

CHAPTER 4 - LDP REQUIREMENTS/TRAINING

The best source for information about the Leadership Development Program (LDP) can be found on the LDP Web site:

<http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/ldp/>

The NASA Headquarters Training and Development Web site is also very useful:

<http://ohr.gsfc.nasa.gov/DevGuide/Hq/hqtrngopps.htm>.

LDP REQUIREMENTS

There are a few formal requirements of the Program that you need to be aware of during your year:

1. Requirements for Reimbursement of Expenses Related to NASA Training and Development

Each participant is required to sign a Continuing Service Agreement that acknowledges his or her potential financial responsibility to the Agency if he or she voluntarily leaves the Agency within three years of completing the program.

2. Performance Plan/Appraisal

You will remain under the Performance Appraisal Program at your Home Center during your program year. However, your Performance Plan must include objectives and performance requirements applicable to your developmental work assignments. You need to get your Home Supervisor and your development work assignment Host Supervisor jointly involved in the process. You are required to contact your Home Supervisor to schedule a review of your performance plan for the year. You will need to provide a list of your accomplishments (a self-assessment) to help your Home Supervisor determine an overall performance rating. Your mid-term and final reports, required as part of the program, provide a documentation of your accomplishments, as well as input from your developmental work assignment Host Supervisor. Your Host Supervisor is responsible for providing any needed information (i.e., a written performance evaluation) to your Home Supervisor. To avoid any misunderstandings, we suggest you discuss this with your Home Supervisor prior to your developmental assignment to insure he/she understands the process.

It is imperative that you keep your Home Supervisor informed of your developmental work assignments and accomplishments. It is especially important to keep your Home management up-to-date on your activities.

As busy as your developmental program year will be, it behooves you to stay in touch. You can schedule reminders for yourself to call your Home Supervisor every other week. Also, you may want to take advantage of e-mail.

Sending a note to your Home Supervisor, past Project Managers, and upper management each month, summarizing your experiences, is an effective method of communication and goes a long way towards keeping your Home Supervisor informed. Of course, e-mail cannot replace verbal communication.

3. Collateral Work Assignment

All yearlong program participants are required to complete a collateral work assignment at some point during the year. This assignment must be a minimum of 90 days and performed in an organization different from that of the primary work assignment.

If your collateral is with another Federal Agency or a non-Federal organization you must get approval from your Home Supervisor and complete an Agreement for Outside Developmental Assignments. Legal approval may also be required. This year's class had varying experiences getting the outside collaterals approved. In one case, it didn't work out because the legal offices couldn't agree on the language. Bottom line: give yourself time to get the Agreement worked out before you start your assignment.

Your collateral work assignment can be performed at any time that is most convenient. Begin looking for your collateral assignment as early as possible, but stay open to the many possibilities that will become available during your primary assignment. Find out about opportunities for collateral assignments by talking to individuals in the areas/codes that you are interested in working. Make sure your primary work assignment Supervisor is informed as to when you intend to do the collateral work assignment.

Participants sometimes lose sight of the value of a collateral assignment. Being the highly motivated people that we are, we can thoroughly engross ourselves into our primary assignments and leave no time or energy to pursue a collateral. However, one of the objectives of the program is to encourage new work paradigms. By engaging in the program, you've already shown your initiative for pursuing new opportunities. Extend that

behavior by building in flexibility into your co-lateral; don't get so deep into the critical path of any program or project that you can't appreciate the options that the program provides. This is not to suggest that you be superficial about your primary assignment, but rather to select tasks that can be completed within the timeframe of the year so that you are free to pursue other activities and training.

4. LDP Meetings

There are many planned program meetings/events throughout the year. They are about the only opportunities for your entire class to get together after you leave Orientation. Periodically, you will receive an e-mail notification of upcoming events, such as the Shared Experiences, the AA (Associate/Assistant Administrator) Briefings, Workshops, and other activities. In any event, it is your responsibility to keep in touch with Code FT and/or with your fellow program participants, to make sure you are abreast of the latest information that may impact you.

