

Innovation Ambassador Developmental Assignment Guide

2011

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NASA Innovation Ambassador Summary

- **Purpose:** The ambassadorship is a developmental assignment focused on innovation for future Agency leaders that will also create connections between innovative external organizations and NASA for increased Agency benefit from external creativity
- **Selection:** Competitive with demonstration of met criteria
- **Target Grade:** 11-15
- **Venue:** Developmental assignment may be at industry, academia, research institutions, national laboratories and other government agencies as long as it meets set guidelines
- **Requirements:** Nomination by Center Chief Technologist, commitment to continue in service of NASA for 3 years past ambassadorship, willingness to engage in all developmental assignment requirements
- **Assignments begin in October 20011 timeframe.**
- **Assignments are 3 to 12 months in duration.**

Innovation Ambassador Overview

The Innovative Partnerships Office launched the Innovation Ambassadors Program to ensure that NASA benefits from creativity and innovation occurring outside the Agency.

Innovation Ambassadors is a developmental assignment where individuals from NASA's technical workforce are placed at an external organization for 3 to 12 months. Participating individuals will focus on improving their technical and business skills while identifying innovations relating to Agency needs.

Specifically, the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment is intended to:

- Provide a unique training opportunity to the technical community to broaden their technical and business skill set with a focus on innovation
- Recognize creativity and innovation occurring in Agency-related innovation areas
- Foster relationships with external organizations
- Create synergy and leverage resources between NASA offices

Innovation Ambassadors as Part of NASA APPEL's Project Management Development Program:

The Innovation Ambassadors developmental assignment is designed to integrate into APPEL's Project Management Development Program (PMDP) to enhance training outside the classroom. The unique developmental assignment allows for NASA's technical workforce to improve upon technical and business skills necessary to respond with speed and insight to the rapid innovation occurring in the technical sector.

The Innovation Ambassadors developmental assignment is NOT a "guarantee" of a future promotion or selection for a particular position. Rather, future promotion is dependent upon the increased skill-proficiency of the individual participant.

While the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment is supported by the NASA Office of Human Capital Management, it is not part of the Leadership Development Program (LDP) or any other existing Human Capital training program. Those specifically interested in candidacy for LDP should contact their Human Capital representative.

Selection Criteria and Process

Selection Criteria

Using an Agency-wide competitive process, the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment targets high-performing GS 11-15 civil servants who are committed to serving NASA, and are seen as future Agency technical and managerial leaders. Centers should use the following criteria in choosing the best candidates to support the achievement of Center, Mission Directorate, and Agency missions and goals.

Timing

Candidates selected as Innovation Ambassadors should be individuals that the Center Director or AA expects to take on broader responsibility upon returning to their home Centers or shortly thereafter.

Characteristics and Abilities

Individuals must demonstrate the ability or have shown high potential to:

- a. Possess Technical Competency: Establishes a broad expertise in multiple technical and functional disciplines, better enabling innovation recognition in multiple fields.
- b. Produce Tangible Mission Results: Assures that team/organizational goals and objectives are achieved in a timely and effective manner.
- c. Be Open to Feedback and New Ideas: Manages self in a manner that fosters learning and high performance. Is willing to be coached and has the ability to be self-critical.
- d. Take Risks: Applies critical and appropriate judgment to decision making and thinking strategies to interpersonal, organizational and complex societal issues.
- e. Understand Center, NASA, and National Goals: Has a broad understanding of the Center's role in meeting NASA goals. Works to increase collaboration and cooperation across NASA. Has a strong commitment to enhancing NASA's impact on National goals, including space exploration and improving the quality of life on Earth.
- f. Lead Teams or Projects: Actively leads and manages teams and integrates program goals and values and organizational, stakeholder and customer needs.
- g. Work Well With Others: Works to build and maintain trust and supportive relationships. Understands and knows how to leverage the impact of the informal organization to accomplish goals.
- h. Have Unquestioned Credibility: Has the respect of supervisors, peers and subordinates.

