

WASHINGTON



**Secretary of State
Productivity Board**

**Agency Coordinator
Resource Guide
2024**



Contents

Introduction	3
Productivity Board Program Objectives.....	3
Agency Coordinator Overview	4
Agency Coordinator Responsibilities.....	4
Incentive Programs Overview	5
Employee Suggestion Program (ESP)	5
Teamwork Incentive Program (TIP).....	7
Recognition Awards	8
Proposal Content (ESP or TIP).....	8
Program Eligibility	9
Proposer Eligibility	9
Tracking.....	10
Placing a Proposal On Hold.....	11
Agency Evaluator Overview.....	11
Criteria to Accept.....	12
Criteria for Denial	13
Additional Information	13

Introduction

The Productivity Board was first established by the Legislature in 1982 and has saved the state of Washington millions of dollars. Almost all state employees are eligible to participate in the program. Cost-saving and/or revenue-generating proposals may be awarded cash incentives, and suggestions that improve government in other ways are eligible for recognition awards.

The purpose of the Productivity Board is to encourage employees to make continuous and lasting improvements in a safe, productive environment. Employees are key to keeping the state competitive, efficient, and effective.

Employees can present two types of proposals:

The Employee Suggestion Program (ESP) provides cash incentives up to \$10,000 and recognition for individual ideas that save money, generate revenue, and/or improve services within state government. Applications must be submitted prior to the implementation of the idea.

The Teamwork Incentive Program (TIP) rewards teams of two or more for proposing process improvements that reduce costs and/or generate revenue. Individual team members can receive cash awards up to \$10,000. Applications may be submitted before or after the implementation of the project. The agency can also nominate a team that has already implemented an improvement project.

Productivity Board Program Objectives

As defined by Board policy, the primary objectives of the Employee Suggestion Program are to:

- Stimulate creative and innovative suggestions that:
 - Increase productivity
 - Improve service
 - Eliminate duplication
 - Improve working conditions
 - Conserve energy

- Foster an environment where management embraces the discovery of good ideas and utilizes individual talents and abilities
- Appreciate that employees are an integral part of state government and a valuable resource
- Motivate employees to share ideas by providing:
 - Personal recognition
 - Cash awards
- A feeling of empowerment and ownership through their contribution
- Provide an equitable and impartial evaluation
- Ensure that adopted suggestions are properly implemented

Agency Coordinator Overview

Agency Coordinators' critical role is twofold: 1) Working with their agency's leadership to promote and maintain awareness of the ESP/TIP through marketing and other communication efforts. 2) Acting as a liaison to Productivity Board staff and facilitating intra-agency communication throughout the evaluation process. Together, we can build a partnership that benefits your agency, your internal and external customers, and your staff.

Agency Coordinator Responsibilities

Employees should be aware of the ESP/TIP and how they can benefit. Successfully marketing these programs to staff and management will increase their impact.

To maximize benefits to the agency and the state, the ESP/TIP must have the support of agency administration and management.

Coordinators should encourage management to promote the ESP/TIP to all personnel. Beyond regular newsletters and similar communications, adding information about Productivity Board programming to new employee orientation materials is a great way to spread awareness. It is also important to convey the potential positive impacts for employees and their agency to evaluators.

The Productivity Board staff will provide materials to help coordinators obtain support. Coordinators will disseminate information about how the ESP/TIP benefits their agency. Frequent updates are important. We encourage coordinators to facilitate friendly competitions within their agency and/or other agencies.

The Agency Coordinator acts as a liaison to promote effective communications between the Productivity Board and agency management.

The coordinator is also the link between the Agency Evaluator and the suggester, or between the evaluator and the Productivity Board staff when the suggester is anonymous.

The success of the employee suggestion program depends on the competence, hard work, and dedication of those individuals selected as Agency Coordinators.

Incentive Programs Overview

Employee Suggestion Program (ESP)

What qualifies as an Employee Suggestion?

A suggestion is a **single solution** for a current problem or condition proposed by an individual employee.

