

**U.S. Department of Commerce**  
**International Trade Administration**  
**Global Markets**

**“E” Awards Program Manual**

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## **I. Purpose**

During World War II, more than 4,000 “E Pennants” were presented to war plants in recognition of production excellence. The famous flag with the big “E” emblazoned on it became a badge of patriotism in action.

President Kennedy established the President’s “E” Award and the President’s “E” Certificate of Service by Executive Order No. 10978 (Dec. 5, 1961) as an “award program for significant contributions to the Export Expansion Program” “designed to assist American private enterprise, both large and small, to expand greatly the nature and volume of exports.” In the Executive Order, the President directed that the “Secretary of Commerce, in cooperation with the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, and the heads of other Government departments and agencies, shall establish procedures for the nomination of persons, firms, and organizations for awards and the granting of awards, and for such other matters as may be incidental thereto.”

On August 4, 1969, the Secretary of Commerce authorized the President’s “E Star” Award and the President’s “E Star” Award for Export Service to recognize continuing significant contributions to expand the nature and volume of U.S. exports.

## II. Awards, Eligibility and Criteria

### A. “E” Awards

The “E” Awards are subdivided into two categories, the President’s “E” Award for Exports and the President’s “E” Award for Export Service.

#### President’s “E” Award for Exports

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Any of the following entities is eligible:
  - i. A U.S. citizen or legal resident;
  - ii. a corporation, partnership, or other business association created under the laws of the United States, any State or Commonwealth thereof, or the District of Columbia, including a U.S. subsidiary of a foreign-owned or -controlled corporation; or
  - iii. an organization created under the laws of the United States, any State or Commonwealth thereof, or the District of Columbia, including a State or local government entity;
2. That is engaged in the marketing of products, either as a manufacturer, service provider, or agricultural producer.

Merit Criteria: The entity must have made significant contributions to the expansion of the export trade of the United States.

#### President’s “E” Award for Export Service

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Any of the following entities is eligible:
  - i. A U.S. citizen or legal resident;
  - ii. a corporation, partnership, or other business association created under the laws of the United States, any State or Commonwealth thereof, or the District of Columbia, including a U.S. subsidiary of a foreign-owned or -controlled corporation; or
  - iii. an organization created under the laws of the United States, any State or Commonwealth thereof, or the District of Columbia, including a State or local government entity;
2. That is engaged in activities other than the marketing of products that assist or facilitate the export expansion of the United States by providing financing, transportation, market promotion, or other export assistance or facilitation services. Examples include an export management company, a freight forwarder, a financial or educational institution, a chamber of commerce, and a state trade promotion agency.

Merit Criteria: The entity must have made significant contributions to the expansion of the export trade of the United States.

B. “E Star” Awards

The “E Star” Awards also are subdivided into two categories, the President’s “E Star” Award for Exports and the President’s “E Star” Award for Export Service.

*President’s “E Star” Award for Exports*

Eligibility Criteria: The entity must be a previous “E” Award for Exports recipient.

Merit Criteria: The entity must have made continuing significant contributions to the expansion of the export trade of the United States.

*President’s “E Star” Award for Export Service*

Eligibility Criteria: The entity must be a previous “E” Award for Export Service recipient.

Merit Criteria: The entity must have made continuing significant contributions to the expansion of the export trade of the United States.

### **III. Description of the Awards**

#### **A. Certificates**

"E" Award recipients receive a certificate signed by the Secretary of Commerce in the name and by the authority of the President, an "E" pennant, and an "E" lapel pin. Recipients are authorized to use the "E" logo on their company literature and website in accordance with the "E" and "E Star" Logos Policy. The certificate shall cite the recipient's contributions to the expansion of the export trade of United States. The "E" Award pennant has a field of white upon which a blue "E" appears.

"E Star" recipients receive a certificate signed by the Secretary of Commerce in the name and by the authority of the President, an "E Star" pennant, and an "E Star" lapel pin. Recipients are authorized to use the "E Star" logo on their literature and website in accordance with the "E" and "E Star" Logos Policy. The "E Star" Award pennant has a field of white upon which a blue "E" appears with a blue star displayed to the right of the "E".

#### **B. Logo Use**

The "E" and "E Star" logos ("logos") are representations of the "E" and "E Star" Awards respectively, and symbolize the highest recognition any U.S. entity may receive for supporting export activity.