In addition candidates must:

- Be a full-time, NASA civil servant.
- Be Willing to Make a Commitment to NASA: All participants must sign a continuing service agreement with NASA prior to being accepted as a candidate for the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment.
- Meet Grade Requirements: Candidates must be grade 11, 12, 13, 14 or 15.

Individual Development Plan

Developmental planning is an integral part of Innovation Ambassadors, because it provides a rational, systematic framework for assessing developmental needs in terms of both the individual's career goals and the Agency's strategic needs. The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a statement of specific job-related knowledge and skills that the individual seeks to improve or strengthen, along with the activities planned to acquire the desired knowledge and experience. Candidates who do not already have a Center or APPEL IDP should contact their supervisors before proceeding.

Selection Process

Center Chief Technologists, in coordination with their Center Directors, should submit two to three nominees needed to support the Center's targeted areas of innovation improvement. The Agency's need and financial resources available will determine the actual number of participants each year. Nominating home organizations cover base salary costs. Employees who wish to be considered for the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment can initiate the nomination process, but require the full support and endorsement of their supervisor, line management, Center Director, and Center Chief Technologist to advance in the process.

Center Chief Technologists will submit nominees in priority order to the Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive. Nominees will then be subject to an Agency-wide competition conducted by a NASA Selection Committee. Nominees will be selected based on a paper review and Center recommendations.

Following are the guidelines used by the selection committee when evaluating applications.

Points	Material Judged	Factor	Description
0-20	Form Questions 14-20	Relevant Technical Expertise	Applicant has significant experience in relevant technical field and can identify new innovations
0-20	All	Communication	Indicates an ability to communicate across functional areas and hierarchical boundaries to accomplish goals; demonstrates written skills necessary to communicate effectively and efficiently
0-15	Form Questions 14-20	Experience	Experience on projects of significant complexity; experiences have prepared the applicant for the position at the external organization during the developmental work assignment
0-20	Form Questions 13, 21 & 22; Individual Development Plan; Supplemental Form	Relevance of Innovation to Applicant's Career Path	Work assignment at external organization will help employee develop technical and/or managerial skills relevant to personal goals set over the next 5 to 7 years
0-25	Form Questions 21 & 22; Supplemental Form	Potential for Innovation Relevance to NASA	Work assignment at external organization is relevant to Agency, Center, or Mission Directorate innovation needs; potential for innovation to have significant impact on improving business practices, processes or technologies

BASED ON INNOVATION AMBASSADOR APPLICATION AND SUPPLEMENTAL FORMS

Maximum Points 100

Nomination Forms

Candidates for the Innovation Ambassador Developmental Assignment are required to complete and submit the following:

- NASA Innovation Ambassador Developmental Assignment Application
- Supplemental Attachment: Innovation Ambassador Developmental Assignment, including a description of the intended assignment and its location.*
- A Center Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- If applicable, a cost estimate of per diem and travel expenses (including "En-Route/Exit" Trips and Monthly Home Visits) based location of the host organization.**

*Candidates identify Developmental Assignments by working with their Center Chief Technologist or designee to negotiate a position directly with a host organization supervisor.

**An explanation of the per diem rate can be found in the ["Administration and Travel- Monthly Per Diem Vouchers"](#) section. US per diem rates by location can be also found at the following URL: http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?programId=9704&channelId=-15943&oid=16365&contentId=17943&pageType=8203&contentType=GSA_BASIC&programPage=%2Fep%2Fprogram%2FgsaBasic.jsp&P=MTT

Nomination Form Completion

Since the task of identifying and screening nominees is the responsibility of the Field Center, the candidate's application and IDP must:

- Clearly state specific objectives to be derived from participation in the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment and how this experience will meet the objectives of the employee's IDP.
- Contain strong endorsements from the immediate supervisor, line management, Center Chief Technologist, and Center Director/AA.
- Describe a reentry plan for the participant upon his or her return
- Contain an assignment description from the host organization supervisor.
- Explain how this external organization can be of benefit to the Agency's goals, business practices, and Mission Directorate technology needs—particularly how this organization is uniquely innovative in comparison to other organizations in the field or industry.

