cash equivalent, or a tangible item or items valued at greater than \$200. When an award consists only of gifts of travel, meals, or a plaque, certificate or trophy of little intrinsic value, use other methods to obtain approval (e.g. sponsored travel and/or the widely attended gathering exception). Sponsored travel and Widely-Attended Gathering forms can be found at: <https://www.ethics.usda.gov/forms.htm> Please provide all attachments from the awarding organization and use supplemental sheets as necessary.

PART I: EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

EMPLOYEE'S NAME:	EMPLOYEE'S WORK #:
AGENCY ADDRESS:	E-MAIL ADDRESS:

If the award is offered by a private foundation, check this box:	PAY PLAN	GRADE	ANNUAL SALARY \$
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PART II: AWARD INFORMATION

NAME and ADDRESS OF THE AWARDING ORGANIZATION:	PURPOSE/MISSION OF THE AWARDING ORGANIZATION
FULL NAME OF THE AWARD:	DATE OF AWARD/EVENT: LOCATION OF AWARD/EVENT:

Identify all cash, stipends, cash equivalents Identify all cash, stipends, cash equivalents, tangible items, reimbursements, meals, lodging, transportation, entertainment, free attendance, or other benefits to be provided personally to the applicant and/or members of the applicant's family to be received at or in conjunction with the award/event. Indicate the market value of each item.

ITEM TYPE	APPLICANT	APPLICANT'S FAMILY
Plaque, certificate, or trophy of little intrinsic value, and intended solely for presentation	\$ N/A	\$ N/A
Cash/stipend/cash equivalent	\$	\$
Award medallion, trophy, sculpture, or other tangible memento of the occasion that has utility and/or artistic merit and a commercial value in excess of \$200	\$	\$
Awards ceremony dinner, reception, and/or entertainment	\$	\$
Travel expenses for meals, lodging, and/or transportation provided in-kind or through cost reimbursement	\$	\$
Other items or benefits provided (describe in the space below) Description:	\$	\$
TOTAL:	\$	\$

Additional Award Descriptions (if any):

Check the statements that apply in the sequence indicated. Include as attachments the selection criteria and any documentation supporting the application for approval. Review the notices in Page 4 of this form. Sign and date the form in the space provided.

- 1. The gift(s) described above, that is/are being offered to the employee and/or family members, constitute(s) a bona fide award or is/are incident to a bona fide award that is given to the employee for meritorious public service or achievement.**

If this statement is correct, describe in the space provided the citation or other basis for the award, then go to Statement 2.

Award citation:

If this statement is not correct, the award may not be approved.

- 2. This award is not being offered by an entity that has interests, or an association or organization the majority of whose members have interests, that may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's official duties.**

If this statement is correct, go to Statement 3.

If this statement is not correct, the award may not be approved.

- 3. This award is not a cash award and has a market value of less than or equal to \$200.**

If this statement is correct, the award may be accepted without a written determination made by an agency ethics official, provided that Statements 5 and 6 are correct. Skip Statement 4.

If this statement is not correct, go to Statement 4.

- 4. This award has a market value of more than \$200 or is an award of cash or investment interests.**

If this statement is correct, the award may be approved only upon a written determination by an agency ethics official that the award is a part of an established program of recognition under which:

- a. The award has been made on a regular basis or is funded to ensure its continuity.
- b. The award recipients have been chosen pursuant to written guidelines or by a selection committee.

Check the statements that apply. If both Statements 4.a. and 4.b. are correct, go to Statement 5. If neither statement or only one statement is correct, the award may not be approved.

- 5. The employee has not solicited the award or accepted the gifts incident thereto in return for being influenced in the performance of an official act.**

If this statement is correct, then go to Statement 6.

If this statement is not correct, the award may not be approved.

- 6. The employee has not accepted gifts, including awards, from the same or different sources on a basis so frequent that a reasonable person would be led to believe that the employee is using the employee's official position for private gain.**

If this statement is correct, the award may be approved.

If this statement is not correct, the award may not be approved.

PART III: CERTIFICATION/RECOMMENDATION

EMPLOYEE'S CERTIFICATION AND SIGNATURE

*I request permission to accept the award honor and the associated gifts as described above. **Disqualification Requirement:** I understand that I am recused (disqualified) immediately from all official matters involving or that could affect the awarding organization. If the award is approved, my recusal from matters involving the award donor remains in effect for one year following the date I receive the award and I will not participate in any official matters involving the award donor organization without prior authorization from my Agency/Area Ethics Advisor.*

Employee's Signature:

Date:

SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

The employee has no recent, current or pending official matters with or that can affect the non-Federal organization or a majority of its members. If the award is approved, I will accept responsibility for all official matters from which the employee is recused due to the receipt of this award.

