

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY	
	Policy Number: HR-2-13	
	Policy Title: Recognition Program	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 6.0
Agency Director: Adam Krupp		

POLICY OVERVIEW

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Recognition Program is designed to reward employees for exceptional performance and contributions to outcomes directly related to the DCS mission, vision, and purpose. This specific program utilizes monetary spot bonuses and nonmonetary awards to recognize employees “on the spot.”

POLICY STATEMENT

The DCS Recognition Program follows the [Indiana State Personnel Department \(SPD\) Spot Bonus Policy](#), which replaced any earlier DCS recognition policies.

The DCS Recognition Program gives performance-based awards to employees who go above and beyond their normal job duties. The employee’s action must:

1. Be outside their regular job description or usual daily tasks; and
2. Be a one-time event (not something they do all the time).

Note: If an employee consistently performs well in their regular duties, that will be noted in Success Factors and considered during their performance review.

Awards are given in the following ways:

1. Non-monetary awards: Examples include certificates, thank-you cards, or similar items;
2. \$100 spot bonus: Given for an exceptional one-time event that exceeds expectations, including accepted transformation ideas;
3. \$250 spot bonus: Given for an exceptional event that exceeds expectations and makes an impact at the office level;
4. \$500 spot bonus: Given for an exceptional event that impacts more than one office - at the county or regional level;
5. \$750 spot bonus: Given for an event that has a big impact across the state or involves extra duties over a long period; or
6. \$1,000 spot bonus: Given for a major, extraordinary event that strongly supports DCS’s mission, involves a multi-day statewide event, earns national recognition, or includes many extra responsibilities over time.

Note: No single spot bonus can be more than \$1,000. An employee may receive more than one spot bonus in a fiscal year (July 1–June 30), but the total cannot be more than \$2,000 in that fiscal year.

Anyone at DCS can submit a recognition nomination for anyone within the agency. The nomination should be sent in within 30 days of the achievement.

To qualify for a spot bonus through the DCS Recognition Program, the employee must meet all of the following:

1. Be an active employee who is not intermittent or contract staff, and has completed the working test period;
2. Has not been on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or had any disciplinary action in the past three (3) months before the nomination;
3. Be meeting all performance expectations and competencies, as confirmed by their supervisor (unless the Agency Director makes an exception);
4. Has completed a one-time action of exceptional performance, as described above and on SF 57005; and
5. Has not already received overtime compensation or compensatory time for the action and has not received more than \$2,000 in spot bonuses this fiscal year.

To qualify for a Nonmonetary award through the DCS Recognition Program, the employee must meet all of the following:

1. Be an active employee who is not intermittent;
2. Has worked at DCS for more than three (3) months;
3. Has not been on a Performance Improvement Plan or had any disciplinary action in the past three (3) months before the nomination;
4. Meet all performance expectations and competencies, as confirmed by their supervisor (unless the Agency Director makes an exception); and
5. Has completed a one-time action of exceptional performance, as described above and on SF 57005.

Recognition Nominations

1. Use the [Recognition Program Nomination Form \(SF 57005\)](#) to submit and review all recognition nominations;
2. Send the completed form SF 57005 to Human Resources (HR) at DCSHR@dcs.in.gov. HR will check that the employee is in good standing and not on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP);
3. The SF 57005 must be completed and submitted to HR within 30 days of the qualifying event. Spot bonus proposals submitted more than 30 days after the qualifying event will be considered only by exception, granted by the Agency Director or designee (the Chief of Staff);
4. The nomination process must stay confidential until all approvals are obtained; and
5. All spot bonuses are taxable income and will show up on the employee's pay statements. Nonmonetary awards are not taxable.

PROCEDURE

Monetary Award

Requestor

The person nominating an employee (the Requestor) will fill out the Recognition Program Nomination Form (SF 57005) and email it to DCSHR@dcs.in.gov.

Human Resources (HR)

Within two weeks, HR will:

1. Thank the requestor for their submission;
2. Review the form to make sure the justification aligns with the SPD Spot Bonus Policy.
Make sure the employee:
 - a. Has completed the working test period and is an active, non-intermittent, non-contract employee,
 - b. Has not been on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or had disciplinary action in the last three (3) months,
3. Email the employee's Supervisor and Executive Leader (defined as Deputy Director/Commissioner, Local Office Director, Department Director, Regional Director, or Division Director), or designee, with a copy of the form **if the employee qualifies**;
4. Take no further action and will not notify the Requestor **if the employee does not qualify**; and
5. Notify all approvers up to the Agency Director for a final decision **if HR later learns of a disqualifying issue** prior to finalizing the award (see above).

Executive Leader or Designee

Within two weeks of receiving HR's decision, the Executive Leader (or designee) will:

1. Review the form;
2. Confirm sufficient funds are available, if necessary;
3. Is meeting all performance expectations and competencies (unless the Agency Director grants an exception);
4. Verify employee has not already received overtime compensation or compensatory time for the action and has not received more than \$2,000 in spot bonuses this fiscal year by emailing DCSPayrollInquiries@dcs.in.gov; and
5. Approve or deny the request;
 - a. If approved, send the decision with confirmation from payroll attached, and a recommendation for the award amount or type, to DCSFinance@dcs.in.gov for Chief of Staff review, or
 - b. If denied, send decision in writing to the Supervisor.

