State of Kansas

Performance Management Process

A Resource Guide for Managers

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INTRODUCTION

About the State of Kansas' Performance Management Process

To achieve goals, we must continually strive for excellent Employee performance at all levels within the State of Kansas.

The Performance Management Process is designed to encourage open, ongoing communication between the Employee and the Manager about performance issues. The Process is a continuous cycle that helps Managers and Employees work together to establish objectives, to monitor progress toward these goals, and to assess results.

This Resource Guide will help Managers to:

- Understand the Manager's role and the Employee's role in the four phases of the Performance Management Process.
- Set objectives with Employees and discuss, individually, how they can contribute toward the success of the agency.
- Understand the competency based approach and how it will apply to each Employee.
- Conduct Mid-Year Discussion with Employees.
- Assess Employees' performance against the objectives and competencies.
- Conduct Annual Performance Review Discussions with Employees.

The Performance Management Process at the State of Kansas must maintain mutual respect between Manager and Employee, and add value to their day-to-day communication about performance and development issues.

Performance Management Principles

Our Performance Management Process is based on the following principles:

- It is simple to understand and administer.
- It links the agency's objectives and individual goals together for a specific time period.
- It appraises the behaviors that support the vision and values of the agency as well as appraises job results.
- The different rating levels are clearly defined and consistently applied.
- The highest performance level is attainable and used to recognize outstanding performance.

- It communicates expectations, motivates success and focuses on coaching and development instead of being just a grading mechanism.

- It promotes positive and constructive feedback.

- It minimizes employee stress.

The Performance Management Framework

The Performance Management Process can be thought of as a continuous cycle focusing on planning performance, coaching, reviewing, and rewarding.

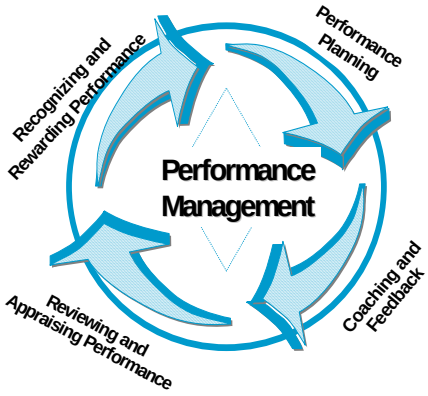
Summary of the main stages of the Performance Management process include the following:

1. **Planning Performance** is the way in which we define what we expect of people and how they are to contribute to achieving the agency's goals.

2. **Coaching Performance** is about reinforcing and supporting the efforts made by individuals in pursuit of those same goals throughout the year, modifying priorities and resources with the changing external world.

3. **Reviewing Performance** concerns evaluating the successes and failures of the year, learning from them, and preparing for the coming year.

4. **Rewarding Performance** is the means by which performance is to be recognized.



What will the State of Kansas' Employees be Measured Against?

There are two basic criteria against which all Employees will be measured against:

Objectives = "What"

Competencies = "How"

What are Objectives?

Objectives describe the specific performance results an Employee will be expected to achieve for the year.

Why are Objectives Important?

Objectives provide Managers and Employees with the criteria needed to objectively discuss performance results. Clear objectives prevent surprises during Mid-Year Discussion and Annual Performance Review, more effectively managing performance on a continuous basis.

Objectives:

- Provide an up-front, objective, mutually understood and accepted basis for reviewing and discussing performance results.
- Reduce misunderstandings between the Manager and the Employee about what performance results he/she is expected to achieve.
- Specify each Employee's role in accomplishing tasks that are important for achieving the agency's and the State of Kansas' goals.

Effective Objectives

Objectives should be S.M.A.R.T.:

- **S**pecific: Think micro, not macro; a goal that is too general will require more action steps than are effective.
- **M**easurable: Manager should be able to monitor and gauge progress in objective terms.
- **A**ttainable: It's frustrating to have a goal that you don't have control over or that can't be achieved in a reasonable amount of time. Be realistic and consider the obstacles and the resources needed.
- **R**elevant: The goals should relate directly to departmental and overall agency objectives.
- **T**ime-Based: Manager should be able to track your progress against specified timeframes.

What are Essential Requirements?

Essential Requirements are those basic behaviors or requirements that are critical for positions within the State of Kansas workforce. These requirements include:

- Dependability
- Agency Values

Please Note: An Unsatisfactory rating in Dependability or Agency Values will result in an Overall Performance Rating of Unsatisfactory

What are Competencies?

