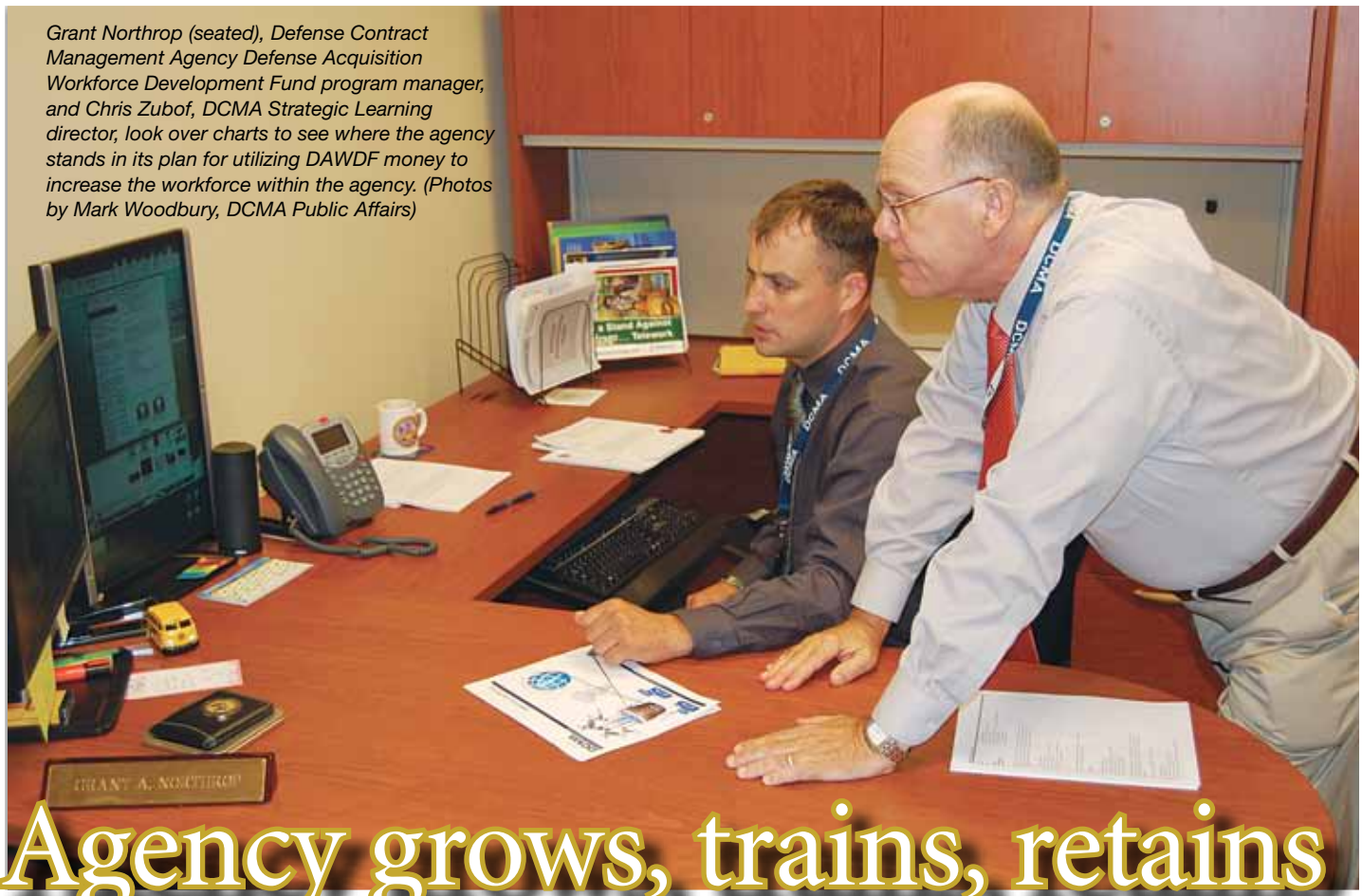


Grant Northrop (seated), Defense Contract Management Agency Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund program manager, and Chris Zubof, DCMA Strategic Learning director, look over charts to see where the agency stands in its plan for utilizing DAWDF money to increase the workforce within the agency. (Photos by Mark Woodbury, DCMA Public Affairs)



Agency grows, trains, retains through Section 852 funding

Mark Woodbury | DCMA Public Affairs

In Section 852 of the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act, the Department of Defense directed the establishment of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund, or DAWDF. The money within the fund has become commonly referred to as 852 funding throughout DOD and the agency.

