

# Dallas County Facilities Department

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## EMPLOYEE INNOVATION AWARDS PROGRAM

### 1. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document “innovation” means: “The creation or promotion of a new service, product or variation on current practice that is *unique* and adds value to the Dallas County’s internal and external clients.

### 2. PURPOSE

To encourage innovation within the department and recognize and reward employees and teams for suggesting innovations which are implemented and which significantly:

- reduce County operation costs,
- improve service to the public, or
- result in improvement to workplace safety or wellness.

### 2. APPROVAL

This program was approved by Commissioners Court on March 01, 2016, in Court Order 2016-0294 and is coordinated by the Human Resource Department, with advice from the Facilities Department Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY

All temporary and permanent employees employed directly by the Facilities Department that provide services to the County are eligible to submit suggestions and receive awards through participation in the Employee Innovation Awards Program.

## 4. EMPLOYEE INNOVATION AWARDS ADVISORY COUNCIL

### 4.1 Membership

The Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council (the Council) will be comprised of at least 5 members to include a chair, one representative from the Management team and no more than two representatives from an engine room.

### 4.2 Subcommittees

Subcommittees of the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council may be formed to address specific aspects of the suggestion process. The council may also designate representatives to assist as required.

### 4.3 Appointment/Term

Council members will be appointed by the Head of the department which they represent and may serve up to two (2) years and may be re-appointed at the request of the Commissioners Court.

### 4.4 Meeting Quorum

A quorum for each meeting will be 50 per cent plus one of the active council members at the time of the meeting. Council members will be expected to attend 60 per cent of the meetings

within a 12 month period from October 1 to September 31. If a member fails to meet these criteria he/she may be asked to resign.

## **5. PROGRAM COORDINATION**

The program will be coordinated by an employee of Department participating in the Strategic Planning Initiatives with advice and assistance from the Employee Innovation Award Advisory Council.

## **6. SUGGESTIONS**

### **6.1 Definition**

A suggestion is an innovation which:

- identifies a problem, potential problem or opportunity;
- presents a specific solution to the problem, potential problem or an approach to realigning an opportunity;
- is written on the prescribed suggestion form and signed by the suggester or completed electronically;
- has been forwarded to the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council which:
  - determines if the suggestion meets the definition of innovation and meets criteria set out in these guidelines;
  - if the suggestion does not meet definition and criteria, notifies the suggester in writing;
  - if the suggestion does meet definition and criteria, assigns a level based on program guidelines and a council member to assist in implementing the suggestion; and
  - ensure the assigned Council member makes contact with the appropriate party/ external department to determine feasibility of implementation.

These steps must be completed prior to implementation. Any suggestion that has been implemented before the above process is complete will not be eligible for an award under the program.

### **6.2 Resulting Benefits**

An acceptable suggestion must be feasible to implement and result in substantial or other significant benefits in one or more of the following categories:

- saving money, time, material or resources;
- improving service, procedures, systems or methods;
- reducing costs, materials, handling or waste;
- increasing productivity; or
- improving workplace safety or wellness.

### **6.3 Suggestions not eligible**

A suggestion will be denied if:

- it is a duplication of a suggestion currently under review;
- the process for implementation is already established and initiated at the time the suggestion is submitted;

- is something that the employee has been tasked to find a solution for, something that the employee gets paid to do, or something which the employee has the authority to implement;
- it deals with matters related to collective bargaining, employee benefits, or personal grievance or opinion; and/or
- it is a suggestion for which the cost of evaluation and/or implementation exceeds the benefits to be gained.

## **7. CRITERIA**

### **7.1 Criteria**

To be eligible for an award, a suggestion must meet the following criteria:

- the proposed solution and the anticipated benefit resulting from the suggestion are clearly stated in the submission;
- it holds a reasonable prospect of implementation and net benefit, as judged by the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council; (the council may require elaboration of benefits or implementation potential prior to acceptance.);
- it is not a duplicate of an active suggestion or a proposal which has been previously, or is currently, under consideration by the County.

### **7.2 Time Limit on Suggestion:**

A suggestion is considered "*active*" for a period of two years from the date of receipt by the Program Coordinator. One 12-month extension may be permitted under special circumstances if the suggester submits a written request to the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council before the end of the initial two- year period. In the event that the suggester should leave the employment, the council, in consultation with the suggester and the Deputy Head of the affected department, will determine whether or not to proceed with the suggestion.

If a denied suggestion is implemented by government within the active period, the suggestion will be considered to have been implemented and the innovation subject to award as per Section 9 of this document.

If a suggester fails to provide council members with documentation or information regarding the suggestion, the council may exercise the right to terminate the suggestion within the two-year period.

If a department, who is responsible for either implementing or denying a suggestion, does not notify the council of its decision within 1 year from the date of submission of the suggestion, the council may assign a time frame to the department within which they must inform the council of its decision. If the suggestion will be implemented, the department must provide the council with a date and plan for implementation. If the suggestion will be denied, the department must provide the council with a letter outlining valid reasons for denial.

## **8. PROCEDURES**

8.1 Suggestions will be submitted to the Employee Innovation Awards Program coordinator. Applications can be completed online.

8.2 The coordinator presents the suggestion to the council for review based on program guidelines.

- If the suggestion does not meet the program criteria, the council shall notify the suggester in writing.
- If the suggestion meets program criteria, the suggestion is assigned to a council member. Suggestions cannot be assigned to a council member representing the same engine room as the suggester if it may result in a potential conflict of interest.
- Acceptable suggestions are categorized by the council in one of the following five categories:

Category 1 - suggestion has impact on local engine room or a regional site.