COMPLETING AGREEMENTS FOR OUTSIDE DEVELOPMENTAL ASSIGNMENTS

Prior to the start of any developmental assignment outside of NASA, employees will be required to complete an Agreement for Temporary Assignment. Templates for these outside assignments have been created for NASA's Development Programs. Employees need to start as early as possible since this process can take up to 90 days.

Employees interested in pursuing outside developmental assignments as part of Innovation Ambassadors are required to:

1. Obtain home supervisor's endorsement of the proposed assignment in writing. This endorsement should explain the benefits of the outside assignment to the home organization. If the outside assignment is already part of an approved IDP or Development Program Application Form, signed by the supervisor, no additional endorsement is required. This endorsement will become part of the employee's developmental program file. For assignments to organizations that are not part of the of the Federal Government, contact your local NASA Ethics Official located at your local NASA Chief Counsel's office for advice on viability and arrangement of your outside assignment prior to engaging in any contact—direct or indirect—with the prospective organization. (For purposes of this provision, Federally Funded Research & Development Centers are considered to be organizations outside the Federal Government.)
2. Contact the outside organization and obtain a verbal understanding to pursue a temporary developmental assignment, including the specifics of the assignment. Outside organizations may have concerns about proprietary information and may be unwilling to sign this agreement. Consequently, in accordance with the advice and support provided by your center's Chief Counsel's office, your contacts at the outside organization should be advised to contact their organization's legal office at the earliest opportunity.
3. Complete the appropriate Agreement for Temporary Assignment in Draft and obtain the written concurrence of your center's Chief Counsel's office.
4. Work with the assigned NASA Commercial Law/Intellectual Property attorney to draft and negotiate an agreement that is mutually acceptable to NASA and the outside organization.
5. Provide this draft to the Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive, along with a point of contact and phone number at the outside organization. The Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive will obtain a review and approval by the Office of External Relations if the assignment includes foreign travel or collaboration with foreign nationals, whether domestically or abroad.
6. Obtain the concurrence and cautionary advice applicable to the assignment from a NASA Ethics official at your center.
7. After preliminary approvals have been received, obtain the organization's required signatures.
8. Resubmit the agreement to the Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive. The Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive will obtain the signature of the AA for Human Capital Management.
9. The signed Agreement will be added to your developmental program file.
10. ***NASA employees should not sign a non-disclosure agreement. Signing such an agreement could cause the employee to become personally liable for any disclosures. In addition, the employee does not have the authority to bind NASA. NASA employees are still subject to 18 USC § 1905, which governs disclosure of confidential information for actions taken while on outside assignment. For further information regarding this section, please consult your Center Patent Counsel.***

Note: The NASA Comptroller's signature is not required for non-reimbursable agreements for outside developmental assignments, as long as funding to support the assignment is available within the program budget.

Developmental Assignment – Key Elements

The Innovation Ambassadors developmental assignment is a unique career opportunity established by the Innovative Partnerships Office that integrates into APPEL's Project Management Development Program (PMDP) as an experiential development activity. The 3 to 12 month individually-tailored assignment supports both IPO and PMDP training goals. Integration into the APPEL program allows for opportunities to present at the Master's Forum and Project Management Challenge to build presentational abilities and support agency dissemination of external innovative practices.

Innovation Partnerships Office

Innovation Ambassadors is a unique developmental assignment established as part of NASA's Innovative Partnership Office. The objectives of the Innovation Partnerships Office that relate to the Innovation Ambassadors developmental assignment are to:

- Identify strategic areas of innovation with potential benefit to NASA- Selected Innovation Ambassador developmental assignments will be those that the Center and Agency find to be of greatest benefit with respect to adding innovative capabilities and practices.
- Recognize and learn from current innovations occurring outside the Agency- During the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment, individuals are expected to recognize and learn about innovations that relate to their Center and Mission Directorate innovation needs. Innovation Ambassadors will draw upon their technical and business skills to decipher which practices and processes are new innovations that may benefit the Agency.
- Disseminate external innovations internally to appropriate individuals- Innovative Ambassadors must present a Communications Plan along with their Final Report after completion of their developmental assignment. This Communications Plan will describe how identified innovations from the developmental assignment will be integrated upon return to the Innovation Ambassador's home organization. A follow-up will be conducted a year later by the Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive to determine the effectiveness of the innovation integrations.
- Provide innovation focus to career development- The Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment is integrated into APPEL's PMDP to provide a unique developmental assignment with particular emphasis on innovation.

