

appraisal, in-service training, penalty mail, university policies and procedures as related to purchase orders/vouchers, duplicating and publications.

After the orientation program, the new employee will visit with the immediate supervisor for further orientation. Refer to the employee handbook for either AAMU or AU for specific details.

II. Mentoring Program

A. Overview

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is a uniquely complex organization. It is different from any other organization in the world. New employees might feel overwhelmed in their new job environment so it is very important to help these new employees understand the System along with their new responsibilities and to help adjust with minimum difficulties. Therefore, the goals of the mentoring process are:

- To enable new employees to learn Extension via facilitated counseling and conversation with an Extension veteran.
- To foster a sense of well-being, acceptance, and inclusion within the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.
- To assist the protege in defining career goals, identifying continuing professional development needs, and developing a career plan.
- To increase the level of confidence of employees in new positions.
- To help employees develop a good working knowledge and understanding of the System.
- To accelerate the rate at which employees in new positions and employees already in place develop professional and personal relationships.
- To elevate employee morale.
- To increase employee performance success rate both short-term and long-term.
- To increase employee competencies needed by the System by accelerating the learning process.
- To reduce the rate of attrition.

B. Benefits of the Mentoring Process

Mentoring should be a satisfying experience benefitting the mentor, the protege, the System and the people served by the System. Mentors receive intrinsic rewards for altruism, as well as the benefit of a professional colleague. Proteges may develop both professionally and personally from the experience.

The System benefits from the mentoring process because the mentor and protege will:

- Increase their levels of productivity
- Improve their management and technical skills
- Refine their leadership qualities
- Reveal latent talents
- Develop skills that will enable them to form and participate in partnerships, coalitions, and teams.

The System may find that this process will challenge managers to grow. Recruitment and retention of qualified staff may also be improved as a result of this process.

C. Mentor Qualifications

A person interested in being a mentor should have the following qualifications:

- Be knowledgeable and supportive of the Extension mission.
- Have five years' System experience.
- Have demonstrated job performance that has exceeded standard job expectations for at least two years.
- Met appropriate degree requirements (support staff - no degree; County Extension Agents, Extension Specialists and administrative staff - master's degree).
- Be a member of at least one professional organization. It is desirable for the person to have served as an officer in a professional organization or have served as a committee chairperson in a relevant organization.
- Demonstrated leadership ability.

D. Mentor Selection Process

A Mentor Selection Team will be established to review mentor nominations, make recommendations for new mentors, recommend new assignments if a mentoring relationship is found to be incompatible, and consistently evaluate the mentoring process. For individuals to be considered for the mentoring process, they must:

- Apply to or be nominated with the approval of the CEC, DEC, Unit Head, Associate Directors, Programs or the Director
- Complete a Mentor Profile form that will be used to help match them with a protege
- Take part in training before being assigned a protege
- Be matched with a protege based on similar job responsibilities
- Be willing to serve as a mentor for three years or until their assigned protege has completed the probationary counseling period
- Be willing to attend informal mixers that provide mentors and proteges opportunities to meet as a group.

E. Mentor Selection Team

The Mentor Selection Team will include the supervising CEC, the supervising DEC, and the relevant Program Leader(s). The Mentor Selection Team will work very closely with the Staff Development Educator and make recommendations to the Staff Development Educator.

The Team will receive and review nominations and applications for mentors. The Mentor Profile and the Protege Profile will be used by the Team to match mentors with proteges. The Staff Development Educator will maintain a Mentor/Protege Registry. The Team will do an evaluation of each mentoring relationship. Copies of all mentoring information collected and maintained by the Mentor Selection Team will be filed in the Staff Development Office. This information will be used to evaluate the Mentoring Program.

F. Responsibilities of the Mentor

- Serve as a role model.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Be a good listener.
- Serve as a guide but not a supervisor.
- Share relevant knowledge, not gossip.
- Show mutual respect.
- Be accessible.
- Be a supporter but not a rescuer.
- Identify resources.
- Serve as a networker.
- Counsel no more than one protege per term.

G. Responsibilities of the Protege

- Be responsible.
- Be proactive.
- Be a good listener.
- Be honest.
- Be receptive to new ideas.

H. Recognition of Mentors

The Director will formally recognize mentors with a plaque or certificate at the end of each mentoring term. Mentoring will be recognized during performance appraisal as additional duties.