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2014 Achievement Awards



2014 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 2, 2014

Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 2, 2014.

Program Information

Locality Prince William County

Program Title HR Liaison Program

Program Category Communications

Contact Information

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Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name Christopher E. Martino

Title Deputy County Executive

Signature Christopher E. Martino

Call for Entries



PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SUBMITTAL

2014 VACo ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
COMMUNICATIONS CATEGORY

HR LIAISON PROGRAM

May 23, 2014

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY
HUMAN RESOURCES LIAISON PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

In 2012 the Human Resources (HR) Department of Prince William County created a permanent, strategic partnership with all County departments and agencies through the establishment of the new Human Resources Liaisons Program. This Program provides HR with on-going regular opportunities to dramatically enhance our delivery of services to departments and agencies via monthly meetings with departmental personnel throughout the County government who are designated as "HR Liaisons."

Prior to 2012, the Recruitment Division of HR established key working relationships with department representatives for staffing purposes and designated these staff as "HR Liaisons". For over fifteen years, quarterly meetings were held to provide ongoing communication and training. This successful relationship served as the foundation for today's "HR Liaison" program.

Before the HR Liaison program, the other divisions in Human Resources primarily utilized email and voluntary group presentations to communicate new programs or process changes. Due to lean administrative staffing in all departments, voluntary group presentations were not well attended and it was very difficult to monitor the effectiveness of messaging on our intranet.

The goal of the new program was to expand this existing relationship so that Liaisons would receive current, consistent messaging from **every area** of Human Resources—Benefits, Recruitment, Classification & Compensation, Training and Development and HRIS on a monthly basis (third Thursday of the month). Additionally, Liaisons are always able to access all prior presentations for further reference or call their designated HR contacts.

On a monthly basis HR Liaisons are offered a wide range of human resource related training opportunities, timely announcements and information, unique opportunities to collaborate on process improvement and the ability to interact and ask questions of all Human Resources staff as well as colleagues from other departments and agencies. Liaisons are regularly canvassed to ensure topics meet their needs and correspond to timely and pressing departmental needs.

Attendance at every meeting remains high and feedback and appreciation from Liaisons attests to the Program's ongoing success. The Program has been a "win-win" for Human Resources and the departments and employees we serve. Human Resources has significantly strengthened our relationships with all departments resulting in increased efficiencies, streamlined processes, enhanced communications, and strong on-going collaborations.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Prince William County Human Resources Department is a centralized department that serves over 30 departments and agencies. Most departments do not have staff dedicated to “personnel” work. Additionally, the HR Department is constrained by a limited number of staff members, twenty-three, who serve 4,000 plus employees in the areas of Recruitment and Retention, Classification and Compensation, Benefits and Retirement, Training & Development and the Human Resource Information System (HRIS).

Monthly meetings provide a venue where HR can introduce new programs and procedures, review policies, share announcements, bring in subject matter experts and provide training. Liaisons receive the most timely and accurate HR information which they can confidently share with staff in their agencies. Liaisons are all provided with the same information at the same time, thus allowing for consistent messaging. They become partners in process improvement and their questions and concerns are addressed in a timely manner. They have direct access to appropriate staff, enabling them to easily resolve issues that may arise in any HR related subject area. Experiences and best practices are shared and they are provided with opportunities to request future presentations dealing with subjects that are important to them or require further clarification.

Guest speakers are routinely invited to the meetings. Recent examples include the Deputy County Executive, representatives from the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), Payroll Office and Office of Management & Budget, representatives from the local Community College, Temporary Agency and the Employee Assistance Program. By providing these presentations during regularly scheduled meetings, Liaisons are able to save time and travel expenses and bring important and timely information back to their departments. Mini trainings are also frequently offered during meetings. For example, the Classification and Compensation team presented a new six part training series on the job classification study process (Job Analysis Questionnaire, Class Specifications, Internal Equity, Hay Point Factor Evaluation, Market Comparison, and Final Approval).

Last year Liaisons were offered the opportunity to participate in a week long HR training (International Public Management Association for Human Resources), to provide more formalized HR training. Several Liaisons participated and increased their knowledge. These Liaisons have been able to provide leadership and guidance to their departments, resulting in a smoother exchange of HR related information.

HR assigned a representative from Benefits, Recruitment, and Classification and Compensation to partner with each department. By having a dedicated partner from each HR Division, the Liaison knows who to contact with HR related questions and HR is familiar with the unique needs and challenges of their assigned departments. This relationship also provides HR staff with the knowledge of who to contact in every department as issues arise.

The goals of this Program were to enhance HR communications and visibility and increase efficiencies. Some recent examples of successes:

- Reduction in phone calls to HR relating to all issues covered during Liaison meetings and programs.
- An increase in calls to the appropriate HR subject matter expert rather than calls to the general purpose HR number.
- Ability to provide critical communication and just-in-time training to a core audience at pre-reserved times; sharing audit findings, new policies and procedures, and important deadlines.
- Seamless and immediate transition countywide of new hiring process documentation.
- Improvements to HR forms and processes in every functional area due to valuable input and focus group participation by Liaisons.
- Increased participation in training programs.
- Increased requests for on-site departmental group meetings to discuss HR programs introduced at monthly meetings.
- Increased accuracy and timeliness regarding all payroll processes.
- Increase in benefit enrollments and change forms as a result of Liaisons' conveyance of information.
- Increase in "consulting" contact (phone calls/meetings) from departmental staff prior to submission of Classification Study requests leading to more accurate and efficient submissions, thus improving turnaround time.
- Utilization of interns hired as a direct result of a presentation by a guest speaker.
- Liaisons have been instrumental in conveying information about new Virginia Retirement System programs and have dispelled misconceptions.
- Liaisons have become more confident and knowledgeable as they share their HR expertise with their colleagues.

Implementation of the Prince William County HR Liaisons Program has effectively addressed the gap in communication between the Human Resources Department and departments and agencies throughout the County. The Program has provided HR staff with a unique opportunity to provide consistent messaging via on-going collaborative partnerships. Liaisons confidently share reliable information and processes with their departmental staffs.

Strengthening the partnership between Human Resources and County departments has provided Human Resources with the opportunity to view our work and processes through the eyes of our customers. With input from the Liaisons we have been able to improve many processes. This mutually beneficial relationship has given HR a better understanding of the unique challenges faced by departments, and at the same time has taken some of the mystery out of HR, resulting in a new level of customer service, transparency and cooperation between HR and the agencies we serve.