

MRN: [21 STATE 125448](#)
Date/DTG: Dec 16, 2021 / 160023Z DEC 21
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Action: ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: APER, AMGT
Reference: A) [21 State 10876](#)
B) [21 State 28978](#)
C) [21 State 39640](#)
D) [21 State 120356](#)
Subject: The Retirement Process: Career Achievement Awards

Key Points:

- This is the fifth in a series of annual notices concerning the retirement process.
- Career Achievement Awards recognize employees for their years of service and are provided after retirement.
- Department of State Foreign Service and Civil Service employees with 25 years or more of service may receive, the Secretary's Career Achievement Award, the "Expanding Universe" Department of State Career Commemoration Award, and the Department of State Career Flag Award.
- Department of State Foreign Service and Civil Service employees with less than 25 years of service may receive the Department of State Retirement Recognition Award, and the "Expanding Universe" Department of State Career Commemoration Award.
- Locally Employed Staff with 25 years or more of service may receive the Secretary's Career Achievement Award, and at post's discretion, the Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award and/or a U.S. flag flown at post.
- Locally Employed Staff with fewer than 25 years of service may receive at post's discretion, the Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award and/or a U.S. flag flown at post.
- If retiring American employees wish to receive the retirement career achievement awards, they should submit form DS-5079 to the Office of Retirement when submitting their retirement application.
- Posts or bureaus that wish to present Department level retirement awards at a pre-retirement ceremony must plan ahead for delivery prior to the event.
- Chiefs of Mission are eligible to receive a Chief of Mission (Bilateral or Multilateral) flag and a U.S. flag upon retirement or resignation from the Department of State.

OVERVIEW

1. To recognize retiring employees for their years of dedicated service, the Department offers Career Achievement (Retirement) Awards through a program coordinated by the Bureau of Global Talent Management's Office of Retirement (GTM/RET). This message describes the awards, their eligibility criteria, and the application process. If you have questions after reviewing this information, e-mail HRSC@state.gov.

2. Career Achievement (Retirement) Awards are based on years of creditable federal service, which includes civilian service and any military service not covered by a military pension (except when the military pension is waived and that service is included in the creditable civilian service). Awards are given at retirement. Additional awards are not issued at the conclusion of a period of post-retirement reemployment. For employees who separate without qualifying for immediate retirement, posts and bureaus have the discretion to recognize such employees with locally procured plaques or other mementos.

Awards Eligibility Requirement for Retiring Employees

3. Foreign Service and Civil Service employees with 25 years or more of service may receive:

- The Secretary's Career Achievement Award (certificate),
- The "Expanding Universe" Department of State Career Commemoration Award (crystal sculpture), and
- The Department of State Career Flag Award (U.S. flag).

Foreign Service and Civil Service employees with fewer than 25 years of service may receive:

- The Department of State Retirement Recognition Award (certificate), and
- The "Expanding Universe" Department of State Career Commemoration Award (crystal sculpture).

Locally Employed Staff with 25 years or more of service may receive:

- The Secretary's Career Achievement Award (certificate), and
- At post's discretion, the Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award (certificate) and/or a U.S. flag flown at post.

Locally Employed Staff with fewer than 25 years of service may receive:

- At post's discretion, the Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award (certificate) and/or a U.S. flag flown at post.

Separating Chiefs of Mission (current or former, career or non-career) may additionally receive:

- An ambassadorial flag and a U.S. flag at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Description of Retirement Awards

4. The Secretary's Career Achievement Award is a certificate signed by the Secretary that features an individualized citation honoring the employee's service.

5. The Department of State Retirement Recognition Award is a certificate signed by the Director General that features standard language and does not require an individual citation.

6. The "Expanding Universe" Department of State Career Commemoration Award is a block of crystal containing a laser-etched replica of the Marshall M. Fredericks "Expanding Universe" sculpture. That sculpture was installed in the South Court of the Harry S Truman building in 1964 and symbolizes the "immensity, order, and mystery of the universe." The crystal has the employee's name laser-etched on it and comes with a black marble base.

7. The Department of State Career Flag Award is a 3x5 foot U.S. flag displayed in a clear Lucite display case.

8. The Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award is a certificate featuring an individualized citation regarding the local employee's service to the post and to the United States. It may be presented by post at an appropriate event.