Integration into the APPEL PMDP

The Innovation Ambassadors developmental assignment is designed to integrate into APPEL's Project Management Development Program (PMDP) to enhance training outside the classroom. The unique development assignment allows for NASA's technical workforce to improve upon technical and business skills necessary to respond with speed and insight to the rapid innovation occurring in the technical sector.

The PMDP is designed to provide participating individuals with the skills to endure technical and general competencies (such as innovation) for future programs and projects. It also establishes a baseline of information for marketing individual's strengths to others. The competencies that are emphasized in the PMDP include:

- Technical Performance- Apply procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies as related to specialized scientific and/or engineering expertise and keep current on issues, practices, and procedures in these technical areas of expertise.

- Technical Performance Management- Apply efficient and cost-effective methodologies/approaches to manage internal and contractor program/project efforts in terms of technical milestones and deliverables.
- Project Life-Cycle Development and Control- Apply program/project management tools and management techniques to effectively and efficiently steward a program/project to a successful conclusion, as measured by defined realistic metrics, within given constraints.
- Individual and Team Effectiveness/Development- Participate in/lead cooperative working relationships within the NASA program/project environment.
- Contract and Acquisition Administration- Apply principles of financials/contract/acquisition management to effectively justify and administer a program/project budget in terms of cost-benefit priorities, proper expenditures, and cost effectiveness.
- Mission Assurance, Safety, and Hazard Management- Effectively identify, manage, and mitigate/eliminate safety/hazard factors that could adversely affect successful achievement or program/project goals and objectives.
- Organizational Effectiveness- Effectively identify, manage, and mitigate cost, schedule, and performance factors that could adversely affect successful achievement of program/project goals and objectives.
- Effective Agency, Business, and International Relations- Identify and leverage international policies and economic, political, and social trends that have an impact on NASA and adapt near-term and long-range plans to achieve program/project success in response to these factors.

Participants' Innovation Ambassador developmental assignments should look to strengthen and add particularly to competencies listed above.

Being part of the APPEL PMDP will give Innovation Ambassadors opportunities to present recognized innovations with the greatest benefit to the Agency at the Master's Forum and/or PM Challenge. Although these presentations are not mandatory, they serve as a chance to enhance the participant's public speaking abilities while bringing Agency-wide visibility to the innovations. The particular venue (Master's Forum/PM Challenge) may vary according to presentation opportunities and logistics.

While developmental work assignments vary in length, all participants are required to participate in the scheduled events for the entire year. In addition, participants are encouraged to write articles to be published in various NASA or external publications, and speak at the PM Challenge and Master's Forum discussing how identified innovations can benefit the Agency.

Developmental Assignment Performance

General Information

Participants engage in developmental assignments designed to challenge them and increase their understanding of Center and Agency technical and business practices and innovations. These assignments will vary widely both geographically and technically.

- Each participant is required to undertake developmental assignments for 3 to 12 months.
- Assignments must be at an external organization (another government agency, university, or private business), but not necessarily outside their home geographic area.
- Assignments begin in October/November 2011, and all assignments must be completed by the end of November 2011.

- The developmental assignment provides opportunities for experiential learning in new tasks and functions, learning about the host organization's innovative practices and processes, and exposure to Agency-wide and Center-wide issues and decision-making processes. Participants are encouraged to seek opportunities that will expand their scopes of experience and understanding about new technical and business practices and process.

Developmental Assignment – Responsibility for Planning

The individual is responsible for coordinating with their home supervisors, Center Chief Technologists, and Center Directors to determine the developmental assignments that will best meet his or her experience needs and the innovation needs of their Center and/or Mission Directorate.

