

**POLICY MANUAL
EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM
CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM**

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM POLICY MANUAL

Included in this manual are policies that would guide those involved in the Suggestion Program in items of confusion, uncertainty, and conflict once the system becomes operational

1.0 City Policy

- a. Support the Employee Suggestion Program at all supervisory levels.
- b. Encourage employees to submit valid suggestions.
- c. Observe fairness and impartiality in the operation of the system.
- d. Expedite investigation of ideas and make decisions promptly.
- e. Provide monetary awards or other forms of recognition for ideas that are adopted.

2.0 Purpose

The Suggestion Program is designed to help employees develop and demonstrate their initiative and ingenuity by providing them with an opportunity to offer constructive ideas for improving City operation. It affirms the importance of individual effort, and provides awards to eligible employees for practical ideas that offer savings in time and material, or results in improved methods or safety.

3.0 Definition of a Suggestion

A suggestion is a timely, constructive idea related to the improvement of methods, equipment, procedures, work conditions, safety, and/or reduction of time or expense. It must include a specific method for achieving a savings or improvement. A suggestion may be a completely new idea or a new application or modification of an existing idea.

3.1 Type of Suggestion Eligible for Awards

Suggestions eligible for cash awards may be defined as positive, constructive ideas for improvement. Such suggestions might include ideas that:

COMBINE	Operations or functions
CREATE	New designs, methods
ELIMINATE	Duplication, labor, equipment, unnecessary operations
REDUCE	Costs, waste, safety hazards, downtime
IMPROVE	Service, efficiency, methods, inventory, communications
SAVE	Time, space, labor, material, utilities

3.2 Ineligible Subjects (Illustrative only and not all-inclusive)

- a. Suggestions dealing with City policy on employee benefits.
- b. Ideas that employees can put into effect without anyone else's approval.

- c. Suggestions that seek to correct simple operating faults, or a condition caused by the failure of any employee to perform an expected or assigned duty.
- d. Suggestions that point to a particular problem or opportunity for improvement but which do not recommend a solution.
- e. Suggestions involving the performance of regular or normal maintenance activities.
- f. Suggestions evolving from assigned special projects or regular assignments involving the evaluation, assessment, or audit of City functions, programs, etc.
- g. Suggestions submitted after the recommended solution, idea, etc. has already been implemented. (The suggestion may still be eligible for consideration provided the suggestor's immediate supervisor or division/department head validates the suggestion.)
- h. Suggestions that are not a new idea or not a new application or a modification to an existing idea.

3.3 Suggestion Submitted Become the Property of the City of Winston-Salem

All suggestions submitted under the provisions of this suggestion policy become the property of the City.

3.4 Limitation Period

If a suggestion is not approved when submitted, but implemented within one year after the committee decision is made, and conditions pertaining to its adoption have not changed, suggestor will be credited with the suggestion, and if eligible, an award will be made. If adoption does not occur within one year after the decision is made, the suggestor can retain credit by resubmitting the suggestion before the one-year period is completed.

4.0 Eligibility for Submitting a Suggestion

4.1 Every active employee on the City payroll is eligible to submit suggestions under this system. No other persons are eligible. Eligibility for cash awards is defined in section 5.0.

4.2 How to Submit Suggestions

Only one suggestion should be submitted on each form. The forms may be mailed or hand-delivered from the employee. Suggestions may also be submitted via the Employee Center.

4.3 Joint Ownership

When two or more employees submit a joint suggestion, each name must be noted on the suggestion form (or online submission) and credit will be equally shared.

5.0 Eligibility for Receiving a Cash Award

5.1 Those employees eligible for a cash award include (eligibility based on the employment at the time of the suggestion):

- a. All active, non-exempt employees not specifically excluded by Section 5.2.
- b. All active, supervisory personnel whose suggestion is judged over and above the expected scope of their normal duties and responsibilities.
- c. All active, exempt employees not specifically excluded in Section 5.2.

