

## **Wisconsin Public Defender Leadership Development Program 2003-2004**

**Overview:** Composed of a classroom portion and a mentoring portion, the Leadership Development Program (LDP) will offer leadership training to all State Public Defender (SPD) employees. LDP classes will focus on crucial leadership issues such as strategy, philosophy, decision making, human resources, client service, and adapting to change. The mentoring portion of the LDP will match future leaders with mentors drawn from current management, allowing each program participant to work with his/her mentor on a project. The mentoring portion will enable participants to observe and practice the leadership skills presented during the classroom portion of the LDP.

**Goals:** The SPD hopes to: (1) stimulate broad-based, future-oriented thinking, (2) share SPD's approaches and philosophies, (3) articulate and reinforce SPD strategic themes, (4) share management ideas and experience with SPD staff, (5) strengthen SPD sensitivity to needs of employees and clients

**Content:** Classroom curriculum and content will center on these priorities, as will the mentoring experience. These priorities form the heart of the LDP.

- Communication skills
- Problem solving: decision making and planning/prioritization skills
- Knowledge of the SPD: the context, the "big picture," and learning to develop a vision
- Understanding human behavior
- Learning to be decisive and a "risk taker"
- Role modeling, coaching, and teaching

LDP training will focus on leadership concepts, as opposed to "how to" skills, intended to help staff and supervisors evolve into managers focused on the "big picture." Participants will gain an overview of the management experience within the SPD, learning the tasks and responsibilities that accompany leadership positions. Subjects will include organizational mission and design, team building and team work, time management and delegation, effective problem solving, staff leadership, communication, development of policy and procedures, values and ethics in management, dealing with the external environment, human resource and fiscal management and conflict resolution.

**Future:** Managers will need a combination of management skills and knowledge of the SPD itself. The LDP provides future leaders with these tools as well as opportunities to experience leadership in a real-world capacity.

# Participant Application Form

## **Section I: Background Information:**

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Title or Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Title of Immediate Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section II: Written Application Assignment:**

Response must be typed and should not exceed 600 words.

- 1. Why do you want to participate in the Leadership Development program? How do you hope to benefit from it?**
- 2. Discuss the qualities or characteristics of a good leader. What personal qualities do you possess that would make you a good leader?**
- 3. Describe a problem which your office faced in the past two years. Discuss the solutions that were developed and evaluate the outcome of the solutions implemented. If you were the leader of the office, how would you have handled the situation?**

## **Section III: Statement of Employee Commitment**

I recognize that the Leadership Development Program is a one-year sequence of learning activities, and that if I cannot complete assignments and tasks on time, program administrators may terminate my participation.

I understand that, if accepted into the program, I will undertake most of the assignments and tasks on my own time. I also understand that the Office of the State Public Defender makes no promise or guarantee that completion of the program will result job advancement or promotion.

Finally, I recognize that this is a rigorous program designed to broaden my personal leadership skills and professional horizons in the Office of the State Public Defender. I will strive to do my best to complete the task assignments and responsibilities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

*Leadership Development Program Application con't.*

**Section IV: Supervisor's Acknowledgement**

Note: To be completed by the immediate supervisor.

I acknowledge the application of my employee \_\_\_\_\_ as a candidate for the Leadership Development Program.

I understand that the program requires a one-year commitment from this employee and that the majority of the curriculum will be accomplished by the employee on his or her own time. My signature below indicates my intention to facilitate his or her participation if he or she is selected. I also understand that some scheduling flexibility will be necessary to allow the participant to be fully involved in the program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Name (please print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments (suitability of applicant and impact on unit workload):**

## **Introduction to the Leadership Development Program**

Work experience, for the purpose of the SPD Leadership Development Program, is defined as significant participation in a major work project within the SPD under the guidance of a mentor. Major projects will include subject matter that is useful and relevant to the SPD, pose a challenge to the participant, and offer the participant an opportunity to develop administrative knowledge and skills. Work projects will correspond to and utilize the lessons learned in the classroom portion of the program.

A major project will consist of five key elements:

1. The identification and development of a major project that develops leadership skills in the participant and will be of value to the agency.
2. A formalized selection/approval process
3. Supervision/support during major project
4. A definable end product
5. A formalized assessment of the major project by the participant's mentor, the participant's regular supervisor.

These specific elements are described in detail below.

### **Element #1: Identification and development of major project:**

Identifying and developing a major project will allow the participant to build crucial leadership skills. While there is a degree of flexibility in the definition of a major project, proposals for major projects should contain most, if not all, of the following key components and experiences:

- The identification of tasks and end products that are useful to the agency's planning and day-to-day functioning.
- Experiences that will allow the participant to develop written and oral communications skills.
- Opportunities for the participant to develop problem-solving and planning skills.
- Chances for the participant to increase his/her organizational and process knowledge through interactions with other subunits of the SPD, outside agencies, members of the executive and legislative branches, etc.
- A work plan that includes specific objectives, timeframes, product(s), and a formal assessment component.

### **Element #2: Formalized Selection /Approval Process**

The selection/approval process consists of the following key components:

- The development and submission of a formal, written proposal and, as mentioned above, a clearly defined work plan. The proposal will set forth the nature of the major project, its specific objectives, timeframes for these tasks, the identification of the end product, and an evaluation component.

- The proposal and work plan would also identify logistics and resource issues. These will include (but not be limited to): whether or not the major project would be a full or part time experience, whether the participant work load is reasonable, and the identification and proposed source of any necessary resources (budget, support staff, transportation, etc.).
- The major project will be approved by the major project mentor, the LDP coordinators, and the manager(s) affected by the project activity.

### **Element #3: Supervision/Support During Major Product Experience**

The specific, formal supervision of the major project experience will be done by the participant's regular work supervisor and the participant's mentor. During the course of the major project experience, it is expected that all of the involved managers will provide guidance, support, serve as a resource/referral point, and/or assist the participants in "trouble-shooting" as necessary.

The written proposal and work plan shall specifically identify the formal supervision/mentor responsibilities during the major project experience.

### **Element #4: End Product**

Every major project proposal and work plan will be required to identify a definable end product. There will necessarily be a degree of flexibility as to what the end product will comprise, depending upon the nature of the major project. Every major project will result in an end product that includes a written report and/or an oral presentation.

### **Element #5: Assessment**

Every major project proposal and work plan will have a written assessment component to bring closure to the major project experience and to provide critical feedback to the participant. The review and feedback provided during the assessment phase will afford the participant the opportunity to identify and consolidate the variety of leadership skills developed and refined through the major project experience.

A formalized assessment mechanism will certify that the participant has successfully completed the major project component of the Leadership Development Program.

### **Conclusion:**

The work experience component of the LDP, as described above, has a necessary degree of flexibility to ensure that both the participant and the agency are well served by a meaningful and productive work experience. The work experience will both afford the participant an opportunity to develop leadership skills, and offer the SPD an end product of value.