



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

September 12, 2006

The Director

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: LINDA M. SPRINGER
DIRECTOR 

Subject: Guidelines for Managerial Development

The Federal Government must deliver results, and Government leaders must drive those results. The most enduring legacy to the future of this nation is the proper development of its leaders. We must ensure the ability of Federal leaders to achieve results by establishing a strong learning environment that supports both initial and ongoing training and development of both current and future leaders.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is establishing guidelines to ensure the ongoing leadership capacity of the Federal workforce and to assist agencies in meeting several managerial development objectives. These guidelines reflect and support several related efforts focused on Government leadership.

- OPM's Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework emphasizes leadership succession management and requires organizations to set goals and measurable outcomes in this area that directly affect their mission.
- Under the President's Management Agenda, leadership is considered a Governmentwide "mission-critical occupation," and agencies have established goals to close leadership competency gaps through their quarterly and annual "Proud To Be" commitments.
- Amendments under The Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-411, Sec. 201) to chapter 41, Training, of title 5, United States Code, require that agencies establish "a comprehensive management succession program to provide training to employees to develop managers for the agency."
- Federal Human Capital Survey Results for 2004 indicated a need for improved Federal leadership, even as we face the impending retirement of many current Federal leaders.

In view of this increasing emphasis on leadership, we believe the time is right to recommit the Federal Government to developing effective leaders. We are issuing the following guidelines to assist you in carrying out your agency's managerial development responsibilities. Consistent with 5 CFR 412, the guidelines are meant to cover programs at all levels from potential leaders and supervisors to higher-level managers and executives.

First, in planning for leadership development programs and in drafting the required written policy (5 CFR 412.103), agencies should ensure the following criteria are met:

- Clear linkage to organizational strategy, goals, and values. Modifications should be made as needed to incorporate emerging trends and new requirements and to ensure continued alignment.
- Clear linkage to Governmentwide leadership competencies and Executive Core Qualifications as well as agency-specific core requirements, to ensure the training provided fosters a broad agency and Governmentwide perspective.
- Top-level commitment as demonstrated by dedicating adequate resources, by ensuring active involvement of higher-level officials in the development of their managerial subordinates, and by serving as positive role models, mentors, and teachers for leadership.
- Integration with other related human capital management processes, such as succession planning, talent management, and performance management. Section 4121 of title 5, United States Code, requires agencies to establish comprehensive management succession programs.
- Thorough needs analysis based on an identification of competency gaps and current mission or business goals and challenges.
- Systematic evaluation of the extent of learning, its application, impact, and where feasible, its return on investment.

Second, agencies should, at a minimum, incorporate the following components into their leadership development approach:

- Development of the objectives, methodology, content, and coverage of each program or significant learning activity in accordance with basic instructional design principles.
- Methods for identifying potential leaders with options for management nomination and for self-nomination.
- Initial and periodic assessment of the leadership competencies of each supervisor, manager, and executive, ideally with multiple sources of input. Assessments should also be done for employees identified as potential leaders.
- Leadership development plans tailored to the individual's level of management. Special attention should be paid to any periods of transition into new roles and the continuing development of executives. Similar plans may be developed for potential leaders.
- Training for new supervisors and managers to ensure they have completed development of basic supervisory skills, including communicating expectations, and managing, evaluating, improving and rewarding employees' performance. Ideally, training should be completed within six months of appointment to supervisory duties.
- Periodic agency program evaluations of training plans, including leadership development programs, to determine how that plan or program accomplishes or effectively promotes the agency's specific performance plans and strategic goals. Agencies must modify those training plans or programs, as needed, to ensure that they continually meet and support specific agency established performance plans and strategic goals, as stated in the Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004.
- A broad range of learning methodologies grounded in experiential/action-oriented learning and relationship-based learning. This can include additional assignments and responsibilities structured for development purposes, coaching and mentoring assistance,

action learning projects, simulations, case studies, and other experientially oriented assignments. Further development can be offered through appropriate educational opportunities and self-development or professional development activities.

- Appropriate use of technology in delivery of learning material, system support, tracking, and measurement. In learning delivery, blended learning solutions should be considered.

Finally, agencies should also take into account the following best practices and special considerations:

- Facilitating learning through active involvement of the leader's boss, coach, mentor, peer group, or management consultant.
- Learning from feedback through such methods as multi-rater assessments, organizational surveys, business simulations, and development-focused assessment centers.
- Learning activities that integrate individual learning with team or organizational learning.
- Structuring development challenges into future assignments. External rotations, launching new initiatives, and managing turnaround organizations are examples of excellent learning opportunities. In the case of SES employees, sabbaticals can also serve as learning opportunities.
- Attention to Government-specific issues of concern, for example, procurement integrity and ethical standards, or to areas of increasing responsibility, such as managing employees with non-traditional career patterns or managing a multi-sector workforce.

We rely on you to implement this guidance fully and to incorporate it into your organizational culture as you build a learning organization. To support your efforts, we will soon issue "A Strategic Leadership Succession Model," which will provide more detailed information on leadership development and succession. We are also updating the Executive Core Qualifications and leadership competencies (available online at <http://www.opm.gov/ses/>). Additionally, we are studying the competencies required for supervisors and managers and will update associated policy as needed. Finally, we are developing a tool for assessing leadership competencies to support your workforce planning initiatives.

Together, these policies and tools provide the foundation for your agency to establish a highly effective leadership cadre for today and tomorrow.

If you have questions or would like to discuss these guidelines, please contact your Human Capital Officer at OPM.

cc: Human Resources Directors