



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM

SOLUTIONS SAVE, \$O \$UBMIT SUGGESTIONS

what is the history of the employee suggestion program?

the government employee's incentive awards act, title iii of public law 763, enacted september 1, 1954, established the suggestion program. the foundation of the federal suggestion program is found in title 5, code of federal regulation, part 451.

the law established a governmentwide program encouraging all employees to improve the efficiency and economy of government operations.

what is the goal of the act?

the act provides agencies with the authority to recognize federal employees, who contribute by their "...suggestions, inventions, extra

effort accomplishments, or other personal efforts to contribute to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement of government operations, extra effort acts, or services in the public interest in connection with or related to their official employment."

what is an employee suggestion?

a suggestion is a constructive proposal that results in a saving or an improvement to the federal government and/or the department of agriculture (usda). it poses a solution to a problem, a solution to a potential problem, or an opportunity to effect change.

what are the department's responsibilities for the employee suggestion program?

the department will:

- ' provide policy guidance to agencies about the suggestion program and present awards recommendations.
- ' refer suggestions with governmentwide applicability to the office of personnel management for distribution.
- ' promote the program departmentwide.
- ' publish reports annually related to this program.

who may participate in this program?

any federal employee may submit a suggestion.

how does the program operate?

the success of the department's suggestion program depends on a large number of people, including those who play a formal role in the program as well as managers and others whose support is critical.

' **suggesters:** a suggester is an employee who submits an idea for improvement, either individually or as a member of a group. all usda employees are potential suggesters under this program.

' **supervisor:** supervisors are responsible for establishing and maintaining a work environment conducive to the development and free exchange of ideas. the supervisor is also responsible for reviewing employee ideas and providing suggesters with input and assistance in refining ideas, if requested.

' **managers:** managers at all levels are responsible for providing and communicating support, resources, and encouragement necessary to ensure the success of the program.

' **suggestion program coordinators:** coordinators are responsible for the administration and promotion of the usda suggestion program within

their agency. coordinators receive and process suggestions, monitor the evaluation process, facilitate award recommendations, promote the program, and educate agency employees.

' **suggestion evaluators:** evaluators are responsible for reviewing and analyzing employees' ideas, determining the feasibility of adoption, and in some instances, making final decisions on adoption.

evaluation procedures may include any or all of the following:

' **individual evaluator team** – an individual assigned to review suggestions and determine the feasibility of implementation. this person is usually a supervisor or manager in the area(s) impacted by the suggestion or responsible for implementation.

' **evaluation team** – a group of persons assigned by the agency to review suggestions, determine the feasibility of implementation, and/or make final decisions on adoption.

' **subject matter expert** – a person with a specific expertise related to the suggestion being evaluated. this person could be called upon by the evaluator or evaluation team to provide

technical input and otherwise assist with the evaluation of the suggestion.

where do I look for ideas?

usually the best place for anyone to look for ideas is within their own work area, but our program is receptive to ideas that impact the agency or affect the efficiency of government operations in general.

how do I get started?

remember suggestions can contribute actual \$\$ savings, a higher quality product, or make it easier to get work done. implemented suggestions result in process improvement that saves the government time and/or money and may include:

- ' reduction in the cost of operations or service
- ' elimination of unnecessary operations or service
- ' improvement in the quality of operations or service
- ' development of new tools, equipment, processes, or procedures to accomplish the preceding purposes
- ' improved employee morale

how do I define my suggestion?

- ' describe the present process or problem. tell what the problem is and why it is a problem.
- ' explain the cost or waste resulting from the current process or problem.
- ' be as specific and concrete as you can. with the problem defined, you are well on your

way toward improvement. explain your proposed solution; be as explicit and complete as possible. point out the benefits, the saving of money, time, labor, equipment, materials, space, etc., for your suggestion. describe benefits that might include better service, improved products quality, safer working conditions, etc.

are there some categories that are not eligible for suggestions?

yes, these include:

- ' employee services or benefits
- ' working conditions such as flexitime, leave, day care, office space, etc.
- ' housekeeping/maintenance
- ' other exclusions identified by your agency

contact your agency suggestion coordinator for specifics.

how do I submit my suggestion?

the ad-287, employee suggestion form (dated 7/97), which includes instructions and nominating criteria, can be obtained from the following sources:

- ' Beltsville service center, consolidated forms and publications distribution center, 6351 ammentdale road, Beltsville, Maryland 20705
- ' internet:
www.hqnet.usda.gov/ocio/ir

m/forms/ocio_forms.html
form flow filler software by jet forms

where do I submit my suggestion?

for instruction, contact your agency suggestion program coordinator.

what can I expect when I submit a suggestion?

- ' you should receive an acknowledgement when the designated agency suggestion program coordinator receives your suggestion.
- ' your suggestion will be referred for appropriate evaluation and applicability.
- ' you will be advised of the outcome of the evaluations process.

1. adoption
2. referral for further study
3. rejection

if the decision is to refer for further study, you may be asked to further explain your suggestion or work on a task group for implementation.

what happens if my suggestion is adopted?

if your suggestion is adopted, you stand to gain in three important ways:

- ' **satisfaction** – you will find

that nothing beats the feeling of seeing your idea implemented.

Recognition – if adopted, your suggestion should be implemented and may be publicized in an agency publication. in addition, you may be presented with an appropriate recognition.

compensation – you could earn non-monetary recognition items, time-off, or monetary recognition depending on the potential savings or profitability of your idea and your agency policies.

what if the savings my suggestion generated are not measurable?

you may be able to quantify your idea by digging a little deeper. consider doing some research or consulting with a subject matter expert in order to determine the savings. talking to your supervisor may help, too.

if you can't attach a dollar value to your suggestion, you may be able to document nonmeasurable benefits such as improved efficiency, effectiveness, or service.

if I receive an award, how will the type or amount be determined?

the types and/or amount of award you receive will be determined by

the agency in conjunction with the measurable and nonmeasurable scale in the *guide for employee recognition*.

your award may be determined using:

computation or measurable savings, where actual \$\$ saving will be realized

OR

evaluation of nonmeasurable savings, where actual \$\$ savings cannot be specifically identified,

(form AD-1111)

OR

a combination thereof.

what happens if my suggestion is not adopted?

if your suggestion is not adopted, you will receive a written response detailing the reason why your suggestion could not be adopted. for information on requesting reconsideration, contact your agency's suggestion program coordinator.

how can I get more information on my agency's suggestion program?

for more information on the policies or procedures of your agency's employee suggestion program contact your suggestion coordinator.

