Appendix H.   IDEAS Program Operating Guide

1. General Procedures.

The basic process for administering the IDEAS Program
is fairly simple.

The suggestion is submitted to the Ideas Officer or
designee. It is reviewed for acceptability, entered into
a tracking system, and sent to an appropriate official for
evaluation. If it is adopted, the IDEAS Program staff
review the cost/benefit estimate, determine job
relatedness, and recommend an award. The IDEAS Program
staff complete the necessary paperwork, and the appropriate
approving authority approves the award. The award is
presented to the suggester at an official recognition
ceremony. If the Idea is rejected, the suggester is
notified of that determination, and a copy of the decision
memorandum is placed in the suggester's Official Personnel
File.

2. Processing Times.

A. Total Time. Ideas should be processed from receipt to
   notification to adopt or reject within an average of 60
   working days.

B. Initial Processing. Acceptable Ideas should be sent
for evaluation within an average of 3 working days from
receipt.

C. Evaluation. Decision Officials will be given 30
calendar days to complete their reviews.

   (1) Normally, extensions will not be approved unless
   the Decision Official finds some merit in the Idea and
   believes there is a possibility it will be adopted.

3. Acceptance.

A. Acknowledgment. When a suggestion is received, the
IDEAS Program staff will date it and insert the Idea
tracking number. Then they will pull the last page of the
Submission Form (acknowledgment), add the name of
the IDEAS Program staff member who can be contacted for
additional information, and send it to the suggester.

B. Criteria for Acceptance. IDEAS Program staff will
review the suggestion carefully prior to acceptance,

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using the policy guide in Section 5.2, Figure 2 of this
handbook.

(1) Ideas that have not been developed fully or
presented clearly will be returned with an explanation.

(2) If the suggestion appears to have possibilities for
significant savings or benefits, the IDEAS Program
staff may offer assistance in developing it.

4. Tracking.

A. Tracking Number. Each Idea will be assigned a tracking
number. For Ideas submitted in the Field, an eleven-digit
number (counting a period) will be assigned. The
tracking number for Headquarters Ideas will be six digits
long. The tracking number is assigned as follows:

(1) For Field Ideas, the first five spaces indicate the
originating office. The first two digits indicate the
Region. They are followed by a period and then two
more digits which indicate the originating office
within the Region. For example, an Idea originating in
the Manchester Field Office would be assigned a
tracking number beginning with 01.02. Headquarters
tracking numbers will not have these first five places;

(2) The next two digits for Field Ideas (and the first
two digits for Headquarters Ideas) indicate the fiscal
year during which the Idea was received;

(3) The following three digits indicate the sequence in
which the Idea was received in the originating office
(e.g., the first Idea received in a fiscal year will be
assigned the number 001);

(4) The final digit indicates whether the Idea is on its
first review (0) or is a reconsideration (1); and

(5) Each series of digits is separated by hyphens. An
example of a Field Idea tracking number, then, is
10.03-88-001-0. That number indicates that the Idea
came from the Portland Field Office in Region X in
FY 1988, that it was the first suggestion submitted
during that fiscal year, and that it is being reviewed
for the first time. An example of a Headquarters Idea
tracking number is 88-003-1. That number indicates

that the Idea was submitted in Headquarters during
fiscal year 1988, that it was the third Idea received
during that fiscal year, and that it is being
reconsidered.

B. Tracking System.

(1) In Headquarters, information about the Idea will
be entered into the automated tracking system. Regional

Ideas Officers will establish either automated or manual tracking systems which should capture all essential information (suggested data elements are defined in Appendix I).

(2) Data will be entered as the Idea passes through each step in processing. The tracking system, whether automated or manual, must be updated regularly.

C. Tracking Followup.

(1) The Departmental Ideas Officer will give regular status reports on all open Ideas to the Director, OPMI, and to all Decision Officials with responsibility for open Ideas.

(2) The Regional Ideas Officers will give regular status reports on all open Ideas to the Regional Directors of Administration and to all Decision Officials with responsibility for open Ideas.

(3) The Departmental Ideas Officer will produce regular management reports showing the status of Ideas submitted by the Regional IDEAS Program Officers, sending copies to the Regions. Regional IDEAS Program Officers will monitor these reports and follow up as appropriate.

