

**STATE PERSONNEL BOARD  
OFFICE OF TRAINING**

**HUMAN RESOURCES  
CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**



**Writing  
Job-Related  
Projects**

**HRCP Project Handbook  
January 2010**

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## TIMELINES FOR COMPLETING THE HUMAN RESOURCES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (HRCP)

1. Attend Module I
2. Begin work on the Individual Development Plan (IDP)
3. Attend Module II
4. Attend Module III
5. Submit Extended Learning Exercise (ELA) -----> Due 2 weeks after  
for Modules I, II, and III completing Module III
6. Attend Module IV
7. Receive HRCP Project Training
8. Attend Module V
9. Submit Extended Learning Exercise (ELA) -----> Due 2 weeks after  
for Modules IV and V completing Module V
10. Submit completed Individual Development -----> Due 1 month after  
Plan (IDP) completing Module V
11. Submit Project Proposal -----> Due 1 month after  
completing Module V
12. Submit Project Report -----> Within 10 months of  
completing Module V
13. Deliver Project Presentation -----> Within 12 months of  
completing Module V



## WHY DO JOB RELATED PROJECTS?

**Deeper Learning:** Job-Related Projects provide HRCP participants with hands-on application of the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the HRCP training sessions. These projects combine “classroom learning” with “practical application”, benefitting the HRCP participants, their agencies, and their internal and external customers.

**Training Validation:** As human resources professionals of the State of Mississippi, wouldn't participants prefer that their investment in the Human Resources Certification Program produce a measurable return? HRCP Job-Related Projects demonstrate tangible applications of information gained in HRCP through documented improvement in products, services, and/or work processes.

### Defining the Scope of Your HRCP Project

The scope of the job-related project is determined by the nature of your job and the content of the material covered in each HRCP module. The project must be applied within your work environment, which is defined as the persons, internal and external relationships, and agency organizational units you encounter in the context of your job. All job-related projects should support the objectives of the HR Office and the organization.

The amount, if any, of official work time used to complete the project is a matter to be determined by the HRCP participant and his/her supervisor. For example, if conducting a survey of agency employees is needed to complete your project, you are responsible for obtaining prior approval from the appropriate department official(s) to conduct the survey and to use agency time to do so.

### Action

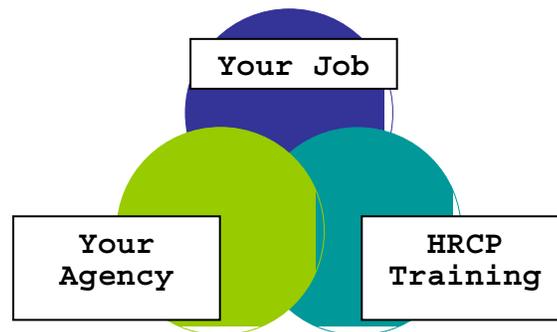
**Your project must involve action on your part.** Merely describing a problem in detail does not improve your product, services, or work processes and **descriptive projects only are not acceptable to meet HRCP Project requirements.** Your project must include your ideas and recommendations and the means for implementing them. Your project has to be implemented but does not have to be successful for the project to be approved. It should, however, result in a learning experience for you.

## HOW TO IDENTIFY GOOD PROJECT IDEAS:

### *Try Using the “Three Circle Test”:*

Using the illustration below, apply these three basic criteria to your project idea.

- ✚ Does your idea relate to your current job responsibilities (your work-related tasks, activities, projects, or interests) or to your ideas for innovation/improvement of services or processes in the workplace?
- ✚ Does your idea relate to your agency and its needs - agency mission, goals, services, and customers?
- ✚ Does your idea relate to the information, examples, concepts, principles or techniques you have learned in the HRCP training modules?



### *Points to Remember . . .*

- ✓ Stay alert for possible project topics while you are taking the HRCP required curriculum.
- ✓ Stay alert for possible project topics while you are performing your job responsibilities.
- ✓ Stay alert for possible project topics whenever you interact with your manager about HR Office or agency mission/goals, services, customers, or needs.
- ✓ Stay alert for your own innovative or creative ideas about how your HR Office or agency could improve effectiveness or efficiency.

