

**Certified Public Manger Project 2019**

**Employee Development**

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**South Carolina Guardian ad Litem program**

**March 27, 2019**

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## Introduction

“The Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem program recruits, trains and supervises volunteers who advocate for abused/neglected children in South Carolina. GAL volunteers get to know the child, and everyone involved in the child’s life, including family, teachers, doctors, social workers and others. They gather information about the child and what the child needs. Their recommendations to the court help the judge make an informed decision about a child’s future. GAL volunteers provide a stable presence in a child’s life, remaining on each case until the child finds a safe, permanent home.” (Admin.sc.gov)

The SC Guardian ad Litem program advocates for the best interest of children. Each of our employees works hard to ensure that our mission is followed and that we are recruiting, training and supervising volunteers who can make a difference in the lives of impacted children. When reflecting upon a relevant CPM project related to this program, my goal was to research and develop a training model for our employees that may have previously seemed out of reach to them due to their employee-level or the fact that training opportunities may not be easily accessible because of their remote work location. Knowing firsthand how dedicated our employees are to a cause greater than themselves, and consequently serving as representatives for the program, it is important that our staff feels supported in their extensive and sensitive line of work and additionally, in their own employee development. I hope to answer relevant questions related to our employee turnover and development to foster professional and personal development that hopefully leads to continuity within the Guardian ad Litem program.

Listed below is a consolidated version of the organization chart for Guardian ad Litem. Under our Director we have four Regional Managers and State Office personnel. Each region is made up of multiple county offices that cover every county in South Carolina except for Richland county. Each county office is made up of one Program Coordinator II and an assortment of Program Coordinator Is and Administrative Specialist IIs. The state office personnel are composed of recruiters, grant administrators, and support staff including myself as an Administrative Coordinator II. This project specifically addresses the professional development of Program Coordinator Is and IIs, which currently make up approximately 90% of our staff. Though the project is specific to a few subgroups of employees, it is my hope that the result may benefit every employee involved with Guardian ad Litem.

Department of Administration				
Office of Executive Policy and Programs				
Guardian ad litem Program				
Director				
Region 1 Manger	Region 2 Manager	Region 3 Manager	Region 4 Mangaer	State office personnel
Program Coordiantor II	Program Coordinator II	Program Coordiantor II	Program Coordinator II	
Program Coordiantor I	Program Coordinator I	Program Coordiantor I	Program Coordinator I	
Administrative Specialist II	Administrative Specialist II	Administrative Specialist II	Administrative Specialist II	

**Problem Statement**

Currently, we do not have an established plan meant to offer either obligatory or optional supplemental training to employees of Guardian ad Litem. Having witnessed too many employees resign from their (primarily) non-supervisory positions, it is my hope that the results of the project survey may bring to light a significant need and desire for supplemental training for employees aimed to support and promote current employees and their development.

Through research and surveys, I hope to detail an employee development plan that not only sparks an interest in our employees to learn and better themselves, but also improves our ability to better retain our most promising employees and develop their skills and interest in preparation for better opportunities within the program. A successful project would see the outcome of a future decline in employee turnover for Guardian ad Litem over the next couple years in addition to more internal promotions from within the program.

“A business is only as good as the skills of its employees, and those employees are only as good as the leadership guiding them. To develop a leadership team and employee pool that runs smoothly and produces consistently, development of an effective training strategy and plan detailing leadership goals is imperative. It is also what is lacking in far too many businesses, from small to local enterprises to large corporations.” (Shcricberg, HR Toolbox)

This quote from HR World truly captures what this project is about; focusing on the skills and development of our employees so as to create a consistent and effective workplace. Alongside the support of the Department of Administration, I would hope to offer this project and its results as proof to how necessary and (hopefully) desired more training opportunities could potentially benefit this program.

I have been fortunate in state government to have supervisors who have been supportive of my own employee development. I have applied and been selected for internal promotions that have allowed me greater access to a number of transferrable skills learned through job experience and access to training opportunities through the Department of Administration. Knowing firsthand the benefits of such training, I approached the questions by asking myself the

same questions I would hope one day all Guardian ad Litem employees may be asked. Do they feel that they are receiving the training they need to perform their job to the best of their abilities as well as furthering their careers within the program and the state? To successfully answer this, I set out to discover the types of training employees and their supervisors feel is necessary for their positions.

