

Developing Grants Management Training for Federal Project Officers

Engagement Profile: Custom Training



Background

The Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provides federal government job training and worker dislocation programs, federal grants to states for public employment service programs, and unemployment insurance benefits. These services are primarily provided through state and local workforce development systems. ETA's grants management staff is distributed among its headquarters and six regional offices. Federal Project Officers (FPOs) within these offices monitor and evaluate the performance of the grant recipients to ensure that the grant projects meet their goals.

Catalyst

ETA's grants management training program was outdated and had been extensively modified independently by each of the regional offices over a period of years. ETA needed an up-to-date, standard, cohesive training program to ensure that the agency provided consistent information and guidance to its FPOs and grant recipients. ETA looked to its newly formed ETA Innovation University (EIU) to drive the effort to establish this training program for FPOs.

Challenge

EIU needed to create buy-in and leverage expertise from key representatives across the regional offices. At the same time, EIU had limited authority over subject matter experts from regional offices. PDRI partnered with EIU, the prime contractor, and representatives from regional offices to develop a training program that would teach the fundamentals of grant management in accordance with government-wide and ETA-specific requirements. The training program was to be piloted for participants in multiple regions and then packaged with a program to enable trainers within regions to deliver the training to local audiences.

Solution

The team proposed a two-hour web-based orientation/introduction, a 24-contact-hour comprehensive classroom-based course, and a reference guide to be used in class and thereafter. We developed and piloted the comprehensive classroom-based basic FPO grant management course that followed the two-hour online introduction/orientation, as well as delivered a train-the-trainer packet and facilitated a session to transfer the training to regional instructors.

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Analysis: After identifying sources for content, PDRI, with consultation and guidance from subject matter experts, created an Analysis Report that:

- Defined instructional strategies and methodologies,
- Evaluated existing resources,
- Reviewed audience characteristics,
- Analyzed technical requirements, and
- Determined objectives to be covered via Web-Based Training (WBT) and Instructor-Led Training (ILT).

Design: We implemented the design strategies and activities approved in the Analysis Report. Design strategies focused on the best approach to provide effective transfer of knowledge and skills to the learners, with consideration given to the content, learning objectives, resources, and audience.

Development: We developed the instructional materials for the training to include slide presentations, Instructor and Participant Guides, group exercises, facilitation strategies, schedules, facilitator actions, and instructions for specific uses of technology.

Implementation: We provided the materials for the pilot and developed a proof to be used to guide reproduction of the course materials.

Evaluation: We coordinated delivery of the course pilot and train-the-trainer session, as well as incorporated feedback from each of these sessions into the final product delivered within the regions.

Quality: We incorporated quality control procedures that focused on functional and instructional components of the course, in addition to editorial elements.

Outcomes

Upon conclusion of the project, ETA had finished and updated training materials, fully trained course instructors, and a desk reference available for its FPO audience throughout the six regional offices.

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