NCSHA 2012 Awards

Category: Management Innovation
Subcategory: Human Resources
Entry Name: DHCD's In-House Training and Education Program

Why Training and Education are Important to DHCD

The DHCD Strategic Training Plan was designed to support and enhance DHCD's workforce, to provide necessary tools and strategies that enable the agency to accomplish its **mission** and **vision** (an end that we aspire to), while encompassing our **values**.

Workforce development was identified as a strategic priority along with efficiency and effectiveness, entrepreneurship and innovation, and communication and knowledge. Workforce development may be DHCD's most essential strategic priority, as the performance of our employees will impact the larger goals established in the DHCD Strategic Plan.

Problems/Concerns

Budget cuts, impending retirements, leadership bench strength, and new hire retention are major issues impacting how state agencies plan and implement training initiatives.

As the job market improves, DHCD fears they will lose their best employees, and as a result we are looking to improve the quality of new hires as well as the development of our staff.

At least 22.5 percent (64 employees) of DHCD's most knowledgeable and experienced employees are eligible to retire within the next year. These retirements will be occurring at all levels of the agency. With recruitment challenges and a large number of pending retirements, the staff is feeling an increasing amount of pressure to fill the knowledge gaps caused by employee vacancies. Thus, it was necessary that DHCD develop strategies for professional development to ensure the success of its employees.

Agency and Staff Needs

DHCD determines training needs, interests, learning styles and preferences in order to offer courses that will promote optimal learning. The staff is surveyed to get feedback on their learning and development needs. Supervisors and managers are consulted to find out what they feel their staff needs in order to better service Maryland citizens.

Providing employees with the necessary skill sets to be successful and fully qualified results in improved morale and agency loyalty, increased employee retention and workforce flexibility. The development of soft skills is needed to help facilitate continuous learning. By supporting employees to develop their skills, DHCD managers are empowering staff to manage their career in pursuit of personal, team or organizational goals. This will then impact agency performance.

As business needs are constantly changing, there is an ongoing need for employees and DHCD to update their capabilities. Therefore, it is necessary that the agency offer training and development activities to support and maximize the current workforce.

Research has shown that superior employee knowledge and competencies contribute to positive competitive advantages and financial performance. The goal is to get the right employees, with the right skills, in the right seats "on the bus." Employees need to be engaged, inspired and productively channeling their energies.

Developing a Program

Core courses in the areas of communication, math, accounting, customer service, computer applications, housing programs and management provide the skill set and knowledge to succeed. Career Development and enhancement can continue with specialized courses that are job specific.

Training in housing programs acclimates new hires at a fast pace. To enhance staff's ability to provide exceptional service and manage employees, constituents, citizens and partners, staff can take the customer service courses. With these courses, staff can learn ways to handle telephone transactions, resolve conflicts, and provide exceptional service.

To be a more confident communicator, staff can enhance oral and written communication skills. After completing this training, employees will be able to present in a professional manner and communicate clearly to groups large and small.

To enhance staff's financial skills, employees can enroll in the financial courses. After completing this training, participants will be able to perform financial calculations, understand financial statements and provide financial counseling to internal and external customers.

To enhance staff technological skills, employees can enroll in MS Office 2010 software courses. Upon completion employees will be able to use MS Office applications and Crystal Report Writing in the performance of their DHCD job duties.

Managers can further develop their skills learn with management development and leadership training.

To further align corporate training with business strategy, operational courses are taught by in-house subject-matter experts. Courses developed and delivered by these experts are more relevant and tailored to the agency, as the instructors know the culture, structure and language.

DHCD's commitment to education can be further demonstrated by encouraging staff to obtain their two year college level A.A. /A.S. degree in business or liberal arts. This would also support Governor O'Malley's goal of increasing the level of education of Maryland's workforce to meet the demands of Maryland's employers. Currently 34 percent of DHCD staff are high school graduates.

The agency offers career counseling to employees to discuss career plans and opportunities at DHCD.

To promote continuous learning, staff can enroll in educational courses, conferences, certification programs and webinars offered by professional associations and business.

Results

To ensure that DHCD achieves its mission and vision, key indicators are used to assist with strategic planning and implementation. In order to successfully manage DHCD's workforce development, training

participation is monitored. To go from Good to Great the value of learning and development is demonstrated and supported at the top of the DHCD with the Executive Management Team.

Training participation is used to measure alignment of goals and strategies with corporate learning. Training participation is calculated as the student attendance per class. A baseline measure is established using training attendance statistics from the previous year. Learning and development records are kept on file to measure how much employees enhance their knowledge and skills over time. Courses are well attended with classes often being filled to maximum capacity, i.e. computer courses - 10 seats, management development courses – 15 seats, soft skills courses – 15 seats, etc.

Foundation for Next Steps

Supervisors and managers can learn essential skills of planning, directing, motivation, decision making, and communicating by completing management development courses.

As a continuation of this training initiative, it is anticipated that management will soon be able to develop a progressive leadership style and lead individuals and groups after completing a leadership development program, referred to as the DHCD Leadership Academy. This program is for DHCD employees who have been hired or promoted into leadership roles.

