

## Chapter 3. Participation

### 3-1. Who may participate?

- a. All Federal employees - including managers and employees of other Federal agencies - are eligible to participate in the IDEAS Program.
- b. An Idea may be submitted by an individual or a group of employees.

3-2. How do employees participate? Suggestions must be submitted in writing on the Department's IDEAS Program Submission Form, HUD-20000A (Appendix A).

Suggestions must:

- a. Clearly, identify, and describe a specific problem which impedes the efficiency, or effectiveness of Government operations and services or a specific condition which could be improved;
- b. Explain a specific solution to the problem or a specific initiative which will improve the productivity of Government operations and services in sufficient detail that the merits are clear to the Evaluator; and
- c. To the extent possible, estimate the costs to implement the suggestion and the benefit to the Government. Whenever possible, the benefits should be described in dollars saved or costs avoided.

3-3. Where do employees submit their suggestions? Headquarters employees submit their Ideas to the Departmental Ideas Officer in the Office of Productivity and Management Improvements. Field employees submit Ideas to their Regional Ideas Officers or to staff or collection points designated by the Regional Ideas Officer. When the suggestion has been accepted as an Idea, the suggester will receive an acknowledgment which includes the tracking number assigned to the Idea.

3-4. How long will it take to find out if the Idea is adopted? Suggesters normally will receive a response within 60 days from the time the Idea is submitted.

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a. Ideas staff will determine whether or not the suggestion is acceptable and will refer the Idea to a Decision Official, normally within 3 working days of receipt of the suggestion.

b. Decision Officials are given 30 calendar days to evaluate the Ideas and come to conclusions.

c. If the Idea is to be adopted, additional time is required for the Ideas staff to review the cost/benefit calculations, to determine job relatedness, and to decide on and receive authorization for an award. If the estimated savings are \$250,000 or more, the Inspector General or Regional Inspector General for Audit will require time to validate the savings.

d. Often when more than one manager is involved in deciding whether an Idea is feasible or cost effective, additional time is required to complete a thorough analysis and to resolve problems.

e. Ideas submitted at the Field Office or Regional Office level may be forwarded to Headquarters for evaluation, if implementation would require Headquarters' approval or if there may be broader applicability (i.e., if they may be appropriate for Departmentwide implementation). In those cases, the suggester will receive notification from Headquarters that the Idea has been referred there for evaluation, and processing times may be extended.

f. Throughout processing, the Ideas staff will keep suggesters informed of the status of their Ideas. Suggesters also may contact their Ideas Officers to inquire about the status of their Ideas. Suggesters always should refer to the Ideas tracking numbers when asking about the status of their Ideas.

g. Whether or not the Idea is adopted, acknowledgment that the suggester submitted an Idea will be placed in the suggester's Official Personnel File. If the Idea is rejected, a copy of the notification will be placed in the file. If the Idea is adopted, a Certificate of Commendation will be placed in the file.