National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
**Headquarters**
Washington, DC 20546-0001

December 14, 2012

Reply to Attn of: Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM)

TO: Directors, NASA Centers
Executive Director, Headquarters Operations
Executive Director, NASA Shared Services Center

FROM: Vice Chair, Incentive Awards Board

SUBJECT: Request for 2013 Agency Honor Awards Nominations

On behalf of the Incentive Awards Board (IAB), I invite you to submit nominations for the 2013 National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Agency Honor Awards (AHA), the Agency's most prestigious awards program. Nominations must be submitted through the NASA Automated Awards System (NAAS) no later than March 15, 2013. The enclosed document contains the AHA nomination instructions, numerical guidelines for 2013, and a description and criteria for the awards.

Upon approval by either the Expert Panel or the IAB and by the IAB Chair, the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC), in coordination with the Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM), will produce and distribute all approved awards to their respective Centers.

Finally, on behalf of the Administrator, the Deputy Administrator, and myself, we are personally dedicated to recognizing and rewarding excellence throughout the Agency without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, grade, or occupation. Your nominations should represent the diverse population of civil servant employees and contractor partners whom you feel are most deserving within your organization.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Kevin Ortegel of my staff at (202) 358-1486.

Jeri L. Buchholz

Enclosure

## PART 1: Agency Honor Awards (AHA) Nomination Instructions

**A. Nomination Documentation Guidelines:** All Honor Award nominations must be entered into NAAS, with all Center reviews/approvals completed, no later than March 15, 2013.

Nomination justifications must be cogent, citing specific facts, activities, and accomplishments in support of the nomination. Additionally, nomination justifications must be succinct (not exceeding 3,500 characters in NAAS) and address all criteria for the applicable award as stated in **Part 3: Description and Criteria of all NASA Honor Awards.**

Additional references and guidance for writing quality nominations are provided in the Agency Honor Awards Nominator's Toolkit on the NASAPeople Web site at http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/awards/toolkit.htm.

**B. Numerical Allocation Guidelines:** Nomination allocations for each Center are based on the following guidelines:

- 1.5 percent of the permanent and term civil servant population.
- .1 percent of the contractor workforce with an active NASA IdMAX identity, PIVII badge, and contract number.

Centers have the discretion to use civil service allocations for non-civil service nominations and vice versa.

Jet Propulsion Laboratory employees are eligible for civil service employee awards under the NASA Honor Awards Program (see NPR 3451.1, Chapter 5).

The numerical allocations for each Center are identified in the table in **Part 2, Numerical Guidelines for 2013 NASA Honor Awards**. Centers may not submit nominations in excess of their numerical allocations. Please note that the sum for each Center does not take into account approved out-of-cycle awards for CY 2012. Therefore, Centers must subtract allocated medals which were awarded out-of-cycle during this period.

Nominations for the following awards **do** count against numerical allocations:

- Distinguished Service Medal
- Distinguished Public Service Medal
- Exceptional Service Medal
- Exceptional Public Service Medal
- Exceptional Achievement Medal
- Exceptional Public Achievement Medal

Nominations for the following awards **do not** count against numerical allocations:

- Outstanding Leadership Medal
- Outstanding Public Leadership Medal

- Early Career Achievement Medal
- Silver Achievement Medal
- Exceptional Engineering Achievement Medal
- Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal
- Exceptional Technology Achievement Medal
- Equal Employment Opportunity Medal
- Exceptional Administrative Achievement Medal
- Space Flight Medal
- Exceptional Bravery Medal
- Group Achievement Award

## C. AHA Review and Approval

To ensure that only the strongest nominations are submitted for consideration, Centers must establish a review board to ensure that all nominees meet the award criteria. Nominations submitted in NAAS as of the nomination due date, March 15, 2013, must have been reviewed and approved by the Center board, which is to ensure that nominations strongly satisfy the criteria for the nominated award.