Award recipients are granted a license to use their respective Award logos on their publications, websites, advertising, flags, pendants, and pins within the context of being an Award recipient. This use is limited to branding the Award recipients as an "E" or "E Star" Award recipient. Recipients may not use the logo to claim that the Department of Commerce promotes or endorses their company, products, and/or services.

The Department of Commerce shall have the right, at all reasonable times, to inspect the Award recipient's goods, services, and promotional activities employing the Award logo to ensure that such use is of proper quality and otherwise consistent with the license, and may terminate the license should it determine that the use is inconsistent.

The license is granted in perpetuity. The license is not assignable. Award recipients may not share the use of the logo with any other persons, organization, or company, nor may it transfer or assign its license to use the logos if its company is sold, merged, or reconfigured. An Award recipient which hires subcontractors to perform manufacturing and distribution activities is allowed to do this without risk of jeopardizing its license to use the logo.

#### **IV. Application Process**

Interested exporters and export service providers apply through their local U.S. Export Assistance Center (USEAC).

Interested entities may approach the local USEAC, or the USEAC personnel may reach out to local companies to inform them of the “E” and “E Star” Awards Program and encourage them to consider applying. Applicants are not required to be current USEAC clients or to have availed themselves of a U.S. Government export promotion or assistance program.

Trade Specialists at the USEACs are encouraged to work with companies in completing the application, including providing feedback and additional information on the “E” and “E Star” Awards. The Trade Specialist should consult with the “E” Awards Program Officer as necessary for additional information on the program.

The entirety of the application is considered business confidential information and will be treated as such to the extent allowed by law.

The Network Director must review and sign each application for completeness before forwarding to headquarters, including ensuring that:

1. The applicant has provided sufficient contact information.
2. The applicant has signed and dated the application.
3. The Global Markets Nominating Employee has signed and dated the application certifying that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria.
4. The applicant has provided an IRS waiver signed and dated within the last 30 days.
5. The applicant has indicated whether it is applying for an “E” or “E Star” Award.
6. The applicant has provided a narrative justification detailing the applicant’s contribution to U.S. export expansion.

The USEAC Trade Specialist who was in contact with the applicant will serve as a local contact and source of information for the “E” Award application. The Trade Specialist will assist in reaching out to the applicant to obtain additional information as needed.

In lieu of physical signatures from the Global Markets Nominating Employee and the Network Director, applications may be forwarded to the “E” Awards Program Officer accompanied by an email from the Nominating Employee and Network Director that notes confirmation of applicant eligibility.

## V. **Review Process**

### A. “E” Awards Program Officer Review

The “E” Awards Program Officer will review all applications for completeness. If the application is incomplete, the Program Officer should discuss it immediately with the USEAC Trade Specialist, who is responsible for coordinating with the applicant to provide any missing information.

The “E” Awards Program Officer will also complete a vetting process using Lexis Nexis, Internet searches, or other means.

The “E” Awards Program Officer will enter the information into the “E” Awards Database and is responsible for updating the database as the review progresses, including entering regulatory agency clearance information and the status of the application.

### B. External Vetting of Applicants

The “E” Awards Program Officer will send a form letter to the regulatory agencies listed below, listing the applicants for the “E” and “E Star” Awards along with the address and telephone number of each applicant. This form letter should be sent out as soon as possible after all applications are received and verified as complete. The letter should request a response within 10 business days of receipt stating whether the applicants have any business before or are under investigation by the regulatory agencies.

Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security  
Federal Trade Commission  
Securities & Exchange Commission (if a publicly listed company, or otherwise applicable)  
Internal Revenue Service  
Department of Justice, Criminal Division  
Department of Justice, Antitrust Division  
Department of Labor

If the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Domestic Operations or his/her designee determines that adverse information received would likely cause embarrassment to the U.S. Government should the “E” or “E Star” Award be granted, the applicant will be rejected without further processing.

The vetting process runs concurrent with merit review described below. All recommendations are pending satisfactory completion of the vetting process.

### C. “E” and “E Star” Awards Committee Review

The “E” and “E Star” Awards Committee (Committee) reviews all applications for both eligibility and merit, and advises the Chairman on which applicants to recommend to the Secretary of Commerce to receive an Award.

