

## H-1116-2 - HANDBOOK FOR RAPS PROGRAM MENTORS

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted: The objective of this Handbook is to assist Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students (RAPS) Mentors in managing Participants within the organization framework of the Bureau of Land Management.

2. Reports Required: None.

3. Material Superseded: None

4. Fining Instructions: File as directed below.

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None H-1116-2

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Assistant Director, Support Services

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## Chapter I. Introduction

### A. Mission of RAPS

The mission of the Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students (RAPS) is to reach out to students who have an aptitude for academics but are at risk of dropping out of school. RAPS provides students with a stimulating educational work experience that assists them in maximizing their potential for success. Uppermost in our minds is the fact that we are dealing with young adults and their futures; therefore, we must plan meticulously before bringing youths into the program to ensure they receive valuable learning experience.

The aim is to increase Participants' sense of responsibility and encourage them to utilize their capabilities to the fullest potential. RAPS Program Mentors should recognize the knowledge and skills that Participants bring with them and help them use these attributes productively in a new educational work environment. Participants and BLM employees are considered to be team members in implementing the mission and programs of the BLM. To foster effective relationships, all those involved must understand and respect the needs and capabilities of one another.

Through an active RAPS Program, people in neighboring communities can become actively involved with BLM and public lands. This involvement can increase public awareness and community understanding.

### B. Partnerships

RAPS is based upon partnerships between the Bureau of Land Management, (BLM) cooperating school districts, Department of Labor and other Federal, State and local Government agencies, and private sector organizations. The BLM manages the program and provides mentoring and work experiences; school districts nominate and assist in the selection of program Participants; the Department of Labor, other governmental offices, and private sector organizations contribute funding and, in the role of "host agency", provide training and work experiences.

### C. Basics of Program

RAPS is structured as a summer internship based on outside financing; formal employment action on the part of BLM is not required. Thus, a larger group of students can be included in RAPS. Participants are covered by Volunteer/Participant Agreements for workers' compensation and tort claim purposes.

Overall, the program may be designed to work in the following manner: In conjunction with a school principal or guidance counselor, the BLM selects one or more RAPS Participants from students who express interest in

participating in RAPS. A RAPS Mentor designated by the BLM and the Participant establish a Developmental Plan for the Participant. The Plan is created to match the Participant's personal interests with BLM's programs and/or related natural resource programs administered by other cooperating public or private organizations. The Plan also serves as a measurement tool throughout the apprenticeship, aiding the Participant and RAPS Program Mentor in structuring the apprenticeship.

During the school year, the RAPS Program Mentor counsels the student and may arrange periodic short-term work sessions and field trips in BLM offices or other host agency offices. During the summer vacation period, the Program Mentor will arrange extended work sessions or field trips near the Participant's residence.

The program, however, may be redesigned to take into consideration the area, funding sources, and needs of the specific organization.

#### D. How Participants Can Assist

Participants can assist with tasks and projects. Remember that Participants cannot be used to displace employees, and that establishing RAPS is neither cost free nor labor free. RAPS should be initiated with an understanding that some money will be spent, and some staff time will be devoted to training and supervision.

One proven method to identify an assignment for the Participants is to conduct a Needs Assessment with your staff. This assessment should be done far enough in advance of the summer to allow adequate time to plan for materials, supplies, equipment, and staff support in the Planned Annual Work Plan (PAWP).

There are a variety of methods which could be used to conduct a Needs Assessment. Individual State RAPS Coordinators may have methods they feel are particularly effective. Regardless of how it is accomplished, what is important is that some kind of a needs assessment is performed.

Participants can and should be used in almost all BLM programs and in almost all of our activities. See Manual 1114- Volunteers, Section .12, concerning Prohibited Volunteer Services. A sampling of the wide variety of learning activities that are acceptable for Participants is listed in Appendix B of this handbook. There are many other tasks that Participants can perform. A creative imagination, a willingness to use students' talents, and an ability to delegate authority will greatly expand your potential to benefit from Participants.

#### E. Compensation

Since Participants are not Federal employees, they are compensated by cash "educational stipends", in lieu of salary and benefits, which are derived from reimbursable funds and grants provided from the Department of Labor and/or cooperating private sector organizations. If a work or field assignment away from the Participant's residence is appropriate, the BLM or other host agency will provide transportation. Transportation may be purchased using donated funds or through in-kind donations of tickets from bus companies, airlines, etc.

