



United States Department of Agriculture

Grain Inspection,  
Packers and Stockyards  
Administration

Office of the Administrator

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TO: All GIPSA Employees

JUN - 3 2013

FROM: Larry Mitchell  
Administrator

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2014 GIPSA Mentoring Program

I am pleased to announce that GIPSA will initiate an agency-wide mentoring program for fiscal year 2014. Secretary Vilsack's Departmental Cultural Transformation initiatives identified implementation of a mentoring program as a key initiative for development of USDA employees.

Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (mentee), usually a less senior employee. This process may involve either transmission of knowledge or skills enhancement both formally or informally. **Knowledge transfer** allows mentors to pass along historical and institutional knowledge that may otherwise be lost as experienced USDA employees retire and leave their agencies. **Skills enhancement** allows mentees to identify methods and tools for focusing their development (soft skills, e.g., communication). For example, the mentor may suggest specific training or on-the-job tasks and assignments that could help the mentee to develop his or her skills.

GIPSA will be asking its more senior employees and formal leadership (supervisors, managers and executives) to consider becoming mentors as an opportunity to contribute to the future success of our agency. It is important to note that 82 percent of Federal Grain Inspection Service's (FGIS) and 14 percent of Packers and Stockyards Program's (P&SP) supervisors and managers are currently retirement eligible.

All time spent by supervisors and managers will count toward the annual 24 hour refresher training requirement, which is coincidentally about the amount of time required to mentor one employee. Mentors may be supervisors or managers or other employees who have been with GIPSA for three years and already service in informal leader positions. Participation in the program is expected to enhance employee engagement.

Anyone within GIPSA may apply to be a mentee although other conditions may apply depending on the availability of sufficient mentors. Under this program, consideration may be given to group mentoring. Also, FGIS will require that all employees waitlisted for the FY2013 program will be placed first before others from that program area. This requirement will not apply to the Packers and Stockyards Program staff or the Office of the Administrator's Civil Rights,

Information Technology and Management and Budget Services offices. Applicants may request a prospective mentor and may also request participation of someone outside our agency. Note: all mentor/mentee pairs will be formally selected by the GIPSA mentoring program to participate.

GIPSA looks forward to assisting all employees who participate in this program. Please see the attached GIPSA Mentoring Handbook for detailed information on how to participate in this program. **All applications must be submitted by August 31, 2013.** For further information, please contact for::

- Mary Coffey Alonzo, GIPSA –FGIS, Director, Technology and Science Division at (816) 891-0463 or via e-mail, [mary.c.alonzo@usda.gov](mailto:mary.c.alonzo@usda.gov) ,or
- Gale Mason, GIPSA-P&SP, Deputy Director, Policy and Litigation Division at (202) 690-2215 or [gale.l.mason@usdag.gov](mailto:gale.l.mason@usdag.gov) or
- Caroline Thorpe, GIPSA-MBS, Mentoring Program Manager at (202) 690-2332 or via e-mail, [caroline.c.thorpe@usda.gov](mailto:caroline.c.thorpe@usda.gov).