

## Introducing the New National Recognition & Rewards Program

### Purpose

The Volunteer Recognition Task Force developed a new *National Recognition & Rewards Program* that will formalize recognition for the program's more than 8,000 volunteers.

### Components

There are three components: On-Boarding, Recognition and Rewards, and Off-Boarding.

#### I. On-Boarding

After a volunteer has completed the training process, the AARP Driver Safety Program will send a welcome/congratulatory letter with a link directing the new volunteer to access the AARP DSP Online Store to order a name badge and mailing labels and to use a code to "purchase" one item of their choice estimated at a \$25 value. The welcome/congratulatory letter will be sent with an AARP DSP briefcase and will include a Volunteer Profile form that will be shared with the volunteer's immediate supervisor. Additionally, at the 100-day and one-year anniversary mark, a survey will be sent to the new volunteer to gain insight into their motivation and initial experiences volunteering with the program.

#### II. Recognition and Rewards

We will use both national strategies and local strategies to recognize our program's volunteers. In both cases, formal and informal strategies have been incorporated into the program.

#### National Strategies

- **"Hear Ye, Hear Ye":** When the National Office receives congratulatory correspondence from a participant or host location singing the praises of a DSP volunteer, we will send it to the DSP State Coordinator, so he/she can use it to "recognize" the volunteer.
- **Thank You Cards:** A new Thank You Card has been designed and will be stocked in the AARP Fulfillment Center; shrink-wrapped in packs of 25. Volunteers can use the cards to recognize peers, host locations and other community organizations for their commitment to the program.
- **Thank You Posters:** As a visual way to recognize volunteer efforts, thank you posters will be created and displayed in AARP's National Office lobby, the AARP State Office of the volunteer's home state and/or at the host location where the DSP volunteer instructs.

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- **Annual Report:** AARP Driver Safety Program volunteers who have been recognized in a calendar year will be highlighted in the AARP Driver Safety Program's Annual Report.
- **Spotlight on Excellence:** In two regular issues of *DSP News*, we will shine the light on a specific volunteer that has done exceptionally well that quarter; highlight a region that has improved significantly during the quarter; or share "Recognition Resources" in which the National Office spotlights best practices, tips, and print and web resources.
- **Century Club:** Presented to an active DSP Instructor when he/she reaches 100 courses taught. The National Office staff will use VMIS to report which volunteers have reached this milestone to the State Coordinator. State Coordinators will administer the recognition to the appropriate Instructors when the milestone has been reached. Century Club recipients will receive a custom lapel pin, an American Express gift card to be used in the AARP DSP Online Store or anywhere American Express is accepted, as well as a congratulatory letter from the DSP Director. A list of all the Century Club recipients (full name, state of service and total number of classes taught) will appear in the *DSP News* Recognition Issue.
- **Years of Service:** Longevity with the program should be celebrated and rewarded. To this end, the National Office has designed seven new lapel pins to mark major milestone years: 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years. Once the milestone has been met, volunteer leaders can present the lapel pin at the state meeting to personally recognize the volunteer. At the 20, 25 and 30 year celebration, volunteers will also receive an American Express gift card, along with a letter from the DSP Director. The *DSP News* Recognition Issue will feature a list of these volunteers under their service year mark.
- **Michael Seaton Volunteer of the Year Award:** The Michael Seaton Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes an active volunteer below the State Coordinator level as the "Volunteer of the Year" (Instructor Candidates are not eligible). A panel of judges will select the recipient of the award from 10 regional nominees submitted by each region. The 10 nominees will receive an American Express gift card and spotlight in the *DSP News* Recognition Issue. The recipient of the Michael Seaton Volunteer of the Year Award will receive an American Express gift card and spotlight in the *DSP News* Recognition Issue. The 9 nominees and national recipient will receive a congratulatory letter from the DSP Director.
- **AARP Andrus Award:** The AARP Andrus Award for Community Service recognizes AARP volunteers who in the last year have made a difference in their communities in ways that support AARP's mission, vision and strategic direction and that inspires others to volunteer. Each year, participating AARP State Offices, select and honor an award recipient. The AARP Driver Safety Program will announce the nomination time period and will encourage all to apply. Additionally, we will recognize DSP volunteers who are nominated and award recipients with a letter from the DSP Director and an American Express gift card. Nominees and award recipients will both be highlighted in the *DSP News* Recognition Issue.
- **DSP News Recognition Issue:** Each year, there will be a special edition of *DSP News* released in April (during National Volunteer Week) that is completely devoted to recognition. In this special issue, we will highlight AARP Andrus Award nominees and

