



Ames Policy Directive

APD 3451.1

Effective Date: October 26, 2021

Expiration Date: May 26, 2026

COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY

Subject: Ames Incentive Awards and Recognition Program

Responsible Office: Code H / California Human Resources Office

CHANGE LOG

Status [Baseline /Revision /Cancelled]	Document Revision	Date of Change	Description
Revision	1	4/1/2001	Document Revised to reflect Center Policy
Revision	2	4/1/2003	OPR made revision to content
Revision	3	8/22/2008	OPR revised to current Center policy
Revision	4	12/12/2016	Update formatting
Revision	5	10/26/2021	Remove Form ARC 103; state that appropriated funds may not be spent on awards for contractors or contractor employees; and administrative edits.

1. POLICY

- a. This Ames Research Center (ARC) policy directive establishes Ames-specific policies, responsibilities, and procedures for the Incentive Awards Program.
- b. The Ames Incentive Awards Program improves government operations through incentives and rewards. It promotes innovation and motivates employees to increase productivity. When criteria for awards programs are met, employees, individually, or in groups, regardless of grade or occupational area, are promptly recognized and rewarded for their inventions, suggestions, accomplishments, or other personal efforts that contribute to increased productivity.
- c. All monetary components of the awards identified below are subject to annual availability of and/or constraints on appropriated funds.

2. APPLICABILITY

- a. This APD is applicable to ARC and associated facilities
- b. This APD applies to civil servants at ARC.
- c. In this directive, all mandatory actions (i.e., requirements) are denoted by statements containing the term "shall." The terms "may" or "can" denote discretionary privilege or permission, "should" denotes a good practice and is recommended, but not required, "will" denotes an expected outcome, and "are/is" denote descriptive material.
- d. In this directive, all document citations are assumed to be the latest version unless otherwise noted.
- e. Awards for patentable inventions and for scientific and technical contributions are established as separate programs outside of the Ames Incentive Awards Program. Center and NASA procedures for these programs are described in 5 CFR pt. 451.

3. AUTHORITY

- a. Awards, 5 CFR pt. 451
- b. NPR 3451.1, NASA Awards and Recognition Program

4. APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS AND FORMS

None.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

- a. **The Center Director** is responsible for ensuring that the Ames Incentive Awards Program supports and enhances the Center's goals and meets employee recognition needs.
- b. **Managers** are responsible for:
 - (1) Using awards as an integral part of supervision and management. Since motivation is complex and personal, supervisors should tailor the awards program to meet the specific conditions and needs of their organization.
 - (2) Matching the award to the person based on an employee's preference.

- (3) Matching the award to the achievement, customizing the award, and selecting the amount based on the significance of the accomplishment.
- (4) Being timely.

c. **The Ames Incentive Awards Program Manager** is responsible for:

- (1) Advising and providing guidance to Center management on the status of the program.
- (2) Acting as Ames representative to other NASA Centers, Government agencies, and private industry about the Ames Incentive Awards Program.
- (3) Coordinating the Center's official recognition events (e.g., ceremonies, astronaut visits, presentations, etc.).
- (4) Directing the Center's response to nomination calls (both externally and internally), evaluating nomination criteria against submittals, and ensuring compliance with deadlines and requests by NASA Headquarters and/or the sponsoring organizations.
- (5) Maintaining a historical database of awards received by Ames employees.
- (6) Maintaining all required awards records and documentation and responding to data calls and requests for reports.
- (7) Providing guidance to managers and supervisors on appropriate options for recognizing and awarding employees.

6. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

None.

7. MEASUREMENT/VERIFICATION

- a. Verification of conformance to requirements in this directive are measured through Center and Responsible Organizational management reviews, self-assessments, and subsequent analysis and reports of conformance to requirements, as well as periodic internal audits.
- b. The Human Capital Office conducts self-assessment reviews of the award function at least every three years. A random sample of various types of awards actions is reviewed for accuracy; corrections made; best practices noted; and a report given to the Human Capital Officer.

8. CANCELLATION

- a. APD 3451.1, Ames Incentive Awards and Recognition Program, dated December 12, 2016.
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Eugene Tu
Director

DISTRIBUTION:

Internal and external distribution.

ATTACHMENT A. AWARD PROGRAM TYPES

A.1 Ames Incentive Awards Program

A.1.1 Awards may be either monetary or non-monetary, and recognition may be given at the Center level, NASA-wide level, or at the Federal government level.

