

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Buffalo District, Corps of Engineers
1776 Niagara Street
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CELRBM 690-1-30

CELRB-DE

Memorandum
No. 690-1-30

22 April 2002

Civilian Personnel
DISTRICT MENTORING PROGRAM

1. **Purpose.** This memorandum prescribes policy, procedures, responsibilities, and guidance for the Mentoring Program of the Buffalo District.
2. **Applicability.** This memorandum applies to all civilian employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District. Participation is voluntary.
3. **Distribution Statement.** Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.
4. **References.**
 - (a) DA Pamphlet 690-46, Mentoring for Civilian Members of the Force.
 - b. AR 690-400, Chapter 410, Training.
 - c. DA Pamphlet 690-43, A Supervisor's Guide to Career Development and Counseling for Career Program Employees.
5. **Policy.** The art of mentoring is based on the transfer of institutional and technical knowledge between individuals. This memorandum implements the philosophy that mentoring begins from the first day of a new employee's career and continues until he/she leaves.
6. **Terms.** *Mentors* are experienced or senior employees who are willing to assist/advise an associate in the development of his/her career and career opportunities, and evaluate their progress towards goals and objectives. *Associates* are employees in the early stages of their careers who are willing to benefit from the knowledge and experience of their mentors. *Career Program Coordinators* are senior managers in a particular career field, appointed by the Commander, to coordinate the mentoring program.

7. **Responsibilities.**

a. The Commander and Deputy Commander will set the tone and create the climate in which mentoring and self-development is actively encouraged and supported. They will encourage all District employees to participate in the program as mentors or associates.

b. The Career Program Managers will assist the Commander in matching associates with mentors. They will arbitrate differences between the associates and their mentors.

c. Managers and Supervisors will support individuals who enroll in the program either as mentors or associates. Supervisors are mentors by the nature of their position. Supervisors will support and are encouraged to serve as mentors outside their immediate work areas.

d. The Executive Assistant will provide program direction and administration for the Commander. This will include announcing program opportunities, maintaining and updating resource materials, provide guidance to mentors and associates, track and evaluate statistical information regarding the program, provide training for mentors and associates and monitor each phase of the program.

e. The Mentoring Champion will be appointed by the Commander to help in the administration of the Mentoring Program. This will include maintaining a public folder, preferably in Microsoft Outlook for distribution of new material and sharing information among all the mentors and associates. Each May, the Mentoring Champion will be renewed or a new Champion chosen.

f. Mentors will serve as teacher, coach, and advisor. They must be willing to make the time commitment to be a mentor. They will provide constructive supportive feedback to associates. They will also advise, as necessary, the District's policies and practices on various issues. The mentor's relationship with his associate will also entail a confidential counselor role. A mentor will not be expected nor allowed to confer with their associate's supervisor, nor serve as an advocate for the associate by creating career opportunities for him.

g. Associates should understand that their participation in this program is not a promise of a promotion or different position in the future. Associates must set realistic goals for themselves and know what they expect to accomplish from working with a mentor. They must be willing to make the time commitment to be an associate, and must be committed to being an active learner. It is the associate's responsibility to apply the information learned in the mentoring process to their every day work life. The

reasons for participating in the Mentoring Program need to be added to the associates five-year Individual Development Plan (IDP).

h. The Buffalo District's Affirmative Employee Program Plan (AEPP) identifies job titles, groups, and units that are underrepresented and underutilized for minorities, females, and individuals with disabilities (covered groups). The mentoring program will assist the Buffalo District with achieving its affirmative action goals by encouraging minority, female and disabled employees participation in the mentoring program. Mentoring may lead to the identification of career paths and/or career development programs.

i. The Senior Leadership Council will review the AEPP and provide information to supervisor/team leaders of focused job areas that are underrepresented and underutilized for covered groups. The supervisors/team leaders will discuss the mentoring program with all their employees to include minorities, females and individuals with disabilities. The team leaders will encourage and support all their employees to apply to become associates or mentors. Once associates and the positions that they would like to learn about are identified, the Career Program Coordinators will attempt to match an associate with a mentor from that career field. The Career Program Coordinators are designated by the Commander and are the senior civilian in a particular career field. If a match can't be found, the Career Program Coordinators will encourage the team leader or supervisor for the position to apply to become a mentor.

