

**TITLE 147
PROCEDURAL RULE
EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION AWARD BOARD**

**SERIES 1
RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE OPERATION OF
THE WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM**

§147-1-1. General.

1.1. Scope. -- The regulations establish general rules for the submission, review and processing for a possible honorary or cash award of suggestions by employees of the State of West Virginia to the Employee Suggestion Award Board to cause substantial savings or improvement in state government operations.

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code §5A-1A

1.3. Filing Date. -- March 9, 1983

1.4. Effective Date. -- March 9, 1983

§147-1-2. Preamble - The West Virginia Public Employee Suggestion Program.

2.1. Purpose. -- The primary goal of article one-a, chapter five-a of the West Virginia Code is to establish the Employee Suggestion Award Program for employees of state government. Under this program, cash or honorary awards will be made to state employees whose adopted suggestions will result in substantial savings or improvement in state government operations.

The specific objectives of the program are to:

(a) Stimulate creative and innovative thinking by state government employees.

(b) Develop a climate in state government which motivates employees to submit their ideas and suggestions for improvements.

(c) Provide an impartial review and evaluation of employee suggestions by persons qualified to judge their merits.

(d) Ensure that meritorious suggestions are appropriately rewarded and ensure that appropriate

recognition is given to the employee.

§147-1-3. Definitions.

3.1. Employee Suggestion Award Board. -- "Employee Suggestion Award Board" means a Board consisting of the Commissioner of Finance and Administration, Commissioner of the Department of Labor, Commissioner of the Department of Employment Security, the President of the State Senate, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, one (1) member of the Senate appointed by the President of the State Senate and one (1) member of the House of Delegates appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates.

3.2. Department head. -- "Department Head" means the official in charge of a particular state government department or agency. The department head will appoint the idea counselor and departmental awards committee for that department or agency.

3.3. Idea counselor. -- "Idea Counselor" means the person who coordinates and administers the Employee Suggestion Program within a state department or agency.

3.4. Departmental awards committee. -- "Departmental Awards Committee" means a group of employees appointed by the department head in a particular department or agency to evaluate and process employee suggestions for that department or agency.

§147-1-4. Responsibility of the Employee Suggestion Award Board.

4.1. The establishment, the administration, the execution and enforcement of article one-a, chapter five-a of the West Virginia Code and policies, Rules and Regulations of the Employee Suggestion Program shall be the responsibility of the Employee Suggestion Award Board.

4.2. The installation and maintaining of any necessary recordkeeping systems, the establishment and promotion of an adequate employee and public information program, the periodic analyzation of the effects of the Employee Suggestion Program and the preparation of an annual report to the Governor are the responsibility of the Employee Suggestion Award Board.

§147-1-5. Eligible employees.

5.1. Any state employee who is eligible for membership in a state retirement program is eligible to participate in the Employee Suggestion Program except as described in Section 5.2 and in Section 6 below. Temporary and part-time state employees, even though not eligible for membership in a state retirement program, are, nevertheless, eligible to participate in the Employee Suggestion Program.

5.2. Employees whose primary duties concern administrative planning and research, or whose normal duties include the making of suggestions, or who are expected as part of their job to develop ideas for improvement and to act upon them, are eligible for an award only for those suggestions not related to their areas of responsibility.

5.3. Any former state employee who has submitted an employee suggestion prior to the termination of the employee's employment.

§147-1-6. Ineligible employees.

6.1. No award may be made to any employee for any suggestion which would be expected from the performance of the employee's normal duties and responsibilities and which the employee has the authority to implement.

6.2. Supervisory personnel may not be given an award for a suggestion if the employee has the authority to implement the employee's own suggestion unless the suggestion has application also to units other than the supervisor's unit.

6.3. No award may be made to any employee whose primary duty is research, planning, investigation or management analysis and evaluation unless the suggestion concerns a matter which is clearly unrelated to the employee's current assignment or primary duty.

6.4. Employees serving, as a part of the Employee Suggestion Program, on any departmental awards

committee, subcommittee or ad hoc committee are not eligible for awards for suggestions falling within the scope of the agency's functions and responsibilities, unless the employee steps down from the employee's responsibilities as a member of the departmental awards committee, subcommittee or ad hoc committee while the employee's suggestion is being considered by the departmental awards committee.

6.5. An employee whose suggestion relates to a special problem specifically assigned to the employee for solution cannot be given an award unless the suggestion has broad application, surpassing the scope of the assignment.

6.6. Normally, cash awards may not be made to any employee associated with the Employee Suggestion Program. Under special circumstances, the Board may authorize exceptions and in all such cases, the employee must disqualify himself from making any evaluations or recommendations regarding the employee's suggestion.

