

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Ceremonies and Awards for NCO/Solider of the Year Competitions

1. **PURPOSE.** To inform U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Belvoir, personnel about the guidelines for ceremonies and awards for NCO/Solider of the Year competitions.
2. **BOTTOM LINE.** Leaders may use NAF to support ceremonies and awards for NCO/Soldier of the Year competitions. Appropriated funds may be used to provide awards for excellence. Federal employees may not solicit non-federal entities for gifts or donations in support of ceremonies or as awards. All personnel are encouraged to seek legal guidance when planning for NCO/Solider of the Year competition ceremonies and awards.
3. **DISCUSSION.**
 - a. Use of Non-Appropriated Funds:
 - 1) Pursuant to AR 215-1, para. 5-13(q), units may use NAF to support NCO/Solider of the Year competition ceremonies and awards.
 - 2) Examples of appropriate NAF expenditures may include mementos, hosting recognition celebrations, nonmonetary awards, distinctive clothing, and refreshments.
 - b. Use of Appropriated Funds: In accordance with AR 600-8-22 and other regulatory guidance, commanders may use APFs to purchase awards for excellence, including awards for Soldiers chosen as Soldier or NCO of the Year. Examples of appropriate APF expenditures may include military awards and commanders coins given for excellence. APFs may not be used to purchase food or other entertainment for ceremonies or to purchase gifts or other mementos.
 - c. Prohibition on Soliciting Gifts and Donations:
 - 1) Federal employees, including servicemembers, may not directly or indirectly solicit gifts or donations from non-federal entities in support of NCO/Solider of the Year competition ceremonies and awards. Personnel must not contact businesses, private organizations, or other non-federal entities in any manner that gives the appearance that that person is soliciting for gifts or donations. For example, unit leaders should not advertise or issue invitations for NCO/Solider of the Year competition ceremonies to local businesses or to private organizations unrelated to the organization hosting the ceremony.
 - 2) Only MWR commercial sponsorship personnel are authorized to solicit from non-federal entities. You can obtain guidance for receiving MWR commercial sponsorship for an event by contacting your local MWR office.

3) Unsolicited gifts may only be accepted IAW acceptance criteria contained in OGE rules, the JER, AR 1-100, AR 1-101 and AR 215-1.

d. Acknowledging Gifts and Donations: In the event that unsolicited gifts are to be distributed to Soldiers at NCO/Solider of the Year competition ceremonies, leaders must follow the guidelines in AR 1-101.

1) Unsolicited gift is given for the purpose of NCO/Soldier of the Year competition will not be publically acknowledged at the ceremony.

2) The donor may not restrict public release of information regarding the gift.

3) The commander authorized to accept gifts will send a suitable acknowledgment to the donor on behalf of the military personnel concerned. Letters of acceptance will not imply DA or accepting HQ endorsement. These letters should be worded so as to avoid seeming to solicit donations from private firms, business, or social organizations, or from the general public. A donor's attendance at an award ceremony may create an appearance of endorsement.

4) Personnel will no arrange special concessions or privileges for the donor.

4. This information paper is a summary overview of the guidelines for ceremonies and awards for NCO/Solider of the Year competitions. Questions about standards of conduct rules and their applicability to specific factual situations should be addressed to your local legal office. You may reach your primary ethics counselor, Mr. Jason Smith, at (703) 805-5013 or jason.bowers.smith@conus.army.mil.