

Causey Awards Entry

Nominee Information

Name: Phil Lenowitz
Title: Deputy Director, Office of Human Resources
Company: National Institutes of Health

What does this person do?

An organization of over 350 people, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) fulfills all the human capital needs of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As the Deputy Director of OHR, Phil is responsible for overseeing all operational activities within the human capital components of NIH. With its unique mission to improve the lives of people around the world through the advancement of medical research, supporting the NIH workforce is a complicated endeavor. He continually encourages innovation and creativity while maintaining core operations with greater efficiencies. He also works hard to resolve any issues that might arise in the various divisions within OHR and NIH, and ensures that employees are able to collaborate and successfully implement initiatives. In spite of his own workload, Phil takes the time to create and maintain personal relationships with much of the staff in OHR, as evidenced by his efforts to be visible and involved with off-campus staff and employees in other areas. Additionally, Phil always places tremendous importance on providing outstanding customer service to employees across NIH, whether it is directly or through overseeing programs within OHR that reinforce customer service as a core value for OHR employees. Phil is a leader who readily demonstrates the behaviors he would like to see in OHR staff, and his actions inspire them to embrace these critical values.

How did this person go above and beyond in 2012?

Even though his official job duties do not specifically include Equal Employment Opportunity issues, Phil has led the creation and development of a number of initiatives that have been particularly beneficial to minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities. Under Phil's guidance, OHR has held three NIH Hiring Events for Veterans and Persons with Disabilities, which have directly resulted in increased hiring for these groups across the NIH. Additionally, almost every Institute and Center at the NIH has been involved in these events, further demonstrating the widespread effect Phil has on the NIH and increasing its diversity through hiring outstanding and diverse employees. NIH has had some difficulty retaining its veteran workforce and ensuring that they have upward mobility at NIH. For example, prior to last year NIH had never formally acknowledged the service of veteran

employees for Veterans Day. Phil oversaw the development of an email that went out to all NIH staff thanking veterans and recognizing the importance of Veterans Day to the entire NIH workforce. Not only did Phil lead the creation of the document, he personally edited it and worked with Dr. Collins and his staff to ensure its dissemination. Without Phil's efforts, there would have been no NIH-wide acknowledgement of Veterans Day or recognition of our veteran employees. Phil also oversaw the 1st Annual NIH Veterans Day event, which was a campus-wide recognition of the efforts of our veteran workforce. This event was put on by the Veterans Recruitment and Retention Force (VRF), a group of veterans from across NIH coordinated by OHR. Phil played an integral role in both the establishment of the VRF as well as the creation of this event. He even personally reached out to solicit the involvement of the keynote speaker, Maryland Lt. Governor Anthony Brown. The event was well attended and received, and took an important step toward recognizing the tremendous efforts of veterans at NIH. Additionally, Phil was the lead on an enormous project affecting the NIH workforce in scientific positions. NIH received a congressional inquiry about a particular hiring authority which necessitated changes to our processes. These employees are critical to the NIH mission and the government's ability to respond to public health issues, so Phil and his team needed to develop ways to preserve the use of this hiring authority while adhering to new regulations discovered through congressional inquiry. Furthermore, it was critical for the team to ensure the agency's ability to recruit world-class scientists to conduct the crucial research that happens at NIH and through its grants. Phil worked tirelessly to ensure NIH could continue to use this authority while collaborating with HHS, OPM, and OMB to ensure that they could develop provisions that would protect employees from any damage to income, such as losing pay or benefits. As a result of these efforts, Phil and his team were totally successful in developing a novel and comprehensive change to a program that affects thousands of employees at the NIH while protecting affected employees from any negative repercussions.

Give us an example of the impact of this person's work. How did it make a difference?

Phil's work with veteran employees has been tremendously valuable at NIH, and his efforts have had a significant impact on the NIH experience for these valuable members of the workforce. Before Phil got involved, Veterans at the NIH did not have any sort of affinity group or recognition of their contributions. Now, NIH has its own Veterans group, and several events and communications that recognize our veteran employees. These

initiatives received outstanding feedback and really made a difference for a portion of the workforce that so often receives little recognition. Phil's dedication to equal opportunity and upward mobility for employees at NIH is truly a model for managers across the organization. Phil supports diversity and recognition of employee efforts at all levels of the organization and works hard to ensure individual employees feel included at NIH. His dedication to veterans is particularly impressive, and has resulted in significant changes to NIH-wide programs and recruitment and retention efforts. This year, NIH was selected by AARP as the #1 Best Employer for Workers over 50, the first time a government agency received the honor. NIH had previously been #3 for three years running, and it is because of Phil's efforts that NIH received such outstanding recognition. Phil was so instrumental to this outstanding award that he was profiled on the AARP website and served as the main interviewee for the NIH article released through the Associated Press. Without Phil, NIH would not have been recognized in this fashion for its many outstanding programs supporting employees. Phil is always working on developing new ways to improve the work experience for NIH's 20,000 employees, and the AARP award is truly a testament to that.

Other Points:

Phil routinely demonstrates impressive dedication to the NIH mission, and has presented many times to audiences across NIH about how he fell in love with NIH. Phil's support of the NIH mission is also apparent in his own projects, where he works tirelessly to connect administrative employees to the scientific mission, whether it is through encouraging them to go on rounds with clinicians at NIH or launching programs to bring scientific speakers to OHR meetings. Phil knows how powerful mission-driven leadership is, and leverages it to the advantage of the organization as a whole. Phil also regularly shares his own personal connection to the NIH mission with employees and how it has made him more committed to enhancing medical science through his work at NIH. There is no doubt that Phil's efforts have had an enormous impact on the work experience for Veteran employees across NIH, but he has also deeply affected specific employees within his own organization. In fact, much of the information used in this nomination came from a Veteran employee within OHR who wanted to find ways to thank Phil for his efforts. This sort of relationship with front line staff is typical of Phil's work – even though his decisions and actions affect thousands of employees, he still works hard to cultivate relationships with all staff to make sure they are happy in their positions. Phil has helped countless people through his over thirty

years of federal government service in human capital, and is highly deserving of the Mike Causey award.