

## 630 Ideas Program

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### 631 Policy

The U.S. Postal Service encourages its employees to contribute constructive ideas that will improve customer satisfaction, generate revenue, increase productivity, reduce cost, and improve the competitiveness of the Postal Service in the marketplace. Ideas are to be promptly evaluated to ensure that their value is quickly realized and the responsible employees are immediately recognized.

### 632 Eligibility

All active career employees are eligible for nonmonetary recognition or a cash award for their ideas.

### 633 Criteria

#### 633.1 General Criteria

Ideas are eligible for nonmonetary recognition, whether adopted or not adopted, at the discretion of the evaluating supervisor or manager. To be eligible for a cash award under the Ideas Program a proposal must:

- a. Trigger management action.
- b. Result in an improvement to service, an increase in efficiency, or other substantial benefit. The proposal should involve a recommendation for change such as:
  - (1) Improving customer service and customer satisfaction.
  - (2) Increasing revenue generation.
  - (3) Improving safety performance.
  - (4) Improving productivity.
- c. Adhere to all existing laws.
- d. Not modify or otherwise relate to matters concerning wages, hours, or working conditions.

#### 633.2 Engineering Criteria

A proposed change related to the improvement of equipment controlled by the Engineering Change Board (ECB) is eligible for a cash award when the following requirements are satisfied:

- a. The equipment has been deployed for one year.
- b. Equipment warranties are not jeopardized.
- c. The idea is tested on only one unit of equipment.
- d. The provisions and detailed procedures of Publication 101, *Engineering Change Board Organization and Operation*, are strictly followed.

## 634 **Awards**

### 634.1 **General**

Awards are based on the contribution of an employee's proposal to the Postal Service, as judged by management. Supervisors as well as managers may adopt and implement ideas and may give awards to the responsible employees.

### 634.2 **Nonmonetary Awards**

Nonmonetary awards provide supervisors and managers with a way to recognize employees for submitting ideas that are commendable but are not adopted locally or are not of sufficient scope or impact to support a cash award. These awards are determined locally and may include pins, certificates, plaques, or nominal gifts. These awards may not modify or otherwise relate to matters concerning wages, hours, or working conditions.

### 634.3 **Cash Awards**

#### 634.31 **Amounts**

Cash awards for adopted ideas are as follows:

- a. Up to \$250 may be given to an idea originator by a supervisor or manager.
- b. Up to \$2,000 may be given to an idea originator by a PCES manager in a plant, district, area, or Headquarters unit who adopts and implements the idea operationwide.
- c. Up to \$10,000 may be given to an idea originator by the vice president of a functional organization who implements an idea nationwide.
- d. Up to 10 percent of the amount of the idea originator's award may be given to the supervisor or manager who champions the idea by the PCES manager who implements the idea operationwide.
- e. Up to \$2,000 may be distributed among employees (originators not included) involved in testing and documenting the idea by the PCES manager if this award is approved by a vice president who adopts the idea nationwide.

#### 634.32 **Multiple-Level Awards**

When a suggestion is adopted at more than one management level and more than one cash award results, subsequent cash awards are not reduced by the amount of any previous cash award given.

#### 634.33 **Deductions**

A cash award is in addition to regular salary and is considered income under federal tax laws. Appropriate taxes and other involuntary deductions, e.g., tax levies and garnishments, are withheld from each award.

634.34 **Acceptance**

Acceptance of a cash award constitutes employee agreement to forego any further claim on the Postal Service by self, heirs, or assigns.

635 **Records**

The receiving supervisor maintains all formally submitted ideas in the privacy system, USPS 120.050, Personnel Records — Ideas Program, Employee Records, and implements regulations found in *Administrative Support Manual* 353. Once a cash award is made, the Finance office retains its copy of Form 1270, Idea Proposal, for budgetary and auditing purposes. These records contain personal information and must be handled and disclosed only as stipulated in the Privacy Act.

636 **Processing**

636.1 **Summary of Steps**

For a summary of the steps required for processing idea proposals, see Exhibit 636.1.

636.2 **Payment**

Supervisors and managers approve Form 1270, *Idea Proposal*, by completing the Award Authorization section and sending the completed form to the Finance office. The Finance office retains its copy and forwards the original to the Minneapolis ASC for issuance of the award check.

636.3 **Presentation Ceremonies**

Whenever possible, an installation head should provide an appropriate ceremony for each award and coordinate publicity with information personnel.

Exhibit 636.1 (p. 1)

**Idea Proposal Processing Summary**

<b>Initiation</b> <i>Employee or Group of Employees</i>	<b>Submits idea to an immediate supervisor on a Form 1270, <i>Idea Proposal</i>.</b>
<b>Local implementation</b> <i>Supervisor</i>	<b>Decides whether idea is within ability to implement.</b>  <b>If not . . .</b> Coordinates with supervisor responsible for implementing proposed idea for assistance in the evaluation. Assisting supervisor is then responsible for responding to original supervisor. <b>If so . . .</b> Evaluates idea and decides which action to take. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adopts idea and decides whether to recognize originator with nonmonetary or cash award.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Notifies employee of decision.</li> <li>■ Implements idea in work area.</li> <li>■ Arranges to recognize employee with nonmonetary award or cash award up to \$250 (see 634.2 and 634.3).</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Does not adopt idea but recognizes originator with nonmonetary award for submission of commendable idea.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Notifies employee of decision.</li> <li>■ Arranges to recognize employee with nonmonetary award.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Does not adopt idea.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Notifies employee of decision.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Decides whether to champion idea for wider implementation by bringing it to attention of district or plant manager.</b>
<b>Wider implementation</b> <i>PCES plant, district, area, or Headquarters manager</i>	<b>Decides whether idea is within ability to implement.</b>  <b>If not . . .</b> Coordinates with manager responsible for implementing proposed idea. Receiving functional manager is then responsible for responding to original supervisor. <b>If so . . .</b> Evaluates idea and decides which action to take. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adopts idea and decides whether to recognize originator with nonmonetary or cash award.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Notifies employee of decision.</li> <li>■ Implements idea in the plant, district, area, or Headquarters unit.</li> <li>■ Arranges to recognize employee with nonmonetary award or to recognize employee with cash award up to \$2000 and championing supervisor with amount up to 10 percent of employee's award (see 634.2 and 634.3).</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Does not adopt idea.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Notifies employee and supervisor of decision.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>If wider implementation may be appropriate, decides whether idea is within ability to test and document.</b> <b>If not . . .</b> Submits idea directly to functional vice president for evaluation and award. <b>If so . . .</b> Tests idea for 6 months and documents feasibility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If feasibility is established, submits a documented proposal to functional vice president.</li> </ul>

Exhibit 636.1 (p. 2)

**Idea Proposal Processing Summary**

<b>National implementation</b> <i>Vice president</i>	<b>Evaluates idea and decides which action to take.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Adopts idea and decides whether to recognize originator with nonmonetary or cash award.</li><li>■ Notifies employee, supervisor, and manager of decision.</li><li>■ Arranges to have idea implemented nationally.</li><li>■ Arranges to recognize originating employee with nonmonetary award or to recognize employee with cash award up to \$10,000 and, if indicated, provides an amount up to \$2,000 to PCES plant, district, area, or Headquarters manager for distribution to those employees involved in testing and documenting proposal (see 634.2 and 634.3).</li><li>■ Does not adopt idea.</li><li>■ Notifies originating employee and championing manager.</li></ul>
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