Management Development courses are a prerequisite for the upcoming Leadership Academy.   Managers are appointed to Leadership Academy by the Executive Team.
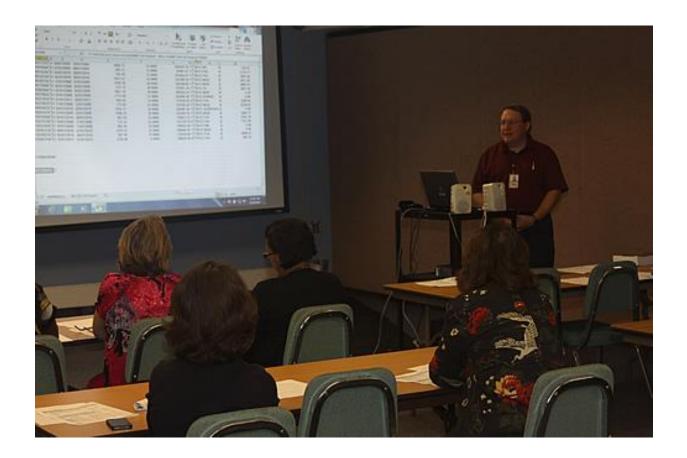
This program would provide intermediate level management skills to supervisors and managers and provide leadership training to mid- and upper-level managers. Leadership Academy will also increase our agency's bench strength as it prepares those next in line to lead and manage DHCD.

To support individual, team and organizational learning, it is anticipated that a learner-centered corporate university will be created. This educational entity will offer flexible learning options to include classroom, online, webinars, seminars/conferences and on-the-job training.

Conclusion

DHCD's training plan provides an overview of courses available to staff, with the goal of encouraging continuous learning. Employees can select from a variety of courses in multiple tracks that will further their careers at DHCD, and allow them to better perform DHCD duties. For a list of courses offered and future offerings, please see attachments.

With the assistance of training and development, employees can reach their personal and professional potential to maximize agency performance. To be successful, learning and development must become an organizational priority and supported throughout the entire agency. This will assist in attracting highly skilled workers and developing and retaining current workers to meet business objectives.

Training Courses We Have Offered at DHCD

Communications
Business Writing & Grammar
Letters, Emails and Memoranduma
Business Report Writing
Writing for the Public
Media Relations – How to get your story out despite all the NOISE
Creating Effective PowerPoint Presentations
Delivering Gold Medal Presentations

MS Office 2010 Computer Applications
Access - Level I
Excel - Level I - III
Outlook - Level I
Word - Level I - III
Excel Users Group – MS Excel 2010 Tips & Tricks

Other Software Courses
Crystal Reports

Core Training
New Employee Orientation
Business Math
Financial Counseling
The Difficult Customer
Time Management and Project Management for Non-Supervisors
DHCD Goes Green
Housing 101
CDA Overview – A Day in the Life of a Community Development Administration Team Member
Housing Bonds 101
Nuts & Bolts of Multifamily Development
Community Outreach Overview
Maryland Codes Administration – What Do We Do?
Revitalizing Watertown: How the Division of Neighborhood Revitalization keeps on changing communities, changing lives
Outplacement Meeting - CDA/CA
Resume Building Workshop: Day 1 - CDA/CA
Resume Building Workshop: Day 2 - CDA/CA
Lunch & Learn Seminar Workshop - Credit Card Act of 2009 and Your Credit Score
Lunch & Learn Seminar Workshop - Maximize Home Energy Efficiency

Management Development
Leadership & Management Fundamentals
Leadership and the Role of the Supervisor
Leadership in a Tough Economy
Basic Problem Solving
Change Management
Coaching & Mentoring
Conducting Effective Meetings
Planning for Meetings, Classes & Events
Good Communications and Developing Interpersonal Skills
Managing Conflict & Confrontation
Project Management/Time Management
Team Building
Performance Management - Facilitating Our Journey From Good to Great
Knowledge Management: Capturing, Storing, and Retrieving Institutional History and Knowledge

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Health & Wellness
Eat to Live
Citizen CPR
Walk for Fitness

Training Courses We Can Offer at DHCD		
MS Office 2010 Computer Applications		
Access - Levels II & III		
Outlook - Levels II & III		
PowerPoint - Level I & II		
Publisher - Level I & II		
SharePoint - Level I & II		
Other Software Courses		
Crystal Reports - Level II		
Core Training		
Service Excellence		
Accounting for Non-Financial Managers		
Housing Bonds 202		
Health & Wellness		
Dealing with Stress in the Workplace		
Management Development		
Grant Writing		
Documentation and Discipline		
Performance Evaluation Program (PEP)		
Leadership Development		
Leadership Academy Courses:		
Day 1		
The leadership challenge – leadership vs. management		
Situational leadership – demonstrate behavioral flexibility and adapting the leadership style most		
Day2		
Self-awareness – to promote personal change and growth		
Confidential 360 degree feedback to enhance personal effectiveness		
Create a principled environment – identifying personal values and leading with integrity		
Day 3		
Build relationships that last – increasing trust in the workplace		
Create high performance teams – meld different personalities into an effective team		
Visionary leadership – create a clear mission and an inspiring vision		
Day 4		
Strategic thinking and planning		
Coaching techniques for improved employee performance		
Become a change master – preparing organizations for change and helping employees successfull		
Day 5		
Lead with emotional intelligence		
Strategies to successfully address conflict		
Influence and persuasion skills – build a power network		
Motivation strategies to engage employees and increase employee commitment		
Communication skills		

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