### **Data Collection**

Upon researching how to best gather the answers to my project's questions, I needed to make sure that I did not approach our employees with any assumptions as to what types of training would be needed by employees or were preferred by hiring managers. With the help of my mentor, I decided to conduct an initial survey from supervisors in our program. In gathering their responses in addition to non-supervisory employees, I hoped to collect the most complete and effective survey results. This survey consisted of two open-ended questions:

1. Please list Skills/Competencies that you feel are needed to be as successful Program Coordinator I with our Agency.
2. Please list Skills/Competencies that you feel are needed to be a successful Program Coordinator II in our Agency.

The pool of supervisors that completed this survey consisted of 18 Program Coordinator IIs and 5 Program Managers. By surveying our supervisors, I was able to gather a general consensus as to what supervisors are looking for in effective Program Coordinator I and IIs in our program. Currently, all our supervisors have previous experience working in these positions

and now supervise and work alongside others in our program. The top results from the first survey are listed below.

Skill/Competency Type	Program Coordinator I	Program Coordinator II	Totals
Computer(data entry, reports)	10	9	19
Organization	9	8	17
Communication	2	13	15
Team Skills/Cooperation	7	7	14
Supervision	4	8	12
Critical Thinking	5	6	11
Time Management	6	4	10
Writing skills	3	7	10
Flexibility	3	5	8
Presentation	1	7	8
Recruitment	2	5	7

With these results, I developed my second step in answering my larger question. The second step of collecting information required me to conduct a survey including most of our employees. It was important to evaluate not only if employees and supervisors felt that training was needed, but to also determine if training opportunities were in fact desired at every employee level. After consulting with my project mentor, I put together an inclusive, open-ended survey using Survey Monkey (Attachment B). This survey would be critical to collecting and answering questions such as, “Is training a priority to our employees?” as well as allowing employees to detail the specific training opportunities desired by staff. The number of responses, in addition to the exact survey replies, would also indicate the overall interest and satisfaction of our current employees.

Lastly, I utilized a detailed record of start and end dates for our employees in order to evaluate our turnover rate. This provided an important context that not only inspired this project, but also will prove to be significant in helping to evaluate the success of this project in

the future. Unfortunately, I was not able access or utilize any relevant data from employee exit surveys since the exit surveys did not address training or advancement specifically.

Though its results are only able to serve as inspiration to this project, it is important to include the current turnover rate of our program. By totaling all employees that have left over the past 3 years in combination to their start date, our current average number of years an employee remains in our program is 3.76 years. While this may not initially appear to be an extremely short tenure with a program, 3 recent employees who have additionally left the program (but who had all served over 15 years going into this survey) heavily affected this average. Removing these employees, our average retention rate is 3.17 years.

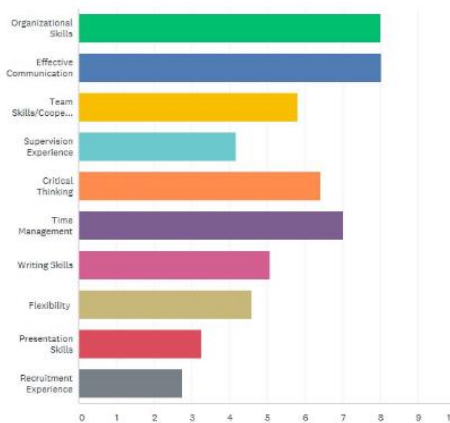
### **Data Analysis**

It was important to attempt to include a large pool of employees for the Survey Monkey questionnaire (Attachment B). I wanted to make sure that every employee felt they had an anonymous space to answer how we could move forward with training in the future especially if the results indicated that it was desired and necessary. While the responses varied from one another and (naturally) every employee offered their individual opinions making part of the survey responses subjective in nature, the results below overwhelming indicated that supervisors and employees alike desire additional training. The results were as follows:

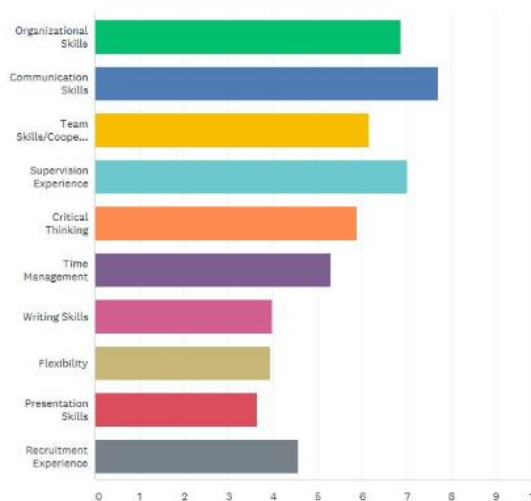
1. Please indicate your position type.
  - Program Coordinator I: 28 responses
  - Program Coordinator II: 19 responses
  - Administrative Specialist II: 4 responses
  - Regional Administrator II: 3 responses



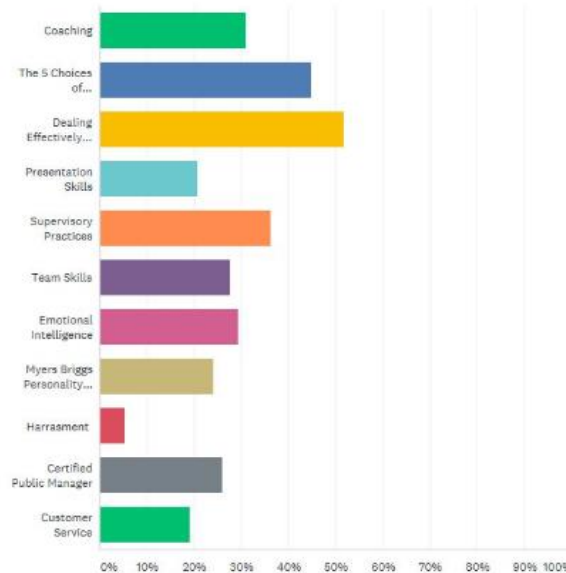
- Other: 4 Responses
2. Please indicate how many years you have been employed with our Program.
    - Less than 1 year: 13 (22.41 %)
    - 1-3 years: 14 (24.14 %)
    - 4-7 years: 15 (25.86 %)
    - 8-15 years: 8 (13.79 %)
    - Over 15 years: 8 (13.79 %)
  3. In your opinion what Skills/Competencies are needed in order to be a successful Program Coordinator I. Please rank the following examples 1-10 in term of importance with 1 being the greatest importance.



4. Please list any additional skills you feel are important.
  - a. Skills that were repeated in this answer are among the following: Strong Ethics, Cultural Sensitivity, Empathy, Research Skills, Crisis Management, Case Management and Accountability.
5. In your opinion what Skills/Competencies are needed to be a successful Program Coordinator I. Please rank the following examples 1-10 in term of importance with 1 being the greatest.



6. Please list any additional skills you feel are important.
  - a. Skills that were repeated in this section involved the following: Ability to Work Under Pressure, Advocacy, Social Services, Accountability, Active Listening, Leadership, Approachability, and Experience Working with Volunteers.
7. From the list below please select any training you feel you would benefit from. Please select all that apply.



8. Please list any additional trainings not already listed you would like to have.
  - a. Key trends from these answers were trainings involving: Family Court, Managing Stress, Marketing/Recruiting, Retention of Volunteers, Talent Management, and Human Resources.
9. Do you feel that you have been sufficiently trained in your current position with the program?
  - a. Yes: 43 (74.14 %)
  - b. No: 15 (25.86%)
10. If training opportunities were easier to sign up for and be approved, is that something that would interest you to develop and grow while with our program?
  - a. Yes: 51 (87.93 %)
  - b. No: 7 (12.07 %)

When initially reviewing the results of the survey, the first piece of information I noted was the number of responses in relationship to employee-level. Applying the response totals to the number of employees in each of these categories, I found that the survey had a more successful completion rate amongst supervisors. Knowing the overall goal of the survey, I can

only assume that supervisors felt more comfortable sharing their training expectations of employees and of which trainings they may most desire from employees seeking promotions. On the other hand, the (albeit minimal) absence of employees not in supervisory positions and who currently lack access to an established training program, can help to answer how necessary it is for our program to provide these opportunities. Especially if these employees were educated in how training and advancement could help with future employee development and were presented with an organized training program, there may be that simple investment from employees that is currently missing within Guardian ad Litem.

