

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Special Compensation Award Incentive Program (Award Program)**

I. PURPOSE

Pursuant to Arkansas Code § 21-5-227 and § 21-5-228, this policy establishes the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) Special Compensation Award Program (Award Program). The Award Program is designed to significantly reduce the reliance on contract nursing staff, increase successful recruiting, and for better retention of current eligible employees at Arkansas State Veterans Homes (ASVH) by providing a one-time special compensation award.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. Current direct nursing care employees occupying regular positions on a full-time basis at an ASVH; and
2. Newly hired direct nursing care employees who will occupy regular positions on a full-time basis at an ASVH.

III. AWARD PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Award Program will be administered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other protected status.

Eligibility:

Current employees occupying a full-time nursing position at an ASVH and new hires into full-time nursing at an ASVH will be eligible to receive a one-time award in order to retain current employees and to serve as a recruitment incentive for new employees in eligible positions.

Positions eligible to receive a special award are listed in Appendix 1.

Criteria:

All current full-time employees meeting the above eligibility requirement will automatically meet the criteria required to receive the five-thousand-dollar (\$5000) special compensation award. This will result in the following approximate costs for each of the facilities: Arkansas State Veterans Home-Fayetteville: \$135,000 and Arkansas State Veterans Home-North Little Rock: \$180,000.

Current and newly hired employees into eligible positions will receive their five-thousand-dollar (\$5000) special compensation over time as detailed below.

Current and newly hired employees may receive only one award (i.e. if a qualifying employee resigns and later returns or is promoted into another eligible position, they would not be eligible to receive a second special award).

Procedures:

1. A qualifying current employee's special compensation award will be processed following final approval from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The employee will receive one-half of the award on the first pay period following OPM approval. The second half of the award will be paid out on the first pay period following the one-year anniversary of the first payment.

If the employee voluntarily resigns or is terminated from employment prior to the completion of one full calendar year beyond the initial payment date, the following conditions shall apply:

- Will repay ADVA any payment received before the date that the employee resigns or is terminated from employment; and
- Will not receive the value of any installment payments scheduled on or after the date of resignation or termination.

2. A newly hired employee into a qualifying position will receive one-half of the award on the first pay period following OPM approval. The second half of the award will be paid out on the first pay period following the employee's one-year career service date. If the employee voluntarily resigns or is terminated from employment prior to completion of the required period of employment the following shall apply:

- Will repay ADVA any installment payments received before the date that the employee resigns or is terminated from employment; and
- Will not receive the value of any installment payments scheduled on or after the date of resignation or termination.

If the employee fails to repay within one hundred eighty (180) days from the date of resignation or termination, the Revenue Division of the Department of Finance and Administration may offset any refunds due the employee from the division by the sum certified by the Office of Personnel Management as due and owing under § 26-36-301 et. seq.

Miscellaneous:

The following terms apply to the Award Program:

1. An employee shall not receive more than one (1) special compensation award type per qualifying event.
2. A lump-sum special compensation award payment is subject to withholding of all state and federal taxes.
3. A lump-sum special compensation award payment is included by retirement systems in determining retirement benefits.
4. A special compensation award may allow an employee's salary to exceed the maximum pay level.
5. An employee may receive a special compensation award, and a merit increase in the same fiscal year, if the employee is otherwise eligible for a merit increase.
6. Existing department funding will be used to cover the costs associated with any special compensation award.

Appendix 1 – Positions Eligible for Special Compensation Awards

Classification	Title	Grade
L002C	Nursing Director	MP04
L018N	Nurse Practitioner (APRN)	MP04
L027C	Registered Nurse Supervisor	MP02
L019C	Registered Nurse Coordinator	MP02
L032C	Registered Nurse-Hospital	MP01
L062C	Licensed Practical Nurse Supervisor	GS07
L069C	Licensed Practical Nurse	GS06