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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Financial Officer
Assistant Secretary for Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

MEMORANDUM FOR Principal Human Resources Managers
FROM: William J. Fleming *WJ Fleming*
Director for Human Resources Management and
Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer
SUBJECT: Request for Gold and Silver Medal
Award Nominations

The Secretary recently invited Secretarial Officers and Heads of Operating Units to nominate employees for Gold and Silver Medals (see Attachment 1). This memorandum outlines the submission requirements and due date for this year's Honor Awards nominations using the Honor Awards Nomination System (HANS).

HANS is a secure web-based system for entering, editing, approving, and transmitting nominations. The system operates from the menu-driven HANS Main Menu. The bureau Incentive Awards Officers have been designated as HANS Bureau Administrators. In that role, they are responsible for granting HANS access to nominators and the approving officials (restricted to the Secretarial Officers and Heads of the Operating Units). Only a supervisor or manager may nominate an employee. HANS can be accessed at the following address:

<https://hr.eas.commerce.gov/HANS/Login/HansLogin.aspx>

Michael R. Osver, the Department's Incentive Awards Officer, has conducted training for the HANS Bureau Administrators. He is also available to conduct additional training or demonstrations of the system.

All nominations must adhere to the following program requirements in HANS:

- The certificate citation (*maximum of 150 characters*) for each nomination must begin with the word "For" followed by a statement, which summarizes the accomplishment. (Example – For developing a technique to estimate current and historic rates of natural gas flaring through an effective use of satellite imagery data.)
- The program booklet citation (*minimum of 450, maximum of 600 characters*) for each nomination must adhere to the following format: Individual nominations (*Mr. Smith is recognized for...*); Group nominations (*The group is recognized for...*); Organizational nominations

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(The organization is recognized for...). In lieu of “*recognized for*,” the following may also be used, “*honored for*” or “*cited for*.” The program booklet must begin with one of the above introductory phrases, which clearly states what is being recognized followed by details on the nominee’s work, and must conclude with a sentence on the impact or importance of the accomplishment.

- Ratings of record are deemed to be PII and may not be associated with an individual nominee. As such, we have included a check box on the Nominee Information section of HANS that requires each nominator to certify that nominee(s) have a current rating of record of Level 3 or higher; Eligible (CAPS or APMS); or Meets or Exceeds Expectations (Two-Level).
- An additional question (*maximum of 300 characters*) was added to HANS: “Describe how this accomplishment exceeds the performance expectations of the individual(s) or organization(s).” The answer to this question will be used to determine how the nominee exceeded performance expectations as opposed to merely doing his or her job. Please note, while exceeding a performance metric and contributing to the accomplishment of the Department’s organizational mission and strategic goals is laudable, it does not necessarily evidence exceptional work above that which would have been expected by the nominee in the normal course of his or her job. The impact of the nominee’s accomplishment must be truly exceptional and reflect only the highest level of achievement in the Department.
- There are limits on the number of nominations that may be submitted by each bureau. Combined with the question addressing how the accomplishment exceeds the performance expectations of the individual(s) or the organization(s), the Department’s goal is to encourage bureaus to submit higher quality nominations rather than simply submitting higher numbers of nominations. See Attachment 2 for the nomination limits by bureau.

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In addition to the requirement to use HANS to enter, approve, and transmit nominations, bureaus must submit one hard copy of the following (MS Word, no PDFs):

- A memorandum from the Secretarial Officer or Head of the Operating Unit transmitting a list of the Gold and Silver Medal nominations (which must include a statement that no nominated employees are delinquent in filing a financial disclosure report);
- Certificate Citations (see Attachment 3); and
- Program Booklet citations (see Attachment 4).

The following limitations apply to all nominations. No exceptions will be granted to these limitations:

- Groups are limited to 10 members. Nominations with more than 10 group members must be submitted as an organizational award;
- Joint organizational awards are limited to three organizational units;
- An individual may only be nominated once either as an individual or as a member of a group;
- Only Department of Commerce employees may be nominated (contractors, private citizens, and employees of other Federal agencies are not eligible);
- Employees who are delinquent in filing a financial disclosure report are not eligible to be nominated;
- The leader of a group cannot be singled out for an individual nomination while the remainder of the group is submitted as a group nomination; and
- Only an employee with a Level 3 or higher (or equivalent) rating is eligible to be nominated.

The nominations must be approved and transmitted by the appropriate Secretarial Officer or Head of the Operating Unit using HANS, and the hard copies mentioned above forwarded to the Director for Human Resources Management and Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer no later than March 30, 2012. Please note, late nominations will not be accepted.

The Department conducts a certification process for all nominations prior to submission to the Department's Incentive Awards Board. This review process is intended to ensure that all nominations are complete and adhere to program and formatting requirements.

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The Department's Incentive Awards Officer will conduct the review from April 2 to April 13, 2012. Bureaus must make the necessary corrections before their nominations will be forwarded to the Board.

Prior to submission, please verify that there is no adverse information on the nominees that would negatively impact the nominations. Because these awards are so prestigious, we will consult appropriate organizations to ensure that there is no adverse information on the individual nominees.

All nominations must be transmitted to the Office of Human Resources Management by the response date of March 30, 2012. In an effort to ensure the integrity of the Honor Awards nomination, review, and approval process, we will activate and deactivate HANS on the specific dates listed below:

- HANS Activation Date: March 1, 2012
- HANS Deactivation Date: April 2, 2012

Please feel free to contact Michael R. Osver at (202) 482-3919 or via e-mail at mosver@doc.gov if you have any questions.

Attachments