



The Train



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NSPS Update: Spiral 1.1 Downsized, NSPS-Specific Content Training Put on Hold

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On its **NSPS website**, DoD reports that over the past few months the focus on NSPS transition preparations included a wide variety of activities and events including working on the implementing issuances, soft skills training for the workforce, and aligning individual performance objectives with mission needs and measurable outcomes. Major undertakings included piloting training classes and preparing instructors to teach the NSPS basics to all employees, managers, and supervisors, in addition to collaborating with the unions on implementing issuances.

Based on feedback they received, the PEO determined more time is needed to focus on simplifying the performance management design, getting performance objectives right, and ensuring the system is simple, clear, and understandable. The PEO advised the Components to press ahead on their communication, alignment of strategic plans/goals with performance objectives, and soft skill training initiatives (*see article below*), but put January NSPS-specific content training on hold, including the train-the-trainer sessions until mid-March 2006, with the exception of the Naval Sea Systems Command Headquarters.

NSPS deployment is impacted as follows:

- Spiral 1.1, downsized to approximately 11,000 employees, begins April 30, 2006. The rating cycle will extend through October 2006 and the NSPS payout will occur in January 2007. The Components and DoD agencies identified NSPS-ready organizations in this group. The Civilian Human Resources Agency, Civilian Personnel Operations Centers and Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers are those Army activities identified to participate in Spiral 1.1. For a complete list of all identified organizations [click here](#).
- Spiral 1.2 begins October 1, 2006 and Spiral 1.3 begins January 2007. The Components and DoD agencies are identifying activities participating in each of these spirals.

DoD states its commitment toward making the NSPS transition as smooth as possible for the workforce, "Ensuring that we 'take the time to do this right' has always been a principle in our event-driven implementation approach. We want to make sure that our employees, supervisors, and leaders fully understand this system, and that they have the tools to succeed in a results-focused, performance-based environment."

NSPS Core Competency Training

One of the best ways to prepare for implementation of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) is to further develop the skills and competencies which are essential to transition to and thrive in the new NSPS environment. Four core NSPS competencies have been identified: 1) the ability to deal with change, 2) skill in interpersonal communications, 3) the ability (for managers and supervisors) to coach and counsel employees and 4) the ability to achieve results and/or manage performance.

NSPS Core Competency from page 1

There are two sources of core competency training available: web-based courses through the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) e-Learning program and classroom training presented onsite at installations and activities by training vendors. These courses are not mandatory, but are highly recommended for managers, supervisors and employees to assist in core competency development. A list of the recommended courses may be found in the **CHRA NSPS Training Plan, Appendix D**.

Any Army employee may register for online courses under Army e-Learning. There is no cost for this training. Instructions for registering for these courses are available on the CHRA website under **Army e-Learning Instructions**. The recommended web-based courses are grouped under Army NSPS Core Competency Training in the Army e-Learning catalog.

For assistance in obtaining classroom training at your installation, please contact your Regional HRD Office.

Change Management: Integral Part of NSPS Transformation

The National Security Personnel System (NSPS) is the most significant change to the civilian human resource program since the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. Change management is an integral part of NSPS transformation and transition efforts.

Because of the magnitude of the changes that NSPS will bring, there will be internal resistance to systems' implementations. These changes may be further complicated by lack of trust in the new system and varying degrees of manager/employee buy-in as NSPS goes through spiral development and fielding. Change also will be sought from major stakeholders who are external to DoD. This resistance can be offset by strong leadership and by comprehensive communications about why a new system is needed and the anticipated benefits the system will produce.

Training and communication must reinforce why the Army is changing, how changes will occur, and how changes will affect the Army workforce. Contact your Regional HRDD Office for further information regarding Change Management training options and opportunities.

HRD Mission: Empowering Commanders and Managers

The Army training vision is to support total force readiness and mission accomplishment by providing and empowering commanders and managers with the authorities necessary to accomplish the training and development of a technically competent, high-performing civilian workforce.

