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Department of Transformation and Shared Services
Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Secretary Leslie Fiskin

December 18, 2024

The Honorable Breanne Davis, Co-Chairperson
The Honorable Mark Berry, Co-Chairperson
Uniform Personnel Classification and
Compensation Plan Subcommittee
Arkansas Legislative Council
State Capitol Building, Room 315

Dear Senator Davis and Representative Berry:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) respectfully submits department plans for administering special compensation awards and recruitment incentives. Ark. Code Ann. § 21-5-227 and § 21-5-228 authorizes a department to develop their plan and submit it for OPM review and legislative approval. The Arkansas Department of Veteran's Affairs has submitted their plan, and OPM is requesting approval of this plan.

Your approval of this request is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kay Barnhill'.

Kay Barnhill, Director
Office of Personnel Management

KB:sd-1

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Maintenance Position Special Compensation Award Incentive Program
(Maintenance 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) Maintenance Position Special Compensation Award Program (Maintenance Award Program). The Maintenance Award Program is designed to significantly reduce the reliance on temporary staffing agencies, to increase successful recruiting, and for better retention of current eligible employees at Arkansas State Veterans Cemeteries (ASVC) and Arkansas State Veterans Homes (ASVH) by providing a one-time special compensation award.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

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

III. AWARD PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Maintenance Position 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 maintenance position at an ASVC or ASVH and new hires into full-time maintenance positions at an ASVC or 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 three-thousand-dollar (\$3,000) special compensation award. This will result in the following approximate costs for each of the facilities: Arkansas State Veterans Home-Fayetteville: \$6,000, Arkansas State Veterans Home-North Little Rock: \$6,000, Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery-NLR: \$24,000, and Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery-Birdeye: \$12,000.

Current and newly hired employees into eligible positions will receive their three-thousand-dollar (\$3,000) 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 Maintenance 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
S017C	Maintenance Coordinator	GS07
S033C	Maintenance Supervisor	GS06
S046C	Maintenance Technician	GS04
S050C	Maintenance Specialist	GS03