Application and Processing

9. Department-level Career Achievement (Retirement) Awards are not initiated through the usual awards committee process. Instead, if a retiring American employee wishes to receive the applicable career achievement awards, he/she should submit form DS-5079 (Career Achievement [Retirement] Award Request) to the Office of Retirement (GTM/RET) when submitting the retirement application.

10. This self-nomination process ensures the efficient use of appropriated funds by ordering awards only for those employees who want them. Posts or bureaus that would like to present these awards in a pre-retirement ceremony should encourage the employee to submit the form at least 90 days prior to the ceremony (for details see the section below on "Awards for Retirement Ceremonies").

11. GTM/RET funds and arranges for delivery of the "Expanding Universe" Career Commemoration Award and the Department of State Career Flag Award. A vendor manufactures, packages, and ships those awards to the address specified by the retiring employee on the DS-5079. GTM/RET will only deliver the physical award items to U.S. Territory addresses, except for pre-retirement ceremonies (for details see the section below on "Awards for Retirement Ceremonies").

12. GTM/RET also forwards the DS-5079 to the appropriate bureau awards coordinator who prepares the certificate and arranges for its delivery to the employee:

- For the Secretary's Career Achievement Award, the bureau is responsible for asking the employee or office/post to provide notes for the citation. The bureau may also write a generic citation in the absence of employee input. Citations are limited to 50 words and must be approved by S/ES-EX by e-mailing the draft text to Edwardsec2@state.gov and GillmoreSJ@state.gov. A list of approved sample citations can be found on SharePoint under "Retirement Recognition Awards." The employee's bureau will order the certificate from Global Publishing Solutions (GPS) that comes with the Secretary's signature.
- For the Department of State Retirement Recognition Award, the bureau will order the certificate from GPS and send it to the GTM Front Office for the Director General's signature.
- For Locally Employed Staff with 25 years or more of service, post may send a request for the Secretary's Career Achievement Award to the bureau awards coordinator (not to GTM/RET or HRSC). At post's discretion, any retiring Locally Employed Staff may receive the Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award and/or a U.S. flag flown at post. The Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award may be ordered from GPS.

Chiefs of Mission

13. In addition to awards based on length of service, Chiefs of Mission (current or former, career or non-career) are eligible to receive a Chief of Mission (Bilateral or Multilateral) flag and a U.S. flag upon retirement or resignation from the Department of State. The Director General officiates at flag ceremonies and encourages Chiefs of Mission who return through Washington en route to their final destination or those retiring from Washington to schedule a flag ceremony so that the Department may give appropriate recognition in honor of the Chief of Mission's service. For more information and to arrange a ceremony, please contact the Director General's office at 202-647-9898 or via e-mail at DGDirect@state.gov. For departing Chiefs of Mission who do not travel through Washington en route to their retirement address or who do not wish a flag ceremony, please notify the Director General's office of your final destination address so that the flags

can be forwarded via certified mail. Other questions regarding Chief of Mission flags not addressed in this notice may be addressed to GTM/PAS at 202-647-9731.

Awards for Retirement Ceremonies

14. Posts or bureaus that wish to present Departmental-level retirement awards at a pre-retirement ceremony must plan ahead. For example, multiple steps are involved in drafting, clearing, printing, and signing the Secretary's Career Achievement Award. Sufficient time is needed to laser etch and deliver the "Expanding Universe" Career Commemoration Award.

15. As a result, GTM/RET can only meet requests for delivery of awards for retirement ceremonies if the DS-5079 is received in GTM/RET at least 90 days prior to the ceremony. Awards will only be mailed to an overseas post for the purpose of presentation at retirement ceremonies. Awards requested 90 days prior to domestic ceremonies must provide a local delivery address as the Office of Retirement does not receive the awards on behalf of individual recipients. GTM/RET is not responsible for the loss or delay of the awards.

16. As previously stated, GTM/RET coordinates delivery of the "Expanding Universe" Career Commemoration Award and the Department of State Career Flag Award. Bureau awards coordinators obtain the Secretary's Career Achievement Award and the Department of State Retirement Recognition Award. Overseas posts obtain the Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award and/or U.S. flag flown at post.

17. Questions: If questions remain after reviewing this message, please contact HRSC@state.gov.

Signature:

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