

OUTLINE FOR “TAILORED” COBOL TRAINING FOR ECB/MIS STAFF

BACKGROUND:

With the exception of one new staff member our programmers average more than twenty-five years experience with the COBOL programming language. Why then do we want a COBOL training course for them? The answer is twofold. A “refresher” course can always be useful. Second, we want to emphasize quality of coding and efficient coding standards.

There is a time tested adage in data processing that an entire business can be encapsulated into three elements:

- 1-Edit a file.
- 2-Update a file.
- 3-Report on a file.

With that in mind each element or combination of elements should include programming assignments. Given the level of experience of our staff, these assignments must be challenging!

Before any programs are written, a lecture combined with written materials will need to emphasize quality and standardization in coding.

The tailored course will need to include; but not be limited to the following:

- Emphasis on “Top Down” design at all costs.
- Paragraph naming standards (numbering them in sequential order).
- Communicative data names.
- Use of 88 levels.
- Use of appropriate comments.
- A section to record program maintenance stating what was done, by whom, and on what date.

And we are counting on the system consultants at SYS-ED to augment and extend the capabilities of our staff with samples programs, coding efficiencies, and workshops which teach us better and in certain instances the next generation featureset of the COBOL programming language.

Techniques to be employed should include but, not be limited to:

- Internal Sort using Input Procedure and Output Procedure.
- VSAM files in COBOL programs: creation, maintenance, and utilization.
- In addition, secondary indexes should be employed.
- Tables (both indexed and subscripted) - when and how to create and use each.

We require that “training files” be provided before the start date for the course. In addition, we expect that training materials will also be available in advance of the training.

We envisage five days of classes AT OUR SITE. However, because we have “flex” time we have cannot have classes on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

We request five weekly classes on Thursday. This will allow staff members to complete assignments without disrupting normal work.