

guide

to Long-Service Employee Recognition in the Ontario Public Service

Best Practices & Minimum Standards
for 20, 25, 30 & 35-Year Programs





A joint project of the Government of Ontario
through Management Board Secretariat and
the Quarter Century Club (QCC)

Recognition

of 25-Year Service

For some time, recognition of long-service for employees in the Ontario Public Service (OPS) has been provided only at the end of 25 years. A lapel pin and membership in the Quarter Century Club (QCC) are given to each employee achieving this length of service. In addition, each employee reaching this milestone has a one-time entitlement to one extra week of paid vacation. In some cases, to mark the occasion, managers present framed or mounted scrolls signed by the Premier of the day. However, there is great variation in how the occasion is marked across ministries/agencies, and there is even a lack of consistency within ministries.

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Introduction

of New Awards & Minimum Standard of Recognition

In 1998, Management Board Secretariat agreed to a proposal from the QCC that the Government and the QCC extend recognition to include employees with 20-, 30-, and 35-years' service in the OPS. To address the consistency issue, they also agreed to establish a minimum standard for the presentation of the 25-year award.

In 1999, the QCC provided associate membership in the organization to almost 8000 employees who achieved 20 years' service that year or in the previous four years. QCC also gave each of these employees a set of attractive leather coasters with embossed QCC logos. These gifts were mailed directly to employees by the QCC or presented or sent to employees by their own ministries or agencies, according to the wishes of each organization.

Recognition of employees achieving 30- and 35- year service levels was also implemented that year, including the provision of congratulatory Premier's certificates. Besides ensuring that a process that met the needs of various ministries/agencies was put in place for distribution of the awards, the QCC has concentrated on promoting the implementation of minimum standards of recognition for long service.

Minimum Standard for 25-Year Recognition

As a minimum standard, the following recognition process was endorsed by Management Board Secretariat (MBS) based on a consensus reached by the Quarter Century Club (QCC) with the Human Resources (HR) Council, the Chief Administrative Officers' (CAO) Forum, and the Deputy Ministers' (DM's) Council.

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1. Each ministry/agency is responsible for preparing and delivering a personalized letter of congratulation addressed to the employee from his/her deputy minister (DM)/agency head or the minister.
2. Each employee should be contacted by an appropriate level of management to ascertain if he or she wishes to be presented with the 25-year recognition award. If not, arrangements should be made to deliver or mail the QCC member package directly to the employee.
3. If the employee agrees to a presentation, ministries are responsible for arranging for this to take place at a suitable time and location in the presence of workplace colleagues on or close to the 25-year anniversary date. The presentation of the award should normally be made by a director or higher level of senior management.

A personalized congratulatory certificate signed by the Premier is also available, upon request, from the Premier's Correspondence Unit (previously the Official Documents Service in Management Board Secretariat). Many ministries/agencies are arranging for these certificates to be suitably framed and included in the package presented to each employee achieving 25 years of service. All ministries/agencies are encouraged to adopt this practice.

In addition, each ministry/agency may wish to consider augmenting the minimum standard of recognition with one or more of the following common practices:

- Arrange for an article on the presentation to be included in a subsequent issue of the ministry/agency newsletter along with any photographs of the event.
- Arrange for an annual lunch or dinner to recognize all ministry/agency employees achieving the 25-year milestone.

The additional costs of any of these optional recognition activities are borne by the ministry/agency.