Additionally, in relation to the positions that composed the survey, I was pleasantly surprised to see the sizeable number of responses from employees that have been with our program for 3 years or less, equaling almost half our participants. With this employee type being the primary sample group and focus of my project due to our employee retention being around 3 years, the number of responses and specific answers reveals that while we might be currently hiring and onboarding employees with the intention of long term employment and advancement, the lack of training and advancement opportunities may be one of many reasons as to why we are losing interest from some of our newest employees.

The survey resulted in many insights, including the skills that are necessary for current employees to be successful at their jobs as well as their supervisor's positions. Though the skills-based question was relevant to each subgroup of employees surveyed, the answers from supervisors provides a glimpse into which skills are desired and necessary for supervisors and as a result, for potential employee advancement as well. When specifically analyzing the results regarding skills and competencies required for Program Coordinator Is and IIs, I found a number

of consistent themes. The most highly selected skills necessary for the Program Coordinator I position included Effective Communication, Organization Skills and Time Management.

Ultimately, I was pleased to see that Effective Communication was the top selection. These employees oversee and supervise volunteers and are constantly meeting with Department of Social Services and other agencies. Knowing this, it is important that these employees recognized how communicating effectively with others not only makes them successful in their position but allows them to serve as equipped representatives for the program to other state agencies.

The results also confirmed my perception in how this position is primarily asked to manage multiple duties including supervising volunteers, entering case information as well as seeing children on occasion. In balancing these day-to-day tasks, it was reaffirming to also see that common skills necessary for Program Coordinator Is includes Time Management and Staying Organized. On the other hand, what surprised me in analyzing the results includes how low Supervision was ranked. This position, while not tasked with supervising employees, does primarily require employees to supervise volunteers. Though interesting to note in this project, this ranking of Supervision towards the latter of necessary skills for Program Coordinator Is may be better suited for another project related to internal training and development.

Our Program Coordinator II's listed similar Skills/Competencies however, given the difference in job description from Program Coordinator Is, included anticipated differences within the survey. Communication was still included as a high-ranking skill as well as Organizational Skills; both are unsurprising to see since supervision is a primary component to this position. The two areas I would see as a cause for concern in this position is how low Recruitment and Presentation Skills were listed. Our Program Coordinator II's are responsible

for implementing our 30-hour training that every volunteer goes through. Knowing this, I was surprised to see Presentation Skills not listed as a more integral skill given how primary this skill is to a Program Coordinator II's job duty. Additionally, each county is responsible for recruitment efforts in cooperation with our regional recruiters. Since one of our overarching themes within Guardian ad Litem is to recruit and manage new volunteers, it was concerning that this was listed lower than I would have assumed it to be.

The area of my survey that will impact implementation the most is the question and results regarding the specific training interests selected by employees. While it helps to know exactly which areas of training employees feel are necessary for their current positions, this question in particular uncovers what our current employees are lacking in regards to training and advancement. After analyzing these results and finding common themes, I would hope to estimate a budget for training costs, while also factoring into this budget the fact that there are differences in cost per employee for each available training offered through Human Resources. Though we could also explore the cost and efficiency of organizing a group class for Guardian employees related to areas they have deemed most important. My biggest surprise in this category was the need for Dealing Effectively with Conflict. This is something that I didn't anticipate but in knowing that some of our employees must engage with angry callers, especially distraught parents, etc. a training in customer service and managing conflict may be beneficial for our employees.

The last two questions of the Survey Monkey questionnaire solidified my previous statement that instituting employee development may be a necessity for the future of our program. Overall, 25% of our employees feel that they are undertrained in their positions.

While that is not the majority, 25% is far too high to feel comfortable that we cannot do more. In correlation with that 87.93% of our staff feel that if training were easier to sign up for training opportunities, that they would feel inclined to take advantage of these opportunities. This result alone is encouraging to the fact that our program may need to consider implementing supplemental training opportunities in order to better assist and support our employees in their current positions, encourage them to feel confident in internal promotions and overall retain these employees.