Civilians have always been part of the Army. Civilian workers help the military accomplish its missions in several ways. First, civilian employees may have technical skills that are critical and in short supply in the uniformed service. They also provide stability and continuity of performance as military personnel rotate more frequently than do civilian workers. But the most important role they play is in freeing military personnel to carry out the military functions that only they can perform. To successfully perform these responsibilities, employees must be thoroughly trained for the jobs they must perform. This training must continue throughout employment to ensure the newest techniques, tools, and equipment are mastered.



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HRD Mission from page 2

Army human resource development is based on the following general principles:

- The function of development relies on a system which measures the gap between the requirements of jobs and the capabilities of the people who perform the work.
- Development is an investment by the organization in its performance and mission accomplishment.
- Successful workforce development programs are directly linked to the Army, installation and activity strategic planning processes.
- Funding for development of the workforce must be addressed and supported at all levels.
- Development is accomplished by the most cost-efficient and effective methods.
- Development helps managers build a diverse, professional, high-performing workforce.
- Information on development requirements, job opportunities, and progression paths is available to all managers and employees throughout their employment.
- Development is a lifelong process.

“Management officials and supervisors at all levels must ensure that adequate, responsive, and quality training is provided to their employees... “

Management officials and supervisors at all levels must ensure that adequate, responsive, and quality training is provided to their employees to ensure that current and future needs can be met. Employees must acquire and maintain the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for high quality performance and optimum contributions to organizational goals and objectives, as well as to the broader mission of the Army and the Government.

Executive Leadership Development Program

The Department of Defense (DoD) has a variety of programs that provide training and education for tomorrow's leaders. However, only ELDP provides participants with an extensive exposure to the roles and missions of DoD. In addition, ELDP provides participants with an increased understanding and appreciation of today's warfighters. Warfighters speak of being at the “tip of the spear” and ELDP provides experiences that will give participants a greater understanding of what it is like being at the tip of the spear.

This training program was established in 1985 with the approval of the Secretary of Defense and has continued over the years to educate future leaders about the issues facing DoD. In addition to seminars in Washington, D.C. where experts in defense, foreign affairs and politics address ELDP classes, participants have intensive "hands-on" field experience at military installations around the country as well as overseas.

Eligibility Criteria

Each class consists of approximately 60 participants (including up to 6 military personnel) in grades GS/GM 12-14 and military grades O-3 (promotable) or O-4.

Other selection criteria include:

- Being identified as a high-potential employee with a history of superior performance;
- Possessing a baccalaureate degree or comparable experience and training;
- Having a commitment to DoD with an intention to pursue a DoD career;
- Having a Secret security clearance; and
- Demonstrating the ability to work effectively as a team member.

ELDP is not for everyone. Events during the program may require participants to work long hours when deployed, travel on weekends, adjust to rapidly changing conditions and situations, climb three-story nautical ladders, jump from airborne training towers, fly



ELDP from page 3

in tactically configured military aircraft, and participate in team sports. Extraordinary diet requirements or unique/specialized medical care may not be available while traveling or working at training sites. These conditions should be considered when applying for ELDP.

Target Audience

ELDP is designed specially for highly motivated DoD employees who have demonstrated outstanding leadership potential. Participants must have the initiative, professional excellence, community involvement, commitment to public service, and integrity. Their performance must reflect an interest in moving into senior management positions. Participants must be receptive to ELDP training methodology whereby participants assume responsibility for their learning. ELDP presents “opportunities to learn” and it is up to participants to take advantage of the opportunities presented.

For more information about ELDP including program features and nomination process, call (703) 696-9614 or 696-9615 (DSN 426) or [click here](#) for brochure.

Building Effective Organizations

The importance of having a trained and developed workforce cannot be overstated. Each stakeholder (managers, supervisors, and employees) shares the important responsibility for organizational success and effectiveness. Following are strategies leaders can use to train and develop employees.

