

## Report for NACEPT Subteam - Leadership Development at EPA September 2011

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Below are examples of best practices identified by EPA regional offices for “building the pipeline”:

### **EPA Region 10:**

- **Mentoring Project - "Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today"**--The Office of Management Programs (OMP) & Office of Air, Waste and Toxics (OAWT) co-sponsored a six-month Mentoring Project for its supervisors to help build their future leadership skills. Designed as a pilot, the program focused on basic mentoring, feedback skills, coaching, listening skills, building trust, non-verbal communication skills and measuring results. Each participating supervisor was paired with a "mentoree-employee" to share and apply the skills he/she was developing. The training involved a series of group and individual training sessions during the course of the six-month pilot.
- **HRC Mentor Program** - Our Human Resource Council (HRC) has developed an excellent year-long Mentor Program which begins in the fall of each year. The program is designed for increase understanding of EPA culture; enhance professional development, improve interoffice communication, and provide opportunities for improved problem solving. Each yearly effort is initiated by a kick-off training event, led by a local Mentoring expert and affiliate professor from the University of Washington, and is intended for sharing specific mentoring knowledge and experiences.
- **Seattle Federal Executive Board (SFEB) Associates Program** - The Seattle Federal Executive Board solicits nominations for its Associates Program every other year. A two-year experiential leadership development program with candidates targeted at grades GS-09-12, we have selected one Region 10 high-potential staff member to participate in the program for the past twenty years.
- **Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington** - Region 10 managers are offered the opportunity to participate in leadership offerings through the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs--the **Executive Management Program** and **Cascade Center Workshops**.

--The **Executive Management Program** is an intensive ten-day learning experience for senior managers. The course challenges leaders to re-examine their roles and responsibilities in public service, and to develop essential management skills. Though Region 10 selected two managers to attend in 2011, the university postponed the program until 2012.

--The **Cascade Center Workshops** are a series of short university quality professional development workshops that address the specific challenges, opportunities, and constraints faced by public and nonprofit sector employees. The programs are

developed by nationally recognized faculty and instructors. Six to ten Region 10 managers attend one or more of these workshops each year.

### **EPA Region 9:**

- Over the past 12 years, Region 9 has sponsored a regional Leadership Development Program which includes leadership trainings, individual assessments, personal coaching, rotational assignments, and team projects. Many graduates of the program have become managers within Region 9.
- The Region sponsors a formal Mentoring Program which matches managers and senior staff with employees interested in personal and career development.
- The Region also sponsors Executive Coaching program for managers, which provides coaching hours by independent certified executive coaches.
- Leadership development training classes are available to the workforce each year, including "Stepping up to Supervision" and "Crucial Conversations" feedback training.
- We rotate special assistant positions in the RA's Office.
- Region 9 participates with other Federal agencies, through the Federal Executive Board, in an interagency Leadership Development Program.
- There is also participation in EPA's annual Leadership and Professional Development Rotational Program (LPDRP).

Annually, we also advertise a handful of temporary promotion detail opportunities for management positions, which often have led to permanent placements.

### **EPA Region 8:**

Region 8's Leadership Development Program is strategic, equitable and transparent. The Region invests in three relevant and formal leadership development programs:

- The Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership (local);
- OPM's Colorado Leadership Development Program (local);
- USDA Executive Leadership Program (national).

Selections are made via a diverse leadership panel consisting of: a senior leader, a program director, a past graduate of the program and the Human Resources Program Lead.

Region 8 also implements an informal program through developmental and other rotational assignments:

- Region 8's Internal Training Program provides regional staff and managers with key leadership skill sets, with topics such as Communication, Building Trust, and Emotional Intelligence, etc.
- Region 8 has had a strong Coaching Program. An internal cadre of trained coaches is available to provide coaching at the staff level. The Region also funds external coaching services for the Region's managers and executives

- Region 8 also has a formal mentoring program to assist with leadership development at every level of the organization

#### **EPA Region 4:**

In Region 4, examples of developmental programs include the following:

- Participation with other Federal agencies, through the Federal Executive Board, in an interagency Leadership Development Program.
- Participation in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Atlantic Division Leadership Program. There is some preference for candidates in our Water Division who are likely to interact with the Corps.
- A rotating special assistant position in the RA's office.

#### **EPA Region 3:**

In Region 3, examples of developmental programs include the following:

- Temporary Developmental Assignments: short term (less than 120 day) details or projects that expose employees or supervisors to other areas or topics.
- Regional practice to announce details to encourage cross-programmatic exposure and using temporary promotion opportunities to fill supervisory positions.
- An active deputy division directors group that engages the regional Management Advisory Team (composed of first line supervisors) to ensure we have a pipeline to understand the management challenges in the region and allow for participation in finding solutions.
- Rotating special assistant positions for senior managers. This provides staff exposure to the day to day leadership challenges and management responsibilities.
- Sending managers to the Federal Executive Institute (FEI) training courses, OPM courses and encouraging staff to use the IDP tool and to take leadership/ management courses.
- Management Exchange - a series of interactive sessions for existing supervisors that deal with current topics or challenges, e.g., performance issues, flexiplace challenges, preparing for mid years, etc.

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#### **EPA Region 1:**

Region 1 has engaged in activities to strengthen and develop our present and future leaders to support a forward thinking and high performing organization.

In collaboration with an external consulting firm, we have undertaken activities to implement training plans that address specific needs that strengthen and develop the senior leadership team, and support the development of future leaders. The senior leadership team participated in a program where they developed a more focused team purpose, team norms and team values. In doing this, they prioritized our initiatives and refined the planned outcomes for the region's

climate, stormwater, and communities initiatives. We continue to apply our learning as we move forward to other issues. An additional expectation of this initiative is that the senior leadership team will employ this approach within their offices, providing, through example and mentoring, leadership skills that strengthen the next generation of leaders. The second component of this initiative was focused on developing the effectiveness of our supervisors/managers as leaders. We identified the two most important needs and trained our supervisors in Situational Team Leadership and Dealing with Difficult Conversations.

Our HR department developed a New Supervisor Orientation to complement the Successful Leaders Program. This program provides a four-hour briefing on human resources programs, responsibilities of a new supervisor, and provides important contacts within the Region to assist our supervisors in successfully performing the requirements of their job. Additionally, we developed a New Supervisor Handbook, citing and linking Agency guidance and Regional policies to support this training program.

We have established a Manager's Newsletter, published bi-monthly, that provides Region 1 managers and supervisors with useful information on National and Regional Human Resource matters. Through this Newsletter, we provide articles, guidance and practical "how to" information that develops the expertise of our managers and supervisors in addressing a range of employee related matters to effectively and efficiently achieve results that will support our mission.

We have instituted Quarterly Managers Forums providing the opportunity for the Regional and Deputy Regional Administrator to share significant activities occurring across the Region. This supports the One EPA effort and reinforces the importance of cross cutting initiatives. In conjunction with management volunteers, we develop purposeful agendas that address their areas of concern. Guest speakers provide training on topics that are important for them to understand as management personnel but which are not generally supported by established training or communication venues. We develop specialized training based on topics of importance identified in these meetings.

As in other regions, we have a rotating special assistant position in the RA's office. This opportunity is offered to GS-13's and above to attract a wide pool of potential applicants. We also have a mentoring program, involving all levels of management, who engage in mentoring employees at all levels of the organization.