

Recognizing Excellence

Employee Recognition and Appreciation Program Guidebook

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“Recognizing Excellence” Overview

The Tennessee Department of Children’s Services (DCS) strives to create a work environment that encourages personal and professional growth. The Employee Recognition and Appreciation Program (ERAP) allows DCS to recognize and show appreciation for employees who go above and beyond expectations.

Quality service provided to the children and families DCS serves is better achieved when employees feel their work is valued. The goal of the “Recognizing Excellence” program is to honor the contributions and hard work of DCS employees through positive reinforcement and to show the Department recognizes their commitment not only to DCS, but also to the children and families served.

To be effective in recognizing and appreciating the efforts of DCS, employees must be sincere and timely in the performance of assigned duties. Outstanding leaders go out of their way to improve self-esteem of employees they supervise. When an employee has team support and feels confident in their job performance, it is amazing what can be accomplished!

The “Recognizing Excellence” Steering Committee has developed an employee driven program to acknowledge employees who excel in their job responsibilities, the delivery of service to children and families, and to other employees.

This guidebook was developed to provide a reference for the DCS Employee Recognition and Appreciation Program “Recognizing Excellence”. These guidelines provide managers, supervisors and employees with a variety of choices for meaningful recognition and appreciation. These tools are valuable in acknowledging and encouraging desirable performance and behavior of DCS employees.

DCS MISSION

Provide high quality prevention and support services to children and families that promote safety, permanency and well-being..

DCS VISION

To create safe and healthy environments for children where they can live with supportive families and engaged communities.

STEERING COMMITTEE AND APPOINTMENTS

Members of the ERAP Steering Committee prepared this Guidebook to assist the Departmental Programs in “Recognizing Excellence” in DCS employees.

ERAP Steering Committee members are chosen by Regional Administrators, Directors, and Superintendents to serve as chairperson of their respective regional committees and represent

them on the statewide committee. Each member serves a term of one fiscal year (from July 1 through June 30).

A list of current Steering Committee Members is in the directions for the ERAP form 0892.

REGIONAL COMMITTEES/MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Each region and program area follow the guidelines and uses the resources supplied in this guidebook or by the Steering Committee and is responsible for formulating an Employee Recognition Committee (voting committee). The chairperson from the regional committee serves on the Steering Committee. The regional committee consists of a proportionate number of diverse staff, representing different job functions and serves for a period of one year (from June 1 to July 30). This provides a sufficient overlap to allow the in-coming committee a smooth transition. When possible, a regional committee meeting will be held however, the Central Office chairperson will always offer communication, expectations, and be available for answering questions for the members of the Steering Committee. The committee also is responsible for determining the types and frequency of "Other Awards" given in their regions and ensures that there is at least one function annually to reward and recognize employees.

PURPOSE

The DCS Employee Recognition and Appreciation Program is designed to encourage employees to strive to give their best individually. The program is intended to recognize achievements or accomplishments that demonstrate the core values of safety, well-being and permanency in the Path to Excellence model.

GOALS

The goals of DCS Employee Recognition and Appreciation Program are:

- To recognize and promote positive behaviors that support individual, work group, unit, team, department, school and/or institutional mission and business goals and objectives;
- To provide timely recognition to employees;
- To provide various mechanisms to facilitate recognition based on the significance of the employee's contribution;
- To provide individual and/or team recognition and rewards;
- To provide for manager and employee-initiated recognition and rewards;
- To improve employee productivity, quality of work and promote a positive work environment; and
- To improve internal and external customer service.

ELIGIBILITY

This program is open to all DCS employees employed with the department for at least one year and who are considered as being “in good standing.”

Good standing is defined as an employee who:

- Will not be actively involved in disciplinary action, nor has any disciplinary actions for the past 12 months;
- Consistently demonstrates best practices;
- Demonstrates good relationships with community partners and supports team members to accomplish the Department’s goals;
- Demonstrates understanding of Department’s mission and vision.

BUDGET FOR THE PROGRAM EVENTS

The yearly budget for the statewide ERAP for DCS is to be announced. Each region receives an allotment of funds (TBD). The budgeted amount is spent on awards, prizes, supplies, food and entertainment for the Employee Recognition and Award Ceremonies. The ERAP Chairperson and the Steering Committee ensure that there are sufficient funds for the overall budget allocated in order to sponsor a State Level Awards Ceremony annually.

