Virginia Association of Counties
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 2, 2017.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Complete Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____   **Website:** _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Mentoring Pilot Program

Chesterfield County, Virginia

Virginia Association of Counties

2017 Achievement Awards

Program Summary

Numerous research projects and publications indicate the efficacy of mentoring programs within

professional organizations (Baranik, L., Roling, E., & Eby, 2011; Eby, L., Allen, T., Evans, S.,

Ng, T., & DuBois, D., 2009; Ragins, B., Verbos, A., 2007; Scandura, T. & Williams, E. 2004).

This suggestion is nothing new for many, as it mirrors years of demonstrated success within their

organization. With the formalized approach to mentoring, where one person (usually senior) is

paired with another based on factors such as common backgrounds, interests, or career paths,

both parties gain exposure and expertise based on the other's knowledge. In late June 2014,

Chesterfield County Leadership, in conjunction with the Chesterfield County Learning and

Performance Center (L&PC), organized a committee dedicated to developing a mentoring pilot

program. The committee was comprised of members from the county's Diversity Advisory

Committee (DAC) and the Chesterfield Young Professionals (CYP), both of whom identified the

need for a mentoring program because of the DAC's Generational Diversity Project and a CYP

survey of Millennials in the county's workforce. With the successful completion of the

program's pilot in February, 2017 and the launch of the full-scale program scheduled for

September, 2017, opportunities to continue the enrichment of Chesterfield County employees

look promising.

Problem to be Solved

As stated in the abstract, two Chesterfield County project teams (the Diversity Advisory Committee and the Chesterfield Young Professionals) identified not only the need for, but also the desire for a mentoring program. Data from the Diversity Advisory Committee's Generational Diversity Survey revealed as much as 15 percent of the county's workforce holding the institutional knowledge is eligible to retire by July 2016. In addition, surveys from the Diversity Advisory Committee and the Chesterfield Young Professionals indicate that employees, particularly younger employees, want a learning experience that provides a broader perspective of Chesterfield County, that they want the opportunity to interact with county leaders and that they want to learn and apply leadership skills in a real-world environment.

Description of the Program

With several county project teams highlighting the need for some type of mentoring structure, the Executive Mentoring Committee was formed in late 2014 to help determine the value of facilitating a county-wide mentoring effort. Before beginning the work of creating and implementing the structure of a mentoring program, the Committee completed research and benchmarking to see what methods would best fit the needs of the county. Based on existing literature, two styles of mentoring emerged as ones likely to succeed.

Given that the program would span across the 40 departments of Chesterfield County, it was determined that a structured approach would best accommodate the various facets of any given employee's job duties. That is, to gain buy-in from Chesterfield County Leadership and to provide a framework from which the program could both provide guidance and operate, a formalized approach appeared best (described further in "Clientele" section below).

Although a certain level of formality was deemed appropriate, members of the Executive Mentoring Committee unanimously agreed that the mentoring experience needed to have a natural feel. As such, efforts to design the program in such a way that promoted as much of an organic connection as possible were utilized from the beginning.

To ensure the program was founded in evidence based research, the program utilized the leadership research of James Kouzes and Barry Posner as a resource to provide a framework for the qualities sought in program participants. Kouzes and Posner's five exemplary practices of leadership are described in their book, *The Leadership Challenge*. The practices are "Model the Way", "Inspire a Shared Vision", "Challenge the Process", "Enable Others to Act" and "Encourage the Heart" (see Appendix A).

During the pilot's conception, the Committee spent several weeks benchmarking and researching other mentoring programs. It evaluated a program designed by the Northern Virginia Society for Human Resource Management to help individuals develop core competencies within the Human Resources profession. The committee also researched guidelines developed by the United States Office of Personnel Management for federal agencies interested in creating mentoring programs. In addition, the Committee spoke with persons from other local governments as well as and private sector employers such as Altria and Microsoft.

Of the local governments surveyed, one reported an attempt to develop a mentoring program, but found the process too challenging because of the complex workforce of local government. Instead they created a 9 month emerging leaders peer program for mid-level managers. Altria's mentoring program developed out of a need to better support diversity and employee engagement in their Women's Networking Resource Group. Microsoft created a two-track approach to mentoring depending on the needs of the mentee. The first track, career

mentoring, is more formalized and pairs the mentee with a senior level employee within the

organization. The second track, peer mentoring, is less formal with the goal of facilitating

knowledge transfer.

