

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

**Personnel
Directive**

Subject: RULES AND PROCEDURES OF THE
SUGGESTION PLAN OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS, CITY OF LOS ANGELES

June 20, 2007

PERSONNEL DIRECTIVE NO. 43

BACKGROUND

The Public Works Suggestion Plan was established in 1964 in accordance with Administrative Code Sections 4.294 – 4.300, as part of a City Wide Suggestion Award Program to encourage constructive thinking by employees and to give all employees an opportunity to submit their ideas in an orderly manner. The purposes of the plan are to improve City services, to reduce costs and to provide suitable recognition for meritorious suggestions.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

I. SUGGESTION PLAN ADMINISTRATION

A. The Suggestion Plan Committee

The Suggestion Plan Committee reviews written suggestions from employees of the Department and makes recommendations to the Board of Public Works for approval and award. The Committee consists of four voting members, or their designees, as follows:

1. Director, Office of Management-Employee Services
2. The Executive Officer to the Board of Public Works
3. The Director of one of the following large Bureaus: Engineering, Sanitation or Street Services
4. The Director of one of the following smaller Bureaus: Contract Administration or Street Lighting.

The Committee meets periodically at the call of the Suggestion Plan Secretary-Coordinator, designated by the Director of the Office of Management-Employee Services who gives notice of such meeting to each member of the Committee. A quorum consists of three voting members. The Secretary-Coordinator chairs the meeting but has no voting rights. At the meeting, the Committee shall review suggestions, evaluate recommendations, and determine actions to be taken.

B. The Secretary-Coordinator

The Suggestion Plan is administered by a Secretary-Coordinator appointed by the Director of the Office of Management-Employee Services. The Secretary-Coordinator:

1. Promotes and directs the operation of the Suggestion Plan in accordance with the Rules and Procedures provided herein;
2. Receives suggestions;
3. Corresponds with the suggester for clarification if necessary;
4. Routes suggestions to the appropriate Bureau(s) and/or Department(s) for analysis and investigation;
5. Keeps appropriate records on eligible suggestions;
6. Prepares an agenda for each Suggestion Plan meeting, listing suggestions and recommendations;
7. Handles all correspondence and records of the Suggestion Plan;
8. Acts as chief advisor to the Suggestion Committee; and
9. Prepares suggestion status reports and other reports as requested by the Board of Public Works.

II. ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE SUGGESTIONS

In accordance with Administrative Code Section 4.297, a suggestion is defined as a written proposal which makes possible the reduction, elimination or avoidance of expenditures of public funds, or which results in improvement in the operation of a City department.

- A. All suggestions which accomplish or tend to accomplish any of the following objectives shall be considered as eligible suggestions:
1. The saving of time, labor, space, material or supplies;
 2. The improvement of service to the public;
 3. The improvement of methods and procedures resulting in increased output or efficiency, or both;
 4. The improvement of safety conditions;
 5. The improvement of tools and equipment; or
 6. The elimination of unnecessary procedures, records and forms.

- B. The following suggestions are ineligible for awards under the Program:
1. Suggestions which call attention to a problem but do not suggest a solution;
 2. Suggestions dealing with salary adjustments and position classifications;
 3. Suggestions which fall under the Employee Relations Ordinance (i.e. meet and confer items);
 4. Suggestions which are not original with the suggester, or which are submitted for other employees who would be ineligible because the suggestions would be within the scope of their normal job responsibilities;
 5. Suggestions which are basically duplicates of suggestions previously submitted; and
 6. Suggestions which are within the scope of the normal job responsibility of a suggester, where the suggester has the authority to implement the suggestion.
- C. A "Joint Suggestion" is a suggestion submitted by two or more employees.

