

Grand Master's Award of Excellence 2015 – 2016

The **Grand Master's Award of Excellence** is the highest award attainable by a Lodge. The award is designed to raise the overall proficiency of a lodge by encouraging it to broaden its horizons and focus on specific challenges. It should not be considered a competition but rather a blueprint of programs that will help the lodge grow and become more active.

For Lodges whose May 31, 2015 membership is eighty (80) members or greater:

An **Award of Excellence Certificate** will be presented to lodges that complete eight (8) of the primary requirement planks and at least eight (8) of the remaining primary or secondary planks. As a further recognition of this accomplishment, each Officer will receive the **Grand Master's Award of Excellence lapel pin**.

A **Meritorious Certificate** will be presented to those lodges that complete seven (7) of the primary requirement planks and at least seven (7) of the remaining primary or secondary planks.

An **Honorable Mention Certificate** will be presented to those lodges that complete six (6) of the primary requirement planks and at least six (6) of the remaining primary or secondary planks.

For Lodges whose May 31, 2015 membership is seventy-nine (79) members or less:

An **Award of Excellence Certificate** will be presented to lodges that complete seven (7) of the primary requirement planks and at least seven (7) of the remaining primary or secondary planks. As a further recognition of this accomplishment, each Officer will receive the **Grand Master's Award of Excellence lapel pin**.

A **Meritorious Certificate** will be presented to those lodges that complete six (6) of the primary requirement planks and at least six (6) of the remaining primary or secondary planks.

An **Honorable Mention Certificate** will be presented to those lodges that complete five (5) of the primary requirement planks and at least five (5) of the remaining primary or secondary planks.

The time frame is from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016, unless otherwise specified in the plank. All applications must be signed by the Worshipful Master and certified by the Lodge Secretary. The applications will be sent to and received by the Area Deputy Grand Master no later than July 15, 2016

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The Area Deputy Grand Master will review the applications and summarize the lodges meeting the necessary criteria for the three award levels. This information will be sent to and received by the Senior Grand Warden no later than August 1, 2016.

Primary Requirement Planks

Membership

Plank 1 – Lodge Membership: Lodge membership shows a net increase in the total reported to the Grand Secretary from June 1, 2015 to May 31, 2016, as per the Annual Report. Increase is to be attributable to number raised, affiliated, and reinstated exceeding number suspended, expelled, dimitted, or died. *Members gained due to consolidation, merger, or plural members do not count for this plank.* **Two points**

Plank 2 – Lodge Raises Three more Master Masons than last year: The Lodge raises during the year three or more candidates than the number of raisings in the May 31st, 2015 Annual Report on membership (not a net increase, but new candidates who have received their 3rd degree) . **Two points**

Plank 3 – Unfinished Work:

(a) All unfinished candidates must have been elected after June 1, 2015. **One point.**

(b) All unfinished candidates must have been elected after January 1, 2016. **Two points**

The Grand Secretary's records must reflect this. *The report must be specific with name of unfinished candidates and date elected.*

Plank 4 – Unfinished Work Committee:

The Lodge will establish or maintain a Committee that consists of three members (not including the Secretary) which contacts each Petitioner, Elected Candidate, Entered Apprentice, and Fellowcraft that is shown on the active MORI roles for the past three years. The Committee is to encourage each Candidate to complete their degrees. Contact to each Candidate is to be in person or by telephone. A report will be given by the Committee to the Lodge that includes the name of the Candidate, date of contact, and the result of the

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conversation. A copy of the report will be attached. **Two points**

Plank 5 – Invitation to Petition (ITP): The lodge will actively participate in the Invitation to Petition Program. *The report will include the number passing the ballot, the number of petitions received, and the number initiated through this program.* **One point**

Plank 6 – Membership Retention: The lodge establishes or maintains a Membership Retention Committee (*not including the Lodge Secretary*) that makes personal contact with each member who has not paid his dues. This committee will make certain the member is not suffering from some financial or health misfortune before recommending his suspension for non-payment of dues. The contact will be in person or, if personal contact is impractical, by telephone. A report to the lodge will be made that is specific as to who was contacted, the date of contact, and the recommendation of the committee. *While maintaining the confidentiality of the Brother a summary of these lodge reports will be submitted.* **One point**

Lodge Programs

Plank 7 – Host an IL CHIP Event: The Lodge must sponsor IL CHIP Events at which either:

- (a) Six of the workers at the event are members of the sponsoring lodge; or
- (b) 25% of the total workers at the event are members of the sponsoring lodge.