A.1.2 Monetary awards may be granted to civil service (part-time, full-time, temporary, and permanent) employees, or groups of civil service employees, who deserve special recognition for their contributions or accomplishments.

A.1.3 Non-monetary awards, such as medals, certificates, plaques, photos, pins, etc., may be granted to both civil service and non-government employees. Appropriated funds may not be spent on awards for contractors or contractor employees.

A.1.4 Time-Off Awards may be granted to civil service employees for accomplishments or other personal efforts that contribute to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations.

A.1.5 Center Sponsored Awards include the H. Julian Allen Award, Ames Honor Awards, Suggestion Award, Ames Fellow and Ames Associate Fellow Program.

A.2 Monetary Awards

A.2.1 Monetary awards may be granted to individual civil service (part-time, full-time, temporary, and permanent) employees, or groups of civil service employees, who deserve special recognition for their contributions or performance. All award documentation will be submitted and processed through the NASA Automated Award System (NAAS). Types of awards include:

a. Performance Awards: An employee may be rewarded with a lump-sum cash award or a Time-Off Award (or a combination of both) based on an employee's performance rating. An employee may receive only one performance award in a performance year. The monetary value of the award is determined by the recommending official but may not exceed 10% of the employee's annual base salary. A copy of the completed and signed performance appraisal must be documented in the Standard Performance Appraisal Communication Environment (SPACE) system.

b. Superior Accomplishment Awards: An award that is given in recognition of an important, identifiable contribution of a non-recurring nature that is outside of the employee's performance plan, exceeds expectations, and is of major significance. The award amounts may range from \$750 - \$10,000.

c. Spotlight Award: In recognition of a specific act performed beyond the call of duty, this award is intended to quickly recognize one-time and short-term efforts by employees and to provide immediate recognition. The award amounts may range from \$150-\$750.

d. Group Achievement Award: Two or more employees involved in a significant accomplishment that is the result of teamwork, rather than the efforts of a single person, are recognized. All employees contributing to the accomplishment share the award, which may be paid in equal shares or to each employee in proportion to the contribution. The award amount for each individual in the group may range from \$150 - \$10,000.

A.2.2 Monetary award approvals in NAAS are:

- a. Division Chiefs have authority to approve up to \$1,500.
- b. Organizational Directors have authority to approve up to \$3,000.
- c. Center Director has authority to approve up to \$10,000.

A.2.3 Approver is one management level above the reviewer.

A.3 Time-Off Award Program

A.3.1 A Time-Off Award is an excused absence granted to an employee without a charge to leave or a loss of pay. A Time-Off Award is intended to recognize superior accomplishments or other personal efforts that contribute to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations. Primarily, intended to be used to recognize an employee contribution that is of a one-time, non-recurring nature.

a. A Time-Off Award may be granted in amounts of four (4) to forty (40) hours for a single contribution. An employee may be granted up to a total of eighty (80) hours of time-off during a leave year. Time-Off Award approvals in NAAS are:

- (1) Branch Chiefs have authority to approve up to 1 day (8 hours)
- (2) Division Chiefs have authority to approve up to 3 days (24 hours)
- (3) Center Director has authority to approve up to 5 days (40 hours)

b. Time-Off Award leave must be scheduled through WebTADS and receive approval from their supervisor. When recording Time-Off Awards, the "TOA" code is utilized.

- (1) A Time-Off Award cannot be transferred if an employee transfers to another Federal agency.
- (2) A Time-Off Award is not converted to a cash payment under any circumstances.
- (3) If illness occurs during time-off leave, sick leave may be granted.
- (4) Time-Off Awards are not transferred to leave recipients under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program.
- (5) Time-Off Awards are not substituted for overtime work that should be directly compensated through paid overtime or compensation.

A.3.2 Since the Time-Off Award is an excused absence, the scheduling and use of such time is subject to approval by the employee's immediate supervisor, with consideration given to factors such as impact on organization workload and productivity. All award documentation will be submitted and processed through the NAAS.

A.3.3 If an employee is outside of the recommending official's organization, the recommending official seeks concurrence with the employee's immediate supervisor prior to approving the Time-Off Award.

A.4 Center Sponsored Award Programs

A.4.1 Ames Honor Awards:

- a. Annually, the Center solicits nominations from all civil service staff.
- b. The nominations in specific award categories are detailed in a memorandum. They are reviewed by a peer review committee comprised of a cross-section of employees from each organization, including the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity and the Union, to make the final selections (with concurrence by the Center Director).
- c. Civil service awardees receive certificates and a cash award at the annual ceremony. Non-government awardees receive a non-monetary memento at the same ceremony.

