



# GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

**Chapter:** Personnel Management

**Section:** 312.3

**Subject:** Employee Recognition

**Topic:** EMPACT Awards

**Enacted:** 09/08/2015

**Last Review:** 09/03/2025

**Review:** 11/01/2027

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish policy and procedure for recognizing and rewarding the exemplary performance of the members of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office.

## II. POLICY

The Employee Achievements & Contributions to Loudoun County (EMPACT) Awards is a mechanism by which County Department Directors and/or the County Administrator may recognize and reward employees and teams. It shall be the policy of the Sheriff to participate in this County program to recognize and reward members and employees of the Sheriff's Office for outstanding achievement and/or exemplary performance.

## III. PROCEDURE

A. All personnel are strongly encouraged to submit nominations whenever criteria set forth in this General Order are met by a member of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office ("LCSO"); however, employees are not permitted to nominate themselves. This award will recognize the employee(s) for their exceptional services rendered in one of three key areas:

1. Public Service: Exceptional services rendered by serving, protecting or improving the quality of life of Loudoun County's citizens.
2. Operational Impact: Exceptional services rendered by enhancing the efficiency, innovation, proactivity or strategic focus of County operations.
3. Organizational Impact: Exceptional services rendered by enhancing the organization through fostering or demonstrating teamwork, leadership, accountability, ethics, or professionalism or promoting diversity, inclusion, wellness or safety within the Loudoun County Government.

B. The EMPACT Awards are governed by the [County's Administrative Policy HR-39, Employee Recognition Program \("HR-39"\)](#), but are administered by the Sheriff's Office under this General Order. The EMPACT Awards provide several categories in which an employee may be recognized: individual, team, peer, and exceptional performance/recognition leave.

- C. As part of the budget process, the Board of Supervisors determines on an annual (fiscal year) basis the level of available funding for bonuses, if any. Based on the availability of such funds, the County Administrator shall establish the amount for each bonus level. The dollar amount of each award is listed in HR-39.
- D. Actions taken under the EMPACT awards are not covered by the County grievance process or the grievance procedures for sworn Sheriff's Office staff under [General Order 301, Grievance Procedure](#), and are not appealable.
- E. EMPACT Award Levels:

There are four award levels under the EMPACT awards program. The bonus amount for each award level shall be set by the County Administrator on an annual basis, depending on funding by the Board of Supervisors. The four award levels include:

1. Bronze Award: Awarded to employees for noteworthy achievements and contributions in the area of public service, operational impact or organizational impact. Typically, the Bronze Awards are appropriate for work assignments that require noticeable extra effort, over a brief period of time, and under relatively normal work conditions.
2. Silver Award: Awarded to employees for significant achievements and contributions in the area of public service, operational impact or organizational impact. Typically, the Silver Awards are appropriate for medium to high priority work assignments that require significant extra effort over a somewhat extended period of time, under increased pressure and deadlines, and that result in demonstrable impact and/or benefit to the organization or the citizens of Loudoun County.
3. Gold Award: Awarded to employees who have made a distinguished contribution in the area of public service, operational impact or organizational impact. Typically, the Gold Awards are appropriate for high priority work assignments performed with substantial and sustained extra effort, over an extended period of time, under substantially increased and sustained pressure and strict deadlines, and that result in substantial and sustained impact and/or benefit to the organization or the citizens of Loudoun County.
4. Platinum Award: Awarded to employees who have made an extraordinary contribution in the area of public service, operations or organizational impact. Typically, the Platinum Awards are appropriate for high priority work assignments performed with tremendous and sustained extra effort, over an extended period of time, under tremendously increased and sustained pressure and strict deadlines, and that result in a tremendous and sustained impact and/or benefit to the organization or the citizens of Loudoun County.

- F. Nomination Authority:

1. An employee's immediate Supervisor or Manager may nominate the employee for an individual Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award.
2. Any departmental Supervisor or Manager may nominate a departmental team for Bronze, Silver and/or Gold Awards.
3. The Department Director may initiate Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards for individual employees and departmental teams at his or her discretion by completing the form and submitting it to Budget. Employees serving on departmental teams may be approved for different award levels based on their individual contributions to the team.
4. Only a Department Director may nominate an employee for a Platinum Award.
5. Any County employee may nominate another County employee (Peer Nomination Only).
6. Employees serving on a multi-departmental team may be nominated for an EMPACT award at any level by any Department Director who has at least one employee serving on the team or whose department was the recipient of the team's services. Employees serving on multi-departmental teams may receive different award levels based on their individual contributions to the team.

