

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

CHANGE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

- DIRECTIVE
 REVISION
 AMENDMENT
 OTHER

FSIS DIRECTIVE
REFERRAL BONUS AWARDS

4451.14
AMENDMENT 1

3/3/09

I. PRINCIPAL CHANGES

Subparagraph VIII, D. 2. is amended to reflect that intermittent employees are now eligible to receive Renewal Bonus Awards (RBAs).

II. CANCELLATION

This transmittal is canceled when contents are filed with FSIS Directive 4451.14. For recordkeeping purposes, users may retain or destroy this transmittal.

for 
Assistant Administrator
Office of Management

FILING INSTRUCTIONS

Remove Old Pages

4

Insert New Pages

4

DISTRIBUTION:
All Employees

OPI:
HRP – Employee Compensation and Policy
Branch



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

FSIS Directive
4451.14

Referral Bonus Awards

REFERRAL BONUS AWARDS

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS DIRECTIVE

4451.14

7/2/08

REFERRAL BONUS AWARDS

PART ONE—BASIC PROVISIONS

I. PURPOSE

This directive establishes a provision for granting awards to employees who refer new hires to the Agency.

II. (RESERVED)

III. (RESERVED)

IV. REFERENCES

Departmental Regulation 4040-451-04, Referral Bonus Awards
5 CFR 451, Awards
5 U.S.C. 2105, Definition of “Employee”
5 U.S.C. 3132 (A)(4), Definitions and Exclusions for the Senior Executive Service
5 U.S.C. 45, Incentive Awards
FSIS-AWD-CAT, Catalog for Non-Monetary Award Items
FSIS Directive 3730.2, Waiver of Claims Against Employees Arising from
Erroneous Payments of Pay and Allowances
FSIS Directive 4451.6, Non-Monetary Award Recognition
FSIS Directive 4451.7, Time-Off Award Program
FSIS Directive 4451.8, Spot Award Program
USDA Departmental Administration Office of Human Capital Management Guide
for Employee Recognition

V. ABBREVIATIONS AND FORMS

The following appear in their shortened form in this directive:

HRO	Human Resources Operations
HRP	Human Resources Policy
OM	Office of Management
RBA	Referral Bonus Award

DISTRIBUTION:
All Employees

OPI:
HRP – Employment and Classification
Policy Branch

VI. POLICY

It is FSIS policy to:

A. Use RBAs as an incentive to recruit and attract individuals for hard-to-fill positions, shortage locations, and persons with unique or highly desirable skills. The incentive is discretionary and is available on a case-by-case basis in situations that meet the eligibility criteria.

B. Ensure that consideration for this award is made without regard to political, religious, labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, maternal or family status, personal favoritism, or patronage.

VII. DEFINITIONS

A. **Continuous Service.** The time period in which an employee is either working or in an approved leave status. (**EXAMPLES:** Annual leave, sick leave, and holiday time.) An employee on a part-time or full-time work schedule may accumulate up to 6 months per calendar year in a non-pay status (**example:** leave without pay) with the employee's service still being considered continuous. If an employee is in a non-pay status for more than 6 months, their service will no longer be considered continuous.

B. **Current Employee.** An individual that is employed with FSIS on a permanent or temporary basis.

C. **Fiscal Year.** The time period extending from October 1 to September 30.

D. **Hard-to-Fill Position.** A position (or group of positions) that, despite two or more job advertisements and attempts to fill, remains vacant, or a position (or group of positions) that has a history of such. This includes, but is not limited to, all veterinary medical officer positions.

E. **Newly Appointed USDA Employee.** An employee who is newly appointed as a civil service employee of the USDA, or reappointed following a break in service. The break in service must be at least 90 calendar days from the date of the employee's last period of Federal employment.

F. **Referral Bonus Award.** A cash award given to current employees who refer new hires that meet the conditions of this directive to the Agency.

G. **Referred Individual.** A person who is referred to FSIS for employment and acknowledges a referral, by a referring FSIS employee during the application process.