Category 2 - suggestion has impact on local engine room and department.

Category 3 - suggestion involves a time saving and/or service improvement and impact is realized within the department.

Category 4a - suggestion involves improvement in safety and reduction in accidents

Category 4b - suggestion has impact on the entire County with possible impact on the general public.

Category 5 - suggestion involves a cost savings which is difficult to monitor and determine.

Category 6 - suggestion involves a direct cost savings in operational costs which are identifiable and need to be monitored for a year.

8.3 For the above categories, the assigned council member will contact the Head of the department which has been deemed as being responsible for the evaluation and possible implementation of the suggestion. Within four weeks of receipt of the suggestion, the Head will have assigned a departmental representative who will have contacted the council member who has been assigned to work on the suggestion. The departmental representative will work with the suggester and/or the council member to determine:

- the feasibility of implementing the suggestion;
- the anticipated benefits or net benefits of implementation, if any;
- how the net benefits could be measured;
- how the suggestion could be implemented;
- whether further action to implement the suggestion is appropriate; and
- how the department would like to address any savings.

If the suggestion is not to be implemented, a letter will be forwarded from the Council to the suggester outlining the reasons provided by the Department.

8.4 The council member is to coordinate meeting with the suggester and the departmental representative.

8.5 The council representative notifies suggester of the results of the department's decision regarding his/her suggestion.

8.6 If the decision is to proceed, the department will implement the idea and monitor resulting benefits. It is recommended that this be done through a team formed within the department.

Should the department request, the council will attempt to provide a facilitator for the implementation team.

8.7 Progress towards implementation will be monitored by the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council. Periodic updates on progress will be forwarded to the suggester via a council member or departmental representative.

8.8 For those suggestions monitored for cost savings, at the end of the first year in which the innovation was implemented, benefits will be measured by the appropriate department and reported to the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council. This report will form a part of the council's recommendation to Commissioners Court of an award for the suggester.

## **9. AWARDS**

Individuals who make suggestions ("suggesters") which are successfully implemented are entitled to recognition certificates, cash or gift awards.

### **9.1 CASH AWARDS**

Cash awards presented to suggesters are a percentage of net savings (i.e., gross savings minus implementation costs). To be eligible for a cash award the net savings resulting from the innovation must be \$500 or more and must be obtained in a 12-month period within 24 months from the date of implementation of the suggestion. Cash awards are presented to suggesters whose suggestion falls within Category 6.

No individual may receive a single Innovation Award greater than \$500, but multiple suggestions may be submitted.

Cash awards will be based on the actual savings resulting from the innovation, measured after the fact by the implementation team and approved by the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council. Suggestions which result in a cash award will be recommended by the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council to Treasury Board for approval.

The maximum cash award an individual can receive is \$500 based on the savings scale listed below:

<i>Savings between \$750 - \$1500 :</i>	\$100
<i>Savings between \$1501 - \$3000 :</i>	\$200
<i>Savings between \$3001 - \$5000 :</i>	\$300
<i>Savings between \$5001 - \$7500 :</i>	\$400
<i>Savings between \$7501 - \$14999 :</i>	\$500

Savings in excess of \$15,000 will be recommended to the Court for a greater reward amount.

All Cash awards are subject to all applicable federal and provincial taxes and will be reported as income on the suggester's W-2 form. If the suggestion is not implemented for any reason, a cash award cannot be made.

### **9.2 GIFT AWARDS/RECOGNITION**

- Innovations which fall within categories 1, 2, 3 and 4 and cost-saving ideas valued at less than \$100 are eligible for gift awards.
- Innovations which fall within category 5 are eligible for a \$50 bonus cash award.
- Innovations which fall within category 6 are eligible for a cash award based on the total cost savings as noted in 9.1.
- Gifts may also be given in other situations as directed by the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council. The gift awarded will change periodically.
- Each quarter, the Council will publish a call for submissions to engine rooms for new innovative ways of carrying out departmental mandates. All submissions will be forwarded to the coordinator of the program, screened by the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council, and forwarded to the Commissioners Court for final decision on the presentation of awards.

## **10. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS**

Upon completion of the implementation of a suggestion, the awardee will be presented with their award at the quarterly strategic planning meeting by one of the Commissioners.

## **11. APPEALS**

If an employee believes that he/she has submitted a suggestion which has been implemented without due credit, the employee may request a meeting with the Employee Innovation Awards Advisory Council to review the circumstances. The decision of the Council is final.

## **12. OWNERSHIP**

The County and the Department reserves the right to make unencumbered use of every suggestion whether accepted or denied.

## **13. PUBLICATION**

The council will publish an annual report, within the Department; containing information regarding the number and types of suggestions made, percentages of suggestions processed at each stage and implemented innovations

## SCHEDULE A

Guide to Calculate Net Savings Under the Employee Innovation Awards Program:

<b>COSTS:</b>	Costs prior to the suggestion: hours, days, administration, equipment, materials, etc.	TOTAL: a) _____
<b>LESS:</b>	Costs after the suggestion: hours, days, administration, equipment, materials, etc.	TOTAL: b) _____
	GROSS SAVINGS (a - b)	c) _____
<b>LESS:</b>	Implementation costs: new administration, equipment, materials, training, development work, forms, etc.	d) _____
	NET SAVINGS ( c- d)	e) _____
	Apply formula to net savings See Section 9.1 (Maximum \$500)	\$ _____

NOTE: Cost savings must be calculated in a 12-month period from date of implementation.