ARTICLE 7 Recognition Programs

Sec. 7.1 Manager's Award. At the discretion of the General Manager and usually on an annual basis, a monetary award and plaque is presented to the District employee who is determined to be the most outstanding employee of the year.

The following categories are considered when evaluating employees for the Manager's Award:

Dependability and Responsibility
Cooperation and Courtesy
Creativity and Drive
Job Related Educational Betterment
Recipient of Employee of the Quarter Award

Persons employed at the Department Head level are not eligible to receive the Manager's Award.

Sec. 7.2 Employee of the Quarter. At the discretion of the General Manager, one (1) or more employees may be designated Employee of the Quarter in recognition of outstanding achievement/work efforts above and beyond the requirements of his/her job, and provided a $100.00 award.

Sec. 7.3 Educational Incentive Reimbursement Program. The District wishes to encourage and support participation by employees in educational programs which will be of mutual benefit to employees and the District. As authorized annually by the Board and with the General Manager's prior approval of the course(s) of study, the District will provide educational funds as defined below to cover costs directly related to the educational program. An educational reimbursement is defined as an employee request for prepayment or reimbursement of expenses paid to accredited schools in pursuit of higher education goals, including professional continuing education courses or training of benefit to the employee and District. The parameters of the program are described as follows:

(a) Investment is made in the employee's educational program in anticipation of the program resulting in the improved value, of the employee, to the District.

(b) Employees must first complete a Declaration of Educational Intent form identifying the course work to be undertaken and submit the form for preapproval to their Department Head. The Department Head will forward the request to the General Manager who will evaluate and reply to the employee. Upon approval, the employee may proceed to enroll in the course work.

Per Ordinance No. 98-05 Adopted 6/15/98 [Sec. 7.3]
Per Ordinance No. 2001-11 Adopted 7/2/01 [Sec. 7.1]
Per Ordinance No. 2014-05 Adopted 8/4/14 [Sec. 7.2]

Sec. 7.3 Educational Incentive Reimbursement Program (Cont'd.)

(c) A regular full-time employee with less than two (2) years of service may be eligible to receive a maximum of $2,500 per fiscal year for approved course work. A regular full-time employee with two (2) or more years of service may be eligible to receive a maximum of $10,000 per fiscal year for approved course work. A regular part time employee shall receive a prorated benefit. The limits in this paragraph do not include costs incurred to acquire certifications required to meet job description requirements.

(d) Whenever a course of study involves selecting elective classes, the General Manager will require the employee to select the class determined, subject to availability and limitations imposed by employee's work schedule, most beneficial to the District. If employee chooses not to enroll in the recommended class, the employee will not be reimbursed.

(e) To receive either reimbursement of the expenses paid or prepayment of expenses directly to the school, employee must submit a completed Request for Reimbursement form.

(f) Employee must submit proof of successful course completion with a grade of "C" or better or a pass in a pass/fail grading system (as evidenced by official school grade) within sixty (60) days of the course end date. In the event the employee fails to respond or complete the course work, employee agrees to reimburse the District for expenses incurred and, if required, to have the total amount of funds paid deducted from the employee's payroll check. In the case of fees and testing costs for state mandated certifications, the District will pay for a maximum of three attempts per certification with additional attempts for the same certification paid for by the employee.

(g) Upon receipt of a job-related degree or certificate, an employee shall also receive an educational award as defined below:

Grade I Certification	$150
Grade II Certification	200
Grade III Certification	300
Grade IV Certification	400
Associate Degree	300
Bachelor Degree	500
Professional Certification	250

Employees, who receive job related certificates, degrees or professional certifications not listed herein, may receive an educational award similar to those listed, upon review and approval by the General Manager to determine the value of the course of study to the District.

Per Ordinance No. 2021-09 Adopted 07/06/2021 [Sec 7.3 (c)]
Per Ordinance No. 2014-05 Adopted 8/4/14 [Sec. 7.3(c)]
Per Ordinance No. 2014-05 Adopted 8/4/14 [Sec. 7.3(g)
Per Ordinance No. 2003-16 Adopted 12/1/03 [Sec. 7.3 (f)]

Sec. 7.3 Educational Incentive Reimbursement Program (Cont'd.)