All nominations will be reviewed by either an Expert Panel or the IAB, except for awards delegated to Center Directors for approval. A reclama process will permit Center Directors to submit rejected nominations to the IAB/IAB Chair for reconsideration.

All nominations approved by the Expert Panels and the IAB, including those submitted for reconsideration and recommended by the IAB, will be submitted to the Chair of the IAB (Lori B. Garver) for final approval/disapproval.

D. Other AHA nomination timeframes:

**Group Achievement Awards**. To provide more timely recognition, GAAs will be processed twice a year by the NSSC. There will be a second deadline in 2013 for GAA nominations to be submitted in NAAS: August 30, 2013. A reminder notice for this second GAA submission date will be sent to Center Awards Officers in early June.

**Space Flight Medal.** Since flight missions occur on their own timetable, which is not necessarily compatible with the NASA Honor Awards cycle, the Space Flight Medal will be awarded as circumstances arise and is exempt from the out-of-cycle awards process.

**Exceptional Bravery Medal**. Due to the nature of this award, and the situations that would warrant granting it, it is most appropriate to award this medal as quickly as possible. Therefore, Centers have been delegated the authority to approve this award; and it is exempt from the out-of-cycle awards process.

**PART 2: NUMERICAL GUIDELINES FOR 2013 NASA HONOR AWARDS**
(The sum does not include deductions for approved out-of-cycle medals.)

| Center | Civil Service Workforce [1] | Contractor Workforce[1] | Civil Service Multiplier (1.5%) | Non-Civil Service Multiplier [2] (.1%) | SUM[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ARC | 1212 | 4745 | 18 | 5 | 23 |
| DFRC | 539 | 1585 | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| GRC | 1630 | 2379 | 24 | 2 | 26 |
| GSFC | 3317 | 15058 | 50 | 15 | 65 |
| HQ | 1152 | 2199 | 17 | 2 | 19 |
| JPL | 5017 | 1840 | 120 | 2 | 122[4] |
| JSC | 3161 | 16032 | 47 | 16 | 63 |
| KSC | 2063 | 9853 | 31 | 10 | 41 |
| LaRC | 1892 | 4431 | 28 | 5 | 33 |
| MSFC | 2457 | 9938 | 37 | 10 | 47 |
| NSSC | 141 | 488 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| SSC | 297 | 4271 | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Total | 22,878 | 72,819 | 386 | 75 | 461 |

NOTES:

[1] The civil service workforce is the number of on-duty employees including part-time and full-time permanent, term, and Student Career Employee Program (i.e., SCEP/co-op) appointments. It excludes employees on Leave Without Pay, interns, or those on Student Temporary Employment Program (i.e., stay-in-school students) and temporary appointments. The contractor workforce is comprised of contractors with an active NASA IdMAX identity, PIVII badge, and contract number. This data is current as of October 1, 2012.

[2] Fractions of 5 and over have been rounded up to the nearest whole number. Fractions of less than 5 have been rounded down to the nearest whole number. For Centers where the contractor workforce baseline is less than 1,000, two non-civil service medals have been allocated.

[3]Centers have the discretion to use civil service allocations for non-civil service nominations and vice versa, with the intent that **both** parties are recognized.

[4]JPL was granted a one-time augmentation of 45 medals above the normal allocation for the success of Mars Science Laboratory (MSL), the Mars Curiosity rover, and GRAIL.

