

Organizational Priorities for Professional Development September 2006-August 2007

Developed by: Professional Development Trust

Overview

The Professional Development Trust met in April 2006 and began the process of identifying professional development priorities for action for 2006-2007. During the summer of 2006 the small work groups of the Trust met via distance technology with the goal of developing needs or issue statements for each of the areas along with strategies to address the needs/issue statements. The result is the following key priority areas:

- Onboarding of New Employees
- Identifying and Addressing Professional and Career Development Needs
- Enhancing the Use of Technology for Learning
- Improving Coordination and Communication of Professional Development

The Trust will meet again face to face in September 2006 to finalize needs and issues for each of the priorities and strategies that can be finalized into an action plan for fiscal year 2007. This brief is a summary of what has been discussed and put together as of the posted footer date. The key priorities are not listed in any particular order nor are strategies in any particular priority order unless otherwise noted.

Onboarding of New Employees

Needs and Issues Statements

- Onboarding should be focused at supporting, motivating and equipping all new employees (agents, specialists, support staff, managers) to be successful.
- These efforts should be tailored to individual needs in light of organizational requirements and goals.
- All onboarding should be integrated, coordinated, and communicated with all stakeholders (Counties, Departments and Units, Programs).

Roles and Responsibilities for Onboarding

- Direct supervisor, i.e. District Extension Administrator/ County Extension Director or Associate Department Head, will be responsible or provide oversight with the onboarding process as it relates to working with stakeholders, teaching skills, TCE oversight, etc.
- Regional Program Directors will be responsible for the onboarding process as it relates to program development, subject matter expertise, and packaged program implementation and evaluation.

- Extension Education will be responsible for making curriculum resources available for use at the individual and regional level such as the new employee guidebooks and presentations that could be used at for NEATO. Extension Education will be responsible for coordination of statewide trainings such as the New Employee Orientation sessions and the online Centra trainings.
- Mentors and co-workers have a role that is important to the development and engagement of employees in the onboarding process and they need to understand their role and how that role should be in today's working environment.
- New employees are responsible for their development as set forth in a plan and in their participation and engagement.

Onboarding Ideas/Strategies

- Extension Education should receive immediate notification on all new hires, including agents and specialists. The new employees would immediately be targeted for the online trainings, with the DEA/CED s and ADHs supervision.
- Develop tools to adequately/appropriately assess needs of new employees.
- Stay flexible w/ First Step (time, base on employee experiences)
- Continue the Mentoring program, realizing that the results will vary due to many factors including distances between new employee and mentor and the effectiveness of the mentor. It may also need to be adjusted or updated as a result of First Steps.
- Establish Agent/Specialist mentor relationship for new specialists (Associate Dept. heads/county programs).
- Provide self directed resources to meet timely needs.
- Provide easy access to pre-recorded webinars (EIT, Ext. Ed).
- Update and web New agent/Co study guide (Relevant??) Ext. Ed, EIT
- Provide concrete examples of what things mean (i.e. Cash Management/Best Practices, Program Development, etc.).
- Something is needed to up energy and engagement of new employees.
- Eliminate redundant info in trainings (Ext. Ed, Adm Districts/Regions).
- Look at teaching styles i.e. interactive sessions, hands-on activities to engage participants (less lecture) Ext. Ed, EIT
- NEATO- look at changing to less days or online modules i.e. CECP, Microsoft Producers, etc. DEA's/RPD's/Ext. Ed/EIT
- Need to create curriculum materials for use in regional NEATOs to insure consistency and continuity.
- Need to rename NEATO if it targets all new employees including specialists.
- Agent association- get buy in and support new employee professional development opportunities (assoc. officers/board).
- Define roles for 4-H in 2 agent/3 agent/4agent counties (4-H faculty/RPDs/DEA's/CED's/Agent)
- Full day of 4-H training for all at New Employee Orientation (4-H Faculty/RB) This would not apply to specialists outside 4-H.
- Full day for 4-H agents in subject matter/programs (AGNR, CRED and FCS) for youth.
- **Create an Individual Development Plan for First Year Employees that** a new employee can select and it will automatically feed into their TExAS account for them to customize.

Identifying and Addressing Professional and Career Development Needs

Needs and Issues Statements

- Information from employee self assessment, supervisor input, and agency strategic plan initiatives will come together in professional development plans for the agency and individuals.
- Training will be delivered through various delivery methods and in varying levels of intensity.
- There needs to be an organizational commitment of funding for professional development at all levels.
- Some professional development will be required while other development is individualized.
- Provide employees support needed to acquire competencies for career development including support for degree attainment.

