



Delaware County Human Resources Department Performance Review System Supervisor Guide

Supervisors, Managers and Directors,

Thank you for reviewing the Performance Review System Supervisor Guide. This guide is an important source of information regarding the administration of the Performance Review System. The proper application of the guidelines will ensure that employees are evaluated on a fair and objective basis.

Periodic training is provided by the Human Resources Department, to assist managers, supervisors and directors in evaluating employees.

Effective implementation of the Performance Review System is in the best interests of:

- Employees, who want to know how they are doing and how they can improve their performance;
- Management, to clarify goals that can be achieved and reward good performance; and
- The citizens of Delaware County, who rightfully expect efficiency in operations.

It is the responsibility of every manager, supervisor and director to honestly evaluate the work performance of their employees once per year with quarterly meetings to review progress toward goals and to discuss performance measures.

Performance reviews are utilized by managers, supervisors and directors to:

- Work toward attainment of the agency/county mission, goals, and objectives;
- Inform the employee of strengths, areas for growth, and progress toward goals;
- Improve performance and productivity;
- Strengthen work relationships and improve communication;
- Develop employee skills;
- Recognize accomplishments and good work.

I. Documentation

Documentation of work performance is an important function of the monitoring process. Documentation from verbal conversations as well as documentation on verbal and written warnings should be referenced in the performance review. In addition, documents from the employee's training, awards, and accomplishments should be referenced. It is impossible to remember over the course of a year all the information that relates to an individual's performance or accomplishment of goals. Most people remember more recent events; yet recent time periods may not accurately represent the entire performance review period. Managers may remember only ineffective performance, which may not reflect overall performance.

For these reasons, it is necessary to maintain ongoing performance documentation of all employees. Supervisors should regularly record their observations in the log provided with the performance evaluation form.



Delaware County Human Resources Department Performance Review System Supervisor Guide

The documentation should:

1. Be accurate, performance-related, and completed in a timely manner
 - Reflect objective facts
 - Be job-related
 - Contain constructive criticism where necessary
 - Be based on direct observations
 - Identify specific work performance of the employee
 - Be dated and anchor the activity to a specific time frame
 - Reflect disciplinary and performance improvement plans for the review period
2. Be consistent
 - Written in the same format and level of detail for each employee
 - Conform with other records and actions
3. Reflect ongoing discussions with the employee concerning performance and progress

Evaluation Rating Guide:

The County's adopted evaluation tool provides a 1-5 rating scale. The following provides an overall guideline for scoring the employee's performance.

5 - Outstanding

To award an "outstanding" performance rating for any individual factor the supervisor must be able to provide evidence of how the employee's job performance made a **significant contribution*** to the success of the organization. To award an employee an "outstanding" rating for any individual performance factor the supervisor must provide specific details (what, how, when) on the significant contribution.

*Significant contribution - having or likely to have a very large positive influence or effect, important, (ex. a *significant* piece of work that establishes a new, higher benchmark for performance); *also*: of a noticeably or measurably large amount, (ex. a *significant* number of special projects accomplished, producing *significant* budgetary savings, etc.).

4 - Exceeds job requirements

To award an employee an "exceeds job requirements" performance rating for any individual performance factor, the supervisor must be able to provide evidence of how the employee's job performance made a **clearly identifiable contribution*** to the success of the organization, beyond the typical results that were expected. To award an employee an "exceeds job requirements" rating for any individual performance factor the supervisor must provide specific details (what, how, when) on the clearly identifiable contribution.

*Clearly identifiable contribution - having or likely to have a positive influence or effect, *also*: of a noticeable or measurable amount, (ex. Consistently demonstrates levels of effort, innovation and leadership that go well beyond the job description, produces unprecedented budgetary savings than typical, etc.)

9/2014

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Delaware County Human Resources Department Performance Review System Supervisor Guide

3 - Performance on Target

The position descriptions expect high quality performance. Every job has tasks is expected to be done consistently well. Discuss and acknowledge these so that employees can focus on the most opportunistic aspects of their jobs.

To award an employee a “performance on target” rating for any individual performance factor the supervisor must be able to describe how the employee’s performance met the performance expectations established at the beginning of the year’s evaluation period and satisfied the job requirements detailed in the position description. A three (3) is given to show that the employee is **meeting the expectations** of the position and is based upon their tenure, skills and abilities. Please communicate to the employee that **“threes are good”!**

2 - Needs improvement

To award an employee a “needs improvement” rating for any individual performance factor the supervisor must provide specific details (what, how, when) on how the employee is developing a competency or why the employee’s performance needs improvement. This rating could be used for (1) a new employee in the position who is still learning the job responsibilities, or (2) an existing employee who recently gained new responsibilities, or (3) an existing employee who needs improvement in performing their job responsibilities.

1 - Unsatisfactory

Behavior exists where an employee is experiencing apathy over a period of time even after developmental interventions.