#### F. Program Requirements

Participants will provide their Program Mentors with a written report/evaluation of each work project or training exercise undertaken, as well as a summary review of program Participants the end of the year. The purpose of the evaluations is for Participants to evaluate their own performance as well as the value and quality of the RAPS experience. Successful Participants will demonstrate a continuing commitment to RAPS, remain in school, complete and submit the required RAPS reports and

evaluations, and observe the same standards of conduct while in RAPS which are required of all employees of the Department of the Interior.

## Chapter II. Roles and Responsibilities

The RAPS Program Mentors shall:

1. Direct Participants so that they understand what is to be done.
2. Motivate Participants toward good work behavior and performance.
3. Communicate with both Participants at your worksite and with others who interact with them by listening and keeping all persons appropriately informed.
4. Clarify the relationship of the Participants' jobs with the activities of the other employees.
5. Implement the terms of the Volunteer/Participant Agreement.
6. Provide on-the-job training to help Participants gain skills and develop desirable work behavior.
7. Assign youths tasks in line with their interests and capabilities.
8. Plan and schedule work so that the worksite objectives will be achieved.
9. Organize Participants' tasks so that coordination and cooperation will be achieved.
10. Develop an annual Development Plan for each Participant which takes into consideration student interests, job availability, and the availability of a Program Mentor. The development of the plan shall be discussed with Participants in a collaborative manner.
11. Ensure the safety and welfare of program Participants while they are engaged in work or training activities with the BLM.
12. As appropriate, inform the Participant's family and school system of their progress.
13. Provide Participants supervision during periods of off-site training and field work.
14. Enforce RAPS standards.
15. Provide Participants with meaningful work and training assignments.
16. Work directly with Participants throughout the year coordinating their activities.
17. Provide Participants with the training required to fulfill their Development Plans and other assigned projects.
18. Evaluate the Participant's progress throughout their apprenticeship, including an evaluation at the end of the year; and provide the Participant with regular feedback regarding performance and behavior.
19. Check and certify the Participant's time and attendance records.
20. Serve as a role model, since youths will try to emulate an adult they look up to, particularly a work supervisor.
21. Brief the Participant on their stipend taxability.

In preparation of the Participant's arrival, the Program Mentor shall:

1. Set up the work area.

2. Ensure that supplies and necessary materials are available.
3. Inform other workers of the Participant's start date, what they will be working on, and what is expected of them.
4. Find out how the Participants will get to work. If there are transportation problems, help resolve them.

### Chapter III. Understanding Youth Participants

#### Helpful hints in understanding youth Participants:

1. Many youths have had exposure only to jobs that require minimal skills and are low-paying, and may react by resisting work experiences that have the same characteristics.
2. For many, this will be their first work experience. They may have unrealistic ideas about work. You should try to guide their attitudes and behavior development.
3. It is important not to undervalue any useful work; help the Participants understand the importance of their job and that doing one job well can lead to an opportunity to move into a better, more demanding job.
4. If you ensure your students understand the meaning and importance of the tasks that they perform, they will more likely develop a positive attitude toward work and help create a social climate in which they can learn from the work experience. This also enables an increase in their feelings of self worth.
5. Be aware of the age differences among RAPS students; a 19-year-old is probably more skilled and experienced than a 16-year-old embarking on a first work experience. You will probably need to offer more guidance to the younger, first-time worker.
6. All youths, regardless of age, should be allowed to try out different tasks.
7. Every work assignment should have responsibility and challenges if students are to develop good work habits.
8. The work experience should be a collaborative effort between everyone at the worksite: workers and supervisors, permanent and summer workers, youth and adults.
9. Youths respond positively to skilled competent supervision, skilled and productive fellow workers, and high work standards.
10. Rewarding achievement, expressing interest in your Participant's performance, and providing encouragement are effective and positive supervisory techniques. Ignoring or punishing poor work behaviors and performance is neither productive nor effective.
11. Try to make the best job match possible within the limitations of the work to be done, but realize that ideal matches do not occur in the majority of instances.
12. Introduce new work elements or provide work counseling if youth become bored, indifferent, or dissatisfied. Notify your RAPS Coordinator if there is a consistent attitudinal problem.
13. When youths are well supervised, understand what they are doing, kept busy, given the proper equipment, and allowed to use free time constructively, they will respond positively.

### Chapter IV. Orientation and the First Several Days of the Participation

## A. Volunteer/Participant Agreement

When an agreement is reached on the Participant's specific time commitments, official starting date, and other negotiable items, the Volunteer/Participant Agreement can be prepared and signed. To avoid duplication, the relevant Position or Project Description may be included in the agreement by reference, and then attached to it. The Participant and the BLM's authorized officer then sign the Volunteer/Participant Agreement and send a copy to the Volunteer Program Coordinator and RAPS Coordinator to complete the enrollment process.