Objectives describe **what** results are expected. It is also important to identify **how** results should be achieved. Competencies describe, very specifically, what kinds of skills, behaviors, and personal characteristics the Employee is expected to exhibit in accomplishing job responsibilities.

Why Measure Against Competencies?

Each agency has a unique way of defining its success. While people's technical skills and experience certainly play a part in this definition, it is important to consider "how" those skills are being applied and utilized to get the job done. By measuring competencies, we come to understand whether Employees are exhibiting the behaviors that have been identified as core competencies within the State of Kansas.

What Competencies will be Measured at the State of Kansas?

Following are the core competencies which have been identified as critical to success for all employees within the State of Kansas environment:

- Job Responsibilities
- Communication
- Customer Service
- Initiative
- Teamwork

Following are the leadership competencies which have been identified as critical to a supervisor or manager’s success within the State of Kansas environment:

- Performance Management
- Leadership

What is the Manager's Role in the Performance Management Process?

The Manager's role in the Performance Management Process includes:

- Using the Performance Management Process to give ongoing feedback to Employees and to assess performance.
- Working with Employees to set objectives for continuous improvement and to monitor performance against those objectives.
- Reinforcing good performance with appropriate reward and recognition, and dealing appropriately with performance deficiencies.
- Training, coaching and developing Employees.

To carry out this role successfully, Managers need to:

- Communicate the big picture of the departmental and agency goals to Employees, and show the relationship between their jobs and agency success.
- Let Employees know what is expected from them and why.
- Help Employees to establish challenging but realistic objectives and work with Employees to help them achieve these objectives.
- Identify competency levels needed for achieving high quality results.
- Conduct at least one Mid-Year Discussion with each Employee to monitor progress and to modify objectives and plans as needed.
- Conduct an Annual Performance Review discussion with each Employee.
- Identify Employee development needs and implement specific development strategies based on those needs.

What is the Employee's Role in the Performance Management Process?

The Employee must take an active role to achieve performance excellence. The Employee's role includes:

- Initiating challenging but realistic objectives that support State of Kansas' strategy, agency, and department goals.
- Taking responsibility for their own continuous performance improvement and development.
- Creating action plans and following through to achieve objectives.
- Letting their Manager know when they need information, help or advice to meet their objectives.
- Monitoring their own performance by actively soliciting feedback from others.
- Asking their Manager for regular feedback on performance throughout the year and initiating suggestions for improvement.
- Keeping their Manager informed about progress toward accomplishing their objectives and demonstrating competencies.
- Keeping their Manager informed of any problems or potential problems which may impact their ability to perform up to expectations.

PHASE I: PLANNING PERFORMANCE

What is Performance Planning?

Performance Planning is a process of jointly planning the performance objectives for the upcoming year. This section of the Resource Guide will help Managers prepare and conduct the Performance Planning discussions to:

- Discuss major responsibilities and develop objectives with Employees.
- Identify competencies Employees can use to perform responsibilities effectively and to achieve objectives.

Overview of Steps in Performance Planning

Individual Performance Planning includes the following steps:

1. **The Manager prepares his/her objectives** based on his/her agency goals for the year. Ideally, these will be derived from the broader agency objectives.
2. **The Employee writes 3-5 objectives** based on agency goals and developmental opportunities identified in the previous year.
3. **The Employee and the Manager meet to review and finalize the objectives** that will best contribute to enhanced personal and agency effectiveness.

What is the Performance Planning Discussion?

The Performance Planning Discussion is a meeting at the beginning of the Performance Cycle in which the Manager and the Employee:

- Discuss the Employee's major accountabilities, and jointly agree on objectives.
- Review the competencies against which performance will be measured.

Importance of the Performance Planning Discussion

This discussion will help the Manager and the Employee to:

- Integrate the agency's objectives with the Employee's objectives.
- Mutually agree upon specific objectives and expected results.
- Discuss and agree on challenging, yet realistic objectives.
- Identify the competencies which will be particularly critical in achieving these objectives.
- Discuss action plans and next steps needed to accomplish objectives and to demonstrate competencies.