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30-Year Recognition

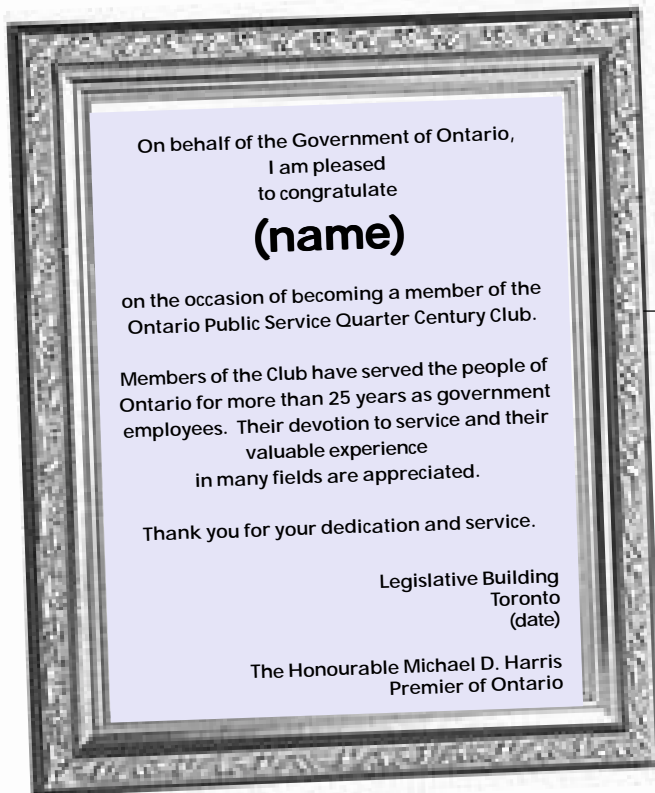
Each employee receives a congratulatory certificate from the Premier. This certificate can be mailed by QCC to the employee's home address, but ministries/agencies may choose to receive certificates in order to present them to employees. The certificates should be framed and if agreed to by the employee, presented by senior management within the ministry/agency.

35-Year Recognition

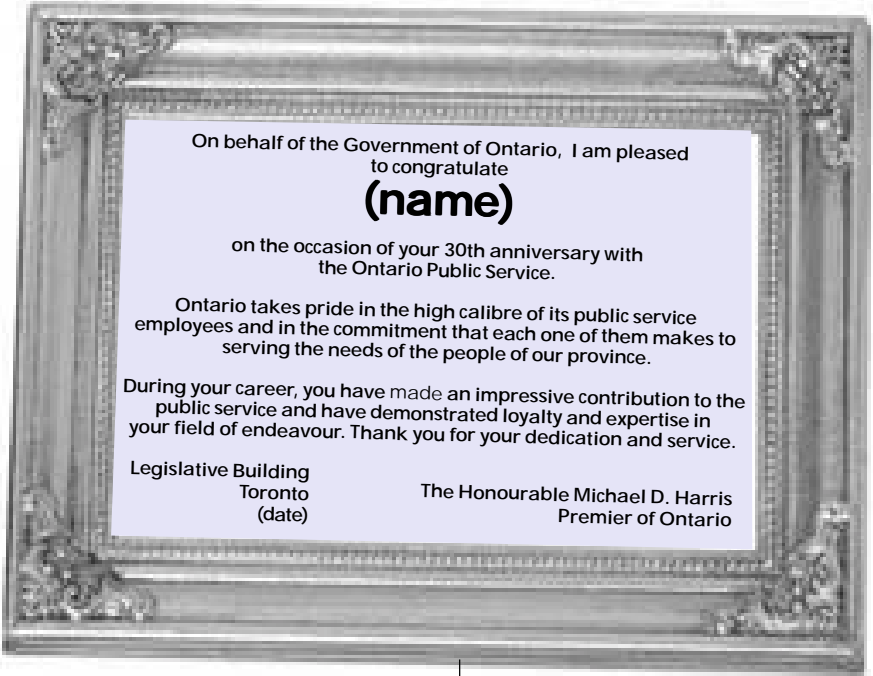
Each ministry or agency arranges for the presentation by the DM/agency head of a framed certificate from the Premier to each employee reaching this significant service milestone. The presentation might take place at an annual ceremony in each ministry or agency or even at a more elaborate event, such as a dinner, hosted by the minister or DM/agency head.

