



U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio

Employee Recognition Policy

Effective: April 1, 2023

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to recognize outstanding achievement by employees, groups, and organizational units in the performance of their duties. The objectives of the employee recognition policy are: (1) to recognize exceptional performance or service, (2) to improve morale and inspire greater achievement, (3) to promote organizational identification and career commitment, (4) to encourage innovative thinking, and (5) to maximize efficiency within the judicial branch by rewarding superior accomplishments by an employee or group that result in significant short- and long-term benefits to the judiciary in terms of money, time, and employees. [Guide to Judiciary Policy, Volume 12, Chapter 8.](#)

II. Scope

This Policy applies to all current Southern District of Ohio (SDOH) employees (e.g., Chambers, the Office of Probation, the Office of Pretrial Services, and the Clerk's Office).

III. Policy and Procedures

Employee Recognition Policy Award Categories

- **Time Off Award**

- A time off award is an excused absence with pay (Time Off Award Taken). A time off award may be granted in increments of eight (8) hours and may not exceed 40 hours per award. An employee may receive more than one time off award per calendar year, but the aggregate award of time off may not exceed 80 hours per calendar year. Time off awards may be granted to an employee or a group of employees. Time off awards must be taken in one-hour increments. For those employees utilizing HRMIS Leave Tracking, employees are required to submit a request using the Time Reporting Code: TOT – Time Off Award Taken. Time approvers must certify the accuracy of the timesheets. Time off awards are not an entitlement and are requested of and approved by the Judicial Officer, the Chief Probation Officer, the Chief Pretrial Services Officer, and the Clerk of Court for their respective employees. Time off awards are processed by Human Resources as an RDE/Remote Data Entry in HRMIS. Time off awards are



available in HRMIS for use after the AO's Staffing Services Branch has processed the RDE action submitted. Time off awards do not expire. A time off award cannot be redeemed for cash, cannot be paid out at retirement or separation, and cannot be added to years of service for retirement calculations.

- **Special Service Awards**

- Special Service Awards (cash awards) must be funded from the Court's existing budget. Special Service Awards (cash awards) may be granted to current employees for job performance or special acts or service. Provided funding is available, awards less than \$2,000 may be awarded at the discretion of the Judicial Officer, Chief Probation Officer, or the Chief Pretrial Services Officer for their respective employees. The Clerk of Court will present to the Chief Judge suitability and amount of the award for consideration for the Clerk's Office employees. The Chief Judge, individually, may also determine suitability and the amount to be awarded. Written approval by the Chief Judge is required if an employee receives one or more cash awards (including "cash equivalent", gift cards, gift certificates, or savings bonds) cumulatively totaling \$2,000 or more in a calendar year. Cash awards (including "cash equivalents") may not exceed the calendar year limit of \$10,000. Cash award payments cannot be made to separated employees. Cash Awards (including "cash equivalents") are not an entitlement. A cash award (including "cash equivalents") is a taxable payment that is not included in base pay or used to calculate benefits.
- There may also exist occasions when a current employee of the Southern District of Ohio will receive a cash award (including "cash equivalent") from another Court/agency to recognize a significant contribution to that Court/agency.

- **Chief's Award**

- The Chief's Award allows the respective Court Unit Executive (CUE) to formally recognize an employee's service or contribution to the Court/agency which surpasses their normal duties. The service or contribution should be significant in time and benefit the Court/agency, as well as further the mission of the Court/agency. This award is initiated by the respective CUE and approved by the Chief Judge. The Chief Judge, individually, may also determine suitability and amount to be awarded. The maximum cash award (including "cash equivalents") is \$10,000 in a calendar year.



- **Informal Recognition Awards**

- Informal recognition awards are given to recognize performance which contributes to the mission of the Court but does not merit a larger award. [Merchandise awards may not exceed \\$100](#) in value per person per calendar year, except for the reasonable cost associated with engraving or other personalization of an honorary award. Examples include tote bags/travel cases, polo shirts, mugs, or vouchers redeemable for a wish list item from Amazon. If an employee receives an informal recognition award, they may elect to provide an Amazon wish list reflecting up to three items. Each item may be no more than \$33. One or more items may be selected from the Amazon wish list and awarded to the employee, not to exceed \$100 in a calendar year. Cash equivalent awards such as gift certificates or gift cards may also be awarded in accordance with AO and IRS regulations and must be reported as taxable income pursuant to the Guide to Judiciary Policy. Provided funding is available, the Judicial Officer, Chief Probation Officer, Chief Pretrial Services Officer, or Clerk of Court, will determine suitability and form of informal recognition to be awarded for their respective employees.

