

USDA TEAM LEADER PROGRAM (TLP)

ONLINE AGLEARN TRAINING

Team-based approaches to work can be powerfully effective as building blocks for organizational performance. Teams have greater total resources, and a greater diversity of resources contributing to improved problem solving and to higher productivity. Team Leaders must foster commitment, team spirit, pride and trust, facilitate internal group dynamics to optimize team performance, and a host of additional tasks.

The online, cost effective **USDA Team Leader Program** is designed to assist you in building your capacity to collaborate with the team, clarify roles, responsibilities and norms, and clarify the parameters of authority and resources available. It will also introduce you to the wealth of resources available through AgLearn.

No individual is more important than the team.
Team Leaders must be able to lead without authority.
Begin your leadership journey here.

OBJECTIVES: The USDA Team Leader Program has three main objectives:

- Enhance the ability to facilitate cooperation and motivation among team members
- Improve the ability to make effective and timely decisions for the team
- Introduce essential leadership competencies

INTENDED AUDIENCE: This course is for you if:

- You aspire to be a team leader
- You want to be an even better team leader
- You may be called upon to lead a team

DURATION: Approximately 10-12 hours of online learning plus other developmental activities.

COMPETENCIES: Participants will enhance these essential leadership competencies:

1. **Decisiveness** – Makes effective and timely decisions, even when data is limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences. Perceives the impact and implications of decisions.
2. **Influencing/Negotiating** - Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.
3. **Meeting Management** – Determines the necessity of a meeting. Chooses the best participants and creates an agenda that will guide the group to achieve meeting goals. Clarifies the purpose and objectives of a meeting. Demonstrates appropriate time management techniques.
4. **Problem Solving** - Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.

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5. **Project Management** – Applies the knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements. Identifies the requirements of a project. Addresses the various needs, concerns, and expectations of the stakeholders as the project is planned and carried out. Balances competing project constraints.
6. **Team Building** - Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS: The Team Leader Program has three components (see component details on next pages):

1. Team Leader Program On-Line Courses
2. Evaluation
3. Continual Learning: job aides, recommended reading, additional courses, and shadow assignment information

Be sure to include USDA Team Leader Program in your Individual Development Plan (IDP). Resources for planning and creating IDPs are available at: <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR4040-410.pdf>

Be sure to coordinate with your supervisor regarding the participation time for this training to ensure that you agree on balancing your own need for training and development with work priorities. Remember that your supervisor must grant time for you to participate in training during normal duty hours, and advanced supervisory approval is required to take training outside of the normal duty hours (as required by Title 5 and the Fair Labor Standards Act).

PROGRAM COMPONENTS DESCRIPTION: Following is a description and detailed information about the components in the USDA Team Leader Program.

Program Component 1 - Team Leader Program On-line Courses

This program will enhance your ability to effectively lead teams. You will explore your strengths and increase your knowledge and skills in decisiveness, influencing and negotiating, meeting management, project management, problem solving, and team building. After you have completed the program, there are suggestions on how to develop a plan to ensure that you remain focused on your next steps to continually grow and develop as a team leader.

The following courses must be complete to receive credit for the program.

Decisiveness

Developing Character for Decisiveness (1hr)

Influencing/Negotiating

Getting Results without Direct Authority: Building Relationships and Credibility (1hr)

Getting Results without Direct Authority: Reciprocity (1hr)

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Meeting Management

Preparing for Effective Business Meetings (1hr)

Problem Solving

Turning Problems Around with Reverse Brainstorming (5 min.)

Uncovering the Root Problem (10 min.)

Anticipating and Solving Problems as a Project Champion (5 min.)

Project Management

Project Management Fundamentals (2.5 hrs)

Team Building

Leading Teams: Launching a Successful Team (1 hr)

Leading Teams: Establishing Goals, Roles, and Guidelines (1 hr)

Inspiring your Team (5 min.)

Leading Teams: Building Trust and Commitment (1 hr)

GETTING STARTED

Find the Team Leader Program curriculum in AgLearn, add it to your To-Do list and then complete the survey when finished. Here's how:

1. Log into AgLearn: <http://www.aglearn.usda.gov>
2. In the right column, enter **Team Leader Program** in the **Search Catalog** (or Browse) field.
3. Click on the word **Browse**.
4. When the curriculum name appears, click on **Self Assign Curriculum**.
5. The curriculum contains 12 courses. Each course will appear in your "To-Do List"
6. After completing each course, be sure to take the survey to obtain credit for the course.
7. When you submit the survey, you may need to select the Home tab on the top of the page to return to your courses. You will need to navigate to your "To-Do List" to take the next course.

Need Help? Please visit the AgLearn Job Aids web page for trouble shooting and getting started tips, or ask a Virtual University team member.

Program Component 2 - Evaluation

After you have completed all courses, please complete the Team Leader Program Evaluation. This evaluation is designed to measure your satisfaction as well as provide information so that we continually improve this course. A completion report will be run every Monday morning. If you've completed the curriculum, an evaluation will be added to your AgLearn To-Do List. This finalizes the curriculum and all courses and the evaluation should have moved to you Completed

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Work list. Participants can print a certificate by accessing the evaluation item in their Completed Work list.

Program Component 3 – Continual Learning

Consider participating in the USDA Mentoring Program. More information regarding the USDA Mentoring Program can be found on the Virtual University's School for Talent Management webpage at <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/vu/mentoring.htm>.

Identify at least one leader to shadow as you are completing the program. Shadowing can include observing a leader in a variety of situations, such as at a meeting, during a conference call, giving a presentation, or running a staff meeting.

This component includes recommended reading, additional courses and experiential opportunities. Component 3 is not a requirement to complete the Team Leader Program, but it is recommended for your consideration in growing as a leader.