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award recipients who are DSP volunteers, the Michael Seaton Volunteer of the Year Award nominees and recipient, list winners of the State Volunteer of the Year Award, have a "Wall of Fame" listing the Volunteer of the Month recipients in each state, Century Club recipients, Years of Service recipients, as well as recognition best practices that have come from regions/states and volunteers in the program.

- **AARP Online Reward System:** Allows Regional and State Coordinators to award recognition "points" (equates to American Express Gift Cards) to volunteers across regions and states for a job well done or going above and beyond the call of duty. Regional and State Coordinators have the ability to recognize excellence by awarding "top" volunteers with monetary "on the spot" awards (American Express Gift Card denominations are \$20, \$25 and \$50). As an alternative to recognition points, Regional and State Coordinators can send electronic greeting cards to DSP volunteers with a valid email address through the Online Reward System.
- **AARP DSP Online Store:** A web based online store stocked with properly branded DSP products. The AARP DSP Online Store will be a place where volunteers can use their American Express Gift Card to "purchase" DSP items, such as polo shirts, pens, mugs, etc. Or where Regional and State Coordinators can order DSP branded items for distribution to volunteers at regional or state meetings with the cost going to the regional or state budget. New volunteers will access the store to obtain administrative items during the "on-boarding" process.
- **AARP Volunteer Opinion Survey:** This survey is administered to a sampling of AARP volunteers each year. It is an annual tracking survey that gathers information about AARP volunteers, including what motivates individuals to volunteer for AARP. The AARP Driver Safety Program will use the data from the survey to continue initiatives that are working, as well as to refine areas that have been a challenge for our volunteers.

### Local Strategies

- **Appreciation Note Cards and Thank You Cards:** We encourage all DSP volunteers to use these cards to show appreciation for a fellow volunteer, host organization or another local organization that has supported the AARP Driver Safety Program at the local level. Use them to write a personal note of thanks.
- **Send a Card:** Send volunteers a birthday card, get well card for someone who is sick, holiday card or an anniversary card highlighting their years of service. Note how long they have made a difference in the program during their tenure. Electronic cards are being made available through the online rewards system.
- **State Newsletters:** If your state produces a newsletter, use it to highlight the achievements of volunteers in your state or to recognize/spotlight an outstanding host.
- **State Meetings:** Use state meetings as an opportunity to recognize volunteers during the meeting or at the luncheon or dinner. Refer back to the Volunteer Profile form to refresh your memory on the volunteer's preferences. Should you give them a gift

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certificate, award/trophy, flowers, CDs, books, a plaque or movie tickets? Don't forget to recognize years of service.