Each participant is encouraged to follow these steps to assure the best possible experience during the developmental work assignment:

1. Review current skills and abilities and identify areas where improvement or additional experience is desired.
2. Identify the primary experiential objectives for the developmental assignment with the immediate supervisor and Center management.
3. Explore developmental assignments with the direct supervisor and Center Chief Technologists that will provide opportunities for improving technical and business expertise and increase the Center's innovation capability.
4. Contact potential organizations with the Center Chief Technologist to determine assignment feasibility.
5. Identify your developmental assignment responsibilities and obtain the endorsement from the host organization supervisor, if possible.

The probability of being selected for the developmental assignment is higher if the applicant thoroughly examines what he or she hopes to gain through participation and has described how selection would add to Center and Agency innovative capabilities.

Developmental Assignment – Opportunities

Developmental assignments should be positions that allow participation in the host organization's everyday business activities and allow for interaction with the organization's technical innovation capabilities.

Participants are encouraged to discuss informally a developmental assignment that will meet their individual needs and those of the host organization. Participants are then encouraged to contact the organization they are interested in with their Center Chief Technologist after they have notified and obtained the advice of their local NASA Chief Counsel's office.

Developmental Assignment – Selection Process

- Potential candidates should begin to negotiate for a developmental assignment as soon as feasible.
- In addition to candidate-negotiated positions, a general announcement is to be released in early Summer 2011 seeking interested organizations to participate as host organizations for Innovation Ambassador developmental assignments. Prospective participants may choose to negotiate for one or more of these positions, or negotiate a developmental assignment specifically tailored to their own needs. The negotiation should involve the participant, the home supervisor, the Center Chief Technologist, and the host organization supervisor.

- The applicant's supervisor, Center Chief Technologist, and Center Director should review and approve the developmental work assignment description to ensure that it is appropriate for the individual, and that it provides an opportunity for the applicant to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities he or she needs as well as fit strategically into the Center and Agency's innovation requirements.

NOTE: The applicant is responsible for notifying the host organization supervisor immediately after their selection for Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment.

Accountability and Performance

For the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment to be effective, there needs to be feedback and accountability at multiple levels. Developmental assignment accountability will be reinforced through both informal and formal structures, including direct feedback, assignment requirements, reports, and evaluations.

Accountability

During the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment, participants continue to be accountable to the Agency and their Center Directors and supervisors for individual performance and ability to realize mission results. During their Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment, participants are also accountable to their Center Chief Technologists and the Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive for:

- a. Identifying areas of innovation with potential benefit to NASA
- b. Recognizing and learning current innovations occurring outside the Agency
- c. Disseminating external innovations internally to appropriate individuals
- d. Fostering future partnerships

All participants must meet the following requirements in order to qualify for completion of the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment:

- A pre-entry meeting with the Center Director or AA, coordinated by the Center Chief Technologist, to discuss the individual's developmental focus and the Center's needs,
- Timely completion of monthly report.
- Completion of a Final Report on the developmental assignment
- Inclusion of a Communications Plan in the Final Report describing how identified innovations will be integrated upon return to the home organization

Host organization supervisors are accountable to the Agency for ensuring participants have challenging assignments that expose them to the higher and broader level to the organization in which they are assigned. Host organization supervisors are expected to have a high level of involvement with the participant to provide technical guidance and overall mentoring and supervision.

Center Directors, Center Chief Technologists, and Home Supervisors are accountable to their participants and to Agency leadership for the Center's participation in the developmental assignment, including success in using the developmental assignment as a strategic position to add to the Center's innovation capability.

The Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive is accountable to the Agency, Center Management, and participants for overall high quality and results of the developmental assignment.

The Headquarters Innovative Partnerships Office will provide feedback annually to Center Chief Technologists and Center Directors on participant participation and results achieved.

Performance Reporting

Participant's Performance Appraisal

Participants in the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment remain under the Performance Appraisal Program of their sponsoring organization during the assignment. The performance plan developed for participants in Innovation Ambassadors must include objectives and performance requirements applicable to their developmental assignment. Performance against these requirements must be given appropriate consideration in the final assessment of performance during the appraisal period.

