

Summary of Training and Development of Hearing Office Group Supervisors
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Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

Objective

To determine whether the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR) provided group supervisors (GS) with sufficient training to maintain their requisite skills and successfully perform their duties as first-line supervisors.

Background

Under ODAR's Leadership and Management Training program, GSs undergo classroom instruction, participate in on-the-job and video training, and work with mentors. Training was designed to allow new and tenured GSs to remain current on such topics as electronic business processes, disability policies, hearing procedures, and personnel management.

Our Findings

Of the GSs who responded to our questionnaire, 84 percent stated they were sufficiently trained to perform their duties or were still participating in the three-phase training. However, 16 percent felt they needed additional training, citing a need for training in such areas as labor and employee relations, performance management, and management information. All but 1 percent of the GSs had prior Agency experience before accepting a GS position, though about 72 percent had been in their GS position for less than 5 years. About 96 percent of the hearing office directors (HOD) who responded to the questionnaire similarly stated the GSs in their offices were sufficiently trained. In terms of the three-phase GS training program, between 89 and 97 percent of the GSs responding to the questionnaire was generally satisfied or did not state dissatisfaction with all phases of the training. In addition, about 76 percent of the GSs stated it met their expectations, and approximately 66 percent said ODAR provided the training at the right time. However, 42 percent of the GSs stated they did not have enough time for on-the-job training while performing their managerial duties.

Our Recommendations

To ensure GSs have sufficient training to maintain their requisite skills and successfully perform their duties as first-line supervisors, we recommend SSA:

1. Develop and offer courses for GSs interested in additional training in those areas identified by questionnaire respondents, such as labor and employee relations.
2. As part of the orientation of new GSs, require both the HOD and new GS to certify that they have been informed about the three-phase GS training program and the proper sequence of each phase.
3. Remind HODs of the importance of setting aside sufficient time for new GSs to participate in the three-phase GS training program