

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		NUMBER: 4120-002
SUBJECT: Policy on Training and Development for Team Leaders, Supervisors, Managers, and Executives	DATE: November 4, 1998	
	OPI: Office of Human Resources Management	

1. PURPOSE

Implementation of the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) recommendations on competency based training and enhanced "people skills" for all persons in leadership positions is essential to insuring that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its programs grow, prosper, and deliver the high quality of service deserved by the American people. It is also critical for establishing and maintaining a positive work environment that encourages and supports a diverse work force in making their maximum contribution to accomplishing the USDA mission.

2 POLICY

To achieve this goal, the following principles and policies will be incorporated as part of all future training, development, selection, and performance evaluations for team leaders, supervisors, managers, and executives at USDA:

a Supervision is a profession and critical career path in its own right. It is not something that is done only when more pressing matters allow.

b Development of employees is recognized as a critical function for supervisors, managers, and executives.

c Continuous learning, self-improvement, and performance feedback are critical for all team leaders, supervisors, managers, and executives.

d USDA adopts the core leadership competencies developed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) as the basis for all supervisory, managerial, and executive selection, training, and development. See Appendix A.

e USDA will develop, adopt, and implement an integrated system of supervisory, managerial, and executive development based on leadership competencies.

f The "USDA Training and Development Consortium" will be the mechanism for fully implementing the recommendations of CRAT. The duties and responsibilities of the Consortium are stated in section 3 below.

g Mission areas are responsible for ensuring that adequate resources in people, funds, facilities, equipment, and other support are provided.

h USDA leadership is responsible for building a positive work environment that enables all employees to contribute to the full extent of their abilities to accomplish the mission and goals of USDA, and encourages acquiring and using leadership skills. Possession of leadership competencies, especially interpersonal skills, will be linked to selection for supervisory and other leadership positions.

i Diversity is one of USDA's most valuable resources. The right of each of us to be treated with dignity and respect is confirmed and will be the standard for interpersonal relations.

j USDA leaders will demonstrate that they possess strong and effective human relations skills, work effectively in diverse teams and organizations, and use effective leadership styles.

k Every employee is accountable for his or her actions. Inappropriate behavior and unacceptable actions by the leadership of USDA will be corrected through direct leadership action, remedial training, performance improvement plans, discipline, and/or removal.

3 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A "USDA Training and Development Consortium" will be established to provide coordination and consistency to the training function within USDA. The Consortium is authorized and empowered to direct mission areas and agencies to comply with its programs, procedures, and guidance. The responsibilities of the Consortium will include, but not be limited to:

a Developing a formal Training and Development Consortium Charter which includes membership, authorities, roles, and responsibilities.

b Developing a Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plans for USDA training and development in accordance with the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act.

c Providing leadership to USDA in becoming a "learning organization."

d Ensuring a broad base of input for the Consortium's planning and decision making process, including program managers, employees, union representatives, customers, and stakeholders.

- e Identifying and using best practices in training content and delivery methodology in all areas, especially leadership, interpersonal skills, and diversity training.
- f Developing a matrix of effective activities and sources for acquiring and enhancing capability in the competency areas.
- g Eliminating duplication of efforts in training.
- h Providing guidance on agency-specific core competency training.
- i Recommending curriculum and course content changes.
- j Establishing guidelines for evaluating the effectiveness of managerial and supervisory training.
- k Providing leadership to a continuing process of organizational climate and work environment assessments to be used in directing supervisory, managerial, and executive training throughout USDA.
- l Encouraging the use of automation and technology to the maximum extent possible to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of training analysis, evaluation, and delivery.
- m Working with representatives of the staffing and employee selection community to link possession of, or potential to acquire, the supervisory and managerial competencies to the selection and performance appraisal processes.

4 ACTIONS ORDERED

The Leadership Competencies developed by OPM will be adopted immediately and form the basis for leadership training and development in USDA. The USDA training and development community will play a central role in developing and implementing this policy and will use all available methodologies to ensure timely, effective, and efficient delivery of training based on the core leadership competencies.

The USDA Training and Development Consortium will be established. Each Mission Area will be represented on the Consortium. The Departmental Administration Office of Human Resources Management will take the lead in establishing the Consortium. Mission Areas are responsible for insuring that this effort receives the resources needed.

Every employee at every level should participate in this effort. USDA, its customers, and its employees will be the beneficiaries.

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APPENDIX A

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES LEADING CHANGE

Vision - Takes a long-term view and acts as a catalyst for organizational change; builds a shared vision with others. Influences others to translate vision into action.