Some of the program training experiences you will encounter will stretch you. That is, you may become uncomfortable with some of the 'coaching' exercises that you will find yourself in during the group training experiences. Our advice is to not become defensive or afraid. Realize that these exercises are for your benefit. Chances are, no one else will take the time, effort, or the risk to honestly and professionally critique and evaluate your leadership potential.

Take advantage of these opportunities by being 1) open to criticism, 2) honest with yourself, 3) willing to try a new way of thinking and presenting yourself, and 4) open to changes.

I. Shared Experience Meetings

Once a month, sometimes in conjunction with an AA Briefing (see below), Code FT will schedule a "Shared Experience" meeting. These meetings are an excellent opportunity to share information, experiences, problems, special topics, etc. with your fellow participants at Headquarters and the Field Centers via teleconferencing. This is also a great time to have questions answered by those in the know.

Participants are required to attend 80% of these meetings.

II. Associate/Assistant Administrator (AA) Briefings

Throughout your program year, there will be scheduled overviews of the NASA Headquarters Codes, usually presented by the Associate/Assistant Administrator. These AA Briefings are an excellent opportunity to meet

with senior NASA Managers to learn about their organization and its role within NASA. You can also ask questions that are related to the AA's leadership journey. A biography of the speaker is provided in advance. All attempts are made for the handouts to be distributed to the Field Centers prior to the briefing. Make it a point to attend the AA briefings as they are an excellent chance to learn about NASA first-hand from those who make the decisions.

Participants are required to attend 80% of the AA Briefings.

5. Workshops

There are five workshops after Orientation, scheduled throughout your program year that you are required to attend:

I. Results Workshop and Congressional Operations (September)

Develop a shared understanding of the larger NASA context. Enhance leadership skills and clarify leadership strategies/actions for the year.

You will spend a week on Capitol Hill, listening to speakers explain how Congress works, be entertained by humorous stories about the different administrations, and attend House and Senate meetings. You will walk away with a feeling of excitement from just being there and a better understanding of how things in our government actually happen.

II. Accelerating Change Workshop (December)

Enhance leadership skills including innovation and creativity. Explore barriers and individual gifts and talents in the context of leveraging results. Assess effectiveness of leadership strategy and make mid-course corrections.

During this workshop, the class usually plans a Christmas party. Since the class is responsible for this event, the format is up to you.

III. Expanding Possibilities Workshop (February)

Customized site visit for leadership benchmarking, to industry or other government organization to learn from other effective leaders.

IV. Re-Entry Workshop (April)

Enhance leadership skills of vision, strategy, speaking, listening, coaching and feedback. Develop individual re-entry strategies to

facilitate the returns to your Centers. Develop professional profile to highlight accomplishments and qualifications.

You will discuss the re-entry process, gain a better understanding of your career objectives, draft a resume-like profile, and hear from past participants about their re-entry experiences. Re-entry refers to a series of informational interviews that you will set up with the senior managers (Center Director, etc.) at your Home Center to help you prepare for your return. The "normal" re-entry process consists of sending out profiles and cover letters, scheduling meetings with whomever you want to talk with, and traveling to your Home Center to accomplish these meetings. They are not job interviews. Most participants do their re-entry trip in late May or early June.

V. Workshop and Graduation Ceremony (July)

During this workshop, you will celebrate results and close out the learning community experience. At the end of the workshop, there will be an official graduation ceremony, at NASA Headquarters, with the NASA Administrator, followed by a small reception.

6. Coaching Sessions

Three, one-on-one coaching sessions are strongly encouraged during the program year. These individual coaching sessions are tailored to the participant's developmental needs, and can be very beneficial, especially if you find yourself stuck on a particular issue or finding a collateral

7. Reports

I. Mid-Term Report

At the mid-point in your program year, you are required to fill out the Mid-term report describing your experiences and accomplishments. In addition, your Host Supervisor is required to fill in the last block of the form summarizing your work performance and any recommendations. These reports are to be submitted to Chris Williams, (Code FT), and a copy sent to your Home Center Supervisor. Your Host Supervisor's report could be an important element for your performance appraisal evaluation by your Home Center Supervisor.

