

Rule # 3-70

Employee Recognition Awards

§§:

[3-70-010 Purpose](#)

[3-70-020 Overview](#)

[3-70-030 Definitions](#)

[3-70-040 Informal Recognition Awards](#)

[3-70-050 Eligibility for Formal Recognition Awards](#)

[3-70-060 Types of Formal Recognition Awards](#)

[3-70-070 Selection Method for Employee Recognition Rewards](#)

[3-70-080 Other Types of Employee Recognition](#)

[3-70-090 Taxing of Awards](#)

§ 3-70-010 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to emphasize the importance of recognizing employee achievements and accomplishments that demonstrate the overall values of Multnomah County and encourage employees to make a performance difference either individually or through teams. The awards are intended to promote and reward the extraordinary accomplishments and contributions of employees in ways separate from the performance review process.

§ 3-70-020 Overview

- A. Multnomah County supports the recognition of outstanding employee contributions at all organizational levels. Departments are encouraged to develop their own employee recognition programs to complement Countywide programs. Activities for such departmental recognition programs are especially encouraged during Public Service Recognition week held each year in May, but can occur throughout the year.
- B. The objectives of Multnomah County's Employee Recognition Award policy are to:
 - 1. Recognize and promote positive behaviors that support individual, work group, unit, team, department, and County goals and objectives;
 - 2. Provide timely recognition to employees either as planned or immediate recognition;
 - 3. Provide both individual and team recognition and rewards;
 - 4. Provide for both manager and employee initiated recognition and rewards;
 - 5. Improve employee engagement and quality of work; and
 - 6. Improve customer service.

§ 3-70-030 Definitions

- **Classified Service Employee:** An employee who holds a position that is represented by a collective bargaining unit or a position designated as management service, but does not include employees in positions designated as executive service, temporary, limited duration, or employees who work on call or less than half time.
- **Executive Service Employee:** An employee, as defined in MCPR § 1-10-040, who is at-will and not represented by a collective bargaining unit. Executive service employees are typically employees at the Department Director, Deputy Director, and senior manager level.
- **Formal Recognition:** Can include awards and celebration events for achievements and service, at which eligible employees can participate and receive recognition. Formal recognition often has certain policy and legal requirements.
- **Informal Recognition:** Usually given by an employee's manager, acknowledges the employee's contribution without applying formal criteria. It can take a variety of forms, has few restrictions, and often includes a low-cost, tangible gesture of appreciation or congratulations.
- **Monetary Awards:** An award paid by any negotiable instrument (cash, check, money order and direct deposit); any item that can be readily converted to cash, such as savings bonds or refundable gift certificates; or gift cards/certificates for any amount.
- **Non-monetary Awards:** Awards that include meals, work related conferences or development opportunities, plaques, trophies, desk items, cups and mugs, and personal items of clothing such as caps, shirts, and sweatshirts.
- **Recognition Leave:** Additional day(s) of leave awarded that may be used for personal purposes. Recognition Leave is only available to be awarded to regular status management and executive service employees and is awarded in accordance with MCPR § 4-30-040(A)(4).
- **Regular Status Position:** All positions that are not otherwise classified as temporary, on-call, or limited duration.

§ 3-70-040 Informal Recognition Awards

- A. Informal Recognition Awards are tools for managers and supervisors to reward excellent individual or team departmental performance (e.g., completion of a project or event, exceptional teamwork, excellent customer service, positive attitudes, etc.) in a timely manner. The tools available for immediate recognition are non-monetary awards, monetary awards, and/or recognition leave for eligible management and executive service employees.

- B. Departments may procure monetary and non-monetary Awards and items to be used for informal employee recognition in accordance with [Administrative Procedure FIN-4](#), Miscellaneous Expense Reimbursements, as well as state ethics rules described in [ORS 244.020 and 244.040](#).
- C. Monetary and non-monetary awards must be approved by the Department Director and the reasons for giving the award must appear prudent to the public. An award may not exceed an aggregate total of fifty dollars (\$50) per person in a calendar year unless an exception is granted in writing by the County's Chief Financial Officer. All exceptions to the fifty dollar (\$50) limitation must be approved prior to the award being given to the employee.
- D. Monetary awards must be reported to Central Payroll at the time of the award in compliance with [FIN-17, Taxation of Fringe Benefits](#).
- E. Volunteers are not eligible for monetary awards.

§ 3-70-050 Eligibility For Formal Recognition Awards

- A. Employees who hold classified service status and limited duration employees are eligible for Formal Recognition awards.
- B. Temporary and on-call employees are only eligible for Formal Recognition if included as part of a team with classified status employees.
- C. Volunteers are not eligible for Formal Recognition Awards.
- D. Executive service employees are eligible individually for the Chair's Excellence Award and in other categories of Formal Recognition when included as part of a team with classified status employees.
- E. Employees are generally not eligible if they have had corrective action or significant performance problems within the previous twenty-four (24) months of being nominated for a Formal Recognition Award. Department HR Managers are responsible for determining eligibility.