**The HRCP Project Requirement.** In addition to other requirements of the HRCP, participants are required to complete a Job-Related Project. Participants are expected to apply the theories, principles, and/or techniques learned in the HRCP to a situation, problem, concern, or opportunity within their workplace. The following guidelines describe the process for completing the HRCP Project requirement.

**Confidentiality.** All approved project reports become the property of the HRCP and will not be returned to the participant. The reports will be kept in the strictest confidence. To ensure complete anonymity for others, participants should avoid using the names of the other persons in the work environment or should substitute fictitious names. The staff recommends that personnel issues be discussed in behavioral terms rather than in personal characteristics. Projects should be designed to take positive action.

## THE HRCP PROJECT PROPOSAL

### Develop the Project Proposal

1. Select a topic for your Job-Related Project. If need be, discuss the topic with the HRCP Project Evaluator assigned to you. Projects in progress **prior to admission** into the HRCP Program **will not be accepted** for HRCP Projects.
2. Discuss the Job-Related Project topic with your supervisor.
3. Complete Sections A-E of the "Project Proposal" form and obtain your supervisor's signature. The "Project Proposal" form should be typed.

### Submit the Project Proposal

1. Submit your "Project Proposal" form to the HRCP Program Coordinator.
  - a) Your project proposal must be submitted within one (1) month of your completion of Module V.
  - b) You may submit your project proposal at any time after you complete the project report training, which typically occurs during or after Module IV.
  - c) Your project proposal will be forwarded to an HRCP Project Evaluator for review. You will receive approval and/or assistance from your assigned HRCP Project Evaluator within two (2) weeks. *Note: Approval of your Project Proposal **does not** constitute approval of a completed project.*
2. We recommend that you **NOT** start your project prior to receiving approval.

## To Prepare the Project Proposal Form ...

*Follow these instructions to complete the Project Proposal Form. A copy can be found by accessing [www.mspb.ms.gov](http://www.mspb.ms.gov), then clicking on Professional Development, then Forms and Policies. Please type your entries.*

### A. Project Title

- Assign the project a title that reflects the major objective of your project.

### B. Problem and/or Situation

- Describe the problem, concern, opportunity, and/or the situation that you plan to address. Indicate those stakeholders who are impacted.
- Explain why you chose it.
- Explain, in general, what you plan to do to address or resolve the matter.

### C. Results/Benefits/Effectiveness

- Explain why implementing the project will result in specific improvements and benefits.
- Describe the outcomes you expect to see. Be specific.

### D. Action

- List and explain the various steps you will go through to
  - Plan your project,
  - Communicate with other parties,
  - Obtain necessary information, and
  - Implement the project.

### E. Evaluation

- Describe the specific survey techniques, feedback processes, or documented observations you plan to use to determine the overall effectiveness of your project.
- Explain the information you expect to receive and how it will demonstrate the success (or lack of success) of your project.

# THE HRCP PROJECT REPORT

## Implement and Complete the Project

1. Once your project proposal is formally approved, implement and complete your project. Most participants will have approximately nine months to implement and complete their projects. Roughly, this will provide one month to complete the preliminary steps, including internal communication and coordination; six months to actively have the project in place; one month to obtain formal feedback on the success or failure of the project; and one month to draft the written report. This time usage will vary according to the participant and the agency.
2. Draft your written report in accordance with the instructions.
3. Review your written report to ensure it conforms to the composition and format requirements outlined in this handbook before submitting to the HRCP Program Coordinator.

## Submit the Written Report

1. Submit your written report to the HRCP Program Coordinator no later than ten (10) months after you complete Module V.
2. Your project report will be forwarded to an HRCP Project Evaluator for review. Within two (2) weeks of receiving your written report, the HRCP Project Evaluator will advise you of either approval of your project report or suggestions for additional work.

