

Background and context

State Employee Recognition Day was first initiated in 2001 by the National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE) in partnership with the National Governors Association and is an excellent opportunity for state executive leadership and managers to express appreciation to employees. Recognition is a powerful motivator at a time when there is great need to value the passion and dedication our employees bring to their work every day. Beyond this day, recognition contributes to employee morale and organizational productivity, with the potential to foster authentic employee engagement.

As participants in this national event, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) is partnering with the Governor's Office to implement statewide activities to recognize state employees and their valuable contributions. In addition, the Governor's Office and DAS encourage agencies to implement their own activities during National Public Service Recognition Week (first full week of May) and State Employee Recognition Day. To assist agencies with their endeavors, DAS has developed this toolkit with ideas, activities and resources for agencies as well as a [webpage](#) with additional resources.

Goal for State Employee Recognition Day

From a statewide perspective, the goal of State Employee Recognition Day is to recognize and honor "Ambassadors of Public Service." These individuals serve as champions for Oregon; their daily work and behaviors connect to the high-level outcomes envisioned by the Governor and the Legislature. Ambassadors embody the state enterprise values of Integrity, Accountability, Excellence and Equity (see page 6 for more information on the values).

Statewide activities seek to communicate the following messages:

- Link the daily work and passion of employees to the organization's mission, vision and values
- Encourage a culture of appreciation amongst teams, co-workers, and colleagues particularly in work environments where employees rely upon each other to get the job done
- Promote state employees for who they are: passionate, dedicated professionals who provide essential services to the citizens of Oregon, assisting countless residents on a daily basis in every county of the state

How to use this toolkit:

The activities presented in this toolkit are but a sample of the vast resources and best practices. Agencies may choose to implement activities at their own discretion and cost. For agencies with existing robust recognition programs year-round and specific to this week, this toolkit may be viewed as a resource to enhance their existing activities. For agencies seeking to create or expand their programs, this toolkit represents some creative, new and classic best practices.

Activities are organized into the following categories:

- **Agency-wide:** Activities have the potential to create a sense of connection between employees and the agency and provide a chance to be appreciated by the agency director and executive teams.
- **Division/Program:** Recognition activities at this level focus on the efforts of the division or program as a whole as well as outstanding individuals.
- **Manager to Direct Report:** Opportunity for the most impact with employees through manager interactions with direct reports which are personalized and specific and acknowledge that individuals respond to varying forms of engagement and recognition.
- **Peer to Peer:** Encourages employees to appreciate and acknowledge their co-workers which builds relationships and fosters a culture where teammates are responsible for and accountable to each other.

Considerations for your agency's strategy and activities:

- Multiple generations: With four generations in the workplace, it is important to recognize employees from different generations in ways that are meaningful to them.
- Leadership challenge: Encourage all levels of management to implement activities and set expectations of managers to engage each of their employees.

Need help or have questions?

We encourage you to contact DAS for assistance:

- Katie Curtis, katie.j.curtis@das.oregon.gov

AGENCY RECOGNITION TOOLKIT

AGENCY			
Activity	Description	How to get involved...	Why it matters...
Message from Leadership	Leadership develops a special agency recognition message to send to employees during recognition week.	- Leadership sends a special message to agency employees thanking them for their contributions and encourages recognition of others. - Share the message through existing internal communication systems (email, intranet, bulletin boards, staff meetings, newsletters). - Invite leadership to join staff meetings to deliver the message.	Employees receive recognition from their leaders, while building a sense of pride and team spirit.
Lunch with the director or executive team member of choice	Conduct a drawing and organize a lunch with agency director or executive team members and the winners.	- Complete and submit a puzzle or quiz related to public service to be entered into a drawing. - Draw employees' names and announce winners. - Take photos of the director and employee and post it on the bulletin board, website or newsletter.	Leadership demonstrates desire to connect with employees.
Leadership gives a hand	Leadership works alongside an employee or group of employees.	- Select members of leadership team who would be interested in learning the work of a particular group or individual. - Employees submit a short paragraph about what they would do if agency leaders worked with them. - Select team/individual based on their submission. - Use existing internal communication systems (email, intranet, bulletin boards, staff meetings, newsletters) to promote. - Take and post photos of the event.	Leadership recognize contributions the team has made to the agency, while employees feel value that their work is important to the organization.

