

## **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 9/9/2008.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

High quality supervision and leadership have always been important in APHIS. In recent years, the importance of leadership has been brought even closer to the forefront through various statutes, policies, and organizational initiatives. Most recently, the Secretary's "Business Case for the Cultural Transformation of USDA" and Cultural Transformation initiatives in USDA and APHIS underscore the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and the ability of supervisors, managers, and executives to leverage the unique talents, abilities, and perspectives of its workforce to enhance decision making, increase operational efficiency and effectiveness, boost employee morale and performance, and improve customer service. Recent studies and reports from the Merit Systems Protection Board, results from Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Employee View Point Surveys, and listening sessions in Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) reinforce the need for ongoing supervisor and leadership development. In addition, the 2007 Federal Supervisory Training Act and OPM's *Guidelines for Managerial Development* require increased performance and accountability for measurable organizational results.

The heightened emphasis placed on leadership and USDA's belief in ongoing employee development leads to our recommitment in this Directive to proper development of effective leaders in APHIS. APHIS considers supervisory competence and leadership development to be mission critical. Genuine partnerships and information sharing between managers and employees create a strong foundation for personal and organizational success. They create synergy and outcomes that allow creativity,

flexibility and productivity to thrive. The intention of this Directive is to drive a supervisory culture that supports APHIS employees' diverse needs by equipping supervisors, managers, and executives with the tools and resources they need to do their very important work.

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 and other leadership competencies is continually emphasized by OPM. As a result, OPM has identified core leadership competencies for all Federal supervisors, managers, and executives to address on their developmental path to outstanding leadership. In APHIS, supervisor and leadership development is framed in terms of those competencies (see Attachment 1).

APHIS considers supervisory competence, in conjunction with the ability to motivate, empower, and build trust within oneself and others, to be critical to developing the leaders necessary to accomplish the APHIS mission.

#### **4. AUTHORITIES**

- a. [Title 5, CFR, Part 412.](#)
- b. [Departmental Regulation 4120-2, Policy on Training and Development for Team Leaders, Supervisors, Managers, and Executives](#), dated 11/04/1998.
- c. [Departmental Regulation 4040-412-001, Leadership Competency Framework](#), dated 12/12/2006.
- d. [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 serving in the mandated one-year probationary period and who have human resources management responsibilities.
- c. Experienced Supervisors. Supervisors who have more than one year of supervisory experience, have successfully completed the one-year probationary period, have been rated at least "Fully Successful" in a supervisory position and who have human resource management responsibilities, as described in the definition of Supervisors.
- d. Managers. Employees who supervise one or more supervisors and who accomplish work by directing the duties of an organizational unit with accountability for the success of specific line or staff functions.
- e. Executives. Employees in Senior Executive Service (including Senior Leaders) or Senior Foreign Service positions who lead the Agency and set organizational goals.
- f. [The APHIS Leadership Development Toolkit](#). A resource for professional development, designed to help an employee enhance personal effectiveness and leadership competencies in his/her current position, as well as develop the competencies needed to advance to higher-level positions. The Toolkit also provides guidance on creating an Individual Development Plan.
- g. [The APHIS Leadership Roadmap](#). A document that defines the OPM core leadership competencies that is important for all APHIS employees and at all management levels within APHIS.
- h. Competency. An observable, measurable cluster of related knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to successfully produce required outcomes directly related to job performance.
- i. 360-Degree Assessment. A comprehensive survey and evaluation tool and process used to capture valuable input from multiple internal and external sources about an employee's competency levels. These sources include the employee, supervisor, peers, direct reports, and/or customers.