Needs Ideas/Strategies related to Professional Development in General

- Need to simplify competency model and make consistent with other systems (career ladder and performance appraisal).
- Professional development should be individually prescribed verses required blanket participation.
- Develop at least a year long schedule of all planned professional development.
- Program implementation should relate back to strategic plan.
- Create different levels of training (introductory, intermediate, advanced).
- Need to be conscious of cost of training and minimize individual out of pocket expenses.
- There needs to be an organizational commitment of funding for professional development at all levels.
- More "on demand" education as a refresher, supplement or for people who can't meet training dates.
- Need to develop tools to effectively identify and analyze individual and organizational needs. Tools that are sensitive to
 - concerns of employees about self assessment
 - value/validation
 - Consider use of multiple methods such as self assessments/supervisory assessments/pre-post tests
- There should be some Professional Development Required or Strongly Encouraged for all Employees such as: (all important, they are not in any priority order)
 - Training on USDA Civil Rights Requirements that would include both letter of the law compliance and embracing of the spirit of the law. Examples would include such things as ADA compliance and diversity issues.
 - Customer service
 - Cash management
 - How things fit together in the organization's mission and strategic plan.
 - Training and ongoing development of technology facilitated learning.
 - Training on Program Development to get everyone on the same page (issues identification and evaluation in particular see <http://extension.missouri.edu/pdo/corecompetencies.shtml>).

Needs Ideas/Strategies related to Career Development and Degree Attainment

- Communicate importance of advanced degrees for increasing salary via communication pieces, centra, mentor, etc.
- Expand the list of potential degree programs nationwide (online degrees, etc.)
- Expand opportunities/partnerships for counties to provide financial support for agents to earn advance degrees
- Increase TCE scholarship opportunities
- Offer training on how to's of grad school (i.e. scholarships, problems, financial aid, etc)Via NEO, Centra, publications, etc
- Provide more information on opportunities available for terminal degrees
- Established agency position on funding of graduate study through allowed fiscal resources.
- Increase awareness of outside employment process as it relates to working in other areas outside Extension..
- Tie individual development plan to career advancement
- Expand certification program information
- Explore/expand leadership opportunities (SALE, NELD, etc.) and Experiential leadership opportunities (communication, trust, etc.)
- Develop programs for agents with 1-5 years experience, 6-10 and 10 and beyond
- Information on How to's of career advancement
- Awareness/requirements for positions (ex. RPD's)
- Consider applications for advanced mentoring
- Establish an agency position on funding of graduate study through allowed fiscal resources.

Enhancing the Use of Technology

Needs and Issues Statements

- Enhance the use of technology to provide a comprehensive portfolio of learning experiences for our employees ultimately for the benefit of our clientele.
- Continue to use technology to develop and manage the professional development process including needs identification, planning, reporting, communication, evaluation, etc.

Technology Ideas/Strategies

- Develop more courses online. Specific topics that need to be addressed via technology (*This is not a comprehensive list, rather this alphabetical list represents those topics the need immediate attention.*)
 - Cash Management – for TCE and Volunteers
 - CEP and TCE How they Work
 - Conflict Management
 - Customer Service Training (blended with online and f2f)
 - Diversity
 - Disaster Preparedness
 - Evaluation
 - Interpretation
 - Marketing
 - Supervisor Training
 - Training on How the Repurposing of Existing Training Materials for Distance Delivery
 - Volunteer training Modules (4-H)
 - Emergency Preparedness Training
- Increase self-directed study courses available to non-extension employees such as county staff, including course found in Train Traq (ADA, Sexual Harassment, Civil Rights, computer Security, etc.)
- Increase different types of technology in web delivered trainings including video streaming, audio streaming, testing, evaluation, etc.
- Improve and enhance the use of technology in other areas of professional development including: (in priority order)
 - Encouraging the use and training on how and when to use technology for meetings and trainings.
 - Needs assessment and self assessment
 - Standardize capability, the process and some of the design elements, in our web presence on all levels (county, district, units, state) to enhance the quality and accessibility for and with search capabilities, sunsetting, tracking, etc. Examples would be solutionsforyourlife.com (Florida) or the LSU site
 - Centralize catalog of learning resources – organized clearinghouse
 - Tracking participation in online learning modules particularly self directed modules (Learning Management System)
- Finding funding to support specific technology related needs listed below (in priority order):
 - Funds to support an EIT professional in each of the Districts
 - Funds to hire an Education specialists to provide leadership in integrating experiential activities into web-based curriculum!!!

- Funding of peripherals such as cameras based on a basic needs list
- Create a basic equipment list
- Continue to monitor technology capabilities and needs in the organization

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Improving Coordination and Communication of Professional Development

Needs and Issue Statements

- There needs to be a more organization wide coordination of the communication of professional development.
- There needs to be scheduling and cataloguing of Professional Development Opportunities in a Timely Manner.
- NEEDS AND ISSUES TO BE FURTHER DEVELOPED AT SEPTEMBER MEETING

Coordination and Communication Ideas/Strategies

- Coordination of scheduling and cataloguing needs to be clarified and a process developed.
- Gather support for learning opportunities catalog and calendar
- Improve operation of catalog and calendar
- Catalog should be linked directly with individual development plan
- MORE IDEAS TO BE DEVELOPED AT SEPTEMBER MEETING

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