8. **Mentoring Program.**

a. **Types of Mentoring Relationships.**

(1) Supervisory Mentoring: All good supervisors mentor their subordinates to a degree, but usually only in regard to their current job.

(2) Situational Mentoring: The right help at the right time provided by someone when an employee needs guidance and advice. It is usually short term addressing an immediate situation, but can transition to a more long-term connection.

(3) Formal Mentoring: Formal mentoring is discussed in Section 8C.

(4) Informal Mentoring: Occurs when one person seeks another for career advice or to be their career guide. If a relationship continues to grow over time, the two individuals should considering entering into a formal mentoring agreement.

b. **Elements of Successful Mentoring.** In a successful mentoring pairing, the mentor and the associate must both want the relationship to work and must be willing to commit time and energy to the process. Six elements essential for the partnership to work are:

(1) Respect: This is established when the associate recognizes the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the mentor and when the mentor appreciates the success the associate has reached to date and the employee's desire to develop to their full potential.

(2) Trust: Mentors and associate should build trust through effective communication, availability, reliability and loyalty.

(3) Partnership Building: The mentor and associate are professional partners. Barriers that partnerships face may include miscommunication, uncertainty of each other's expectations, and perceptions of other people. In order to overcome these barriers, they should work together to maintain communication, address and fix obvious problems as they occur, examine how decisions might affect goals, and have frequent discussions on progress.

(4) Realistic Expectations and Self-Perception: A mentor encourages the associate to have realistic expectations of the associate's capabilities, the amount of time and energy the mentor can commit to the relationship, and what the associate must do to earn their support for his/her career development. The mentor gives honest feedback when discussing the associate's traits, abilities, talents, beliefs, and roles. Honesty is the key and without honest feedback, the partnership will cease to exist.

(5) Time: Set aside the time to meet, even by e-mail or telephone. Don't change times unless absolutely necessary. Control interruptions. Frequently "check in" with each other via informal telephone calls, e-mails, etc.

(6) Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.

c. **Mentoring Program for Career Permanent Employees.** The Mentoring Program will be based on a yearly cycle, from May to April of the following year. Each April new applications will be accepted from those wishing to become associates and mentors. Participating associates and mentors will fill out their evaluation forms and submit them to the Executive Assistant. The Commander and Career Program Coordinators will meet to discuss the evaluations and new application and decide both to renew or dissolve existing partnerships and to select new associate/mentor

partnerships. Appendix B shows a flow chart which graphically displays the components of the mentoring process.

(1) Qualities of Mentors.

(a) Successful mentors are: patient, effective teachers, respectful, people oriented, motivators, good listeners, confident, situationally aware, achievers, highly visible, proud of the Corps, honest, knowledgeable, objective, friendly, supportive, caring, trustworthy, and moral.

(b) To maintain effective mentoring relationships, mentors share their knowledge and experience in an understandable and relevant manner. They know what they can bring to the relationship and are open minded and willing to learn, too.

(2) Qualities of Associates.

(a) Successful associates are: eager to learn, focused on personal growth, open to constructive feedback, team players, contributors to the effectiveness of the organization, career oriented, patient, positive thinkers, and good listeners.

(b) Associates recognize the need for guidance and support from more knowledgeable, experienced people and possess an enthusiastic desire for personal growth. They assess the impact of the mentoring relationship on their short and long term goals, their progress in their current career fields, and the potential for career changes.

(3) Objectives. The mentoring program's main objectives are to help associates learn more about the Buffalo District and achieve their career goals; and help mentors share what they have learned. The mentoring relationship is designed to deepen the associates' understanding of different perspectives on the District and advocate career development throughout the Buffalo District. Mentoring is an opportunity to preserve institutional knowledge and pass it on to the next generation of employees. This program is not intended to replace ongoing mentor/associate relationships.

(4) Benefits. The mentoring program cannot survive without the active participation of supervisors, mentors, and associates. It requires the dedication and support of the agency's management, mentors, and associates to accomplish its purposes. While each participant must define his or her own purposes, many benefits are shared. When it comes to benefits, mentoring is multi-faceted. The mentor, the associate, and the organization can all benefit from a well-founded mentoring relationship.