## General Requirements

### ● Style

Your project report should be typed in font size 12, double-spaced, and submitted on standard paper or via email. It may include attachments such as reports, memos, letters, charts, diagrams, manuals, etc. that will help the reader understand the project. Projects that produce an “end product”, such as a manual, newsletter, or training program, **must** be accompanied by a description of the process used in producing the product. The project should be an expansion of the original project proposal, and should note any changes, deviations, learning outcomes, and applications of HRCP materials. (When quoting or using supplementary material, please cite the source; however, footnotes and bibliographies are not required.)

- **Length**

Although written reports have no specified length or required number of pages, they should typically be at least 5 typed pages. Your report should cover Sections A-E as defined on the Project Proposal Form and should be complete, clear, and concise.

- **Proofreading Your Project Report**

It is important that your project report reflect your professionalism and commitment to excellence. It should be written in clear, standard English and follow all standard guidelines for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing.

Writing experts recommend that you first check the content, then revise or rewrite, and then check for errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Experts also tell us it is easier to catch errors on paper than on a computer screen, so always proofread your hard copy before submitting your final project. **Project reports that lack sufficient detail to explain the project or have errors in format, grammar, spelling, or punctuation will be returned for revision.**

## **Content Requirements**

- **Title Page**

Your submitted project report must have a standard Title Page (see sample) which includes the following:

- Project Title and Subject
- Human Resources Certification Program
- Date
- Participant's Name
- Participant's MELMS ID Number
- Participant's Email Address
- Participant's Organization/Division
- Work Address and Telephone number

- **Abstract Page**

The abstract is a short (no more than a paragraph or so) summary of what your

project is about. ***This summary should be identified only by your MELMS ID Number.*** It should NOT include the agency name, your name or the names of any employees.

- **Body of the Report**

The body of the report should consist of the following four (4) sections. Each section should begin with the appropriate heading, underlined and placed against the left margin as shown below.

Problem and/or Situation

Describe in detail the problem, concern, opportunity, and/or the situation that you addressed in your project. Indicate how stakeholders were impacted and why there was a need to address it. Explain what you planned to do to at the outset of the project to address or resolve the matter.

Results/Benefits/Effectiveness

Explain why implementing the project should result in specific improvements and benefits. Describe the outcomes you expected to see. Be specific.

Action

Discuss the various steps you went through to plan your project, communicate with other parties, obtain necessary information, and implement the project. (Note- this is a key part of the report.)

Evaluation

Describe how your project met or failed to meet your expectations and the criteria established in your proposal. Include survey outcomes, formal/informal feedback, and/or documented observations you used to determine the overall effectiveness of your project.

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

**QUALITY SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS**  
**Human Resources Certification Program**  
**January 1, 2007**

**Dr. Jane Doe**  
**MELMS ID # 000000**  
**Email: [JaneD@dp.state.ms.us](mailto:JaneD@dp.state.ms.us)**

**Department of Personnel**  
**333 First Street**  
**Jackson, MS 39000**  
**601-359-0000**

SAMPLE ABSTRACT PAGE

**MELMS ID # 000000**

Quality to the customer is a key issue in government today. My agency is involved in several reviews aimed at meeting the customers' needs. In my division, all members of the division met to discuss our customers, both internal and external, and to develop a list of services we provide to those customers. We further explored ways we can define how well we provide those services. We then developed a survey instrument to give to our customers that asked questions concerning the timeliness, completeness, accuracy, and availability of our services and the courtesy and responsiveness of our staff. The survey was compiled, two major areas of weakness were discussed and changes in our procedures were made. Six months after the changes, the customers were again surveyed. Some improvement was noted in both areas. We will continue to monitor our customers' needs, make improvements in processes, and strive to make more services available.



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Evaluation

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Page #

**THE HRCP PROJECT PRESENTATION**

**Schedule the Project Presentation and Obtain Agency Approvals**

1. Once your project report is formally approved, contact the HRCP Program Coordinator to schedule a date and time for you to present your project to the HRCP Evaluation Panel.
2. Submit the “HRCP Project Agency Internal Review” form and your written report to your immediate supervisor, the Human Resources Director, and the Human Resource Director’s supervisor for their comments and signatures. A copy of the form can be found by accessing [www.mspb.ms.gov](http://www.mspb.ms.gov), then clicking on then clicking on Professional Development, then Forms and Policies.

