



STATE OF OKLAHOMA
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

"Serving Equal Opportunity Employers"

OPM 03-35

DATE: August 22, 2003

TO: All Appointing Authorities

FROM: Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., Administrator and
Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration

A handwritten signature in cursive, appearing to read "Oscar B. Jackson, Jr.", written in blue ink.

RE: State Mentor Program

The purpose of the State Mentor Program, created by the Oklahoma Legislature in 1994, is to develop the executive potential of employees in all branches of state government, with a special emphasis on women, racial minorities, and individuals with disabilities.

Each state employee selected to participate in the State Mentor Program is called a Mentor Executive and is assigned to a management rotation, through the State Personnel Interchange Program, in several state agencies and his or her employing agency. The Mentor Executive is assigned to at least one policy level manager during the period of time he or she is serving in a management rotation.

Since the Program's inception, eight state employees from six state agencies have participated in management rotations in 18 state agencies. OPM solicited nominations for the first group of Mentor Executives in November and December 1996; five state employees were selected to participate in the Program and began their rotational assignments in July 1997. OPM solicited nominations for the second group of participants in August and November 1999; three state employees were selected to participate in the Program and began their rotational assignments in July 2000. OPM solicited nominations for a third group of participants in June 2002; in November 2002, members of the Mentor Selection Advisory Committee declined to make any recommendations to the OPM Administrator regarding participation in the State Mentor Program.

The Legislature amended the statutory provisions governing the State Mentor Program during the 2003 session to make the Program more attractive to both state agencies and employees. One change permits intermittent Mentor Executive rotations. Previously, Mentor Executives had to be away from their home agencies for 18 months. Now, the law permits each Mentor Executive to serve up to six months in another agency, return to his or her home agency for up to six months, serve up to six months in another agency, return home, etc. until the 18 months are completed. Another change requires the sending agency Appointing Authority to participate in the design and implementation of the management rotations for the Mentor Executive selected from that agency, as a way of ensuring that the Mentor Executive experience is beneficial to both the employee and the employing agency.

OPM is considering whether to initiate another selection process. We have had inquiries from both employees and agency directors expressing interest in participating in the State Mentor Program. We need to know if others are interested, as well.

Please review the information in Attachment 1 and then answer the questions posed in the survey (Attachment 2): **(1) Would you be willing to host a Mentor Executive beginning in January 2004? (2) Would you permit any of your employees to participate in the State Mentor Program as Mentor Executives beginning in January 2004?**

We greatly appreciate your assistance. Please contact Dayna Petete, OPM Assistant Administrator for Communications, at (405) 521-6293 or dayna.petete@opm.state.ok.us, if you have any questions or require additional information.

"We serve the people of Oklahoma by delivering reliable and innovative human resource services to our partner agencies to achieve their missions."

Attachment 1

Hosting a Mentor Executive includes:

- Physical Location:
 - ✓ Providing the Mentor Executive with office space, computer, telephone, access to printer and copier, and necessary office supplies.
 - ✓ Providing the Mentor Executive with access to internal and external e-mail, if available, and the Internet, if available.
- Mentor Assignments:
 - ✓ Assigning several senior-level managers as mentors in order to provide the Mentor Executive with a variety of experiences. The mentor's duties are to instruct the Mentor Executive in the agency's purpose and functions, and to instill a sense of professionalism and public service. Mentors also may serve as a source of career guidance and reference after the management rotation is completed.
 - ✓ Being prepared to assign lower-level agency administrators as mentors in the event the senior-level managers do not have the requisite time to spend with the Mentor Executive.
 - ✓ Sharing this memo and other communications concerning the State Mentor Program with your agency's mentors.
 - ✓ If a state employee's salary is below the minimum salary for the Mentor Executive job family, the employee's salary will be increased to that minimum. A state employee's salary may not be reduced because of his or her participation in the State Mentor Program. The sending agency and each agency in which the Mentor Executive is completing his or her management rotation may share the compensation of the Mentor Executive or either agency may pay the total amount.
- Work Assignments: (In addition, please see Mentor Executive [Job Family Descriptor](#).)
 - ✓ Meeting with the Mentor Executive prior to the rotation or soon after the start of the rotation to establish expectations and goals for the Mentor Executive based on what you and your agency want the Mentor Executive to accomplish, what you and your agency want the Mentor Executive to experience, and what the Mentor Executive wants to accomplish/experience while in your agency.
 - ✓ Assigning meaningful work to the Mentor Executive that requires reliance on his or her skills and abilities.
 - ✓ Including the Mentor Executive in meetings in which senior staff participates.
 - ✓ Providing the Mentor Executive with a broad orientation to agency programs.
 - ✓ Providing the Mentor Executive an opportunity to complete one major assignment in a program area from idea formation to approval of policy, operational issues, etc.
 - ✓ Providing the Mentor Executive opportunities to learn about management and policy decisions within your agency.
 - ✓ Providing networking opportunities for the Mentor Executive.
 - ✓ Scheduling daily structured meetings to exchange information and monitor the progress and success of the Mentor Executive's rotation.
 - ✓ Being available for less formal meetings to touch base with the Mentor Executive and to answer any questions.
 - ✓ Encouraging the Mentor Executive to keep a log of his or her assignments, accomplishments, questions, concerns, etc.
 - ✓ Completing a performance appraisal before the completion of the Mentor Executive's rotation in your agency and providing a copy to the Mentor Executive's home agency.

Participation by your employee in the State Mentor Program includes:

- Permitting your employee to participate in a two-year management rotation. Each agency rotation may not exceed six months and the employee may return to his or her employing agency between rotations.
- Permitting your employee to be temporarily interchanged to one or more state agencies in accordance with the provisions of the State Personnel Interchange Program.

- ✓ Rotational assignments may not exceed a total of 24 months for all rotations combined; each agency rotation may not exceed six months.
- ✓ If selected as a Mentor Executive, your employee will be considered an employee of your agency for all purposes other than supervision. The State Personnel Interchange Program requires each Sending Agency, Receiving Agency, and Participating Employee (Mentor Executive) to implement “necessary procedures regarding requests for, approval of, and recording of leave; delivery of paycheck(s) and performance appraisal(s); and other necessary communications between the Sending Agency and the Participating Employee”.
- ✓ If a state employee’s salary is below the minimum salary for the Mentor Executive job family, the employee’s salary will be increased to that minimum. A state employee’s salary may not be reduced because of his or participation in the State Mentor Program. The sending agency and each agency in which the Mentor Executive is completing his or her management rotation may share the compensation of the Mentor Executive or either agency may pay the total amount.
- Assigning your employee to a six-month detail to special duty (if the employee is classified), in accordance with OAC 530:10-11-110, Detail to special duty, in your agency, during which he or she will be assigned to a policy-level manager who will serve as a mentor; and
- Upon completion of the two-year management rotation, permitting your employee to return to his or her previous job family or its successor job family, if one exists in your agency, or apply the reduction-in-force provisions of the Oklahoma Personnel Act.

Attachment 2

State of Oklahoma
Office of Personnel Management
State Mentor Program Survey

1. Would you be willing to host a Mentor Executive beginning in January 2004?

Yes _____ No _____

2. Would you permit any of your employees to participate in the State Mentor Program as Mentor Executives beginning in January 2004?

Yes _____ No _____

Name of Agency: _____

Appointing Authority Signature: _____

Thank you so much for your assistance. Please return this page by September 19, 2003, to Dayna Petete, OPM Assistant Administrator for Communications, 2101 N. Lincoln Blvd., Suite G-80, Oklahoma City, OK 73105, or via fax to (405) 524-6942. Please contact Ms. Petete at (405) 521-6293 or dayna.petete@opm.state.ok.us, if you have any questions or require additional information.