

## A VALUABLE RESOURCE

The HR Academy is your source for learning, collaboration and support.



### Virtual Learning Success Stories

HR Academy is constantly seeking ways to promote and improve its virtual learning program. Sharing your success stories is a great way to do that. In last month's HR Academy Connection, we asked for your success stories and here's what we heard:

*"For a virtual environment, I thought the course went very well. I will use this format again without hesitation."*

*"I enjoyed the course overall and really enjoyed the presentation format. I enjoyed the interactivity of the overall Blackboard course as well as enjoyed the activities, polling and question/answer format."*

Want to see what others are saying about HR Academy's virtual learning? Go to the [Virtual Learning](#) webpage to read more or share your own story by contacting the Training Administrator at [training\\_administrator@sra.com](mailto:training_administrator@sra.com).

### No Travel, No Cost, No Worries

Registration for HR Academy's Spring 2013 virtual curriculum is now open. This spring, in addition to some of our more popular courses, we are pleased

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# THE HR ACADEMY CONNECTION

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## HR HIGHLIGHTS

HR Highlights helps keep you abreast of the latest news and trends in the HR community. It contains timely and relevant information that you can use in your role as an HR professional. This month, we focus on changes at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

### OPM Shifts Human Capital Officers

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is revamping its human capital staff to better meet the needs of federal HR professionals like you. This includes changing the title and role of its Human Capital Officers (HCO), now known as HR Strategists. The HR Strategists are being asked to partner with you to design, implement and assess pilot projects in areas such as skills gap closure, workforce restructuring, and other priority areas of HR. They'll also participate in events that reach across government agencies including VA to collect and share innovative ideas and best practices related to people management and leadership.

The title change reflects the HR Strategists' new strategic responsibilities and is part of a larger effort by OPM to establish the Center for Strategic Workforce Planning within its Employee Services division (ESD). The purpose of the Center is to focus on the following key areas:

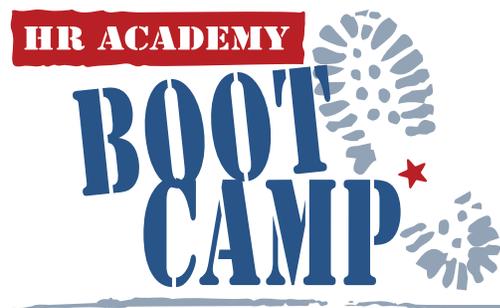
- Providing accurate, timely forecasts about HR trends and future scenarios
- Designing and supporting integrated strategies that address emerging HR workforce priorities
- Enabling innovation in federal government workforce policies and practices

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## ATTENTION!! HR Academy Boot Camp is now in session!

Recently, our first Boot Camp cohort completed Phase 1 of their course instruction and we are hearing a lot of positive feedback from participants. Due to the amount of enthusiasm for the program and the large number of participants, we created a second Boot Camp cohort. The application deadline for students and coaches was March 8th, and again we received an overwhelming response from you, our HR community. We are already working on dates for the third Boot Camp offering so as many of you as possible will have the chance to participate.

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**ADVANCE**  
TRANSFORMING POTENTIAL INTO PERFORMANCE

ADVANCE is an HR&A initiative to invest in people development, workforce engagement and talent management for the delivery of high-quality health care, benefits and other services to Veterans and their families.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Find the Right Career Path for You

Do you want to have a better understanding of where you currently are as a VA HR professional, and explore where you want to be in the future? Are you interested in participating in one of HR Academy's virtual course offerings, but don't know which one will give you the knowledge and skills to help advance your career? Why not start by taking the Career Planning Workshop. This course is hands-on and tailored specifically to address your specific career needs and expertise. It is designed to help you identify the developmental experiences you need today to strengthen your competencies, as well as potential career opportunities in the future.

The HR Academy defines a competency as "a standardized job requirement for an individual to properly perform a specific job or role. It is observable and measurable. Competencies are a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs), attitudes and behaviors used to improve performance." This is just one of the topics covered during the Career Planning Workshop.

Other topics include:

- Analysis of the VA HR Competency Model, its components (core, strategic and technical competencies) and the differences between each component
- Explanation of your Competency Gap Analysis data and how to use it to identify areas where you need to improve
- Overview of the different career maps available, where to find them, and how to use them to determine your own path.

The Career Planning Workshop gives you what you need to take control of your career. For more information about this course, including upcoming course dates, visit the [HR Academy Learning webpage](#). Look for this course under Register for Scheduled Courses (A-E).

## HR Academy Boot Camp ...continued

If you are selected to participate in Boot Camp, please remember that by submitting the application you commit to attend every session. We ask that if you are unable to meet this commitment, please cancel your registration in a timely manner to allow another colleague the chance to take advantage of this opportunity.

Soon, you will see Boot Camp success stories, interviews with Boot Camp graduates, and a behind-the-scenes look at how Boot Camp was created, all right here in the HR Academy Connection. Stay tuned!

## No Travel, No Cost, No Worries ...continued

to announce the addition of seven NEW virtual course offerings. Two of the seven, Leveraging Multicultural and Multigenerational Diversity and Determining Service Computation Dates, have never before been offered (virtually or in-person) by HR Academy. The other five courses, offered previously by HR Academy in a face-to-face learning environment, are now being offered virtually; those courses include:

- Employee and Labor Relations
- Employee Benefits
- Performance Management
- Processing Personnel Actions
- Strategies for Developing Employees

Visit the [Course Calendar](#) webpage to see when these and other courses are being offered in the coming months. Classes fill up quickly, so don't miss your opportunity, register TODAY!

Please remember that registering for a course is a commitment to attend and complete all required coursework. If you find that you are unable to fulfill this requirement, we ask that you cancel your registration in a timely manner to allow another colleague the chance to take advantage of the learning opportunity.

## OPM Shifts Human Capital Officers ...continued

According to the January 25 [memorandum](#) from Angela Bailey, OPM's Associate Director, "The HCO's will shift their focus from servicing a specific list of agencies, to driving innovative new practices across government through pilot projects that address the Administration's most critical priorities." The HCO's former day-to-day HR-related functions will be integrated into the responsibilities of OPM's policy offices, she said.

As VA's HR community continues to work to address the needs of its customers, OPM's ongoing changes will enable you to think in a new and different way about the work that you do. The shift in focus will give HR professionals a direct line to policy office staff for guidance on a variety of HR-related issues (i.e. employment programs, policy advisories and approvals, and technical assistance). HR professionals will also have a greater opportunity to share ideas on policies, solutions and practices directly with policy staff who work closely with these issues.

Overall, the Center is designed to help you accomplish your goals and objectives as an HR professional. OPM's new direction will help you continue to identify future personnel requirements, as well as, attract, train, recognize, reward and retain the right individuals to ensure VA's future success.



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