

	MARICOPA COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE	
	POLICY AND PROCEDURES	
	Subject	Policy Number
	AWARDS	GC-13
		Effective Date
		09-03-25
Related Information		Supersedes
GC-20, <i>Uniform Specifications</i>		GC-13 (04-23-24)
Version Date	Review Period	Description of Review
09-03-25	July 2025– June 2026	Statement of Annual Review – No Changes

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Office Policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for giving recognition to employees, volunteers, and members of the public for outstanding performance or service to the Office, or for civic responsibility.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Office to award appropriate commendations to employees, volunteers, or members of the public who perform services or acts which deserve official recognition.

DEFINITIONS

Award: A document, certificate, plaque, badge, pin, ribbon, or other item or combination of items, given to a person or group of people to recognize their excellence in a specific action or task.

Blue Team: The Early Identification System (EIS) application that allows employees and supervisors to record information in a database regarding incidents, performance, and conduct. The information from Blue Team is transferred to the IAPro Early Identification case management system.

Commendation: A written or verbal expression of approval or praise.

Early Identification System (EIS): A system of electronic databases that captures and stores threshold events to help support and improve employee performance through early intervention and/or to identify problematic operating procedures, improving employee performance, identifying detrimental behavior, recognizing outstanding accomplishments, and improving the Office's supervisory response. The computerized relational database shall collect, maintain, integrate, and retrieve information gathered in order to highlight tendencies in performance, complaints, and other activities. The database allows the Office to document appropriate identifying information for involved employees, (and members of the public when applicable), and the actions taken to address the tendencies identified. Blue Team, IAPro, and EIPro are applications of EIS.

Higher Award: Formal recognition for any commendable act, the outstanding performance of duty, or an act of bravery/courage, which includes the awarding of an Office medal or citation.

Mechanical Intervention: The use of a medical device or rescue technique to assist or replace a critical bodily function which is essential to an individual's survival.

Minor Commendable Act: Includes actions such as, but not limited to, alertness resulting in the apprehension of a suspect, completing a project before the due date, volunteering for additional work assignments or duties, assisting others in completing an assignment, providing exceptional customer service, or taking extraordinary actions that had an immediate impact on the outcome of a project or assignment.

Volunteer: A person who performs hours of service for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered. An employee may not volunteer to perform the same, similar, or related duties for the Office that the employee is normally paid to perform.

PROCEDURES

1. **Award Nominations and Requests:** Any employee of the Office, member of the public, or volunteer may submit a formal written acknowledgment commending the actions of any Office employee, volunteer, or member of the public for excellence in a specific action or task. All formal acknowledgment submissions such as commendations, nominations for minor awards, nominations for higher awards, and service award requests shall be entered through Blue Team by an Office employee, as specified in this Policy.
 - A. When an employee composes a commendation or award nomination it shall be submitted through Blue Team by selecting the proper incident type from the drop-down menu.
 1. All commendations and award nominations shall contain a detailed description of the act and incident that occurred which deserves recognition, as well as the recommendation of the specific award that should be given.
 2. The entry shall be forwarded to the nominated employee's supervisor for review with a copy sent to the employee mentioned through Blue Team. The nominated employee's chain of command should make a good faith effort to review the entry within **30 days** of the submission.
 3. Higher Awards: Nominations for Higher Awards shall be reviewed as follows:
 - a. The supervisor who receives a nomination for a higher award shall review the entry with the employee who is the subject of the higher award nomination to ensure all facts and details of the event are listed and accurate; and
 - b. The supervisor may make alterations or corrections to the nomination as needed during their review with the employee; however no further alterations shall be made, nor shall additional facts be entered into the higher award nomination after the employee and supervisor review has taken place, and the nomination has been forwarded.
 4. Commendations: Commendation entries shall be forwarded by the employee's supervisor through the chain of command to the respective division commander for review and approval and copied to the respective bureau chief. The respective chain of command should make a good faith effort to review the entry within **30 days** of the submission. All commendations are reviewed and audited by the Early Intervention Unit (EIU). If a commendation entry qualifies for a minor or higher award nomination, the EIU will contact the author of the entry and assist with resubmission of the entry.
 5. Service Awards: Service award requests shall be forwarded through the chain of command to the respective division commander or specialty unit/team commander for review of the service criteria requirements.