H. **Referring Employee.** A current employee whom a referred individual names during their application process as referring that individual to FSIS for employment.

I. **Shortage Location.** A duty station with a shortage of candidates despite two or more job advertisements, and attempts to fill. In in-plant shortage locations, recruitment incentives (**examples:** direct hire, superior qualifications, recruitment bonuses, relocation bonuses, and first post-of-duty payments) must be necessary and approved.

VIII. **AUTHORITY AND ELIGIBILITY**

Hiring officials must indicate that a position is eligible for a referral bonus before that position is announced.

A. **Authority.** RBAs are made under the authority granted by Departmental Regulation 4040-451-04, Referral Bonus Awards.

1. The authority and responsibility for developing policy, granting awards that represent exceptions to the policy, and reporting on the RBA program is delegated to the Director, HRP, and those formally designated to act in that official's absence.

2. The authority and responsibility for approving, processing, and monitoring RBAs is delegated to the Chief, SSBAB, and those formally designated to act in that official's absence.

B. **Eligibility.** In order for a referring employee to be eligible for an RBA, the referred individual must name the referring employee when applying for a position with FSIS. The referred individual must:

1. Be hired by FSIS into a hard-to-fill position or shortage location.
2. Complete at least 1 year of continuous service with FSIS.
3. Receive a performance rating of fully successful or better, or demonstrate satisfactory performance.
4. Be a newly appointed USDA employee.
5. Not be an intermittent employee.

C. **Limitation.** There is no limit to the number of RBAs that a referring employee may receive. However, a referred individual may only name one referring employee. Furthermore, the referred individual must meet all requirements for the RBA before the referring employee may receive the award.

D. **Ineligibility.** The following persons are **ineligible** to receive RBAs:

1. Official FSIS recruiters.
2. Special Emphasis Program Managers.
3. All employees in HRP and HRO.
4. The selecting official of the referred individual.
5. All employees in the management chain of the referred individual, starting with the individual's supervisor through the FSIS Administrator.
6. All employees appointed by the President with Senate confirmation who serve in:
 - a. An Executive Schedule position.
 - b. A position for which pay is set in statute by reference to a section or level of the Executive Service.
7. An employee during a Presidential election period in a senior executive service position that is not a career appointee as defined under 5 U.S.C. 3132 (a) (4), Definitions and Exclusions for the Senior Executive Service.
8. Employees who are excluded from the receipt of incentive or time-off awards under other Agency directives.
9. Any of the following relatives of the employee recruited:
 - a. Spouse.
 - b. Children (including adopted children) and spouses thereof.
 - c. Parents.
 - d. Brothers and sisters, and spouses thereof.
 - e. Any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

IX. **AWARD AMOUNT**

A. The RBA amount will be \$1,000 regardless of the referred individual, referring employee, or the position of either the referred individual or the referring employee. However, the Assistant Administrator, OM, may temporarily decrease this amount on all RBAs if deemed necessary. The award amount may not exceed \$1,000.

B. Time-off awards are not permitted for FSIS RBAs.

X. **AFFECT ON OTHER AWARDS**

A. **Combined with Non-Monetary Award.** RBAs can not be combined with non-monetary awards. (See FSIS Directive 4451.6, Non-Monetary Award Recognition; FSIS Directive 4451.7, Time-Off Award Program; and the Catalog for Non-Monetary Award Items.)

B. **Relationship to Performance Awards.** An employee can receive only one award for a contribution. However, a supervisor may recognize the sustained performance of an employee with a performance award when the employee has also received an RBA during the same year, as long as the contribution recognized with an RBA is not used to support the performance award.

C. **Relationship to Spot Awards.** Because an employee can receive only one award for a contribution, an employee who has received an RBA for a referral can not receive a spot award for that same referral. (See FSIS Directive 4451.8, Spot Award Program.)