III. SUGGESTER'S ELIGIBILITY AND RIGHTS

A. Eligibility

Any Public Works employee is eligible to submit a suggestion, in accordance with these Rules and Procedures, with the following exceptions:

1. Department, Bureau and Division Heads
2. An employee whose principal duties and responsibilities consist of research or development or the analysis of methods and procedures, for the purpose of determining what improvements can be made therein; providing the suggestion submitted pertains to such research, development or analysis;
3. Employees who administer the Suggestion Program or who are members of the Suggestion Plan Committee (or represent such members at meetings of the Committee during their term of assignment to the Committee);
4. The Secretary-Coordinator in charge of the Suggestion Plan; and
5. An employee whose suggestion is within the scope of his/her normal job requirements as determined by the Civil Service class specifications for the suggester.

Suggester's Rights

Suggestions shall remain anonymous, except to the Secretary-Coordinator until final action by the Board of Public Works. The suggestion shall remain the property of the suggester until he/she is notified of the final action. When a suggestion is approved for monetary award, or a Certificate of Commendation is issued, the suggestion shall become the property of the City of Los Angeles. If the suggestion is patentable, it shall be used by the City for City purposes without further cost.

IV. SUBMITTING OF SUGGESTIONS

A. Suggestion Forms

Each suggestion shall be submitted in writing on a City Employee Suggestion form, Form Gen. 150. Such forms shall be available from the suggester's Bureau Administration Office or the Office of Management-Employee Services.

B. Contents of Suggestions

Each Suggestion should contain the following information:

1. A description of the present method or problem and a clear statement of what is being suggested and how it can be placed into effect;
2. Sketches, drawings, maps, photographs or other attachments which may be necessary to fully and clearly present the suggestion;
3. The advantages expected if the suggestion is adopted and placed into operation;
4. Signature(s) of the employee(s) making the suggestion; and
5. A home mailing address including zip code to which replies may be addressed and the office telephone number of the employee. (An employee leaving the Department should notify the Secretary-Coordinator of a change in home mailing address).

C. Transmission of Suggestions

Suggestions may be sent by United States mail, messenger mail or delivered in person to the Secretary-Coordinator in the Office of Management-Employee Services, Room 1805, City Hall. The suggester may prevent his/her suggestion from being copied and submitted by another employee if he/she:

1. Puts an idea in writing on a suggestion form as soon as possible after the idea is formulated and forwards it to the Secretary Coordinator;
2. Discusses the suggestion with other employees only after it has been formally submitted; and
3. Contacts the Secretary-Coordinator if an acknowledgement letter is not received within two weeks of submission.

V. RECEIPT OF SUGGESTIONS

A. Suggestion Numbers

Upon receipt of a suggestion, the Secretary-Coordinator shall establish a file for each suggestion, time-stamp and number each suggestion, and acknowledge receipt of the suggestion within 15 working days, by informing the suggester by letter of the number assigned to the suggestion.

Ineligible suggestions shall be returned, informing the suggester of the reason for ineligibility within 30 working days.

B. Priority

The Secretary-Coordinator shall process suggestions for analysis in the order in which they are received. If it is found that a suggestion submitted presents the same proposal as one previously submitted, only the suggestion received first shall be eligible for processing and analysis.

VI. ANALYSIS OF SUGGESTIONS

A. Transmittal for Analysis

The Secretary-Coordinator shall transmit a copy of each suggestion to those Bureaus, which are most directly concerned or affected by the proposal contained in the suggestion. If the suggestion pertains to another City Department, the suggestion shall be transmitted to the Department for review and recommendation.

B. Analysis of Suggestions

Those Bureaus/Departments to which the suggestion is transmitted, shall analyze the intent, effect, advantages and disadvantages of the suggestion and record the results of their analysis on a standard investigation report form supplied by the Secretary-Coordinator. A Suggestion Award Program Evaluator's Guide prepared by the Personnel Department is available from the Secretary-Coordinator to assist in determining merits of suggestions.

C. Recommendation

The suggestion analysis together with a recommendation shall be transmitted to the Secretary-Coordinator. A recommendation for adoption shall include the approximate date that the suggestion will be or has been placed into effect and a determination of the estimated net savings for the first year or other benefits which can reasonably be expected to occur (including the methods and computations used to arrive at such net savings).

A recommendation for non-adoption shall include all pertinent reasons for such non-adoption. If the idea has been suggested previously, there shall be included with the recommendation the date and number of the original suggestion, if known.