(a) Benefits to the Associate:

- Increase individual's ability to manage his/her own career.
- Develop individual short-, mid-, and long-term goals, while exploring ways to meet those goals. These goals need to be identified in the associate IDP.
- Enhanced personal growth and realization of potential.
- Obtain opportunities for feedback and self-evaluation of needs, interests, and skills in relation to career opportunities within the agency.
- Identify resources to promote career development needs.
- Cultivate job skills and abilities to increase productivity and potential.

(b) Benefits to the Mentor:

- Participate in the nurturing of tomorrow's talent.
- Provide guidance and assistance in career development.
- Provide insight into the next generation's interests and capabilities.
- Help motivate personal and professional development of associates.
- Share expertise to minimize the knowledge gap in the future of the Corps.
- Gain satisfaction by helping the associate define and attain goals, identify options, plan strategies, and solve problems.
- Gain perspective from employees who mentors rarely talk frankly with or have an opportunity to supervise.
- Reflect on personal accomplishments and consider the mentor's own goals and performance.

(c) Benefits to the Agency:

- Improved retention of employees in the workforce.
- Improved morale, job satisfaction, and work performance by matching needs and expertise of members within the organization.
- Open lines of communication throughout the organization.
- Broaden understanding of the organizational mission and interrelationships.
- Maintain an organizational staff of talented, motivated, and ambitious people.
- Create collaborative setting for problem solving, teamwork, and performance improvements.
- Offer a means of expressing new ideas for consideration, which encourage a team concept.

(5) Program Administration.

(a) Eligibility for Participation. All employees of the Buffalo District, in a full- or part-time permanent status, are eligible to participate in the program as mentors and/or associates. Participation is voluntary.

(b) Orientation. The orientation will include a brief overview of the program, stressing that there are no guaranteed advancements or job changes, and will discuss briefly the roles of mentors, associates, and the Buffalo District. Orientations will be held at the beginning of each mentoring round. An associate or mentor will be given a one-on-one briefing on the program upon request at any time.

(6) Applications.

The open season for the Mentoring Program is the month of April. Associate candidates need to submit Form A-1. Mentor candidates need to submit Form A-2. Copies of the Applications are found in Appendix A: Forms and in the Microsoft Outlook Public Folder for Mentoring. All applications will be forwarded to the Executive Assistant by 30 April.

(7) Selection and Matching of Mentors/Associates.

(a) Each May the Commander, the Career Program Coordinators and the Executive Assistant will meet to facilitate in the matching process. This will ensure support at the highest level and provide the greatest opportunity for success. Once the due date for the applications and evaluation form has passed, the Commander and Career Program Managers will meet to screen the applications and determine possible partnerships. Each associate will be notified (by e-mail) of the panel's first choice for a mentor. The associate will then have five (5) working days to accept the choice or request a different mentor.

(b) After the selection process is complete, the Executive Assistant and Mentoring Champion will arrange an orientation of all mentors and associates to announce the pairings. During the orientation program, goals and objectives will be reiterated, along with program reporting and requirements. The Executive Assistant will maintain the list of the current round of mentoring relationships and those awaiting assignment in the next round of mentoring. Each mentoring partnership will be assigned a Career Program Coordinator as a contact.

(c) Upon assignment, the mentor and associate will submit the Mentor/Associate Agreement Form A-3 to the Executive Assistant by the end of June. The agreement will be forwarded to the Commander (and Career Program Coordinators) for their comments or approval. Form A-3 contains guidelines that should be followed by the mentor and the associate. This is a pact between the associate and the mentor. It states what the associate hopes to achieve while participating and what the mentor agrees to undertake on behalf of the associate. This should be developed and signed by the mentor and associate by their second meeting.

(d) Occasionally, a pair may report their mentoring relationship is not working. If problems are encountered, the pair will contact their Career Program Coordinator for advice. The Career Program Coordinator will talk to both parties and discuss strategies to improve the relationship. If the problem persists, the relationship may have to be concluded. If they wish, both participants' names will be maintained for future mentoring rounds.

