

What Is the IDEA Program?

The IDEA Program is an incentive program to reward submitters for their approved ideas that benefit the Government by streamlining processes or improving/ increasing productivity and efficiency. It also recognizes individuals for intangible benefits such as improving morale or working conditions.

How Do I Submit An Idea?

Individuals, teams or groups may submit ideas through the IDEA Program Data System (IPDS) via the Internet at <https://ipds.randolph.af.mil> IPDS is an automated system designed to provide all Air Force users access from any Air Force desktop computer. You must create a user name and password before you can enter your idea. Ideas must be clearly titled, state the current practice, method, procedure, task, directive or policy. The idea text must provide a detailed description or solution of how to change the current practice or implement the idea. The idea text must contain the following headers: present method, proposed method, and expected benefits. Do not submit classified IDEAs through IPDS; contact the base Idea Analyst for specific instructions.

Who Can Submit Ideas and Be Eligible for an Award?

All AF military members and federal civilian appropriated fund employees, AF Academy cadets, Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets, AF Reserve personnel on active duty orders, including Individual Mobility Augmentees, Air National Guard Title 5 USC employees, and Direct-hire non-US citizen employees may submit ideas and are eligible for monetary awards. Private citizens, non-appropriated fund personnel, contractor personnel, retired personnel (unless idea was submitted before they retired), and Air National Guard Title 32 military members may submit ideas. However, they are not eligible for monetary awards.

Employee Rights

The ownership period of an idea begins when the idea was submitted through one year after final approval or disapproval action. Ownership rights are determined by the first idea to reach the final approval authority. This protects the submitter from the unauthorized use of the idea by another employee or the Government without proper recognition of the originator of the idea.

How Is My Idea Processed?

During the input process, IPDS assigns a number to each idea. IPDS then automatically sends it to the Manpower Office which receives a notification in its e-mail. The Idea Analyst accesses IPDS and completes the eligibility review. The idea is then sent via IPDS to the unit POC for the subject of the idea who assigns it to an evaluator. If the base-level evaluators can "implement" the idea, whether or not they want to, they have the authority to approve or disapprove the idea. If the base-level evaluators do not have the approval/disapproval authority, they must still provide an evaluation and either recommend approval or disapproval. If the idea requires MAJCOM-level evaluation, it is sent through the IPDS e-mail system to the unit POC for the subject of the idea who assigns it to an evaluator. The process continues until a final evaluation decision can be obtained. Throughout the entire evaluation process, the submitter, Idea Analyst, unit POC, evaluator and supervisor receive electronic IPDS notifications explaining the status of the idea in the evaluation process.

An Idea is Ineligible if it:

- Is vague, incomplete, or deals with generalities or opinions.
- Appears to be a personal complaint or criticism.
- Proposes a stock-listed item be used for its intended purpose.
- Recommends the enforcement of an existing law, regulation, directive, instruction, or procedure unless it causes corrective action.
- Calls attention to obvious printing errors which do not cause serious misinterpretation, and which will normally be corrected at the next printing.

- Proposes a change in housekeeping practices or routine maintenance.
- Recommends a study be conducted or a tool designed, without specific proposal for improvement.
- Proposes changes to off-the-job activities in community affairs, including charities, public and private education, scouting, church and athletic programs.
- Offers ideas or designs for posters, slogans, contests, advertising or promotional material.
- Benefits an Air Force contractor with no benefit to the United States Government.
- Recommends improvements to non-appropriated fund activities.
- Proposes improvements to non-governmental activities, including banks and credit unions.
- Covers routine operations, including requesting supply items, office equipment, and telephone services.
- Proposes force structure issues, including major systems acquisitions.
- Recommends that a form be developed, revised, or changed without specific proposal for operational improvement, if it entails study of all forms, or if it results from new technology.
- Proposes realignment of text or an addition of a word when there has been no serious misunderstanding or error reported.
- Has been determined not to be the submitter's own idea.
- Benefits a submitter in a personal way.
- Is not an approved AFTO 22 or AFTO Form 135.
- Has "correction" marked on AFTO Form 22.