§ 3-70-060 Types of Formal Recognition Awards

- A. Superior Public Service Award – Internal and External
 - 1. Purpose: To promote and recognize individual employees for outstanding customer and public service.
 - 2. Internal Award Criteria: May include showing initiative in providing excellent service to other County employees by being responsive to requests for services and/or improving procedures to enhance the efficient delivery of services; and providing customer friendly processes with commitment and professionalism.

The employee may demonstrate judgment and communication skills when dealing with internal customers under a variety of situations including demanding and difficult circumstances. The efforts of this employee may generate lasting or significant positive customer relations.

3. External Award Criteria: The activity being recognized must have been performed in a direct service role for a citizen or organization of the greater Multnomah County community. The outcome of the activity must have been demonstrable excellent customer service resulting in a notably satisfied and benefited external customer.

B. Outstanding Team Achievements Award

1. Purpose: To promote and recognize members of work teams that add significant value to the organization.
2. Criteria: The accomplishments and contributions of the team shall reflect efforts made above and beyond normal work duties or performance expectations of a team. Examples of achievements that warrant an Outstanding Achievement Award include, but are not limited to: completing a major project significantly under budget or before the deadline under extraordinary time pressure; receiving repeated recognition by internal or external customers for extraordinary service; contributing to a one-time, outstanding effort, which benefited the work unit or the County; and specific accomplishments that improve internal processes, saving time or money.

C. Employee Innovation Award

1. Purpose: To foster employee innovations to improve work processes, which result in monetary savings or significant operational efficiencies. The award is primarily intended for individual employees rather than teams, but could include multiple employees who work together on cross functional teams or a group of employees working together to champion the innovation.
2. Criteria: Employees who suggest innovations that improve the quality of County operations and services are eligible. Employees must also substantially contribute to the implementation of the innovation or exercise leadership in championing the necessary change for the innovation to occur.

D. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award

1. Purpose: To recognize employees and teams that promote inclusiveness and champion diversity and equity in the community or within the County organization.

2. Criteria: The award may go to employees who demonstrate excellence in creating or advancing projects, policies or programs that model the County's core values related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This could include demonstrating cultural humility, engaging diverse communities and partners in equitable service outcomes, working internally to help provide inclusive services, or implementing practices to promote safety, trust, and belonging among staff and those they serve..

E. Sustainability Award

1. Purpose: To recognize employee and team efforts to make Multnomah County's vision of attaining an equitable, livable, resilient, and low-carbon future possible through programs, policies, or actions.
2. Criteria: The award may go to employees who implement a new approach, project, or program that addresses the root causes of environmental, social or economic inequities, while improving outcomes for the people Multnomah County serves or for the way Multnomah County does business.

F. Chair's Excellence Award

1. Purpose: To provide a mechanism for the County Chair to select employees to be recognized for their outstanding contributions that embody the County's values related to public engagement and partnerships, accountability, integrity, safety, or any other substantial benefit provided to the County and its citizens.
2. Criteria: The award may go to employees who effectively engage communities and partners in successful collaborative efforts, to employees who make a demonstrable and positive difference in people's lives, or to employees who work internally to create or manage projects, policies, or programs that bring various parts of the County together to improve processes, increase efficiency, develop the County's workforce, or produce other value to the County. As referenced in § 3-70-050, employees who hold a regular status position in executive service and classified service positions are eligible for the Chair's Excellence Award.

§ 3-70-070 Selection Method for Formal Employee Recognition Rewards

A. Employee Awards Selection Committee

1. The Employee Awards Selection Committee operates under the guidelines of a Charter, under sponsorship of the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Human Resources Officer.
2. A member of Central Human Resources will be assigned to the committee as a Project Organizer to provide support and assist with coordination of the awards process.

3. The committee is comprised of two (2) regular status employees from each Department and represents a cross-section of bargaining unit members and management.
4. Central Human Resources will work with Department Directors and the appropriate elected officials to appoint members to serve on the committee. Members will serve for two (2) years with staggered terms when possible.
5. The Project Organizer will work with committee members to appoint a volunteer for the role of Committee Chair. The Committee Chair will facilitate meetings and work with the Project Organizer to ensure the committee remains within objectives and scope.

B. Nominations

1. All staff members and citizens of Multnomah County are encouraged to submit nominations for formal Employee Recognition Awards through the nomination forms found on the Employee Recognition intranet and web pages. Nomination forms are available throughout the year. All eligible nominations will be forwarded to the Employee Recognition Committee for consideration.
2. An employee who does not wish to be formally recognized can withdraw their name from any nomination.