The Committee is comprised of representatives from various U.S. Government agencies that are engaged with U.S. industry and U.S. businesses. The Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, Global Markets, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Domestic Operations, or his/her designee, serves as Chairperson. Other member agencies include, but are not limited to, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, the Interior, Labor, State, and Transportation, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and the Export-Import Bank of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The Program Officer will call Committee meetings as needed. Meetings may be held in person or via teleconference. The Chairperson will set the agenda and run the meeting. The “E” Awards Program Officer is responsible for keeping meeting minutes, particularly noting specific grounds for the recommendations to grant or deny an award for each application.

At least one week prior to a meeting, the Program Officer will provide all Committee members with a copy of the entire application and his/her analysis of the application.

All Committee members should be represented, either in person or by proxy. However, if a Committee member or proxy cannot attend, the member should provide his or her analysis and recommendations as to acceptance or denial of the applications in advance of the meeting to the “E” Awards Program Officer.

During the meeting, the “E” Awards Program Officer will present each application for discussion. Following discussion of the eligibility and merit of each application, the Committee members will vote to recommend to grant or deny the application for the Award or to request additional information. Committee decisions need not be unanimous.

If a Committee member objects to a recommendation to grant an Award to an applicant, the Chairperson and any Committee members who support the applicant must conclude that recommending granting an Award to that applicant is overwhelmingly justified based on the application and must conclude that the objections of the specific member are outweighed by the merits of the application as a whole.

The Committee will heavily consider any negative information received from the regulatory agencies, industry analysis, or communication from the local USEAC with regard to the application.

If the Committee requests additional information, the “E” Awards Program Officer will coordinate with the USEAC Trade Specialist to obtain that additional information, forward that information to the Committee members, and present the application for further consideration at a subsequent meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of the Interior does not currently participate in the “E” and “E Star” Awards Committee or the Awards selection process. As of October 2011, the Department of the Interior has confirmed that it does not currently engage in export promotion or other matters relevant to the “E” and “E Star” Awards selection process and does not have an interest in participating in the process at this time. The Department of the Interior may resume participation in the Committee at any time should its interests or mandate change.

## **VI. Description of the Merit Criteria: Significant Contributions to the Expansion of the Export Trade of the United States**

An entity's contribution to the expansion of the export trade of the United States will be evaluated based on the following four criteria in descending order of importance.

### **A. Measurable**

Exporters' applications must provide actual (not projected) data demonstrating a sustained increase in total export sales, as measured by dollars or volume, of U.S. exports, either overall or in one or more new foreign markets. The data over the applicable period should demonstrate an overall increase in total export sales. Although a slight decrease or stagnation in annual total export sales during the applicable period is not an automatic disqualification, applicants must provide a clear explanation for any such fluctuations. If the applicant demonstrates an increase in one or more new markets, and there is not a corresponding increase in overall total export sales, the applicant should explain the industry, market, or global financial conditions which demonstrate how the applicant significantly contributed to the expansion of U.S. exports. Applicants not demonstrating sustained consistent increases in total export sales over the applicable period must demonstrate compelling and exceptional activities and approaches under the other merit criteria.

Export service providers' applications must provide a description of how the provider has serviced the needs of exporters. The provider must provide three case studies demonstrating how the provider's trade promotion services assisted three specific exporter clients to measurably increase their U.S. exports. If a case study cites participation in a government export promotion program or activity, the provider must indicate what actions were taken beyond basic participation in the program or encouragement of others to participate in the program. The service provider must provide an actual or reasonable estimate using generally accepted industry measurements in its sector to demonstrate its clients' increases in exports. If the export service provider is unable to provide case studies, it must explain why case studies are not possible, describe how the organization's activities have resulted in export expansion, and detail how it measures the results of its activities and their contribution to export expansion.

In addition to these case studies, certain types of service providers must provide additional information. A financial institution must identify the various types of export financing and amount of each of the types of export financing extended to exporters for the period under consideration. Freight forwarders (ocean transportation intermediaries) must demonstrate an increase in the value of exports handled over the period of the application (but are not required to demonstrate an increase in the number of shipments handled), and must demonstrate direct results of programs or activities contributing to export expansion, which programs or activities are over and above the reason for the existence of the business. Port Authorities must

demonstrate an increase in new and/or established exports, export tonnage, or other generally accepted industry measure. Other service organizations such as chambers of commerce, trade associations and educational institutions must demonstrate concrete results of programs which are over and above the reason for existence of their organization.