Suggestion Submittal

- Employees can propose only one idea per form.
- Suggesters can request to be anonymous. If the suggestion is adopted, the employee's name is released for payment purposes.
- An employee can submit a suggestion without agency approval. The agency will have the opportunity to determine the viability of the suggestion if it meets eligibility requirements.
- Suggestions must be submitted prior to implementation.
- The suggester must research the suggestion prior to submitting an idea.
- A suggestion must be submitted via an application, online, or via hard copy

ESP Suggestion Eligibility

- Eligible suggestions:
 - Save money
 - Generate revenue
 - Eliminate waste or duplication
 - Improve services or products
 - Conserve energy
 - Improve working conditions

- Ineligible suggestions:
 - Are personal complaints
 - Change salaries, positions, classifications, employee benefits, state holidays, leave benefits, retirement compensation, or any other compensation to employees
 - Relate to the enforcement of laws, policies, procedures, regulations, rules, etc.
 - Are common sense ideas
 - Are outside the purview of state government

Awards

- Awards are paid for adopted ideas.
- For suggestions with quantifiable savings/revenue: employees receive 10% of the first year's net savings/revenue, with a maximum award of \$10,000 per suggestion.
- For suggestions where savings/revenue are not quantifiable employees can receive Recognition Awards, up to \$200 value.
- The agency determines the type and level of recognition.
- Awards are paid for by the agency benefitting from the suggestion
- Awards are considered taxable income

Teamwork Incentive Program (TIP)

What qualifies as a TIP Project?

A TIP project proposes **process improvements that provide quantifiable savings/revenue**. A TIP project is different from an ESP suggestion because projects are executed by teams of two or more employees. Projects also differ in that they can be recognized for an award before or after implementation.

TIP Project Submittal

- A project team must have at least two members. Team members can be from one or more agencies.
- A project application submitted before implementation must have the agency head's approval.
- A TIP project application may be submitted up to one year after the project has been completed. This may be done online or via hard copy.
- An agency may nominate a team for a TIP award.
- The time frame for completion of a TIP project is flexible; it may be three, six, nine, or 12 months. The award is based on a percentage of savings and/or revenue documented during the project period only.

Awards

TIP awards are paid by the agency/agencies that realize a financial benefit. Awards made through the TIP are considered taxable income.

The TIP team award scale is up to 25% of the net savings/revenue derived from the TIP project, with a maximum award of \$10,000 per team member. The TIP project team and agency management must agree on the percentage of impact before submitting the application to the Productivity Board. The award distribution among team members must also be agreed upon before submitting the application to the Productivity Board.

Recognition Awards

The statute that established the Productivity Board program also directs agencies to provide Recognition Awards for ideas with intangible improvements (e.g., morale) or when savings/revenue cannot be identified. Recognition Awards can be given independently of participation in Productivity Board programs for things like outstanding achievements, safety improvements, or tenure.

Recognition Awards may be up to \$200 in value per award. While the award may be cash, agencies may consider awarding items such as pen and desk sets, plaques, pins, trophies, framed certificates, etc., or a combination of the above.

Recognizing Award Recipients

Recognition of employees is an important part of promoting the ESP/TIP. There are several ways to recognize employees who receive awards:

- Congratulatory letters, signed by agency leadership
- Presentation of ceremonial award checks or certificates of commendation by the Agency Coordinator, Agency Head, or Agency Evaluator at meetings
- Receptions or ceremonies recognizing awardees
- Agency newsletters and/or other internal agency communications.
- Agencies are encouraged to consider developing internal procedures for approving recognition awards
- Public media coverage and agency communications coordinated with Productivity Board staff

Proposal Content (ESP or TIP)

Submitted proposals will contain:

- A brief and concise narrative describing the present methods, practices, or problem
- A specific and concise narrative describing the proposal and how it can be accomplished

- For suggestions that will result in cost savings or revenue generation: cost/benefit analysis of anticipated savings/revenue and the method used to determine that estimate.
- Suggestions must include the suggester's signature, e-mail address, title of position, department/division, and mailing address.

ESP suggestions must be supported by research that indicates the suggestion is practical and can be reasonably implemented.

ESP suggestions do not require anticipated savings/revenue. For suggestions that do not have a quantifiable fiscal impact, a statement of the improved services or benefits that the suggestion will provide must be included.

Program Eligibility

Productivity Board staff will determine if a suggestion is eligible. Agency Coordinators can help proposers by making sure they understand the eligibility requirements. Communicating this information to proposers will help optimize the submission process.

Proposals shall be considered in the order of the date by which the Productivity Board the Productivity officially receives them.

Proposer Eligibility

A person/team is eligible if they are:

- Employed by a state agency or higher education institution, including permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time, emergency, intermittent, project, or exempt employees
- Employed at the time the Employee Suggestion application is received in the Productivity Board office (not when the suggester signs the application)

A person/team is not eligible if they are:

- Not employed by the state of Washington
- A member of the judiciary

- An elected official
- The head of a state agency or institution of higher education
- A confidential secretary or administrative assistant to an elected official or agency/institution head
- Productivity Board staff

Tracking

When ESP/TIP net savings/revenue are expected to be significant, it is recommended that a partial award be made, and the actual impact be tracked for one year from the implementation date.