AGENCY RECOGNITION TOOLKIT

PROGRAM/DIVISION			
Activity	Description	How to get involved...	Why it matters...
Recognition “kudos” boards	Leadership, managers and employees post recognition and kudos. Encourage recognition vertically and horizontally within the agency.	- Identify a place for the kudos board if you don’t already have one. - Provide pieces of paper and envelopes for every employee and ask everyone to put their praise in the envelopes (anonymous recognition). - Post kudos for employees and let employees post kudos for each other. - Take a photo of employees in front of the board and post on agency intranet or newsletter. - Have a staff meeting in front of the board and read the posted kudos out loud.	Demonstrates how employees are valued and needed.
Team recognition	Employees participate in team building events alongside leadership and management.	- Scavenger hunt (SAMPLE 1), (SAMPLE 2), teams who win receive a group lunch or treat (pizza, ice cream party). - Offer themed dress up days (favorite sports teams, crazy socks, etc.). - Supervisor/exec team cooks or provides lunch (BBQ, pizza, etc.).	Encourages team building, sharing and a sense of belonging.
Award recognition	Management and leadership give employees recognition awards to praise performance, achievements or milestones and build team spirit.	- <i>Traveling Trophy</i> that would change hands every day during Public Service Recognition Week. - <i>Silly Awards/Certificates</i> (everyone gets one) that are not related to business performance. - <i>Great Saves Award</i> for employees who identified savings or operational inefficiencies.	Facilitates interaction amongst teams and divisions and gives employees opportunities to participate in fun and relaxing activities.

AGENCY RECOGNITION TOOLKIT

MANAGERS TO DIRECT REPORTS			
Activity	Description	How to get involved...	Why it matters...
Personalized notes	Managers send e-cards or hand-written thank you cards to recognize employee/team/department performance or milestones.	- Write a personalized message and deliver to employee. Encourage employees to do the same for colleagues and external parties they work with (you can provide them with cards, or they can bring one themselves).	Demonstrates to employees that their direct supervisor is paying attention and values their contribution.
One-on-one coffee or lunch time	Managers have one-on-one coffee or lunch with employees and/or teams they wish to recognize.	- Recognize employees who demonstrated a certain desired behavior or achieved an important milestone by taking them to coffee or lunch.	Employees feel important, respected and valued.
Employee perks	Award employees you would like to recognize with perks such as a premium parking spot for the week or a casual dress day.	- If you want to recognize an employee for a job well done, you can award them the use of a premium parking spot for a week (if possible) or even give up your parking spot for a time period. - Other perks could include allowing employee(s) a casual dress day, work from the boss' office, job shadow of employee's choice, or special snack in their honor. - Take photos of the employee with their "perk" and post it on bulletin board, newsletter, intranet, etc.	Opportunity to recognize employees who are engaged, contributing to a team to positive work environment.

PEER TO PEER			
Activity	Description	How to get involved...	Why it matters...
Go the Extra Mile award	Employees nominate peers for an award recognizing someone providing superior service or going the extra mile.	- Create a description of what the "go the extra mile" includes. - Provide all employees with forms to submit nominations for the award. - Award and recognize every nominated employee. - Read nominations in a staff meeting and give employees certificates/awards. - Post nominations on a bulletin board, website, intranet, or newsletter.	Awarded employees are recognized and incentivized to continue with the good performance, while serving as positive role models to other employees.
Personalized notes	Employees send e-cards to recognize other employees/team/department performance or milestone.	- Write a personalized message and deliver to employee. (ELECTRONIC)	Demonstrates to employees that their peers are paying attention and value their contributions.