(4) The Departmental Ideas Officer should be prepared to supply statistics about Ideas processing (e.g., number received, number adopted, etc.) at the request of the Director, OPMI, or the Assistant Secretary for Administration. Likewise, Regional Ideas Officers should be prepared to supply statistics about their processing efforts at the request of the DOAs or the Departmental Ideas Officer.

D. Status Reports. IDEAS Program staff should contact suggesters regularly to update them on the status of their Ideas. The Regional IDEAS Program staff will update Regional and Field suggesters on the status of Ideas referred to Headquarters.

5. Evaluation.

A. Decision Official. The Decision Official will be at least an Office Director in Headquarters or a Field Office Manager or Regional Director in the Field who is identified as having the primary or sole authority to

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implement the suggestion. A suggester cannot be the Decision Official for his/her Idea. Typically, the IDEAS Program staff will identify only one Decision Official for

each Idea. In Headquarters, Ideas may be routed
through the manager of the program administrative
office, depending on the preference of the Assistant
Secretary.

B. Transmittal. The IDEAS Program staff will send to
the Decision Official:

  (1) A copy of the suggestion, including any
  attachments; and

  (2) An Evaluation Form (HUD-20000B).

C. Anonymous Ideas. If the suggester has indicated that
he/she prefers to remain anonymous, only the lower
portion of the Submission Form will be sent for evaluation.

D. Field Evaluation.

  (1) Suggestions received in the Regional Office should
  be evaluated there, if at all appropriate. If they appear
  to have broader applicability, Regional IDEAS Program
  staff will send two copies of the Idea, along with
  a copy of the Regional evaluation, to OPMI for
  Headquarters evaluation. Suggestions received in the
  Regional Office for which Headquarters approval must
  be obtained prior to implementation should be forwarded
  to Headquarters for evaluation immediately.
  Once an Idea is referred to Headquarters, it will be
  processed independent of the Regional evaluation.

  (2) If the Decision Official in the Region decides to
  adopt the Idea for Regional use, typically there is no
  reason to delay local recognition, including cash
  awards.

  If Headquarters officials adopt the Idea for broader
  implementation, a separate award will be authorized.
  In that case, the Regional Ideas Officer should deduct
  the amount of the Regional award from the amount
  authorized by Headquarters before processing the request
  for payment. The reason for that policy is that
  the Headquarters Decision Official will determine the
  overall benefit of the suggestion to the Department
  and the award amount determined by the Departmental
  Ideas Officer will be based on the Departmentwide
  benefit.

E. Completed Evaluations. Once an evaluation is received,
the IDEAS Program staff will review it to make
sure it is both complete and convincing. If it is not, they
may return it to the Decision Official with suggestions
for additional facts or data needed to support the
conclusion.

6. Advocating Ideas.

When an Idea appears both to be feasible and to have
potential for yielding significant savings or benefits, the
Ideas Officer and staff may act as advocates for acceptance
and may work to expedite the evaluation. They may meet
with Decision Officials and, if necessary, with higher
level officials to promote adoption of the suggestion.

7. Cost/Benefit Verification.

A. Award Determination Form. When an Idea is adopted,
an Award Determination Form, HUD-20000C (Appendix C) will
be established for the file. The cost/benefit verification
is the first documentation entered on that form.

B. IDEAS Program Staff Review. The accuracy of the
cost/benefit analysis is important for two reasons:

    (1) Ideas should be adopted only if the benefit
    outweighs the cost, including implementation costs; and

    (2) Monetary awards typically will be based on the
    anticipated first-year savings.

The cost/benefit analysis of the Decision Official should
be reviewed carefully to see that it is complete, that the
methodology and calculations are clear, and that it appears
to be accurate. Staff members assigned to review
cost/benefit analyses should be sure they understand the
way savings were calculated and that the evidence is
completely defensible before signing that portion of the
form.

C. Inspector General Verification. If estimated benefits
are $250,000 or greater, the Inspector General (IG) or
Regional Inspector General for Audit (RIGA) must
verify the savings. The Departmental Ideas Officer
should approve all Ideas of this magnitude before they
are submitted to either the IG or RIGA.

8. Job-Relatedness Determination.

A. Purpose. Before the type of award can be decided for
an adopted Idea, the IDEAS Program staff will determine
whether or not the Idea is job related, according to
the criteria defined in Section 6-3-a of the handbook.
The outcome of this determination will have an impact
on the type of award the suggester receives.

B. Process.

    (1) To make the job-relatedness determination, the
    IDEAS Program staff have several options. They may
    review copies of the suggester's position description
    and performance standards for the job the suggester

held at the time the suggestion was submitted. They

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may contact the suggester's supervisor at the time the
suggestion was submitted to determine whether the
suggester had been given any specific assignments or
had received any management directives from which
the Idea could have resulted or whether the suggester
could have implemented the Idea without the approval of
someone else.

If a clear determination cannot be made based on
these steps, the IDEAS Program staff may do one or
more of the following:

o Review the classification standards for the series
and grade of the job held at the time the suggestion
was submitted;

o Review the qualification standards for the suggester's
job at the time the suggestion was submitted; or

o Review the functional statements for the employee's
organization at the time the suggestion was submitted,
found in the Department's Organization Handbook.

(2) If doubt remains, the determination will be made in
favor of the suggester.

C. Regional Ideas. The Regional Ideas Officer will
determine job relatedness for those Ideas adopted in the
Region. The Departmental Ideas Officer will make the
job-relatedness determination for Ideas adopted in
Headquarters, including those forwarded by the Regions.

D. Job-Related Ideas. In exceptional cases, even if an
adopted suggestion is job related, it can he rewarded
monetarily via the IDEAS Program if the potential savings
are significant. The Director, OPMI, will approve
all such awards, determining each on a case-by-case
basis.

It may be more appropriate to reward such a suggestion
with a performance award. Contact the Personnel staff
for additional guidance on performance awards. Typically,
the IDEAS Program staff will consult with the suggester's
supervisor in these cases to determine the appropriate
type of recognition.

E. Documentation. The section of the Award Determination
Form relating to the job-relatedness determination
should be documented appropriately, with the reviewer's
analysis and reasons for making the decision. Supporting
evidence such as the position description, performance

standards, and/or supervisor's assessment should be
attached.

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9. Determination of Type and Amount of
     Award.

A. Award Type. Once a job-relatedness determination has
been made for an adopted Idea, the IDEAS Program
staff decides what type of award is appropriate. Normally,
if the Idea is not job related, a monetary award
will be approved, in accordance with Appendix G. If the
Idea is job related, a nonmonetary award is approved.

The Ideas staff member who recommends the award
type and amount on the Award Determination Form
must document the reason(s) for the recommendation. If
the award is based on tangible benefits, calculations
should be recorded on the form so that anyone reviewing
the form will know exactly how the award was determined.
Similarly, if the award is based on intangible
benefits, the reviewer should document the award range
and the reasons for selecting the award amount within
that range.

B. Honorary Recognition. All suggesters of adopted
Ideas will receive Certificates of Commendation. Copies
of the Certificates will be sent by the Ideas Officer to
the servicing personnel office for filing in the suggesters'
Official Personnel Files. The latter practice is important
since this documentation is needed to enable merit staffing
panels to consider suggestion awards in their decisions.

C. Nonmonetary Awards. Other nonmonetary awards, to
be granted in addition to the Certificates of Commendation,
can be determined by each IDEAS Program Officer. Possible
awards are plaques, desk sets, paperweights, etc.

D. Multiple Suggesters. When there are multiple suggesters
of an adopted Idea, each should get a Certificate of
Commendation. The cash award, if any, should be divided
among them equally. If all suggesters agree, the
award may be divided in proportion to the amount of
effort of each.

E. Documentation. Once all determinations have been
made, the IDEAS Program staff submit the Award Determination
Form to the Ideas Officer for signature. For monetary,
awards, the Award Determination Form should be accompanied
by a form HUD-840, Recommendation for Performance and
Incentive Awards (Appendix D). The Ideas Officer will
forward these forms to the appropriate authorizing official
for approval.

F. Notification of Award. Suggesters are notified of their

awards via memoranda signed by the appropriate
IDEAS Program official. At no time will the award
amount be discussed with the suggesters until the
appropriate authorizing official has approved the award.

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10. Payment of Cash Awards.

A. Implemented Ideas. For suggestions that are already
implemented at the time of adoption, full payment is
made.

B. Ideas Not Yet Implemented. For suggestions that have
not been implemented at the time of adoption:

   (1) Awards of $1,000 or less are paid in full upon
   adoption.

   (2) Awards greater than $1,000 are paid in two parts.
   Typically, the first payment of $1,000 plus 5 percent
   of the balance of the award amount is paid at the time
   of adoption; the remainder is paid upon implementation.

C. Award Approval. If a monetary award has been determined,
the Ideas Officer will secure the signature of the
appropriate approving official (see Section 6.4, Figure 3
in the Handbook) on the Award Determination Form
HUD-20000C) and on the HUD-840.

   (1) The concurrences of all intermediate approving
   officials should appear on the Award Determination
   Form. For example, if a Regional Office recommends
   a $6,000 award for an Idea, the Award Determination
   Form must be signed by the Assistant Secretary for
   Administration and must include the concurrences of
   the DOA and the Director, OPMI. These concurrences
   are not necessary on the HUD-840.

D. Payment Procedures.

   (1) Headquarters.

   a. For adopted Ideas submitted in Headquarters, the
   HUD-840 is sent to the Office of Personnel and Training
   (OPT), for preparation of a check. When the
   check is produced, it is sent to the Departmental Ideas
   Officer for presentation at a recognition ceremony.

   b. When monetary awards are to be split, only the first
   check is presented at a recognition ceremony. The
   second check is generated by OPT upon receipt of a
   second HUD-840 signed by the Director, Office of
   Productivity and Management Improvements. This
   second payment will be sent directly to the suggester

through the normal payroll distribution process.

(2) Field.

a. Monetary awards for adopted Ideas submitted by
Field employees are paid similarly. If the Idea is
adopted in the Region, the Regional Ideas Officer
prepares the Award Determination Form and the

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HUD-840, securing all appropriate signatures, and sends
them to the Regional Personnel officer to produce a
check.

b. If the Idea is adopted in Headquarters (either in
addition to or instead of being adopted in the Region),
the Departmental Ideas Officer will send a memorandum to
the Regional Ideas Officer authorizing him/her to direct
the Regional Personnel Division to prepare a check.

c. Checks in the Field, too, are presented at recognition
ceremonies. Second payments are sent directly to
the suggester via normal payroll distribution processes.

E. Adopted But Never Implemented.

(1) Sometimes changing technology or management
priorities may result in a management decision not to
implement an adopted Idea because it no longer is cost
effective or feasible or it no longer advances the goals
of management. In those cases, the suggester will not
have to return any part of the award he/she already
has received, but normally, no additional award will
be paid.

11. Recognition Ceremonies.

A. Purpose. Since public recognition is an important part
of the incentives program, all award checks and Certificates
of Commendation will be presented at official recognition
ceremonies.

B. Location. Headquarters suggesters and Regional
Office and Field Office suggesters receiving major
awards will be recognized in ceremonies at Headquarters.
Other Regional and Field Office suggesters will be
recognized in ceremonies at the local level. Former
employees who submitted Ideas while they were employed
by the Government or employees of other agencies
should be recognized at the HUD office nearest to them.

C. Coordination. In Headquarters, the Director, OPMI, is
responsible for ensuring that recognition ceremonies are
held. In the Field, the Regional Directors of
Administration have the responsibility for ensuring that

ceremonies are held in the Region.

D. Officiating Managers. In Headquarters, the Assistant
Secretary for the program area adopting the Idea or his/
her designee will officiate at the recognition ceremonies.
In the Regional Offices, the DOA or a program manager of
equal or greater rank will officiate. In the Field
Offices, the Field Office Manager or his/her deputy
should officiate.

E. Attendees. The suggesters, their supervisors, and the
Decision Officials who adopted the Ideas should be

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invited to the ceremonies. Ceremonies may honor a group
of suggesters or individual suggesters.

F. Frequency. Ceremonies should be held as soon as the
check is generated, normally within 6 weeks of notification
of adoption. If the ceremony will be delayed for
any reason, the Ideas Officer should notify the suggester
immediately, providing an approximate date by which
the ceremony will be held.

G. Verification of Presentation. Adopted Ideas will not
be closed until the Ideas staff verify that awards were
presented at recognition ceremonies. For
Headquarters-adopted Ideas submitted by Regional or Field
Office employees, the Regional Ideas Officer is responsible
for notifying the Departmental Ideas Officer that the award
has been presented at a recognition ceremony.

