

# Town of Amherst



## Employee Suggestion Program

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Town of Amherst Employee Suggestion Program ("ESP") is to secure for the Town of Amherst and its taxpayers the maximum benefit from the conservation of Town resources. The program recognizes that the employees of the Town represent an unlimited source of ideas for better ways to serve the public. Monetary awards are intended to offer a significant incentive for employees to become involved in the creative process and to amplify the capabilities of management. The Program recognizes that every employee will, by identifying problems and providing possible solutions, become in a very real sense, a part of the creative management team.

#### ELIGIBILITY

All Town employees, whether full-time, part-time, or volunteers, are eligible to submit suggestions. Former employees are also eligible as long as the suggestions were submitted prior to separation of service with the Town, such separation was voluntary, and the suggestions are implemented within one (1) year of submittal. Department heads and supervisors, where supervisors' job responsibilities call for them to seek methods to improve operations or services, shall not be eligible for cash awards for suggestions which deal with operations under their own supervision. They may, however, receive cash awards for suggestions that deal with operations other than those under their supervision or assigned general responsibility. Elected officials of the Town may never receive cash awards.

#### SUBMITTING SUGGESTIONS

The Submitter must complete the Town of Amherst Employee Suggestion Form in as much detail as possible. The form must be signed and dated, and the Submitter may attach any additional information that will assist in evaluating the suggestion. The Submitter may request assistance from a supervisor in completing the form. The suggestions must not be the kind which employees are reasonably expected to make in the course of their regular duties. The completed Suggestion Form must be submitted to the Town Personnel Office along with ten (10) copies thereof, where the suggestion will be stamped with the date and time. Verbal suggestions cannot be given any consideration for awards. However, suggestions may be processed anonymously if the Submitter so desires and indicates. All suggestions become the property of the Town of Amherst upon receipt and filing.

Duplicate suggestions cannot be given consideration for cash awards. If duplicate suggestions are received, the suggestion received first, as indicated by the date and timestamp, shall govern. That first suggestion will be the only one eligible for award. With the sole exception of group suggestions as indicated below, duplicate awards shall not be made.

If it is necessary for several persons to collaborate in the preparation and submission of a suggestion, and such a suggestion is adopted and implemented, any resulting cash awards will be divided between the Submitters whose names appear on the Suggestion Form in the percentage determined by the Submitters prior to submission of the suggestion. This percentage breakdown shall be indicated on a separate sheet of paper attached to the Suggestion Form and separately signed by each of the submitters. If the Submitters indicate no percentage apportionment, it will be assumed that all parties contributed equally and any resulting cash award will be apportioned accordingly. Suggestions involving a patent are eligible for awards. However, the Town and the Submitter(s) must negotiate an arrangement for patent rights.

The Town Personnel Office will record all received suggestions and send a copy of the suggestion to the department or departments affected within two (2) business days of filing. It shall request a meeting of the Suggestion Review Committee at least monthly if any unreviewed suggestions are pending. The Personnel Office will inform Submitters of any delay in processing their suggestions.

#### EVALUATION

The Suggestion Review Committee ("SRC") will meet within thirty (30) days of a request by the Town Personnel Office for such a meeting. The SRC will determine the merit of suggestions being reviewed on criteria which include, but are not limited to, the question of whether the suggestion will increase productivity; conserve Town resources; reduce Town costs; improve working conditions of Town employees or improve the morale of Town employees. Following review by the SRC, all suggestions will be forwarded to the Merit Award Board ("MAB"), along with a recommendation of the Committee to either accept or reject the suggestion, and the SRC's recommendation of the amount of the award, if any. The MAB will then make its decision regarding the worthiness of the suggestion for an award, and the appropriate amount of such award.

#### DETERMINATION OF AWARD

In order to be eligible for a cash award, a suggestion with tangible benefits must result in at least \$1,000.00 in projected savings during the first year after implementation. The award shall be ten (10) percent of the first year's tangible monetary benefits, with no cap.

The amount of tangible monetary benefits will be calculated as follows: the estimated net monetary benefits for the first full year of operation following the adoption or implementation of the particular suggestion minus the implementation costs of the suggestion. An exception may be made in cases where an improvement with a high implementation cost will yield measurable savings beyond the first year; the award may then be based on the average of the estimated tangible monetary benefits over a period of the first three years. In special cases, where the benefits cannot be calculated with any degree of accuracy prior to full implementation, a token cash award may be made and the determination of the total award amount deferred until the adopted suggestion has been in operation for a period of no less than six (6) months.

The same procedure used to compute awards for suggestions submitted by individuals shall also be used for group suggestions. The total award shall be the same as though one person submitted the suggestion. All monetary awards shall be treated as wages for tax purposes, and are subject to applicable federal and state payroll taxes.

The Town Supervisor, within fourteen (14) days after every MAB meeting, shall produce a list of award winners, if any, and the type and amount of their awards, if any. All employees who have a suggestion adopted, either individually or in collaboration with others, will receive an Employee Suggestion Award Certificate with a letter or commendation, both of which will become a permanent part of their personnel record.

An eligible suggestion that has been rejected by the MAB shall be returned to the Submitter by the Town Supervisor, along with a letter indicating the disposition of the suggestion and the reason for rejection. The decisions of the MAB and the SRC are final and binding and non-reviewable by any body or court, except as follows: employees may submit further evidence of the potential savings or merit of their suggestions within one (1) year of the receipt of a rejection letter. The SRC will review the suggestion again and forward their recommendation to the MAB. If, after a suggestion has undergone this process, it is again rejected, the rejection of the suggestion is final and non-reviewable.

#### FINAL NOTE

All submitters are strongly encouraged to review the Local Law and Regulations establishing the ESP in their entirety, which are available online from the Town's Personnel Office website, or directly from the Personnel Office upon request. Any questions regarding the ESP should be directed to the Town of Amherst Personnel Office.