## PART 3: DESCRIPTION AND CRITERIA OF ALL NASA HONOR AWARDS

**Leadership/Service**

- Distinguished Service Medal/Distinguished Public Service Medal
- Outstanding Leadership Medal/Outstanding Public Leadership Medal
- Exceptional Service Medal/Exceptional Public Service Medal
- Exceptional Engineering Achievement Medal, Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal, and Exceptional Technology Achievement Medal
- Exceptional Achievement Medal/Exceptional Public Achievement Medal
- Equal Employment Opportunity Medal
- Exceptional Administrative Achievement Medal
- Early Career Achievement Medal
- Group Achievement Award

**Specialty (outside of annual call)**

- Space Flight Medal
- Exceptional Bravery Medal
- Silver Achievement Medal

**Distinguished Service Medal** This is NASA's highest form of recognition that is awarded to a Government employee who, by distinguished service, ability, or vision has personally contributed to NASA's advancement of United States' interests. The individual's achievement or contribution must demonstrate a level of excellence that has made a profound or indelible impact on NASA mission success, and therefore, the contribution is so extraordinary that other forms of recognition by NASA would be inadequate.

**Distinguished Public Service Medal** This is NASA's highest form of recognition that is awarded to any non-Government individual or to an individual who was not a Government employee during the period in which the service was performed, whose distinguished service, ability, or vision has personally contributed to NASA's advancement of United States' interests. The individual's achievement or contribution must demonstrate a level of excellence that has made a profound or indelible impact to NASA mission success, therefore, the contribution is so extraordinary that other forms of recognition by NASA would be inadequate.

**Outstanding Leadership Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to Government employees for notable leadership accomplishments that have significantly influenced the NASA Mission. Sustained leadership and exceptionally high-impact leadership achievements should demonstrate the individual's effectiveness in advancing the Agency's goals and image in present and future terms. As one of NASA's most prestigious medals, the leadership excellence must be demonstrated in all of the following areas:

- Achieving Results--Highly effective in achieving positive results/change. Impact and importance of work achievements toward NASA's missions and image are a direct result of the individual's contributions and efforts.
- Role Model--Consistent and exemplary behavior that models NASA's core values and promotes these values within the Agency.

- Leading People--Cooperative collaboration and teamwork across the organizational, directorate, Agency, Government or industry level to accomplish expected results.
- Influencing Change--Innovative approaches used in the conception, design, or execution of projects, programs, initiatives, and activities (work represents a high degree of creativity or fundamental departure from usual practice).

Achievements in leadership are not limited to executives or supervisors – employees at any grade level who meet the criteria may be considered.

**Outstanding Public Leadership Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to non-Government employees for notable leadership accomplishments that have significantly influenced the NASA Mission. Sustained leadership and exceptionally high-impact leadership achievements should demonstrate the individual's effectiveness in advancing the Agency's goals and image in present and future terms. As one of NASA's most prestigious medals, the leadership excellence must be demonstrated in all of the following areas:

- Achieving Results--Highly effective in achieving positive results/change. Impact and importance of work achievements toward NASA's missions and image are a direct result of the individual's contributions and efforts.
- Role Model--Consistent and exemplary behavior that models NASA's core values and promotes these values within the Agency.
- Leading People--Cooperative collaboration and teamwork across the organizational, directorate, Agency, Government or industry level to accomplish expected results.
- Influencing Change--Innovative approaches used in the conception, design, or execution of projects, programs, initiatives, and activities (work represents a high degree of creativity or fundamental departure from usual practice).

**Exceptional Service Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to a Government employee for sustained performance that embodies multiple contributions which contribute to NASA projects, programs, or initiatives. The criteria must include all of the following:

- sustained performance has made a significant improvement to NASA deliverables, operations, or image;
- employee's record of achievements sets a benchmark for others to follow;
- substantial improvement to a NASA program that yielded high quality results or improvements;
- impact and importance of the employee's services have been instrumental to the past and ongoing success of NASA.

**Exceptional Public Service Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to any non-Government individual or to an individual who was not a Government employee during the period in which the service was performed for sustained performance that embodies multiple contributions on NASA projects, programs, or initiatives. The criteria must include all of the following:

- sustained performance has made a significant improvement to NASA deliverables, operations, or image;

- employee's record of achievements sets a benchmark for other non-Government contributors to follow; substantial improvement to a NASA program that yielded high quality results or improvements;
- impact and importance of the employee's services have made a lasting impact on the success of the Agency.