The performance appraisal process will involve both the home supervisor and the host organization supervisor. Developmental assignment reports will be useful in this process, and the participant's Individual Development Plan may serve as the basis for the performance plan to cover the assignment duration. The host organization supervisor is responsible for providing needed information to the home supervisor as requested since assessment of the participant's performance during the assignment duration is the responsibility of the home supervisor. Usually the developmental assignment monthly tag-ups and final report are sufficient to meet this requirement. Participants should discuss this issue with the home supervisor to ensure that he or she understands the process. Participation in the developmental assignment should not have a negative impact on pay determinations.

Innovation Ambassador Assignment Reports

It is the developmental assignment participant's responsibility to prepare monthly tag-ups and a final report. These reports are used by the Innovation Ambassador's home organization management and the Office of the Chief Technologist to monitor the progress of the participants and log innovative practices and processes. The final report is also the documentation used to assess the effectiveness of the developmental assignment.

Monthly Report

During the first week of each month of the developmental work assignment, participants are expected to report to their Center's IPO Chief, home organization manager, and host organization manager. This report should emphasize the significant accomplishments and progress being made in acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined in the participant's IDP and application. It should also cover new innovative practices and processes recognized at the host organization. At least one new innovation is targeted for each report. Any other pertinent issues to the developmental assignment will be discussed during these meetings.

Final Report

By October 2012, each participant submits the final report to the Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive. The report should emphasize the experience gained during the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment, the opportunities it provided and how the participant plans to apply the knowledge and skills gained toward the achievement of NASA's goals upon

return to his or her Center. Through this evaluation process, a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the developmental assignment are determined, and actions can be taken to improve future developmental assignments.

This report should also list all innovations recognized and learned during the assignment, and prioritize them according to their importance to the Agency. Also, this report should give feedback as to the developmental assignment's effectiveness. This feedback helps ensure the developmental assignments continue to meet the needs of the Agency and are of the highest quality.

Communications Plan

One of the objectives of the Innovation Ambassador training assignment is to disseminate external innovations to appropriate internal individuals. After the completion of the developmental assignment, individuals will be required to prepare and submit a Communications Plan as part of the Final Report. This plan details how the individual will disseminate the innovations identified during the developmental assignment. The plan should be formulated toward how the innovations can and will be integrated into the participant's home organization and should clearly identify the strategic benefits of chosen methods. This plan should also describe how the Innovation Ambassador will champion the innovations throughout other Agency organizations.

Administration and Logistics

Funding

Nominating home organizations are responsible for paying the salaries of participants for the duration of the developmental assignment.

For most assignments, the ambassadors should be local to their host organization and not require extended TDY funds.

In very specific circumstances, or when budget allows, the cost of the per diem and related travel occurring for the developmental assignment will be covered by Innovation Partnerships Office funds. It is the responsibility of nominating home organizations to submit an estimate of the per diem and Innovation Ambassador related travel expenses to the Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive along with the participant applications. The Headquarters Innovative Partnerships Office will then disburse funds to selected Innovation Ambassadors' home organizations based on these estimates. Nominating home organizations will be responsible for using such funds to pay per diem and Innovation Ambassador related travel expenses for the duration of the developmental assignment. Travel required as part of the developmental assignment is paid by the host organization under separate travel orders.

Leave

Since per diem is discontinued during periods of annual leave, participants may wish to use as much of their annual leave as possible before beginning their extended temporary duty assignment. Per Diem is paid for sick leave that does not exceed 14 consecutive working days. Official time and attendance records are maintained at the participant's Home installation. Participants must coordinate with their Home supervisor on time and attendance reporting requirements.

Policy on Job Offers

Due to the extent of the NASA resources utilized in the arrangement and implementation of an Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment, reassignment to a position within NASA that interrupts completion of an assignment that is meeting NASA's expectations is discouraged and should only be sought in exceptional circumstances. Accordingly, a senior official seeking to offer a new position to an individual that would interrupt an Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment is requested to coordinate with the Innovation Ambassadors Program Executive prior to taking any formal or informal action to offer such a change. This policy does not restrict the participant's right to apply for advertised vacancies during the developmental work assignment and to accept the new position if selected. Agency-wide mobility is encouraged.

