

SERENITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

SUBJECT:	Employee Suggestion Program
POLICY NUMBER:	HR-57
EFFECTIVE DATE:	September 2001
SUPERSEDES:	N/A
LAST REVISION DATE:	July 2010

POLICY:

It is the policy of Serenity Behavioral Health Systems (SBHS) to encourage employees to submit suggestions for improving operations and efficiency through the Employee Suggestion Program (ESP) to assist the State fulfilling its commitment to serving the public effectively. Eligible employees whose suggestions are adopted may receive awards under the provisions of this policy.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

- I. “Agency” means any agency as defined in O.C.G.A. § 45-20-2, any authority, or any public corporation, but does not include the Board of Regents and units of the University System of Georgia.
- II. “Agency Coordinator” means the chair of an Agency Suggestion Committee.
- III. “Agency Suggestion Committee” or “Committee” means the committee appointed by an agency to review suggestions submitted which pertain to the operation of that agency.
- IV. “Employee” means an employee of any agency as defined by O.C.G.A. § 45-20-2, or authority, or any public corporation, but shall not include employees of the Board of Regents or units of the University System of Georgia.
- V. “Employees Suggestion Program” means the program developed by the Board.
- VI. “Suggestion Program Coordinator” means an employee of the State Personnel Administration (SPA) its successor agencies designated by the Commissioner.

ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES:

All employees may participate in the ESP, with the following exceptions: Members of the General Assembly, Agency Heads, members of boards and commissions appointed by the Governor or the General Assembly Members, justices, judges, officials, officers of the judicial branch, Officers and officials elected by popular vote, persons appointed to fill vacancies in elective offices, Employees of the Board of Regents and Employees of units of the University System of Georgia.

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HOW TO SUBMIT A SUGGESTION:

Suggestions may be submitted online through the SPA or its successor agencies' website. Alternatively, suggestions may be submitted to the Suggestion Program Coordinator by mail, e-mail, or in person. Verbal suggestions are not considered.

- I. Each suggestion should clearly and concisely identify the issue, propose a detailed solution to the issue, and explain the expected benefit to the state agency. Inventions, whether patentable or not, will also be considered.
- II. Group suggestions must be signed by all participating individuals. Awards for adopted group suggestions will be prorated.

REVIEW PROCESS:

The Human Resource Committee will serve as members of the Committee, with the Human Resource Manager being designated as SBHS Coordinator.

- I. The Commissioner will designate an employee of the SPA or its successor agencies as the Suggestion Program Coordinator. The Suggestion Program Coordinator shall review for eligibility each suggestion received and forward those that should be considered to the appropriate Agency Coordinator for evaluation.
- II. The Human Resource Manager should obtain internal feedback on the suggestion, including a determination of the amount of savings, if any that would be realized by the implementation of the suggestion. Based on feedback provided, the Human Resources Committee will evaluate the suggestion and provide a written recommendation regarding its adoption to the CFO in the prescribed format within 45 days of receipt. The recommendation should explain in detail why the suggestion should or should not be adopted, and should include any supporting documentation and an estimate of the value of projected annual savings to be generated by adopting the suggestion.
- III. SBHS may also appoint a Suggestion Committee for any program within SBHS. The Suggestion Committee will follow the same procedures set forth above but report their recommendations to the Human Resources Committee instead of directly to the CEO.
- IV. The Human Resource Manager will review each suggestion to determine whether it is a duplicate of, or is similar to, a previously submitted suggestion. When duplicate suggestions are received, the suggestion bearing the earliest date of receipt will be submitted for consideration. If duplicate suggestions are received on the same date, both will be considered, and if adopted, any award given will be split as determined by the State Personnel Board.
- V. The Human Resource Manager may forward a suggestion to an agency that does not employ the originator of the suggestion, when appropriate.

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- VI. An employee may ask the Human Resource Manager to forward a suggestion to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for reevaluation if the Committee does not recommend adoption. Likewise, a SBHS employee may ask the Human Resource Manager to reevaluate a suggestion that was not recommended for adoption. Reevaluation may only be requested one time per suggestion.
- VII. The Human Resource Manager will collect and provide the Commissioner with the written recommendations regarding employee suggestions. After reviewing the written recommendations, the Commissioner will make final recommendations to the State Personnel Board, which will make the final determination regarding any action to be taken.