6.7. Former state government employees are not eligible to submit suggestions for award after their employment has terminated.

6.8. Any state employee convicted of a felony connected with state government employment is not eligible.

§147-1-7. Eligible suggestions.

7.1. Any suggestion which is useful, practical and constructive and is of benefit to the state is eligible for an award.

7.2. A suggestion may involve an entirely new idea, improvement of an existing process or activity or an application of an old idea which can be adopted to the state's benefit.

7.3. If a suggestion is modified by the Board or any implementing agency, the employee will remain eligible for an award.

7.4. If a suggestion is responsible for stimulating activity on the part of supervisors or management and results in improvements, the suggestion may be eligible for an award even though it may not have been implemented as specified in the suggestion.

§147-1-8. Ineligible suggestions.

8.1. Personal grievances.

8.2. Suggestions concerning classification and pay of positions.

8.3. Those which do not propose a specific method or procedure for implementing the suggestion.

8.4. Those which correct conditions that exist only because established policy and procedures are not being followed.

8.5. Those which duplicate another suggestion previously submitted and eligible for consideration or for which an award has been previously granted or denied.

8.6. Those which simply suggest eliminating, instituting, lowering or raising fees or taxes levied by the state.

8.7. Those concerning matters which are the result of assigned or contracted audits, studies, surveys, reviews or research, unless the suggestion idea is not directly included in the follow-up, recommendations or activity generated by these efforts.

8.8. Those calling attention to the need for routine maintenance operations involving buildings, grounds, equipment, etc., which should normally be reported through established channels: Provided, however, That suggestions concerning improvements in maintenance methods, materials or equipment may be considered for an award.

8.9. Matters recommended outside the Employee Suggestion Program for study or review.

8.10. Those concerning matters which are actively being considered by supervision or management. (Note: Supporting documentation should be available from management when a suggestion is ruled ineligible under this provision.)

§147-1-9. Submission and processing of suggestion.

9.1. The completed suggestion should be submitted by the employee as soon as possible after it is documented, preferably before any attempt is made to implement it. All suggestions should be submitted to the idea counselor in the agency where the employee is employed.

9.2. If an employee wishes to submit a suggestion involving another agency, the employee would still submit the employee suggestion form to the idea

counselor in the employee's agency. The idea counselor will send the employee suggestion to the department head who will promptly forward the employee suggestion to the department head in the other agency for processing by that agency.

9.3. The idea counselor will forward all employee suggestions to the departmental awards committee. It is here that the evaluation process begins.

9.4. Each departmental awards committee, upon receiving the suggestion, will conduct a thorough and objective analysis of the suggestion and will prepare and forward an evaluation report with recommendations to the idea counselor. The departmental awards committee will have a maximum of thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the suggestion to evaluate each suggestion.

9.5. The idea counselor will examine the employee suggestion and review the recommendations of the departmental awards committee. After thorough examination of the employee suggestion, the idea counselor will submit a recommendation and the employee suggestion form to the department head.

9.6. The department head will examine the employee suggestion and review the recommendations of the departmental awards committee and the idea counselor. Next, the department head will estimate the savings that reasonably can be expected to result from implementing the employee suggestion for a fiscal year or twelve (12) consecutive months. The department head will submit a recommendation and the employee suggestion form to the Employee Suggestion Award Board.

9.7. The Employee Suggestion Award Board will examine the employee suggestion and review the recommendations of the departmental awards committee, idea counselor and the department head. The Board shall approve or disapprove all employee suggestions. The Board will notify in writing the suggester and the department head of the final disposition of the suggestion. For all disapproved suggestions, the notification will include a full explanation of the reason or reasons for rejection. All evaluations and processing required by the Board will be completed within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of receipt by the Board of the suggestion.

9.8. When the Board has acted on a suggestion and has either approved or rejected it, the Board will communicate with the department head and the employee who made the suggestion, advising of the Board's ac-

tion. If the Board adopts the suggestion, it will request the department head to, and the department head will, implement the suggestion for one (1) fiscal year or for twelve (12) consecutive months. Thereafter the department head will report as soon as possible to the Board on the results of the implementation, whether there was a substantial savings or improvement in state government operations and the estimated savings, if any, resulting from the implementation. The Board will review results of the implementation and decide whether or not an award will be made and if the award is to be cash or honorary. If a cash award

is made, the Board will make the award as provided by statute.

9.9. The department head or agency head, if a small agency, may perform duties of idea counselor and departmental awards committee if approved by the Board.

§147-1-10. Annual report.

10.1. The Employee Suggestion Award Board will prepare an annual report to the Governor.