- **Service Recognition Pins, Certificates, and Ceremonies**

- Pins and certificates, in five-year increments, will be presented to employees who have completed five through 50 years of judiciary service within the calendar year. Employee recognition ceremonies will be held annually. The employee recognition ceremonies will be celebrated during the annual employee recognition ceremony luncheons, one celebration each city. The Court may use appropriated funds to use an [off-site facility](#) such as a restaurant or hotel banquet room for food and beverages (excluding alcohol) for an awards ceremony if such expenditures are for the purpose of enhancing an awards program and limited to reasonable amounts. The cost associated with procuring pins, certificates, and items associated with offering the luncheons is the responsibility of the Court. Food and beverage costs may not exceed the GSA-established locality-based allowances for subsistence expenses. For allowable cost of the meal appropriate at the time of the ceremony, see: [Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\)](#).
- The Administrative Office of the United States Courts recognizes employees who retire from the Judiciary. They receive a framed Retirement Testimonial Certificate which is signed by the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AO). Processing and preparation of this certificate is performed by the AO as part of the retirement process. The purchase of the frame is the responsibility of the Court.



- **Retired LEO Badges/Credentials**

- Probation or Pretrial Service Officers retiring or separating, in recognition of service to the judiciary, may be presented their badge and/or credentials encased in Lucite as honorary awards once the surplus badge and/or credential are rendered completely unusable. For those officers whose death occurs in the line of duty, the badge and/or credentials encased in Lucite may be presented to the officer's family. The cost associated with encasing the badge and/or credentials in Lucite is the responsibility of the Court.

Aggregate Cap

The aggregate pay for any court employee may not exceed the salary of a district court judge except in the case of a court employee to allow receipt of the full amount of a national judiciary award, such as the Director's Award. If the judiciary aggregate pay cap is exceeded to allow receipt of the full amount of national judiciary award, the statutory aggregate pay cap applies, which is Level I of the Executive Schedule. Any award exceeding this amount must be deferred and provided as a lump-sum payment at the beginning of the following year. [Guide to Judiciary Policy, Volume 12, Chapter 6.](#)

Judiciary Non-OHSD Court Employees

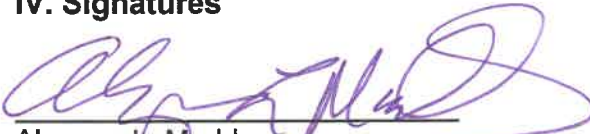
There may be occasions when a judiciary non-OHSD court employee has provided significant contributions to the Ohio Southern District Court where the Court elects to award the employee with any of the following awards: special service award ("including cash and/cash equivalent awards"), Chief's Award, an informal recognition award, and/or a certificate.


Required Documentation

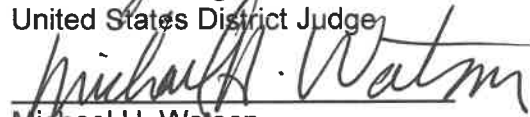
Approval documentation, which includes the request and award data, will be maintained for audit purposes.

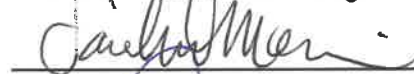


IV. Signatures



Algenon L. Marbley
Chief United States District Judge



Edmund A. Sargus, Jr.
United States District Judge


Michael H. Watson
United States District Judge



Sarah D. Morrison
United States District Judge



Douglas R. Cole
United States District Judge


Matthew W. McFarland
United States District Judge


Michael J. Newman
United States District Judge


Jeffery P. Hopkins
United States District Judge


James L. Graham
United States District Judge


Walter H. Rice
United States District Judge


Thomas M. Rose
United States District Judge



Susan J. Dlott
United States District Judge


Michael R. Barrett
United States District Judge


Timothy S. Black
United States District Judge


Richard W. Nagel
Clerk of Court


Melanie A. Furry
Chief U.S. Pretrial Services Officer


Mark R. Grawe
Chief U.S. Probation Officer