

University of California - Local Guidelines for the Employee Recognition and Award Program (ERAP)

For Plan Year July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026

These guidelines serve as a framework for the implementation of cash recognition awards for employees under the Employee Recognition and Award Program (ERAP) at UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR).

Plan Eligibility

Policy-covered career PSS and MSP employees, as well as exclusively represented employees in the Clerical Unit (CX), are eligible for STAR Plan cash awards if, at the time of the award, they:

- Have successfully completed their probationary period, if applicable.
- Are on active pay status or on an approved unpaid leave.

Received a “Meets Expectations” or better overall rating on their most recent annual performance evaluation. (PPSM 23 requires that written performance evaluations be completed annually.) Employees who have not yet received an annual performance evaluation may be eligible for an award if their manager confirms on the nomination form that they are “meeting expectations.”

Additionally, employees with the following types of appointments are also eligible to participate in STAR at this location if they meet the above requirements:

- Policy-covered (non-represented) staff in limited and contract appointments.
- CX represented employees in limited appointments.

All other exclusively represented employees are not eligible for recognition awards under the STAR Plan.

An employee may not receive an award under the STAR Plan if the employee is a participant in an incentive award plan that prohibits the receipt of a recognition award. An employee’s receipt of an award under the STAR Plan does not establish any right or guarantee that the employee will be eligible for or entitled to an award in any subsequent Plan year.

Award Limits and Restrictions

The following limitations apply to STAR Plan cash awards for Individual or Team Awards:

- Team and individual awards are limited to a maximum of \$1,000 per person and capped at one per person or team per fiscal year, except for the Best of the Best and the Staff Inclusion awardees, which will be capped at \$2,500 each.
- STAR Plan cash awards are strictly discretionary and may not be promised or guaranteed in advance.
- “Across-the-board” type awards (e.g., awards to a category of employees without regard to a recipient’s performance or relative contribution) are not allowed under the STAR Plan. Awards must be based on the recipient’s achievement as an individual or as part of a team.
- The Vice President of ANR has the authority to approve additional Individual awards not to exceed \$2,500 per individual and Team awards not to exceed \$3,000 per Team. (Team members will equally split the \$3,000 award.)

Nomination Process

The STAR Award Nomination Form must be used for every nomination. Electronic notification will be sent to unit directors to launch the annual nomination process and establish the nomination deadline.

Individual Award Nominations

Individual employees may be nominated for STAR awards based on one or more of the performance standards set forth in the STAR Plan. Input will be required from the employee's manager/supervisor if someone other than the employee's manager/supervisor is nominating the employee.

Team Award Nominations

Team Awards may be granted to teams of employees who meet one or more of the performance standards set forth in the STAR Plan for work on a project within the same department or for work on the development and/or implementation of interdepartmental projects. If a team application is nominated, the performance standard of "teamwork" must be completed in the application. Input will be required from the team leader and each employee's supervisor/manager if someone other than the manager/supervisor is nominating the team.

The employee's unit head is responsible for confirming that the employee is eligible for an award and must approve the employee's award, regardless of the funding source for the award.

Award Review and Approval Authority

An appointed review committee will review applications submitted. The committee will select up to twenty individuals and five teams to receive awards. The ANR Vice President must approve any variation from this target number of awards.

The process for all STAR Plan cash awards requires endorsement of the employee's immediate supervisor and approval of the next-level manager. All Individual and Team STAR Plan cash awards require the approval of the ANR Vice President.

Timing and Processing of STAR Award Payments

STAR awards will be presented no later than July 31, 2026.

The assigned Description of Service (DOS) code XSC, specific to the STAR Plan, must be used when paying awards to employees.

All STAR Plan cash awards for the Plan year should be processed in accordance with year-end closing schedules.

Funding Requirements and Restrictions

UC ANR Staff Recognition and Development Program funds, or any unrestricted funding source UC ANR selects for this purpose, will be the source of funding for the STAR Award Program offered by ANR.

Recordkeeping and Compliance

The committee will review and recommend their selection to the ANR Vice President. The committee facilitator and non-voting member is the Executive Director for ANR Human Resources and will keep appropriate records of award winners. Working with the UC ANR Business Operation Center Director or Associate Director, the UC ANR Human Resource Executive Director will also monitor the monetary awards distribution. Financial recordkeeping will be conducted and monitored by the UC ANR Business Operation Center.

Plan Contact for Questions

Questions regarding the ANR STAR Plan should be directed to UC ANR Human Resource Chief Executive Officer, Bethanie Brown (brbbrown@ucanr.edu).