



**Admin Awards and Recognition Program**  
*Program Overview and Basic Guidelines*  
*December 2012*

**Background**

A new Awards and Recognition Program for Admin has been created and launched by a work group of Admin employees and approved by the Commissioner and Senior Leadership team. This program is intended to recognize outstanding achievement by Admin employees through the use of various non-monetary awards and incentives. As part of the new program, three recognition tools have been introduced and will be supported by agency leadership:

- Ongoing Recognition Boxes
- Quarterly Achievement Awards
- The Annual Star of the North Award

The basic policies, procedures and guidelines for participating in these recognition programs are outlined in the pages that follow. Questions about the Awards and Recognition Program should be directed to [Admin.Info@state.mn.us](mailto:Admin.Info@state.mn.us).

**Ongoing Recognition Boxes**

To foster consistent and ongoing recognition of good work in Admin, physical ballot boxes will be delivered to each Admin division. These Recognition Boxes are to be used as a tool for employees to place any positive feedback or recognition about their colleagues and coworkers. Divisions are to take ownership of these boxes and have responsibility for maintaining them. In doing so, divisions should follow these basic guidelines:

- The boxes should be placed in common areas where all or most division employees will have the ability to participate by inserting a note.
- The plain, white cardboard boxes can be decorated however a division prefers. Divisions are encouraged to have fun with this process and to involve division staff in decorating and designing the boxes. At a minimum, divisions are encouraged to label the boxes and include basic details about their purpose and simple instructions for usage, along with the basic criteria for determining work worthy of recognition.

- Entries into the box can come in any shape or form (as long as they fit in the box's entry slot). As a starting point, divisions can set up recycled paper slips next to the boxes. However, employees should be encouraged to have fun with this as well. E-mail printouts, greeting cards, photos, arts or crafts, and more are all fair game and provide an additional opportunity to have fun when recognizing fellow employees.
- Divisions should establish a schedule to empty the box daily, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. The task of emptying and reviewing items in the box should be assigned to a division director, manager or unit lead, or can even be shared among a team of division supervisors.
- Slips and notes recognizing an individual should be given to the recognized employee's supervisor so the supervisor can highlight or recognize that employee's good work and ultimately give the note to the employee for their keeping.
- If entries identify significant achievements or particularly extraordinary work, divisions are encouraged to share them with agency leadership and communications staff to be considered for larger recognition. A copy of the note can be dropped off at the Commissioner's Office or emailed to [Admin.Info@state.mn.us](mailto:Admin.Info@state.mn.us) and it will be considered for inclusion in department communication vehicles, such as the Monthly Minute, or as a possible nominee for larger agency awards (described in more detail below).
- Employee can also submit notes via the "Digital Recognition Box" by sending a note to [Admin.Info@state.mn.us](mailto:Admin.Info@state.mn.us) and including "Recognition" in the subject line.
- If for any reason divisions need a new box or have other questions about their box, they should contact [Admin.Info@state.mn.us](mailto:Admin.Info@state.mn.us) for assistance.

### Quarterly Achievement Awards

Each quarter, awards will be given across the department honoring exemplary work. The procedures for these awards will go as follows:

- During the agency's Quarterly Operations Review process, each division is instructed to identify individuals and teams worthy of formal recognition based on the accomplishments of the last quarter. In doing so, division directors should look to the submissions to the Recognition Boxes from the past quarter, the suggestions of their staff, and the other great work seen throughout the agency.
- Following the Quarterly Ops Reviews, senior leadership will select three to four individuals or teams from those nominated by divisions as the award winners.
- The Commissioner will personally present award certificates to each recipient and the recipients will be announced and featured in Admin's Quarterly Update publication.
- A number of criteria for the quarterly awards have been identified and are as follows:
  - *Exceptional Service* – a person or team that demonstrates exceptional service to Minnesota, putting the needs of their customers first, and delivering the high value, sacrifice, and courtesy that are hallmarks of public service.

- *Improvement and Innovation* – a person or team that demonstrates the courage and drive to shrug off the status quo, break new ground in delivering a service, and inspires and involves others to find improved avenues to meet their mission.
- *Engagement and Connection* – a person or team that displays a commitment to crossing traditional boundaries – across divisions, cultures, generations, or others – bridging new relationships, sharing knowledge, and creating new opportunities to engage with their colleagues and meet the mission.
- *Positive Attitude* – a person who makes the workplace more enjoyable for all by their actions and attitude – a bright light, a drudgery-dasher, a burden-lifter, a positively positive person.
- *Leadership* – a person who “steers the ship” by demonstrating strategic thinking, sustained vision, and an encouraging attitude – someone who helps other meet their potential and galvanizes support to meet the goals of their office.
- *Teamwork* – a team that demonstrates exceptional attitude, engages the talents of all members, and yields impressive outcomes, making it a model to others about how teamwork actually works.
- *“Your criteria here” (Other)* – tell us in 50 words or less the criteria that you think are reasons to honor a person or team.

### **The Star of the North Award**

The Star of the North Award is the flagship achievement award for the Department of Admin. It is given yearly to one or two individuals and one or two agency teams, with no more than four given each year. Criteria for the award are the same as those for the Quarterly Awards (as seen above), however, the annual award represents the pinnacle of recognition for the agency. Procedures for the award are as follows:

- Winners are selected by the Admin Senior Leadership Team. They are selected primarily, but not exclusively, from the pool of Quarterly Award winners and nominees from the preceding year. Notes of recognition originating in the Recognition Boxes or elsewhere that are shared with agency leadership or communications staff throughout the year are also considered.
- Any agency employee is able to recommend an individual or team for the award. This can be done by emailing [Admin.Info@state.mn.us](mailto:Admin.Info@state.mn.us) with a written explanation of how an individual or team meets one or many of the award criteria and is worthy of selection.
- Star of the North winners are announced and recognized each year in a formal presentation at the Annual Admin Fall Festival. Here each winner will be presented with a Star of the North certificate and trophy.

- The Star of the North trophy is a traveling trophy, meaning each winner will keep their trophy for one year. When the new winners are announced, the placards on the trophies will be replaced and the trophies will be presented to their new winners.
- A permanent display will be installed in the Admin lobby for displaying past Star of the North winners. Placards removed from the trophy will be placed on this display, which will also include some basic details about the trophy and its history and development.

### **Additional Notes**

As part of the agency's Award and Recognition Program, tips, best practices and other ideas about recognition will be regularly featured in agency communications. This is intended to encourage more effective recognition practices and to foster a culture of ongoing recognition for great work. If employees have ideas, comments or feedback about the agency's program or would like to share tips or best practices of their own, they should email [Admin.Info@state.mn.us](mailto:Admin.Info@state.mn.us).

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