In addition to the information gleaned from those entities described above, the Executive

Mentoring Committee knew that there were limited opportunities in which employees at the

supervisor level and below could gain exposure. For example, within Chesterfield County,

employees can participate in a variety of leadership development opportunities through several

programs, such as the Employee Leadership Institute (ELI), Supervisor Leadership Conference

(SLC) and the Emerging Senior Leaders Programs (ESLP); however, the ELI program is

designed as a traditional leadership skill-building program; moreover, SLC and ESLP are

designed for supervisors and senior level managers.

Objectives

The Mentoring Pilot was designed as a program that facilitates and enhances career

development, knowledge transfer, professional skills, a meaningful connection to the

organization, and a better understanding of the county operation. Given the nature of

mentor/mentee relationships, that they are unique to each pair, as well as the goal of encouraging

natural cohesion amongst the relationships, no expectation around objectives was set for any

pairing; however, measurable outcomes were expected within the context of each relationship.

Emphasizing a focus on mentee-driven action, the Pilot aimed to facilitate the mentee's

professional growth within the organization by sharing resources, networks, knowledge, skills,

and competencies. For many, the program challenged the mentee to move beyond his/her

comfort zone while sustaining a safe learning environment.

Time Frame

After approximately eighteen months of planning, the Mentoring Pilot Program officially

launched on February 1, 2016 and celebrated its conclusion on January 18, 2017. The launch of

the county-wide program is scheduled for September, 2017.

Clientele

The clientele served over the course of the Pilot were two-fold. At the onset, there were

twenty mentors and twenty mentees (which decreased over the course of the Pilot due primarily

to mentors/mentees leaving the county for other employment opportunities). The mentees were

selected based on a multi-faceted application process, including nominations from their

department director, an essay, and an application. Regarding the selection of mentors, each one

was hand-picked from the top levels of Chesterfield County's leadership, including the county

administrator, deputy county administrators, department directors, and assistant directors. After

all mentee applications were received and mentors had been selected, mentees were provided a

list of three mentors, which they were asked to rank in order of preference. Based on expressed

goals for the Pilot, common career goals, and shared exemplary practices from Kouzes and

Posner's *The Leadership Challenge*, the mentor/mentee pairs were made.

Role of the County

Chesterfield County played an integral role in the development and implementation of the

program. From the county administrator's initial blessing to the participation of the county's

most senior leaders, the various levels of support from the county allowed for the continued

progress of the Pilot. In addition, two departments played the leading role in the backing of the

Pilot. The county's Director of Human Resources served as one of the program's two sponsors.

The Director and Chief Learning Officer of Chesterfield County's Learning & Performance

Center (L&PC), served as the Pilot's second sponsor. The L&PC is ultimately the department who oversaw the Mentoring Pilot. Without the support, influence, and commitment from these two persons, the Mentoring Pilot would not have achieved its current success.

Contributions & Partnerships

As discussed throughout this nomination, the Mentoring Pilot Program was based on partnerships across departments within Chesterfield County. From the launch of the project and throughout the implementation phase, the program's Executive Committee was (and still is) comprised of persons from the Human Services, Human Resources, Planning, and Learning & Performance divisions. Mentors came from departments across the county, ranging from Accounting to the Chief of Police to Transportation, with mentees coming from units such as Parks & Recreation, Utilities, and Libraries.

Use of Technology

The Pilot Program made use of several technological systems, most of which reside in the realm of data entry/management. For example, using Microsoft Office, the Pilots guiding documents were drafted and shared while also serving as the application through which mentor and mentee commitment was tracked. During the program's development stages, presentations to various departments were made, utilizing presentation software such as Prezi and Microsoft PowerPoint. Members of the Executive Committee also worked with the county's IST department to have mentoring@chesterfield.gov created. Other technological resources included laptops, conference calling, and internet websites relevant to mentoring.

Cost of the Program

The costs of the program can be broken down into two subcategories: direct and indirect. The

primary direct costs of the program were materials such as books, binders, and other presentation

materials. In terms of indirect costs, there were several, including the time of members of the

Executive Mentoring Committee, the mentors, and the mentees in the development of the model,

preparation of staff, staff selection, and training of all mentors and mentees.

Results and Outcomes

To understand the success of the Mentoring Pilot Program, it is necessary to draw on both

qualitative and quantitative data. It should be noted that data presented below is from varying

points throughout the Pilot year.

Of the many success stories that emerged from the Pilot, there are two that stand out as

particularly poignant. The first, which highlights a macro focus, revolves around one mentee, a

now former lieutenant from the Chesterfield County Police, and the relationship with his mentor,

the county's attorney. After becoming acquainted, the pair quickly began spending time

together. In addition to reading assignments geared towards leadership and professional

development, the mentor brought his mentee into high-level meetings involving various

members of the county's leadership. The mentee shared that not only did these opportunities

allow him to become more familiar with the workings outside of his day-to-day work, but it also

allowed him to see how decisions that affect the entire county are made. Since the Pilot's

completion, the mentee has been promoted to captain.