5.2 Those employees who are not eligible to receive cash awards for suggestion are:

- a. Elected Officials, City Manager, and Assistant City Managers, Department, Division, and Office Heads.
- b. Members of the Suggestion Program staff.
- c. Those who are primarily engaged in research, development, methods investigation, or productivity studies.
- d. Employees who have been given a direct assignment for correction or improvement.
- e. Current members of the Employee Suggestion Review Committee.

5.3 Award eligibility is based on an employee's occupation at the time the suggestion was submitted.

6.0 Administration Responsibilities

6.1 The administration of the Employee Suggestion Program is the responsibility of the Employee Suggestion Program Coordinator. The duties of the coordinator include:

- a. Maintaining suggestion forms and submitted procedures.
- b. Publicizing the Suggestion Program.
- c. Maintaining adequate records on suggestion received and investigated, and keeping a file on open items.
- d. Acknowledging receipt of suggestions and reviewing for validity.
- e. Notifying suggestors when additional information is needed, or to give reasons why suggestion are not acceptable for consideration under the Suggestion Program.
- f. Evaluating or referring suggestions to functional organizations for investigation and determination of savings.
- g. Notifying suggestors of progress or delays in an investigation.
- h. Reviewing replies from investigator or investigating department to make sure all necessary information has been received.
- i. Determining an employee's eligibility to receive an award.
- j. Notification to suggestors stating results of investigation.
- k. Forwarding pertinent data regarding an adopted suggestion to the Human Resources office for posting to employee's personnel record.

- l. Assisting employees in writing suggestion, when requested.
 - m. Periodically collecting data relative to the cost of operating the Suggestion Program.
 - n. Insuring the minutes of the review committee meetings are recorded.
- 6.2 The Employee Suggestion Review Committee determines the policies and rules by which the system operates.
- 6.3 The Employee Suggestion Review Committee will assist the Suggestion System Coordinator in:
 - a. The overall administration of the system.
 - b. The final decisions as to a person's eligibility.
 - c. Reviewing reports and evaluations from the investigating organization to assure that adequate investigation has been made.
 - d. Determining application of Suggestion Program policy.
 - e. Determining the amount of the award.
- 6.4 Supervisory employees are responsible for:
 - a. Understanding and supporting the purpose and operation of the Suggestion Program.
 - b. Developing a work environment that encourages employees to submit valid suggestions.
 - c. Assisting employees in preparing suggestion when requested.
 - d. Expediting the investigation of a suggestion that relates to their organization.
 - e. Expediting the prompt implementation of an adopted suggestion.
 - f. Completely understanding all the facts, and tactfully explaining to an employee why his/her suggestion was not adopted and, as required, to recommend a reinvestigation if the facts justify this action.
- 6.5 Department Heads are responsible for:
 - a. Understanding and supporting the purpose and operation of the Suggestion Program.
 - b. Reviewing the suggestion when received from the Program Coordinator and designating someone within the department to investigate the suggestion.
 - c. Expediting the investigation of a suggestion that relates to their organization.
 - d. Expediting the prompt implementation of an adopted suggestion.
 - e. The department head of the area the suggestion involves signs investigation form affirming the information is correct and none of the information supplied has been falsified.
- 6.6 Investigators are responsible for:
 - a. Completing the investigation form and returning it to the program coordinator in a timely manner.

- b. Supplying all necessary, supporting documentation including calculations used to glean the cost/benefit of implementing the suggestion.
- c. Affirming the information supplied is correct and none of the information supplied has been falsified.

7.0 Employee Suggestion Review Committee

7.1 Composition

The Employee Suggestion Review Committee will be composed of nine employees. Five of the Committee members must be employed by the City in non-supervisory roles.

7.2 Time Commitment

At minimum the Review Committee will meet on a quarterly basis to review suggestions that have been evaluated by City departments. Each committee member will be expected to serve a two-year term.