Recommend Approval

Do Not Recommend Approval

Supervisor's Signature:

Title:

AGENCY/AREA ETHICS OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION

Based on my review of the above statements and supporting documentation supplied by the employee, this constitutes my determination pursuant to 5 C.F.R. 2635.204(d), that the employee's request is:

Approved as requested

Disapproved

Approved with the following conditions:

Signature:

Title:

USDA OFFICE OF ETHICS - CONCURRENCE

Concur

Do not Concur for this reason:

Signature:

Title:

NOTICES

RESTRICTIONS ON CERTAIN EMPLOYEES

Pursuant to Sections 4941 and 4946 of Title 26 of the U.S. Code, awards and other payments received from private foundations, as defined under Section 509 of the Internal Revenue Code, may be prohibited for Presidential appointees, Schedule C employees, or other individuals compensated at pay levels at or above 120% of the rate of basic pay for Grade 15, Step 1, of the General Schedule, unless the recipients of the award are selected from the general public and consideration is not confined to government employees.

AGENCY GIFT ACCEPTANCE

If approval is obtained in advance, tangible items intended for display at and retention by the USDA that are accepted on behalf of the employee's component pursuant to an applicable agency gift acceptance authority statute are not reportable as personal gifts on the OGE-278. Employees should consult their employing office, ascertain the availability of this option, and comply with applicable procedures. Travel reimbursement authorities contained in Section 1353 of Title 31 of the U.S. Code, as implemented by Part 304-1 of Title 41 of the Code of Federal Regulations, permit the Department to accept where appropriate, travel costs tendered by non-federal sources in connection with the recognition of federal employees for meritorious public service that is related to official duties.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

Awards, including cash, cash equivalents, meals, lodging, transportation, reimbursements, entertainment, free attendance, or other benefits incident thereto, received for the personal use, disposition, or retention by the employee valued individually in excess of \$150 and which aggregate \$390 (as of January 2017) or more must be disclosed by employees who file a financial disclosure report. Incumbent and termination filers of the OGE-278 Public Financial Disclosure Report include this information on Schedule B, Part II filers include these items in Part IV. (Note that the reporting threshold is determined every 3 years; check the financial disclosure requirements for the current amount.) Travel funds accepted by the agency under the sponsored travel regulations are not reported as personal gifts on the OGE-278 or on the OGE-450.

TAX CONSEQUENCES

Award recipients should consult their personal attorney, accountant, or other financial advisor concerning the treatment of awards and the benefits incident thereto for tax purposes. Ethics officials and government attorneys do not provide tax or other personal financial advice to government employees. Note that, pursuant to section 4941 and 4946 of Title 26 of the U.S. Code, awards and other payments received from private foundations, as defined under Section 509 of the Internal Revenue Code, may be prohibited for Presidential appointees, Schedule C employees, or other individuals compensated at pay levels at or above the lowest rate of basic pay for the Senior Executive Service under section 5382 of Title 5, United States Code, unless the recipients of the award are selected from the general public and consideration is not confined to government employees.

CERTIFICATION

The signature of the employee on this form certifies that the statements made and information provided on this form are true, complete, and correct to the best of the individual's knowledge. Failure to provide the requested information will result in the denial of the request for approval. Falsification of information required to be reported for this purpose may subject the employee to disciplinary action by the employing agency or other appropriate authority.

WHERE TO SUBMIT YOUR FORM

Once the employee completes the form, it should be sent to their immediate supervisor for review and recommendation then forwarded to their appropriate Agency/Area Ethics Advisor* (see Note, below). A list of Agency Ethics contacts is available on the USDA Office of Ethics website at: <https://www.ethics.usda.gov/advisor.htm>

Once the form is signed by the Agency/Area Ethics Advisor, with concurrence by the USDA Office of Ethics, the requesting employee will be given a copy of the form while the original is maintained in the USDA Office of Ethics for a period of 6 years.

***Note:** Employees who are in the SES, SL, ST or SSTS pay plans should instead submit this form to the USDA Office of Ethics – HQ at DAEO.ethics@oe.usda.gov