



## Commonwealth Employee Recognition Program

---

### Low and No-Cost Recognition

One of the highest motivators for employees is recognition of a job well done. In financially challenging times, it is especially important to provide meaningful recognition to heighten morale, reinforce good behaviors, sustain or improve performance and reward results.

Employee recognition can take many forms, from a simple 'thank you' to a full-blown award program and everything in between. Here are just a few examples of how your agency may choose to recognize employees.

#### **No-Cost Ideas**

1. Profile recognized employees in a newsletter or agency website. Include a small bio and/or summary of their achievements at work and/or in the community.
2. Create recognition areas in break rooms, lobbies, and bulletin board locations to recognize employees and their achievements and update them on a regular basis.
3. Establish a place to display memos, posters, photos, etc., recognizing progress toward goals and thanking individuals for their assistance.
4. Present "State of the Agency" reports periodically to acknowledge employee work effort and contributions.
5. Record a series of recognition messages from the agency head, deputies, bureau directors, and other managers thanking employees for their service. Rotate these messages on the agency's intranet monthly or more frequently.
6. Place a special message on agency websites to recognize those agency military employees by name and job title who are serving in active duty.
7. Revise the agency's customer service pledge to include treating employees with the same courtesy and respect as customers.
8. Greet employees by name every morning.
9. Include "kudos" as a staff meeting agenda item.
10. Have a team or team member present results of efforts to upper management.
11. Arrange for the agency head and/or deputy to attend bureau, division, and section/unit staff meetings to recognize employees.

12. Allow an employee to attend a meeting or luncheon in your place, when you are not available.
13. Include an employee in a special, "high-level" meeting, as appropriate.
14. Attend the first meeting of a special project team and express your appreciation for their involvement.
15. Schedule visits by the agency head and other key leaders to employees at their work location, including field sites.
16. Call an employee to your office just to thank them (don't discuss any other issue).
17. Write a handwritten thank you note and post it on an employee's door, cubicle, computer, etc.
18. Post an employee recognition letter from the agency head on the agency's website.
19. Send a letter to all team members at the conclusion of a project, thanking them for their participation.
20. Write a letter or send an email to an employee to recognize specific contributions and accomplishments. Send a copy to senior management and have a copy placed in the employee's official personnel folder.
21. Use 3 x 5 cards to write "I appreciate you because...." messages. Employees can collect the cards and refer to them when they are in a need of encouragement or affirmation.
22. Distribute a hand-written thank you note or make phone calls to either randomly selected or targeted agency employees. Targeted employees may be members of a team or individuals who made significant contributions to the organization, or who completed a major assignment.
23. Nominate employees for formal award programs.
24. Name a continuing recognition award after an outstanding, well-respected, possibly retired employee.
25. Create an "above and beyond the call of duty" award to recognize employees who exceed expectations.
26. Establish an "unsung hero" award to recognize the contributions of those whose actions are not usually in the spotlight.
27. Include new employees' "first year" as part of the service year recognition program. Have the agency head or other executive leader personally meet with the employee to thank them for joining the state, the agency, or the new work group and ask them for feedback on their first year's employment.
28. Present recognition items for longevity, retirements, etc. in-person and in front of peers, rather than forwarded through interoffice mail.

## **Low-Cost Ideas:**

29. Send recognition care packages, including thank you notes, to agency military employees serving overseas. Consider including notes of encouragement from employees.
30. Have a tree planted on behalf of an employee or group of employees, or make a service contribution in the employee's name to a charitable organization of his/her choice.
31. Hold a contest to create an employee recognition slogan for the agency and award a prize to the winner(s) on employee recognition day, e.g., no-cost or preferred parking for the month, lunch at a nearby eatery, etc.
32. Throw a pizza party for your unit.
33. At an employee meeting, randomly tape gift certificates to the bottom of chairs.
34. Host an annual "Staff Appreciation Day" where managers supply, cook, and serve the food.
35. Hold informal retreats to foster communication and set goals.
36. Pick a recognizable symbol such as a stuffed animal, trophy, or toy that can be displayed on an employee's desk for a day/week so everyone in the department knows they are being recognized.
37. Plan a surprise picnic, luncheon, or breakfast.
38. Give an employee a copy of the latest-selling management or business book or a subscription to a trade magazine.
39. Allow employees to recognize each other by placing names into a "job well done" prize raffle.
40. Serve ice cream sundaes to all of your employees to celebrate the end of a project.

### **Need more info?**

Check out [Management Directive 505.23 – Employee Recognition Program](#), as well as these additional [online resources](#)

### **Questions?**

Contact OA, Bureau of Talent Development at 717.787.3813.