A report showing the date, names of the Lodge members who participated and the total volunteers who worked must be included. **One qualifying event - one point Two or more events - two points**

Plank 8 – Academic Bowl: The Lodge sponsors high school teams and supports the youth by attending the Sectional Tournament by either:

- (a) Sponsoring one high school (\$150) and having two (2) Lodge members attend the Sectional Tournament competition, 20 February 2016, in which their sponsored school is competing. **One point** or;
- (b) Sponsoring two high schools (\$300) and having four (4) lodge members attend the Sectional Tournament competition 20 February 2016, in which their sponsored schools are competing. If the two schools are

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competing at different tournament sites, then the sponsoring Lodge must have two (2) members at each tournament sites. **Two points**

Additional Academic Bowl credit is available under Secondary Requirements Plank 19. *For credit, the Lodge members attending the Sectional tournament must be present for a minimum of 4 rounds of competition.*

Plank 9 – Dinner Meetings: Hold at least four dinner meetings with one in each of the following groups:

- (a) Hold a fraternal dinner for Masons only. This may be in conjunction with a stated or special meeting and is to be solely for the purpose of promoting fellowship.
- (b) Hold a dinner for the ladies and families that include a speaker or some type of entertainment.
- (c) Hold a Past Masters' night dinner with some type of special recognition for these brethren.
- (d) Host a dinner for prospective candidates and their families, featuring a speaker on Freemasonry.

*Report to include the date, members in attendance, number of prospective candidates, the total attendance (ladies, etc.) and an outline of the program or topics presented. **One point***

Plank 10 – Open Installation of the Lodge: All elected and appointed officers of the lodge must be present at the Open Installation of the Lodge Officers. No substitutions of officers will be allowed. *If an officer is unable to attend due to extenuating circumstances the lodge may apply to the District Deputy Grand Master for relief. If he determines that the absence was justifiable, the lodge will then be considered to have met this requirement. The DDGM will sign the score sheet. **One point***

Plank 11 – Illinois Masonic Charities Fund: The Lodge contributes an amount equal to \$2.00 per member to the Illinois Masonic Charities Fund. This cannot be an assessment, but it may be from lodge funds, donations, or a fundraiser. **One point**

Plank 12 – Widows Communications: The lodge will begin or continue an active Communications Program with the widows of Lodge members, including personal contact with them. *Examples Include:* sending holiday or birthday cards, holiday gifts, invitations to public functions of the lodge, and oversight to assure that their financial and health needs are met. *The lodge will provide the*

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*Grand Secretary's office with a current list of widows that includes address and telephone numbers. The report must describe the activities and actual results obtained. **One point***
Lodge Administration

Plank 13 – District Deputy Grand Master's Official Visit: All elected and appointed officers of the lodge must be present at the DDGM's 2015– 2016 Official Visit. If the District Deputy is an officer of the lodge, a member of the lodge will be substituted for him. The lodge will open for the reception of the District Deputy Grand Master. *If an officer is unable to attend due to extenuating circumstances the lodge may apply to the District Deputy Grand Master for relief. If he determines that the absence was justifiable, the lodge will then be considered to have met this requirement. The DDGM will then sign the score sheet. **One point***

Plank 14 – Grand Lodge Attendance: The Worshipful Master, Senior Warden and Junior Warden must have been present at both days of the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge in October 2015. The report must show the names of the Officers attending. *If an Officer is unable to attend due to extenuating circumstances and a proxy attends, the lodge may apply to the District Deputy Grand Master for relief. If he determines that the absence was justifiable, the lodge will then be considered to have met this requirement. The DDGM will then sign the score sheet. **One point***

Plank 15 – Lodge Officers Schools of Instruction: (Revised 2014)

Five (5) voting members of the lodge attend two Lodge Officer Schools of instruction. To get

credit those attending should consist of:

(a) One (1) principal officer (*Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, or Secretary*) and

(b) Four (4) members of the lodge

*The report must include the date of the schools and the officers in attendance. **One point***

Plank 16 – Attend Grand Lecturer's School: Four members of the lodge attend one Grand Lecturer School. *The report must include the date of the school and the names of the attendees. **One point***

Plank 17 – Leadership Workshop: At least one of the following lodge officers must attend the Leadership Workshop conducted Friday afternoon at Grand Lodge: Senior Warden; Junior Warden; Senior Deacon; and / or Junior Deacon. *The report must list the officers' name and title. **One point***

Plank 18 – Officers Proficiency: Five (5) of the current lodge officers (Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, Secretary,

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Chaplain, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Senior Steward and Junior Steward) must be certified as proficient in all the work of opening and closing lodge in form and all the work in the first section of each degree pertaining to their station or place. They must have been examined and recommended by a Grand Lecturer, Certified Lecturer or Certified Lodge Instructor before June 1, 2016. *The examiner(s) will sign the score sheet.* **One point**

Secondary Requirement Planks

Our Grand Lodge Programs

Plank 19 – Academic Bowl: A Lodge supports the Academic Bowl by either:

(a) Lodges that sponsored a Team (Primary Plank 8) then host a dinner, inviting the student participants and their families, community leaders, and teachers from the participating school, **One point** or;

(b) The Lodge may co-sponsor a high school team and have one (1) Lodge member attend the Sectional Tournament competition, 20 February 2016, in which their sponsored school is competing. *If multiple Lodges are co-sponsoring their combined sponsorship must total \$150.00 for the one school.* **One point**

Additionally, any Lodge that has:

(c) Two (2) members attend the State Tournament competition, 5 March 2016. **One point** or;

(d) If two (2) additional members of the Lodge in (c) above [total of four (4) members] attend the State Tournament, 5 March 2016. **Two points**

For credit, the Lodge members attending either the Sectional or State Tournament must be present for a minimum of 4 rounds of competition.