Family Considerations

Participants who consider the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment must also consider the effects of the assignment and geographical relocation on family members. Some participants elect to bring their families with them to the new location while others choose to come alone. Either way, the assignment may present stressful situations for all involved. We strongly urge all potential participants to discuss the likely impact of the developmental assignment with

others who will be affected. One suggestion is to discuss the pros and cons with participants of other developmental assignments and, if possible, arrange for other family members to be present for the discussion. There is no one solution for every family situation, but everyone involved should have a voice in the decision. The Office of Human Capital Management at NASA Headquarters can provide information on family considerations and names of previous participants willing to share their experiences.

Standards of Conduct Considerations

Participants are reminded that they remain subject to the Standards of Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 C.F.R. § 2635, at all times, including but not limited to their developmental assignment as an Innovation Ambassador. Due to these provisions and the criminal restriction against outside compensation for U.S. Government employment at 18 U.S.C. § 209, participants will be generally prohibited from accepting gifts from the outside organization and its employees. Also, other Federal ethics requirements, such as but not limited to the criminal restrictions at 18 U.S.C. § 203 and § 205 (which generally prohibit federal employees from representing other organizations before the U.S. Government) restrict Innovation Ambassadors from doing work concerning NASA during this outside developmental assignment. Accordingly, participants should ensure that they are very familiar with the standards of conduct before their developmental assignment commences, confer with their local NASA ethics official both before and during the developmental assignment to ensure full compliance with these requirements, and attend or otherwise satisfy their requirement to complete annual NASA ethics training. All Innovation Ambassadors who participate in a developmental assignment outside the Federal government will be required to file a confidential financial disclosure form (Form OGE 450). To ensure compliance with this requirement, the Innovation Transfusion project will submit the name of each selected Innovation Ambassador along with the name of the organization to which the individual will be assigned to the office of General Counsel at NASA Headquarters (through ethicsteam@hq.nasa.gov).

Reentry and Agency Mobility

Reentry Process

Returning to the Home organization after participating in long-term developmental assignments has presented challenges for participants of other development assignments and their respective installations. Reentry can be successful if it is fully discussed prior to the nomination process, but can lead to problems and disappointments when participants or supervisors assume this is understood without addressing individual expectations.

It is important, therefore, that the issue of reentry be discussed before the developmental assignment starts and as the assignment progresses. The NASA Innovation Ambassadors Application Form requires the individual, along with their supervisor and Center Director/AA, to identify a reentry strategy for the participant prior to being accepted into the developmental assignment.

The most successful reentry occurs when expectations are addressed during the initial planning of the participant's nomination. In many cases, the sponsoring organization will fill the participant's job while the participant is on a development assignment. When this happens, even on a temporary basis, it is mandatory that the participant be informed of this action and understands the organization's commitment to him or her after completing the Innovation Ambassador developmental assignment. Otherwise, the participant suffers unnecessary anxiety and uncertainty about his or her future.

Aligning the participant's new skills, knowledge, and abilities with the needs of the Home Center is not always easy to arrange upon the individual's return. When a good fit is not immediately available, Centers are encouraged to work with the participant to develop three to four month rotational assignments within the Home Center following the individual's return. These rotational assignments provide an opportunity to ensure that the knowledge and skills gained by the participant are used to meet the current needs of the Home Center.

Communication: A Two-Way Street

Experience from other developmental programs has shown that participants who have experienced the most successful reentry worked deliberately and systematically to maintain open communication with their home supervisor and Center Director during the assignment. Although this fact is emphasized to participants prior to their assignment, the home supervisor is also responsible for staying in touch and keeping the participant informed.

Agency Mobility

Mobility, or the willingness to move within the Agency, is also an important concern for NASA. As employees move upward, the opportunity to broaden their experience by working in other areas of the organization becomes more important. Historically, approximately 30 percent of developmental assignment participants in similar programs change Centers or organizations within one year after completing a developmental assignment.