(h) In accordance with Administrative Code Section 3.8, additional educational funds may be made available to employees at their option in the form of a loan.

(i) It has been determined that the District's investment is justified if the employee remains employed with the District for a minimum of four (4) years after completion of course work required for a degree program at a four (4) year college or university. If employee voluntarily leaves District employment within one (1) year of completion of course work, including professional continuing education, or while enrolled in a degree program at a four-year college or university or accelerated school, the employee must repay the District 100% of the funding received, and if within two (2) years must repay 50%. Repayment is waived if the employee is involuntarily separated from employment. An agreement signed by the employee to abide by these terms shall be required.

Details on the program and all necessary forms are available in the General Manager's office.

(j) The requirements of this program are subject to the interpretation of the General Manager.

Sec 7.4 Training and Education Categories; Compensation Provisions

(a) Training and Education Elected by the Employee - In the interest of self-development or preparation for possible future advancement, employees may elect certain courses of education or training as provided in Section 7.3 of this article. For training or education in this category, there will be no compensation for time spent or expenses incurred in traveling to and from class, meal expenses, or time spent in class.

(b) Training Made Available by the District - From time to time, the District may identify a course or training judged to be beneficial to both the employee and the District. In this case the District will pay for the cost of registration, CEU hour's registration (if applicable) and compensate the employee for transportation expenses to attend the education or training course. If such training opportunity occurs after regular working hours, the employee will not be compensated for time spent in attendance.

(c) Training Directed by the District - In cases where the District specifically directs an employee to attend a training program, class, certification program, seminar or conference, the District will compensate the employee for reasonable expenses and any two-way travel time occurring prior to the normal work-day or after the normal work-day beyond the time which the

Per Ordinance No. 2021-09 Adopted 07/06/2021 [Sec 7.3 (i)]
Per Ordinance No. 2003-16 Adopted 12/1/03 [Sec. 7.4 (a)(b)(c)]

Sec 7.4 Training and Education Categories; Compensation Provisions (Cont'd.)

(c) Training Directed by the District (Cont'd.)

employee would have spent traveling to their regular worksite. If the event occurs on a Saturday or Sunday, the employee will be compensated at the appropriate hourly rate for such time. Exempt employees shall not be eligible for additional training related compensation beyond their normal bi-weekly salary rates.

(d) Directed Training Requiring Out of Town Travel and Overnight Stays - If the directed out of town training requiring travel for which an over-night stay is required and has been approved, the employee will be compensated for reasonable expenses and time at the appropriate hourly rate for travel from portal to portal (i.e., home to hotel, or training site and for the return trip).

(e) Continuing Education Requirements - Certain designated District employees are required to obtain and maintain specific State of California certificates to perform their specific duties for the District. Maintenance of these certificates requires a certain level of continuing education courses on an ongoing basis. Employees will not be compensated for time or expenses incurred in traveling to and from class or compensated for time spent in class, beyond the provisions in Section 7.3.

(f) Training and Education Categories, Summary of Provisions - The compensation and expense reimbursement provisions for the training and education categories set forth above are as follows:

Type of Training or Education	Elected by Employee, Sec. 7.4(a)	Made Available by District, Sec. 7.4(b)	Directed, Required by District, Sec. 7.4(c)&(d)	Continuing Education– Required by State for Employee to Maintain Required Certification, Sec. 7.4(e)
Registration, Books, Parking, CEU Hours Registration and other Expense Reimbursement	Paid by District as per Sec. 7.4	Paid by District	Paid by District	Paid by District as per Sec. 7.4
Travel Expense	Not Paid by District	Paid by District	Paid by District	Not Paid by District
Compensation	None	None after regular working hours	Two-way travel portal to portal beyond normal commute time; regular pay while attending training for exempt employees.	None

Per Ordinance No. 2003-16 Adopted 12/1/03 [Sec. 7.4 (c)(d)(e)&(f)]

Sec. 7.5 Service Award Program. In recognition of continuous service to the District, employees, beginning at five (5) years of service and at five (5) year intervals thereafter, shall receive a service award which depicts the employee's years of service at the District.