Summary of Performance Planning

Do	Don't
• Tie Employee's objectives to the objectives of the agency.	• Set objectives without looking at the "big picture".
• Encourage the Employee to develop his/her own goals.	• Develop objectives for the Employee without any discussion.
• Gather information so the objectives are set at the appropriate difficulty level.	• Set objectives that are too easy or too difficult under the circumstances.
• Develop specific, measurable objectives that are challenging yet realistic. Use quantitative and/or qualitative measures where helpful.	• Develop general or vague objectives.
• Discuss how demonstration of competencies will contribute to meeting objectives.	• View competencies as unrelated to the achievement of objectives.
• Agree, up front, on the criteria for successful achievement of objectives.	• Assume the Employee can read your mind or know what is important to you.
• Discuss specifically which competencies the Employee will need to demonstrate to achieve objectives.	• Ignore the "how" of achieving objectives.
• Ask Employees to suggest action plans for achieving objectives.	• Neglect to discuss steps and resources needed to achieve complex objectives.
• Set Mid-Year Discussion meeting date to discuss progress on objectives. Remember the importance of ongoing, informal coaching.	• Assume that you can set objectives and forget about them until the end of the review cycle.
• Set objectives to improve future performance.	• Be overly critical of the Employee's past performance when setting objectives.
• Let the Employee know that objectives can be revised if the circumstances change and if critical goals are no longer reasonable or relevant given changing business circumstances.	• View objectives as cast in bronze!

PHASE II: COACHING PERFORMANCE

What is Performance Coaching?

Performance Coaching provides both formal and informal opportunities for the Employee and the Manager to discuss progress against objectives, review demonstration of competencies and determine if any objectives should be modified before the final review at the end of the performance management cycle.

This section of the Resource Guide will help Managers to provide both informal and formal performance coaching to Employees throughout the year.

Coaching is one of the most important managerial skills for improving performance results and for motivating and developing Employees. Coaching discussions:

- Clarify the Manager's expectations.
- Reinforce positive results and effective demonstration of competencies.
- Identify adjustments needed to achieve objectives and to effectively demonstrate competencies.
- Ensure the continued development of the Employee.
- Renew the Manager and Employee partnership to achieve results.

Guidelines for Effective Coaching

Consider the following guidelines for effective coaching:

- Conduct discussions as needed throughout the year. Do not wait for the Mid-Year Discussion to discuss how an Employee is doing.
- Remember that either the Manager or the Employee may initiate coaching discussions at any time during the year.
- Use every opportunity to give timely, specific feedback. Generally, Employees are accepting of constructive criticism.
- Remember to coach employees on **both** the Objectives ("what") and the Competencies ("how").
- Continue to define and discuss requirements that are mutually acceptable to the Employee and the Manager.

Guidelines for Providing Recognition

Consider the following guidelines for providing recognition:

- Remember that recognition reinforces and rewards successful past performance and encourages continued successful performance in future.
- Recognition must be sincere, specific and earned.
- Recognition builds Employees' confidence, acting as a powerful motivator.

Provide recognition when an Employee:

- Has achieved a critical goal.
- Has made substantial progress toward achieving a complex or long term critical goal.
- Effectively demonstrates specific competencies.

Steps for Providing Recognition

Use the following steps to provide recognition:

1. **Describe the situation.**

- Make a general reference. For example, "You made a very effective presentation to the customer."

2. **Describe specifically what the Employee did that made performance results or demonstration of competencies effective.**

- For example, "You demonstrated Customer Service when you anticipated and responded emphatically to the customer's objection. You listened by paraphrasing effectively and by then emphasizing how this process would benefit the customer."

3. **Describe the positive impact of the Employee's performance.**

- State how the Employee's performance positively impacted: his/her achievement of objectives, demonstration of competencies, and people's perceptions of the Employee.
- For example, "Based on your effective presentation, we were able to gain the support of the team to move forward on the project."

Characteristics of Feedback for Improving/Developing Performance

Feedback for improving/developing performance identifies **what** needs to be improved or developed, **why** it is important to do so and **how** to do it. Effective feedback is:

- **Prompt,** rather than delayed. Don't wait three months to discuss what needs to be done differently.

- **Focused** on important issues. Discuss one or two things that would really improve the Employee's performance. Don't overwhelm the Employee so he/she feels that you are overly critical or that he/she is totally ineffective.

- **Two way,** rather than one-way. Get the Employee's perception of his/her strengths and areas that need improvement. Performance improvement involves two-way discussion, not a lecture.

- **Descriptive,** rather than judgmental. Discuss behaviors related to the job. Avoid discussing personality traits. Say, "You interrupted Bob three times during our discussion," not "You're rude."