## 6. POLICY

- a. The core leadership competencies established by OPM serve as the basis of supervisory and managerial training and development for APHIS employees (see Attachment 1). APHIS' goal is that every supervisor, manager, and executive develops and maintains the necessary skill level in the core leadership competencies. The candidate selection criteria will reflect and reinforce this goal, as will the performance standards of supervisors, managers, and executives.
- b. Employee training and development opportunities will be made available to all employees according to need and 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, managers, and executives (regardless of pay plan) are to adhere to the following policy requirements to ensure that organizational goals are met:
  - (1) Newly appointed supervisors, managers, and 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 them an opportunity to develop and demonstrate the necessary skills and abilities of the new position.
  - (2) Probationary supervisors will acquire a minimum of 40 hours of basic supervisory training through the current Agency-sponsored mandatory training program for probationary supervisors within 1 year of appointment to the position.
  - (3) Newly appointed managers will complete the requirements of the Agency-sponsored mandatory training program for new managers within 1 year of appointment to that position to support their transition from supervisor to manager, or, if new to APHIS, their first year in a managerial position in the Agency.
  - (4) Newly appointed executives will complete the USDA mandatory training requirements within 1 year of appointment to that position to support their transition from manager to executive, or, if new to APHIS, their first year in an executive position in the Agency.
  - (5) Each experienced supervisor, manager, and executive will complete an APHIS 360 degree assessment (or equivalent, e.g., one from the Federal

Executive Institute or a Senior Executive Service Executive Career Development Program, that uses OPM competencies) at least once every 5 years to determine his/her potential developmental needs. Probationary supervisors and newly appointed managers and executives will complete an APHS 360 degree assessment after completing 6 months in the new position.

- (6) Each fiscal year, every experienced supervisor, manager, and executive will prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) with his/her supervisor, that addresses one or more of those areas needing attention as identified in his/her most recent 360 assessment, in performance reviews, and/or from ongoing feedback.
- (7) Each fiscal year, every supervisor, manager, and executive must complete a minimum of 24 hours of training and/or developmental activity relating to one or more of the core leadership competencies identified in the 360 degree assessment or other performance feedback and, where applicable, planned for in the IDP. Training and development needs can be met in a variety of ways, including: online learning, self-developmental activities (reading a book or other publication, listening to CD's, viewing a DVD, having or serving as a coach or mentor), formal classroom training, taking a temporary detail or shadowing assignment, undertaking special projects, training on-the-job, or a combination of the above, as long as the learning that takes place meets the needs identified in the employee's assessments and is documented on the employee's IDP (see Attachment 2 for a more detailed listing of learning activities).

## **7. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. The Administrator and Deputy Administrators will ensure that the training and development needs of all supervisors, managers, and executives are identified, and that training programs and/or developmental activities are established and provided to meet those identified needs according to the succession planning goals.
- b. Supervisors and managers will:
  - (1) Ensure employees' individual learning and development needs align with and support organizational goals, performance plans, strategic plans, civil rights requirements, and Agency and program workforce, human capital, and succession plans, .

- (2) Provide access to and resources for identified training and development activities.
  - (3) Certify annually, as part of the Performance Review process, that the requirements in this Directive have been met.
- c. Employees in supervisory, managerial, and executive positions will work with their supervisor to:
  - (1) Assess their own learning needs through the use of 360 degree or other assessment tools, as well as performance reviews and ongoing feedback,
  - (2) Complete an IDP, and
  - (3) Ensure that they complete and document at least 24 hours of training or development annually based on the identified needs. All training needs to be documented in AgLearn. To document training in AgLearn, see Instructions for Recording and Certifying Completion of the 24-Hour Training Requirement for Supervisors, Managers, and Executives.
- d. AgLearn Administrators will support employees in recording their training and development activities and creating their IDPs in AgLearn. Create reports that document completion of the requirements in this Directive.
- e. Training Units will support employees' development by providing or directing employees to valuable training and development experiences.

## **8. INQUIRIES**

- a. Clarification or assistance concerning this Directive should be directed to the APHIS-MRPBS-Human Resources Division-Training and Development Branch, at 301-734-4949.

- b. This Directive is available on the [APHIS](#) Administrative Issuances homepage.

/s/

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2 Attachments