XI. **APPEALS**

If an employee does not receive an RBA, the employee may not appeal that decision. The inability to appeal does not waive any rights supported in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

XII. **EXCEPTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

The Director, HRP, must approve all exceptions and written documents concerning the procedures, policies, or interpretation of RBAs.

PART TWO—SUBMITTING, PROCESSING, AND PAYING

I. PREPARING AND SUBMITTING NOMINATIONS

A. **Indicating the Availability of a Referral Bonus.** FSIS indicates the availability of a referral bonus for a position in the vacancy announcement of the position. If a hiring official wishes to offer a referral bonus for a position, the official will notify their servicing human resources specialist before the position is announced.

B. **Naming a Referring Employee.** The referred individual must name the referring employee during the application process. FSIS automated staffing systems contain a question for the referred individual to indicate who referred them.

C. **Tracking a Referral.** When a referral is made, HRO tracks the referral to ensure that the referred individual completes 1 year of continuous employment with FSIS and the performance is satisfactory.

D. **Recommending and Submitting a Referral Bonus Award Nomination.**

1. The recommending official for an RBA is the supervisor or manager of the referred individual.

2. Once the referred individual completes 1 year of continuous service with FSIS and either performs at a satisfactory level or receives a performance rating of fully successful or better in a position for which a referral bonus was indicated in a vacancy announcement, HRO will notify the recommending official to prepare a Form AD-287-2, Recommendation and Approval of Awards (see Attachment 1).

3. HRO will obtain the top page of the referred individual's performance appraisal showing a rating of fully successful or better, or documentation demonstrating satisfactory performance. If a performance appraisal is unavailable, the supervisor of the referred individual's supervisor must indicate in writing that the referred individual's performance has been satisfactory.

4. The recommending official will prepare, sign, and submit Form AD-287-2 to HRO. When preparing the form, the recommending official should indicate in block 11 that it is an RBA, and the referred individual should be named. In block 12, "Other" should be checked.

E. **Maintaining Confidentiality.** The recommending official will not inform the referring employee of the award nomination until it is officially approved. All involved in the process will consider the award documentation privileged information, and until the award is presented, they should make the information available only on a need-to-know basis.

II. **OBTAINING APPROVALS**

A. **Approving Official.** The approving official for an RBA is the Chief, SSBAB. The approving official determines if the recommended award is appropriate and approves the award by signing and dating Form AD-287-2. The approving official then prepares and signs FSIS Form 4451-14, Referral Bonus Award (see Attachment 2).

B. **Disapproval.** If the approving official does not approve the RBA nomination, they must document and inform the recommending official of the reason(s) for disapproval.

III. **PAYMENT AND PROCESSING OF REFERRAL BONUS AWARDS**

A. HRO processes approved requests for RBAs. The recipient of the award receives the award amount via direct deposit.

B. The total amount of the award (\$1000) is before taxes are removed. The recipient receives a net amount (the award minus taxes).

IV. **AWARD PRESENTATION**

The recipient of the RBA will be presented with the award, an approved Form AD-287-2, and a signed FSIS Form 4451-14 soon after processing. Delaying the presentation of the award may result in the employee receiving the award in their account before notification.

V. **INTERNAL CONTROLS AND REPORTING**

HRP monitors the use of the RBA and ensures that approved actions are according to established policy. HRP also provides reports as requested by USDA and FSIS administration.

VI. **ERRONEOUS PAYMENTS**

If RBAs are paid erroneously, the Agency will follow the procedures outlined in FSIS Directive 3730.2, Waiver of Claims Against Employees Arising from Erroneous Payments of Pay and Allowances.

VII. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For additional information, contact HRP at (202) 720-4827.



Assistant Administrator
Office of Management

SAMPLE FORM AD-287-2, RECOMMENDATION & APPROVAL OF AWARDS

It is the policy of the Department to ensure that consideration for awards is made without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability or other nonmerit factors.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RECOMMENDATION & APPROVAL OF AWARDS	CASE NO. (Personnel Use Only)
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NOTE: For group awards, attach list of group members. Show data in Items 2 - 9, and award amount for each payee.

