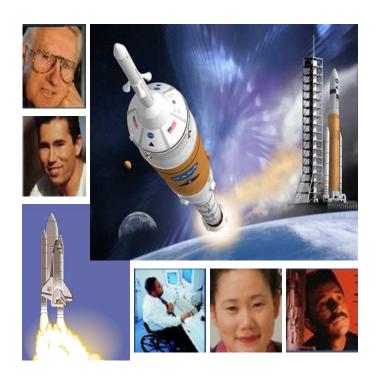# *Implementing the Conflict Management Program*

A Guide for the NASA Centers

Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
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Implementing the Conflict Management Program:
A Guide for NASA Centers

This guide provides information and instructions for implementing the NASA Conflict Management Program (CMP) at the NASA Centers and Headquarters (HQ). The guide is intended as a desk-reference for Center EO Directors[1] and other stakeholders (e.g., Center CMP Advisory Teams) to assist in ensuring that the implementation process runs smoothly at each Center.

Part I of the Guide describes the CMP implementation process step-by-step and shows expected completion dates for the associated actions. Part II of the Guide addresses general matters associated with the process, such as scheduling of activities and further training options. An appendix provides a matrix showing CMP implementation steps at each Center during FY 08, to assist in conceptualizing the timeframe for completion of each of the steps.[2]

Part I. Step-by-Step of the Process

Step 1. Briefing of Center Senior Leadership (February 2008)

ODEO[3] will advise the Center EO Directors on the process in advance of Center CMP implementation. ODEO will seek the assistance of the Center EO Directors in providing each Center's senior leadership with an overview of the CMP and advance informational material, e.g., CMP Overview document and Fact Sheet, as well as the Center's role in implementing the program. This includes the development of the Center CMP Advisory Team (CCAT).

Step 2. Identification of a Center CMP Advisory Team (February 2008)

Once senior leadership has been briefed, Center EO Directors will work to form the CCAT. The CCATs have a counterpart at the Agency level, the Agency CMP Advisory Team, formed during the pilot phase of the program. It is envisioned that the CCAT at each Center will be led by a senior management official from the Center Director's Office. At the Pilot Centers, that individual was the Associate Center Director. The CCAT should also include representatives from the offices of key stakeholders, e.g., EO, Human Resources (Training and Labor Relations), Chief Counsel, Public Affairs.

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[1] Wherever the term "Center EO Directors" is used in this document, it is meant to be inclusive of the NASA HQ EO Director.
[2] Note that for the three Conflict Management Pilot Centers, GSFC, JSC, and MSFC, most of the steps identified in this Guide have already taken place. For example, leadership at these Centers have already been briefed by NASA ODEO, and Needs Assessments and Course Evaluations have already been conducted.
[3] ODEO as used in this document refers to the Agency Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

The primary role of the CCAT will be to facilitate CMP implementation, including collaborating with ODEO's Agency CMP Advisory Team, interfacing with the vendor, and coordinating all communications and logistical matters. This means, for example, that the CCAT will be responsible for working with Center leadership and the vendor to schedule the dates for ODEO briefings to Center leadership and the CCAT (Step 3), the Needs Assessment (Step 4) and the Conflict Management training (Step 5).

The CCAT should be in place no later than February 2008.

Step 3. ODEO Briefing to Center Leadership (February-March 2008)

The Assistant Administrator for Diversity and Equal Opportunity with the vendor will conduct on-site briefings at each NASA Center for Center leadership. Members of the CCAT will be briefed by the CMP Manager and the vendor. The briefings for Center leadership are intended to convey an understanding of the program and obtain senior management's buy-in at each Center. More specifically, ODEO will provide information on the purposes, scope, and intended outcomes of the program to each Center's senior leadership, and answer any questions pertaining to these matters.

Step 3. Center Communications Plan Rollout (February-March 2008)

Once ODEO has completed its Center briefings, the development of a communications rollout plan spearheaded by the CCAT should begin in earnest. This plan should include print and electronic dissemination of information on the CMP to all employees, e.g., Center Director's Memorandum on CMP, CMP Fact Sheet, and should utilize communications organs already in place at each Center, e.g., NASA HQ's HeadsUp, ARC's *Astrogram*. ODEO will work in conjunction with each Center's CCAT on these efforts.   ODEO also intends to provide standardized communications tools in the form of posters for dissemination at the Centers, to help "brand" the program.

Step 4. CMP Needs Assessment and Analysis (March-April 2008)

The vendor will be working closely with the CCAT, firstly to schedule interviews and focus groups for the Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment will be conducted by the vendor over the course of 2-3 days at each Center. The Needs Assessment will encompass interviews with key stakeholders (e.g., EO, HR, Chief Counsel's Office), focus groups, and data and document analysis. The Needs Assessment is intended to survey the conflict "environment" at each Center, and will enable ODEO and its vendor to tailor the CMP training to each Center's needs regarding conflict.