The purpose of the DAWDF is to ensure DOD has the personnel and skills needed to perform its acquisition mission, provide appropriate oversight of contractor performance and ensure it receives the best value of taxpayers' dollars. The fund meets these objectives by ensuring money is spent within three basic categories – recruiting; training and development; and recognition and retention.

According to Grant Northrop, Defense

Contract Management Agency DAWDF program manager, “852 funding is a critical component of our agency’s human capital path forward. Currently, 24 percent of our workforce is retirement eligible with another 46 percent retirement eligible within five years. The issues that come from this reality are being addressed through 852 funding.”

RECRUITING

This funding has allowed for the hiring of approximately 10,000 new acquisition personnel throughout DOD. DCMA alone is authorized 2,747 additional positions through fiscal year 2015. At the end of October, the agency brought onboard 1,477 people through the fund and is planning on having the last employee hired

through 852 funding onboard by January of FY15.

Northrop said the fund has been crucial in bridging the knowledge gap caused by attrition within the agency. “In reality, our existing Keystone program was too small to adequately address attrition rates,” he said. “Section 852 funding has helped bridge the gap between the current workforce and the projected growth requirements of the agency – allowing us to grow our own acquisition workforce professionals.”

To meet the agency’s additional 2,747 hiring demand, DCMA currently used the open continuous job announcement process for contract administrators, quality assurance, industrial specialist and engineering posted on USA Jobs. There has been an enormous amount of interest



A recent group of Keystones take a class picture together during a two week course at the Defense Contract Management Agency Learning Center located just outside Fort Lee, Va.

in these announcements. When these job announcements were first placed on USA Jobs, within 72 hours there were more than 12,000 applicants who had applied.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

According to Chris Zubof, DCMA Strategic Learning director, 852 funds have allowed the agency to partner with the Defense Acquisition University and create the College of Contract Management.

In April, Director Charlie E. Williams, Jr. issued an On Point memo on Strengthening the Acquisition Workforce. This memo states the CCM will professionalize and strengthen the DCMA workforce by designing standardized accredited curricula and certifications that will better prepare agency employees for success.

The college will open its doors within the fiscal year. Dr. Kurt Stonerock, College of Contract Management dean, is currently seeking people with experience and expertise in several job series common within the agency to become professors within the college. Information on teaching opportunities within the CCM is available on the DAU website - www.DAU.mil. By accessing "Job Search" under the "Career at DAU" tab, interested persons will find all open announcements with quick access to USAJOBS to complete an on-line application. Those interested in the teaching opportunities can also contact Dr. Stonerock, at kurt.stonerock@dau.mil or (804) 734-0699 for any additional information on the CCM job


announcements.

Additionally, 852 funds were used to establish the DCMA Learning Center located just outside Fort Lee, Va. Opening its doors initially in February of 2011, in fiscal year 2012, the DLC held 21 2-week classes with approximately 525 Journeyman and Keystone employees getting agency-specific training.

Zubof said the DLC has also helped long-time DCMA employees receive new acquisition training keeping them up to date with the emerging technologies associated with the acquisition career field.

RECOGNITION AND RETENTION

Northrop said the agency is currently looking into different ways to use 852 funds to help retain the qualified acquisition workforce the agency employs. DAWDF allows money to be used toward recognizing employees through on-the-spot, teaming, or annual performance awards.

"The challenge that comes from growth is ensuring employees are engaged from day one and feel a sense of personal pride in what they are providing the American taxpayer," he said. "Our next milestone is utilizing 852 funds to recognize agency employees that have embodied the agency core values of integrity, service and excellence." 



Charlie E. Williams, Jr., Defense Contract Management Agency director, talks with Keystones about their experiences within the agency during their two week course at the DCMA Learning Center just outside Fort Lee, Va.. The Keystone course is paid for by using Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund money.