**G. Employee Eligibility:**

1. Regular Employees: To be eligible to receive an EMPACT award, regular employees must have received a minimum overall rating of "Fully Successful" on their most recent annual appraisal, or an interim appraisal, if applicable. Further, within the previous 12 months, the employee must not have received any informal discipline (counseling or Letter of Warning) related to a Code of Conduct violation or any formal discipline of any kind. (One lesser offense in the last 12 months resulting in either a counseling or Letter of Warning and which is not a violation of the Code of Conduct is permissible).
2. Probationary and Temporary Employees: These categories of employees are eligible to receive EMPACT awards at the discretion of the Sheriff. Further, within the previous 12 months, the employee must not have received any informal discipline (counseling or Letter of Warning) related to a Code of Conduct violation or any formal discipline of any kind. (One lesser offense in the last 12 months resulting in either a counseling or Letter of Warning and which is not a violation of the Code of Conduct is permissible).

3. Platinum Award Eligibility: In addition to the eligibility criteria detailed above, only fiscal year recipients of a Gold Award may be nominated for a Platinum Award. The nomination for the Platinum Award must be associated with the same contribution or achievement for which the employee received the Gold Award.
4. All employees who receive an EMPACT award are subject to a bonus cap of two times the level of the Gold Award during each fiscal year. In addition, the employee may also receive one Platinum award bonus which shall not be counted toward the bonus cap.

H. General Guidelines:

1. The nominator shall be responsible for verifying that the nominee meets the eligibility requirements.
2. The nominator shall fully document the circumstances supporting the nomination. The nominator should review the six key categories and evaluation criteria as defined in [HR-39](#) to ensure that their nominee's actions may be awardable under the EMPACT program.
3. The nominator shall complete the online [EMPACT Award Nomination Form](#).

I. Submission Process (individual, team):

1. The nominator shall complete the online EMPACT Award Nomination form and submit it to his/her immediate supervisor for review. The form shall be submitted through the chain of command for final review by the Sheriff.
2. The entire review process should be completed within 14 days of submission by the supervisor. If the designated reviewer is unavailable, his or her designee may perform the approval. The employee shall be notified by the nominator who shall forward the approval whenever they receive an EMPACT Award. A copy of the nomination and approval shall be placed in the employee's departmental personnel file.

J. Multi-Departmental Teams:

1. General Guidelines:
  - a. Multi-Departmental Team EMPACT Award may only be nominated by the Department Director.

- b. An employee who is approved to receive an EMPACT Award due to his or her work serving on a multi-departmental team shall not be eligible to receive an individual or departmental team EMPACT Award for the same achievement or contribution.

2. Submission Process:

- a. The Sheriff shall complete an EMPACT Award Nomination Form and memorandum and forward it for review and approval to the Assistant County Administrator who oversees the Sheriff's Office for such nominations.
- b. The Assistant County Administrator shall then submit the form to the County Administrator for final action (i.e., approval or denial).

K. Peer Nomination

The Loudoun County Employee Recognition Program allows for any County/Sheriff's employee to nominate another County/Sheriff's employee for recognition through the EMPACT Awards. The nomination shall adhere to the eligibility and awards evaluation guidelines as defined in HR-39. The procedure for submitting an employee for recognition leave is as follows:

1. General Guidelines:

- a. An employee wanting to nominate another employee for consideration for an EMPACT Award shall be responsible for verifying that the nominee meets the eligibility requirements.
- b. The nominator shall complete the Peer Nomination Form. The nominator shall fully document the circumstances supporting the nomination. The nominator should review the six key categories and evaluation criteria as defined in County Administrative Policy HR-39 to ensure that their nominee's actions may be awardable under EMPACT.
- c. Only individual employees may be submitted through the Peer Nomination process.
- d. The submission shall not contain any reference to an award category.
- e. The sole determination for the awarding of an EMPACT Award rests with the Sheriff.
- f. If an employee receives an EMPACT Award, it should be within two pay periods.

2. Submission Process:

- a. The nominator shall submit a copy of both documents to the nominee's direct supervisor. The memorandum shall include the nominators' name, section and notification process.
- b. The supervisor shall complete an EMPACT Award Nomination form and submit it through the chain of command for final review by the Sheriff.
- c. The entire review process should be completed within 14 days of submission by the supervisor. If the designated reviewer is unavailable, his or her designee may perform the approval. The employee shall be notified in writing of the final decision.