

U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2020 Secretary's Awards Categories

Secretary's Exceptional Service Gold Medal Award: This is the highest award for service granted by the Secretary. The award honors exceptional leadership or service distinguished by achievements of unique national or international significance, reflecting great credit on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) by markedly improving the security of our homeland. *Only one individual award will be presented in this category.*

Secretary's Meritorious Service Silver Medal Award: This award is the second highest award presented by the Secretary and recognizes outstanding leadership, superior public service, or unusually significant contributions to strengthening homeland security. It may recognize a body of work regarding remarkable innovation or notable resourcefulness and diligence that improved the effectiveness of one or more DHS missions. *No more than ten individual awards in this category.*

Secretary's Award for Exemplary Service: This award recognizes exemplary individual service by DHS employees serving in administrative, technical, clerical, and general support positions. Employees in support services positions below GS-11 and WG-8 are eligible for this award. *No more than ten individual awards in this category.*

Secretary's Award for COVID-19 Pandemic Heroism (*New for this year only!*): The award honors exceptional and dedicated work and selfless response in the face of this deadly and perilous coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that erupted around the world and in this nation. *No more than five individual or team awards will be presented in this category.*

Secretary's Award for Leadership Excellence: This award recognizes an individual that exemplifies the Department of Homeland Security's leadership philosophy, principles, and core values of integrity, vigilance, and respect. This individual puts employees first and inspires and motivates others. This award is named for the first Secretary of the Department, Tom Ridge, who embodied these qualities. *Only one individual award in this category.*

Secretary's Award for Valor: This award is the highest recognition for extraordinary acts of valor occurring either on or off duty. The employee will have demonstrated selfless response by performing courageously in a highly dangerous or life-threatening situation to protect another's life or to save significant assets or infrastructure from harm. Both civilian and military employees of the Department are eligible for this award. *Only one individual or group award in this category.*

Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Diversity Management: This award recognizes an employee who has excelled in efforts to promote diversity at DHS through outstanding leadership and innovation. It may acknowledge individual efforts exclusively within DHS or with external partners who assist DHS in meeting our commitment to diversity. *Only one individual award in this category.*

Secretary's Award for Volunteer Service: This award recognizes significant contributions by DHS employees who serve as volunteers with non-profit or community service programs or activities. The employee's contributions should be direct, sustained, and have meaningful results for individuals or larger public good. *Only one individual award in this category.*