C. Selection of Award Recipients

1. The Employee Awards Selection Committee will consider all eligible employees nominated for a Formal Recognition Award and will determine which employees receive the awards and the number of awards per category to be given each year.
2. Individual employees or teams who have won a Formal Recognition Award in the prior three (3) years would not be eligible for an award for the same or significantly similar work. Their nomination will still be accepted and acknowledged, but will not be evaluated and scored. Teams or individuals nominated for work that is substantially different from their previous winning nomination would be considered.
3. Multiple nominations that are submitted with exactly the same content (copy and pasted) will be considered one nomination for the purposes of evaluation and scoring.
4. All employees who accept their nomination will receive a certificate recognizing their accomplishments, regardless of whether they are selected for a Formal Recognition Award, in order to share their extraordinary efforts with others.

5. Although employees may be nominated for specific Formal Recognition Awards, the Employee Awards Selection Committee has the discretion to give an employee an award in a different category than the employee was nominated for if the committee believes another category better recognizes the employee's efforts.
 6. The Employee Awards Selection Committee may elect to recognize a nomination, regardless of category, with the Committee's Choice Award. The selection will be made based upon the Committee's determination that the submission outstandingly exemplifies the County's mission, vision and values.
- D. Timing: On an annual basis, the following timelines will be used when granting Employee Recognition Awards:
1. **January and February:** There will be an announcement requesting nominations for Employee Recognitions Awards, although nominations are accepted year round.
 2. **March:** The Employee Awards Selection Committee will review the nominations for Employee Recognition Awards. Nominees will be announced publicly in March or early April.
 3. **April:** Awardees will be notified that they are receiving an award and be invited to the awards ceremony.
 4. **May:** Awards ceremony will be held whereby employees receiving Recognition Awards will be honored.
- E. Annual Review: On an annual basis, Central Human Resources will review the employee recognition awards process with the Department Directors to discuss whether the program objectives are being met and make process improvement as needed.

§ 3-70-080 Other Types of Employee Recognition

- A. Honoring Separating/Retiring Employees: Departments may procure items to provide recognition to employees for their contribution and years of service to the County in accordance with [Administrative Procedure FIN-4](#) as well as state ethics rules as described in [ORS 244.020 and 244.040](#).
- B. Years of Service Awards
1. The County will recognize employees for each five (5) year period of service. Whenever possible, employees will be recognized on, or shortly following, their Continuous Service Date.

2. Employees with five (5) and ten (10) years of service will be recognized by their department at an appropriate recognition event. Service awards will be presented to employees by the highest level of supervision practicable.
3. Employees with fifteen (15) or more years of service will be recognized by the Board of County Commissioners at an annual event.
4. The County may utilize letters of appreciation, certificates of merit and other types of recognition which will add a personalized dimension to the presentation. The utilization of press coverage and other appropriate publicity is encouraged.
5. For purposes of this rule, the County will calculate the Continuous Service Date using the service award date. Time in temporary status that is continuous and contiguous to service in regular status will count towards the Continuous Service Date. On-call time will not count towards the Continuous Service Date. Time will be adjusted for leaves of absence without pay of six (6) months or more and separation from County employment of six (6) months or more. The calculation of the Continuous Service Date is for the purpose of service awards only, and is unrelated to and does not affect an employee's seniority or service dates for any other purposes or as provided for elsewhere in these rules or applicable collective bargaining agreements, including but not limited to leave accrual, seniority for purposes of layoff or bumping, or any other benefits, privileges or rights tied to service time.
6. Central HR is authorized to establish and/or modify procedures necessary to implement and monitor this program to carry out the intent of the Chair.

§ 3-70-090 Taxing of Awards

- A. Monetary Awards: All monetary awards, including gift cards and gift certificates, for any amount, shall be subject to federal, state and FICA withholding, and as taxable income, shall be reported on an employee's W-2 form, in accordance with FIN-17. Employees may reject any monetary award so as to avoid receiving taxable income.
- B. Non-monetary Awards: The Payroll Division is responsible for determining whether non-monetary awards are taxable, in accordance with IRS guidelines.
- C. Recognition Leave: Any recognition leave awarded to an employee in accordance with MCPR § 4-30-040(A)(4) is considered income and will be subject to federal, state and FICA taxes when used by the employee. If the leave is not used by the end of the fiscal year or prior to separation, it is forfeited and not taxed as income.

REFERENCES

MCPR 4-30 Leaves: Non-Represented Employees

Personnel Rule 3-70 final 2024

[FIN-4, Miscellaneous Expense Reimbursements](#)

[FIN-17, Taxation of Fringe Benefits](#)

[ORS 244.020 and 244.040](#)