Sec. 7.6 Suggestion Awards Program. The District has established a suggestion awards program for all full-time regular employees. The following shall constitute the District's provisions and administration of the program:

a. Definitions. Whenever in this Code the following terms are used, they shall have the meaning respectively ascribed to them in this section unless otherwise apparent from the context:

"CERTIFICATE OF AWARD" means a document commending an employee for submitting five (5), ten (10) or more suggestions which have been adopted and placed in operation.

"COMMENDATION" means a document commending an employee for submitting a suggestion which has been adopted and placed in effect, but has not resulted in a net saving or net increase in revenue to the District sufficient to qualify for a monetary award, or which was submitted by an employee ineligible to receive a monetary award.

"COMMITTEE" means the Suggestion Awards Committee.

"EMPLOYEE" means any full-time, regular employee of the District.

"JOINT SUGGESTION" means a suggestion submitted over the signatures of two (2) or more employees who shall share equally in any award therefore.

"SECRETARY" means the Secretary of the Committee.

"SUGGESTION" means a written proposal by an employee of the District that clearly suggests to the administration of the District the way: to do any job, system, or procedure better, quicker, easier, safer and/or at less cost; to handle additional workload with the same staff and/or equipment, or to produce a more efficient operation with better control.

Per Ordinance No. 2014-05 Adopted 8/4/14 [Sec. 7.6]

Sec. 7.6 Suggestion Awards Program (Cont'd.).

b. Suggestion Awards Committee. There is hereby established a Suggestion Awards Committee, composed of:

The General Manager and all Department Heads of the District. Unless otherwise designated, the Executive Assistant shall act as Committee Secretary.

An employee of the District appointed by the Employees' Association, subject to approval of the General Manager, provided that one or more alternates may be chosen in like manner to serve in the absence of said member.

c. Committee Voting. Each member of the Committee shall have one (1) vote, and at least a two-thirds vote of all members of the Committee shall be necessary on all matters requiring Committee action.

d. Chairperson. The General Manager or his appointed representative shall be the chairperson of the committee. The General Manager or his designee shall have final approval over the determination of the Committee.

e. Eligibility for Monetary Awards. Any employee who submits, in accordance with this Code, a suggestion which is placed into effect and which is determined to result in an intangible benefit, a net savings, or a net increase in revenue sufficient to qualify for a monetary award, is eligible to receive a monetary award, with the following exceptions:

Employees serving in the capacity of Department Head

Any employee who submits a suggestion which is found by the Committee to be within the scope of the normal duties and responsibilities of his/her position.

Any eligible employee submitting a suggestion which is placed into effect shall not lose his/her eligibility for a monetary award by reason of the fact he/she terminates his/her employment after submission of the suggestion.

Per Ordinance No. 2014-05 Adopted 8/4/14 [Sec. 7.6]

f. Suggestion Form. The Committee shall provide forms on which an employee may submit a suggestion. Each suggestion submitted shall contain the following information:

A clear statement as to WHY the suggestion is made, including the estimated amount of time and money the District may be expected to save the first year after the suggestion is adopted and placed into operation or the amount of increased revenue the District may be expected to receive during such year.

A clear statement as to WHAT the suggestion aims to accomplish.

A clear statement as to WHERE the suggestion should affect District operations and WHEN the suggestion should become operative.

A clear statement as to WHO should be affected by the suggestion and WHO should implement the suggestion.

A clear statement as to HOW it is to be accomplished, including sketches, drawings, maps, photographs, or other descriptive material which may be necessary to fully and clearly present the suggestion and including a comparative description of the present method or problem, if any.

The signature of the employee making the suggestion. If it is a joint suggestion, the signatures of all the employees submitting the suggestion shall appear.

g. Filing Suggestions. All suggestions shall be directed to the office of the General Manager/Executive Assistant and shall be delivered personally, by interoffice memo or by U.S. Mail.

h. Receipt. The Executive Assistant, upon receipt of a suggestion, shall place on it the date and time it was received and assign to it an identification number.

i. Acknowledgment. Immediately upon receipt of a suggestion, the Executive Assistant shall transmit to the suggester a letter acknowledging its receipt and informing him/her of its identification number.

j. Anonymity. Upon receipt of a suggestion, the Executive Assistant shall remove therefrom the name and address of the suggester and any other marks of information which might reveal the suggester's name, and thereafter, the suggestion shall be known only by its identification number. The Executive Assistant shall not reveal the name of the suggester to ANYONE until the Committee has reached a decision as to its recommendation thereon to the Board, provided this shall not be construed to prevent the Executive Assistant from delegating his/her duties to a subordinate employee. A suggester, by written request to the Executive Assistant may remain anonymous.