If the export statistics in the application include military sales or sales made under U.S. Government foreign military financing,<sup>2</sup> the applicant must provide a breakdown, if applicable, of any exports financed by U.S. Government foreign military financing, such as foreign military sales. Exports financed by U.S. Government foreign military financing cannot be used to demonstrate export expansion.

For the “E” Award, the applicable measuring period is the most recent consecutive full four-year period.

For the “E Star” Award, the applicable measuring period is the most recent consecutive full four-year period, none of which time may overlap with the time period for the original “E” Award. An “E Star” Award application must demonstrate an increase in export expansion since the initial “E” Award or previous “E Star” Award.

#### B. Innovative

The applicant must demonstrate an innovative approach that resulted in the measurable increase in U.S. export sales. The applicant must identify key challenges and obstacles to expanding U.S. exports, and describe how the applicant adapted or assisted others to adapt to overcome those challenges and obstacles.

For exporters, the applicant should clearly present its international marketing strategy and make a compelling case of how implementation of specific aspects of this strategy resulted in an increase in export sales and/or entry into new international markets. Examples of innovative approaches or strategies include the introduction of new products or services, customizing or modifying existing products or services, developing one or more new markets, process changes to increase international competitiveness, and initiating exporting to a new trade area previously closed or extremely limited to U.S. companies because of difficult competitive conditions.

An export service provider must demonstrate its innovative approach to assisting U.S. exporters in achieving a measurable increase in U.S. exports. For export service providers, examples of innovative approaches or strategies include distribution of information on trade opportunities; assisting with trade documentation; conducting seminars, workshops, and conferences; sponsoring of trade missions; opening foreign offices; hosting foreign business visitors;

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. foreign military financing refers to the U.S. government program for financing through grants or loans the acquisition of U.S. military articles, services, and training to assist friendly nations to improve their defense capabilities.

promoting local international facilities such as air terminals and port authorities; and cooperating with U.S. Government agencies in sponsoring and promoting export-related activities and events. For freight forwarders, examples of innovative approaches or strategies might include the development of special expertise which has contributed to the expanded and orderly overseas marketing of specific products; cooperating with ocean carriers to foster the availability of suitable equipment or service; providing market guidance or periodic information specifically designed to encourage exporters; and attendance at conferences, trade shows, etc. for the purpose of promoting export trade.

#### C. Sustainable

The increase in total export sales and innovative approach must be capable of being sustained. The applicant must be able to identify specific actions it took to expand export sales, and those actions must be capable of being continued or replicated in other markets. The applicant does not need to demonstrate that its marketing strategy guarantees future success. However, increases in exports attributable largely to causes such as a one-time sale or an increase in export sales based largely on exchange rate fluctuations are not sufficient to demonstrate an increase that is capable of being sustained.

#### D. Have Broad Impact

The applicant should demonstrate what, if any, larger impact its actions have had or will have on the expansion of the export trade of the United States beyond the increase in export sales noted in its application. Examples include a broader impact on the applicant's sector (such as opening a new foreign market) or on the applicant's community (such as creating an export expansion model capable of replication by others in its community or creating future export opportunities for other U.S. companies).

## **VII. Selection of Award Recipients**

The Committee Chairperson will consider the Committee recommendations and prepare and forward to the Secretary of Commerce a recommendation package for final selection decisions. The package will contain summary descriptions of how each applicant satisfies the award criteria and the Committee's analysis of why the applicant should receive the award, as well as a draft letter for the Secretary to congratulate the recipient on its achievement.

## **VIII. Applicant Notification**

The congratulatory letters from the Secretary will officially notify applicants selected to receive the "E" and "E Star" Awards. Once the Secretary has made the final selection decisions, the "E" Awards Program Officer will notify unsuccessful applicants.

## **IX. Presentations**

Once the approval letter or denial letter has been sent to the company, the "E" Awards Program Officer will contact the relevant Trade Specialist, update the files and database, and prepare the Award Packages, including the Certificates. The Program Officer will coordinate within the Department of Commerce and with the recipients to arrange for presentation ceremonies and press materials regarding the Awards.