

New York State's Project Management Mentoring Program (PMMP)

Executive Summary

Overview

New York State's Project Management Mentoring Program is designed to increase the cadre of expert project managers within New York State government available to manage the increasingly complex and expensive projects necessary to support the government's business. This annual program partners New York State government's developing project managers with their more experienced colleagues. Experienced project managers who are nominated to participate in the program are assigned as interns to more experienced project managers who serve as their mentors. The length of the assignment is six months, and during that time the intern works under the guidance of the mentor while working on his/her own NYS agency project. Throughout the six months, the Office for Technology (OFT) provides formal Project Management training classes for the interns as a group. The mentoring program provides the opportunity for the interns to apply the techniques they are learning in a structured, supported environment, and for the mentors to support, reinforce, and elaborate on the lessons of the formal training. The first class was held in 2000 and in 2007 the program graduated its 100th intern.

Benefits

The program design is intended to benefit both the participants and all NYS agencies. The participating NYS agency benefits by the fact that its participating employees, whether mentors or interns, will gain tremendous expertise through the formal training being offered. This increased expertise will benefit the NYS agency in the execution of any and all business transformation and technology projects it conducts in the future. Mentors and interns also gain through the formal training offered. Most importantly, New York State benefits from the increased success of large-scale projects designed to make New York work better for its citizens.

Nomination: **New York State's Project Management Mentoring Program (PMMP)**

Category: IT Project and Portfolio Management

Business Problem:

New York State government, like other public and private entities, often engages in complex and expensive projects to support its business. NYS agencies have learned that special skills and a project management discipline are required to successfully manage and implement these projects. However, there are not enough skilled project managers in the NYS workforce to meet the ongoing demand. New York State must continue to meet the growing business and technology demands of its government agencies and the associated expectations of the citizens they serve. The Project Management Mentoring Program provides an opportunity for developing project managers to obtain necessary formal training, while working side by side with an experienced project manager in a mentoring relationship. The PMMP curriculum incorporates the NYS Project Management methodology as documented in The New York State Project Management Guidebook.

The New York State Project Management Guidebook was developed to document a common methodology for managing projects in New York State government organizations and to provide guidance and advice to Project Managers throughout the life of a project. A common methodology encourages individual Project Managers across the state to approach each project endeavor with the same discipline and tools. Since the methodology is common to all business areas and across all agencies, state Project Managers moving to new opportunities within and among state agencies will have virtually no learning curve for project management. Roles and expectations are clearly defined for Project Team members, Project Sponsors, and Customers, regardless of the type of project (IT projects, software development projects, engineering projects, business process improvement projects, etc.). All project participants receive the same information regarding deliverables and activities throughout the project. This streamlines project execution, since participants will not need continual direction and education regarding the project process.

The New York State Project Management Methodology also provides a standard for agency staff to use when contracting with private vendors. The state can now provide the methodology for its contractors, rather than requiring New York State staff to adjust to the different performance standards of each firm with whom they contract. Again, utilizing one common framework within which all New York State projects can be carried out improves the state's ability to complete the projects successfully.

By incorporating The New York State Project Management Guidebook as its textbook, the Project Management Mentoring Program provides even greater

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NASCIO Recognition Awards 2007 Category: IT Project and Portfolio Management

benefit by furthering the standard while it develops advanced project management skills across many government entities. The first class was held in 2001. Since its inception, approximately 100 project managers have enrolled in the program representing more than 20 different state agencies.

Features

- Candidates for interns must have some experience in project management, an understanding of Project Management methodology, standards, procedures, and processes, and a desire to promote their implementation within their organization and statewide.
- Candidates for mentors must be individuals with project management knowledge and experience who demonstrate a desire to share their knowledge, and who advocate and promote the use of project management practices. Mentors will be required to participate in a Project Management Mentor training program prior to serving as a mentor or be a former graduate of the PMMP.
- Annually, NYS agency executives are notified about the program in a letter from the Director of the Office for Technology requesting nominations. NYS agency executives must nominate candidates for the PMMP.
- The Office for Technology (OFT) provides formal classroom instruction to the interns as a group. Fifteen days of classroom training are provided over the six months.
- Interns and mentors work together in structured settings to apply, reinforce, and elaborate on the techniques learned in the classroom. Five structured practicum days are held over the six months to provide a laboratory type environment for mentors and interns to work together.
- Interns and mentors work together informally to address specific project concerns and individual learning requirements. A minimum of fifteen hours of one-on-one time outside any structured setting is required over the six months.
- Successful interns go on to be mentors providing continued learning opportunities.
- Both mentors and interns benefit from the sharing of knowledge and experiences.
- Participants build a network of peer project managers to collaborate with in solving problems.

- Participating NYS agencies benefit from increased and sustained success in business transformation and technology projects.

The Project Management Mentoring Program is designed to increase project management expertise. Project management experience is necessary. Preference is given to those experienced project managers who need to further develop their skills. The selection process will evaluate candidates against the prerequisite skills. The PMMP is not an introductory level course.

A pool of mentors is generated from each class of PMMP program graduates. Periodically, as the available mentor pool dictates, a solicitation for additional mentors is conducted. Their NYS agency head or commissioner must nominate candidates to be considered as mentors for the PMMP. All project managers interested in participating in the program as a mentor are encouraged to indicate their interest to their NYS agency management for consideration. Nominations must include a cover letter from the commissioner or NYS agency head and the candidate's resume. Mentors are required to have significant project management expertise, preferably 10 years of experience including management of large-scale business or technology projects.

Mentors will have demonstrated:

1. Successful completion of the NYS PMMP previous to being assigned as a mentor.
2. Knowledge and use of Project Management methodology, standards, procedures, and processes, and a desire to promote their implementation statewide.
3. Ability to multi-task and manage multiple projects in a cross-agency or statewide environment.
4. Ability to blend creativity, problem solving, and technical skills for refining existing theories or developing new system approaches to seize opportunities and sustain business successes.
5. Ability to lead and motivate staff to apply skills and techniques to solve dynamic problems.
6. Written and oral communication skills, as well as the ability to present and explain technical information to persuade others and promote understanding.
7. Employing teamwork and interpersonal skills at all management levels.
8. Ability to operate under a complex reporting relationship balancing multiple stakeholders and customers.

Nomination: New York State's Project Management Mentoring Program (PMMP)
NASCIO Recognition Awards 2007 Category: IT Project and Portfolio Management

9. Customer focus and ability to manage client and stakeholder expectations.
10. Ability to communicate all aspects of project status, performance, budget, etc., to all stakeholders and clients at the appropriate level of detail.
11. Experience in large-scale technology and application system development projects, as well as process improvement and business and organizational change projects.
12. Conceptualizing creative solutions, documenting them, and presenting/selling them to senior management.
13. Understanding of change management principles.
14. Facilitation and meeting management skills.
15. Understanding of organizational influences and culture and the ability to negotiate these environments to achieve project success.
16. Strong technical aptitude and displayed ability to grasp a detailed knowledge of multiple disciplines and technologies.
17. Detailed understanding of business and financial principles.

These skills which are required of mentors are the skills being developed in new interns through their participation in the Project Management Mentoring Program. The resulting increase in skills across many state agencies coupled with a further understanding of the standard project management methodology has provided and continues to grow a common framework across New York State which allows an increasing number of the state's largest projects to be managed more effectively and more efficiently with a continually increasing level of success.