- **Ideas at Work:** The greatest honor is to honor others. Encourage volunteers in your state to submit a worthwhile idea that will make a difference. Here are some tips on submitting "Ideas at Work": 1) Look around and evaluate...just because it has always been done one way doesn't mean it can't be improved, 2) See a problem and examine procedures. Get the facts and solve the problem, 3) Challenge details: ask why, what, where and how to fix it, 4) New idea: analyze and evaluate your creative and innovative idea, 5) Don't procrastinate: submit your IDEAS AT WORK consistently. Make them clear and simple for speedy evaluation. The "Ideas at Work" concept is something that could be used at the local level to recognize efforts.
- **Build Skills:** Recognize the contribution of a volunteer in your region/state by building his or her skills. Include them in a special project; cross train them; recognize the outstanding skill or expertise by allowing him/her to mentor another volunteer; include them in goal setting and work planning; or enroll them in a seminar or training of their choice.
- **Volunteer of the Month:** State Coordinators will be given 12 of the newly designed "Volunteer of the Month" lapel pins. States may award the lapel pin to a local volunteer each month based on the state's criteria. If the state is interested in awarding a recognition item with the lapel pin, that award is up to the state and will be charged to the state's budget.
- **State Volunteer of the Year Award:** Each state will select a "State Volunteer of the Year" based on the award criteria by the designation date each year. Recipients of the state award will move on to compete for the "Regional Volunteer of the Year" award. The 10 regional winners are automatically nominated to compete for the national "Mike Seaton Volunteer of the Year Award." States will select their recipients based on the established award guidelines and criteria, which is in line with the national guidelines. The actual award given to the recipient is decided by each state and will be charged to the state's budget. Recipients will be spotlighted in the *DSP News Recognition Issue*.
- **Regional Volunteer of the Year Award:** The "Regional Volunteer of the Year" will be selected from the "State Volunteer of the Year" recipients in that region. The 10 regional winners will compete for the national "Mike Seaton Volunteer of the Year Award." Regions will select their recipients based on the established award guidelines and criteria, which is in line with the national guidelines. The actual award given to the recipient is decided by the Regional Coordinator and will be charged to the region's budget. The regional nominees will receive an American Express Gift Card, letter from the DSP Director and a spotlight in the *DSP News Recognition Issue*.
- **AARP DSP Online Store:** Described in the national strategy section.

### III. Off-Boarding

Implementing a formalized off-boarding process will allow us to gain insights and correct parts of our processes and procedures that are not as effective as we need them to be.

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- **Evaluation Tool:** A new evaluation tool is being created that the National Office can use with Regional Coordinators when discussing their performance. The evaluation tool will be adaptable for state/local use. All DSP volunteers are to be evaluated at least once a year.
- **Reappointment Process:** Regional and State Coordinators serve two-year terms with the option to be reappointed by their immediate supervisor. Regional and State Coordinators can serve for a total of six years in their role if reappointed. The six year term total is not guaranteed. After the reappointment process is complete, the volunteer leader will either be reappointed for another term or released from his/her position. He/she will be informed of their reappointment status in writing by the immediate supervisor. The reappointment process should be adapted at the local level.
- **Exit Interview:** When a Regional or State Coordinator leaves the program voluntarily, in good standing or terms out of their position, an exit interview will be conducted by the immediate supervisor or in some cases by a member of the National Office staff. This exit interview will provide insight into the volunteer's experience with the program, what worked, what could be improved and overall program suggestions.
- **Termining Out:** Each year, Regional and State Coordinators who are terming out of their position will be recognized with a gift by the National Office.
- **Thank you Letter:** A new thank you letter will be incorporated into the process for volunteers who are retiring from the program, terming out or leaving voluntarily (in good standing). The letter template will be posted on VolunteerNet, so volunteers can download, insert the date and send directly to the volunteer under their immediate supervisor's signature.
- **Condolences Letter:** A new condolences letter template has been created and will be posted on VolunteerNet, so volunteers can download, insert appropriate data and send directly to the volunteer's family under the immediate supervisor's signature.
- **New VMIS Title:** For those DSP volunteers who are no longer instructing/active but would like to stay connected to DSP, we are creating a new "Emeritus" title in VMIS. Individuals who hold this title in VMIS will not have the ability to order DSP material but will receive *DSP News*.
- **In the Future:** After the volunteer has completed his/her exit interview, a thank you letter will be sent that includes a promotional code that will allow the volunteer to select a gift from the store. This special section will have non-branded, higher quality items for the volunteer's to choose from.

**The National Recognition & Rewards Program will launch  
June 1, 2011.**