### **Implementation Plan**

1. Determining the cost for implementation. Listed below is a breakdown of what I determined would be a secure prediction for implementing this proposed general supplemental training opportunities to the surveyed employees. The cost would be approximately \$54,180. To reach this total, I took the number of responses (assuming they are interested employees) regarding training requested and multiplied it by the cost of the corresponding training type that was selected as their greatest need. I then found the percentage of the total that selected that type and applied that percentage to an estimated 116 employees. We are currently at about 100 employees but are overcoming vacancies currently. I am optimistic that we will be around 116 by the implementation of this project. Also, more than likely we will not be able to get more than one or two employees into CPM on any given year, so I've budgeted for a maximum of two employees. Some of these trainings I needed to estimate since the cost is determined by the size of the class. I went with an average of \$200 on these

trainings which I feel is a safe prediction based on the costs of other trainings offered by the State.

Trainings offered	# of Responses	Cost for training	% Per training type	*116 Employees	# of Employees * Training cost
Coaching	18	180	10.71%	12.43	\$2,237
5 Choices of Extraordinary Productivity	26	210	15.48%	17.95	\$3,770
Dealing Effectively with Conflict	30	1440	17.86%	20.71	\$29,829
Presentation Skills	12	180	7.14%	8.29	\$1,491
Supervisory	21	300	12.50%	14.50	\$4,350
Team Skills	16	180	9.52%	11.05	\$1,989
Emotional Intelligence	17	200	10.12%	11.74	\$2,348
Myers Briggs	14	200	8.33%	9.67	\$1,933
Harassment	3	200	1.79%	2.07	\$414
Customer Service	11	200	6.55%	7.60	\$1,519
	168		100.00%		\$49,880
<b>Budgeting for a maximum of 2 CPM candiates</b>					<b>\$4,300</b>
<b>Total funding estimated for Employee Development FY 2020</b>					<b>\$54,180</b>

- The training request form will need to be sent out with ample time to fill out and send in their request before the budget is finalized for Guardian ad Litem. To accomplish this, I would suggest sending this out no later than July 1, 2019. Since this plan will be proposed for use after we are separated from the Department of Administration, our process for approving trainings may differ slightly in the future which could present obstacles, but this can be used as our internal request form and possibly for the agency. The purpose of this form is to make sure that employees and/or supervisors feel comfortable in requesting trainings that they feel would be beneficial to them and their staff but that the form also detailed how there would be a clear approval process due to cost for the program. On the form will be the ability to select trainings that are listed as well as list of possible trainings that they have found that could be beneficial to them. As part of the transparent approval process, employees would then be able to describe how they would benefit from these opportunities.
- In our state office these training requests would need to be collected and sorted into our four regions. We can hold a senior staff meeting to go over the request for each

region and the Regional Manager can give their final approval or denial for each of the requests based off needs and funds for the year in question.

4. Inform staff members that are approved for their requests that they can sign up for their trainings at a date of their choosing. This will give them the freedom to sign up for a class when it becomes available instead of having to wait for approval once a date opens. From here, it would be important to keep a record of training interest and registration per employee, like that of an individual development plan. This plan could be reviewed annually between employees and their supervisors so that the trainings they receive is not only that of an interest to the employee but is also beneficial to their career and long-term goals. This could also ensure that the trainings employees receive are also viewed as valuable to the program.<sup>f</sup>

### **Evaluation Method**

I would like to request that a survey similar to the one detailed in the project be implemented yearly to determine how our staff is progressing and allow our staff to detail anonymously what could be improved regarding our process. The goal of these surveys would be to see if the overall desire for employee development increases if relevant supplemental training opportunities were offered to employees. Additionally, the results of these surveys would be useful to grasp and respond to the trends in the types of trainings employees feel are important to their current position or potential advancement. In my opinion, it would be best to have the senior staff meet after these surveys to discuss the results and to see if any reoccurring themes



are presented. If so, how can these trainings be incorporated? Would it be through individually-sought trainings, regional trainings or office-wide trainings?

I would consider this project a success if we were able to meet the following goals. These goals include raising the percentage of employees that are satisfied by their level of training by at least 10%, putting us over 85% of employee success. I would also like to see an increase of 5% or more in employees requesting training. Lastly as a measure to evaluate how training impacts our employees we need to see an increase in employee's willingness to participate in the surveys. We had a participation rate of 60% with this survey. While this survey in particular was an optional survey, it does give the indication that training is not of large importance to a large percentage of our employees. I am hoping to see at least a 20% increase in participation provided the survey remains optional. In my opinion, this survey should remain optional from year to year in order to gauge trainings based upon willing participation, therefore not altering the results. I fear if employees were forced to participate, they may not provide quality data to evaluate and implement.