7.3 Selection

The Marketing and Communications Department will solicit nominations from Department Heads for the Employee Suggestion Review Committee biannually. Each department head shall nominate two employees from within their respective department to serve on the committee. One of the nominees must be employed in a non-supervisory role; the second nominee shall be employed in a supervisory role. These nominations shall be forwarded to the City Manager through the Marketing and Communications Department. The City Manager will make the final selection of committee members. The Fire Department, Police Department, and Utilities Division will be represented at all times on the Review Committee. A representative from Human Resources will serve as an ex officio member of the committee and will not occupy one of the nine positions.

Note: During the first year of the revised program, five non-supervisory employees will be selected. Three of these employees will serve four-year terms. Four supervisory employees will be retained to allow for staggered terms. Two of these employees will serve four-year term.

7.4 Leadership and Procedure

The Program Coordinator or their designee shall chair the Review Committee meetings. Suggestion investigation packets will be sent to committee member prior to the meetings. Committee members may initiate discussion, ask for clarification, or vote on recommendation. Voting will be general consensus. In the event of disagreement, majority vote will rule. All awards will be subject to the City Manager's approval.

8.0 Evaluation of a Suggestion

8.1 Types of Suggestions

Suggestions may involve tangible or intangible savings, or both. Tangible savings are those that result in measurable dollar savings in time, materials, and/or equipment, expense, and cost avoidance. Intangible savings are those for which there are no measurable dollar savings, i.e. benefits in public and employee relations, working conditions, elimination of safety hazards, reduction in effort, or increase in efficiency which are difficult to evaluate in dollars.

8.2 Calculating Tangible Savings

Evaluation will take into consideration:

- a. Direct labor costs (salary).
- b. Indirect labor costs:
 1. Vacations
 2. Holidays
 3. Sickness
 4. Longevity
 5. Benefit payments (Social Security, Worker's Compensation, Pension, Group Life Insurance, Health Insurance)
- c. The cost of materials.
- d. The cost of rental services.
- e. Capital costs.
- f. Tangible items of expense such as electricity, fuel oil, gas, gasoline, or water when such items are significant.
- g. The salary cost of investigating a suggestion shall be excluded in evaluating savings, except when it is the direct subject of the suggestion.
- h. Tangible savings are calculated by the reduction in costs expected during the first 12 months' use of the suggestion. Such calculations shall not be revised, except to correct clerical errors, after an award is granted.
- i. Savings shall be based on the expected volume of business during the first 12 months of the suggestion's use based on the latest available data. Cost factors used shall be those in effect at the time savings are evaluated, or at the date the suggestion was put into effect, whichever is earlier.

Note: Implementation costs that are normally amortized over a period of years should be amortized as part of the suggestion investigation. Savings shall not be amortized.

8.3 Calculating Intangible Savings

Intangible savings, such as improvement in employee relations, working conditions, or elimination of safety hazards cannot be assigned measurable dollar savings. Instead, they will be evaluated on the basis of importance, frequency of application, extent of application, and cost of implementation.

8.4 The Marketing and Communications Department is responsible for coordinating all evaluations of suggestions. Any department may be called upon to conduct or assist in the evaluations. Staff will also chair all review committee meetings.

8.5 Determining Awards

For tangible savings, awards are based on 10% of the expected material and/or labor savings during the first twelve months' use of the suggestion. Cash awards shall be rounded to the next \$5.00 increment, and shall range from \$50.00 minimum to \$5,000 maximum per suggestion.

Awards for intangible savings will be \$50.00 plus such things as letters of appreciation and favorable additions to personnel records.

Awards will be presented only after the suggestion has been implemented.

All awards are subject to federal, state, and local taxes.

9.0 Appeals

In the event a suggestor wishes to appeal the decision made by the Employee Suggestion Review Committee, the suggestor may initiate the process by notifying the Employee Suggestion Program Coordinator in writing. The suggestor will be invited to address the Review committee during the next committee meeting. At this time, the suggestor may provide committee members with additional information and justification supporting their appeal. Committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions for clarification, if necessary. After the presentation has concluded, the suggestor will be excused and the committee will discuss and vote on the merits of the appeal. The committee decision will be based on simple majority outcome. The coordinator will notify the suggestor in writing of the appeal outcome. The decision of the Review committee will be final. All awards will require the City Manager's approval.

