



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

DEC 15 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Recognition of Outstanding Department of War Civilian Employees

Since the dawn of the Republic, civilian employees have played an essential, foundational role in driving the success of America's military and ensuring it prevails on the battlefield.

Over the past 10 months, Department of War (DoW) civilians upheld that proud tradition through their steadfast support of the worldwide mission of the Department — including historic successes in defending the homeland and securing peace in the Middle East — and their dedication to executing the transformational changes necessary to revive the warrior ethos, rebuild our military, and reestablish deterrence.

These achievements have not been easy. The uncertainty and adversity inherent in all periods of change can test even the most elite workforce. Further, the longest Government shutdown in American history imposed severe strain on our civilian workforce. The resilience our civilian teammates have demonstrated throughout this challenging time is an inspiration and deserves to be recognized.

In addition to the ongoing efforts across the Department to develop plans of action to retain, reward, and recognize our outstanding civilian employees, I hereby direct all DoW Component heads and Principal Staff Assistants (PSAs) of the Office of the Secretary of War to take immediate action to recognize and reward our very best civilians with meaningful monetary awards consistent with the relevant existing civilian awards authorities for each pay system (Senior Executive Service, Senior Professional, General Schedule, Federal Wage System, alternative personnel systems, etc.) included in Department of Defense Instruction 1400.25, Volume 451, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Awards." This initiative is independent of any awards previously executed. I hereby direct all DoW Component heads to effectuate these awards no later than January 30, 2026.

DoW Component heads and PSAs retain decision authority over the number of award recipients and award amounts with respect to employees within their organizations. To best recognize our civilian workforce, monetary awards of 15 to 25 percent of basic pay, up to \$25,000, are authorized for the top 15 percent of performers. If Component heads or PSAs wish to reallocate funding to support awards beyond the 15 percent rate, they may do so within their internal budget. DoW Components and PSA offices will coordinate with their respective Financial Management and Comptroller organizations concerning availability of funding and budget planning. All personnel actions for civilian awards processed pursuant to this directive

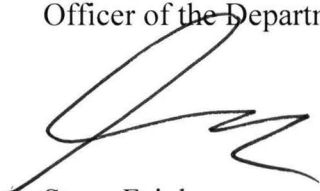


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shall include the following remark for tracking purposes: “ZZZ – *Recognition of Outstanding DoW Civilian Employees 2025.*”

I am enormously grateful for the incredible contributions of our entire civilian workforce, and I am proud to work with everyone in the Department, military and civilian, in defending our Nation.

My points of contact are the Honorable Anthony J. Tata, Undersecretary of War for Personnel and Readiness, for civilian award policies and authorities, and the Honorable Jules W. Hurst III, Performing the Duties of the Undersecretary of War (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer of the Department of War, for funding support.



Steve Feinberg  
Deputy Secretary of War



Pete Hegseth  
Secretary of War