Overall, it is important that the research and findings outlined in this project regarding implementing a training model aims to solve and increase our employee retention rate, since this is becoming a larger concern for the program.

## **Summary and Recommendations**

It is my hope that this project will be successfully implemented within this program. As I was reviewing and analyzing the results of the surveys, I truly feel that there was a desire and request from our current employees for training opportunities. I believe implementing such a proposal would assist our program's future in terms of developing our employees and encouraging them to excel. My desire for this project (if implemented) is to see an increase in length of employment within our program as well as percentage of employees satisfied with their position and training opportunities. In conclusion, this project allowed me to gain insight into how employees view the managing of our program currently and was grateful knowing that I allowed them the opportunity to detail how we could support them if given the appropriate resources and opportunities.

## Reference/Resources

Guardian ad Litem. Retrieved from <https://www.admin.sc.gov/executive-policy-programs/guardian-ad-litem>

Schriberg, E. (2019, January 30). HR Training and Leadership Development Strategies That Work. Retrieved from <https://hr.toolbox.com/articles/hr-training-and-leadership-development-strategies-that-work>



## Survey Monkey Questions

\* 1. Please indicate your position type.

- Program Coordinator I  Regional Administrator  
 Program Coordinator II  Other  
 Administrative Specialist

\* 2. Please indicate how many years you have been employed with our program.

- Less than 1 year  
 1-3 years  
 4-7 years  
 8-15 years  
 Over 15 years

\* 3. In your opinion what Skills/Competencies are needed in order to be a successful Program Coordinator I? Please rank the following examples 1-10 in terms of importance with 1 being the greatest importance.

⋮	<input type="text"/>	Organizational Skills
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Effective Communication
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Team Skills/Cooperation
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Supervision Experience
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Critical Thinking
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Time Management
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Writing Skills
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Flexibility
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Presentation Skills
⋮	<input type="text"/>	Recruitment Experience

- \* 4. Please list any Skills/Competencies that you feel were missed in the question 3 that you feel are important.

- \* 5. In your opinion what Skills/Competencies are needed in order to be a successful Program Coordinator II? Please rank the following examples 1-10 in terms of importance with 1 being the greatest importance.

10	Organizational Skills
9	Communication Skills
8	Team Skills/Cooperation
7	Supervision Experience
6	Critical Thinking
5	Time Management
4	Writing Skills
3	Flexibility
2	Presentation Skills
1	Recruitment Experience

- \* 6. Please list any Skills/Competencies you feel were missed in Question 5 that you feel are important.

- \* 7. From the list below please select any training you feel you would benefit from. Please select all that apply.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Intelligence             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The 5 Choices of Extraordinary Productivity | <input type="checkbox"/> Myers Briggs Personality Inventory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing Effectively with Conflict           | <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation Skills                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Public Manager           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisory Practices                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Team Skills                                 |   |

- \* 8. In addition to question 7's choices please list any additional types of training that would interest you if offered by our program.

\* 9. Do you feel that you have been sufficiently trained in your current position with the program?

Yes

NO

Please explain your answer.

\* 10. If training opportunities were easier to sign up for and be approved, is that something that would interest you in order to develop and grow while with our program?

Yes

No

Please Explain

**Employee Development Request Form**

**Children’s Services**

**Guardian ad Litem Program**

Please fill out the sections below for training requests you have during the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Each form needs to be signed by your immediate supervisor and turned into your regional for review. Once a decision has been made involving your request you will be notified by your regional and told how to proceed.

- 1. Please choose no more than 2 trainings from the box below**

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<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Supervisory</b>	<b>Harassment</b>
<b>5 Choices of Extraordinary Productivity</b>	<b>Team Skills</b>	<b>Customer Service</b>
<b>Dealing Effectively with Conflict</b>	<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	<b>Certified Public Manager</b>
<b>Presentation Skills</b>	<b>Myers Briggs</b>	

- 2. Briefly explain how you would benefit from the trainings you selected.**

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- 3. If you have class that you would like to attend that is not in the predetermined list above, please list the name of the course, the vendor that provides the class and attach a description/breakdown of the class from their website. We can review this class to determine if we can provide this to you.**

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**Employee Signature**

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**Supervisor Signature**

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**Director Approval**

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