To award an employee an “unsatisfactory” rating for any individual performance factor the supervisor must be able to describe how the employee’s performance over the past year did not meet the performance expectations that were established at the beginning of the year’s evaluation period, did not satisfy the job requirements contained in the position description, and negatively impacted the success of the organization. Any performance evaluation that contains an “unsatisfactory” rating, whether on individual performance factors or on the overall rating must provide comments to explain the employee’s unsatisfactory performance over the past year **along with documentation**. In addition, an evaluation that contains “unsatisfactory” ratings, whether on individual performance factors or on the overall rating, must be reported to the next level of supervision for review.

II. Performance Review Conference Overview

An effectively managed performance review conference can improve the ongoing communication between the supervisor and employee.

During the performance review conference, the supervisor should:

- Review the employee's current performance goals and/or expectations, and discuss performance effectiveness during the past rating period
- Develop a plan to address improvement opportunities and/or to increase employee effectiveness during the next rating period
- Establish individual performance goals or expectations for the next rating period and demonstrate how they support the goals of the organization



Delaware County Human Resources Department Performance Review System Supervisor Guide

III. Preparation

Thorough preparation for the performance review conference, by both the supervisor and the employee, can set the stage for an effective performance review conference.

Prior to the performance review conference the supervisor should:

1. Provide a copy of the agency/county mission to the employee;
2. Provide a copy of the employee's position description to the employee;
3. Review the employee's position description;
4. Make copies of a blank employee evaluation form and submit to the employee at least seven (7) days prior to performance review conference for the employee to complete a self-evaluation;
5. Provide a copy of the last performance review to the employee;
6. Assemble and review all documentation related to the goals, objectives and actual performance of the employee;
7. Complete a preliminary evaluation of the employee, basing evaluation and comments on specific performance activity documented throughout the rating period. In most cases, prepared to reach agreement with the employee regarding their effectiveness over the past rating period. At times, agreement may not be reached; however, discussion with the employee to provide reasons for the difference(s) is important to communicate.

Prior to the performance review conference, the supervisor should direct the employee to:

1. Review the agency/county mission to see where their job duties and individual goals contribute to the overall effectiveness of the agency and unit;
2. Review their position description and be prepared to discuss how the job has evolved over the past rating period;
3. Review any documentation they have that demonstrates their effectiveness in their position;
4. Complete a self-evaluation. Be prepared to reach agreement with the supervisor regarding their effectiveness over the past rating period. Again, agreement may not be reached; however, discussion with the employee to provide reasons for the difference(s) is important to communicate.

Scheduling the date, time and location of the performance review conference should be done by the supervisor.

The performance review conference is a private discussion and should **only** involve the supervisor (or supervisors, when appropriate) and the employee. Steps should be taken to ensure privacy and minimize interruptions or distractions. The process should not be rushed; ample time should be provided to fully address all performance issues.

The supervisor should plan for a conference that encourages the employee to think about their performance and allows for discussion of any concerns, issues or questions the employee might have regarding their duties, working conditions, opportunities for training, etc.



Delaware County Human Resources Department Performance Review System Supervisor Guide

IV. Guidelines for the Performance Review Conference

The following information presents general guidelines or key points to keep in mind for conducting an effective performance review conference. Please remember the performance review conference involves only the supervisor and the employee. During the discussion, the supervisor should focus on how performance expectations and individual employee goals were or were not achieved using specific examples from throughout the rating period.

1. **Start with Self-Assessment.** The Performance Review System is built on a philosophy of employee participation and joint input into the performance planning and review processes. The supervisor should encourage employee input in the discussion. The employee then compares his or her performance against the expectations established for the performance review period.
2. **Respond Briefly to the Employee Self-Assessment.** The supervisor should provide supportive comments where his or her appraisal agrees with the employee's point of view. Those areas where there may be disagreement also need to be addressed. The supervisor's documented observations should be referred to when he or she replies to the employee's self-assessment. The employee should be encouraged to discuss other facts or circumstances that affected or impacted performance.
3. **Review Performance Dimensions and Status of Individual Goals.** The supervisor should verbally review each performance expectation or dimension and the status of each individual goal. He/she should recognize acceptable or superior work, as well as note where the employee has been unsuccessful in meeting performance expectations. The supervisor should also determine with the employee if there are any areas where help is needed to improve performance. Individual and agency/county expectations for the next rating period should also be discussed.

V. Effective Communication Skills

1. **Communicate Openly.** As described above, the performance review conference should be a give-and-take session in which you examine areas of agreement and disagreement. For example, the employee might disagree with one or more of your ratings. Hear the employee out -- there may be information you have overlooked. Share your position; show the employee that you are interested in conducting an objective conference. If you think, on reflection, that a rating should be changed, do so. Of course, remember that the final appraisal should reflect your honest judgment. The employee always has the option of disagreeing with your evaluation and providing a written response.
2. **Try to Manage the Emotional Level.** Should an employee become angry or hostile, it is important that you do not. Allowing the employee to talk or "vent" is often a good strategy. Listen carefully to try to understand the real reasons the employee is upset. Sometimes it will help to restate the employee's position in your own words to confirm your understanding.