12. Implementation.

A. Timeliness. Adopted Ideas should be implemented as
quickly as possible so that the Department can begin to
reap the benefits. In many cases, final award payments
cannot be made until implementation is complete. For
these reasons, the Ideas staff are active in ensuring that
implementation is timely.

B. Implementation Plans. The Decision Official must
indicate on the Evaluation Form the anticipated
implementation date, unless the Idea already has been
implemented. For major initiatives which will require 90
days or more to implement, the Decision Official also may
be asked by the Ideas Officer to submit an implementation
plan, with milestones that can be tracked.

C. Monitoring Implementation. The Ideas staff monitor
implementation, alerting the appropriate managers to any
delays. If needed, the DOA or the Director, OPMI, will
take appropriate action to elevate implementation problems
to the management level at which they can be resolved.

D. Productivity Improvement Program. OPMI may include
Ideas which will produce significant savings in the
Departmental Productivity Improvement Program
(PIP). Ideas which may fall into this category are
referred by Ideas staff to the Director, Office of
Productivity and Management Improvements, for consideration.

E. Documenting Implementation. Decision Officials must
confirm the fact that an Idea is fully implemented. In
many cases, a telephone call to the Ideas Officer will be
sufficient confirmation. For major initiatives, however,
confirmation should be supplied via memorandum or official
issuance or both.

F. Final Award Payments. Once implementation is
documented, the IDEAS Program staff will complete the

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paperwork to issue any additional award payments due the
suggesters.

13. Publicity.

A. Activities. One of the most important jobs of the
Ideas staff is to increase participation in the program. To
do this, a number of actions should be taken:

  (1) IDEAS Program displays and posters should be
  placed in prominent locations throughout the office
  space;

  (2) Supplies of IDEAS Program Submission Forms
  (HUD 20000A) should be maintained and made accessible
  to potential suggesters;

  (3) Staff Bulletins, newsletters, and other forms of
  communication should be used to describe and promote
  the program and its successes; and

  (4) Suggesters of adopted Ideas should be recognized
  publicly.

14. Records Management.

A. Ideas Files. An individual file folder must be
established and maintained for each Idea, from its
receipt. This practice is essential both for effective
program management and for possible future audits.

B. Assembly of Files. Files must be assembled with
two-hole fasteners, fastened at the top. The Idea number
must be typed or written on the file tab. Information in
the file will be arranged as follows:

  (1) On the right side of the file, in order from top to
  bottom:

o For adopted Ideas, copies of any awards, including
memoranda or Certificates of Commendation;

o For adopted Ideas, copies of the Award Determination
Form (HUD 20000C) and, if appropriate, the
HUD Form 840, with supporting documentation such
as the position description and performance standards
of the suggester;

o The original Evaluation Form (HUD 20000B), with
all attachments; and

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o The original Submission Form (HUD 20000A), with
all attachments.

(2) On the left side of the file, in chronological order
with most recent on top:

o Copies of all correspondence prepared by the Ideas
staff relating to the Idea; and

o Copies of all correspondence received by the Ideas
staff relating to the suggestion.

C. Records Disposition. Ideas files will be retained by the
IDEAS Officers for a minimum of 2 years from the date
of adoption or rejection.

(1) Files for rejected Ideas are retained for 2 years
from the date of rejection. After that, the files are
destroyed.

(2) Files of adopted Ideas are retained for 2 years
from the date of adoption. Then they are transferred
to the Federal Records Center for an additional 3
years. After that, they are destroyed.

15. Reporting Requirements

A. Reports. Regional Ideas Officers will submit reports
of program activity to Headquarters on a quarterly basis.
specific requirements are defined in the reporting format
found in Appendix E.

B. Annual Report to OPM. The Departmental Ideas Officer
prepares the annual reports of program activity to
the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Regional
Ideas Officers will be asked to supply whatever additional
data is necessary to meet OPM's requirements.

16. Performance Reviews

A. Explanation. The management of the IDEAS Program will be reviewed during regular Field Performance Reviews. The Departmental Ideas Officer supplies information on Regional program activity to each of the Field Performance Review teams. Typically, this information includes data from the quarterly reports from the Regional Ideas Officers, summarized to show comparative workload and performance among the Regions, and briefings on any specific problems or issues relating to the Region being reviewed.