**Exceptional Achievement Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to any Government employee for a significant specific achievement or substantial improvement in operations, efficiency, service, financial savings, science, or technology which contributes to the mission of NASA. The criteria are as follows:

- Work-related achievements yielding high-quality results and/or substantial improvement that supports the Agency mission.
- Innovative approaches used in the conception, design, or execution of the individual's work.
- Impact and importance of the individual's achievement related to the Agency's goals and image.

**Exceptional Public Achievement Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to any non-Government individual or to any individual who was not a Government employee during the period in which the service was performed. The award is for a significant specific achievement or substantial improvement in operations, efficiency, service, financial savings, science, or technology which contributes to the mission of NASA. The criteria are as follows:

- Work-related achievements yielding high-quality results and/or substantial improvement that supports the Agency mission.
- Innovative approaches used in the conception, design, or execution of the individual's work.
- Impact and importance of the individual's achievement that made a significant contribution that enables NASA to accomplish its mission.

**Exceptional Engineering Achievement Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to both Government and non-Government individuals for exceptional engineering contributions toward achievement of the NASA mission. This award is given for individual efforts for applications of engineering principles or methods that have resulted in a contribution of fundamental importance in this field or have significantly enhanced understanding of this field or have significantly advanced the state of the practice as demonstrated by an application to aerospace systems. The criteria also include the following: 1) Accomplishments are far above others in quality, scope, and impact. 2) Accomplishments are explicit, significant, and demonstrate results. Engineering contributions are typically characterized as being the design, development, and application of tools and systems, or significant process improvements. (A contribution that was overlooked at the time it occurred will also be considered.)

**Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to both Government and non-Government individuals for exceptional scientific contributions (specific, concrete scientific achievements) toward achievement of the NASA mission. The award is given for individual efforts that have resulted in a key scientific discovery or resulted

in contribution(s) of fundamental importance in this field or significantly enhanced understanding of the field. Scientific contributions typically result from reasoned investigations or studies of phenomena using collected data and observations, current scientific theories and formulae, and the scientific method and/or other formal techniques, to attain enduring principles. (A contribution that was overlooked at the time it occurred will also be considered.)

**Exceptional Technology Achievement Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to Government or non-Government individuals for exceptional technology contributions achieved in one or more of the following: 1) Technology development significantly contributing toward achievement of the NASA mission; 2) Development of a broadly applicable, disruptive technology for advancing future research capabilities or commercial applications; 3) Development of key conceptual or theoretical advances to technology that significantly accelerate the achievement of NASA's Mission; 4) Exemplary collaborative effort in achieving significant technology transfer or technology infusion; 5) Exceptional utilization of a NASA-developed technology resulting in a significant commercial application. (A contribution that was overlooked at the time it occurred will also be considered.)

**Equal Employment Opportunity Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to both Government and non-Government individuals for outstanding achievement and material contribution to the principles and goals of NASA's Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion Programs, either within the Government or within community organizations or groups. Diversity is the similarities and differences in the individual and organizational characteristics that shape our workplace. Inclusion is the means by which we optimize the benefits to mission inherent in our diversity, for example, the policies, procedures, and practices that an organization puts in place to create more inclusive work environments.

The criteria in the areas of Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion are as follows: a) achievements are clearly superior in quality, scope, and impact and b) achievements are explicit and demonstrate significant results. (A contribution that was overlooked at the time it occurred will also be considered.)

- Outstanding achievement and material contributions to EEO can be demonstrated in a number of ways, such as:
    - Creating or promoting a work environment that is accessible and welcoming to employees with disabilities (e.g., initiated a transportation network that assists employees with disabilities commute to work).
    - Leading recruitment efforts to nontraditional sources to expand the demographic diversity of the applicant pool (e.g., established a relationship with a Historically Black College or Tribal College that resulted in more diverse Co-op students).
    - Consistently participating in programs that help ensure mentoring or coaching for members of underrepresented groups in the organization.
    - Leading cultural awareness or education events for employees.
    - Initiating outreach events for underrepresented groups in the community.

