



## UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

September 10, 2018

The Director

### MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: DR. JEFF T.H. PON  
DIRECTOR 

Subject: Coaching in the Federal Government

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is pleased to highlight to Federal agencies the importance of creating a coaching culture. Coaching is a critical tool as the Federal Government strives to develop a workforce that supports the effective and efficient mission achievement and improved services to the American people. The benefits of coaching individuals and teams include higher engagement, retention, organizational performance and productivity; increased focus on mission and organizational objectives; improved creativity, learning, and knowledge; and better relationships between people and departments<sup>1</sup>. The field and practice of coaching is broad, and contains many facets which will require more specific guidance. This memorandum and attached Frequently Asked Questions provides guidance to Federal agencies as they plan, design, and implement coaching activities and programs.

It is important to acknowledge two aspects of coaching:

- Coaching is a sanctioned learning and development activity as described in 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 410.203. Coaching is one of the most effective learning and development activities for supervisors, managers, and executives. Equipping leaders with coaching skills is a proven and effective way to enhance employee development and performance<sup>2</sup>.
- Coaching within the Federal Government is appropriate for learning and development purposes only, and requires the voluntary participation of the individual or team being coached. Coaching is not appropriate as a mandatory requirement for poor performance or in lieu of supervisory performance management responsibilities. Participation in coaching activities, in any capacity, should be included in an employee's Individual Development Plan (IDP).

<sup>1</sup>MacKie, D. (2014). The effectiveness of strength based coaching in enhancing full range leadership development: a controlled study. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice & Research*, 66(2), 118-137. doi:10.1037/cpb0000005

<sup>2</sup>Ali, M., Lodhi, S. A., Oranzab, Raza, B., & Ali, W. (2018). Examining the impact of managerial coaching on employee job performance: Mediating role of work engagement, leader-member-exchange quality, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce & Social Sciences*, 12(1), 253-282.

As agencies develop and implement a coaching program, please consider that creating a coaching culture requires a multi-pronged approach, which includes:

- Embed coaching in your leadership programs for targeted populations (e.g., Senior Executive Service (SES) Onboarding programs, new supervisors training programs);
- Developing internal coach capacity to support coaching for all employees, including individual contributors;
- Leveraging external coaches;
- Developing coaching skills in supervisors, managers, and executives; and
- Implementing peer coaching.

Your assistance to promote and champion the practice of coaching will ensure the successful use of coaching in your agency and Governmentwide. If your agency wishes to find out more information about coaching, please contact the point of contact at your agency. If unknown, please email [FederalCoachingNetwork@opm.gov](mailto:FederalCoachingNetwork@opm.gov), or Ms. Julie Brill, Manager, Work-Life and Leadership & Executive Development, at [Julie.Brill@opm.gov](mailto:Julie.Brill@opm.gov).

Attachment

cc: Deputy Chief Human Capital Officers  
Chief Learning Officers  
Human Resources Directors  
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