- **Specific,** rather than general. Say, "If you presented your findings at the quarterly meeting, you'd gain visibility with upper management," not "Upper management is unaware of your abilities."

- **Helpful,** rather than destructive. Don't give feedback when you're angry, even if you were very concerned about the Employee's performance when you observed him/her. Wait an hour or, if necessary, a day. Think about what you'll say and how you'll say it. Present your feedback in a constructive way that is likely to enhance future performance.

- **Focused** on problem solving and developing for the future. Don't blame for the past or ignore opportunities for future development. The idea is to identify specific things the Employee can do differently.

- **Developmental,** rather than remedial. Every job can be performed better. Even a very effective Employee can enhance his/her skills. Everyone benefits from ongoing, periodic coaching. It should not be reserved for poor performers.

Pitfalls to Avoid When Giving Feedback

The following is a list of pitfalls that may arise during a feedback session:

- Feedback receivers may fear that there is *more to the message* than what is said. Be sensitive to how you believe the Employee is responding to the feedback.

- Most of the time, both the Manager and the Employee *treat feedback as a management responsibility*. Employees tend to detect problems that are occurring, but rationalize their own role and responsibility. Thoughts such as "It's my Manager's job to fix this" help individuals avoid analyzing, discussing or eliminating problems. *In reality*, it is the **joint responsibility** of both parties. Feedback should be solicited by the Employee as well as volunteered by the Manager to help maximize performance.

- Managers and Employees often *avoid and ignore talking about problems* until the problems get so big or have gone on for so long that they become crises. When the discussion finally occurs, it is often too late for effective problem solving, and the discussion itself usually is charged with defensiveness, blaming, and helplessness.

- Often Managers legislate improvements in performance *without involving the Employee in the action planning* or without assuring that the Employee commits to real action. If the Employee doesn't personally commit to changing his/her behavior, even the best action plans are useless. If the Employee lacks the skills and/or support to implement the action plan, it is a waste of time.

- Often development plans are designed as though *everyone had the same learning style*. Some people learn faster on the job; others learn through reading, attending courses and workshops, or watching role models. Make an effort to understand the Employee's preferred learning style.

What is the Mid-Year Discussion?

The Mid-Year Discussion is a more formal opportunity for the Employee and the Manager to: discuss progress against objectives; discuss demonstration of particular competencies; and identify if any changes need to be made to objectives.

Importance of the Mid-Year Discussion

The Mid-Year Discussion provides a valuable opportunity for: coaching, problem solving, and updating objectives. By discussing actual results to date versus objectives, the Manager and the Employee can:

- Identify performance results that are on or above target. This approach enables Managers to provide recognition to encourage continued strong performance.

- Identify performance results that are "below target" and develop plans for improving performance. By identifying and correcting performance problems as they occur, Managers will avoid surprises at the Annual Performance Review Discussion.

- Develop plans to accomplish expected results.

- Discuss any competencies that need to be enhanced or demonstrated further to accomplish objectives.

- Identify potential problems that may affect future performance. By planning preventive actions, Managers can often eliminate such problems before they occur.

- Identify what specific help, if any, the Employee needs from you to accomplish his/her objectives.

- Add, change, or delete objectives in response to changes in priorities or business conditions.

The Mid-Year Discussion will be a required part of the Performance Management Process. Remember, the Mid-Year Discussion is not intended to take the place of informal, day-to-day coaching and communication with the Employee.

Guidelines for How Often to Conduct "Update Review Discussions"

The Manager and the Employee may find it helpful to conduct Update review discussions more frequently.

Consider scheduling more frequent reviews when:

- The Employee is new to the job.
- The workload has increased.
- The work has changed.
- Priorities in the agency or department need to change.
- The Employee has a performance problem.
- The Employee needs or requests more guidance from the Manager.

Preparing for the Mid-Year Discussion

Thorough preparation is a must for discussing the Employee's progress against achievement of objectives and demonstration of competencies. The Manager should:

1. **Schedule the meeting and ask the Employee to prepare by:**

- Reviewing his/her results against objectives and job responsibilities.
- Determining if the results on each critical goal meet, exceed, or are below the agreed upon expectations.
- Identifying the cause and possible solutions for any below target results.
- Identifying plans for accomplishing objectives for the remainder of the year.
- Identifying any objectives that need to be added or updated to reflect changes in business priorities.