- B. Written or verbal commendation requests received from a volunteer or member of the public shall be entered into Blue Team by an Office employee, and forwarded through the chain of command, to the division commander for review and approval and copied to the respective bureau chief for consideration of further appropriate recognition and award.
 - C. If the division commander determines that the employee, volunteer, or member of the public being recommended for a commendation or outside agency award is exceptionally deserving and would be better suited as a minor or higher award nomination, the recommendation shall be forwarded to the EIU through Blue Team, requesting the entry type to be changed. The respective bureau chief shall be copied. The EIU shall forward higher award recommendations through Blue Team to the Awards Committee Chairperson for their review and action by the Awards Committee.
 - D. If the division commander determines that the employee, volunteer, or member of the public being recommended for a higher award would be better suited as a minor award, the recommendation shall be forwarded to the EIU through Blue Team, requesting the entry type be changed and attach the appropriate minor award allegation. The respective bureau chief shall be copied.
 - E. If the division commander determines that the employee, volunteer, or member of the public being recommended for a higher or minor award would be better suited as a commendation, the recommendation shall be forwarded to the EIU through Blue Team, requesting the entry type be changed. The respective bureau chief shall be copied. The EIU shall make appropriate adjustments and populate the entry into the Early Identification System (EIS).
2. **Responsibilities of the Awards Committee Chairperson:** The Awards Committee Chairperson and members shall be appointed by the Sheriff or designee.
- A. If approved by the Awards Committee Chairperson, the recommendation for a higher award shall be forwarded to the Sheriff or designee. The Chairperson shall be responsible for the preparation of the appropriate award. At the discretion of the Sheriff or designee, an employee may be presented with several awards stemming from a single incident. Once the recommendation has been reviewed, it shall be returned to the EIU, and the records maintained in the EIS.
 - B. The EIS shall serve as the Office's Awards Register to record all Office awards.
 - 1. After the Awards Committee determines the award recipients, the selections shall be provided to the EIU, who will assist in documenting the award recipient in the EIS.
 - 2. The award entry shall list the name of the recipient, the nominating author, the date of the incident, the date the award was presented, and a copy of the presented award.
3. **Awards and Award Classifications:** Office awards are separated into categories of Minor Awards, Higher Awards, and Service Awards. All awards under these categories shall be submitted through Blue Team.
- A. Minor Awards: These awards are given in recognition of service deemed to be exceptionally deserving of recognition, but to a lesser degree than required to warrant Higher Award consideration. Minor Awards are presented to the employee as specified in each category and shall be entered into Blue Team by the presenting individual using the designated Minor Award Recipient allegation. A Minor Award may be submitted through the chain of command in Blue Team for consideration of a Higher Award.
 - 1. Memorandum of Commendation: A formal document awarded at the division level to an employee whose actions are deemed exceptionally deserving of recognition.

2. Letter of Commendation: A formal document awarded by a bureau chief to an employee whose actions are deemed to be exceptionally deserving of recognition.
 3. Sheriff's Commendation: A formal document presented by the Sheriff to deserving employees and volunteers for outstanding performance that, although exceptional, does not meet the standards for a Higher Award. This award consists of a formal document and a pin presented by the Sheriff.
 4. Undersheriff's Commendation: A formal document presented by the Undersheriff to deserving employees and volunteers for outstanding performance that, although exceptional, does not meet the standards for a Higher Award. This award consists of a formal document and a pin presented by the Undersheriff.
 5. Chief's Award for Excellence: An award presented by a bureau chief to an employee in recognition of exceptional achievement in the areas of job performance, Office goals, community outreach, or demonstrating values and ideals associated with professional law enforcement standards. The employee's supervisor may submit a recommendation through the chain of command to their bureau chief for this award. This award consists of a pin and letter.
 6. Employee of the Quarter: Awarded to one deputy, one detention officer, and one civilian employee of the Office who has demonstrated excellence in their everyday duties, or who has been recognized by the employee's division commander for their commendable actions throughout the quarter. This award consists of a plaque awarded to the recognized employee and a blue, red, white, blue, white, red, and blue ribbon.
 - a. Each division may recognize one employee in its respective area every quarter for consideration. Employees of the Quarter are determined by the bureau chief or designee.
 - b. Nominated employees that are not selected for this award shall receive a commendation entry in Blue Team by EIU personnel.
 7. Medical Aid Award: An award conferred by a division commander to individuals who perform life-saving actions, but to a lesser degree than required for the Life Saving Medal. These actions should aid or support an attempt to preserve a life regardless of the outcome. The rescuer need not have been subjected to personal risk through their involvement. The award consists of a ribbon. The ribbon representing this award shall be blue, white, red, white, and blue.
- B. Higher Awards: These awards are given in recognition for acts of bravery/courage, being injured or dying in the line of duty, saving a person's life, exceptional performance of duty, or outstanding performance by an organizational component of the Office. Recommendations for Higher Awards shall be prepared within **30 days** of the date the incident became known. Higher Award submittals shall be received by the Awards Committee by the end of January, of the following year.
1. Awards for Acts of Bravery/Courage: These awards are conferred in recognition of a single act of bravery/courage performed by an employee or volunteer while facing threats or adversity involving the mental or moral strength to persevere and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. Such acts often involve situations where one's life or safety is at risk. These awards are typically given to individuals who display heroism and an extraordinary commitment to their duties under a dangerous, often in life-threatening situation. This might involve rescuing someone from imminent danger, stopping a crime in progress, or