An MSWord file of the Mid-Term Report is available on this Web site in the Reports section.

II. Final Report

At the end of your program year, you and your Host Supervisor are required to fill in the Final Program Report. These reports are to be submitted to Chris Williams (Code FT), and a copy sent to your Home Center Supervisor. This is the same procedure as was required for the Mid-Term Report (above).

An MSWord file of the Final Report is available on this Web site in the Reports section.

At the end of the year you are required to fill in the Program Evaluation.

An MSWord file of the Program Evaluation is available on this Web site in the Reports section.

LDP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Even though your entire year can be considered a training opportunity, there are other formal training opportunities you should be aware of. We recommend you take advantage of these opportunities by scheduling them early in your year. A description of some of these training opportunities are listed below. There are many others as well. If you discover a good one, then please add it to the list for next year's class.

The Training and Development Web site <http://ohr.gsfc.nasa.gov/DevGuide/Hq/hqtrngopps.htm> contains all educational and employee development programs sponsored by Headquarters. Feel free to contact the Headquarters Training Office for further information on the programs and courses listed on the Web site.

Payment of Training/Nomination Procedures

In general, the program will pay for your formal training. The amount each program participant receives for this type of training is \$1,000.

This money can be spent on courses, conference fees, or other training materials that are intended to improve job performance. This money cannot be used for membership dues, test fees or software.

This money also cannot be used to fund travel related to training. The program will not provide other travel funds in support of using this training money or to attend Agency-wide courses.

Participants can contact their Home Centers or request travel funds from their assignment organization, if NASA. Other Federal Agencies could provide invitational

travel orders. Program participants on assignments in corporations or other non-Government organizations cannot accept travel funds.

All training funds must be used during the program year. These funds cannot be used to fund training to be taken after returning to your Home Center.

All requests for training must be submitted to Linda Landrus on a HQ Form 56 AND be signed by your assignment supervisor. This signature confirms that the supervisor is aware of the training and the dates you will be out of the office, not that they are paying for the course.

Depending upon the training budgetary constraints in a given fiscal year, the cost for some of the courses, which fall in the "Agency Funded" category, may be deducted from the participant's allocated training budget.

Popular courses that typically fall under the "Agency Funded" courses are *The Human Element*, *Systems Engineering*, *Program Control Overview*, and other Program/Project Management Initiative courses. Computer courses sponsored by NASA Headquarters also fall under this category.

All that is required, for the courses indicated above, is a NHQ 228 Form, "Application For No Cost Training" (See Fig. 5.1). We suggest you make two copies of the confirmation copy -- one for your personal records and one to send to your Home Center for inclusion in your Official Personnel Folder.

For program participants who anticipate training other than the "No Cost Training", you will need to complete NHQ Form 56, "Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training", (see figure 5.2). This form should be submitted through your Host Supervisor or Home Center if located at a non-NASA facility to Code FT as far in advance as possible. It is your work assignment code or Home Center that is responsible for the travel expenses related to your individual training.

In Block 4, type "(Name of Program) Participant, and in Block 24, type "Christine R. Williams, Director Professional Development". You will receive an approved confirmation copy of the form from the Headquarters Training Office, Code CP-1. We also suggest you make two copies of the confirmation copy, one for your personal records, and one to send to your Home Center for inclusion in your Official Personnel Folder.

Participants at the Field Centers use the Headquarters' form (referenced above) because Code FT processes and pays for all training.

If you want to take additional training courses, which will exceed the amount you are authorized, you may want to check with your Home Center or your Host Supervisor to determine if they will pick up the tab for some of these courses.

NASA Sponsored Training

During the program Orientation, you will receive an up-to-date schedule of Program courses that will be offered in the upcoming year.

You should take some time during your Orientation to map out the other courses that you would like to take during the next year.

