



The Governor's Efficiency and Continuous Improvement Initiative *Employee and Stakeholder Feedback Program*

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Employee and Stakeholder Feedback Program?

The purpose is to enlist the entire workforce in saving money and making improvements. This is accomplished by providing an easy method for all employees to submit ideas that receive fair consideration and by a systematic process for implementation. This is truly "*improvement from the people up.*"

Is this a re-design of the Quality or QSTP program from prior administrations?

No. While this builds on many of the same principles (customer focus, continuous improvement, partnership with unions, manage by fact, etc.), this initiative ensures all employees can make improvement ideas any time and don't have to wait to be part of a team.

Are all departments, agencies, boards and commissions participating in this program?

No. At this time, only cabinet-level departments are involved in this program. However, all agencies, boards and commissions are welcome to join the program at any time. A full list of participating departments and agencies can be found at efficiency.ohio.gov.

What kind of ideas will be implemented?

Ideas to improve operational or programmatic issues by saving money, reducing waste, cutting cycle time, improving customer service, increasing safety and that are aligned with organizational goals and performance measures will get the highest priority. Structural issues will not be considered.

What is an operational/programmatic issue?

An operational/programmatic issue is one that relates to a particular function of a department or agency. Simply, it's a process. Examples would include: reducing time for refunds for the Ohio Department of Taxation, processing permits faster by eliminating bottlenecks, not requiring Social Security numbers for driver's license renewals.

What is a structural issue?

Structural issues are those that require changes to any of the following: table of organization, laws, a union contract or departmental governing policy.

How will you ensure all ideas receive fair consideration?

Each agency has selected and trained a team of employees called the Agency Review Team to use a consistent and fair process to evaluate ideas.

What is the role of the agency review team?

The review teams are an administrative group who sort appropriate and inappropriate ideas, prioritize ideas for improvements, update the person submitting the idea with comments on the efficiency tracking system Web site about the status and outcome of their suggestion, determine who to hand off ideas to and to charter teams as well as collect, analyze and report data. Review teams do not actually perform the process improvements. That work is done by those who own or do the process (e.g. those closest to the work).

How were agency review team members selected?

Each agency review team has on average of between eight to 10 members, equally divided between management and labor representatives. The department's director appointed the management representatives and the respective labor unions appointed the union representatives. Members were selected through an interview process that focused on several factors, including the breadth and depth of each candidate's knowledge of agency processes and services, their ability to work collaboratively, communicate effectively and grasp and promote a shared vision and "big picture" approach to problem solving.

Why isn't there a member on the review team from each division/unit?

The teams were designed to represent an agency/department, not a particular division, unit, office or even union. Members are responsible for evaluating suggestions based on a "big picture" approach to determine the best action for the agency/department, not a division or unit. Admittedly, team members will not have all of the knowledge necessary to evaluate every suggestion; therefore, they will be reaching out to those who have submitted suggestions and the owners of the various business processes for guidance and additional information.

What happens to my suggestion after I submit it?

After suggestions are submitted, they are evaluated by the review team at the agency where you submitted the suggestion. The review team will determine whether the suggestion meets the program criteria, whether it has merit, if it's a priority for the department/agency, etc. Those suggestions that meet the criteria and have merit will then be assigned by the review team to a subject-matter expert or a chartered team for investigation and implementation.

How do I learn the status of my suggestion?

Information about the progress of a suggestion can be found on the suggestion tracking system at efficiency.ohio.gov. Updates to the suggestion feedback form are made each time there is a change in the suggestion's status.

Can I submit a suggestion for any agency?

Absolutely. State government is not a system of mutually exclusive agencies. Employees work with other agencies every day, and therefore know how different agency processes work. Employees are free to submit suggestions about any agency.

Will I be paid if one of my suggestions is implemented?

No. This program is about all employees continuously improving services as the way we do business in state government.

What is an example of a good suggestion?

While the premise of the question is subjective, there are certain characteristics and qualities that distinguish suggestions from each other. "Good" suggestions provide workable and practical solutions, focus on process improvements, demonstrate added value, and are clear and concise. It's important to remember that this is not a complaint program so suggestions must have solutions.

Examples of "good" suggestions might include:

- Reducing the number of approvers for correspondence in order to respond to customers faster.
- Migrate paper forms online to allow for greater accuracy, less processing time and lower printing costs.
- Instead of requiring employees to come to the district office for meetings, allow them to participate by video or teleconference, cutting down on travel time and expenses and employees being away from their offices.

What is an example of a bad suggestion?

This too, is a subjective premise; but for the purposes of illustrating the point, the term “bad” will be used to reference suggestions that are lacking in quality. Accordingly, just like good suggestions, “bad” suggestions also have distinguishing characteristics. “Bad” suggestions typically have one or more of the opposite attributes of “good” suggestions and are often negative in tone, off topic and offer no remedy to the problem. It’s also important to note that the scope of this program is very specific. There will be “good” suggestions that don’t meet the criteria of this program and will not be considered by the agency review teams.

Examples of “bad” suggestions might include:

- Eliminating all middle managers to save money.
- Get rid of OAKS and go back to the old systems; we didn’t have any problem with those.
- Consolidate all of the finance officers in each division.

Do the unions support this?

Yes. All five unions (OCSEA, OSTA, OEA, FOP and SEIU) support this initiative.

Why can’t I make a suggestion about OAKS?

OAKS is a tool/application. This program is focused on process improvement. If you have a suggestion about how to improve a process related to entering or extracting information from OAKS, then please submit a suggestion about the process topic (i.e. HR, finance, etc.).