Wording on Premier's Congratulatory Certificates

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25-Year Award



30-Year Award

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35-Year Award

Process Used for Distribution of Awards

20-Year Award

- > In November or December, CORPAY provides QCC with a list of 20-year employees with their home addresses and a diskette for uploading the data to the QCC data base
- .
- > In January, QCC initiates a general mailing to all 20-year service employees, who are now eligible to be QCC associate members. The mailing includes the following:
 - a welcoming letter from the president and
 - an information brochure on QCC.
- > Also in January, QCC sends a letter to all ministry/agency QCC co-ordinators, explaining the procedure that it will follow in the delivery of the recognition program and asking that they inform QCC by a certain deadline whether or not their respective ministry or agency wishes to present a set of QCC leather coasters to their 20-year employees or have them mailed by QCC. Attached to the letter to each ministry/agency co-ordinator are:
 - a copy of the welcoming letter from the QCC president to all new 20-year associate members and
 - a breakdown of the total numbers of employees from each ministry/agency achieving this milestone, as indicated on the CORPAY list.
- > QCC follows the wishes of each ministry/agency as to whether it mails the coasters or forwards them to the ministry/agency for presentation or distribution with additional items, such as a congratulatory letter from the department head. Most choose to have QCC mail these packages directly to employees' homes.
- > In March, QCC sends each new 20-year associate member a set of leather coasters, along with a letter from its president, if the ministry/agency has decided not to make the presentation.

25-Year Award

- > In October, CORPAY provides QCC with an electronic list of all employees, with their home addresses, who will have 25 years' service the following year.
- > QCC sends the list to each ministry/agency's QCC coordinator to provide salutations and check that given and family names and addresses are correct, as well as to note any anomalies, and return corrections by a given deadline. If a list is not returned, it is assumed that there are no changes.
- > QCC imports this information to its data base to update its records. (It will have had employees in its data base from the time they had 20 years' service.)
- > QCC mails the following items to all 25-year employees at the beginning of the year in which they achieve this service level:
 - a letter of welcome from the President of QCC;
 - a copy of the organization's by-laws; and
 - a brochure on the organization.
- > In January or February, QCC prepares and distributes the 25-year package for each employee to the ministry/agency QCC co-ordinator. Each package includes:
 - a QCC lapel pin;
 - a QCC membership card;
 - a bookmark with the year printed on it; and
 - a congratulatory letter from the Chair of the Civil Service Commission.
- > Ministries, who wish to do so, obtain a Premier's certificate for each employee from the Premier's Correspondence Unit and arrange for its framing or mounting. They also arrange for presentation or distribution of the package according to each employee's wishes. Some presentations are made individually within employees' workgroups and others are made at a ministry or agency-wide event for all recipients.

Note: Ministries/agencies have indicated through responses to questionnaires that they would like QCC to provide framed Premier's certificates for 25-year employees along with the packages already distributed to them. QCC has recently written to MBS suggesting that the 25-year program be enhanced by including a framed certificate from the Premier in the standard package. Streamlining of the acquisition and framing of the certificates would save ministries/agencies extra steps as well as ensure that all employees receive the same recognition from the Premier (who is also the Honorary President of the QCC) regardless of where they work in the OPS.

30-Year Award

- > After CORPAY has provided the list of employees achieving 30 years' service and it has been checked with ministries/agencies for given names, address changes, anomalies, and other corrections, QCC arranges for the Premier's certificates to be prepared at the Premier's Correspondence Unit. Some ministries/agencies choose to present the certificates along with a letter from the minister or DM/agency head, but most have requested that QCC mail the certificates directly to employees' homes.
- > QCC mails the certificates (at present unframed) as they are returned from the Premier's Correspondence Unit in ministry/agency batches. They are provided to any active employee with 30 years' service, even if the person retired up to three months prior to the actual anniversary date.
- > QCC recognizes the importance of such certificates being framed and will be requesting that MBS adopt this as a minimum standard.

35-Year Award

- > After CORPAY provides the necessary information on employees with 35 years' service and the ministries/agencies provide any corrections, QCC arranges for the Premiers' certificates to be prepared and framed.
- > They are distributed to the ministries/agencies by the fall. Each ministry/agency is encouraged to arrange for congratulatory letters from the minister, DM/agency head, assistant deputy minister (ADM), and possibly others for presentation with the framed certificates.
- > Ministries arrange for senior official(s) to present the certificates and letters in an appropriate presentation venue or event. These events vary from one ministry/agency to another. In most cases, it will be the minister, DM, or agency head that will present the certificates. In the case of regional employees, it may be an ADM.