## B. Orientation

### 1. Purpose

Most Participants, even those who bring specific skills and knowledge applicable to the training, require some orientation to acquaint them with the BLM mission, the uses of the public lands and the function and layout of their specific work site. The Participant should receive a copy of their handbook. This orientation should be tailored to each Participant's specific needs. The Participant's Orientation and Mentor's Orientation Handbooks are available as guides in this orientation process. These can be found in the Training or Personnel Offices.

### 2. Elements of Orientation

Encourage and answer questions.

a. Mentors should ensure that Participants are given an orientation on BLM history, programs, objectives, environmental quality, job safety, and conduct while serving as a Participant.

b. Introduce the Participant to yourself and to other workers.

c. Describe worksite activities and objectives and how they are to be achieved, including a general description of the weekly work plan.

d. Explain work rules and expected work behavior.

e. Clearly explain to the Participant the following responsibilities:

(1) To work within the bounds of their duties as set forth in their Volunteer/Participant Agreement, including their project or job descriptions, and to advise their Mentors if they think these documents should be revised due to any reason.

(2) To accept the guidance and decisions of their Mentor, and inform the Mentor promptly if the Bureau is not keeping any aspect of its commitment as set forth in the Volunteer/Participant Agreement.

(3) To serve the public well and represent the Bureau in an appropriate manner.

e. Explain to the Participant how they will prepare for the specific job to be done, what tasks and skills are needed, how these will be acquired, and relationships with other jobs.

f. Describe your role as supervisor and counselor.

g. Discuss what the Participant can expect to gain from the program.

h. Discuss liability protection and injury compensation coverage for Participants, as well as job safety and conduct considerations.

i. Advise the Participant that conduct while working in a Participant status is governed by 370 DM 735, "Regulation Governing Responsibilities and Conduct of Employees", and make a copy of the regulations available to the Participants. The Mentor may obtain copies from the servicing personnel office.

j. Ensure that the Participant is aware that they will be considered a Federal employee for tort claim (liability), workers' compensation (injuries on the job) and for damage to, or loss of, personal property purposes only while engaged in activities within the scope of the Volunteer/Participant Agreement.

k. Make certain that the Participant knows whom to contact in emergency situations as well as general emergency procedures to be followed.

### C. Sources of Information for Participants.

Information on the history, goals, and various programs of the BLM can be presented to Participants with the RAPS video. This can be supplemented by giving Participants a packet of printed informational materials such as some background on the program they will be involved in, and copies of the BLM Volunteer Brochures, "Promise of the Land", "Our Public Lands", or "Inside Track".

## Chapter V. Training

Training is a major part of a mentor's job, particularly with young workers. For your RAPS students, learning skills and appropriate work behavior are primary program objectives. Instructing young workers, individually or in groups, requires preparation; therefore, it is recommended that training programs be planned thoroughly.

Participants will be provided training on the job. Some Participants may already have basic skills in the tasks they will be expected to perform. However, some work may require training beyond the scope of on-the-job training or orientation. In that case, Participants may be invited to attend BLM training courses directly related to their Participant assignment when their participation would not result in displacing employees or significant extra expenditures and would show a benefit to the government. Selection for training will be the same as for employees.

## Chapter VI. Assisting the Participant with Development Plan

In collaboration with the Participant, the RAPS Mentor will establish a developmental plan for the Participant. The developmental plan is created to match the Participant's personal interests with BLM's programs and/or related natural resource programs administered by other cooperating public or private organizations. The developmental plan also serves as a measurement tool throughout the apprenticeship, aiding the Participant and RAPS Mentor in structuring the apprenticeship. During the school year, the RAPS Program Mentor may counsel the student and arrange periodic short-term work sessions and field trips in BLM offices or other host agency offices. During the summer vacation period, the Program Mentor will arrange extended work sessions or field trips near the Participant's residence.

## Chapter VII. Evaluation of Participant's Work

Performance evaluation is an important element in the educational component of RAPS. Observe and evaluate the competence, behavior, and performance of Participants. Provide clear guidance and adequate performance evaluations.

Performance evaluation can help you to:

1. Let the student know what is expected, how well these expectations are being met, and how they can improve.
2. Plan the work better by being able to estimate what your student can accomplish.

