
TRAINING POLICY FOR APHIS SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, AND EXECUTIVES

1. PURPOSE

This Directive establishes the APHIS training policy for supervisors, managers, and executives.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces APHIS Directive 4315.1, dated 4/8/2005.

3. BACKGROUND

The Federal Government considers supervision and management as occupations critical to the effective organization and delivery of its services to the public. The need for supervisors and managers to develop and maintain current and effective human resources management skills is continually emphasized by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). As a result, OPM has identified 28 core competencies, known as leadership competencies, which all Federal supervisory, management, and executive training and development should address.

The Federal Personnel Manual Sunset Document and the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act of 1994 significantly eliminated or reduced many of the restrictions previously in place regarding employee training and development, thereby allowing agencies considerably more flexibility in managing organizational training and development functions to accomplish each agency's mission.

Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) has the authority and responsibility to administer training and development programs based on unique service needs, the Government Employees Training Act, specific and general funding authorities, and other related Federal regulations and requirements.

Within a rapidly changing work environment, an ever-increasing diverse workforce, exploding technological advances, and increasing global pressures, the effective management of human resources is paramount for the survival and success of a vibrant organization. Key to this is the manner in which supervisors, managers, and executives are able to carry out their duties and responsibilities in ways that encourage high levels of individual and organizational performance, while providing for individual growth and development and ensuring individual and organizational accountability.

4. AUTHORITIES

- a. Departmental Regulation 4120-2, Policy on Training and Development for Team Leaders, Supervisors, Managers, and Executives, dated 11/04/1998.
<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR4120-002.pdf>
- b. The Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004, dated 11/2004.

5. DEFINITIONS

- a. Supervisors. Employees who accomplish work by directing others. Duties involve such activities and responsibilities as selecting employees, assigning work, coaching, assessing accomplishments, conducting performance reviews, approving training, approving leave, and rewarding and disciplining employees. Supervisors are permanent, full-time Federal employees who have input into at least one employee's performance review.
- b. Probationary Supervisors. Newly appointed supervisors who are still serving in the mandated 1-year probationary period and who have human resources management responsibilities.
- c. Managers. Employees who accomplish work by directing the duties of an organizational unit with accountability for the success of specific line or staff functions. Managers also monitor and evaluate the progress of the organizational unit toward meeting goals and making adjustments in objectives, work plans, schedules, and commitment of resources.
- d. Executives. Employees in Senior Executive Service (or Senior Foreign Service) positions who lead the Agency and set organizational goals.
- e. The APHIS Leadership Roadmap. Defines the 28 OPM core leadership competencies that are important for all APHIS employees and at all management levels within APHIS (see Attachment 3).
- f. Competency. A cluster of related knowledge, skills, and abilities that can be measured against standards that are necessary to produce required outcomes and that directly correlate with performance on the job. The 28 core OPM competencies with definitions are attached.
- g. 360-Degree Feedback. A comprehensive evaluation which identifies skills, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and competencies from several perspectives: the employee, supervisor, peers, direct reports, and/or customers.

6. POLICY

- a. The 28 core leadership competencies serve as the basis of supervisory and managerial training and development for APHIS employees (see Attachment 1). It is APHIS' goal that every supervisor, manager, and executive develops and maintains the necessary skill level in these 28 core leadership competencies. The candidate selection criteria will reflect and reinforce this goal, as well as the performance standards of supervisors, managers, and executives.
- b. Employee training and development opportunities will be made available to all employees according to need, without regard to non-merit reasons including: race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability (mental or physical), marital or family status, and/or sexual orientation. Reasonable accommodation will be made for those with disabilities.
- c. All supervisors are to adhere to the following guidelines to ensure that organizational goals are met:
 - (1) Newly appointed supervisors, managers, and career senior executives will serve a 1-year probationary period, unless exempted by regulations or previous creditable service as a supervisor, manager, or career senior executive. The probationary period provides opportunity to develop and demonstrate the necessary skills and abilities of the new position in the area of human resources management.
 - (2) Probationary supervisors will attend an Agencywide sponsored mandatory training course entitled, Fundamentals of APHIS Human Resources Management (FAHRM) within 1 year of appointment to the position. This course covers the fundamentals of human resources management within APHIS.
 - (3) Each probationary and experienced supervisor, manager, and career senior executive will complete a 360 degree assessment instrument at least once every 5 years to determine his/her potential developmental needs.
 - (4) Annually, each experienced supervisor, manager, and career senior executive should prepare a development plan, (i.e., learning contract, individual development plan (IDP), etc.) with his/her supervisor, that addresses one or more of those areas needing attention as identified in the assessment (6.c.(3) above).

- (5) Annually, each supervisor, manager, and career senior executive must complete a minimum of 24 hours of training and/or developmental activity relating to one or more of the 28 core competencies identified in the 360 degree assessment and where applicable, planned for in the development plan. Training and development needs can be met through a wide variety of ways, including: formal classroom training, online training, reading a book, taking a temporary detail or shadowing assignment, CD ROM, DVD, etc., or a combination of the above, as long as the learning that takes place meets the needs identified in the individual's assessment and learning contract or IDP (see Attachment 2).

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The Administrator and Deputy Administrators will ensure that the training and development needs of all supervisors, managers, and career senior executives are identified, and that training programs and/or developmental activities are established/provided to meet those identified needs according to the succession planning goals.
- b. Supervisors and managers who oversee other supervisors will:
 - (1) Ensure that training and development opportunities are provided to subordinate supervisors, managers, and career senior executives based on the subordinate supervisor's identified leadership skill needs derived from approved assessment instruments, and their learning contract and/or IDP. These opportunities will be cooperatively developed between the subordinate supervisor and supervisor, and will ensure that there is a match between the organizational goals, performance plans, strategic plans, Agency and program workforce, human capital and succession plans, civil rights requirements, and employee needs.
 - (2) Certify annually, as part of the Performance Review process, that these requirements have been met.
- c. Employees in supervisory, managerial, and career senior executive (or Senior Foreign Service) positions will work with their supervisor to:
 - (1) Assess their own learning needs through the use of 360 degree assessment tools,
 - (2) Complete a Learning Contract or IDP, and
 - (3) Ensure that at least 24 hours of training or development are accomplished annually based on the identified needs.

8. INQUIRIES

- a. Clarification or assistance concerning this Directive should be directed to the Training and Development Branch, Human Resources Division, MRPBS, at 301-734-4949.
- b. This Directive is available on the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/library and on the training Web site.

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