

NOMINATION
NASPE's Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award

“Got ideas?” Employee Feedback Program
State of Nevada



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“Got Ideas?” is an agency-level employee feedback program implemented by the State of Nevada Department of Personnel (DOP) in March of 2009. The “Got Ideas?” program utilizes fun and approachable branding strategies to encourage employees to submit ideas to the director of the department. Instead of the traditional comment box, this program relies on an electronic submission form that is posted on the Department of Personnel Intranet website. Employees go to the website, click on the “Got Ideas?” banner and are prompted with a message that encourages them to share their ideas. The message states that “all suggestions will be reviewed by the director and forwarded to the appropriate division for consideration.”

Employees are then directed to an online form where they can enter their name (optional), email address (optional) and a short title for the idea. The form also contains a large field for employees to type in idea details. If applicable, they can select a division that their idea specifically relates to.

Once an idea is submitted, it is logged in the database of the website. To maintain confidentiality, only the department’s Public Information Officer and back-up Web Administrator have access to the database. Ideas are then forwarded to the director for consideration. A summary of all non-confidential ideas that have been implemented or are under consideration are posted on the DOP Intranet biannually. This is done specifically to communicate that ideas submitted to the program are actually being heard and acted upon.

An important element of the program is the consistent reminder for employees to submit ideas. “Got Ideas?” posters have been created and displayed in common areas of the office (i.e. break rooms, copy rooms etc.) These posters are fashioned after the familiar “Got milk?” campaign to provide a sense of approachability for the program. Rotating “Got Ideas?” web banners are included on the DOP Intranet site. The director also includes the “Got Ideas?” slogan with every department-wide email. Additionally, as part of State Employee Recognition Day, the director supplied all employees with a “Got Ideas?” pocket notebook for logging suggestions.

1. Please provide a brief description of this program.

“Got Ideas?” is an agency-level employee feedback program implemented by the State of Nevada Department of Personnel (DOP) in March of 2009. Instead of using a traditional comment box to collect employee feedback and suggestions, this program relies on an electronic submission form that is posted on the DOP Intranet website. The form allows confidentiality and is an efficient means to collect ideas. All submissions are forwarded straight to the director for consideration.

The “Got Ideas?” program also utilizes a fun and approachable branding strategy to encourage employees to submit ideas. Biannually a summary of all ideas that have been implemented or are under consideration are posted on the DOP Intranet to communicate that ideas submitted to the program are actually being heard and acted upon.

To continually remind employees about the program, “Got Ideas?” posters have been created and displayed in common areas of each office (i.e. break rooms, copy rooms etc.). These posters are fashioned after the familiar “Got milk?” campaign to provide a sense of approachability for the program. Rotating “Got Ideas?” web banners are included on the DOP Intranet site. The director includes the “Got Ideas?” slogan with every department-wide email. Additionally, as part of the 2009 State Employee Recognition Day, the director supplied all employees with a “Got Ideas?” pocket notebook so they could jot down their ideas.

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)

The “Got Ideas?” program was implemented in March of 2009 and has been active for more than one year.

3. Why was this program created (What problem[s] or issues does it address?)

Over the last two years, Nevada has experienced severe economic decline as displayed by the second highest unemployment rate in the country and more recently a \$900 million budget hole. The State as a whole was exploring ways to reduce costs and agencies were mandated to cut budgets by 10 percent. Since employees have much to contribute in the way of problem-solving and money-

saving ideas, the DOP wanted to get more feedback from its employees on how to save costs and increase efficiency within the department.

Additionally, in the months prior to creating the “Got Ideas?” program, the director of the department had implemented lunch gatherings with staff to open lines of communication and get feedback. During these meetings it was discovered that many staff members felt like communication in the department was only one way – from management to employees. The Director of Personnel wanted to provide a means for DOP employees to give direct feedback in an approachable and accessible manner.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?

The program uses electronic means to get feedback (saving the cost of comment boxes, comment sheets, time to compile data from comments and time for comments to reach management). It also uses a fun branding strategy to give employees the sense of approachability and accessibility with their ideas. This branding also provides a constant reminder for employees to submit ideas. The structure of the program allows employees to see the results of their suggestions and provides a direct and confidential line of communication to the director.

5. What was the program’s start up costs?

The only start-up cost incurred was a nominal cost for colored ink and paper to print “Got Ideas?” posters for each office. Staff time was also required to develop posters and online banners for the program. A free idea feedback module was added to the existing DOP Intranet and required an investment of less than two working days to deploy.

6. What are the program’s operational costs?

There are no operational costs to maintain the “Got Ideas?” program. The only investment required is time to receive responses, research the viability of ideas and periodically report which suggestions have been implemented.

7. How is this program funded?

Only labor is required to maintain this program; it is delegated to the Department's Public Information Officer.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

Yes.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If yes, how does this program differ?

There are many states that have statewide suggestion programs, most with monetary awards. However this program is an agency-level program and we are not aware of similar programs in other states. It is possible that agency-level feedback programs exist in other states. However, the structure and theme of such programs is likely to be different.

10. How do you measure the success of the program?

We measure the success of the program by monitoring the level of participation and number of cost-saving ideas that are implemented.

To date, DOP has had 42 idea suggestions, 10 of which were anonymously submitted. The remaining 32 ideas were submitted by 20 different employees, which equates to 23.5% of DOP employees participating in the program. Out of the 42 idea suggestions, 32 have been acted on (14 have been implemented, 4 are in process of being implemented and 14 are being researched). The result has been 76% of the ideas being acted on.

Since the inception of the program, there have also been three suggestions implemented that have resulted in a direct savings for the department. An idea to outsource a program will save DOP \$226,196 through FY11 alone. A suggestion to consolidate office space was implemented and will save \$7,407 in lease costs just for FY11. The third idea to eliminate temporary salary increases was enacted statewide and will result in a savings of \$17,683 for DOP through the remainder of FY10 and FY11.

Several other ideas have been used in the director's statewide policy suggestions. A stronger enforcement of the hiring freeze and the removal of accelerated salary adjustments were suggested in the "Got Ideas?" program and these elements were recommended and implemented as a statewide policy. Intangible successes have been seen as well. Employee morale has improved and staff members are more likely to express ideas and suggestions in their project groups.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

There has been very little change in the program since its inception. The volume of ideas that were submitted in the second half of the year is similar to the amount that was submitted in the first half of the year. This indicates that utilization of the program remains strong.