3. Determine training needs.
4. Identify students who need more instruction.
5. Discover your student's potential.

Youths are sensitive to criticism, so emphasis should be on positive reinforcement. Try to avoid focusing attention on incorrect elements in the student's performance. If necessary, repeat the job instruction training cycle. Set high but attainable standards and praise improvement.

A. The Mentor's role in evaluation is to:

The Mentor should evaluate each Participant. (Appendix 3 is an example of a suggested format for evaluation.) This should be completed when a position is finished, when a Participant terminates their service, when a Participant's services are terminated by BLM, or at least annually for continuing Participants. These evaluations should be kept as brief as practicable. They can merely refer to tasks defined in the Project Description rather than spell them out in detail.

An initial evaluation provides a basis for your decision to continue or discontinue a Participant's services and gives the Participant feedback on their work. The Participant can use a copy as a reference for future employment or volunteer work. During the project(s), the Mentor should acknowledge accomplishments and, when appropriate, provide constructive criticism. They should also advise the Participant's parent or guardian of the student's progress and welfare through maintained periodic contact.

B. The Participant's Role in Evaluation

It is highly recommended that State/Center and District RAPS Coordinators encourage Participant self-evaluation. Self-reflection and self-evaluation are valuable learning techniques.

## Chapter VIII. Recognition

Everyone, whether a paid employee or a Participant, wants and needs to have their efforts acknowledged. A thank you note or letter is an excellent way to thank someone.

Other Suggested Methods of Recognition:

A. An exhibit can be prepared and displayed in the office with photographs and text explaining the Participants' training projects. Participants may want to put the display together themselves. In addition to publicizing your Participants' accomplishments, these displays can help you recruit other Participants.

B. Participant teas, dinners, or picnics are all good ways to recognize Participants for their efforts.

C. Write-ups and photos in the Participants' local newspaper, your unit's newsletter, your State Office newsletter, and "Inside Track", can be an effective way to acknowledge and recognize your outstanding Participants. This also informs other managers of your successes and methods, and can serve as particularly effective promotional material in subsequent recruiting of new Participants.

D. A certificate acknowledging Participant training, can be presented to Participants on a yearly basis or upon completion of their training. These certificates are available from your State Office RAPS Coordinator.

### APPENDIX 1 of Mentor's Handbook

## RESOURCE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS



## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PARTICIPANT: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT OR JOB DESCRIPTION (Brief Summary of work to be accomplished):

SKILLS TO BE ACQUIRED: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES THAT WILL ASSIST THE STUDENT IN ACQUIRING THESE SKILLS:

1. 1.
2. 2.
3. 3.
4. 4.
5. 5.
6. 6.
7. 7.
8. 8.

### Appendix 2

#### List of Learning Activities

NOTE: This is not an all inclusive list of the possible tasks a participant may be involved in. Each State/Center must also devise a list of additional tasks, given their particular needs, that will best work for them.

#### A. Multi-Program Tasks

1. Train employees in various skills.
2. Rehabilitate disturbed areas.
3. Perform research.
4. Draft news releases.
5. Take photographs.
6. Provide assistance with environmental analyses.
7. Prepare art work for publications.
8. Serve as hosts, moderators, and facilitator at public meetings.
9. Serve as Contact Representative in public forums.

## B. Recreation (many of these apply to Wilderness also)

1. Visitor services: staffing visitor centers, information and interpretation, monitoring use and reporting problems to appropriate staff members, and giving first aid and other emergency assistance to visitors, as long as participants are not involved in firefighting or activities requiring aircraft use.
2. Living history demonstrations.
3. Recreation inventory, recreation area management planning, recreation project planning.
4. Monitor compliance with recreation permits (limited to reporting non-compliance to appropriate staff members).
5. Monitor off-road vehicle use.
6. Develop and/or maintain interpretive exhibits.
7. Campground hosts.
8. Trail maintenance and/or construction.
9. Facility maintenance.
10. Outreach.

## B. Cultural Resources

1. Cultural resource survey, both for inventory and for case related projects.
2. Archaeological excavations.
3. Literature searches.
4. Site monitoring.
5. Artifact preservation and cataloging.

## C. Wilderness

1. Monitor Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's) or designated Wilderness Areas (impairing actions are reported to appropriate BLM staff).
2. Teach low-impact camping and wilderness skills.
3. Trailhead contacts.
4. Collect user data.