If emotions get too high, consider postponing the remainder of the session. Ask the employee if he or she thinks that might be a good idea, and reschedule the remainder of the conference for a specific date, place, and time.



Delaware County Human Resources Department Performance Review System Supervisor Guide

VI. Discussing Performance Improvement

Many performance review conferences will include discussions about how performance can be improved. The following are guidelines for such discussions.

The supervisor should:

- Establish what improvements are needed and the expected time frame for achievement.
- Maintain a "problem-solving" orientation, involving the employee in the identification of potential solutions to performance problems.
- Discuss the performance dimensions, the status of individual goals, and focus on future performance. Lead into a discussion of plans for improving performance or building on current strengths. This begins the performance-planning phase for the next performance review period.
- Present suggestions or ideas, and obtain the employee's ideas, wherever performance needs improvement. Identify for the employee that there is a need in specific areas for improvement. Demonstrate an interest in assisting in the employee's development.
- Cite specific actions that the employee can take to improve.
- After discussing performance expectations, decide on a specific course of action. Try to obtain the employees commitment to the course of action.
- Let the employee know where performance is effective. Indicate that there is potential for being outstanding in certain areas and provide suggestions to accomplish this.

VII. Evaluating Goals

Once the employee has established his or her goals, the manager will evaluate them and approve them, or work with the employee to refine them.

Do the individual goals support the department goals? Depending on the past performance and capability of the employee, the manager may find it necessary to challenge the employee to reach for more or encourage the employee to set more realistic goals. In all cases, the manager should evaluate whether or not the attainment of the goal is within the control of the employee, i.e., does the employee really have the resources or the position to influence the outcome?

Holding an employee to the attainment of a goal that is meaningless or not attainable is counterproductive.

VIII. Modifying Performance Expectations

Occasionally, the supervisor may decide that changing circumstances warrant a revision of performance expectations and goals. There are several legitimate reasons for making such changes. These include instances in which significant changes occur in priorities, personnel, and resource availability. When it becomes apparent that such a situation exists, the supervisor should meet with the employee to redefine or revise performance expectations and goals. Keep in mind that the additional or revised expectations and goals must remain consistent with the employee's position.



Delaware County Human Resources Department Performance Review System Supervisor Guide

IX. Discussing Employee Development

In addition to covering employee performance during the rating period, the conference is also a good time to discuss plans for professional development. The major responsibility for employee development lies with the employee; the supervisor should attempt to be helpful and supportive regarding career opportunities.

Sources for employee development may include:

- Agency/County sponsored training;
- Outside training (seminars, workshops, etc.) as budgets allow;
- Academic training at local secondary schools, colleges, or universities;
- Reading material references;
- Computer-based training and education programs.

X. Pay Adjustments

1. Annual Increases

Provided that funds are available, employees may be afforded wage increases annually. Unless wage adjustments have been established by a collective bargaining agreement or separate resolution, the method of awarding these increases shall follow the rules listed below:

- A. The Board of Commissioners shall approve annual appropriations for salaries for all offices and departments. The Board of Commissioners will utilize the payroll rates of the current incumbent positions and any approved new/replacement positions to determine the appropriations, including any wage increases.
- B. Distribution of the appropriations for salaries is discretionary to each appointing authority with the following exceptions
 1. The individual employee pay rate must not exceed Grade "A" for the job category and skill level of that employee's position description
 2. Any employee whose pay rates are at or exceed Grade "A" are eligible for lump sum bonuses that do not affect wage rates and must still be within the appropriations as set by Board of Commissioners.

2. Probationary Increases

Employees in probationary status will not be eligible for year-end merit or annual increase wage adjustments unless defined by a separate resolution or collective bargaining agreement. Generally, a two percent (2%) adjustment is given upon the successful completion of a probationary period, unless otherwise identified in a collective bargaining agreement, resolution or the employee's hire letter.



Delaware County Human Resources Department Performance Review System Supervisor Guide

3. Merit Based Pay Increases

When merit increases are provided by resolution by the Board of Commissioners to specific employees under their authority, the employee's annual performance appraisal serves as the basis for the merit increase. To ensure consistency with merit increases, performance appraisals are to be completed on an annual basis. Recommendations for merit increases by directors / managers to human resources will be identified annually. Appraisals and merit increase recommendations are reviewed with the director / manager. Directors / Managers and Human Resources will review the employee's performance, responsibilities, and achievement of objectives since the last appraisal.

When funding permits, all merit based increases will be finalized no later than December 31 of each year. Merit increases will generally be effective beginning the first full pay in January or as identified in a separate resolution.

After managers receive confirmation as to the merit increase amount for each of their direct reports, they must meet with each employee to inform him or her of the merit increase decision. The merit increase will be reflected on an Employee Action Form and submitted through the proper channels for processing.

XI. Performance Evaluations Appeal

An employee may appeal his/her performance evaluation following the steps in the Delaware County Policy Manual Complaint Procedure. The appeal must be submitted within seven (7) business days of the performance review conference.