



Office of State Human Resources

ROY COOPER
Governor

BARBARA GIBSON
Director, State Human Resources

Memorandum

To: Agency Human Resources Directors, Communications Officers
From: Jill Warren Lucas, Communications Director
Re: 2019 State Employee Appreciation Week, May 5-11
Date: April 18, 2019

It's time to start making agency plans to honor our valued co-workers during **2019 State Employee Appreciation Week, May 5-11**. Special efforts should focus on **Wednesday, May 8, State Employee Appreciation Day**. Governor Cooper will mark these occasions with a proclamation recognizing the extraordinary service of state employees and their commitment to making our state a great place to live, work, play and prosper.

Please communicate these dates to your agency leadership team as soon as possible and urge creativity in identifying ways to show co-workers just how valued and appreciated they are.

It goes without saying that state government agencies would not be able to meet their missions without the dedication of their employees. State Employee Appreciation Week provides an excellent opportunity to go beyond our usual expressions of thanks.

Activities and words of appreciation that align with your unique programs can be powerful ways to demonstrate gratitude and motivate your teams to achieve continued excellence. Efforts like personal thank-you notes and team-building functions are proven to boost morale and help colleagues gain a greater appreciation for each other's contributions.

There's no reason to not be a little playful, too. A day in which bosses deliver doughnuts to their staff, or colleagues contribute to a potluck lunch, can serve to lift spirits when folks are otherwise focused on completing complex tasks or launching new ones.

OSHR has collected a list of employee appreciation activities that agencies have used in recent years. We find that the examples best remembered (and appreciated) involve connecting and interacting with employees who provide services at all levels of your operation. If you have offsite locations, be sure to engage those employees as well.

Whether you plan an activity for each day or the week or focus primarily on State Employee Appreciation Day, consider the following as a starting place to inspire your creativity.

2019 State Employee Appreciation Week Suggestions

State Employee Appreciation Week activities should be designed to convey a positive message to all employees that their contributions are valued every day. Ideally, activities should connect employees from different divisions within an agency, as well as different levels of skill and experience, from your leadership team to your newest entry-level position.

Like their peers in the private sector, state employees are encouraged and motivated by recognition of a job well done. This is especially true when the public does not necessarily understand their role, or how difficult it can be to accomplish tasks that keep communities safe and healthy.

Whatever you choose to do at your agency, aim to incorporate creativity and personalization. It's human nature to want to hear how your individual efforts made an impact, as well as how your contributions to a team lead to group success. Remember that a rising tide lifts all boats, so anything you can do to lift up your employees with genuine and deserved appreciation can serve to inspire them to even greater achievements.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Management or leadership team could offer coffee and donuts to employees as they arrive at the workplace or deliver afternoon snacks.
- Invite everyone to an ice cream social with a team building activity.
- Plan a potluck lunch, cookout and/or food truck rodeo.
- Have each supervisor write a personal note to every member of their team describing how their work is valued. Follow up by showing gratitude every day in acknowledging specific employee contributions.
- Collect and post baby photos, then match them with the adult co-workers they became.
- Giving creative awards can lift spirits and recognize the unique personalities of team players. Honor their stick-to-it-iveness with an award made of Velcro tape, their energy with a bedazzled pack of batteries. Have fun with it.
- Plan a "praise barrage" gathering. In a round-robin setting with your immediate staff, give everyone a chance to say what they like about working with their colleagues and their agency.
- Write your employee names on sets of index cards. Circulate sets, asking each employee to write something they admire about the person whose name is on the index card, making sure you have feedback for each member. Provide completed cards to staff, along with a positive message from their supervisor.

Additional ideas can be found in the [State Employee Recognition Day Guide](#) published by the National Association of State Personnel Executives.