

Service Awards: Excellence in Service Program

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Purpose

The purpose of the Excellence in Service Program is to express appreciation for longstanding employees as the State recognizes continued dedicated service through service awards. This program celebrates length of service milestones. The Program is a partnership between the Office of State Human Resources, Correction Enterprises in the Department of Public Safety and the Museum of History in the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

The program provides:

- A tool for Management to recognize ongoing employee dedication and a means to reinforce, acknowledge and retain employee commitment during an employee's tenure with the State at pivotal milestones.
- Award choices which reflect employees' tastes, needs and lifestyles.

Covered Employees

Full-time or part-time (20 hours or more) employees are eligible for a Service Award.

Probationary, trainee, Time-limited, temporary and intermittent employees are not eligible for a Service Award.

Policy

The success of State government in providing services to meet the needs of North Carolina and its citizens is dependent on the efforts of State employees. These employees provide services in the fields of human services, education, transportation, crime control, law enforcement, and health, as well as many other special areas. It is, therefore, important for the State to have competent, committed and dedicated employees to provide effective and efficient services to and for the citizens of our State.

The statewide Excellence in Service Program recognizes employees when they reach career status, and at five years and then in increments of five years through retirement. The accompanying goals of Excellence in Service are to:

- Celebrate North Carolina's heritage, culture, symbols and craftsmen.
- Create and encourage efficiencies by operating the program within state government.
- Offer unique products that, for the most part, cannot be purchased outside of the Excellence in Service Awards Program.
- Offer products primarily made in North Carolina or, at a minimum, made in the United States of America.

Service Awards (continued)

Criteria for Service Awards

- Service awards shall be awarded to the employee by the agency who employs the individual when their milestone is reached.
- Employees who have worked in one or more state government agencies or other recognized public-sector systems, shall be recognized based on total state service at five years and each five-year milestone thereafter.
- Employees who are eligible to retire and have worked in one or more state government agencies or other recognized public-sector systems, shall be recognized based on creditable retirement service if a milestone has been reached. This is a one-time opportunity to be granted only when an employee is retiring.

Total State Service Defined

Total State Service is the time of full-time or part-time (20 hours or more) permanent, probationary or time-limited appointments, whether subject to or exempt from the State Human Resources Act.

If an employee so appointed is in pay status for one-half or more of the regularly scheduled workdays and holidays in a pay period or is on authorized military leave or workers' compensation leave, credit shall be given for the entire pay period.

Credit toward total State service shall also be given for the following:

- Employment with other governmental units which are not State agencies. (Example: county highway maintenance forces and Judicial Systems)
- Authorized military leave from any of the governmental units for which service credit is granted provided the employee is reinstated within the time limits outlined in the State Military Leave policies.
- Employment with the county Agricultural Extension Service, Community College system and the public school system of North Carolina, with the provision that a school year is equivalent to one full year.
- Employment with a local Mental Health, Public Health, Social Services or Emergency Management agency in North Carolina if such employment is subject to the State Human Resources Act.
- Employment with the General Assembly (except for participants in the Legislative Intern Program and pages). All of the time, both permanent and temporary, of the employees will be counted, and the full legislative terms of the members.

Creditable Retirement Service Defined

This type of service is the length of time an employee has made contributions to the State Retirement System. It is not calculated the same as Total State Service. Refer to the Retirement System handbooks for further information. This service time is used to determine eligibility for a retirement benefit and the amount of the retirement benefit.

Program Administration

Each agency is responsible for the administration of this program which shall, as a minimum, recognize employees' service beginning with the date they achieve career status and at five years and then in five-year increments thereafter.

Service Awards (continued)

Agency Procedures and Implementation

Each agency shall administer the Program to include:

- The establishment of the agency cutoff eligibility date,
- The identification of eligible employees as defined by the Office of State Human Resources.
- All employee service awards shall be ordered via E-Procurement where available. Agencies without E-Procurement access shall order through their service award coordinator using the Correction Enterprises website for reference.
- The determination of the time and method of presentation of the awards.

This program is designed to recognize State employees within the provisions of the State Human Resources Act. However, the program may be extended to employees exempt from this statute, as long as the agency administers the awards consistently, following the guidelines provided by the Office of State Human Resources.

Records

Each agency shall maintain records through Human Resources and use these records as the official employment history for eligible employees. Agency Human Resources Representatives must coordinate with the Retirement System to verify creditable retirement service to determine if an eligible retiree's service award milestone has been reached.

Funds

All purchasing of awards is dependent upon availability of agency funds. Any agency not having sufficient funds to finance the program shall notify the Office of State Human Resources. Employees whose agencies determine state funds are not available to provide a service award program will be eligible to purchase "service awards" with personal funds for themselves or for another eligible employee.

Selecting and Ordering Service Awards

The Office of State Human Resources and Correction Enterprises will provide detailed guidelines and procedures for selecting and ordering awards. This information is found in the Training manual that will be kept updated and may be downloaded using the following link:

<https://files.nc.gov/ncoshr/documents/files/ServiceAwardsTrainingManual20.pdf>