Special Circumstances

Occasionally, the individual being recognized may be out of the workplace for an extended period of time, for example for health reasons; recently transferred from or to another ministry; or recently terminated or declared surplus. In such cases, it is important for the manager to deal sensitively with the individual and mutually determine the appropriate method of recognition.

Roles & Responsibilities in Administration of Long-Service Recognition

- > **MBS** is responsible for overall policy direction regarding employer-employee practices and recognition programs and pays for the costs of materials and the delivery of the 25-, 30- and 35- year programs.
- > **CORPAY** provides QCC with lists of names and addresses of employees from each ministry/agency who have reached various service milestones.
- > **QCC** obtains and forwards the CORPAY lists to the ministry/agency co-ordinators. After receiving given names and any corrections, it updates its database and prepares packages to be mailed to employees and/or forwarded to ministry co-ordinators for presentation or distribution as appropriate. QCC is responsible for obtaining certificates from the Premier's Correspondence Unit for 30- and 35-year recognition programs and for having the 35-year certificates framed and sent to the ministry co-ordinators. QCC mails 30-year certificates directly to employees, unless a ministry/agency co-ordinator has directed otherwise. QCC also mails information to new 25-year members, in addition to providing a package to co-ordinators for presentation in each work site. In the case of 20-year recognition, it pays for the program entirely and mails two packages to employees' homes: an initial welcome package to its new associate members early in the year and later, a set of coasters, unless the ministry/agency has chosen to present or distribute them.
- > **Co-ordinators in each ministry and agency**, usually in the HR benefits unit, are responsible for communication with QCC. They correct and return the CORPAY lists received from QCC, adding given names for all recipi

ents if they are available. They usually obtain personalized letters from their respective DMs/agency heads and/or ministries for inclusion in the 25-year packages received from QCC. Then they distribute the packages to directors in their own organizations for presentation to employees, perhaps first obtaining from the Premier's Correspondence Unit (and framing) the 25-year certificates for inclusion. They may also distribute to the appropriate office the certificates for 30-year recognition and/or the QCC packages for 20-year recognition if their respective ministries or agencies have opted to present them. They ensure that the 35-year framed certificates from QCC reach the right place for presentation to each employee by the minister, DM/agency head, or ADM. Depending on the ministry/agency, they may procure congratulatory letters from the minister, DM, ADM, agency head, or others for various long-service employee awards.

- > **Directors** are responsible for coordinating the presentation to their employees of the 25-year packages prepared by QCC, in front of employees' co-workers. As well, they may present the 20-year packages and/or 30-year certificates to employees, as decided by their respective ministries/agencies. In some ministries/agencies, they are responsible for procuring and possibly arranging for the framing of the 25-year Premier's certificates and/or the personalized letters from their respective DMs/agency heads and/or ministers. It is important that prior to any presentation, managers have consulted with the proposed recipients of the recognition so that employees who do not want public presentations have their wishes respected.
- > **Managers** are responsible for determining the individual recipient's wishes prior to any presentation and for ensuring that those wishes are adhered to.

** At 20 years, they are associate members.
At 25 years, they become full QCC members.*

Examples of Current & Proposed Best Practice for Presentation of Long-Service Awards

Each ministry/agency will be able to control its own form of recognition guided by its own context, work environment, and culture, while at the same time meeting government-wide standards of recognition. QCC hopes that this brochure will provide ideas to help ministries/agencies make the means and process of recognition meaningful for employees who have reached significant service milestones. We have compiled these examples from questionnaires completed in the spring of 1999 by members of the HR Council or their delegates, from ideas presented by QCC coordinators at a meeting held in November of 2000, and from research on current ministry practices. We would like to thank those who took the time to share their ministry's or agency's current practices or provide new ideas for recognizing service. (Please note that any costs associated with these enhancements are the responsibility of those adopting these practices.)

