



THE DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

September 16, 2009

M-09-31

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Peter R. Orszag  
Director

SUBJECT: Implementing the President's SAVE Award

**Introduction**

Recognizing the unique perspectives of frontline employees, President Obama, in his weekly address of April 25, 2009, called for "a process through which every government worker can submit their ideas for how their agency can save money and perform better." The President's SAVE (Securing Americans Value and Efficiency) Award will fulfill this commitment by enabling Federal employees from across the government to submit their ideas for efficiencies and savings as part of the annual Budget process. The best idea will be included in the FY 2011 Budget, and the Federal employees who submitted that idea will be invited to a meeting with the President. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will oversee the SAVE competition process, and agencies will be responsible for driving internal participation.

The SAVE Award helps fulfill President Obama's commitment to creating a government that spends taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively. When the President introduced his Budget last February, he promised that "we're going to go through our books page-by-page, line-by-line, to eliminate waste and inefficiency."

This line-by-line review is a long-term effort that includes multiple initiatives. Implementing the SAVE award will be an important part of this process. Other steps have included:

- Identification of 121 terminations, reductions, and other areas of saving as part of the President's FY 2010 Budget. These would save approximately \$17 billion next year alone;
- The President's call for Cabinet members to identify \$100 million worth of administrative savings within 90 days of his first Cabinet meeting in April 2009; 77 proposals were made to cut \$102 million in spending this year and \$140 million in FY 2010, which begins on October 1, 2009;
- OMB's request, as part of recent FY 2011 Budget guidance, that agencies identify high-priority performance goals aimed at making government operate better and more efficiently.

## **Submission of Proposed Savings**

All SAVE Award entries must be submitted through [www.SaveAward.gov](http://www.SaveAward.gov). Entrants will be required to include their name; email address; agency name, component, and organization; phone number; and company name (if a contractor). OMB will not consider or disclose the names of the participants in evaluating proposals, other than to reward the participant who submitted the winning proposal.

With respect to the savings proposals themselves, applicants will be required to submit the title of the innovation, a description, and the agency affected by the innovation. Finally, all applicants will be asked to agree to confirm whether their names may be disclosed in the event that their innovation is selected as a winner.

All applicants will receive a confirmation email at the address they listed, in order to confirm its validity. Any innovations coming from .gov email addresses that cannot be confirmed will not be accepted.

## **Eligibility**

The President's SAVE contest will be open to all Federal employees, as verified by their .gov email address. In order to confirm the accuracy of these email addresses, a confirmation email will be sent to applicants' .gov email addresses upon submission.

## **Competition Schedule**

*Wednesday, September 23, 2009:* Agencies implement initial elements of the "campaign in a box," as discussed below;

*Wednesday, October 14, 2009:* Deadline for submissions to be considered for the FY 2011 Budget (although the website will remain open after that date);

*November 2009:* Announcement of winner.

## **Assessment Criteria**

The goal of the SAVE Award is to produce ideas that will yield savings while also improving the way that government operates. As such, submissions will be judged according to the following criteria:

- Does the idea reduce costs in a way that is concrete and quantifiable?
- Does the idea improve the way that government operates by:
  - Improving the quality of output at lower costs; or
  - Simplifying processes to reduce administrative burden; or
  - Improving the speed of government operations to improve efficiency?
- Does the idea have a tangible impact on citizens' lives or environment?
- Is there a clear and practical plan for implementing the idea?
- Will it be possible to begin realizing savings immediately?

## **Agency Responsibilities**

In order to disseminate information and drive participation, agencies are asked to designate a senior accountable official and take a number of measures to promote the contest internally. Agencies will be provided with a virtual “campaign in a box,” which will include internal communication materials to increase awareness about the President’s SAVE Award to promote the contest.

### ***Designation of a senior accountable official***

Within each agency, a senior-ranking official, preferably a Chief of Staff or an Assistant Secretary, should be tasked to oversee internal outreach for this competition. This individual will be responsible for implementing the measures described below, and may delegate these responsibilities as he or she sees fit. This individual will also serve as the point of contact for OMB. **Please submit the name of your liaison to [SaveAward@omb.eop.gov](mailto:SaveAward@omb.eop.gov) by no later than Friday, September 18, 2009.**

### ***Implementing the SAVE award, “campaign in a box”***

OMB will email your designee a series of promotional materials, a “campaign in a box.” (The virtual “campaign in a box” is designed to make promotion of the SAVE award as easy as possible.) Though agencies can tailor campaign materials to their needs, they will be responsible for implementing each element. Elements of it include:

- Email to employees to be sent by the Secretary of the agency, as well as follow-up reminder emails with key dates;
- Video message from OMB announcing the contest, which can be embedded into email sent to employees or put on a webpage;
- Link for inclusion on agency’s intranet page;
- PDF design to print signs to place on bulletin boards, cafeterias, and other public areas.

Please contact [SaveAward@omb.eop.gov](mailto:SaveAward@omb.eop.gov) with any questions or comments.