

**Memorandum of Agreement**  
**Between NIEHS and AFGE Local 2923**  
**Professional Development Program**

Pursuant to the memorandum of agreement (MOA) between NIEHS and AFGE Local 2923 (henceforth referred to as “the Union”) regarding the NIEHS Leadership Development Program, dated February 1, 2013, the parties agreed that the Agency would create and establish a leadership development program or upward mobility program for non-supervisory employees GS-11 and below. A professional development program (PDP) will be created and structured to provide skillsets through coaching, mentoring, and training to help with upward mobility opportunities (See examples on Attachment 1). Decisions regarding participants in the PDP shall be objective, fair, and impartial regarding the selection of the best qualified candidates. Decisions regarding the consideration and selection of a prospective candidate or a group of prospective candidates shall be consistent with all applicable federal laws. Diversity shall be a guiding principle regarding the selection of prospective program candidates. This agreement outlines the Agency’s training program for professional development for NIEHS employees GS-11 and below.

- 1) The Agency shall post program information on its intranet site, including the purpose, program features, schedule, criteria, and other applicable information. In addition, the Agency shall specify the deadlines for application, any details regarding supervisory approval, and other important information regarding the program.
- 2) The NIEHS shall send an all-hands announcement asking for nominations.
- 3) Any interested and eligible employee should submit an application to the supervisor in a timely manner. Employees are expected to be performing at a fully successful level to apply to this program.
- 4) The supervisor will promptly review and consider the employee's application for further submission. If an employee is not recommended by their supervisor, the supervisor shall provide the employee with a specific written explanation for the denial.
- 5) An evaluation committee will be formed to review all applications and make recommendations to the NIEHS Director. The committee will include a representative from each NIEHS Division and one from the Union. The Union representative will be provided the same information that will be reviewed by all other members of the committee. The Union Committee Member would be permitted the same rights and responsibilities as other

members, including, but not limited to, offering comments or voting on nominations.

- 6) The Committee mentioned above will provide a prioritized list to the NIEHS Director (or designee) along with any appropriate comments and minority views.
- 7) Normally, and when applicable, the Director shall follow the recommendations or votes of the committee but has the discretion to do otherwise. The Director shall consider Union comments as well regarding the bargaining unit applicants.
- 8) Whenever there is a deviation from the committee's recommendations, the Agency shall provide a rationale to the Union. In any event, the final list of participants shall be sent to the Union.
- 9) The Parties agree that employees are responsible for self-development, for applying for and successfully completing authorized training, and for fulfilling continuing service agreements. In addition, employees are responsible to identify training needed to improve individual and organizational performance and identify methods to meet those needs, effectively and efficiently. It is the employee's responsibility to discuss these matters with his/her supervisor (5 CFR Subpart C 410.303)
- 10) The Agency shall notify the nominee(s) of their nomination and whether or not they were selected.
- 11) Any criteria used by the Agency to evaluate or rank employees shall be developed to differentiate applicants through the use of an appropriate scale, e.g., 1-10. The criteria shall be objective, fair, and created to ensure that the best applicants are selected.
- 12) Selections shall be made by considering only the application in accordance with program criteria. Other considerations, such as budget, space, location, etc. will be considered in making final decisions about selections for this program.
- 13) The parties agree that diversity is a goal of the program and that nominees should be selected based on this principle, to the extent possible. When applicable, a proportional number of bargaining unit and non-bargaining unit employees will be selected as long as there are enough nominees who meet the criteria.
- 14) Upon request, the Union shall be provided lists of final selectees identified by BUE status, NIEHS division, and grade.

- 15) The Agency shall create a waiting list of qualified applicants who are deferred for future cohorts of this program and will receive first priority for future cohorts.
- 16) Temporary or career-conditional employees are not eligible to participate in this program.
- 17) Upon completion of the Professional Development Program, participants will receive a "Certificate of Completion" in recognition of their achievement.
- 18) The parties agree that relevant parts of the CBA shall also be followed regarding this MOA.

Nothing in this document changes or waives either party's rights.

This agreement will expire upon implementation of a new collective bargaining agreement by the parties.

For the Agency:

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Matthew S. Burr, Chief of Staff, OM/NIEHS

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4/17/2018  
Date

For the Union:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, AFGE Local 2923

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **ATTACHMENT 1: Sample coursework for the Professional Development Program (PDP)**

Length of Program – 4-6 months

Target Employees: GS11 and below

Focus of Program: Professional Training and Development

### **Component 1: Classroom Training**

1. Skillset building – coursework may include training in communications, such as presenting and creating PowerPoint slides, writing skills, Excel training, customer service, and time management. Classes may be instructor led by outside instructors or in-house SMEs, or on-line training, or a combination.
2. Developmental training – coursework may include training in competency development that incorporates cognitive skill development, intrinsic motivation, and self-awareness.
3. Case studies – coursework may include interactive group projects where participants develop a presentation to address a specific topic. Such topics might include specific institute topics, or more generic issues. Participants will demonstrate learning by providing a briefing or writing a report on what they learned and how they will apply it to their future development.

### **Component 2: Coaching**

1. Self-assessment tools will be provided. These might include Myers-Brigs Assessment or a type of conflict management assessment (such as Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)).
2. Individual coaching may be made available to guide participants in reviewing and addressing the results of the self-awareness assessments.

### **Component 3: Additional Developmental Projects (to be coordinated with supervisor)**

1. Students will be encouraged to work with their supervisor to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) or other specific plan to facilitate their individual career interests. The supervisor and student may agree to a shadowing opportunity, informational interview, or other class work in technical development.