It's easy and meaningful to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of employees for their work every day, as well as after the completion of projects both large and small.

**Taxable Income**: Rewards such as cash, gift cards, debit cards or gift certificates are considered taxable income. Any decision to use these types of rewards should be discussed with your supervisor and/or your Financial Transaction Center or Business Service Center.

**Bargaining Units**: If your employee is represented by one of Cornell’s bargaining units, please consult with Workplace Policy and Labor Relations (lmj6; 607-255-6866) before you implement recognition ideas marked by an * as there may be restrictions on these types of rewards.

**Related**: [Employee recognition programs and awards](#)

**Contact the Cornell Rewards and Recognition Committee**: recognition@cornell.edu

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### No cost individual & group recognition

- Say “thank you” on a regular basis
- Smile. It's contagious.
- Notice and praise progress towards a goal
- Check in on a project to give encouragement
- Check in on employees performing daily work to recognize those efforts
• Acknowledge each team member’s contribution
• Provide immediate positive reinforcement
• Commend employees for small successes
• Praise employees publicly
• Email a note of appreciation and copy the employee’s supervisor
• Handwrite a note of thanks for a job well done
• Encourage, enable and empower employees to provide feedback, input and observations
• Encourage employees to take advantage of development opportunities
• Encourage a team mentality; emphasize the importance of working together
• Recognize the different roles and strengths each employee contributes
• “Casual dress on Fridays
• “Support “flex-friendly” schedules
• Present “State of Department” reports to your employees acknowledging the work and contributions of individuals and teams
• Encourage and implement ideas from employees shared at staff or other group meetings

Other forms of individual recognition

• *Car wash and/or wax
• *Round of golf
• *Occasional lunch or dinner
• “Kudos” candy bars
• Pack(s) of “Extra” gum
• *Magazine subscriptions
• *Theatre or Movie tickets
• *Tickets to sporting event
• *One day parking pass
• Nominations for quarterly employee recognition
• Nominations for special acknowledgments
• *New/varied work or special assignment
• *Attendance at work-related seminar
• Personalized coffee mug
• *Afternoon or day off for project completion
• *Institutional Logo Items
• Create a trophy to be passed around to a different employee each month
• *Day off for a job well done

Other forms of group recognition

• Intermittent gatherings with refreshments or departmental luncheons
• *Occasionally hold a offsite meetings and provide a meal
• *Outing to sporting or other event
• Years of service celebrations
• Occasional free refreshments
• *Off-campus retreats
• *Team Morale Building Events
• Arrange for a team to present the results of its efforts to leadership
• Celebrate with employees at the end of a project
• *Schedule an afternoon or extended lunch hour for activities such as playing board games, softball, soccer, volleyball, and/or miniature-golf