



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEEKING STANDARD TRAINING INFORMATION

Dear Sir:

For about one year I have been inquiring about the matter of standards for training and staff development. This inquiry consisted of some search of the literature, and sending letters to various individuals and organizations throughout the country.

A principal question concerned the relationship between a Training Department's budget to the over-all organizational budget. Collateral, yet important, questions include: (1) the ratio of training personnel, located in a central staff training office, to total personnel of the organization; (2) the amount and extent of orientation a new worker should receive; and, (3) the amount and extent of in-service training a regular or experienced worker should receive each year.

My inquiry revealed a real paucity of information. I am writing to you in the hope that fellow members of ASTD might contribute data or comments. Among my respondents, incidentally, was K. D. Rittenhouse who, on October 29, 1968, wrote in part:

"The questions you pose about standards and guidelines for training and development in the correctional field are intriguing. I wish we had some answer for you. Unfortunately, we're not aware of any published material on this subject."

Perhaps some commentary on my part would be useful in providing a focus for readers. As to the principal question noted above, in my agency, where I am in charge of a separate training office, my budget runs about 1.7% of the total agency budget. Is this enough? Should it be more? What standard or guideline can one use in answering the question? Is it sufficient to say, on the basis of a presumed impropriety of the question, that one needs to first identify training needs in an organization, and then build a budget on such identification? Or might we say that, in a sense, there is a floor below which an organization should not go, in terms of a training

budget - at least some standards or guidelines?

Some of the public administration faculty at the University of Southern California believe that a rough standard is about 3%. I checked informally with training colleagues at two large, local aircraft companies, and their response was that they had no idea of the relationship between their budget and total company budget. They also were unaware of standards.

The ratio of training personnel to total agency personnel is also important to consider, in terms of a standard. In public welfare, the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare does not require a ratio. However, their letter to me, dated October 29, 1968, indicates that pursuant to the 1962 amendments to the Social Security Act, they

"did require that the States establish a formula for determining the number of training personnel needed on the basis of the services to be provided, the qualifications of staff, the kind of supervision provided, and the opportunities for educational experiences outside the agency, but included as part of the agency's training plan."

The letter also indicated that "the most common ratio of training personnel to staff ranges from 1 to 50 to 1 to 100 professional staff."

The California State Department of Social Welfare has developed a formula for the various County Welfare Departments, which considers: total number of staff, number of cases handled, and the class level (based upon the complexity of the given county, availability of resources, and other factors). Pursuant to this formula, Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services has obtained approval from county government of a yardstick of one full-time trainer to 150 personnel, counting all personnel. The yardstick means that as D.P.S.S. personnel increases in number, the number of training staff increases *mandatorily*.

As to orientation, the question here, assuming that all new personnel should receive some orientation to an organization is how much orientation should a new employee receive — again in terms of a standard, or guideline, or even minimum? The local county D.P.S.S. has developed a formula for a combined orientation and induction program, which meets state and federal requirements. For professional social workers, for example, a minimum of 160 hours (four full weeks) is required during the first four months of employment.

For in-service training, my search revealed hardly any data. The Manual for Correctional Standards of the American Correctional Association, a widely-quoted work, has only one standard in this connection. It calls for 52 hours of

annual training time “for each *custodial* position.” (Emphasis mine.)

In public welfare in California, my informants have advised me that there is a base guideline of two hours a week set aside for in-service training for regular or experienced workers. A question here comes to mind - is this budgeted or does it “come out of the worker’s hide?” In a neighboring County Welfare Department, 5% of a worker’s time, out of a 40-hour week, must be reserved for in-service training — a formula which yields two hours a week.

I hope that readers will respond to these questions, and share their thinking and experiences with respect to them.

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ASTD POLITICAL?

Dear Sir:

Is the ASTD politically oriented? I noted that in the *Journal’s* August issue “Washington Report,” page 55 there has been emphasis added to indicate that the Nixon administration is against education.

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- *No political implication intended. The underscorings (emphasis) are merely an editorial style used by the editors of Education-Training Market Report to highlight key words such as names, agencies and other important points or identities.*

Editor.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES PASS 500,000 MARK

More than 500,000 on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities have been available over the past six years for the jobless and underemployed, according to Secretary of Labor George P. Schultz.

Employers have received an average per trainee of about \$675 to help provide the jobless with the necessary skills to earn a steady living.

Since OJT began operating in early 1963, the Labor Department has invested \$346.4 million in the program with employers.

A total of 512,000 opportunities have been slated for the unemployed or underemployed. Some 386,000 have been enrolled up to April 1, 1969, and more than 223,000 have completed their on-the-job training. Latest reports indicate

195,000 or 87 percent are holding down jobs and about 136,000 are still in training status, although they are receiving wages.

Under the program, funded by the Manpower Development and Training Act, employers pay the trainees wages from the day they enter the premises. The Federal government reimburses the employer only for the cost of instruction and teaching materials.

To give employers more information on OJT, the Manpower Administration has issued a revised edition of its booklet, *An Employers’ Guide to On-the-Job Training*. It is available from Manpower Administration offices or for 15 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.