

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

2013 VA Sustainability Achievement Awards

1. AWARD CATEGORIES

a. Waste/Pollution Prevention

This category recognizes FY 2012 source reduction practices related to the generation of non-hazardous solid wastes or hazardous wastes or pollution at VA through any change in the design, manufacturing, or use/reuse of materials or products, and/or the amount of toxicity in waste materials before recycling, reuse, treatment or disposal. Preference will be given to nominations that include outreach programs/projects or educational efforts designed to promote the pollution prevention and waste prevention goals and objectives of Executive Order (EO) 13514, "Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance," and EO 13423, "Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management."

b. Recycling

This category recognizes FY 2012 VA recycling activities – including collection, separation, and processing – by which products or other materials are recovered from the waste stream for use in the manufacture of new products (other than fuel for producing heat or power by combustion). Preference will be given for recycling programs that have an internal education component and/or a public outreach component designed to promote recycling at the site, facility, or operation, or to foster partnerships with the surrounding community to promote recycling.

c. Green Purchasing

This category recognizes the most effective and innovative programs implemented at VA in FY 2012 for the purchase and use of recycled content products, Energy Star/energy efficient and EPEAT-registered products, biobased products, and environmentally preferable products and services. The nomination must describe specific purchases of goods and services during FY 2012 in these categories, where applicable. It also must include a discussion of how green products requirements were incorporated in supply and services contracts (e.g., specifications, scope of work provisions, performance-based provisions).

In addition, nominees must have a written, integrated green purchasing plan (or affirmative procurement plan), policy, or procedures; training of contracting officials and requirements staff; and education and outreach to facility staff and contractors. There will be a preference for innovative purchasing techniques, such as the notification of green purchasing requirements in FedBizOps synopses, the use of solicitation or contract templates, blanket purchase agreements requiring the supply of green products, and the use of past performance criteria and evaluation factors for award for knowledge of the supply and use of green products.

d. Environmental Management Systems (EMS)

This category recognizes the most effective and innovative FY 2012 programs implementing EMS at VA in accordance with EOs 13514 and 13423. Effective implementation of EMS includes establishing measurable environmental objectives, targets, executing management procedures to achieve those objectives and targets including an environmental compliance management component, and measuring progress towards those objectives and targets with the goal of continual improvement. This category emphasizes the use of a formal EMS to identify and address all those sustainable practices identified in Section 2 of EO 13423, especially environmental, transportation, and energy issues.

e. High Performance/Sustainable Buildings

This category recognizes the most innovative FY 2012 sustainable design and high performance building project(s). Nominations are limited to projects that have been completed, are under construction, or have been awarded. Address all facets of a structure/project's life cycle, including overall design considerations, energy efficiency, component materials, building operations, commissioning/re-commissioning, end-of-life considerations, and others. Preference will be given to nominations that demonstrate innovation in response to technical, logistical, financial and other challenges to implement the *Guiding Principles for Federal Leadership in High Performance and Sustainable Buildings* and other goals in EO 13423 and the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA). Each nomination should highlight the life-cycle cost effective innovative solutions that use sustainable design principles in the planning, construction, and operation of a VA facility.

f. Electronic Stewardship

This category recognizes FY 2012 programs, practices and procedures that promote sustainable environmental stewardship of VA electronic assets in any one of or all three lifecycle phases: acquisition and procurement, operation and maintenance, and end-of-life management practices. Preference will be given to nominations that demonstrate innovation in response to technical, logistical, financial and other challenges to implement the electronics stewardship goals in Section 2(i) of EO 13514 and Section 2(h) of EO 13423.

g. Alternative Fuel/Fuel Conservation in Transportation

This category recognizes FY 2012 programs, practices and procedures implemented for a VA vehicle fleet that result in significant alternative fuel use and/or fuel conservation measures in transportation. This includes establishment of new alternative fueling infrastructure for fleet vehicles, methods for encouraging the use of alternative fuels, ride sharing programs, increased vehicle usage efficiency programs, hybrid vehicle or hybrid electric vehicle acquisition and use, or other methods to decrease petroleum consumption. Preference will be given to nominations that demonstrate innovation in response to technical, logistical, financial and other hurdles and support the goals of the Energy Policy Act, EISA, and EOs 13514 and 13423.

h. Water Conservation

This category recognizes FY 2012 effective and innovative programs in water conservation. At a minimum, nominees should demonstrate how the program will aid in achieving the goals stipulated in EOs 13514 and 13423, and/or the goals set in VA's Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (SSPP). Measures that will be considered include the protection of natural water supplies and existing water source, reduced consumption of potable and non-potable water, re-use or recycling of water, storm water management, habitat enhancement, or otherwise increasing the sustainability of the water system. Preference will be given to non-traditional innovative programs.

i. Energy Efficiency

This category recognizes FY 2012 effective and innovative programs for improving the energy efficiency of a VA building, facility, or campus. Efficiency is considered to include reducing gross consumption, reducing the energy intensity of the site, or reducing the cost of energy by other means. Nominees should demonstrate how the project helps meet the goals of EO 13514, EISA, and/or earlier EOs and legislation. The nomination should also demonstrate how the project or measure will help meet the goals in VA's SSPP. Preference will be given to innovative programs using non-traditional means or tools.