Job Responsibility Criteria:

The reporting official or supervisor will determine job responsibility based on the merits of each approved idea. IPDS automatically sends approved ideas to the submitter's supervisor who receives a notification in the e-mail. The supervisor accesses IPDS and completes the supervisor's review. Supervisors may also be required to complete the base-level evaluation if they are the base-level OPR for the subject matter contained in the idea. If an idea can be implemented by an individual (submitter), without approval of higher authority, including the reporting official or supervisor, the action is considered to be within job responsibility. If the submitter's primary responsibility is to make recommendations on the subject matter contained in the idea, the action is considered to be within job responsibility. If in doubt, check the submitter's position description, enlisted performance report or officer performance report for verification.

If an idea is developed by a team or group and can be implemented without approval of higher authority, or if the team has been officially chartered, in writing, to make recommendations on the subject matter contained in the idea, the action is considered to be *within* job responsibility.

As a general rule, *if not addressed above*, ideas from base-level that must be approved and implemented at command-level or higher *normally* are **not** job responsibility. The same rationale applies for command personnel when approval authority is at Headquarters Air Force or higher.

All other ideas are considered to be *outside* job responsibility.

What Happens When My Idea Is Approved?

Submitters receive an IPDS e-mail notification informing them the idea has been approved. The base Idea Analyst prepares the required paperwork for payment. Special recognition at the submitter's Commander's Call or staff meeting may also take place.

	Tangible	Intangible
Outside Job Responsibility		
Individual	15% of the estimated first year savings. Minimum is \$200 and Maximum is \$10,000	\$200
Team	Award is divided equally among team members depending on each submitter's job responsibility status. Award is 15% of the estimated first-year savings. Total award will be no less than \$200 and no more than \$10,000.	\$200 per submission, shared equally by co-submitters
Within Job Responsibility		
Individual	3% of the estimated first-year savings. Idea must save a minimum of \$20,000. Minimum award is \$600 and maximum is \$10,000.	Award Certificate
Team	Award is divided equally among team members, depending on each submitter's job responsibility status. Award is 3% of the estimated first-year savings. Idea must save a minimum of \$20,000. Minimum award is \$600 and the maximum is \$10,000	Award Certificate

Special Processing for Other Types of Ideas

Separate Improvement Process (SIP). Ideas that require a special form or separate approval process can be entered into IPDS only after they have been approved by the separate approval authority or completed per the assigned Air Force policy. There are over 700 SIPs. These include, but are not limited to: AFTO Form 22, TM Change Recommendation and Reply, AFTO 135, Source, Maintenance, and Recoverability Code Change Request, AF Form 1046, ZOP Challenge/Referral, AF Form 2276 Request for PIF Funds, AF Form 2288, Request for FASCAP Funds, and IPDS and MDS System Change Requests.

Scientific Achievements, Inventions and Patents. These are eligible for submission into IPDS, but are processed IAW special processing rules.

Can I Have My Idea Reconsidered?

You may request reconsideration of your idea within one year of the date of final approval or disapproval. Requests are limited to one per idea. If a submitter requests reconsideration of any part of the evaluation (e.g., job responsibility, evaluation, or award), it must be combined into one request. The submitter must input a request for reconsideration into IPDS, reference the old idea number, and explain in the text portion the reason for reconsideration. After the submitter inputs the reconsideration, IPDS automatically sends it to the Manpower Office for eligibility determination. The Idea Analyst reviews the reconsideration, and it is transmitted to one level higher than the original approval or disapproval authority. The reconsideration request must contain one or more of the following reasons:

- Additional evidence
- New material, information, or rationale
- New approach
- Clarification of significant issues

Mere disagreement alone is not justification for the reconsideration

Summary

Your idea submission must include the current method, proposed method, and the expected benefits

You must input your Idea into the IDEA Program Data System (IPDS).

And, most importantly, you must think creatively and take advantage of the awards and benefits available through the IDEA Program!