## D. Range Management

1. Inventory and identify plants.
2. Prepare study mounts.

3. Maintain a herbarium (or establish one).
4. Collect plant phenology data.
5. Catalog slides and pictures.
6. Prepare aerial photos and maps for field work.
7. Compute field data or determine acreage.
8. Assist in conducting vegetation or soil inventories.
9. Monitor and maintain range projects where BLM has maintenance responsibility.
10. Construct and/or maintain fences, or enclosures.
11. Update grazing case files.
12. Assist in determining effects of acid rain on vegetation.
13. Gather samples for water quality analysis.
14. Assist in determining stream runoff occurrences and reading stream gauges.

#### E. Forestry

1. Assist with post pole and fuelwood sales to the public.
2. Thin seedling patches and sapling stands.
3. Assist in piling debris from cuttings.

#### F. Watershed

Monitor watershed studies and collect data.

#### G. Wildlife

1. Assist on habitat improvement projects including, but not limited to: installation of wildlife waters, installation of bird ramps in stock water tanks, stream improvements, shrub planting and seeding, nest box construction/placement, and fence construction or modification.
2. Collect wildlife and/or vegetation data for inventory, monitoring, or management purposes.
3. Adopt a wildlife habit management area and complete selected projects, monitor changes in vegetation and wildlife.
4. Conduct or help to conduct special studies and research.
5. Make literature/data searches.
6. Inspect and maintain wildlife improvements.

7. Record wildlife use of critical areas or facilities.
8. Revegetate wildlife habitat.
9. Make public fisheries contacts.

#### H. Wild Horses and Burros

1. Handle adoption applications including mailing, sorting, reviewing, and filing applications.
2. Draft responses to public inquiries.
3. Handle title applications.
4. Move, set, operate and maintain portable capture traps or corrals.
5. Feed and water penned animals.
6. Maintain tack or other equipment.
7. Provide transportation, feed or other equipment.

#### I. Lands

1. Monitor compliance with terms of lands actions.

#### J. Minerals

1. Geological, paleontological, structural, geobotanical, and industrial minerals mapping.
2. Geochemical sampling and analysis.
3. Geophysical surveying.
4. Photogeology.
5. Sediment analysis.
6. Economic geology and other studies.
7. Monitor compliance with seismic permits, leases, etc.
8. Assist with paleontological excavations.

#### K. Cadastral Survey

1. Work on survey crews of various types.
2. Locate and mark survey corners.
3. Operate equipment (when qualified).

#### L. Engineering

1. Construct or maintain facilities and trailheads.

2. Work on survey crews of various types (engineering, etc.).

3. Erect or maintain signs.

M. Fire and Aviation Management

1. Conduct fire prevention projects.

2. Assist with logistics operations (away from firelines).

3. Operate communications equipment.

4. Assist with fire accounting.

N. Support Services

1. Computer Specialties.

2. Records Management.

3. Personnel.

4. Public Affairs.

5. Visual Information Specialties.

6. Cartography.

Appendix 3

MENTOR'S EVALUATION OF STUDENT

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Work Period: FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ TO: \_\_\_\_\_

Duty Station: \_\_\_\_\_

This evaluation is designed to serve as a formal record of the RAPS student's performance and as a basis for modifying and improving this program. This should be completed by the student's immediate supervisor. *Please check the appropriate rating. Do not answer those categories not applicable to the student. Please provide comments for each category where clarification is necessary.*

5 - excellent

4 - above average

3 - average

2 - below average

1 - unacceptable

CATEGORY RATING

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1. Enthusiasm for jobs assigned 1 2 3 4 5

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2. Initiative on-the-job 1 2 3 4 5

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3. Ability to follow directions 1 2 3 4 5

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4. Ability to work without supervision 1 2 3 4 5

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5. Quality of work 1 2 3 4 5

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6. Quantity of work 1 2 3 4 5

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7. Safety habits 1 2 3 4 5

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8. Punctuality 1 2 3 4 5

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9. Personal appearance 1 2 3 4 5

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10. Organization and planning 1 2 3 4 5

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11. Leadership 1 2 3 4 5

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12. Cooperation with others, teamwork 1 2 3 4 5

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13. Interest in resource management 1 2 3 4 5

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14. Integrity, honesty 1 2 3 4 5

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15. Acceptance of criticism 1 2 3 4 5

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16. Adaptability to new situations 1 2 3 4 5

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17. Emotional maturity 1 2 3 4 5

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18. Sociability, enjoying the company 1 2 3 4 5

of others, friendly

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19. Writing ability 1 2 3 4 5

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20. Speaking ability 1 2 3 4 5

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*Please complete the following.*

Would you be willing to provide a reference for the student? Please explain.

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Describe at least one of the outstanding strengths of the student.

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What deficiencies should the student be made aware of?

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Recommended improvements for this program.

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