

Champion of COVID Response

Virtual Training Transformation Team

Social Security Administration



Summary:

During the summer of 2020, the Virtual Training Transformation Team rose to the challenge of the Coronavirus pandemic, and in a matter of weeks, they transformed in-person training to virtual training using new video automation tools for 52 new supervisors/managers, and 115 employees on critical professional development topics to help them do a better job. With no formal automation training, the team self-taught themselves how to use and troubleshoot Skype video and Adobe Connect, and they immediately trained other employees how to conduct trainings virtually to spread the knowledge everywhere.

Description: When the Coronavirus pandemic hit in 2020, training plans were underway to host in-person 1) new supervisor training and 2) professional development courses as had been tradition for years in downtown Chicago. However, 2020 was not a traditional year and the Virtual Training Transformation Team stepped up to the challenge with solutions. 1) For the management training, the team received approval to offer a condensed version of the training that would cover the most critical and time sensitive topics. The team had never conducted a virtual training to this extent or magnitude. They had less than one month to coordinate the virtual training, prepare the participants, management coaches, and regional office subject matter experts for this new virtual training environment. The team came together during July 2020 and worked extra hours with no overtime to plan and successfully host 3 virtual management classes in August 2020 using Microsoft Skype. Each class was transformed from all day in-person sessions to half-day morning sessions. This allowed the supervisors to learn critical information in a format that was safe and conducive to retaining new information without getting overwhelmed. Their accomplishment is important because thanks to their dedication and creativity, the team trained 52 new supervisors and managers across six Midwestern states on the most critical policies required to do their job. The team also trained 12 regional office subject matter experts and 3 management coaches on how to provide virtual training and how to use Skype engagement tools. Their accomplishment is innovative on many levels. The agency had just opened video capability to all employees during the summer of 2020; therefore, most employees did not know how to use Skype video. The virtual training transformation team had no training themselves on how to use Skype tools and video and yet they taught themselves by initiating practice sessions internally among the team members. Additionally, they quickly taught themselves and trained all of the parties involved how to troubleshoot technological issues during virtual Skype trainings with no outside automation support.

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