

NASPE – Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination
Category: Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

Program Title: Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP)

State: Georgia

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Program Summary

In March of 2009, at the recommendation of the Office of the Governor, the Georgia State Personnel Administration (SPA) rolled out the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP). The ELDP was specifically designed to take individuals identified by state agency heads as being capable of leading an agency within the next 3-5 years, and putting them through a rigorous challenge-centered development program which will provide them the experience required and sharpen their skills necessary to lead a state agency. While building a bench of leaders capable of leading Georgia's agencies for years to come, the program continues to move Georgia closer to Governor Sonny Perdue's vision of being the "best managed state" by implementing significant change initiatives through the Challenge Projects. The ELDP also alleviates the 'silo-effect' inherent to state government by fostering cross-agency teams and support networks, which enable participants to have a greater impact upon the State. The program, through the investment made by the State Personnel Administration, has generated a positive net effect on the overall state budget through the cost savings gained through the participants' initiatives as well as has created a pool of leaders to tap into as specific talent is needed to fill top vacancies.

1. Please provide a brief description of this program:

The ELDP is a one-of-a-kind program designed to prepare Georgia state leaders for an expanded role within state government, including the agency leader or commissioner role, through assessment, individual executive coaching and an action based leadership challenge project addressing a critical need within the leader's agency.

- Assessment – ELDP participants undergo six tailored assessments centered on Georgia's Leadership Success Profile (LSP), which is the summation of key attributes that portray successful leadership of a state agency. The output of these assessments is a personalized Development Plan, which the participant uses as a roadmap with their coach to fortify their LSP skills and abilities through the Challenge Project.
- Individual Executive Coaching - In addition to peer feedback, participants are assigned an external coach who works with the participant to assimilate the assessments, create the development plan and provide objective feedback and guidance through the leadership challenge project.
- Challenge Centered Leadership Development – ELDP participants actively learn leadership in the context of a Challenge Project, lead by the participant, which addresses one of the top two to three critical challenges within their agency that is not currently being addressed and is broader in scope than their current role in the organization.

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

Cycle 1 of the program began in March 2009, with 32 participants. Cycle 2 was launched in September 2009, with 27 participants and Cycle 3 is scheduled to begin in September 2010.

The cycles are designed to be 12 to 18 months in duration.

3. Why was this program created? (What problem(s) or issues does it address? With an

anticipated 17% retirement of Georgia’s most seasoned workers over the next five years, the state has a critical need to identify and develop candidates who are ready to successfully take on key leadership roles; particularly the top two positions within our agencies. For this reason, the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) was created to provide careful planning for the eventual replacement of executives in the state, as well as a venue for high-potential individuals within state government to demonstrate their capabilities beyond the scope of their existing role. Through the assessment phase, these leaders determine the gaps between their existing strengths and the key attributes that portray successful leadership of a state agency. During the Challenge phase, leaders fill these gaps while addressing one of their agency’s top two to three critical challenges. The output of the program is a “catalog” of leaders capable of assuming greater responsibilities within State government. An additional benefit of the program is that critical challenges within the state are being resolved which would have not been addressed without the focused effort of the program.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?

While similar programs have been conducted in private industry, this is the first program – to our knowledge – of its kind specifically designed for state government and the intricacies involved due to the relationship between state government, the legislature and the citizens of Georgia.

5. What was the program’s start up costs?

The Executive Leadership Development Program was begun with the re-deployment of existing training dollars that the State Personnel Administration contracted through the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government. In the past, these dollars funded the Executive

Leadership Program (ELP), which was designed as a team building program for agency heads and their direct reports.

6. What are the program's operational costs?

The program operates on approximately \$350,000 annually. This budget includes initial design, on-going enhancements, materials, facilities, individual executive coaches, external program consulting, custom designed assessments as well as nationally recognized assessment tools, and program administration. Rather than an investment *in* Georgia agencies and leaders, dollars spent through the program are an investment *for* the citizens of Georgia – as the program costs are more than recouped through savings created and revenue generated through the challenge projects instigated by the participants.

7. How is the program funded?

Please see responses to questions 5 and 6. The program is funded through the operational budget of the State Personnel Administration.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

The program was originated by and is unique to the state of Georgia.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If yes, how does this program differ?

We are not aware of similar programs in any other state or governmental entity.

10. How do you measure the success of this program? Success of the program is measured in

both soft as well as quantifiable terms. The growth and development of the individual participants is one measure of success: upon completion of the program participants are given a final assessment, with the results compared to the initial baseline assessments upon entering the program. The progression of the individual is a measure of success. Additionally, results of participants' Performance Challenges are success for the ELDP. Examples of results seen thus far:

- Initial pilot of a Fleet Management initiative has saved over \$300,000
- Federal Grant of \$2.3M awarded to Department of Revenue based on project to identify new funding sources through a Centralized Grant Procurement process
- Reduction in motorcycle fatalities by 19% in Oct/Nov 2009 from same period 2008 through concentrated enforcement and education projects created jointly by participants from two separate agencies.
- Reduced hiring costs for the State through two separate Performance Challenges – one reducing turnover of a key highly populated position (Juvenile Correction Officer) by increasing job satisfaction through no-cost process improvements and the other by targeting new hires with specific experience, reducing training costs.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

Minor adjustments were made to the program from Cycle 1 and implemented in Cycle 2.

Examples include: 1 – update to the 360-degree feedback tool used to better illustrate to participants their strengths and developmental areas as viewed by their superiors, peers and subordinates 2 – duration of the program was extended from 12 months to better support the participants in their Performance Challenge, as the projects are designed to be 12 to 24 months in length 3 – additional individual coaching sessions added to supplement the extended duration. Adjustments, based on feedback from participants and agency heads, will continue to be made to the program as it progresses and as determined to best serve the ever changing needs of the state.