D. Review by the Secretary-Coordinator

After receipt of the recommendation, the Secretary-Coordinator shall review all data to insure compliance with applicable Rules and Procedures. After the recommendation is reviewed, the Secretary-Coordinator shall schedule the suggestion for discussion at the next Suggestion Committee meeting.

VII. SUGGESTION COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Review

The Suggestion Committee shall review the analysis and recommendation for each suggestion at a scheduled meeting. If the Committee believes that further analysis is required, the Secretary-Coordinator shall be so instructed. The Committee shall not be bound by the recommendations presented to it; however, any actions taken contrary to such recommendations shall require the vote of at least three members.

B. Recommendation

Upon completion of review, the Committee shall recommend, by a majority vote, that the Board of Public Works affirm the recommendation to adopt, non-adopt, defer for further investigation or otherwise dispose of each suggestion in accordance with these Rules and Procedures. A Board Report, initiated by the Office of Management-Employee Services, shall present these recommendations to the Board of Public Works.

C. Action by the Board of Public Works

The Board of Public Works shall act upon the Suggestion Committee’s recommendations outlined in the Board Report submitted by the Office of Management-Employee Services. The Board shall either adopt, non-adopt, file, refer back for further analysis, or take under advisement the Report. Adopted suggestions will be referred to the Secretary-Cordinator for appropriate awards.

VIII. SUGGESTION AWARDS

A. Monetary Awards

The Board of Public Works shall recommend that the concerned Bureau issue monetary awards for adopted suggestions from eligible employees. Such awards are based on the estimated net first year savings – the savings directly attributable to the suggestion during the first year that the suggestion is in effect, less the estimated first year cost, amortized if appropriate, of placing the suggestion into effect.

The current schedule of awards is as follows:

<u>Estimated Net Savings First Year</u>	<u>Amount of Award</u>
Less than \$100.....	No monetary award
\$100 and more.....	25% of estimated net Savings, first year, up to a maximum of \$50,000

A \$100 Monetary Award may be granted if the Suggestion Committee and the Department Head find that the implementation of a suggestion would result in a significant, although monetarily immeasurable, improvement in methods, services, safety or employee morale. The \$100 Monetary Award shall be the sum of money which, after deducting applicable taxes, leaves a cash remainder of \$100 to be paid to the suggestor.

B. Joint Monetary Award

Where a monetary award is approved for a joint suggestion, the amount of the award shall be divided equally among the employees who sign the suggestion, unless by signed agreement of all concerned, a different distribution of the award is agreed to in writing.

C. Certificate of Commendation

An employee participating in the Suggestion Plan shall receive a Certificate of Commendation if the Board of Public Works approves the Suggestion Committee’s recommendation to adopt the employee’s suggestion.

IX NOTIFICATION TO EMPLOYEES AND PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

As soon as practicable after the Board of Public Works takes action to adopt or non-adopt a suggestion, the Secretary-Cordinator shall provide appropriate notification as follows:

A. Notification of Adoption

If a suggestion is adopted, the Secretary-Cordinator shall so notify the suggester by letter. In addition, a Certificate of Commendation shall be prepared and forwarded to the suggester's Bureau Head for appropriate presentation with the appropriate monetary award prepared by the concerned Bureau.

B. Notification of Non-Adoption

If a suggestion is not adopted, the Secretary-Cordinator shall so notify the suggester by letter, also informing the suggester of the right to reconsideration (See X).

X STATUTE OF LIMITATION AND RECONSIDERATION

All suggestions shall be held on file for a period of two years after the date of final disposition. During this two-year period any suggestion may be reconsidered or reinvestigated upon presentation of new, additional, pertinent information by the original suggester.

XI CHANGES IN THE SUGGESTION RULES

Recommended changes in the Suggestion Rules shall be proposed to the Board of Public Works by the Office of Management-Employee Services when necessary and shall become effective upon adoption by the Board.

Reference: Sections 4.294 – 4.300, Los Angeles Administrative Code

Sections 17.400 – 17.447 Personnel Procedures Manual Ordinance No. 126506