2. **Review relevant performance data and information:**

- From "customers", both internal and external.
- On the Employee's results against each objective.
- On the Employee's demonstration of competencies.
- On conditions affecting the Employee's performance.
- On changes in business priorities which may require objectives to be added or revised.

3. **Identify the Employee's improvement or development needs.**

- What could he/she do to make an even greater contribution to the goals of the agency or the goals of the department?

Steps for Conducting the Mid-Year Discussion

The following steps will help Managers conduct the Mid-Year Discussion:

1. **Set the stage**

- Thank the Employee for preparing for the discussion.
- Review the importance of the discussion for monitoring progress toward achieving objectives**,** demonstrating competencies, and for modifying objectives, if needed.
- Review the agenda.

2. **Ask the Employee to review his/her perception of progress on each objective.**

- Share your perception of progress.
- Discuss similarities and differences in perceptions.
- Provide recognition for on or above target performance results.
- If any performance results are below target, develop specific next steps for improving performance.

3. **Ask the Employee to discuss how the use of particular competencies is contributing to the achievement of performance results.**

- Share your perception of the employee's demonstration of competencies.
- Provide recognition for effective demonstration of competencies.
- Discuss specific ways the Employee could demonstrate competencies to further enhance performance results.

4. **Determine if any objectives should be modified.**

- Document any changes.

5. **Summarize the discussion and offer ongoing support.**

- Discuss plans/next steps for achieving objectives and demonstrating competencies for the remainder of the year.
- Discuss any other questions or concerns related to performance or development that you or the Employee want to discuss.

- Encourage the Employee to come to you any time he/she has questions about performance or needs advice to achieve his/her objectives.
- Express confidence in the Employee's ability to contribute to the overall success of the agency.

Tips for Observing and Documenting Behaviors

1. Be thoroughly familiar with the competencies and objectives that are to be evaluated during the performance appraisal period.
2. Keep a record of critical incidents related to objectives and competencies, and include:

- **Context**: when, where, etc.
- **Action**: what the Employee did or didn't do
- **Outcome**: the result or impact of the action or inaction

3. Be as specific as possible in presenting behaviors. Avoid general words such as "good" or "fine."
4. Be careful not to allow what you have seen in one situation influence your observations of other situations.
5. Document both the presence and absence of desired behaviors.
6. Solicit feedback from others who work closely with the Employee.
7. Watch your own behavior; be careful about inferences.
8. Document your observations immediately following the incidents, not long after the fact. You do not want to find yourself in the position of having to remember or recreate events at the time of the meeting.

Summary of Performance Coaching

Do	Don't
• Conduct informal day-to-day coaching discussions as needed in addition to conducting the Mid-Year Discussion.	• Use the Mid-Year Discussion as the only time for coaching the Employee.
• Take time before the Mid-Year Discussion to review performance data to assess the Employee's results and how he/she achieved those results.	• Forget that preparation is a must for success.
• Ask the Employee to review performance data to prepare for the discussion.	• Fail to encourage Employees to self-assess their results and to take an active role in performance management.
• Establish a positive tone and climate.	• Put the Employee on the defensive.
• Listen to the Employee's viewpoints.	• Discount Employees' perceptions or minimize concerns.
• Remember to provide recognition for results that are on or above target.	• Focus on one negative performance situation and forget about the positive ones.
• Revise objectives as needed.	• Ignore changed business needs/priorities.
• Encourage an open dialogue. Get the Employee involved. Listen by paraphrasing, asking open questions, and empathizing. Ask for the Employee's ideas on enhancing results.	• Talk at the Employee and give lots of "If I were you" advice that implies "My way is the only way."
• Set specific next steps for improving performance on below target results and for continuing to develop the Employee.	• Sidestep problems. Remember that continuous improvement is our goal at the State of Kansas.
• Focus on enhancing future performance.	• Blame the Employee for past performance.
• Review results achieved and plans to accomplish results for the remainder of the year.	• Ignore performance plans for the remainder of the year.

PHASE III: REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

What is Performance Review?

The Annual Performance Review is an assessment of the Employee's overall performance for the year.

This Section of the Resource Guide will help Managers to:

- Assess performance and complete the **Performance Review** form by:
  - Assessing the results on each objective.
  - Assessing performance on each Competency.
  - Determining the Overall Rating.
- Conduct an Annual Performance Review Discussion with the Employee.

