

# Training Needs

## Introduction

A well trained work force developed to its full potential is generally recognized and accepted as an essential objective of personnel management. A planned program designed to increase the knowledge, proficiency, ability and skills of district personnel is vital to the overall administration of district programs.

Effective training and development programs should meet the immediate and long-range goals of the district as well as the personal goals of employees. The concept of providing the opportunity, budgeting the necessary funds and arranging for the training of employees may be new to many districts, but should be seen as an investment in the future of the district.

The inevitable process of change brings about new concepts and demands in district programs, to which both the employees and district officials must adapt. The way a district accommodates these changes will depend largely on how well district employees have been prepared for growth.

## Training approach

The training of district employees should be approached systematically to avoid duplication of effort and to get the most out of district training dollars. The following approach is recommended.

1. Determine training needs
2. Set training objectives
3. Decide how training will be accomplished
4. Evaluate training

## Determining training needs.

Both supervisors and employees are responsible for seeing that training needs are identified, discussed and acted upon. Some ways in which training needs can be determined are:

1. Daily observations
2. Performance reviews
3. Progress reports
4. job application form
5. discussions with employees

When training needs have been determined, they should be recorded as precisely as possible, including method, objectives and formal course names where appropriate. The individual training needs form is a convenient form on which training needs can be recorded.

**Setting training objectives.** Training for training's sake has little value. Before any training is scheduled, a definitive objective should be set that will let the employee know exactly why the training is being provided. Employees should have an observable change in ability, skill or knowledge after receiving the training. For example, a district secretary may be scheduled for training in accounting to be able to maintain district records in accordance with accepted accounting principles.

**Decide how training will be accomplished.** Training should be accomplished whenever possible through self development or on-the-job training. This provides the most cost effective method. Self development includes home study courses, planned experiences, conferences, course work at local schools and participation in professional societies. On-the-job training requires supervisor input or input from specialists. This training should be well thought out, scheduled and carried through to completion just as if formal classroom training were provided.

If training needs cannot be satisfied by either of the two methods mentioned above, identified needs can be met by formal training courses through government, local colleges or universities.

**Evaluate training.** Training should be evaluated on the objectives set prior to providing the new training. The results of training should be reflected in improved performance, utilization of new skills and acceptance of increased responsibility and new duties. Job descriptions and performance standards should be reviewed periodically to determine if training has necessitated a revision of either of these documents.

### ***Individual training plans***

As with job descriptions and performance standards, training plans should be tailored to the individual. The employee and the employee's supervisor should jointly prepare any training needs, objectives and plans for satisfying the needs.

Normally a new employee is operating at full capacity within one year of appointment. During the first six months a general orientation should be provided along with assignments that will show where the job fits into the organization and what is expected from the individual. Because basic orientation to the job is very important, it should be provided as soon as possible after appointment. The second six months gives the individual the opportunity to gain confidence and to concentrate on developing proficiency in the job.