

For: State and County Offices

National DD Mentoring Program

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Field Operations



1 Overview

A Background

The Program has been established to provide new DD's a developmental partnership with experienced DD's. The role of the DD position is critical to FSA's mission and one-on-one training in their roles and responsibilities remains a high priority.

B Purpose

This notice:

- announces the National DD Mentoring Program
- provides information about the:
 - mentor's role, required qualifications, responsibilities, and selection process
 - mentee's role and responsibilities.

C Contact

Direct questions about the program to Trina Brake, DAFO, by either of the following:

- telephone at 202-720-0258
- e-mail to trina.brake@wdc.usda.gov.

Disposal Date

April 1, 2017

3-4-16

Distribution

State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

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2 Program Announcement and Objectives

A Program Announcement

The program was developed to assist newly hired DD's with transitioning to the management and policy requirements of their position.

The program is mandatory for **all** DD's hired **after** January 1, 2014. Participation in the program is optional, but strongly recommended for DD's hired before January 1, 2014.

Note: The program requirements will be incorporated in 6-PM.

B Program Objectives

The program creates the opportunity for an experienced DD to be teamed with a new DD, and assist the new DD through the beginning of their assigned duties. The objectives of the program are to:

- increase efficiency and consistency during the job transitional period
- instill an understanding of the expectations, responsibilities, and central role of DD's
- provide new DD's a source of professional advice, counsel, and exposure to new perspectives
- help new DD's successfully build lasting and effective relationships throughout the FSA organization
- help strengthen the new DD's knowledge, confidence, and leadership abilities.

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2 Program Announcement and Objectives (Continued)

B Program Objectives (Continued)

Strong mentors are needed to make the program a success. Participation as a mentor is on a voluntary basis with the approval of the mentor's SED. Mentors will be selected from a pool of DD applicants. DD's selected to be mentors **must** have:

- at least 5 years of experience as DD
- completed either of the following courses:
 - Leading from the Center: Advanced Leadership Skills for the District Director
 - Influencing Excellence: Effective Leadership at FSA

Note: DD can submit a request to DAFO through their SED to be added to the next available session to meet this requirement.

- a history of positive working relationships with a broad scope of individuals in FSA and other agencies
- effective:
 - communication skills
 - interpersonal skills
 - leadership skills
 - organizational skills.

C Mentor Responsibilities

Formal mentoring interaction with the mentee is expected to last between 12 and 18 months. In addition to the time commitment, mentors shall:

- serve as an unbiased confidant and advisor with whom new DD's may discuss work-related concerns
- provide information to assist new DD's in managing their district
- provide guidance on improving proficiency and productivity on the job

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2 Program Announcement and Objectives

C Mentor Responsibilities (Continued)

- participate in **all** mentoring program activities, including, but **not** limited to:
 - establishing the mentor and/or mentee relationship
 - assessing new DD needs, including selecting appropriate Tool Kit modules
 - developing IDP
 - facilitating new DD learning experiences
 - promoting new DD continuous development

- attend a 2-day Train-the-Mentor training session, April 12 through 14, 2016, in Washington DC

- complete and submit FSA-1058 through their SED for recommendation and approval on the DAFO SharePoint web site at <https://sharepoint.fsa.usda.net/mgr/DAFO/DD%20mentoring/default.aspx>.

The deadline to submit FSA-1058's to DAFO for final approval is **COB March 18, 2016**.

Following are the number of DD mentors that will be selected, per area, and will participate in the program's 2-day Train-the-Mentor training session.

Note: DAFO will keep the remaining mentor applications in a pool for future use.

Area	Number of DD Mentors
Midwest	6
Northeast	3
Northwest	6
Southeast	6
Southwest	6

D Train-the-Mentor Training Session

Selected DD mentors will be notified about the training session April 12 through 14, 2016, in Washington, DC by memorandum from DAFO.

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2 Program Announcement and Objectives (Continued)

E DAFO Responsibilities

DAFO will:

- review all approved FSA-1058's and make the final decision on DD mentor selections
- notify SED's of DD mentors selected for the 2-day Train-the Mentor training session
- assign DD's a mentor, within 20 workdays of receiving FSA-1059, on the DAFO SharePoint web site
- team-up mentor and mentee according to the following factors:
 - complimentary skill sets
 - scope of programs managed
 - similarity in types of producers
 - geographical proximity
- review mentee evaluation reports submitted on the DAFO SharePoint web site
- resolve conflicts or disputes between mentors and mentees.

State Offices will:

- ensure that FSA-1059 is submitted for each DD hired in their State from January 1, 2014, through the current date by SharePoint

Note: For DD's hired:

- **after** the date of this notice, the State Office will submit FSA-1059 to DAFO within 45 calendar days of date of hire
- **before** January 1, 2014, the State Office may submit FSA-1059 to DAFO at any time.
- develop IDP and establish estimated timeframes for completing the program
- code travel expenses incurred by mentor or mentee for program participation activities to the Washington-directed travel accounting code 161616-STO-WDC-TRAVEL.

Note: Any travel to occur in a subsequent FY should be included in the State Office travel allotment request for that FY.

3 Mentee Information

A Mentee's Role and Responsibilities

All DD's hired after January 1, 2014, will participate in the Program. Formal mentoring interaction with the mentor is expected to last between 12 to 18 months. In addition to the time commitment, mentees shall:

- complete and submit FSA-1059 on the DAFO SharePoint web site
- be open-minded to constructive criticism
- participate in **all** mentoring program activities, including, but **not** limited to:
 - establishing the mentee and/or mentor relationship
 - self-assessment, for assistance with selecting appropriate Tool Kit modules
 - developing IDP
 - facilitating learning experiences
- complete recommended Tool Kit modules at an acceptable proficiency level
- maintain timely contact with their mentor, either face-to-face, by telephone, or e-mail.

B Requirements for Completing the Program

The program is complete when mentees have successfully completed the following:

- recommended Tool Kit modules, and submits final assessment on the DAFO SharePoint web site
- activities identified on IDP
- the course, Leading from the Center: Advanced Leadership Skills for the District Director, or Influencing Excellence: Effective Leadership at FSA.

It is anticipated that communication, guidance, and advice will continue informally between mentor and mentee throughout the DD's career.