

Innovation Management

1. POLICY

Innovation Management establishes a formal process to encourage and evaluate employees' ideas for improving the District. Suggestions that identify specific problems and propose innovative, appropriate and reasonable solutions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the District by increasing productivity, reducing costs, improving working conditions, conserving resources and/or improving public services are considered.

2. GUIDELINES

The District's Innovation Management initiative encourages all employees to develop suggestions that improve the performance and quality of their work while achieving District objectives and provides an opportunity to share the ideas with management and senior staff.

Innovation Management Participant Roles

HR-program administrator/owner

SST-may serve on evaluation team/recognize employee for idea submission/decide if ideas are accepted

Evaluation Team- reviews idea submissions

Manager-may serve on evaluation team as Subject Matter Expert (SME)/recognize their employee for idea submission

Employees-idea submitter/may serve on project implementation team

Employee Idea Generation

A Sewer District employee thinks of a way to improve the organization. Ideas could fit into the following categories:

- Services innovation—a new or improved service.
 - Example: self-service platform available on mobile devices
- Service delivery innovation—a new or different way of providing a service.
 - Example: providing electronic time-off submission platform
- Administrative or organizational innovation—a new process.
 - Example: incorporate sustainable administrative processes (reduce use of paper and create electronic options)
- Conceptual innovation—a new way of looking at problems, challenging current assumptions, or both.
 - Example: organization of cross-functional “think tanks” for problem solving
- Systemic innovation—a new or improved way for parts of the public sector to operate and interact with internal and/or external stakeholders.
 - Example: incorporate a form of “town hall” meetings for employees to engage C-suite

Employee submits idea

The employee goes to NEORSO intranet page and finds the “submit an idea” link. They fill out a form detailing the idea and which area of the organization the idea pertains to. The form is submitted to Human Resources. Employees should also feel free to discuss their ideas with their managers. However, to be reviewed under the Innovation Management Policy, a form must be submitted to HR.

Once the idea is submitted, a screen immediately appears and/or an email is sent to the employee informing him/her that their idea has been sent to the idea evaluation committee. The employee is thanked and they are informed that they should hear back within 14-30 days (depending on the level of evaluation necessary). Any idea that falls under the exclusions will not be considered.

Idea evaluation

The idea is sent to the evaluation team, which is made up of four Sewer District employees of varying organizational levels. The team includes representation from our core business areas (Operation & Maintenance, Engineering & Construction and Watershed Programs.) The team meets monthly to review Sewer District innovation submissions. If there are no idea submissions for the month the team will not meet. The idea would then go through an evaluation by senior staff members for final approval/disproval.

Whether an idea is accepted or rejected, the submitter receives feedback from the department director impacted by the idea and feedback is especially constructive and nonjudgmental. Any feedback is communicated verbally and in writing via email to the employee.

Idea implementation

The implementation time of the idea depends on the scope of work identified by a combination of the impacted department director and project implementation team formed by said director.

Employee is rewarded/recognized

Small or large-scale implementations will be recognized. Employees receive an Innovation certificate and are placed on an Innovator list on the intranet. The certificate is made by the impacted department director and/or idea evaluation team.

3. EXCLUSIONS

Suggestions that **cannot** be considered include but are not limited to the following:

- Suggestions that would normally be expected in the performance of the employee's job or those that the employee can implement without higher-level approval.
- Suggestions that do not include a solution or plan for improvement.
- Suggestions that propose changes to salaries or employment classifications.
- Suggestions that are already enforced by existing laws or regulations.
- Suggestions that pertain to complaints or grievances, active or inactive, or any issue covered by a collective bargaining agreement.
- Suggestions that relate to immediate safety concerns as such concerns should be reported to management and Health & Safety in accordance with District policies and procedures.
- Suggestions that are inconsistent with the District's Mission, Vision, or Core Values