

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Human Services/Personnel Policy #803

INCENTIVE PAY AND MERITORIOUS AWARDS

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REFERENCES: O.C.G.A. 45-21-1, et. seq.
Rules of the State Personnel Board, Incentive Compensation and Awards Programs

The Department supports the use of incentive pay and meritorious awards as tools for achievement of strategic objectives. Incentive pay plans provide motivation for employees to work to achieve “stretch” goals, by setting forth both the goal and the potential financial award at the outset of the plan period. Meritorious awards provide recognition for particularly extraordinary achievements that are unanticipated and that further the achievement of strategic objectives. Incentive pay may also be used in connection with hiring for critical, hard-to-fill vacancies in accordance with this policy.

(Section A)

- DEFINITIONS:**
1. Incentive payment means a one-time lump sum payment based on achievement of pre-determined goals, which does not become part of base salary.
 2. Meritorious award payment means a one-time lump sum payment based on extraordinary achievement, which does not become part of base salary.

(Section B)

- INCENTIVE
COMPENSATION
PLANS:**
1. Incentive compensation plans may be enterprise-wide, or may be applicable within a Division or Office, an appropriate organizational unit, or a specific project.
 2. Enterprise-wide incentive compensation plans must be approved by the Commissioner.
 3. Division or Office incentive compensation plans must be approved by the Division or Office Director, following consultation with the Office of Human Resource Management and Development (OHRMD).
 4. All incentive compensation plans must be certified by the Commissioner of the State Personnel Administration and the Director of the Office of Planning and Budget, and must specify:
 - 4.1 Eligible positions or jobs;
 - 4.2 Performance criteria for awards; and
 - 4.3 The amount to be awarded each employee who meets the specified criteria.

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5. Documentation of the basis for each incentive payment shall be provided prior to the payment of an incentive pay award, and shall be maintained in the receiving employee's official personnel file.

(Section C)

**MERITORIOUS
AWARDS:**

1. The Department's meritorious award program shall be used to recognize individual employees or teams of employees who demonstrate extraordinary customer service by:
 - 1.1 Performing service or an act or acts of achievement which particularly enhance the public perception of state government or the Department;
 - 1.2 Performing acts of heroism above and beyond the call of duty;
 - 1.3 Performing special, extraordinary acts or service in the public interest that go beyond the employee's assigned responsibilities;
or
 - 1.4 Responding in an extraordinary manner to an unanticipated problem.
2. The Commissioner, Division and Office Directors or their designees shall make determinations concerning meritorious awards.
3. The amount of a meritorious award may not exceed \$5,000 and the award should be paid within 90 days of the service or act for which the award is made.
4. Each meritorious award shall be documented with a written description of the act or service for which the award is made. A copy of this documentation shall be maintained in the employee's official personnel file.

(Section D)

**HIRING
INCENTIVE
PAY:**

1. Hiring incentive pay of up to 5% of base salary may be provided to a new hire for a hard-to-fill, critical position which involves relocation of the selectee for the position. With the approval of the Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee, a hiring incentive of up to 10% may be awarded. A confirmation letter will be prepared to the recipient for each hiring incentive award, and such letter will be maintained in the employee's official personnel file.
2. A plan shall be maintained in the OHRMD listing the jobs for which hiring incentive pay is an option.

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3. In the event of a voluntary resignation by the employee during the initial twelve months of employment, the employee shall make repayment of the hiring incentive pay in accordance with the schedule set forth in the State Personnel Board Rules.

(Section E)
**REPORTING
AND
MONITORING:**

1. Divisions and Offices shall report all incentive pay and meritorious awards to the OHRMD prior to payment. Information reported shall include:
 - Name of employee
 - Amount of award
 - Reason for the award
 - Date or time period in which the award was earned
 - Proposed payment date
2. OHRMD shall monitor all payments made in accordance with this policy for compliance with the policy and the State Personnel Board Rules.
3. All payments made in accordance with this policy shall be documented with reference to an approved plan, in the case of incentive payments, or with reference to specific qualifying acts or service, in the case of a meritorious award.

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local Human Resource Office, or email DHS-Policies@dhr.state.ga.us.