### **Develop and Deliver the Project Presentation**

Developing and delivering your project presentation will allow you to apply many of the competencies you have been introduced to during the Human Resources Certification Program. Doing so will be a challenging activity, but one that will help you hone those communication skills that are so important to today’s human resources professional.

In developing your project presentation, be aware that it must consist of these three components:

- an Oral Presentation to be made to the HRCP Evaluation Panel,
- Visual Aids to be used during your oral presentation, and
- Three (3) copies of your approved project report (placed in individual file folders) and one (1) copy of the completed “HRCP Project Agency Internal Review” form, to be provided to the HRCP Evaluation Panel.

The objective of the project presentation is to present your project report to the HRCP Evaluation Panel. Therefore, ensure that you cover the key points of each of the four sections of the report body (Problem and/or Situation, Results/Benefits/Effectiveness, Action, and Evaluation) as well as any “product” resulting from your project.

Your immediate supervisor must be present during the presentation.

Presentations will be scheduled at one hour intervals. This time will be used in the following manner:

- SET UP (15 minutes)

Use this time to bring in your materials, organize your handouts and the materials from which you will speak, place the Evaluation Panel's copies of your final report at their seats, and set up your visual aids (e.g., load your PowerPoint presentation, set up your flip chart, place your overhead transparencies next to the overhead projector, and so forth). Get everything ready so you can start your presentation when the Evaluation Panel arrives.

- PRESENTATION AND Q & A TIME (30 minutes)

After setting up, you will deliver your presentation to the Evaluation Panel. Don't speed through it, but gage your time and touch on each of the major sections of your project report (Problem and/or Situation, Results/Benefits/Effectiveness, Action, and Evaluation). Be careful not to read your report to the panel. Instead, prepare ahead of time and practice what you are going to cover and how you will cover it. Decide when you will refer to handouts and/or visual aids during your presentation and at what points they will be the most effective. Use a watch or clock to pace your presentation. Make your goal one of having an organized presentation that covers the key points and effectively uses visual aids to support your oral presentation.

Consider covering your presentation in approximately 20 minutes and leaving 10 minutes for questions from the Evaluation Panel at the end of your presentation.

- BREAK DOWN (15 minutes)

During this time collect and remove your materials. Be sure to leave the presentation room neat and orderly for the next presenter.

#### ABOUT HANDOUTS AND VISUAL AIDS:

Handouts are typically used to provide additional information not found in the body of your project report, such as examples of before and after work products, summaries of surveys, or lists of stakeholder contacts used in the planning and implementation process. Only use handouts when they are necessary to support a key point in your presentation or to explain aspects from your report. Handouts, like your report, should be neat and organized. Handouts are not required.

You must use at least one visual aid in your presentation. Visual aids include such things as PowerPoint presentations, overhead transparencies, flip charts, and posters. They are used to emphasize key points in your presentation or to illustrate important information that may or may not be in your report.

If using PowerPoint, try to limit the number of items on each slide to no more than four (4). Practice using the equipment beforehand so you will be able to change slides at the appropriate times during your presentation. If you must show detailed information, an overhead transparency may work better. Flip charts and posters should be prepared ahead of time and placed on an easel (they can be removed and taped to the wall during your presentation if need be).

Think about the visual aids some of your facilitators have used and which ones have been effective. Be creative, and don't be afraid to use color, graphics, or clip art to make the visual part of your presentation more interesting. Also consider where you will be standing when you use your visual aids so you will not be blocking their view as you are referring to them.

Whatever aid(s) you use, be sure to contact the Office of Training prior to your presentation to ensure that the proper equipment is in place for your presentation. They can provide PowerPoint equipment, overhead projectors, easels, markers, and tape as needed.

### **Await Formal Approval of the Project Presentation**

Within one (1) week after your presentation you will be notified in writing by the HRCP Director of the outcome of your project presentation. **Projects are not considered complete until presented to and approved by the HRCP Evaluation Panel.** If approved, you and your agency will be notified that you have successfully met all HRCP Professional Level certification requirements and have been awarded the Human Resources Professional Certification designation.