OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

PERSONNEL POLICIES

Policy: Incentive Award Program  Effective Date: February 22, 1996
Policy Number: 606.0  Approved By:

I. Policy

A. The objective of this policy is to establish minimum guidelines for administration of the incentive award program within the OCHE. The program allows the opportunity for the recognition and monetary reward of individual employees, groups of employees, and non-employees for:

1. efforts that significantly contribute to documented achievements or outcomes eliminating or reducing the office’s expenditures; or

2. improvements to the effectiveness of the OCHE or improvement of services to the public by permitting more work to be accomplished within the OCHE without increasing the cost of operations.

B. An idea or suggestion becomes eligible to be nominated for an award when it is implemented or when documented achievements and outcomes can be determined.

C. The Commissioner of Higher Education makes the final decision to grant an incentive award and for determining an award’s monetary value. Implementation of ideas and suggestions, and grant of any monetary award, is totally at the discretion of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

D. Awards up to $500 or up to 40 hours of paid leave may be approved for an award for which a documented value cannot be calculated. Achievements or outcomes with a documented value that can be measured after the savings are actually incurred, may be approved for a larger award, but may not exceed the following:

1. 10% of the first $100,000 of cost savings actually incurred during the 12 months following implementation of the suggestions; plus

2. 5% of the next $100,000 of cost savings actually incurred during that 12-month period; plus

3. 2% of the next $100,000 of cost savings actually incurred during that 12-month period.

II. Procedures

A. The Employee Incentive Award Program (EIAP) Coordinator shall be responsible for the following:

1. Receiving ideas and suggestions.

2. Notifying submitters of the status of proposals.

3. Maintaining a tracking system for nominations for awards.

4. Serving on a standing committee to evaluate and prioritize nominations for awards.

5. Promoting the program within the office.

6. Arranging presentation ceremonies, including obtaining monetary awards.

7. Publicizing awards to the office and the media.

8. Preparing the annual report of activity for the Department of Administration.
9. Making or arranging a reasonable accommodation to participate in the program if one is requested.

10. Performing any other duty assigned by the Commissioner.

B. A nomination for an incentive award may be submitted on a form provided by the program coordinator, or in another written format. The name of the person or persons submitting the idea or suggestion and the date submitted will be recorded. The nomination must include the following information to be considered. Incomplete submissions will be returned.

1. Name, address, and telephone number of person(s) submitting the nomination for an incentive award.

2. Name(s) of individual or group or team of employees nominated, if applicable.

3. A description of how the outcome, achievement or savings
   a) exceeds normal expectations for the employee, or group or team of employees, or
   b) has an impact on the delivery of service to the public or other customer, or
   c) directly and to what degree the outcome, achievement, or savings contributes to the OCHE’s objectives, goals, and mission.

4. The dollar value of the documented savings, including the method used to determine the value.

5. Signature of the submitter(s) and the date submitted. The date stamp on each nomination which will become the official receipt date of the nomination. The program coordinator will notify the submitter that the nomination has been received. Additional information may be requested from the submitter in order to evaluate the nomination.

6. All nominations for incentive awards are public information and available for review.

C. The Commissioner will appoint three members to a standing committee and name a chairperson. The committee will conduct the initial evaluation and prioritization of nominations for incentive awards using the following:

1. Compare the outcome, accomplishment, or savings to what is normally expected from the employee, group, or team of employees through the duties and responsibilities of their positions.

2. Evaluate the impact of the outcome, accomplishment, or savings on delivery of service to the public or other customer.

3. Evaluate the outcome, accomplishments, or savings in terms of how directly and to what degree they contribute to the OCHE’s objectives, goals, and mission.

4. Consider other factors for evaluating a suggestion, invention, or idea, which may include:

   a. Is the suggestion, idea, or invention original?

   b. Has the suggestion, idea, or invention been fully implemented or did it require modification or further development before it could be successfully implemented?

   c. How important was the suggestion idea or invention in contributing to the outcome, accomplishment, or cost savings? Did it provide the principal impetus or
mechanism for an outcome that would not have occurred without the suggestion, idea, or invention?

D. If the committee determines a nomination is applicable to the OCHE, the committee will make non-binding recommendations to the Commissioner concerning:

1. approval or disapproval of a nomination for an award, and
2. an appropriate monetary or leave award.

E. If the committee determines the nomination is not applicable to the OCHE, the committee may:

1. return the nomination to the submitter with that explanation, or
2. after consultation with the program coordinator in another agency to which the nomination may apply, refer the nomination to the new agency and notify the submitter of that action.

F. The Commissioner will make the final decision regarding the granting of an incentive award and the amount of the award. The Commissioner will resolve any disputes related to the granting of an incentive award. The Commissioner may limit the number and amount of the awards.

References:
   2-18-1101 et seq., MCA and ARM 2.21.607 et seq.