Note: See A.1.3 for restrictions on appropriated funds.

A.4.2 Suggestion Awards:

- a. Recognizes a constructive proposal, submitted by one or more employees, that directly contributes to tangible costs savings, productivity, and efficiency, or directly increases effectiveness in carrying out Government or NASA operations.
- b. Award amounts vary.

A.4.3 H. Julian Allen Awards:

- a. Presented annually to the author(s) of a scientific or engineering paper of outstanding technical merit and significance.
- b. A peer-review committee established by the Chief Scientist reviews nominations. The Chief Scientist will invite interested Ames employees to nominate a paper.
- c. Awardees typically receive cash honorarium of \$10,000, a plaque, and their name added to the H. Julian Allen Award Plaque.
- d. Awardees will also give a lecture to the Center based on the paper for which they are nominated.

A.4.3.1 Qualifications for H. Julian Allen Award Nominations:

- a. Must be an ARC civil service employee;
- b. Be the senior author of the paper;
- c. The majority of the work must have been done at Ames.
 - (1) The impact of the research reported in the paper must have been realized within 2-3 years preceding the nomination; and
 - (2) The paper must have passed through a peer review.

A.4.4 The Ames Fellow:

- a. The Ames Fellow Program is designed to identify and acknowledge a very small number of Ames employees for their international reputation of scientific or engineering excellence and their contributions to NASA and the Center.
- b. The rank of Fellow is considered the highest recognition that Ames can bestow upon one of its own employees. It is intended that an Ames Fellow be a civil servant currently employed at Ames by NASA:

(1) In order to be considered for the honor, an individual must have no less than ten (10) years professional-level civil service employment at Ames, although the 10 years need not be continuous. Contractor, NRC, grantee, or similar non-civil service experience will not be counted toward the 10 years required. Any time spent at a non-professional or assistant-level work, such as technician, staff or technical assistant, wage grade, or clerical, will not be counted toward the 10 years required, although supervisory time will be counted.

(2) The award will be granted to an Ames civil servant who has an international reputation for outstanding research and who has made significant and innovative contributions in the fields of science or engineering.

- c. Approximately every five (5) years, the Chief Scientist will issue a call for nominations.
- d. Ames Fellows receive special honors, which include a formal reception and a special plaque.
- e. A portrait of the new Fellow will be hung next to previous Ames Fellow Awardees.
- f. In addition, while maintaining active employment at Ames, the Ames Fellow will typically be tendered the following privileges for a period of 5 years:

(1) A budget of \$5,000 per annum for travel to technical meetings.

(2) A budget of \$30,000 per annum toward support of personal aerospace research.

(3) Free choice of research subjects with the following reservation: If the supervisor cannot accomplish the research commitments without the services of an Ames Fellow, the extent to which this privilege can be enjoyed will be determined by negotiation among the Ames Fellow, the supervisor, and the Center Director.

A.4.4.1 Ames Associate Fellows:

- a. Every two years the Office of the Chief Scientist selects individuals as Ames Associate Fellows. This is an honorary designation to recognize a staff member's distinguished scientific/engineering research achievement(s) of a non-management nature in the 3 to 5 years preceding nomination.
- b. The number of Ames Associate Fellows selected per year will not exceed two (2), and their tenure is 2 years.
- c. In order to be considered for the honor, an individual must have no less than 5 years of professional-level civil service employment at Ames.
- d. Ames researchers and engineers who do not hold a management or non-research discipline position are eligible.
- e. The Ames Associate Fellowship typically carries a cash honorarium of \$4,000 and discretionary research budget of \$40,000 and a travel budget of \$2,500 distributed over a period of two years.

A.4.5 Ames Early Career Researcher Award:

- a. Ames Early Career Researcher Award recognizes recipients that demonstrate exceptional scientific or engineering potential for leadership through outstanding research and the integration of research within the context of the mission of their organizations.

- b. All nominations must be submitted to the Office of the Chief Scientist, which will arrange a peer-review committee to evaluate the technical and scientific merit of the paper.
- c. The award will be granted to an Ames civil servant who is within five (5) years of the start of their research career. It will not be granted to anyone in a non-research discipline or anyone in a management position.
- d. Awardees will receive a personal cash award of \$2,500 and a \$2,500 travel budget.