



SPECIAL EDITION

July 2010

Message from the Administrator



The secretarial profession has changed dramatically over the past several decades with the increase in technology and automation. ARS “Secretaries” are now “Office Professionals” and are no longer behind the scenes, but are now often the focal point of communications for their organizations and serve as continuing important members of the ARS management team. These professionals must also possess the management and administrative skills essential to organize daily schedules and assignments for themselves, their supervisors, and other employees in the organization.

Many tasks that were previously considered managers’ duties are now delegated to office professionals. Office professionals set the tone and the level of professionalism viewed by ARS’ internal and external customers.

The ARS National Advisory Council for Office Professionals (NACOP), along with the Area Councils, were formed to serve the entire ARS management team in an advisory capacity on new

initiatives which impact employees across the Agency and to enhance the office support profession through training, mentoring, and recognition. They have served these important roles for many years.

Today’s office professionals must possess good verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills; be proficient with constantly changing technology; and be adaptable to diverse situations. To maintain these skills, a national training workshop for office professionals has been approved and is scheduled for August 18-19, 2010, in Norman, Oklahoma. A preview of the workshop program is included in this special edition of NACOP Notes.

ARS office professionals are valued members of the management team. I encourage all employees to support them and their continued training and development to meet the needs of the Agency.

Listed is a brief overview of the training workshop:

General Session Speakers:

Kate O’Hara, MWA

“ARS: Making A Difference”

- Through decades of discovery and commercialization, ARS technologies have improved our lives
- We’ll look at some products and impacts, the foundation of excellence they were built upon and ways the future is being created, today

Diane Strub, MWA

“Self Development – How To Help Yourself And ARS”

- Provide tools, resources, & tips to be successful
- How to advance in your career – be prepared for opportunities
- Interpersonal/organizational skills
- How to give & take direction
- Advantages of details and job shadowing
- Taking classes to broaden horizons

National Center for Employee Development

“Practical Tips for Abundant Living”

- Examine your lifestyle – the way you work, play and exercise, and enjoy life
- Optimal health is defined as a balance of physical, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, and financial health
- Lifestyle changes can be facilitated through a combination of efforts to enhance awareness, change behavior, and create environments that support good health practices

Jim Bradley, AFM

“The Future Is Now”

- A discussion about the different generations in the workforce today, how they differ, and what that means for all of us as we strive to work together to accomplish our work
- Also we will talk about some of the things that we can do to enhance our working together
- Followed by a Q&A session

Jeff Schmitt and Jan Lewis, ODEO

“Collaborative Conversations”

- Build collaborative relationships that emphasize trust and respect
- Foster diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- Learn to minimize workplace disagreements
- Improve mutual understanding and respect

Sharon Drumm, ONP

How To Say “No,” Mean It, And Look Good In The Process!

- We are all doing more with less these days
- This provides many good opportunities and many chances to spread yourself too thin
- Participants in this session will gain many tools for their “no” toolbox that will help keep you sane, effective, and ingratiated

Breakout Session Speakers:

Lisa Baete, NPA

“What Is Records Management? How Can We Improve The Upkeep Of Our Files?”

- Do you know what to do with the e-mails you receive
- How to determine a record
- File management plan
- Records retention schedules

Josie Portales, SPA

“SharePoint”

- Ability to share & transfer large files
- Transfer of sensitive/confidential
- How to set up alerts
- Set up site
- Basic introduction & navigation
- Examples of use

Diane Eggert & Janelle McClintock, AFM

“Travel/GovTrip”

- Troubleshooting
- One-on-one expert help
- FTIS – OSEC approval/reporting
- Open Forum for travel policy questions

Rick Brenner, OTT

“Partnership Initiatives to Enhance ARS Research & Adoption of Outcomes”

- A proposed “Office of Partnerships & Innovation”
- Overarching goals of the initiatives and core values
- Developing and nurturing relationships, and establishing efficient uniform processes
- Strengthening research capabilities through competitive grants processes
- Engaging other government R&D agencies through structured partnerships addressing areas of common interest
- The new Agricultural Technology Innovation Partnership program of ARS, designed to fast-track adoption and commercialization of research outcomes to the private sector using partnership intermediaries.

Marcie Currie-Gross, NPA

“Grants.Gov – Start To Finish”

- Overview of Grants.Gov – what it looks like and how to find what you need
- What is an LOI
- What do you do in ARIS
- What happens if they get the grant

Michelyn Boyd, AFM

“T&A/WebTA”

- Pay and leave policies and programs
- How they affect T&A processing
- Completing T&A’s
- Leave audits and lump sum payments
- On boarding and separating employees
- Leave for family care and bereavement/voluntary leave transfer program
- Credit time, overtime/compensatory time

TBD

“Procurement”

- Policies & procedures – general
- Mandatory sources
- Sole source justification/requirements
- When can refreshments be purchased
- Hosting a local meeting – when ARS funds can or cannot be committed
- Ethics

Cathy Lonaberger, HQ

“Correspondence”

- Need a refresher in ARS format
- Are you new to ARS
- When to use “memo format” vs. “letter format”
- Proper clearance procedures
- Sending correspondence by email

TBD

“Foreign Nationals in ARS Labs”

- Introducing the e-230 system, to create a seamless, transparent, and user-friendly experience for USDA employees and their international guests
- Anticipating a substantial reduction in administrative burden to office professionals
- Address assistance memos (for maintenance allowance, health insurance, etc.)
- Foreign national check-in/check-out procedures

Council Representatives:

Mary Dailey, NACOP Notes Editor (BA)
Linda Fulton (MSA)
Sandy Groneberg, Sr. Co-Chair (MWA)
LaTasha Burl, Webmaster (NAL)
Christa Meier (PWA)
Wanda Rohrer, Recorder (SAA)

Sherry Dewald, Historian (SPA)
Diane Koch (NAA)
Diona Austill, Ex-Officio (NPA)
Jackie Kelly, Jr. Co-Chair (HQ)
Cathy Lonaberger, Technical Advisor
Rhonda Sampson, Technical Advisor

Training Workshop Committee Members:

Drusilla Fratesi (MSA)
Barbara Hodges (SPA)

Heather Lewandowski (MWA)