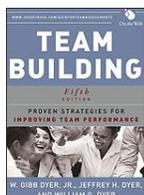
AgLearn Job Aids

The following helpful AgLearn job aids can assist you with the Team Leader courses:

- Trouble Shooting AgLearn Issues
- Getting Started in AgLearn
- How to get into Books 24x7
- Tips to Build Your Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Recommended Readings from Books 24X7 in AgLearn

Read the books listed and watch for announcements showing the dates/times when the Virtual University will conduct interactive webinar sessions to discuss each book.



Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance, Fifth Edition

By W. Gibb Dyer Jr., Jeffrey H. Dyer and William G. Dyer
Jossey-Bass © 2013 (304 pages)
ISBN: 9781118105139

Including illustrative examples, a discussion of managing cross-functional teams, and information on leading teams in a competitive environment, this guide offers team leaders, members, and consultants the knowledge and skills to create effective, high-functioning teams.

Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance, Fifth Edition

Part One – The Four Cs of Team Development (Context, Composition, Competencies and Change)

Part Two – Solving Specific Problems through Team Building

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Part Three – Team Building in Different Types of Teams
Part Four – The Challenge of Team Building for the Future



25 Instruments for Team Building

By Glenn M. Parker
HRD Press © 1998 (203 pages)
ISBN: 9780874254457

Ranging from very simple, self-scored tools, to more complex assessments that provide in-depth information on teams, this collection of instruments provides practitioners with tools to assist in the development of individuals, teams, and organizations.

25 Instruments for Team Building

Part One – Effective Team Players
Part Two – Effective Teams
Part Three – Organizational Effectiveness

Recommended Additional Courses and Reading

- Managing Effective Business Meetings (Skillsoft)
- Dealing with Common Meeting Problems (Skillsoft)
- Search for additional books that cover team building topics in AgLearn's Books 24X7.

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Experience Opportunities

Training doesn't always have to be a formal course. Explore options from following list for additional ways to stretch and develop competencies through experiences.

- **Work groups** - serve on a special work group to use your current skills in a new environment.
- **Teams/Projects** - request to join a special team, project or assignment.
- **Focus or sensing groups** - these are a group of people who discuss their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a service, concept, or idea. An example of this is the chiefs sensing group: <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/chief/sensing>.
- **Cross-Training** - acquire knowledge and skills from coworkers, who have similar grade levels and experiences. A new skill can make you more valuable.
- **Details** - check the USDA Detail Registry at <http://opportunities.usda.gov/> for opportunities.
- **Shadowing assignments** - These are designed to give you exposure to managerial duties, responsibilities, and to show you different approaches to handling them. It also provides exposure and experience in a different unit than your own. A shadow assignment is an important next step after completing the Online Aspiring Leader Program. Ask your supervisor for recommendations for you to engage in a shadow assignment.
- **Developmental stretch assignments** - Stretch assignments allow you to ease into leadership roles by exposing you to an array of roles and responsibilities. Stretch assignments are about getting you to expand your competencies and skills to newer, wider levels. By definition, "a stretch assignment is one that requires you to take a leap beyond your comfort zone and, in the process, pick up new skills".
- **Be a Mentor - Find a Mentor** - The mentoring process links a less experienced employee with a more experienced one to help facilitate professional growth. A mentor is someone not in your chain of command who is in a position to help with job and career issues, and who is committed to doing so. For more information on mentoring please visit the USDA Mentoring Program webpage at <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/vu/mentoring.htm>.
- **Be a Coach - Find a Coach** - Coaching is a thought provoking and creative process that inspires people to maximize their personal and professional potential. This is a method of instruction where the desired outcome is to obtain a certain level of knowledge or skills. See Marisol Rodriguez of the Virtual University for more information about coaching (email marisol.rodriquez@dm.usda.gov).
- Complete other online leadership development courses.
- Join professional organizations and volunteer to lead a group or serve as an officer.
- Participate in supervisor training.

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- Serve as a representative on a special emphasis committee.

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SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN

Activity	Description	Estimated time	Date completed
Program Component 1: Online Courses	Complete the online-courses in AgLearn		
	a. Developing Character for Decisiveness (1hr)	a. 1 hour	
	b. Getting Results without Direct Authority: Building Relationships and Credibility (1hr)	b. 1 hour	
	c. Getting Results without Direct Authority: Reciprocity (1hr)	c. 1 hour	
	d. Preparing for Effective Business Meetings (1hr)	d. 1 hour	
	e. Project Management Fundamentals (2.5 hr)	e. 2.5 hours	
	f. Turning Problems Around with Reverse Brainstorming (5 min.)	f. 5 min.	
	g. Uncovering the Root Problem (10 min.)	g. 10 min.	
	h. Anticipating and Solving Problems as a Project Champion (5 min.)	h. 5 min.	
	i. Leading Teams: Launching a Successful Team (1 hr)	i. 1 hour	
	j. Leading Teams: Establishing Goals, Roles, and Guidelines (1 hr)	j. 1 hour	
k. Inspiring your Team (5 min.)	k. 5 min.		
l. Leading Teams: Building Trust and Commitment (1 hr)	l. 1 hour		

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SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN (continued)

Activity	Description	Estimated time	Date completed
Program Component 2: Evaluation	The evaluation will be added to your To Do List upon completion of the program.	15 minutes	
Program Component 3: Additional Development (optional)	Identify additional development activities based on your interests.	To be determined based on the activities selected	

Remember to discuss your training with your supervisor, and to request approval for the time you spend in training, as well as to include the training on your Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Growing leaders is important to us at OHRM. Thanks for investing time to develop your skills, and for considering a commitment to filling a leadership role in USDA, both now and in the future. Leaders provide the foundation for our success.