  - Volunteering to speak or conducting workshops at national conferences such as Black Engineer of the Year Award, Society of Women Engineers, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, etc.
  - Consistently utilizes summer interns from diverse cultures, including interns with disabilities.
- Outstanding achievement and material contributions to diversity and inclusion can be demonstrated in a number of ways, such as:
  - Creating an inclusive work environment where employees are engaged, valued, and respected and their talents are fully utilized, for example, by championing the Agency's Diversity and Inclusion Policy within the organization and considering and including goals of diversity and inclusion in all organizational planning.
  - Leading diversity and inclusion dialogues, and educational opportunities and encouraging employees to participate in diversity and inclusion dialogues, surveys, and training and educational opportunities.
  - Recognizing and rewarding employees for commitment to diversity and inclusion, for example as part of their performance planning and evaluation, and in nominations for leadership programs and awards.
  - Actively assuring conflicts within the organization are resolved in a positive and constructive manner, for example, by taking a leadership role in the NASA Conflict Management Program training.

**Exceptional Administrative Achievement Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to any civil service employee in the NASA Classification 500 Group* or non-Government-equivalent for a significant, specific achievement or contribution that clearly demonstrates a substantial improvement in administrative support contributing to NASA's mission. The criteria should also include exceptional initiative in developing and implementing processes, methods, or operations that resulted in improvements to the office or program activities and/or operations. *Clerical/Assistant and related support positions: Includes positions engaged in routine one-grade interval clerical and support work requiring application of a practical knowledge of the established clerical or administrative systems, procedures, and techniques of a subject-matter area or program.

**Space Flight Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to space flight crewmembers (i.e., civil and military astronauts, mission specialists, payload specialists, and civilians) to recognize individual participation in an initial human space flight mission.

**Exceptional Bravery Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to both Government and non-Government individuals for exemplary and courageous handling of an emergency by an individual who, independent of personal danger, has acted to prevent the loss of human life and/or Government property.

**Group Achievement Award** This prestigious NASA certificate is awarded to any combination of Government and/or non-Government individuals for an outstanding group accomplishment that has contributed substantially to NASA's mission. The criteria should include: (1) the quality of results and the Agency or multi-Center level of impact on programs or operations; (2) effective management of cost and schedule; (3) customer satisfaction; (4)

team growth and capacity for future contribution (Government personnel only); and (5) additional credit for development of innovative approaches, use of and contributions to lessons-learned data banks, and/or (6) success in responding to unforeseen crises.

**Silver Achievement Medal** This prestigious NASA silver medal is awarded to Government and non-Government individuals or teams by NASA Center Directors for a stellar achievement that supports one or more of NASA's Core Values, when it is deemed to be extraordinarily important and appropriate to recognize such achievement in a timely and personalized manner.

**Early Career Achievement Medal** This prestigious NASA medal is awarded to any Government employee for unusual and significant performance during the first 10 years of an individual's early career (i.e., entry-level professional in a scientific, engineering, administrative professional or technical position) in support of the Agency. Performance is characterized by unusual initiative or a creative achievement that clearly demonstrates a significant contribution in the individual's discipline area that directly contributes to NASA's mission and goals. The contribution is significant, in that, for an employee who is at such an early phase of career, the contribution has substantially improved the discipline area. The criteria also include the following:

- The achievement yields high-quality results and/or substantial improvements to the discipline.
- Impact of the employee's achievement has significant importance relative to the discipline area.
- The achievement is perceived as outstanding or significant by peers and/or impacted target groups.

Justification must describe the nominee's career history sufficiently to show that that he/she meets the definition of "early career" as defined herein.