If savings/revenue are anticipated to be \$25,000 or more, savings/revenue must be tracked for one year, and a tracking due date must be included with the evaluation. Tracking is for one year from the date of implementation.

TIP project teams are required to submit a mid-point and final report. These reports should include:

- Relevant agency/agencies
- Project name
- Project period
- An overview of the project
- The project's goals
- A summary of progress to date
- Net savings/revenue projected
- Net savings/revenue to date
- Award approved by relevant agency/agencies
- Project team members and any changes in team personnel

Placing a Proposal On Hold

A proposal or an evaluation can be placed on hold when additional information is needed. Holds can be requested by communicating with Productivity Board staff. These requests can be made by the proposer(s), Agency Coordinator, evaluator(s), or agency management.

Proposer(s) can ask for a hold when:

- They have additional information to submit for inclusion in the evaluation process

An Agency Coordinator can ask for a hold when:

- The evaluator is unable to complete the evaluation due to extenuating circumstances. Context and a recommended end date for the pause should be supplied with the request.
- An agency's evaluator would like to see the other agencies' evaluations before submitting their own (multiple agency suggestions only.)

Agency Evaluator Overview

When a proposal has been determined eligible by Productivity Board staff, it will be forwarded to the relevant agency for evaluation.

The evaluator, chosen by the agency head, will determine if the proposal is practical and if the anticipated savings/revenue is accurate. Evaluators are selected for their subject matter expertise. Timely completion of the evaluation process helps contribute to an agency's success. Timely evaluation of proposals communicates to employees how their agency values their input and engagement.

Upon receipt of a proposal, the agency must designate a subject matter expert(s) to evaluate the proposal and provide their recommendation to the Productivity Board within 45 days. Exceptions may be granted if special circumstances prohibit completion within that timeframe.

The evaluator role has three primary responsibilities:

- Assess a proposal's feasibility
- Recommend agency action on the proposal: adopt, non-adopt, or modified adopt
- Arrange for implementation of the adopted proposal

ESP Suggesters may request to be anonymous. When this happens, they will communicate with the Agency Coordinator and Productivity Board staff not agency management or the evaluator(s). If an evaluator has questions about an anonymous suggestion, they will submit them to the Agency Coordinator, who will relay them to the suggester.

Appeals

Proposers may file an appeal once to request further consideration for either an award decision or an award amount. New supporting information must be supplied.

Productivity Board staff will determine whether to accept or reject an appeal. If the appeal is accepted, the agency must reconsider its recommendation and report any findings to the Productivity Board. If the agency recommends adopting it, the appeal process will move forward.

If a rejected proposal is implemented within two years of board action, the employee may file an additional appeal for award consideration.

Criteria to Accept

- Appeal is received within 30 days of the Board meeting date when the non-adopt decision was made
- Suggestion is implemented within two years of the Board action date
- New information is supplied that convinces the agency to modify their recommendation
- Agency evaluation contradicts suggestion, and the suggester provides clarifying information
- Agency evaluation misinterprets or excludes all or part of the intent of the suggestion

- Suggestions should be evaluated by other offices/agencies (must provide justification)
- Suggester received a recognition award when savings can be identified (must provide documentation)
- There are additional tangible cost-savings that can be identified (must provide documentation)

Criteria for Denial

- Appeal request received more than 30 days after Board action
- No new evidence, information, or clarification provided
- Appeal request received after the two-year time frame for implementation has elapsed
- Disagrees with the idea of not being unique or new to the agency

Additional Information

Contact Productivity Board staff or the suggester if:

- The problem or the proposed solution is unclear
- The application contains insufficient data for evaluation
- Requesting additional information from the Productivity Board, evaluator, or the suggester
- Looking for ways to modify a suggestion

In some instances, suggestions may involve an outside agency, multiple agencies, or all agencies statewide. The Productivity Board will inform you if a suggestion falls into one of these special cases and will coordinate processing of that suggestion.

Resources

- **Productivity Board Statute:**
RCW 41.60
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=41.60>
- **Employee Suggestion Program Guidelines:**
WAC 383-06 (ESP)
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=383-06>
- **Teamwork Incentive Program Guidelines:**
WAC 383-07 (TIP)
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=383-07>
- **Productivity Board Webpage:**
www.sos.wa.gov/productivity-board
- **Contact:**
productivityboard@sos.wa.gov or (360) 725-0314