

## Employee Suggestion Awards Program (ESAP) Rules and Procedures

### SECTION 1

#### Purpose

To establish an Employee Suggestion Awards Program for Classified Service employees of the Unified Personnel System. Under this program, cash awards may be made to eligible employees whose adopted suggestions will improve the productivity and cost-effectiveness of County services and operations.

### SECTION 2

#### Employee Eligibility

All employees within the Classified Service of the Unified Personnel System, including temporary and part time, are eligible to participate in the Employee Suggestion Awards Program. Participation in a suggestion program offered exclusively by any Appointing Authority does not preclude entering the same suggestion in the Employee Suggestion Awards Program.

### SECTION 3

#### Approval Authority

1. Final authority on ESAP submissions is vested in the Employee Suggestion Awards Committee (ESAC) composed of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, County Administrator, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections and Tax Collector, or their designated representatives, two members of the Employees' Advisory Council and the Director of Human Resources who will serve as Chair.

Members may appoint alternates to serve in their stead, and these alternates shall have full voting rights in the absence of the primary member.

2. It is the duty and responsibility of the Employee Suggestion Awards Committee to:
  - a. Adopt rules governing its proceedings and frequency of meetings.
  - b. Establish criteria and guidelines for making awards.
  - c. Evaluate all suggestions received.
  - d. Determine which suggestions should or should not be approved and the level of award to be granted for approved suggestions.
  - e. Maintain confidentiality of the ESAC discussion and support group decision.

## SECTION 4

### Human Resources Department Responsibilities

The Human Resources Department is responsible for administering and promoting the Employee Suggestion Awards Program in accordance with established rules and other instructions issued by the Employee Suggestion Awards Committee. In discharging this responsibility, Human Resources will:

1. Schedule three electronic meetings annually where members will be emailed submitted suggestions.
2. Ensure that incoming suggestions are eligible under Section 5 of the Program's rules.
3. Acknowledge all eligible suggestions to employees involved within 5 business days.
4. Confirm with the appropriate department(s) that the suggestion is valid per Section 6 and establish suspense dates for prompt departmental evaluations and appropriate follow-up.
5. Review evaluation results from departmental reviewing officials for clarity, accuracy and completeness.
6. Prepare and distribute an agenda for each committee meeting, summarizing each submission to include all backup information to the Committee for consideration and establish a completion date.
7. Schedule a meeting in HR to reach agreement if decision is not unanimous or items require more discussion.
8. Suggestions will be awarded based on the majority vote of the committee.
9. Report Committee's findings to all members after decision is made.
10. Promote the Employee Suggestion Awards Program through meetings with employee groups including the Employees' Advisory Council, articles in *The Pen* and other appropriate means.
11. Prepare and post the ESAP application and rules on HR website.

## SECTION 5

### Eligibility of Suggestions

1. Each suggestion must concisely identify a problem or area in which productivity, efficiency, quality, and cost effectiveness can be improved and must recommend a remedy for the problem or procedure/operation cited.
2. Certain suggestions are not eligible for award consideration. They are the ones which:
  - Offer no specific solution or procedure for correcting/improving the cited problem area
  - Exist only because established policy and/or procedures are not being followed
  - Duplicate an idea previously suggested
  - Involve the elimination, lowering or raising of taxes levied by the County or other governmental entities
  - Deal with matters that are considered to be part of an employee's normal job responsibilities
  - Embrace matters which are the result of assigned or contracted audits, studies, surveys, reviews, or research
  - Propose ideas which are already under consideration

- Deal with personal grievances, salary schedules, job classifications, time and leave regulations and fringe benefits
- Involve procedures which have not been implemented with demonstrated savings
- Are not submitted within two years after date of implementation, or within three years in unusual cases.

## SECTION 6

### Submission and Evaluation Process Steps

1. Suggestions must be submitted only on the form authorized for this purpose.
2. Employee fills out the suggestion form and sends it via interoffice mail to the Human Resources Department, Attn: Employee Communications, which will assign a number to each suggestion and acknowledge receipt directly to the suggester.
3. The suggestion, without identification of the suggester(s), will be provided to the appropriate reviewing official(s) within 5 business days.
4. Reviewing official(s) will verify the probable cost and savings estimated by the suggester(s).
5. The Employee Suggestion Awards Committee will review the recommendations from reviewing officials and decide whether to deny, modify, or approve the adoption of the suggestion. Using established guidelines, the Committee will also determine the amount of award to be given.
6. In those instances where the Employee Suggestion Awards Committee questions or asks for clarification of any aspect of the recommendation(s) of reviewing officials, HR will refer such questions or comments to the appropriate reviewing official(s) for resolution and report to the Employee Suggestion Awards Committee.
7. The decision of the Employee Suggestion Awards Committee, favorable or otherwise, will be sent to the suggester. Copies of approved (only) suggestions will also be furnished to the suggester's appointing authority/department head and to the department(s) realizing the savings of the suggestion.

## SECTION 7

### Reconsideration of Not Favorably Considered Suggestions

1. When an employee's suggestion is not submitted to the committee or approved by the committee for adoption, that employee has the right to request the Employee Suggestion Awards Committee reconsider its decision.
2. The appeal must state in detail the basis for requesting further consideration and must be submitted within 15 business days of notification of the Committee's original decision.
3. After the appeal has been returned to the original reviewing official for additional study and recommendation, it will be forwarded to the Employee Suggestion Awards Committee which will give full consideration to all relevant information in the case prior to making its decision which will be final.

## SECTION 8

### **Modification of Suggestions**

Suggesters may be considered for an award even though their suggestions may be adopted in a modified form.

## SECTION 9

### **Duplicate Suggestions**

In case of duplicate suggestions dealing with the same subject, the one with the earlier date of receipt will be eligible for consideration, and all others deemed ineligible.

## SECTION 10

### **Group Suggestions**

Group suggestions will be considered 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. All group suggesters must be identified on and sign the standard submission form.

## SECTION 11

### **Deceased or Terminated Employees**

In the case of a deceased employee, the award will be presented to the employee's heirs or estate. In the case of a terminated employee, the award will be forwarded to the last-known address.

## SECTION 12

### **Disclaimer of Rights**

Suggestions that have been adopted become the property of Pinellas County, and the suggester may make no claims against the County regardless of the use made of the suggestion by the County.

## SECTION 13

### **Payment of Awards**

Cash awards recommended by the Employee Suggestion Awards Committee shall be subject to approval of the Appointing Authority and within budgeted appropriations for this purpose. Cash awards approved by the Committee will be charged against the budget of the department(s) who benefit from the suggestion.

### **Amount of Awards**

Suggestion Awards are based on cost-saving (tangible) suggestions. Monetary awards for suggestions are based on 10% of the claimed savings for the estimated first year, up to a maximum cap of \$2,500.