Overview of Steps in Performance Review

1. **Preparing for the Performance Review**

- The Manager sets a review time and date with the Employee and gives the Employee suggestions on how to prepare for the Annual Performance Review discussion. The Manager and the Employee jointly determine who else is knowledgeable about the Employee's performance (e.g., project team members, internal/external customers, etc.).

2. **Gathering Input from Others**

The Manager:

- Solicits input on the Employee's performance from project team members, internal/external customers, etc.

3. **Completing the Performance Review Form**

The Manager:

- Considers input on the Employee's performance from others (e.g., project team members, internal/external customers, etc.).
- Assesses the Employee's results on each objective.
- Assesses the Employee's performance on each Competency.

Don't wait until the end of the year to discuss the Employee's performance results and development needs with *your* Manager. Throughout the year, keep *your* Manager informed to avoid surprises and major disagreements which could delay the approval process.

4. Conducting the Annual Performance Review Discussion with the Employee

The Manager:

Discusses performance results and demonstration of competencies. Identifies obstacles beyond the Employee's control and how to handle them in the future.

- Explains the ratings.
- Discusses development if appropriate.
- Secures all required signatures.

What is the Annual Performance Review Discussion?

The Annual Performance Review Discussion is a face-to-face meeting between the Manager and the Employee at the end of the performance period between October 1st and December 31st. Its focus is on assessment of past results and development in the future.

Steps for Conducting the Annual Performance Review Discussion

Use the following steps to conduct an effective Annual Performance Review Discussion:

1. Set the Stage.

- Create an open, relaxed atmosphere.
- Thank the Employee for preparing.
- Review the purpose of the discussion: to summarize the Employee's performance for the year and to set next steps for continued development in the current job.
- Review the agenda.

2. Review how Ratings on objectives was Determined.

- Discuss how the performance rating on each objective contributed to your overall rating.
- If the Employee's opinion differs from your perception, listen to his/her rationale.
- Be open to changing your assessment if the Employee presents information you did not consider. Otherwise, restate and explain your assessment using specific illustrations.

3. Review how Ratings on competencies was Determined.

- Discuss how performance on each Competency contributed to or detracted from the accomplishment of objectives.
- Explain your overall assessment on each competency.
- If the Employee's perception differs from yours, listen to his/her rationale.
- Be open to changing your assessment if the Employee presents information you did not consider. Otherwise, restate and explain your assessment using specific illustrations.

4. Review the Overall Rating.

- Explain how you determined the Overall Rating based on an overall assessment of performance on objectives and competencies.
- If you feel a significant change in the overall rating is warranted as a result of your discussion with the Employee, explain that the desire for change will be considered and documented.

5. Discuss the Employee's Development Plan.

- Open the discussion by reviewing the overall purpose of the Performance Management Process at the State of Kansas. Emphasize the goal of having a formal process to encourage continuous development.
- Identify the Employee's major strengths in the job. Emphasize the parts that he/she does particularly well, to boost confidence and create a positive atmosphere.
- In a constructive way, identify areas where improvement is needed.
- Identify what additional skills or knowledge would help the Employee perform more effectively. Determine specific action steps for developing those skills and knowledge.
- Agree on a development method that:
  - Appeals to the Employee.
  - Is acceptable to you.
  - Is practical in the agency environment.
  - Makes the best use of time and resources.
  - Is least disruptive to the Employee's and others' work.

- Common development methods include:
  - Coaching.
  - Redesigning parts of the job, or changing its boundaries.
  - Self-development activities.
  - Project assignments or task force participation.
  - Cross-training with another employee/division.
  - Formal training programs.

6. Summarize the Discussion and End on a Positive Note.

- Ask for any questions or the need for further clarification.
- Set next steps, if appropriate (e.g., a date for next year's Performance Planning Discussion).

The Performance Ratings at the State of Kansas

Under the new State of Kansas Performance Management System, there are five separate and distinct performance levels identified:

Unsatisfactory	= Employee is not making contributions expected of an employee in this role. = Employee may not be appropriately placed in the job or the agency. = Immediate improvement is required.
Needs Improvement	= Employee is inconsistent in performance. = Employee sometimes meets expectations and requirements. = Continual improvement is required to fully meet expectations.
Meets Expectations	= Employee is making meaningful and valuable contributions. = Employee has shown consistent and continual performance throughout the review period.
Exceeds Expectations	= Employee is making significant contributions and often exceeds requirements and expectations. = Employee demonstrates a high level of competency.
Exceptional	= Employee is making outstanding contributions to on a continual basis. = Employee’s achievements are clearly distinguishable from solid performers, and are highly valued by others. = Employee consistently performs at a high level of competency.