Chief of Staff

Within two weeks, the Chief of Staff or designee will:

1. Review the form and the proposed award;
2. Approve or deny the request;
 - a. Suggest changing the award amount or type based on impact or budget, if appropriate, and
 - b. If approved:
 - i. Notify HR, Payroll, the Supervisor, and the Executive Leader or Designee in writing, including the form and paid date, and
 - ii. Advise HR to keep a copy in the employee's personnel file.
 - c. If denied, notify the Executive Leader (or designee) in writing.

Payroll Director

Within two weeks, the Payroll Director will:

1. Assign the approved reward to a Payroll Supervisor for processing, and

Note: The Payroll team will process a spot bonus as a PSHUP file a week before payroll is out, the same as a timesheet.

2. Submit a copy of what goes to the Comptroller's Office to HR.

Supervisor (after approval)

Within two weeks of approval by the Chief of Staff, the Supervisor will:

1. Work with DCS Communications to create an award certificate;
2. Give a printed copy of the [thank you card](#) or [appreciation certificate](#) with the employee's name to the Agency Director or designee to complete, if a thank-you card or certificate of appreciation is requested;
3. Give the complete items to the employee once received; and
4. Notify the Senior Manager and the employee in writing about the decision and effective date.

Note: They are encouraged to share the good news with the team or senior staff.

Communications

The Director of Communications or designee will keep a record of recognized achievements for the current and previous fiscal year. They may share the text of the recognition in internal or external publications, but will not include the dollar amount.

Nonmonetary Award

Requestor

The person nominating an employee (the Requestor) will fill out the Recognition Program Nomination Form (SF 57005) and email it to DCSHR@dcs.in.gov.

Human Resources (HR)

Within two weeks, HR will:

1. Thank the requestor for their submission;
2. Review the form to make sure the justification aligns with the SPD Spot Bonus Policy. Make sure the employee:
 - a. Has completed the working test period and is an active, non-intermittent, non-contract employee,
 - b. Has not been on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or had disciplinary action in the last three (3) months,
 - c. Verify and make sure the justification is consistent with the factors permitted to be considered in the SPD Spot Bonus Policy, and
 - d. Has not already received overtime compensation or compensatory time for the action and has not received more than \$2,000 in spot bonuses this fiscal year.
3. Email the employee's Supervisor and Executive Leader (or designee) with a copy of the form **if the employee qualifies**;
4. Take no further action and will not notify the Requestor **if the employee does not qualify**; and
5. Notify all approvers up to the Agency Director for a final decision **if HR later learns of a disqualifying issue** prior to finalizing the award (see above).

Executive Leader or Designee

Within two weeks of receiving HR's decision, the Executive Leader or Designee will:

1. Review the form;
2. Confirm employee is meeting all performance expectations and competencies (unless the Agency Director grants an exception),
3. Confirm sufficient funds are available, if necessary; and
4. Approve or deny the request;
 - c. Suggest changing the award based on impact or budget, if appropriate, and
 - d. If approved, send the decision and a brief summary of the nomination to the Deputy Director of Staff Development & Strategic Workforce Planning at DCSBonusProgram@dcs.in.gov and the Supervisor, and request the Supervisor provide the employee's item choice, or
 - e. If denied, send decision in writing to the Supervisor.

Supervisor

Within two weeks, the Supervisor will provide a copy of the reward (see Resources) to the Deputy Director of Staff Development & Strategic Workforce Planning, including the employee's name, for completion by Agency Director or designee.

Deputy Director of Staff Development & Strategic Workforce Planning

Within two weeks of notification from the Supervisor, the Deputy Director or designee will:

1. Provide a brief summary of the nomination and a printed copy of the thank you card or appreciation certificate with the employee's name to the Agency Director or designee to complete; and
2. Provide the completed certificate of appreciation or thank-you card to the Supervisor or designee.

Supervisor (after approval)

Within two weeks of receipt, the Supervisor will:

1. Provide the nonmonetary award to the employee; and
2. Notify DCS Communications of the achievement.

Communications

The Director of Communications or designee will keep a record of recognized achievements. They may share the text of the recognition in internal or external publications.

Resources

- DCSHR@dcs.in.gov
- DCSBonusProgram@dcs.in.gov
- DCSFinance@dcs.in.gov
- [DCS - Recognition Program Nomination Form \(SF 57005\)](#)
- Financial Management Circular 1.1 located on the [Financial Management Circulares website](#)
- Financial Management Circular 2.2 located on the [Financial Management Circulares website](#)
- [Indiana State Personnel Department \(SPD\) Spot Bonus Policy](#)
- [Recognition and Reward Database SharePoint](#)
 - [Thank you card](#)
 - [Certificate of appreciation](#)