making split-second decisions that save lives or protect others from harm. Each act is worthy of an award. However, several commendable acts may qualify the individual for a higher award. Each award consists of a neck ribbon with medal, citation, and a uniform ribbon.

- a. Medal of Valor: The Office's highest award, that may be awarded to individuals who distinguish themselves by conspicuous heroism, above and beyond the normal demands of duty. To receive this award the individual must have performed a single act displaying extreme bravery/courage while consciously facing imminent peril. The ribbon representing this award shall be white, red, blue, red, and white. This award also consists of a plaque awarded to the recognized individual.
 - b. Sheriff's Medal: Conferred to individuals who distinguish themselves by heroism, above and beyond the normal demands of duty, but to a lesser degree than that required for the Medal of Valor. To receive this award the individual must have performed a single act displaying extreme bravery/courage while knowingly facing a potentially dangerous situation. The ribbon representing this award shall be red, white, and red.
 - c. Sheriff's Star: Conferred to individuals who distinguish themselves by heroism, above and beyond the normal demands of duty, but to a lesser degree than that required for the Sheriff's Medal. To receive this award the individual must have directly supported others displaying extreme bravery/courage in response to a potentially dangerous situation. The ribbon representing this award shall be green, red, green, red, green, with a white center band.
2. Purple Heart: Conferred to individuals who suffer serious physical injury or death in the line of duty. This award consists of a neck ribbon with medal, citation, and a uniform ribbon. The ribbon representing this award shall be solid purple.
 3. Life Saving Medal: Conferred to individuals whose decisive actions prevented the death of another person whether through mechanical intervention, rescue, or other lifesaving measures that avert a fatal outcome. The rescuer need not have been subjected to personal risk through their involvement. The Blue Team entry should acknowledge the specific life saving measure utilized by the individual. This award consists of a neck ribbon with a medal, citation, and uniform ribbon. The ribbon representing this award shall be solid red.
 - a. Life saving measures which may qualify for this award nomination include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - (1) Performing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and/or use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED);
 - (2) Administering Narcan;
 - (3) Performing Emergency First Aid;
 - (4) Active suicide attempt intervention and; and/or
 - (5) Active rescue of an individual from an imminent life threatening circumstance or a dangerous environment, such as a waterway, burning building, or burning vehicle.

- b. Employees who had a supporting role do not qualify for this award but may be considered for a Medical Aid Award nomination.
- 4. Exceptional Performance Awards: Conferred to individuals based on exceptional performance of duty, clearly above what is normally expected, and has contributed significantly to the success of a major project or field operation. Awards consist of a neck ribbon with a medal, citation, and uniform ribbon.
 - a. Sheriff's Distinguished Service Medal: This is the Office's highest award for service and may be conferred to individuals who distinguish themselves by performing exceptional service in a duty of great responsibility or of critical importance to law enforcement. This may be recognized for sustained extraordinary performance, leadership, or contributions to the mission of the Office. The exceptional performance of normal duty will not alone justify this award. The ribbon representing this award shall be solid royal blue.
 - b. Sheriff's Meritorious Service Medal: Conferred to individuals who perform meritorious service, but to a lesser degree than that required for the Sheriff's Distinguished Service Medal. This may be recognized for outstanding performance of duty, often over a prolonged period, or in a particular incident that does not necessarily involve danger but reflects exceptional dedication, professionalism, or achievement. To receive this award the individual must have performed meritorious service in support of a specific project or operation. The ribbon representing this award shall be solid dark green.
- 5. Humanitarian of the Year Medal: This award signifies the pinnacle of success to an employee who has worked under a philosophy of servant-leadership and which honors a selfless individual who employs a set of practices that enrich lives, values the development of others, and builds trust within our communities. This is awarded to one employee annually. The award consists of a medal and ribbon. The ribbon representing this award shall be light blue, yellow, light blue, green, yellow, green, yellow, green, light blue, yellow, light blue.
- 6. Community Relations/Outreach Award/Medal: Awarded to an employee for outstanding performance or conduct exemplifying dedication to duty involving a single act or continuing excellence that fosters or furthers the Office in significant problem-solving activities in the community, the creation of a productive community partnership, or an implementation of a new community policing program or initiative that builds and enhances trust, knowledge, understanding, and community satisfaction. The award consists of a medal and ribbon. The ribbon representing this award shall be fuchsia, white, light blue, black, light blue, white, fuchsia.
- 7. Employee of the Year: Conferred to one deputy, one detention officer, and one civilian employee of the Office who have demonstrated excellence in their everyday duties, or who has been recognized by other employees or their division commander for their commendable actions throughout the year. Employees of the year are determined by the Awards Committee. The award consists of a plaque and a red, white, and blue ribbon.
- 8. Supervisor of the Year: Conferred to one deputy supervisor of all ranks sergeant and above, one detention supervisor of all ranks sergeant and above, and one civilian supervisor of the Office with equivalent rank of sergeant or above who have demonstrated excellence in their everyday duties, or who has been recognized by other employees to include