(e) By the end of April each year, both the associate and mentor will submit a completed Form A-4, Program Evaluation Form to the Deputy District Commander. Each May, the Commander and the Career Program Coordinators will meet to evaluate the success of the mentoring program. All existing mentor/associate partnerships will be either renewed or dissolved based on their evaluation forms. New partnerships will be

created from the pool of remaining and new associates and mentors. The next round of mentoring will commence during the month of May.

(8) **Additional Resources.** There are a number of correspondence courses, audio and video tapes, and books that are available for participants' use. Also, the CPOL Website at <http://cpol.army.mil> contains pertinent information. All participants are encouraged to use these materials.

(9) **Confidentiality.** Any associate, mentor, committee member, other individual involved with the District's mentoring program must maintain the confidentiality of all information concerning the participants of this program in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

2 Appendices:
App A - Forms
App B - Flowchart

/S/
CHRISTOPHER G. HALL
Major, EN
Deputy Commander

DISTRIBUTION:
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APPENDIX A

FORMS

A-1: Associate Application

A-2: Mentor Application

A-3: Mentor/Associate Agreement

A-4: Mentoring Program Evaluation

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**Form A-1: Associate Application
U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers, Buffalo Distirct
Mentoring Program**

Name: _____

Title: _____ Telephone: _____

Organization: _____

Brief work history (include job title, series, grade, and description of duties). You may attach one additional typewritten page:

Educational Background:

What kinds of assistance do you need/want from a mentor?

Do you have a preference for someone to be your mentor (who)? _____

What are your career goals? Include fields of interest/occupations.

Ideally, what would you like to accomplish as a result of this mentoring relationship?

I agree to actively participate in the Buffalo District Mentoring Program.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I agree to support this employee's participation in the Buffalo District Mentoring Program.

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Form A-2: Mentor Application
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District
Mentoring Program

Name: _____

Title: _____

Telephone: _____

Organization: _____

Brief work history (include job title, series, grade, and description of duties). You may attach one additional typewritten page:

Educational Background:

What specific development objectives do you possess that would assist you as a mentor?

Ideally, what would you like to accomplish as a result of the mentoring relationship?

I agree to actively participate in the Buffalo District Mentoring Program.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I agree to support this employee's participation in the Buffalo District Mentoring Program.

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

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**Form A-3: Mentor/Associate Agreement
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District
Mentoring Program**

We understand that each of us is responsible to:

- maintain the confidentiality of what we say to each other
- set realistic and challenging goals for this relationship
- meet regularly at the times we agree on
- give each other honest feedback
- evaluate our relationship regularly, and assess how we are progressing toward the goals below

The associate is responsible for:

- clarifying the goals they want to achieve in the mentoring relationship, with the mentor's help.
- contacting the mentor and setting up the meetings.
- following up on the tasks agreed.
- gaining the supervisor's support.

The mentor is responsible for:

- providing coaching and counseling
- being unbiased about the associate's situation
- providing objective and positive information and suggestions on anything which affects the associate's career and marketability
- helping the associate set goals and strategize to reach them

For the first six months, our goals are to:

(Note: Be sure to list goals which the two of you have the power to achieve together. For example, a goal might be "apply to college and organize all the required transcripts and recommendations, with mentor's feedback on the application," but not "admittance to college.")

By the end of one year together, our goals are to:

During December of each year, evaluate whether you want to continue on the evaluation sheet.

Associate's signature: _____ Date: _____

Mentor's signature: _____ Date: _____

**Form A-4: Evaluation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District
Mentoring Program**

Name: _____ Date: _____

Please identify your role (circle one):

Mentor

Associate

Please take a minute to complete this evaluation form for our records.

1. Were the short-term goals established for development met by the associate? Please explain:

2. What changes do you believe would improve the Mentoring Program?

3. Did you receive management support while participating in the Mentoring Program? (Yes/No)
Please explain:

4. Please comment on benefits/risks experienced?

5. Do you wish to continue your participate in this program (Yes/No)? Would you like to switch mentors or associates (Yes/no)? Please share your reasons.

6. What did you gain personally from this mentoring experience?

7. Please add any additional comments you have concerning the Mentoring Program.

APPENDIX B - FLOWCHART

1 April

1 May

1 June

31 March

