

8.1 Human Resources Development

Purpose

This chapter outlines the policy of the Government of Nova Scotia with respect to the development of its human resources and provides guidelines for all branches of government in the application of the policy.

Note: All references to “department” in this chapter refer to the departmental personnel specialist (where that individual is normally assigned responsibility for human resource development activity).

Policy Framework and Basic Objectives

Sound human resource management is as critical to the effective development and implementation of government policies and programs as the management of financial and capital resources. The development of human resources, in accordance with organizational goals, is recognized as an essential component of human resource management and an accepted cost of government operations.

It is, therefore, the policy of the Government of Nova Scotia to ensure that human resource development is carried out, where necessary and appropriate, in order to meet the following basic objectives:

- to maintain a civil service of the highest quality with individuals and teams who have the personal and professional knowledge and skills to develop and effectively implement Nova Scotia government policies and programs
- to meet the future needs of the Nova Scotia government for qualified employees.

Staff Training

PURPOSES OF TRAINING

Training will be provided when supported by management as necessary and appropriate in order to meet the following purposes.

JOB-RELATED TRAINING

To enable employees to maintain a satisfactory level of performance in their present function.

STATE-OF-THE-ART TRAINING

To enable employees to remain abreast of current technology in their area of work.

DEVELOPMENTAL TRAINING

To prepare employees for future promotions or lateral mobility, whether related to a specific position or to a category of positions for which they have demonstrated potential.

RETRAINING

To assist the incumbents of redundant positions to acquire skills necessary to meet the requirements of available positions.

SAFETY TRAINING

To ensure that employees are capable of meeting safety standards established for the workplace.

REMEDIAL TRAINING

To allow employees whose performance is unsatisfactory to continue in their present positions or in other positions for which their qualifications may be better suited.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following is an outline of the roles and responsibilities of the Public Service Commission, departments, and employees for staff training and development.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The Public Service Commission is responsible for:

- providing advice and consulting services to departments in identification of needs and selection, design, conduct, and evaluation of training and development programs
- coordinating, developing, and contracting training and development programs to meet service-wide needs
- developing comprehensive human resource development policies that meet the requirements of the Government of Nova Scotia
- developing service-wide systems for the planning, control, delivery, and evaluation of training and development.

DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Departments and agencies are responsible for:

- identifying the training requirement of their employees in order to meet operational needs and government policy objectives

- reporting to the Public Service Commission their requirements for service-wide training
- making arrangements to ensure that staff are appropriately trained to meet identified needs
- developing and operating training programs in cases where the training needs are unique to the department or agency.

EMPLOYEES

Employees are responsible for:

- acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their present jobs effectively
- identifying, in conjunction with their managers, areas in which their knowledge and skills are, or may be, deficient
- participating in training activities provided by management (which may include formal training programs and/or on-the-job training and experience)
- ensuring that job knowledge and skills once outlined are maintained
- acquiring on their own time and at their own expense any additional training and/or education required to meet their personal development goals.

Administrative Guidelines

IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING NEEDS

Employee training needs are identified jointly by the employee and manager by means of the following process:

- Establish performance expectations for the job.
- Identify discrepancies between expected and actual performance.
- Isolate those performance gaps or problems that are due to knowledge or skill deficiencies and are not caused by other individual, organizational, or managerial problems.
- Identify the level of knowledge or skills that the employee requires to perform the job effectively.

IDENTIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE TRAINING ACTIVITY

The identification of department-specific training activities is the responsibility of departments. Consultative assistance is available from the Public Service Commission.

Identification of service-wide training activities is the responsibility of the Public Service Commission in consultation with departments. These responsibilities include:

- establishing learning objectives based on knowledge and skill requirements

- establishing evaluation criteria to permit measurement of the effect of training on performance
- identifying alternative learning activities, which may include:
 - on-the-job coaching and feedback
 - programmed instruction
 - assigned reading
 - special projects and work assignments
 - formal training courses
- selecting or developing a learning activity or combination of activities judged most appropriate to meet the training needs.

SELECTION OF TRAINEES

It is the responsibility of departments to select employees for training in accordance with consideration for departmental priorities, equity, identified employee needs and capabilities, and any eligibility criteria established for training activity.

Some types of training should be provided to all appropriate employees, for example: orientation training for new employees and training related to safety, technological change, or legislative or policy changes. Other forms of training are by their nature of limited applicability, for example: retraining or remedial training. Employees should be selected for development training on the basis of a high level of performance, demonstrated interest, capacity to accept increased responsibility, and developmental initiatives taken independently by the employee.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of training is the responsibility of the department in the case of department-specific training and of the Public Service Commission in the case of service-wide training.

FOLLOW-UP

On completion of the training, the employee is responsible for developing a plan of action for on-the-job implementation of the acquired knowledge/skills. The employee's manager is responsible for confirming the action plan and facilitating its implementation.

EVALUATION OF TRAINING

This is essential to determine whether the training has met the needs of the department and the individual. Such feedback may be secured by:

- questionnaires and/or tests upon completion of training, for which the organization delivering the training is responsible
- systematic follow-up of the trainee's performance on the job to measure change, for which the department is responsible. Consultative assistance is available from the Public Service Commission.

Enquiries

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Approval date:

Manual release date: January 9, 2003

Approved by:

Most recent review:
