

CHARTER (Revised)

NORTHERN PLAINS AREA COUNCIL of OFFICE PROFESSIONALS

October 31, 2007

MISSION

The mission of the Northern Plains Area Council of Office Professionals (NPACOP) is to provide a resource for the Area Director and management for matters relating to office professionals. The Council is to work with the Area Director and management in an advisory capacity on new initiatives, which impact employees in the organization, provide input and serve as liaison to the NPA representative to the ARS National Advisory Council for Office Professionals (NACOP) on matters that impact employees Agency-wide, and to enhance the office profession through training, mentoring and recognition.

VISION

Our vision is to ensure that NPA has highly skilled professionals working in partnership with management to meet the office support needs of the organization.

GROUND RULES

- Approach tasks positively and optimistically.
- Treat each other professionally, regardless of functional responsibility, grade or position.
- Take responsibility for our decisions and actions. We are accountable and flexible.
- Be candid.
- Encourage giving and receiving constructive feedback.
- Actively participate with information and resource sharing.
- Approach and resolve conflict openly.
- Have fun and value humor.
- Stand together as a team.
- Decisions by consensus - can live with decision made.
- Keep records.
- Quorum should be present.
- Start and end meetings on time.

OBJECTIVES

- Recommend and promote recognition for office professionals.
- Support the NACOP.
- Encourage mentoring for newly hired office professional staff through the new office professional orientation, the Resource Assistants List, the Quick Reference Guide, the NPACOP Web site, Brochure, and Welcome Packet.

- Identify and encourage outside training for office professionals, as needed, such as coordination and organizational skills, enhance computer skills, time and office management.
- Encourage networking among office professionals for effective communications and efficient working relationships, providing assistance and back-up between various offices.
- Identify and advise the Area Director and/or management on matters concerning office professionals.
- Recommend office professionals attend the NPA Leadership Meetings and assist in development of the agenda for the office professional portion of the meeting.

SCOPE OF COVERAGE

- The Northern Plains Area Council of Office Professionals will represent office professionals who support the Area Office, Center/Laboratory Directors, Research Leaders, and Administrative Officers throughout the NPA. This may include employees in the Secretarial Series, GS-318; Office Automation Series, GS-326; and Miscellaneous Clerk or Program Support Assistant Series, GS-303; and positions which provide a broad scope of program management and administrative assistance.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

- Membership will be made up of office professional representatives from the Area Director's office and the remainder from the locations throughout the Northern Plains Area. The Area Director's Executive Assistant will serve as an Ex-Officio member. Volunteers will be solicited. NPA Council members will be appointed by the Area Director based upon recommendations submitted by the Council.
- Appointments will be for three years.
- Terms will begin October 1 and end September 30. If a member cannot complete a term, the new appointee will finish the remainder of the term. If the resigning member has one year or less remaining, the new member will serve the remainder of the term plus an additional term.
- The representative from the Northern Plains Area to the NACOP will serve as Technical Advisor and shall be selected by the Area Director from persons who have served, or are presently serving, on the Northern Plains Area Council. Upon appointment to the National Council, a new member shall then be selected to serve on the NPA Council of Office Professionals.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chairperson will:

- Rotate every two years among members.
- Organize meetings and issue agendas.
- Preside at all meetings and conference calls.
- Advise and work with management on implementing policies and programs affecting the NPA.
- Develop correspondence from the Council and obtain appropriate approvals prior to dissemination.
- Arrange conference calls as needed.
- Inform Council members of future meeting arrangements.
- Prepare annual progress report for NACOP.
- Follow-up with welcome phone call to new office professionals.

Recorder will:

- Rotate every two years among members.
- Record and distribute highlights and action items of meetings and teleconferences.

Technical Advisor will:

- Ensure all Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the established charter and appropriate issues are addressed.
- Ensure that all recommendations from the Council are consistent with rules and regulations.

Webmaster will:

- Keep NPACOP Web site updated and functioning.
- Maintain current biographical information on Council members.
- Maintain an accurate roster and email list of membership.

Media PR will:

- Keep NPA office professionals aware of information and activities of the Council and related programs.

Welcome Packet Coordinator will:

- Maintain current information.
- Call and distribute packet to new NPA office professionals.

All Members will:

- Support and actively participate in the activities of the Council.
- Collect and report information on significant activities, questions, and concerns.

- Provide current biographical information upon appointment to the Council.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- The Council will meet yearly. Special meetings will be held as called by the chairperson. Meetings will be held at the Area Office in October.
- Hold conference calls as needed.
- Recommendations from the Council with Area-wide impact will be submitted to the Area Director for approval prior to implementation.
- A replacement will be named prior to the expiration of a member’s term.
- Official Council records will be retained by the Ex-officio in Area Office.
- All members of the Council will adhere to the following principles:
 - All members will be expected to attend meetings and participate.
 - Confidentiality of all discussions will be maintained.
- A calendar year progress report will be provided to the Area Director and the NACOP by May 31 of each year. Annual report will be also distributed to area-wide office professionals.
- Feedback on Council issues and activities is encouraged.
- All NPACOP records and documents will be stored on NPACOP SharePoint site.

NORTHERN PLAINS AREA COUNCIL of OFFICE PROFESSIONALS

Date	Diona Austill, Webmaster, Technical Advisor, Media PR
Date	Louise Dalton, Ex-Officio Member
Date	Lori Dimmer, Chair
Date	Olga Lee, Ex-Officio Member
Date	Marianne McCaulay, Recorder
Date	Linda Parnell, Welcome Packet Coordinator
Date	

APPROVED:

Date	W. H. Blackburn, Area Director
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