- + *Meet with employees.*
 - Assess employee skills and competencies.
 - Identify training that will enhance the organizational mission requirements.
 - Provide appropriate or required training.
 - Funding should not prevent training. While funding may be limited for paid vendors supervisors should look for alternative training sources by promoting no-cost training available on-line and utilizing subject matter experts within the organization.

- + *Meet with employees after the training session to assess newly learned skills, job competencies and to evaluate the transfer of learning.*
 - Did the training meet the organization’s expectations?
 - Will the organization benefit from the training?
 - Was the outcome worthwhile considering the cost of the training, employee’s labor costs and time away from the office?
 - Were there any barriers (known or unknown) that may have prevented a quality learning process?
 - It is imperative to identify and try to prevent barriers from recurring in future training opportunities. Barriers that may exist in the training session include: loss of connectivity in video tele-training courses causing down time and loss of focus from the participants; outside noises; instructor/student interaction; attitudes; fear of failure/tests; discussions not related to the training topic; or delivery of training too fast/slow.

- + *Meet with employees throughout the year to reassess skills.*
 - Meeting with employees can be the best approach to enhance and improve your organization. Be open, set goals, and discuss individual or team successes, oversights or mistakes. Determine how to improve performance and learn from trials and errors.
 - Maintaining frequent open discussions with employees provides excellent opportunities to build, mentor, or train them to become valued members of the organization.



Building from page 4

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- Although one-on-one sessions with your employees throughout the year are required and very beneficial, the organization will not be effective or successful without team emphasis. Team meetings provide an avenue to stay involved with your employees and focus on the organizational mission. Discuss and identify how individual contributions are important in a team project.
- Quality employee meetings can be informal or may require a formal setting for counseling sessions or conflict resolution.



Develop good communication and listening skills.

- Email can not and should not replace the personal communication process.
- Attend training to learn about your communication style and increase your confidence and ability when communicating with others.
- Attend one of many excellent training opportunities available for supervisors, such as:
 - Mentoring
 - Coaching Skills for Managers
 - How to Deal with Difficult Employee
 - Conflict Resolution
 - HR for Supervisors
 - Listening Skills

Building an effective organization is a continual process requiring effective communication, training, dedication, patience and the pursuit of excellence. Contact Regional HRDD personnel to assist you in “Building Your Effective Organization.”

Continuing Service Agreements

Title 5, U. S Code (USC), Section 4108 requires each employee to sign an agreement with the Government before assignment to training that exceeds his/her agency's prescribed minimum period. The employee will agree to (1) continue in the service of his agency at least three times the length of the training period, commencing upon completion of the training, and (2) pay back expenses if he/she voluntarily separates from his agency prior to completion of the service obligation period.

Department of the Army policy requires civilian employees selected for non-Government training in excess of 80 hours, *and*, Government or non-Government long-term training and education programs in excess of 120 calendar days, to complete a continued service agreement *before* assignment to the training. The period of service will equal at least three times the length of the training, to begin upon the employee's return to duty following training completion. Approving officials will retain a copy of each signed agreement (see Section E, DD Form 1556) and monitor execution of the obligation period.

Failure to Fulfill Agreements

Commanders at all levels are charged to protect the Government's interests should an employee fail to successfully fulfill his/her signed training agreement by not completing the continued service obligation period **Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 410.309(c)**. The commander, or a designated official, will review the status and circumstances of each unexpired agreement to decide whether to transfer, waive or require repayment of expenses incurred other than salary costs. In addition to the destination of the employee (see below), the determination should consider intangible criteria such as equity, good conscience, and the public interest.

1. ***Employee Transfers within Army or DoD.*** The remainder of the service obligation transfers to the gaining DA activity or DoD Component. The gaining commander will monitor the agreement.

Please see *Continuing Service* on page 6



Continuing Service from page 5

2. **Employee Leaves DoD.** The employee's MACOM commander or designee will decide whether to waive or require reimbursement of the additional training expenses when the employee transfers to another Federal agency, resigns, retires or is terminated from Federal service.