Sec. 7.6 Suggestion Awards Program (Cont'd)

k. Records. The Executive Assistant shall maintain a file of all matters pertaining to each suggestion and a record showing the current status and final disposition of each suggestion.

l. Identical Suggestions. If at any time during the course of processing a suggestion, it is found that a suggestion submitted previously presents the same proposal, only the suggestion received first shall be eligible for any award or certificate, and the employee submitting the duplicate suggestion shall be so informed by the Committee.

m. Analysis. Each suggestion submitted to the Executive Assistant in accordance with this policy shall be presented to the Committee at its next regular meeting. However, the Executive Assistant may refer the suggestion to qualified persons for study and report prior to presenting it to the Committee.

n. Committee's Determination. The Committee shall analyze and investigate each suggestion and shall estimate the net savings, net increase in revenue, or improvement in service for the first twelve (12) months of operation of the suggestion and thereafter; provided that no monetary award may be recommended unless the suggestion had been placed into operation.

o. Monetary Award. Upon finding that a net savings, a net increase in revenue or improvement in service, will benefit the District through adopting and placing the suggestion into operation, the Committee may determine that a monetary award be paid the suggester; provided, that in no event shall the total monetary award for any one (1) suggestion exceed an aggregate total of $500.00 or be less than $50.00.

p. Certificate of Award. For every five (5) adopted suggestions submitted by an employee, the suggester shall be given a Certificate of Award. A copy of the Certificate of Award shall be made a part of the permanent personnel file of the suggester.

q. Commendation. Upon finding that the adoption of a suggestion will not result in a net savings or a net increase in revenue or intangible benefit of sufficient value to qualify for a monetary award, the Committee may recommend that the suggester be given a commendation.

Per Ordinance No. 2014-05 Adopted 8/4/14 [Sec. 7.6]

Sec. 7.7 Retirement Commemoration/Recognition. Employees retiring from the District, who have attained the age of 55 and years of service as noted below, shall be recognized and commemorated as follows:

(a) Employees with thirty (30) or more years of service shall be provided a District staff luncheon, which may also include the retiring employee's immediate family and four guests. A gift not to exceed $1,000 shall be presented.

(b) Employees with a minimum of twenty (20) years, but less than thirty (30) years of service shall be provided a District staff luncheon, which may also include the retiring employee's immediate family and two guests. A gift not to exceed $500.00 shall be presented.

(c) Employees with a minimum of ten (10) years, but less than twenty (20) years of service shall be provided a luncheon for the retiring employee and the staff within his/her division.

(d) Employees retiring with ten (10) or more years of service shall be awarded a plaque of recognition.

Sec. 7.8 Retirement Commemoration/Recognition – Board of Directors. Retiring members of the Board of Directors shall be commemorated with a resolution of appreciation adopted by the Board and a plaque of recognition.

Sec. 7.9 Gary T. Arant Legacy Award.

(a) Purpose. The Gary T. Arant Legacy Award recognizes an employee whose service reflects the values that helped shape Valley Center Municipal Water District during Gary's leadership: integrity, dedication to public service, responsible stewardship, collaboration, mentorship, and a commitment to making the District better for those who follow. The recipient leads by example, demonstrates exceptional care for the District and its people, and leaves a positive and lasting impact through their service.

All regular full-time District employees, including Department Heads, are eligible for the award, with the exception of the General Manager. Selection shall be based on contributions that are exceptional in relation to the responsibilities and expectations of the employee's position.

Per Ordinance No. 2026-14 Adopted 10/5/2026 [Sec. 7.9]
Per Ordinance No. 2026-06 Adopted 5/4/2026 [Sec. 7.8]
Per Ordinance No. 2008-05 Adopted 6/16/08 [Sec. 7.7]