

DOD Mentoring Resource Portal

MENTORING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Mentoring Program Planning

MENTORING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A needs assessment is a systematic set of procedures that are used to determine needs, examine their nature and causes, and set priorities for future action. The process focuses on the ends to be attained and leads to action that will improve programs, services, organizational operations, or a combination of these elements.

Purpose:

To help Mentoring Program Coordinators develop the business case for mentoring, through the discovery of specific needs.

Audience:

Mentoring program stakeholders (Senior Executives, Managers, Supervisors, Mentors, Mentees, etc).

Context:

This is the first step towards the development of a mentoring program.

Common Terms

The following are common terms associated with the DOD Mentoring Resource Portal:

Mentor, also known as Advisor, is a trusted counselor or guide who is involved in the development and support of one who is less experienced.

Mentee, also known as Protégé or Learner, is the more junior person being mentored.

Mentoring Program Coordinator, also known as Mentoring Program Manager, is responsible for the overall management of the mentoring program.

Information Source Disclaimer

Most of the information on this mentoring resource was obtained and adapted from **Office of Migrant Education: 2001 New Directors Orientation document**. All content is provided for informational purposes only.

1.0 WHY CONDUCT A MENTORING NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

A Mentoring Needs Assessment will help you develop the business case for mentoring, by setting priorities to tackle specific challenges. Whether your data collection is formal or informal, at the end you should be able to answer the following general questions:

- Why should the organization devote time and money toward developing a mentoring program?
- Who needs mentoring?
- What are the key needs of Mentees/Mentors?
- What needs are not being met by your organization?
- Does the need you have identified fit within your organization's strategic plan?
- Does your organization have the human capital with the skills, experiences, and connections to effectively address the identified needs?

2.0 STAGE 1 - DEFINE CURRENT MENTORING STATUS

Step 1 – Prepare Management Plan

- Select a key person to conduct the Mentoring Needs Assessment.
- Form a Mentoring Needs Assessment Committee – The members of the Needs Assessment Committee should properly represent senior executives, managers, supervisors, potential Mentees and Mentors.
- Set a report deadline to present the findings to leadership.

Step 2: Identify Major Mentoring Goals

- Select 3 to 5 goals of greatest importance.
- Define concerns/factors for each of the goals.

Step 3: Determine Mentoring Need Indicators

- Identify indicators that could verify that the concern/issue exists (An indicator is data that can verify that a concern exists).

Step 4: Consider Data Sources

- Determine what kinds of information would be helpful to more clearly define the need and where to get the data.

3.0 STAGE 2 - GATHER & ANALYZE DATA

Step 1: Determine Mentoring Target Groups

- Determine the scope of the Mentoring Needs Assessment – e.g., employees in the Acquisition Community are eligible for the mentoring program.
- Determine target groups – e.g., emerging leaders (GS-7 to GS-11).

Step 2: Gather Data to Define Mentoring Needs

- Specify a desired outcome based on the Mentoring Program goals.
- Collect data to determine the current state of the Mentoring target group in relation to the desired outcome.
- Formulate mentoring need statements based on of the target group in relation to the desired outcome.

Step 3 – Prioritize Mentoring Needs

- List the mentoring needs in rank order of importance.

Step 4 – Identify & Analyze Causes

- Determine general and specific causes of high priority Mentoring needs. In general, try to answer question “Why does this mentoring need persist?”

Step 5 – Summarize Findings

- Summarize and document findings by Mentoring need with an explanation of the major causes.
- Share the results with the Mentoring Needs Assessment Committee, managers, and other key stakeholders.

4.0 STAGE 3 - DECISION MAKING

Step 1: Set Priority of Mentoring Needs

- Assign priorities among mentoring needs.

Step 2: Identify Possible Solutions

- Set standards for judging the merits of alternative solution strategies. At a minimum, proposed solutions should meet the criteria of **effect on causes**, **acceptability**, and **feasibility** (includes resources).
- Generate and examine potential solutions.

Step 3: Select Solutions

- Evaluate and rate each solution separately against the standards.
- On the basis of all the information, select one or more solutions for each need area.

Step 4: Propose Action Plan

- The plan should include descriptions of the solutions, rationale, proposed timelines, and resource requirements.

Step 5: Prepare Report

- Communicate the methods and results of the needs assessment to decision-makers, policymakers, and key stakeholders.
- The report should include:
 - Description of the mentoring needs assessment process.
 - Major outcomes (identified mentoring needs).
 - Priority mentoring needs (and criteria used to determine such priorities).
 - Action Plan (with the data and criteria used to arrive at the solution strategies).
 - Recommendations for future mentoring need assessments.