

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL

May 1, 1984

PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM 2-84

TO: Heads of Departments and Agencies
SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION AWARDS PROGRAM

The 110th Legislature established an authority for an Employee Suggestion Awards Program by enactment of Section 642 of the Personnel Law. Under requirement of Section 642, the Commissioner of Personnel is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Awards Program, and a Suggestion Board is established with responsibility to develop program guidelines and make final determinations.

The Suggestion Board is composed of the Commissioner of Personnel, the Commissioner of Finance and Administration and a third Commissioner appointed by the Governor.

The Board's program guidelines are attached. The Board's guidelines recognize that each department is best equipped to process and evaluate suggestions which are unique to its programs and methods of operation. Specifically, the guidelines require each department to provide a staff person to coordinate the review of suggestions and to establish departmental committees with the expertise necessary to evaluate agency-specific suggestions. The guidelines also require the Department of Personnel to provide a System Administrator to receive and route suggestions and to function as liaison between individual departments and the Board.

I am asking each of you to designate an employee to serve as your departmental/agency Coordinator for the Awards Program. Freeman G. Wood of this department has been selected as the Suggestion System Administrator. Please direct the name of your Coordinator to him by June 1. Mr. Wood will then schedule a meeting with the Coordinators to discuss the Awards Program and implementation responsibilities in greater detail.

The information and guidelines provided by this memorandum should not be released to employees until an official implementation date is announced by Mr. Wood.

Please address any questions concerning the contents of this memorandum or the Awards Program to Freeman Wood, Department of Personnel.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.



DAVID W. BUSTIN

COMMISSIONER

GUIDELINES FOR THE
MAINE STATE EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION SYSTEM

Section 1 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to implement 5 MRSA §642 which establishes the Employee Suggestion System and authorizes cash awards to State employees whose adopted suggestions result in substantial savings to the State.

Section 2 Employee Suggestion System Board

By statute, the Employee Suggestion Board is comprised of the Commissioner of Personnel, The Commissioner of Finance and Administration, and one other Commissioner appointed by the Governor.

The Board Shall:

- (a) Elect a Chairperson by February fifteenth on each odd-numbered year;
- (b) Review, revise and adopt guidelines governing the Employee Suggestion System, including the criteria for making awards;
- (c) Review all suggestions and approve any awards to be given; and
- (d) Report to the Legislature by March 1st of each year.

Section 3 Department of Personnel

The Commissioner of Personnel is responsible for the administration of the program and shall designate a State Suggestion System Administrator to manage the program on a day-to-day basis.

The Department shall:

- (a) Promote the Employee Suggestion System Program;
- (b) Provide appropriate forms to departmental/agency coordinators;
- (c) Assist departments and agencies in evaluating suggestions;
- (d) Receive and review evaluation results from departmental/agency evaluation committees and forward eligible suggestions to the Board;
and
- (e) Provide any further guidelines needed to administer the Suggestion System.

Section 4 Departments/Agencies

Each departmental/agency head shall appoint a Suggestion System Coordinator and forward his/her name to the State Suggestion System Administrator.

Section 5 Suggestion System Coordinators

Suggestion System Coordinators shall:

- (a) Provide program information and assistance to departmental employees and make suggestion forms accessible and visible to departmental employees;
- (b) Review each suggestion forwarded by the Suggestion System Administrator and recommend to the departmental/agency head the composition of an evaluation committee qualified to analyze and evaluate each suggestion received;
- (c) Assist and work with departmental evaluation committees and the Suggestion System Administrator as required; and
- (d) Keep an accurate record of actual savings derived from implemented suggestions and make quarterly reports to the departmental/agency head and the State Suggestion System Administrator.

Section 6 Departmental/Agency Evaluation Committees

Departmental/agency evaluation committees shall be established as appropriate for each suggestion. Committees shall include the Suggestion System Coordinator and/or such other members, if any, as may be appointed by the departmental/agency head. When a suggestion has implications for more than one department, an evaluation committee may include representation from each of the effected departments.

The Evaluation Committee shall:

- (a) Evaluate suggestions received from the Suggestion System Administrator; and
- (b) Through the Suggestion System Coordinator and the departmental/agency head, forward its evaluations and recommendations to the Suggestion System Administrator. Committee evaluations will provide valid estimates of the savings on which awards will be based.

Section 7 Employee Eligibility

All employees within the classified and unclassified services are eligible except:

- (a) Employees in positions listed in Title 2, Sections 6, 6A and 6B or Title 5, Section 711,
- (b) Non-status employees in project positions or on temporary assignments; and
- (c) Staff of the Employee Suggestion Awards Program.