EXCLUDED SUGGESTIONS:

Suggestions relating to the following areas are not eligible for consideration:

- I. Suggestions that directly relate to an employee's assigned duties or responsibilities unless the suggestions are considered above and beyond the scope of the employee's job
- II. Personal grievances
- III. Classification and pay of positions
- IV. Matters recommended for study, review or summary
- V. Matters that are a result of assigned or contracted audits, studies, surveys, reviews or research
- VI. Matters requiring the enactment of legislation by the General Assembly
- VII. Suggested changes or additions to the rules of the Employees' Suggestion Program

AWARDS FOR ADOPTED SUGGESTIONS:

The following factors will be considered by the State Personnel Board in making the final determination regarding an award:

- I. Nature of benefit
- II. Degree of benefit
- III. Extent of application (i.e., how many agencies and/or facilities adopt the suggestion)
- IV. Originality and ingenuity of idea

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- V. Cost of adoption
- VI. Effort undertaken by the employee in formulating the suggestion
- VII. Clarity and completeness of the suggestion
- VIII. Suggestions for improving safety are given more weight in determining the amount, if any, of a cash award

CASH AWARDS:

- I. An employee whose suggestion is approved by the State Personnel Board and adopted and implemented by an agency that results in direct and measurable cash savings or cost avoidance will receive a cash award. The award will be equal to 10% of the first year's estimated net material and labor savings, with a minimum amount of \$10 and a maximum amount of \$5,000.
- II. Other suggestions that are approved, adopted and implemented by an agency may result in improvements that cannot be measured (e.g., suggestions involving improvements in working conditions, changes in procedures or forms or employee morale, health, or safety, etc.). These suggestions may be eligible for a maximum cash award of \$100.
- III. A cash award is generally paid upon adoption of the suggestion and paid by the adopting agency or agencies within the fiscal year it is authorized for payment. Payment may be delayed up to six months if the savings resulting from implementation cannot be immediately determined.
 - A. In order to receive payment of a cash award, the individual must be a current employee of SBHS, retired from service, or deceased at the time of implementation of the suggestion. In the case of a deceased employee or former employee, the award will be paid as if it were part of the employee's final compensation.
- IV. An employee may be entitled to an award if a suggestion is adopted in a modified form. The State Personnel Board will determine whether a suggestion was adopted in a modified form and whether the employee making the suggestion should receive an award. The State Personnel Board's decision is final.
- V. An employee may be entitled to an award if a suggestion was rejected but subsequently adopted within a year of the employee's receipt of the initial notification of non-adoption. For an individual to receive any award under these circumstances, the Commissioner must have been notified that the suggestion was implemented and the individual must be a current employee of SBHS, retired from service, or deceased at the time of implementation of the suggestion. In the case of a deceased employee or former employee, the award will be paid as if it were part of the employee's final compensation.

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CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATIONS:

When the submitted suggestion results only in minimal savings or minor improvement, the employee may receive a certificate of commendation in lieu of a cash award. An employee receiving a cash award may also receive a certificate of commendation.

RIGHTS OF PARTIES:

- I. The right to receive a State Personnel Board suggestion award is the submitting employee's sole right under the Employee Suggestion Program.
- II. SBHS has the right to use a suggestion in any form or manner without making any payment, including royalties, other than an award determined by the State Personnel Board pursuant to the Employee Suggestion Program.

REFERENCES:

- I. State Law (O.C.G.A. § 45-21-10 et seq. – Employee Incentive Awards) State Personnel Board Rules for the Administration of the Employees' Suggestion Program
- II. Rules of the State Personnel Board, Rule 22 (Employee Suggestion Program)

APPROVAL SECTION:

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Chief Executive Officer

Date

Committee Chairperson

Date

RESCISSION SECTION:

Chief Executive Officer

Date

REVIEW SECTION:

Committee Chairperson

Date

Committee Chairperson

Date

Committee Chairperson

Date