10.0 Organization

Coordinator

A staff member from the Marketing and Communications Department will be the coordinator and have the responsibility to promote and operate the system as designed.

Suggestion System Review Committee

This committee would be nominated by department heads and appointed by the City Manager and would consist of nine members from various departments who would serve two year terms. This committee would meet on a regular basis to review suggestions, accept or reject suggestions, determine the extent of implementation and determine eligibility and awards.

Investigator Can be someone familiar with the area of the suggestion or can be specifically designated by the Review committee. The investigator will obtain all necessary data on a suggestion in order to give the committee adequate information for making a decision on implementation.

Clerical Staff The clerical duties will be handled by the **MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS secretary**. Major tasks include receiving suggestion, maintaining records, and corresponding with suggestor.

11.0 Operating Procedures

- a. Submit Suggestions Suggestions are submitted through the Employee Center, or on the official form by mail or in person to the Marketing and Communications Department.
- b. Review suggestions for eligibility and validity Suggestions will be reviewed for eligibility of the suggestor and proper form information such as signature, etc.
- c. Identify each suggestor A unique identification system will be established as a basis for control.
- d. Notification to suggestor Each suggestor is to be notified of the status of his suggestion.
- e. Assignment of valid suggestion The Marketing and Communications Department will assign valid suggestions for investigation to the appropriate City department.
- f. Conduct an investigation The department head will designate an investigator to collect all pertinent data on the possible implementation of each suggestion. The Suggestion Program Coordinator will meet with the designated investigator to glean further understanding of the processes involved and the improvements or savings the suggestion will accomplish.
- g. Evaluate the suggestion The Marketing and Communications Department will prepare a packet of completed suggestion investigations and forward it to the committee members prior to the scheduled meeting. Using data supplied by the investigator, the Review Committee will approve or reject the suggestion.
- h. Suggestions The Marketing and Communications Department will forward the packet of completed suggestion investigations recommended for awards to the City Manager for approval.
- i. Notification to the Suggestor Notification of approval, rejection, or delay will be given to the suggestor. In the event of approval, a letter will be sent from Marketing and Communications recognizing the employee.

- j. Suggestion Implementation Responsibility for implementation will be assigned and carried out as decided by the Committee.
- k. Award Presentation A high level manager should participate in award presentations with an appropriate amount of publicity.
- l. Additional Award If the evaluation study shows more first year savings than expected, an additional award is made to the suggestor.
- m. Close out the suggestion The suggestion form is reviewed, data such as amount of award and evaluation results are added to the form, and it is filed for future reference.

12.0 Office Procedures

- a. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS receives suggestion via the Employee Center or mailed form.
- b. Staff reviews suggestion for eligibility and validity.
- c. Staff queries database for next sequential identification number. This number and data received is written on suggestion form. Appropriate information is keyed into database.
- d. Staff acknowledges receipt of suggestion with memo to suggestor. This information is noted in database.
- e. Staff determines area of responsibility for suggestion and sends copy of suggestion along with memo requesting assistance to the respective department head.
- f. The department head will designate an investigator to collect all pertinent data on the possible implementation of each suggestion.
- g. Upon receiving investigation summary from department head, staff will note date completed in the database.
- h. The Marketing and Communications Department will schedule a meeting with the Employee Suggestion Review Committee. Prior to the meeting, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS will prepare a packet of completed suggestion investigations and forward to the Committee members for review. Using the data supplied by the investigator, the Review Committee will approve or reject the suggestion.
- i. Staff will note whether the suggestion was adopted or rejected in the database. If suggestion is rejected, staff will send memo to suggestor indicating reason for rejection.
- j. Responsibility for implementation will be assigned and carried out as decided by the Committee.
- k. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS staff will schedule an award ceremony to recognize those receiving awards for suggestions. Staff will write narrative detailing the suggestion and cost savings.