Step 5. Deployment of Conflict Management and EEO/ADR Training

The deployment phase of the CMP will include: a conflict management training module for managers and supervisors, as well as employees; training on the EEO ADR process for those involved in managing and implementing the EEO ADR program; and training for the EEO ADR team. Each conflict management training session is designed to train 30 individuals. The conflict management training module will be based on five main topics:

- Sources of Conflict and Conflict Resolution Strategies;
- The Role of Emotions and Assumptions in Conflict (FSR Model);
- Skills of Effective Communication;
- Common-Sense Practices for Building Trust; and
- Collaborative Problem-Solving in the Workplace Model

The vendor will coordinate with the CCAT to schedule facilities and times for the trainings. (See Appendix, Proposed Conflict Management Program Schedule of Activities, detailing the number of sessions currently planned for each Center in FY 08).

Step 6. Course Evaluation and Impact Study

The CMP training at each Center will first be evaluated based on a Course Evaluation, designed to assess the appropriateness of the course content as well as evaluate participants' views on the potential applicability of the course to their work. To this end, the Course Evaluation focuses on the participants' estimates of the course's potential applicability to their work environments. Participants will be asked to identify what they considered to be the most helpful parts of the course and provide suggestions for improvement. A Course Evaluation Report will be prepared and presented to the Center.

To further measure "return-on-investment" at each Center, ODEO also will conduct an Impact Study three months after course delivery. The Impact Study will be based on a survey prepared by the vendor and will look at whether CMP participants at each Center have had the opportunity to utilize the knowledge and skills learned. For example, course participants will be asked to identify situations in the workplace where they were able to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the training. This approach will allow participants to assess their effectiveness in recognizing and resolving conflict. The Impact Study will also be used to determine the areas of the training that may need future reinforcement, as part of the basis for determining overall effectiveness. A report of the Impact Study will be issued and briefed at each Center by the vendor.

Part II. General Matters Associated with the Process

1. *Scheduling for the CMP Process*

Beginning in February 2008, ODEO will work closely with the vendor and CCAT at each Center to establish firm dates for the following:

- Briefings to Center Senior Management and CCAT
- Needs Assessment
- Conflict Management Training and EEO/ADR Training

2. *CMP Tracking System*

ODEO has in place an electronic tracking system for all actions pertaining to CM, the Strategic Information Management System (SIMS). Each Center will be asked to identify a system administrator for entering information regarding the implementation of the CMP at each Center. Each Center's information will be accessible only to that Center and to ODEO. The ODEO System Administrator is available to answer and questions and provide ongoing technical assistance regarding the use of the tracking system.

3. *Further Training and Technical Assistance Options*

Continuing Conflict Management Training

ODEO plans to offer continuing conflict management training to the NASA workforce in FY 2009-2010. In addition, ODEO will be providing advanced conflict management training courses focusing on more complex issues, such as potential class action issues, and inter-organizational conflict issues.

ODEO is exploring, in collaboration with the Office Human Capital Management, including conflict management training as part of new manager and supervisor training. ODEO is also exploring providing conflict management training to new employees. Finally, ODEO plans to develop web-based conflict management modules, such as refresher training.

One-on-One Conflict Management Assistance

NASA ODEO will provide upon request on-on-one conflict management technical assistance for managers and supervisors who have participated in the conflict management training. Conflict management assistance will be designed to address issues regarding management style, with a focus on enhancing interpersonal and communication skills. It will be based on a one-on-one relationship between a trained neutral and a manager or supervisor seeking to build on the conflict management training.

Among the critical objectives of conflict management assistance are:

- To prevent unnecessary disputes and the escalation of disputes;
- To enhance conflict management skills and gain increased conflict competency;
- To prepare for a mediation or a cooperative problem-solving session;
- To prepare to lead a meeting and/or a team that has the potential for being fractious; and
- To strengthen self-awareness and support professional development through professional and personal discovery.

4.   *Agency-wide EEO ADR Policy and Procedural Framework*

ODEO has undertaken a review and analysis of current Center and Agency EEO ADR programs. ODEO will partner with Center EO Offices to complete the evaluation of these programs and develop an Agency-wide policy and procedural framework.

APPENDIX. PROPOSED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

	Feb.	Mar.
Briefings		
HQ	X	
GSFC	X	
KSC	X	
ARC		X
DFRC		X
LaRC		X
SSC		X
NSSC		

	Mar.	Apr.
Assessments		
HQ	X	
GSFC	X	
KSC	X	
ARC	X	
DFRC		X
LaRC		X
SSC		X
NSSC		X

	Mar.	Apr.
Assessment Reports		
HQ	X	
GSFC	X	
KSC	X	
ARC		X
DFRC		X
LaRC		X
SSC		X
NSSC		X

	Mar.	Apr.
Assessment Briefings		
HQ	X	
GSFC	X	
KSC	X	
ARC	X	
DFRC		X
LaRC		X
SSC		X
NSSC		X

	May
CMP Trainings	
HQ	2 Sessions
GSFC	4 Sessions
KSC	4 Sessions
ARC	2 Sessions
DFRC	2 Sessions
LaRC	2 Sessions
SSC	2 Sessions
NSSC	4-5 Sessions

	June
ADR/EEO Trainings	
HQ	1 Session
GSFC	1 Session
KSC	1 Session
ARC	1 Session
DFRC	1 Session
LaRC	1 Session
SSC	1 Session