BUDGET FOR PROGRAM AWARDS

The budget for the statewide Employee Recognition and Award Program is determined on a year-to-year basis. The ERAP Chairperson orders gifts with assistance from the representative of each region and youth center. Frames and presentation materials are ordered at each regional office.

AWARD NOMINATION FORM

To nominate an employee, fill out form [CS-0892, Employee Recognition and Appreciation Program Nomination](#). After completion, the Supervisor of the Nominee signs form [CS-0892, Employee Recognition and Appreciation Program Nomination](#) and submits it to the ERAP Steering Committee member for the region. Employee nominations are reviewed and selected for awards at the regional level.

Each employee can only be selected as the winner once a year, and in one division each year. No employee can win for both a regional area and division more than one time in the same year.

At the end of the ERAP cycle, each regional committee votes on and then submits one name from the thirty-six winners of the Employee of the Month winners to be honored as

part of the Employee of the Year celebration. This name is sent to the ERAP Central Office chairperson.

TYPES OF EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

To ensure fair and consistent application within the Department, a core set of rewards and recognition for the regional programs are as follows:

Annual Award Event

Employees of the Year – Commissioner’s Luncheon

Once a year, in January, DCS hosts a Commissioner’s Luncheon for the Employee of the Year that represents each Region, Youth Development Center, and Central Office. The luncheon is hosted by Central Office and is held in Nashville. At the annual event, the Commissioner presents each Employee of the Year winner (total of 16) with a framed certificate and a gift. Each winner receives a picture with the Commissioner. In addition, a group photo of all the Employees of the Year will be featured in DCS OpenLine with an article featuring the luncheon.

(The Regional Directors, Superintendents, and Directors including input from Senior Staff members and the ERAP committee select the yearly winner for each site, or it is selected by a poll of the entire region/division.)

Employee Appreciation Day

At least annually, each Region, Youth Development Center, and Central Office has an Employee Appreciation event. Details are the responsibility of each group. The only parameters are that the event be structured so that all regional/divisional employees are able to attend some part of the event and that Employee Service Awards are presented at the same time.

Monthly Award Event

Employee of the Month Award

Each Regional Office program area, Youth Development Center, and Central Office Steering Committee member accepts nominations from staff for the employee of the month based on work related conduct, performance and attitude. The Regional Administrator, Superintendent, Deputy/Assistant Commissioner and the Steering Committee members review the nominations and select the Employee of the Month. The employee receives a framed certificate, a state pin (provided by the ERAP chairperson), a small award and has their picture taken and posted in a prominent area. Each site can add to what the Employee of the Month receives (Example – reserved parking spot for the month). Employees chosen are presented with the award in a

public forum (senior staff meeting, potluck luncheon, etc.). The announcement is also included in the local newsletter or sent out via email for all staff to read. Employee of the Month can only be presented to one individual; entire teams or groups are not eligible for the Employee of the Month designation. Other awards can be used to recognize groups of workers who show exceptional effort.

Anytime Awards

Each Regional Office, Youth Development Center, and Central Office is encouraged throughout the year to recognize employee contributions and accomplishments of an individual, team or section within their region. This approach provides employee recognition and appreciation at any time for demonstrating behaviors that reflect the core values of the Path to Excellence model, values, and objectives of the organization. Recognition can come from co-workers, team leaders, team coordinators, and other regional/facility staff or from community partners. This type of award is recognized with a certificate and a small token of appreciation. The nomination form [CS-0892, Employee Recognition and Appreciation Program Nomination](#) is completed and sent to the ERP for consideration and processing.

Examples of this type of award could be, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Cheers for Peers
- ❖ Everyday Hero Award
- ❖ Shining Star Award
- ❖ Customer Service Award
- ❖ "Can Do" Award

POLICY INTERPRETATION

The ERAP Chairperson and the Executive Director of Human Resources and/or designee are responsible for official interpretation of this program and policies that may affect this program. General questions regarding functions and activities are directed to the regional ERAP committee member designee.