The second story, a success on the micro level, involves the county's director of Juvenile

Detention and her mentee, one of the county's librarians. During the Pilot's celebration

ceremony, the mentee shared that when she started working with her mentor, she was at a place

in her life where she was contemplating a career change. She reported no longer feeling fulfilled

by the work. Through working with her mentor, she stated that learned more about herself and

ways in which she could affect change in her career without taking on change in her profession.

She changed positions within the library system and found that she could deliver services in a

way more meaningful to her. One example of positive change that emerged was a partnership

that emerged between the libraries and Juvenile Detention. This collaborative effort brought

staff from the libraries into the detentions homes to focus on reading with the adolescents. Not

only did this prove beneficial for the children involved, but so too did it encourage the mentee in

her career and in the relationship with her mentor.

For the program, certain data elements were measured to help determine suggested

guidelines for the program. For example, during one of the quarterly reviews, 78% of mentees

surveyed stated they were meeting weekly or bi-weekly, with 37.5% of those meetings lasting

30-60 minutes and 62.5% lasting 60-120 minutes. From the same sample of mentees, 93.75%

reported that the experience is consistent with or exceeds what they thought it would be. From

the same quarterly review, 93.3% of mentors reported that the experience was either somewhat

consistent or consistent with what they thought it would be.

Perhaps the greatest result from the Pilot was the feedback and opportunity to improve

the program. Suggestions and lessons learned regarding the mentee application process,

technology used throughout the Pilot, the role of the Executive Mentoring Committee, and even

around something as simple as more effective ice breakers, all proved the usefulness of the Pilot

as the county moves towards a full scale launch in September, 2017.

Worthiness of the Award

The Mentoring Pilot Program has served as one answer to helping the county not only improve its ability to attract new talent, but also to help retain existing employees. Based on the success stories shared throughout the course of the Pilot, it can be reasonably argued that if mentees have a positive experience with their mentor, their overall career stands to benefit as well. Working to institute an effective attraction/retention tool such as a mentoring program now can help to reduce the costly process of losing employees and hiring and training replacements. With the lessons learned and momentum gained from the Pilot, Chesterfield County continues to demonstrate not only an ability to think innovatively, but to also carry those same ideas through to completion. Demonstrating such values as partnership, collaboration, and commitment to a mutual end, the Mentoring Pilot Program enables mentors and mentees to participate more fully and robustly in their own day-to-day work and overall careers is an accomplishment that benefits all parties involved. This is worth celebrating.

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APPENDIX A

The Kouzes and Posner Leadership Model
The Mentoring Program utilizes the leadership research of James Kouzes and Barry Posner as a resource to provide a framework for the qualities sought in mentors. Kouzes and Posner's five exemplary practices of leadership are described in their book, *The Leadership Challenge*. The practices are: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart. These practices have been developed after extensive research which found that credibility is the foundation of leadership. In addition, Kouzes and Posner have found that the four most admired characteristics of leadership are honesty, forward looking, inspiring and competent. Each mentor should possess knowledge, skills, and abilities consistent with these leadership practices. A brief description / example of each follows.

1. Model the Way
   - Set the Example – If you don't believe the messenger, you won't believe the message! Do what you say you will do.
   - Clarify Values – Affirm shared values. Know the principles, values and ideals that matter most to you

2. Inspire a Shared Vision
   - Envision an Uplifting Future – Dream of what could be. Be visibly confident.
   - Enlist Others in a Common Vision – Identify your constituents and appeal to their values, interest, hopes and dreams. Listen first; and often.

3. Challenge the Process
   - Search for Opportunities – Avoid complacency: Change, Grow, Innovate, Improve! Seize the initiative. Rise to the occasion.
   - Experiment and Take Risks – Step out of your comfort zone. Learn from your mistakes. Create a climate for learning.

4. Enable Others to Act
   - Foster Collaboration – Create a climate of trust. Facilitate relationships. Show trust to build trust. Share information and resources.
   - Strengthen Others by Giving Power Away – Provide choice. Develop competence. Foster accountability. Offer visible support and build confidence.

5. Encourage the Heart
   - Recognize Individual Contributions – Expect the best. Give meaningful and personalized recognition. Get to know your people to learn what encourages and motivates them.
   - Appreciate and Celebrate – Create a spirit of community. Be personally involved. Reinforce core values in your celebrations.