[Table 5.1](#) is the master schedule for APPL courses currently being offered. You can also contact Ed Hoffman, Code FT, for any questions as well as recommendations on these and other courses.

Recommendations - Popular Course

Course Title: Project Management (PM)

Objective: The PM course is a ten-day program designed to provide early career exposure to the many skills and techniques used in the management of successful NASA projects. The course is offered three times a year at the Management Education Center (MEC) in Wallops Island, VA. Sessions A and B are scheduled at least one month apart. Each session begins on Sunday afternoon and ends midday Friday. The course provides an introduction to the basic principles and techniques of project management as they are applied at NASA, including refining strengths and weaknesses, learning how to gain equitable contributions from project team members and goal setting.

Course Title: Advanced Project Management (APM)

Objective: The APM course is a ten-day program, which expands on the PM material and provides mid-career project managers with an opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and to improve their project management skills. The APM is also taught at the MEC at Wallops. A follow-on course for all APM participants is held once a year to share lessons learned.

Course Title: The Human Element

Objective: This one-week (Sunday evening to Friday noon) course is more participative and experimental than other NASA sponsored programs and involves extensive introspection and self-analysis. It is most effective when participants are there because they personally choose to participate. It provides a greater awareness of (1) how one behaves towards other people and the effects of that behavior, (2) how one's behavior towards others may depend on how we feel about them, (3) how our feelings about

others may depend on our feelings about ourselves, and (4) how behavior, feelings and self-concept affect work relationships, productivity, motivation, and team development. The course is offered at the MEC also.

Course Title: Systems Engineering (SE)

Objective: This is a series of Center-based courses structured for NASA project personnel on the general topic of systems engineering. It describes, at a high level, the process of carrying out systems engineering through a project's life cycle. At present, there are at least three different courses being provided depending on the needs and desires of the sponsoring Center. This course is designed to provide an understanding of the systems engineering process and the associated tools and techniques commonly used by systems engineers at NASA.

For more information on these and other courses check out the Code FT Web page.

Training Opportunities At Headquarters

NASA Headquarters Computer Training Center

The Headquarters Training Office, Code CP-1, offers a variety of computer software classes for both IBM PC and Macintosh computers. The Computer Training Center is located in the NASA HQ Building. Call 358-1111 for information and class offerings. This center can also provide information as well as registration for courses that may not offered on-site during a particular time frame.

Additional Training Opportunities

Check with your Host Supervisor for the Center's training resources. For example, NASA Headquarters periodically publishes NASA Activities and the Human Resources Bulletin usually lists other training opportunities.

Local Washington DC Colleges and Universities

Local universities and colleges include:

- George Mason University, (<http://www.gmu.edu/>)
- George Washington University (<http://www.gwu.edu/>),
- Catholic University (<http://www.cua.edu/>),
- American University (<http://www.american.edu/>),

- University of Maryland (<http://www.umd.edu/>),
- Bowie State University (<http://www.bowiestate.edu/>),
- Marymount University (<http://www.marymount.edu/>),
- Howard University (<http://www.howard.edu/>), and
- Georgetown University (<http://www.georgetown.edu/ssce/contedu/>).

USDA Graduate School

Don't be fooled by the name. The USDA Graduate School calls itself, The Government Trainer, and offers business and government-related courses for government professionals, (as opposed to farmers). This school offers more than 1,000 courses in 50 subject areas during the day, evenings, and weekends. The school has an office in the Capital Gallery Building (1st Floor) next to the L'Enfant Plaza Metro stop.

A course catalog can be picked up at that location or you can call 1-888-744-GRAD or go to their Web site at <http://www.grad.usda.gov/>.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

OPM offers courses for leadership and management that give you the opportunity to experience coursework with like-minded individuals from other Agencies. Look for courses offered for the Senior Executive Service (SES); you can usually get into those as part of the other Agency developmental Programs. The URL is www.opm.gov/ses/.

Additional Information

Call the Headquarters Training Office at 358-1162 for information about additional training opportunities.

**Karen Smith updated this chapter.
Please contact her at 202-275-0528 for more information.**

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