Guidelines for Determining the Ratings

Use the following guidelines, along with managerial judgment, to determine ratings.

When you assess the Employee's results against each objective, consider:

- How close the Employee came to meeting the objective.
- External factors, things outside the Employee's control, that impacted his/her results, such as emergencies that pre-empted his/her time, unexpected conditions, or difficulties.
- How challenging the objective was.
- How much help you provided the Employee in accomplishing the objective.
- The impact of the Employee's performance results upon customers, either internal or external to the State of Kansas.
- If the Employee failed to obtain acceptable results on an objective, describe the extent of the gap and hypothesize why it occurred. Explain whether it appears the failure was due to factors within or beyond the Employee's control. Also, mention any coaching discussions and improvement steps to which the Employee previously agreed.
- If the Employee obtained outstanding results on the objective, provide supporting information. For example, by how much did he/she exceed the objective and how did he/she do it?

When you assess the Employee's demonstration of competencies, remember to:

- Observe the Employee in action, and note how his/her behaviors affected the results achieved. Take notes throughout the year on specific behaviors, both positive and negative, that affected results.
- Your documentation will be critical for an effective discussion with the Employee.

Use the complete competency model as your reference in measuring performance.

Measurement Pitfalls to be Avoided

1. **The Halo Effect**: allowing one single event (positive or negative) to bias overall perception of performance.
2. **Stereotyping:** a pre-supposed assumption about someone without evidence or grounding.
3. **The Central Tendency:** lumping all Employees in the same category to avoid conflict; or “averaging” out an Employee’s performance.

4. **The Recency Error:** the review covers the entire year; don't be biased by a major error committed just before the review.

5. **Length of Service Bias:** longer time in the job does not *necessarily* mean better performance; confront any performance not at the level expected from the amount of experience, even if past managers have not done the same.

6. **The Initial Impression:** whether good or bad.

7. **Lack of Documentation:** not grounding the review with specific examples from throughout the year.

Dealing with Performance Review Problems

There are five possible reactions when Employees do not respond effectively to the performance appraisal:

The Hard-to-Convince Employee

- Some Employees may be disappointed with their review. Managers should plan out what they will do if this happens.
- Do not argue with the Employee. Make your position clear, and then try to understand the reasons for disagreement. Complete agreement may be difficult to attain, although agreement on some basic points should be reached.
- Be open to the possibility that you overlooked something critical. Add more information to the review to support your position.
- Let the Employee talk, and listen carefully.

The Noncommittal Employee

- Some people may have different reactions as a result of fear, resentment, lack of interest, cultural differences or lack of understanding. Find out which of these it is, so that you can determine how to proceed.
- Some periods of silence are natural as the Employee thinks over what you have said. Don't rush; give your remarks time to be absorbed.
- Try asking some open-ended questions to get the Employee talking. Restate the feedback and check for understanding.
- Having the Employee prepare a self-rating may spur some thoughts.

The Easy-to-Convince Employee

- If Employees agree too quickly to all of your opinions, this may not be a good sign.

- Check to ensure the Employee really understood what you said (e.g., by having them restate it in their own words). Make sure the agreement is genuine.
- Emphasize that you will be following through on your decisions, and then do so.

The Quick-Tempered Employee

- Some Employees will get angry when you point out weaknesses in their performance, regardless of how tactfully you present it.
- If this occurs, let the Employee vent their feelings and listen patiently.
- Do not get into an argument. The best thing to do is pause or leave the room briefly to let the Employee regain composure.
- Further discussion at this time may not be effective. Schedule another meeting, and try to calm the Employee by explaining that you will have another opportunity to talk.

The Employee Who Is Experiencing Personal Issues

- Personal crisis can sometimes be the cause of poor job performance. If an Employee becomes emotional in a review, listen and show concern.
- Pause or leave the room briefly to let the Employee regain composure.
- As you feel is appropriate, given your relationship with the Employee, ask questions to find out the reason for the outburst. Do not get into an in-depth discussion of personal issues and do not offer personal advice. In most cases, what Employees need is simply someone to listen.
- You may need to reschedule a meeting where the conversation can focus on performance, not the personal, non job-related issues.

