Launching a 21st Century Mentor Program

Using Technology to Enhance Workforce Development

Rosa Ayer, Department of Veterans Affairs
Agenda

- VA’s Workforce
- VA’s Challenge
- VA ISO Development
  - Mentoring at VA
  - ISO Mentoring Program
- Closing/Questions
VA’S WORKFORCE
Department of Veterans Affairs

Mission

• To serve America’s Veterans and their families with dignity and compassion and to be their principal advocate in ensuring that they receive medical care, benefits, social support, and lasting memorials promoting the health, welfare, and dignity of all Veterans in recognition of service to this Nation
VA’s Workforce

• VA is the second largest Federal Department, with 318,359 employees
• VA’s workforce includes physicians, nurses, counselors, statisticians, architects, computer specialists, attorneys, etc.
• IT makes up 3.18% of VA’s workforce, 10,138 employees
ISO Workforce

• Information Security Officers (ISOs) are part of Field Security Service, including:
  – Regional Information Security Directors
  – Network Information Security Officers
  – Facility Information Security Officers
VA’S CHALLENGE
VA’s Challenge

• Geographically dispersed workforce
• Quickly acclimating new employees
• High number of staff to be trained
• Developing an environment where employees can succeed
• Succession planning
VA ISO DEVELOPMENT
ISO Professional Development Program

• The goal of the program is to build a high performance, highly motivated workforce consisting of skilled personnel who are able to perform tasks proficiently and securely in order to achieve VA’s mission

• Tools to support the professional development of ISOs include:
  – Competency Model
  – ISO Mentoring Program
Mentoring at VA

VA Mentoring Goals

• To develop the next generation of leaders through information sharing from current staff
Mentoring at VA

VA Mentoring Overview

- VA offers and supports a mentoring culture
  - Pairing
  - Training
  - Tools
  - Ongoing support
Discussion

• How many of you have participated in a mentoring program as either a mentor or mentee?

• How many of you have been involved in the development of a mentoring program?
ISO Mentoring Program

ISO Mentoring Program Objectives

• Better integrate newly appointed ISOs into the larger FSS team
• Provide a solid support system for career development
• Prepare mentors for leadership roles and supervisor responsibilities
• Improve the interpersonal and communication skills of both mentors and mentees
### ISO Mentoring Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>A structured one-to-one relationship or partnership that focuses on the needs of the person being mentored, fosters a caring and supportive relationship, encourages the mentee to develop to his or her fullest potential, and helps the mentee develop their own vision for the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>A trusted counselor or guide. The VA ISO mentor provides long-term career development support for mentees, as well as on-the-job training and support for day-to-day ISO functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee</td>
<td>One who is being mentored. The VA ISO mentee works with his/her mentor to learn more about day-to-day ISO functions, and develop and work toward long-term career goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ISO Mentoring Program Components

• Mentoring Agreement
• ISO Two Year Plan
• Reference Guide and Workbook
• Training
• Mentoring Forums
ISO Mentoring Program Design, Development, and Implementation

- FSS Work Group put in place to design program framework
- Analysis of current state via interview and focus group with work group
- Surveys developed and distributed to the field

- Identify Program Champion
- Identify Mentor SMEs for each region

- Develop detailed program materials
- Design and develop workshop to deliver training on mentoring

- Develop and distribute communications announcing launch
- Conduct training workshop
- Distribute Reference Guide and Workbook

- Quarterly Mentoring Forums
- Develop metrics for evaluation of program
- Gather feedback through anonymous evaluation forms

FISSEA Conference
Use of Technology

• Technology plays an important role in the success of the ISO Mentoring Program

• Mentoring relationships are maintained through virtual interaction, including:
  - E-mail
  - Instant Messenger
  - Conference calls
  - Live Meeting
  - Discussion boards
Discussion

How has technology helped in the career development of employees at your agency or organization?
Program Feedback

• Survey was sent to participants to gather feedback on the program:
  – 80% were satisfied with the ISO Mentoring Program
  – 75% of were satisfied with their mentoring relationship
  – 75% of Mentees and over 90% of Mentors felt the relationship is beneficial to the Mentee’s career development
  – 80% of Mentors felt the relationship is beneficial to their own career development

• Some comments include:
  – Being the only ISO at my location, it is useful to be able to speak to someone with experience
  – I am in favor of helping out and working with new employees and I think the Mentor/Mentee process is a positive move in that direction
Discussion

How would a mentoring program benefit your organization?
CLOSING
Summary

• Purpose: Facilitates the transition of new ISOs into the VA environment
• Duration: Implemented/operational for one year
• Participants: 40 Mentors and 40 Mentees
• Benefits: Ensures a baseline ISO learning plan that clearly identifies and tracks training assigned and completed
Discussion

What are some best practices your agency has used to develop new employees?
Questions

For additional questions, contact IT Workforce Development at vaitwd@va.gov