Recovery of Funds. When a commander requires reimbursement from an employee for failure to complete a continued service agreement, the repayment amount will be based on the **additional expenses or direct costs of the training** (e.g., registration fees, tuition and matriculation fees, library and laboratory fees, purchase or rental of books, materials, supplies, travel, per diem, and miscellaneous other related training program costs). Repayment calculations will not include salary costs, and will normally prorate the percentage of the remaining service obligation period.

Student Loan Repayment Program for Nonappropriated Fund (NAF) Employees



Department of Defense (DoD) Nonappropriated Fund (NAF) Personnel Policy has administratively adopted the Student Loan Repayment program for NAF employees. Eligible employees may be offered this benefit as a recruitment or retention incentive. Within Department of the Army, authority to approve repayment of student loans may be delegated by Commanders to the lowest practical level. Signed service agreements for NAF employees will be sent to NAF Financial Services to begin payments to the loan holder. All other provisions of the DoD Student Loan Repayment policy apply to NAF employees the same as for Appropriated Fund employees.

Where this program impacts bargaining unit employees' conditions of employment, activities should be reminded of their statutory and contractual labor relations obligations.

BRAC Transition: Retraining & Readjustment Assistance for Displaced Federal Employees

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides funding for the Department of Labor to sponsor a program for retraining and readjustment assistance for displaced Federal employees. The WIA is administered through the various State Employment Security Agencies, and includes assistance such as:

- Retraining
- Career counseling
- Testing
- Placement assistance and
- Other related support activities.

Workforce Investment Act of 1998
 Workforce Investment Act of 1998

Workforce Investment Act of 1998

U.S. Department of Labor • Employment and Training Administration September 1998

*Click on picture to access
 Workforce Investment Act*

Generally, displaced employees are eligible to participate only after being terminated or after receiving a specific notice of separation or, if offered by their installation, upon receipt of a Certificate of Expected Separation (CES). However, individuals employed at a BRAC installation may apply for WIA benefits up to 24 months before base closure or realignment.

Employees who file an application for optional retirement or otherwise indicate, in writing, intent to retire, are no longer available for assistance through the WIA.

DA Policy Requiring Utilization of Army's e-Learning Program Extended

HQDA Letter 350-04-01 dated 8 January 2004 specifically details the requirement for all Army employees, both military and civilian, to utilize the **Army's e-Learning Program** for basic and advanced information technology (IT) training. While the policy was set to expire in January 8, 2006, **HQDA Letter 350-06-1** extends the policy to through January 8, 2007.



All army organizations and major commands are directed to use the Army's e-Learning Program as the primary method for satisfying their workforce IT requirements. There is no cost to the individual or their organization for utilization of the Army-provided program.

Army organizations will review their current process for determining the individual IT skills required to execute their mission.

They will satisfy their IT training requirements with this program as the best method for providing and maintaining IT skills to their workforce. They may utilize traditional instructor-led classroom training for only those training needs that are not available through e-Learning.

Waivers may be submitted for exception for compelling reasons. All waiver requests will be endorsed by the commander or senior leader of the requesting activity and forwarded through their higher headquarters to the policy proponent.

Annual & Acquisition Ethics Training Requirement Reaffirmed

The Secretary of the Army reaffirmed the mandatory annual requirement for ethics training in his 27 December 2005 memorandum on Face-to-Face Ethics Training. During calendar year 2006, every Soldier and Army civilian employee is required attend one hour of ethics training.

In addition, every Soldier and civilian employee involved in the acquisition process will also be required to receive an additional hour of ethics training to address recurring and emergent acquisition and contracting issues.

Ethics counselors are responsible for conducting this training and maintaining records on personnel trained and topics covered.



Click on picture to view memo in its entirety – See "SecArmy Memo on Ethics Training"

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