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

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

[/accordion]