j. Renewable Energy

This category recognizes FY 2012 effective and innovative programs in reducing VA greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Particular attention will be given to projects that have negative GHG emissions, are integrated with other facility systems and operations, are more inherently "green," and reduce the total environmental footprint of the facility. Nominees should demonstrate how the project helps meet the goals of EO 13514, EISA, and/or earlier EOs and legislation. The nomination should also demonstrate how the project or measure will help meet the goals in VA's SSPP. Preference will be given to innovative programs using non-traditional means or tools applied.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- a.** All VA personnel employed at the time of nomination are eligible to be nominated for an award under this program.
- b.** Nominations may be submitted for either individuals or any size group or facility, but only one nomination may be submitted per person or group.
- c.** These awards will not be used in lieu of superior performance awards.
- d.** Nominations for awards must be submitted not later than **March 4, 2013** and will cover the FY 2012 fiscal period (October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012). If the project represents a multi-year effort, accomplishments must be demonstrated for the fiscal year for which the nomination is being submitted.

3. NOMINATION CRITERIA

a. General. Nominations must be electronically submitted to vacogreen@va.gov. Nominations must not exceed 2,000 words or a total of four pages not including the cover page. Photographs and supporting documentation, e.g., quantitative data showing reductions in waste generation, amount of green products purchased, and percentage of construction and demolition debris recycled, are encouraged and may be submitted in excess of the four-page limit.

b. Nomination Format

(1) The nomination package must have a cover page to include the following information:

(a) Category of Award Nomination: Specify which award category the nomination package addresses. Choose only one category, i.e., waste prevention, recycling, green purchasing activities, environmental management systems, high performance/sustainable buildings, electronics stewardship, reduced fuel consumption, water conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.

(b) Title of Nomination: Program/project name, e.g., Aluminum Recycling at XYZ Facility.

(c) Contact Name: Indicate a single point of contact for the nomination. Include name, title, facility name, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone and facsimile numbers.

(d) Nominee: List the name, title, facility name, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone and facsimile numbers of the employees performing the actual work.

(e) Location: Identify the VA facility at which the nominated work was performed.

(f) VA Facility Director: List the name, title, facility name, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone and facsimile numbers of the director of the VA facility at which the nominated work was performed.

(2) The first page of the nomination must begin with a 100-150 word summary describing the project and the improvements or benefits resulting from the project. The summary may be used to publicize the nomination.

(3) The remaining pages must address the evaluation criteria listed in section 4.a.

c. Nomination Process

(1) VA employees may submit a nomination for themselves, a peer, supervisor, or any size VA group or organization.

(2) Nominations should include consolidated achievements of a particular individual or group. Achievements accomplished by a group should only be nominated once in the name of the group and not multiple times by individual members of the group.

(3) Nominations must be submitted to the facility director or other designated key official for written and signed concurrence. The director or other key official must certify that there are no violations of Federal, state, or local environmental requirements outstanding at the time of the nomination.

(4) Nominations must be electronically submitted to vacogreen@va.gov no later than **March 4, 2013**. Nominations must not exceed 2,000 words or a total of four pages not including the cover page. Photographs and supporting documentation are encouraged and may be submitted in excess of the four-page limit.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria. To ensure full consideration, all nominees must address the criteria listed in paragraphs (1) to (7). Nominations submitted in the categories of hazardous waste and recycling must also address paragraphs (8) and (9), as appropriate. These criteria will be used as a guide to evaluate nominations submitted under the specified categories:

(1) Does the project involve the use of innovative approaches, techniques, or technologies? That is, does the project represent something that is not well demonstrated or proven for the category under which you are submitting your nomination? Please describe.

(2) Is the project cost effective when considering life cycle costs? Describe actual cost savings, revenue generated, and costs avoided, including the means by which the foregoing was determined. Also, describe any other tangible benefits, such as improved health and safety or reduced waste.

(3) Does the project have an education/training or outreach component designed to inform or promote the goals of your project at the facility, or within VA, or to the public? Please describe.

(4) Does the project involve or promote partnerships with the local community, another Government agency, a non-Governmental agency, private industry, or other entity outside your facility? Please describe.

(5) Were performance measures or goals identified to determine the success of the project? If so, please describe them and indicate if they were met or exceeded.

(6) Can the project be replicated by or serve as a best practice for another VA facility, Government agency, or entity outside the Federal Government? Please describe.

(7) Recognizing that compliance with environmental regulatory requirements is a fundamental responsibility of Federal agencies and Federal employees at all levels, each applicant will be subject to a review of background information on their environmental regulatory compliance status and enforcement history. This process will include consideration of information in the Environmental Protection Agency's Online Tracking Information System (OTIS), which is available online at: <http://www.epa-otis.gov/otis/> ([click this link for help in using OTIS](#)) as well as other available compliance and enforcement information. In general, chronic non-compliance in any environmental media and/or recent or ongoing criminal or certain civil enforcement activity will be considered a basis for disqualification. Applicants should review their compliance status and history prior to submission.

(8) If the project involves recycling of documents, computers, or other electronics with media storage components, please describe how privacy/data security measures were considered and managed.

(9) If the project involves hazardous waste, the nomination must be reviewed by and concurred on—in writing—by the facility safety officer, industrial hygienist, or other appropriate staff member to ensure that the process and outcome do not negatively impact the environment or public health or safety.