

RETENTION

In order to ensure you maintain a viable program, retaining your students through conversion is essential. In this module, you will learn techniques key to developing and retaining a SEEP student employee from the initial hire to final conversion.

Some of the elements of an effective retention program are:

- Assigning a good mentor, providing professional development through appropriate job related and other training opportunities, offering incentives and maintaining ongoing communication with the students

When selecting a student mentor, it is always good practice to allow the student to assist with identifying the mentor if possible. If the student decides later in the program that he/she would like to change mentors they are able to do so. Educate the supervisor on the importance of selecting a good mentor that will facilitate the student/mentor relationship to ensure the student's needs are being met.

A good mentor is someone who is patient, personable and a good communicator. This person should want to be a mentor and not be forced to assume the role of mentor. Mentors should not be the student's supervisor. Having a supervisor as a mentor breaks down the mentor/student relationship, students may be reluctant to share concerns with their supervisor because of the supervisor/employee relationship and/or fear of reprisal.

*Did you know? There is an online mentor training course available through DOI Learn

It is recommended that all students receive some type of employee orientation within the first few weeks of employment. Educate supervisors on the importance of orientation. It is strongly recommended that SCEP students attend the orientation provided by the National Training Center in June of each year. However, if for some reason your students are unable to attend this orientation, your local orientation should include but not be limited to:

- An overview of the Bureau and the SEEP which should include a definition of student roles and responsibilities, a discussion of career and performance management, a discussion of diversity and ethics and an overview of pay, benefits, and administrative procedures as they relate to the SEEP program.

**** Best practices in the resources section**

Retention incentives may vary by state and office. Be sure to know what incentives are available in your state so that you may provide accurate information to both the student and the supervisor.

You may visit the resource section of this training to get additional information about the rules governing retention incentives.

In creating a successful retention plan, SEEP coordinators should:

- Ensure the supervisor initiates and implements an Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP)
- Inform the supervisor that he or she must provide meaningful work. Meaningful work for a SCEP student is work that is relevant to their targeted position.
- Coordinators should also be available to the supervisor, mentor and student and
- Monitor student progress through-out the program.

To ensure the students success throughout the program, coordinators should monitor grade reports, performance evaluations, course schedules and student/mentor relationships.

It is also recommended that coordinators encourage supervisors and managers to assist the student with initiating an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

At the end of each semester, supervisor should meet with the student for a feedback session. In this session, supervisors can discuss work performance, academic progress and any other concerns or issues the student may have.

Exit interviews should be conducted with all students who are resigning, being terminated, transferring or converting. Student input and feedback has proven to be the best resource for improving the program.

Remember, first impressions are lasting impressions.

States that have the most successful programs provide additional assistance to their students that allow the student a smooth transition into the agency.

Examples include:

- Assisting students with travel and lodging arrangements
- Providing students with information about local businesses and resources before arrival to the duty station
- Assigning and preparing mentors BEFORE the students arrive at the duty station
- Ensuring students receive on-site orientation within the first week of arrival, and
- facilitating ongoing communication among student, mentor, and supervisor