1. AGENCY FSIS	2. NAME OF EMPLOYEE (Last, first, middle initial) Griffin, Joan F.	5. PAY PLAN-SERIES/GRADE/STEP GS-318-6/3
3. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. 123-45-6789	4. POSITION TITLE Secretart (OA)	8. ACCOUNTING CODE
6. ORGANIZATION AND LOCATION OM, HRP	7. PERIOD COVERED FOR AWARD (mm, dd, yy) From: 02/28/09 To: 2/27/10	
9. IF AWARD APPROVED, MAIL CHECK TO: <input type="checkbox"/> SALARY CHECK ADDRESS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify address): →		

10. LIST AWARDS OR QSI'S IN THE PAST 52 WEEKS (Specify type of award, amount received, and effective date.)

11. CITATION: SUMMARIZE EMPLOYEE'S CONTRIBUTION IN 25 WORDS OR LESS. (This language will appear on the employee's certificate.)
EMPLOYEE IS BEING RECOGNIZED FOR:

Referral Bonus Award for referring Jane Doe to the Agency

COMPLETE THE APPROPRIATE AWARD SECTION

EXTRA EFFORT AWARD	12. TYPE OF RECOGNITION RECOMMENDED (check one)				ESTIMATED FIRST YEAR SAVINGS	
	<input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION OR INVENTION *	<input type="checkbox"/> EXTRA EFFORT AWARD *	<input type="checkbox"/> SPOT AWARD	<input type="checkbox"/> TIME OFF AWARD **	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER *	
	<input type="checkbox"/> KEEPSAKE AWARD		<input type="checkbox"/> GAINSHARING AWARD			
	* Attach a description of the contribution or patent notification being recognized and the resulting benefits to the Government. ** Attach a description if the contribution exceeds the moderate benefits.					
	13. NO OF PERSONS 1	14. TOTAL AWARD (Give dollar amount / hours, or value of item) \$1000	15. TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT/HOURS BASED ON: (Check approp. box) <input type="checkbox"/> MEASURABLE BENEFITS SCALE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NONMEASURABLE BENEFITS SCALE	VALUE OF BENEFITS Moderate	APPLICATION Limited	
PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARD	16. TYPE OF RECOGNITION RECOMMENDED (check one)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARD *	<input type="checkbox"/> QUALITY STEP INCREASE * Certification: I certify, by my signature in the Recommendation & Approval section below, that the employee's position description and the performance standards for the positions were thoroughly reviewed prior to submission of this recommendation; that the employee's performance is outstanding; and that the performance is characteristic and is expected to continue in the future.				
	* Attach a copy of employee's latest performance rating of record. Also, attach a justification statement, if required.					
	17. DATE OF LAST PROMOTION	18. DATE OF LAST WITHIN GRADE INCREASE		19. AMOUNT RECOMMENDED FOR PERFORMANCE BONUS AWARD \$		

RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL

20. RECOMMENDING INDIVIDUAL (Signature)	DATE 2/21/2010	21. REVIEWING OFFICIAL (Signature)	DATE
TITLE:		TITLE:	
22. APPROVING OFFICIAL (Signature & Title)			DATE 2/22/2010

PERSONNEL USE ONLY

23. AGENCY CODE/POI	27. DATE EFFECTIVE	QUALITY STEP INCREASE: →	25. TO: (Grade & Step)	26. NEW SALARY	27. RATE	28. PAY RATE DETERMINANT CODE
I certify that the proposed action is in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements			29. PERSONNEL OFFICIAL (Signature & Title)		DATE PROCESSED	

SAMPLE FORM 4451-14, REFERRAL BONUS AWARD

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE



REFERRAL BONUS AWARD

is presented to

SAMPLE

Congratulations! You have successfully referred an employee to the FSIS team.

Date