External Awareness - Identifies and keeps up to date on key national and international policies and economic, political, and social trends that affect the organization. Understands near-term and long-range plans and determines how best to be positioned to achieve a competitive business advantage in a global economy.

Creativity and Innovation - Develops new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to make organizational improvements; creates a work environment that encourages creative thinking and innovation; designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs/processes.

Strategic Thinking - Formulates effective strategies consistent with the business and competitive strategy of the organization in a global economy. Examines policy issues and strategic planning with a long-term perspective. Determines objectives and sets priorities; anticipates potential threats or opportunities.

Continual Learning - Grasps the essence of new information; masters new technical and business knowledge; recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; pursues self-development; seeks feedback from others and opportunities to master new knowledge.

Resilience - Deals effectively with pressure; maintains focus and intensity; and remains optimistic and persistent even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks. Effectively balances personal life and work.

Flexibility - Is open to changes and new information; adapts behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles. Adjusts rapidly to new situations warranting attention and resolution.

Service Motivation - Creates and sustains an organizational culture which encourages others to provide the quality of service essential to high performance. Enables others to acquire the tools and support they need to perform well. Shows a commitment to public service. Influences others toward a spirit of service and meaningful contributions to mission accomplishment.

LEADING PEOPLE

Conflict Management - Identifies and takes steps to prevent potential situations that could result in unpleasant confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a positive and constructive manner to minimize negative impact.

Cultural Awareness - Initiates and manages cultural change within the organization to impact organizational effectiveness. Values cultural diversity and other individual differences in the workforce. Ensures that the organization builds on these differences and that employees are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

Team Building - Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward goal accomplishments. Consistently develops and sustains cooperative working relationships. Encourages and facilitates cooperation within the organization and with customer groups; fosters commitment, team spirit, pride, trust. Develops leadership in others through coaching, mentoring, rewarding, and guiding employees.

Integrity/Honesty - Instills mutual trust and confidence, creates a culture that fosters high standards of ethics; behaves in a fair and ethical manner toward others, and demonstrates a sense of corporate responsibility and commitment to public service.

RESULTS DRIVEN

Accountability - Assures that effective controls are developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the organization. Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities. Can be relied upon to ensure that projects within areas of specific responsibility are completed in a timely manner and within budget. Monitors and evaluates plans; focuses on results and measuring attainment of outcomes.

Problem Solving - Identifies and analyzes problems; distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions; provides solutions to individual and organizational problems.

Decisiveness - Exercises good judgement by making sound and well-informed decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; makes effective and timely decisions, even when data is limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; is proactive and achievement oriented.

Customer Service - Balancing interests of a variety of clients, readily readjusts priorities to respond to pressing and changing client demands. Anticipates and meets the need of clients; achieves quality end-products; is committed to continuous improvement of services.

Entrepreneurship - Identifies opportunities to develop and market new products and services within or outside of the organization. Is willing to take risks; initiates actions that involve a deliberate risk to achieve a recognized benefit or advantage.

Technical Credibility - Understands and appropriately applies procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies related to specialized expertise. Is able to make sound hiring and capital resource decisions and address training and development needs. Understands linkages between administrative competencies and mission needs.

BUSINESS ACUMEN

Financial Management - Demonstrates broad understanding of the principles of financial management and marketing expertise necessary to ensure appropriate funding levels. Prepares, justifies, and/or administers the budget for the program area; uses cost-benefit thinking to set priorities; monitors expenditures in support of programs and policies. Identifies cost-effective approaches. Manages procurement and contracting.

Human Resources Management - Assesses current and future staffing needs based on organizational goals and budget realities. Using merit principles, ensures staff are appropriately selected, developed, utilized, appraised, and rewarded; takes corrective action.

Technology Management - Uses efficient and cost effective approaches to integrate technology into the workplace and improve program effectiveness. Develops strategies using new technology to enhance decision making. Understands the impact of technological changes on the organization.

BUILDING COALITIONS/COMMUNICATION

Oral Communication - Makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals or groups; listens effectively and clarifies information as needed; facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters an atmosphere of open communication.

Written Communication - Expresses facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing, and organized manner.

Influencing/Negotiating - Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals; facilitates "win-win" situations.

Partnering - Develops networks and builds alliances; engages in cross-functional activities; collaborates across boundaries and finds common ground with a widening range of stakeholders. Utilizes contacts to build and strengthen internal support bases.

Political Savvy - Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization. Approaches each problem situation with a clear perception of organizational and political reality; recognizes the impact of alternative courses of action.

Interpersonal Skills - Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful, compassionate and sensitive, and treats others with respect.