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Ideas for 20-Year Award

- > Include a letter from the ADM and/or DM/agency head with the package presented to the employee or send it separately if the QCC does the mailing of the gifts.

Ideas for 25-Year Award

- > Include a letter with more personalized reference to the individual from the DM/agency head and/or minister (possibly on a plaque or framed) in the package presented to an employee.
- > Present pen and pencil sets or other suitable gifts with an Ontario or agency logo on them.
- Have coffee and cake or take the employee to lunch with co-workers to present the award, so as to make it a celebratory occasion.

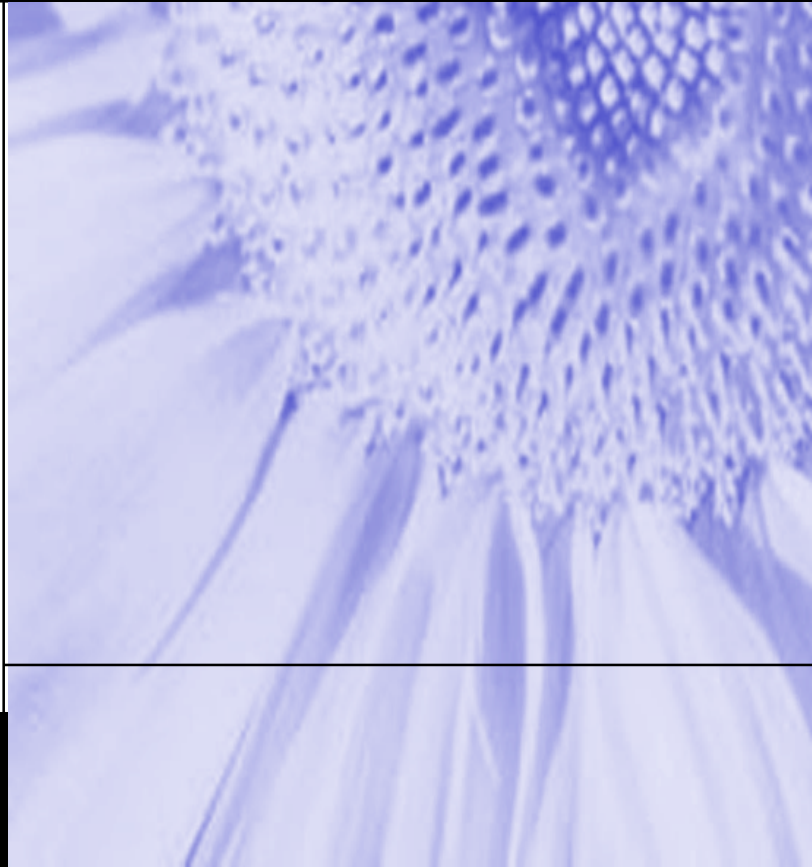
- > Hold one event and presentation hosted by the DM/ agency head for all ministry employees, at least in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), or by ADM's in regional offices.

Ideas for 30 & 35-Year Awards

- > Have the minister, DM or ADM present the certificates at an annual event, such as a lunch or dinner, or with coffee and cake.
- > Publish pictures of the event(s) at which the awards are made, showing the minister, DM/agency head, or ADM making the presentations.
- > Frame a letter or plaque signed by the minister and/or DM/ agency head.
- > Provide a pin with an Ontario emblem to each employee from the ministry/agency. (A number of appropriate gifts are available from the shop in the Legislative Building at Queen's Park.)
- > Present a watch with the ministry or agency logo on the face.
- > Have a lunch with employees work unit to honour the individual.
- > Involve the recipient's family in the recognition event.

General Ideas for Awards

- > Put lists and/or pictures of recipients or events at which awards are made in ministry/agency newsletters on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- > Have an annual event for all 25-, 30-, and 35-year service employees, with senior management and possibly the minister attending.
- > In all cases, obtain the recipient's prior permission and arrange a recognition event in the workplace.



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