Section 8 Eligibility of Suggestions

- (a) Suggestions must concisely identify a condition or procedure in which productivity or efficiency can be improved and recommend a specific remedy for that condition or procedure for improved productivity or efficiency.
- (b) Suggestions must result in a measurable cost savings, and estimates must be a part of the suggestion submission.
- (c) Suggestions must be submitted on the official Employee Suggestion Submission Form.
- (d) Suggestions may be rejected for lack of sufficient information.
- (e) Suggestions pertaining to the following will NOT be eligible:
 - i. Opinions or suggestions which do not offer a specific solution or procedure for implementing the suggestion;
 - ii. Suggestions to improve or correct conditions which exist only because established policy and procedures are not being followed;
 - iii. Suggestions which duplicate a suggestion previously submitted;
 - iv. Suggestions to eliminate, lower, or raise fees or taxes levied by the State;
 - v. Matters which are considered to be part of the normal job responsibilities of the employee;
 - vi. Matters which are the result of assigned or contracted audits, studies, surveys, reviews or research;

- vii. Ideas already under consideration by the department;
- viii. Suggestions submitted by an employee whose primary duties involve development or evaluation of cost-saving ideas for the department concerned;
- ix. New procedures which have been in effect less than six months; and
- x. Suggestions which would require a change to State legislation.

Section 9 Suggestion Submission and Evaluation Process

- (a) Employee completes Suggestion Submission Form.
- (b) Suggestion Submission Form is forwarded to the State Suggestion System Administrator.
- (c) Suggestions will be date stamped and assigned a control number by the Suggestion System Administrator.
- (d) Ineligible suggestions will not be processed for an award and will be returned to the suggester with the reason for non-acceptance. Suggestions may be deemed ineligible by the Suggestion System Administrator, the Departmental Evaluation Committee, or the Employee Suggestion System Board.
- (e) The Suggestion System Administrator will forward the suggestion to the appropriate departmental Suggestion System Coordinator.
- (f) If the suggester specifically requests it, the name of the suggester will be treated with confidentiality by all persons involved with the review and evaluation of the suggestion being processed. Each suggestion of this kind will be marked "Confidential" upon receipt.
- (g) The Evaluation Committee will evaluate each suggestion and review and verify its net cost savings (savings minus cost of implementation).
- (h) Within 21 days from date of submission, the Evaluation Committee will forward its evaluation results to the Suggestion System Administrator, and the Board will determine if the suggestion should be adopted, modified, or rejected.
- (i) The System Administrator will send a copy of the Board's decision to the suggester and the appropriate departmental coordinator.

- (j) Suggestions will normally be subject to final determination within fifty-five (55) days from the date of submission. The Board may reasonably extend this time period if necessary.
- (k) Each suggestion, committee evaluation and the corresponding Board decision will be retained in a Central File maintained by the Suggestion System Administrator, and copies will be provided to the Suggestion System Coordinator of the department(s) involved.

Section 10 Modification of Ideas

An employee is eligible for an award even though his/her suggestion is adopted in a modified form.

Section 11 Duplicate Suggestions

- (a) Each suggestion will be reviewed to determine whether it is a duplicate of or similar to a suggestion which has already been submitted or adopted.
- (b) If duplicate suggestions are received, the one with the earliest date of receipt will be eligible for consideration and all others will be ineligible.

Section 12 Group Suggestions

Group suggestions will be determined on the same basis as if the suggestion had been submitted by one employee and the award will be divided equally among the employees in the group.

Section 13 Deceased Employees

In the case of a deceased employee, the award will be paid to the employee's heirs or estate.

Section 14 Determination of Awards

Awards will be made for each adopted suggestion. The maximum cash award will be limited to ten percent (10%) of the first year's estimated savings or two thousand dollars (\$2,000) whichever is less. A cash award will not be made for any estimated savings of less than \$250.00. Any cash awards approved by the Board will be charged against the fund or funds to which estimated savings apply. If it is not possible to reasonably estimate the first year's savings, the Board may authorize an alternative payment process. If a suggestion is accepted which does not result in enough savings to qualify for a cash award, the suggester will receive a certificate of recognition.

Section 15 Payment of Awards

The suggester will receive written notice indicating that his/her suggestion has been or will be implemented. Cash awards will be presented upon implementation provided an estimate of cost savings over the first year can be made. Otherwise, cash awards will be made during the first year of implementation.

Section 16 DISCLAIMER OF RIGHTS

Adopted suggestions become the property of the State and the suggester may make no claims against the State regardless of the use made of the suggestion by the State.