Summary of the Performance Review

Do	Don't
• Gather performance data from a variety of sources for the full year.	• Focus on most recent performance data only.
• Focus on the Employee's performance in the job.	• Be judgmental or focus on the Employee's personality.
• Explain how you determined each rating. Give specific examples of how performance results were achieved and how particular competencies were demonstrated.	• Discuss the performance of other Employees, or compare the Employee with other Employees.
• Use the ***Unsatisfactory*** rating to confront and correct poor performance. Develop specific action plans to address performance issues.	• Tolerate unacceptable performance.
• Get the Employee's reaction and perceptions. Make it clear that you are interested in his/her feelings and thoughts.	• Conduct a one-way discussion.
• Focus on future improvement and development.	• Dwell on a past problem, blame the Employee, or put him/her on the defensive.
• Remember to discuss both strengths and development needs.	• Assume that performance enhancement is for poor performers only.
• Document both positive and negative incidents throughout the year.	• Focus on weakness only.
• Choose a private meeting place where you will not be disturbed. Allow sufficient time for the actual appraisal meeting (1-1$^{1}/_{2}$ hours).	• Allow for interruptions.

PHASE IV. REWARDING PERFORMANCE

"Effective performers should know that their contribution is recognized and valued by the agency. The purpose should be to reward the high performing people and to motivate all the people."

Performance Related Pay -- Some Background and Issues

Pay is one of the strongest communicators of how much the State of Kansas values the contributions of an individual or group. A well structured and implemented performance related pay strategy sends clear messages about the direction and values of an agency.

In understanding the key links between pay and Performance Management, there are a number of issues that need to be taken into account:

- Performance rewards should be significant enough to motivate the excellent performers.
- The process needs to be monitored, evaluated and reviewed.
- It is important to manage expectations about what performance rewards can and will deliver.
- It is important to avoid being too mechanistic or simplistic about setting performance targets.

The operation of merit pay is traditionally linked, either directly or indirectly, to appraised performance. As a result its success is partly dependent on the quality of the appraisal process in operation. Appraisal "rating inflation," inadequate management training in appraisal, and poorly designed appraisal processes can all have an adverse effect on the efficiency of merit pay as a performance-related reward. The creation of an effective Performance Management process eliminates these issues.

Steps for Selecting and Communicating Base Salary Increases

The steps to select and communicate a base salary increases are in the process of development. More information will be added in the future.

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

What is Employee Development?

Employee development focuses on clarifying Employees' strengths and weaknesses, and identifying opportunities for him/her to further develop particular skills which will contribute to improved performance on the job.

This Section of the Resource Guide will help Managers to understand the importance of Employee Development and learn to identify appropriate developmental needs of those Employees you supervise.

What is the Role of Employee Development in Performance Management?

- Ensures Employees' understanding of the State of Kansas' commitment to excellence in personal performance and the commitment to continuous improvement.
- Fosters maximum individual contribution in support of overall agency goals and direction.
- Serves as a process to define problem areas, and or strengths/weaknesses so they can be corrected or developed.
- Can serve as a management tool to facilitate internal transfers and promotions.
- Focuses individual/personal growth within the department and agency.

Helping Employees Identify Developmental Needs

In identifying Employee developmental needs, ask the Employee:

1. What are your key objectives/job duties? List in order of importance.
2. Do you anticipate any significant changes in any of these activities during the next year or so?
3. What aspects of your job give you the most problems at present?
4. In what areas do you think you could make a significantly greater contribution to team performance?
5. In what ways do you think you need to develop as an individual? What learning would help you to:
    - meet the challenges of the changes listed in (2);
    - deal with the problems listed in (3);
    - help you make a greater contribution to your team's performance;
    - aid your professional development as an individual?

6. Considering the way we do things currently, do you have ideas as to procedure/process improvements that would make the agency run more efficiently and effectively?

Guidelines for Employee Development

Keep in mind the following things:

- Encourage Employees to take an active role. Discussions should be Employee-driven.
- Look at how to maximize the use of Employees' strengths and talents.
- Focus on development in current job.
- Use task forces and special projects as opportunities for development in particular areas.
- Attempt to understand Employee's motivation and interests.
- Be realistic regarding advancement opportunities.
- Create mentor relationships where appropriate.
- Consider lateral transfers for Employee development purposes.
- Tie training programs to individual development programs.
- Follow-up periodically throughout the year.