subordinates for their commendable actions throughout the year. Supervisors of the year are determined by the Awards Committee. The award consists of a plaque and a blue, white, and red ribbon.

9. Meritorious Citation: These awards are conferred upon an organizational component of the Office for outstanding performance of duty, clearly above what is normally expected, which has contributed significantly to the success of a major project or field operation. The commendatory accomplishment must be the result of a combined effort by members of the Office component. The participation of all members and the results of the cited activity must be explained in detail to be considered for this award. The awarding of a meritorious citation does not preclude the conferring of individual awards to members of the Office component for individual accomplishments. These awards consist of a written citation and a uniform ribbon. The ribbon representing this award shall be white, blue, and white.
- C. Service Awards: These awards are given in recognition of service during a designated time frame in an Office specialty unit/team, past or present military service, or awarded by an organization outside of the Office. Service Awards are presented to the employee by their respective division commander or specialty unit/team commander and shall be entered into Blue Team by the presenting individual using the designated Service Award allegation unless otherwise specified. Service Award submissions shall contain an attestation that the individual has met the specific service award criteria.
1. Emergency Service Award: Awarded to employees and volunteers to recognize those who served the needs of the Office during the designated time frames of a natural or man-made disaster, pandemic, or another significant emergency event. This award shall consist of a certificate and a ribbon. The ribbon representing this award shall be red, gold, and red.
 2. Military Service Award: Awarded to active and former military members. The ribbon representing this award shall be green in color, with a blue, white, and red stripe in the center.
 - a. The employee shall submit a memorandum to the Human Resource Services Division requesting the military service ribbon. The initial military service ribbon shall be provided by the Office and additional ribbons may be purchased.
 - b. Reserve and posse members who are active or former military members are authorized to display their military service ribbon on their uniforms as specified in this Policy. Reserve deputies and posse members may purchase military service ribbons at their own expense. Information regarding the purchase of military service ribbons can be obtained from the Enforcement Support Division.
 3. Honor Guard Meritorious Service Award: Awarded to deputies and detention officers who are actively serving or have formerly served in the Sheriff's Office Honor Guard Unit, for more than three years. The ribbon representing this award shall be red in color with a blue, white, red, white, and blue stripe in center.
 4. Dive Team Achievement Service Award: Awarded to sworn personnel and posse members who are actively serving or have formerly served on the Lake Patrol Dive Team for more than three years, achieving the status of Certified MCSO Diver. The ribbon representing this award shall be red with a diagonal white stripe and metallic gold border.
 5. Mobile Field Force Service Award: Awarded to deputies and detention officers who are actively serving or have formerly served on the Mobile Field Force for three years, or a

satisfactorily length of time in a supervisory or command level of responsibility as designated by the Mobile Field Force Commander. The ribbon representing this award shall be coyote tan with a black stripe in center and olive drab piping on the outer edges of the ribbon.

