

**WASHINGTON**



# Secretary of State Productivity Board

**Agency Evaluator Resource Guide  
2024**



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## Introduction

The Productivity Board was established in 1982 and, to date, has saved the State of Washington millions of dollars. With a few exceptions, any state employee is eligible to participate in our programs. Cost-saving and/or revenue-generating proposals may be awarded cash incentives, and proposals that improve government are eligible for Recognition Awards.

When proposals are submitted, Productivity Board staff will review them to ensure they are eligible. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to the agency or agencies to which the proposal pertains.

There are two programs to recognize and reward employee suggestions:

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 process improvements. 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 implemented an improvement project.

## Agency Evaluator Overview

Agency Evaluators play an important role in the Employee Suggestion and Teamwork Incentive Programs. Evaluators will determine if proposals are practical and if the savings/revenue projected by the proposer are accurate. Evaluators are selected for their subject matter expertise. Fair and timely evaluation of proposals communicates to employees how their agency values their input and engagement.

The Productivity Board encourages evaluators to approach proposals with a “What is possible?” mentality. Though an idea may not work as originally proposed, the evaluation process can be used to refine good ideas and turn them into productive realities.

## Evaluation Process Overview

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 exist that will prohibit completion within that timeframe.

The evaluation process will differ depending on the specific agency, proposal, etc. Some questions that may be asked during the process:

- “Is the proposal practical?”
- “Will it deliver the benefits anticipated?”
- “Are there factors that the proposal didn’t consider?”
- “Is there enough information to make a determination?”

Evaluators are encouraged to reach out to proposers and maintain an open line of communication with them. If a proposal needs significant or material changes to be adopted, it will need to be resubmitted by the original proposer.

Proposals need to contain the following:

- A clear and concise narrative describing the solution and how it can be accomplished.
- A clear and concise narrative describing the present methods, practices, or problems.
- A cost/benefit analysis of anticipated savings/revenue and the method used to reach those calculations.

- If savings are not anticipated, a statement of the improved services or benefits must be included.
- Research, primarily regarding practicality and implementation
- Proposer’s signature, e-mail address, title of position, department/division, and mailing address

## Proposal Eligibility

### Eligible proposals

- Save time or money
- Generate revenue.
- Eliminate waste or duplication
- Improve services or products
- Conserve energy
- Improve working conditions
- Improve public safety

### Ineligible proposals

- Proposer has a proprietary interest in the outcome
- Personal complaints
- Changing salaries, positions, classifications, benefits, state holidays, etc.
- Enforcement of laws, policies, procedures, etc.
- Common sense ideas
- Outside the purview of state government
- Not a new idea
- Fall within the employee’s regular job duties or have been given to the employee as a work assignment (ESP only)
- Employee already has the authority to implement their proposal (ESP Only)
- Submitted after the idea is implemented (ESP only)

## Summarize Findings and Make a Recommendation

- **Clarify** the proposal with the proposer, if needed
- **Analyze** the facts as they relate to the proposal.
- **Recommend** the action the agency should take on the proposal.
- **Prepare** a formal recommendation on the proposal, forms are available on the Productivity Board website.
- **Develop** an implementation plan for adopted proposals

Click [here](#) to access the Employee Suggestion Program form, and [here](#) to access the Teamwork Incentive Program form.

There are three possible recommendations:

- **Adopt** – The proposal is feasible and will create the outcome anticipated in the proposal - cost savings, increased revenue, or other intangible benefits
- **Modified Adopt** – The proposal has merit, however, a portion of it may not be feasible, or the savings/revenue may be less than anticipated
- **Non-Adopt** – The proposal as presented is not practical, would result in a net loss, or was disqualified for non-compliance with the rules of the program

For **ADOPT** or **MODIFIED ADOPT** recommendations:

- Document tangible savings, revenue generation, cost avoidance, or intangible benefits.
- Recommend an award based on the Payment Award Scale, which is the following:

- Monetary awards shall be given for all proposals that have actual net savings/revenue generation.
- Monetary awards for the ESP shall be based on 10% of actual first year net savings and/or revenue generated for the State, up to \$10,000.
- Monetary awards for the TIP shall be based on up to 25% of actual first year net savings and/or revenue generated for the State. The maximum award amount is \$10,000 per team member.

Ineligible or unquantifiable proposals may still receive recognition. Recognition for these types of suggestions can be monetary and/or non-monetary in nature, as permitted by RCW 41.60.150, and shall not exceed \$200. The agency determines the appropriate type of recognition.

When actual net savings/revenue is expected to be significant, it is recommended that a partial award be made, and the actual savings be tracked for one year. If estimated savings/revenue are \$25,000 or more, savings must be tracked for one year, and a tracking due date must be included with the evaluation.

Implementation costs for capital expenditures must be amortized over the life of the equipment. Other implementation costs may be amortized over years when savings/revenue will continue and are significant. The purpose of amortizing costs is to make an equitable award to the proposer when implementation costs are high.

If the agency determines the savings will be less than outlined in the proposal, they may recommend a modified amount.

For **NON-ADOPT** recommendations:

- Documentation supporting a non-adopt recommendation should be provided if documentation exists
- Pertinent dates, times, and other data will help to substantiate a non-adopt decision

## Additional Information

Contact the relevant Agency Coordinator, Productivity Board staff, or proposer immediately if:

- The problem or the proposal is unclear
- The application contains insufficient data for evaluation
- You believe you are not the appropriate evaluator for this suggestion
- Request additional information from the Productivity Board, Agency Coordinator, or the proposer.
- Discuss the idea with the people who will be affected
- Look for ways the idea can work or can be modified to work

Evaluations should be submitted with an authorizing signature from agency management. It is up to the agency to determine the appropriate authorizing management signature(s).

Evaluations may be submitted electronically to the Agency Coordinator, who will review the recommendation and forward the evaluation to the Productivity Board.

In some instances, proposals may involve multiple agencies. The Productivity Board will inform you if the proposal involves more than one agency.



## Appeals

Proposers may file a single appeal, requesting further consideration for either an award decision or award amount. New evidence or information must be supplied to support the request.

The Productivity Board staff will determine whether to accept or reject an appeal. If an appeal is accepted, the agency is required to reconsider the determination and report its findings to the Productivity Board.

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

## Resources

RCW 41.60

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=41.60>

WAC 383-06 (ESP)

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=383-06>

WAC 383-07 (TIP)

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=383-07>

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