Plank 20 – Charity for a Brother and/or his Widow (revised 2014):

(a) The Lodge qualifies for and receives a grant from the Illinois Masonic Outreach Services Matching Grant Program for an act of charity to a needy brother and/or his widow. Or,

(b) The Lodge provides financial aid from their own resources, for a Brother and/or his widow, but chooses not to submit a request for matching funds Illinois Masonic Outreach Services Program.

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*The report must include the actual service or benefit rendered, while maintaining the confidentiality of the brother assisted. **Two points***

Plank 21 – Coins for Children:

(a) Award Coins for Children matching grant. The lodge must host a dinner to make the presentation and invite local community leaders. The lodge portion of the matching grant may be from donations or a fundraiser, but cannot be from lodge funds or an assessment.

*The report must give a brief outline of the need, the name of the recipient, date of lodge function, and number attending. **One point***

(b) A lodge contributes a minimum of \$100 to the Coins for Children Program. The contribution will be made by check. **One point**

Plank 22 – Community Builders Award: Sponsor a dinner for community leaders and their spouses and present a Community Builders Award Certificate to a person or organization that has made significant contributions to the community. *Report the date, name of recipient, and number of members and guests attending. **One point***

Plank 23 – Lodge Blood Drive: The Lodge sponsors a blood drive. *The report will show the number of pints collected and the date held. **One point***

Plank 24 – Masonic Community Days: A lodge participates in the Masonic Community Days program, by conducting a minimum of three (3) public events, using the Masonic Community Days logo and registering the completed events with the Masonic Awareness Committee. **Two points**

Proof of participation in the program may be provided in two ways:

(a) By attaching a copy of the Participation Certificates for each event, or

(b) Dates and nature of each event will be listed, and the DDGM will certify compliance with the guidelines of the Masonic Community Days program.

Lodge Programs

Plank 25 – Masonic Youth Groups: The lodge will support one or more of the

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Masonic affiliated Youth Groups with at least one member serving as an active advisor. *The report must identify the youth group, the member serving as advisor, and His role. One point*

Plank 26 – Non-Masonic Youth Group: Financially sponsor a non-Masonic youth group, and have at least one member serving in a leadership role. *The report must identify the youth group, the financial involvement, member serving as a leader and his role. One point*

Plank 27 – Religious Services: Observe Saint John the Baptist Day (June 24th) and / or Saint John the Evangelist Day (December 27th) by having a lodge function or attending a religious service as a group on the Sabbath closest to the respective day. The Worshipful Master and at least eight other officers and/or members must be present at the religious service. *The report must give the date of the event and program, or the location of the service attended, and number attending. One point*

Plank 28 – Father and Son, and / or Daughter Dinner: Host a Father and Son, and / or Daughter Night (*grandchildren included*) with a meal and program. *The report must give the date, attendance, and program. One point*

Plank 29 – Educational Programs: The lodge offers at least four (4) educational programs, each on a different stated meeting or special night. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Presentation on Masonic symbols
- (b) Show a Masonic video
- (c) Presentation on Masonic history
- (d) Program on Masonic Charities.

Although preferable, these Educational Programs are not limited to Masonic subjects. *The report for credit must show the dates of the meetings; topics presented, and number attending. One point*

Plank 30 – Scholarship Program: Take part in a scholarship program with a local school, either as a lodge or part of a district program. Host a dinner for the recipients and their families. *The report must show the names of scholarship recipients, the date of the lodge function, and number attending. One point*

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Plank 31 – Press Release: A lodge will submit “tear copies” of at least three (3) different articles about lodge activities in the community that have been published in the local newspapers. **One point**

Lodge Administration

Plank 32 – Secretary's Workshop: The Lodge Secretary and one member of the Lodge attend one of the scheduled Secretary's Workshops conducted by the Grand Secretary's Office. *The report must show the attendees names, and the date and location of the workshop attended.* **One point**

Plank 33 – Other Lodge Visitation (revised 2014): Any of the three principal officers (*Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, or Secretary*) plus two (2) other members make a minimum of three (3) visits, as a group, to a stated or special meeting of a lodge other than their own. *The report on the visits must show the dates, the lodges visited, and identify the officers and members who made the visits.* **One point**

Plank 34 – Degree Conferral at Other Lodges (revised 2014): The slate, which includes at least three (3) principal officers (*Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, or Secretary*) plus three (3) members of the lodge one of which will confer one of the three degrees of Masonry in another lodge. The lodge will confer the degree upon a candidate of the lodge visited. Advance agreement of both lodges involved is required. *The report must show the date, degree conferred and lodges involved.* **One point**

Plank 35 – Instructors: A voting member of the lodge receives a new commission as a Grand Lecturer, Certified Lecturer, Certified Ritualist, or Certified Lodge Instructor in the time July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. **One point**

Plank 36- Attendance at Town Hall Meeting: The Master and two (2) of his principal officers (*Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, or Secretary*) plus two (2) other members make a minimum of one (1) visit, as a group, to a Town Hall Meeting . *The report on the visits must show the date and Town Hall Meeting attended, and identify the officers and members who attended.* **One point**