6. High Risk Response Service Award: Awarded to deputies and detention officers who are actively serving or have formerly served in one of the Sheriff's Office High Risk Response Units/Teams, to include, but not limited to, the Tactical Operations Unit (TOU), Bomb Squad, Canine Unit (K-9), Special Response Team (SRT), Criminal Apprehension Surveillance Team (CAST), Aviation Services Division (ASD), and Special Investigations Division (SID) personnel. This ribbon is awarded to eligible employees after completing three years of service, or a satisfactory length of time within their High Risk Response Unit/Team, as designated by the applicable High Risk Response Unit/Team Commander. The ribbon representing this award shall be OD green with a coyote tan stripe in center.
4. **Award and Service Ribbon Display:** Ribbons accompanying higher awards reflecting Office service, whether awarded by the Office or by other organizations, may be worn on the appropriate uniform.
 - A. All award ribbons shall be mounted and worn according to the precedence listed. Awards shall be worn in order of precedence from the top down and from the wearer's right to left, unless otherwise specified.
 - B. Personal decorations and Service Award ribbon precedence is as follows:
 1. Medal of Valor;
 2. Sheriff's Medal;
 3. Sheriff's Star;
 4. Purple Heart;
 5. Life Saving Medal;
 6. Sheriff's Distinguished Service Medal;
 7. Sheriff's Meritorious Service Medal;
 8. Humanitarian of the Year Medal;
 9. Community Relations/Outreach Medal;
 10. Employee of the Year;
 11. Supervisor of the Year;
 12. Meritorious Citation;
 13. Emergency Service Award;
 14. Military Service Award;
 15. Honor Guard Meritorious Service Award;

16. Dive Team Achievement Service Award;
 17. Mobile Field Force Service Award;
 18. High Risk Response Service Award;
 19. Employee of the Quarter;
 20. Medical Aid Award; and
 21. Awards from organizations other than the Office.
- C. A star shall be placed on the ribbon to indicate a subsequent award. A maximum of three stars may be placed on any award ribbon. Award and service ribbons shall be displayed and worn on the designated uniform, as specified in Office Policy GC-20, *Uniform Specifications*.
5. **Awards from Other Agencies and Community Organizations:** Awards from other agencies and community organizations may be awarded to Office personnel.
 - A. Office personnel may receive and nominate other Office personnel for Awards presented from other agencies and community organizations for actions taken in the performance of their duties and/or as representatives of the Office.
 - B. Written or verbal requests for an Office employee commendation or award received from a volunteer or member of the public shall be entered into Blue Team by an Office employee using the designated Other-Award Recipient allegation. The request will then be forwarded through the chain of command, to the division commander for review and approval and copied to the respective bureau chief for consideration of further appropriate recognition and award.
 - C. Written or verbal requests made by an Office employee or volunteer nominating another Office employee or volunteer for an outside agency or community organization's award shall be entered into Blue Team by an Office employee using the designated Other-Award Recipient allegation. The request will then be forwarded through the chain of command, to the division commander for review and approval and copied to the respective bureau chief for consideration of further appropriate recognition and award.
6. **Awards to Members of the General Public:** The Office may present a member or organization of the public with an award for behavior or acts that served to assist the Office in achieving its mission; or for assisting an employee or volunteer in the performance of their duty.
 - A. Certificate of Commendation: A formal letter conferred by the Office upon a member of the public for heroic conduct while assisting an employee or volunteer in the performance of duty. The recipient of this award may not have been acting in any law enforcement capacity.
 - B. Certificate of Appreciation: A formal letter presented by the Office to an organization or member of the public whose performance and acceptance of civic responsibility assists the Office in accomplishing its mission.
7. **Formal Presentation of Awards:** Recipients of a Higher Award shall be notified of the achievement and the date of the award presentation.
 - A. The Sheriff shall determine which Higher Awards should be presented in an official Office ceremony.

- B. A formal awards presentation shall be made by the Sheriff or designee.
- C. The awarded employee shall receive the original documents and copies shall be maintained in the EIS and the employee's Personnel File.
- D. Any award may be conferred posthumously.

8. Record of Awards:

- A. The Awards Committee Chairperson provides corresponding certificates of the Minor and Higher Awards allocated to employees, volunteers, or members of the public to the EIU, who memorialize the award in the EIS.
- B. The Chief's Awards Committee Chairperson provides corresponding certificates of the Minor and Higher Awards allocated to employees, volunteers, or members of the public to the EIU, who memorialize the awards in the EIS.
- C. The Employee of the Quarter Awards Committee Chairperson provides corresponding certificates of the Minor Awards allocated to employees, volunteers, or members of the public to the EIU, who memorialize the awards in the EIS.
- D. Employees who are missing historic awards in the EIS, are to obtain a copy through their chain of command. Once the documentation is gathered, copies shall be distributed through e-mail to the EIU for appropriate memorialization in the EIS.