


and virtual meetings have their value, but do not substitute for the face-to-face interaction of employees at meetings and regional conferences.

RECOMMENDATION AR 2007 -- 20

The Ombudsman recommends that USCIS expand the opportunities for vertical and horizontal communication among offices by supporting conferences focused on specific work issues and providing funds for travel of working level staff to share best practices. 


f. Recognizing and Training the Trainers

All offices have “go to” persons who, by virtue of longevity and refined judgment, advise officers on case situations and who act as mentors or trainers. Some offices have designated training positions and many offices have employees who are assigned collateral duties as trainers. These employees should be recognized and provided support for their important roles.

g. Training for Supervisors

A commonly-heard complaint among field managers is that training for supervising employees and managing workflows is lacking. There is a need for training beyond knowledge-based instruction on product lines or new laws and regulations. While knowledge and leadership training are important, first-line and other supervisors also should learn about employment regulations and agency policies on labor management. For example, supervisors should be provided techniques to resolve employee conflicts. The agency needs to clearly define and provide for a standard set of additional courses that employees at the journeyman level should take as they move into supervisory and leadership positions before they assume the most senior positions.

RECOMMENDATION AR 2007 -- 21

The Human Capital and Training Office in collaboration with field offices and service centers, should determine the skills and knowledge sets required for supervisors to be effective in their daily managing of people and resources. Specific resources or training programs should be identified on diversity requirements, discipline issues, handling problem employees, evaluating workflows, and budget management. Headquarters funds should be provided to field offices for employees to attend these sessions. 

In summary, USCIS has taken significant steps to address its leadership and training needs. Chief among these steps is the recognition and articulation of a strategic human capital development and recruitment plan. Several initiatives in the plan establish baselines and proposed further actions. The next steps are to build on the strategic plan, develop training material and methods, and continuously validate them. The agency needs to avoid short-term