

Office of Human Resources
1802 Employee Suggestion Program

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**Georgia Department of Human Services
Human Resources Policy #1802**

Employee Suggestion Program

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References: O.C.G.A. §45-21-1 et. seq. — Employee Incentive Awards
Rules for the State Personnel Board 478-1-22 — Employee Suggestion Program

Employees are encouraged to submit suggestions for improving operations and efficiency through the Employee Suggestion Program (ESP) to assist the State fulfilling its commitment to serving the public effectively.

Section A: Eligibility

1. All DHS employees, except for the Commissioner, are eligible to receive cash awards and/or certificates of commendation through the ESP.

Section B: Submitting Suggestions

1. Suggestions may be submitted online through the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) website. Alternatively, suggestions may be submitted to the DOAS Suggestion Program Coordinator by mail, e-mail, or in person. Verbal suggestions are not considered.
2. Suggestions must clearly and concisely identify a specific situation or problem, recommend a detailed solution and indicate the expected benefit to State government. Inventions, whether patentable or not, will also be considered.
3. Suggestions may be submitted by a group of employees for consideration. Group suggestions should be signed by all participating individuals. If a group suggestion is adopted, the award will be prorated evenly among the group members.
4. Completed suggestion forms are to be submitted to the DOAS Suggestion Program Coordinator. Both hardcopy and electronic transmissions are acceptable.
5. Suggestions relating to the following areas will not be considered:
 - a. Personal grievances.
 - b. Specific assigned duties or responsibilities of a particular employee.
 - c. Classification and/or pay of positions.
 - d. Matters recommended for study, review, or summary.
 - e. Matters that result from assigned or contracted audits, studies, surveys, reviews, or

research.

- f. Matters requiring the enactment of legislation by the General Assembly; and,
- g. Rules of the ESP.

Section C: Review Process

1. DHS will appoint three (3) employees to serve as members of the Agency Suggestion Committee (the “Committee”). One of whom will be designated as the Agency Suggestion Coordinator (ASC).
2. The DOAS Suggestion Program Coordinator will review suggestions to determine if they are eligible for consideration and forward those that should be considered to the ASC. Employees will be notified if their suggestions are not eligible for consideration.
3. The ASC should obtain internal feedback on the suggestion, including a determination of the amount of savings, if any, that would be realized by the implementation of the suggestion. Based on feedback provided, the Committee will evaluate the suggestion and provide a written recommendation regarding its adoption to the Suggestion Program Coordinator in the prescribed format within 45 calendar days of receipt. The recommendation should explain in detail why the suggestion should or should not be adopted and should include any supporting documentation and an estimate of the value of projected annual savings to be generated by DHS.
4. Divisions and Offices that may be affected may be asked to review the suggestion and provide recommendations to the Committee.
5. ASC will forward reports of findings and recommendations for adoption or non-adoption of suggestions to the DOAS Suggestion Program Coordinator for review.
6. The DOAS Suggestion Program Coordinator will review each suggestion to determine whether it is a duplicate of, or is similar to, a previously submitted suggestion. When duplicate suggestions are received, the suggestion bearing the earliest date of receipt will be submitted for consideration. If duplicate suggestions are received on the same date, both will be considered, and if adopted, any award given will be split as determined by the State Personnel Board.
7. The DOAS Suggestion Program Coordinator may forward a suggestion to an agency that does not employ the originator of the suggestion, when appropriate.
8. The DOAS Suggestion Program Coordinator will collect and provide the DOAS Commissioner with the written recommendation regarding employee suggestions. After reviewing the written recommendations, the DOAS Commissioner will make final recommendations to the State Personnel Board, which will make the final determination regarding any action to be taken.
9. The DOAS Suggestion Program Coordinator will notify the employee in writing of the decision, including any award to be received.

Section D: Reevaluation of Suggestions

1. If a suggestion is not adopted, the employee may ask the DOAS Suggestion Program Coordinator to request DHS reevaluate the suggestion.
2. Likewise, DHS may ask the Agency Suggestion Coordinator to reevaluate a suggestion that was not recommended for adoption.

3. Reevaluation may only be requested one time per suggestion.

Section E: Consideration Factors

1. The following factors will be considered by the State Personnel Board in making the final determination regarding an award:
 - a. Nature of benefit.
 - b. Degree of benefit.
 - c. Extent of application (i.e., how many agencies and/or facilities adopt the suggestion).
 - d. Originality and ingenuity of idea.
 - e. Cost of adoption.
 - f. Effort undertaken by the employee in formulating the suggestion; and
 - g. Clarity and completeness of the suggestion.
 - h. Suggestions for improving safety are given more weight in determining the amount, if any, of a cash award.

Section F: Awards

1. An employee whose suggestion is approved by the State Personnel Board and adopted and implemented by DHS that results in direct and measurable cash savings or cost avoidance will receive a cash award. The award will be equal to 10% of the first year's estimated net material and labor savings, with a minimum amount of \$10 and a maximum amount of \$5,000.
 - a. A cash award is generally paid upon adoption of the suggestion and within the fiscal year it is authorized for payment. Payment may be delayed up to six (6) months if the savings resulting from implementation cannot be immediately determined.
 - b. In order to receive payment of a cash award, the individual must be a current employee of DHS, retired from service, or deceased at the time of implementation of the suggestion. In the case of a deceased employee or former employee, the award will be paid as if it were part of the employee's final compensation.
2. Employees may make suggestions that are approved, adopted and implemented by DHS that may result in improvements that cannot be measured (e.g., suggestions involving improvements in working conditions; changes in procedures or forms; or employee morale, health, or safety, etc.). These suggestions may be eligible for a maximum cash award of \$100.
3. An employee may be entitled to an award if a suggestion is adopted in a modified form. The State Personnel Board will determine whether a suggestion was adopted in a modified form and whether the employee making the suggestion should receive an award. The State Personnel Board's decision is final.
4. An employee may be entitled to an award if a suggestion was rejected but subsequently adopted within a year of the employee's receipt of the initial notification of non-adoption. For an individual to receive any award under these circumstances, the Commissioner must have been notified that the suggestion was implemented and the individual must be a current employee of DHS,

retired from service or deceased at the time of implementation of the suggestion. In the case of a deceased employee or former employee, the award will be paid as if it were part of the employee's final compensation.

5. When the submitted suggestion results only in minimal savings or minor improvement, the employee may receive a certificate of commendation in lieu of a cash award. An employee receiving a cash award may also receive a certificate of commendation.

Section G: Rights of The Parties

1. The right to receive a State Personnel Board suggestion award is the submitting employee's sole right under the Employee Suggestion Program.
2. DHS has the right to use a suggestion in any form or manner without making any payment, including royalties, other than an award determined by the State Personnel Board pursuant to the Employee Suggestion Program.

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local Human Resources Office, or email DHS-Policies@dhs.ga.gov.