

General Performance Management Guidelines

- All supervisors and employees should familiarize themselves with the new Civil Service Rules on the Performance Evaluation system (i.e., Rule XI).
- Evaluations of employees should only be performed on the official Performance Planning and Evaluation Form identified by the Civil Service and the Chief Administrative Office.
- You should have complete information and legible signatures on the Performance Planning and Evaluation Form for making your form “official”, and for verification purposes towards merit increases.
- All of the information on the Performance Planning and Evaluation Form should be as accurate as possible.
- Supervisors should approach this evaluation process with all emphasis on the success/progress of their employees to attain mutually identified performance goals. Likewise, employees should be open to feedback based on these goals.
- Supervisors and employees should know that the promotional opportunities, merit increases, and other incentives are all linked to goals attainment and its impact on the effectiveness of their departmental operations.
- Employees and supervisors are required to exercise care and caution when using the confidential performance information.
- All comments made on the Performance Planning and Evaluation Form should be recorded using professional and courteous language. Supervisors and employees should refrain from stating their personal opinions and/or any disrespectful, belittling, or threatening language in the form.
- Questions and inquiries regarding the new form should be directed to the liaison for your department.
- Supervisors, who fail to complete performance evaluations of their employees, will not be eligible for their own merit increases.

A Performance Planning Session

When is this session conducted?

- September 1 – December 31, 2016 (and each year afterwards)

Who is this session conducted for?

- Any newly hired/probationary employee
- Any employees who have moved into a new position with significantly different duties
- All permanent employees within your department

What should a supervisor do for this session?

1. Before the performance planning session:

- Alert your employee that you'd like to set up a date/time for the two of you to discuss the performance plan.
- Inform the employee that the session would entail agreeing upon goals, work tasks/behavior expectations, and competencies for subsequent evaluation throughout the year.
- Ask the employees to specifically come up with goals/work expectations – in advance of the actual session - for which they feel they should be evaluated.
- Secure a copy of the employee's job description for both of you to review before/during the session. You can ask for the job specification/position descriptions of your employee from the department/personnel officer – PERFORM liaison.
- Gather materials – position description, departmental goals, vision and mission of the City, etc. – which would help you to get the best image of the duties/responsibilities of your employees.
- Make sure you have filled out all the pertinent information on the Performance Planning and Evaluation form (e.g., name, department name, employee title, etc.)
- Let your employees know in advance if/what they will need to bring to the performance planning session.
- Make sure that your employees have access to the most updated Civil Service Rule XI. You can access it on www.nola.gov/civil-service/resources/rules.
- Make sure that you have formulated some discussion points that you feel can be motivating for your employees.
- Think about any big assignments/projects which may take longer to achieve than usual and the best ways to set up their deadlines.

2. During the performance planning session:

- Be ready and able to connect - for your employees - *work unit goals* to *departmental goals* in order to help employees realize their significance. This will show how they tie in to the overall success and effectiveness of the department, as a whole.
- Consider having the employee to first share their ideas for performance goals. Then, share with the employee what you feel their performance goals, as well as other relevant duties to be evaluated on, should be.
- Develop **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Reasonable, and Time-bound (SMART)** goals for your employees based on the unit/departmental goals, gathered material, and discussions with your employee.
- Consider what good measures/indicators would be to confirm goal achievement and assure that your employee is aware of them.
- Develop work tasks and set behavioral expectations based on the goals. You can make use of the task statements from employee's position description.
- Select competencies that your employee is required to develop during the performance period. Think about training needs of your employee, training offered by the City, and the feasibility of the employee's attendance at such training.
- Ask your employees if they have any questions/concerns about any of the new Rules or the new evaluation process and note them down in the Notes/Comments section of the form.
- Ask the employee if there is anything that you can do – at this point of the process – to better their understanding of it or to make for an easier flowing of the new process/protocol.

3. After the performance planning session:

- Make sure that you give your employees a copy of their Performance Planning and Evaluation Form for their own records.
- Make sure to seek approval for the performance plan from the Second Level Evaluator and/or the Appointing Authority.
- Be prepared to continuously monitor and document employee's performance throughout the year and provide him/her feedback to improve work.

- Inform employee that his/her work will be regularly monitored and recorded to provide year-end performance evaluations. Make sure employees accept responsibility for meeting deadlines and realize the repercussions that can result from not doing so.
- At the conclusion of the planning session, make sure that the employee knows where everything stands at this stage in the process, and when you would expect anything further from them.

How is an effective performance planning session conducted?

- Make sure your employees have access to or know where to find all information related to the performance evaluation process and are aware of all the rules and procedures.
- Let your employees know that you are open to their feedback and suggestions.
- Help the employee to realize that this process is going to be one that would be beneficial for the employee, the supervisor, and the department.
- Consider those employee responsibilities that have the biggest impact on the operations of that unit as you try to come up with goals.
- Consider responsibilities of high frequency, and those which have measurable results.
- Instruct employees to consider responsibilities that both you and your supervisor may be able to lend feedback on.
- As you think about work expectations, consider any Civil Service Rules or CAO memoranda that might govern these duties, and whether these rules may help to validate your compliance and appropriate behavior related to these duties.
- Think about any circumstances that might have some impact on the current projects or duties, in order to revise the goals if necessary.
- Last but not the least, thank your employees for their cooperation, and let them know that their doing so has made it an easier process for you, and their efforts will go far in bringing to fruition the desired outcomes of this new system.

Why is conducting this session important?

For a fair and legally defensible performance management system, you should make sure that:

- Your employees are involved in establishing performance standards (i.e., goals, tasks, and competencies/KSAs) for their positions.

- The standards used are relevant to the essential elements of the job and are clearly documented.
- Your employees are informed of, understand, and sign off on, the performance plan.
- The performance management is not based on comparisons between employees (e.g., curve).
- The performance appraisal is done annually and documentation of performance discussions is done properly and on a continuous basis.
- Employees are allowed and encouraged to add their comments and responses to any performance appraisal documentation.
- You are adequately trained to use the performance management forms/system.
- Employees are informed of any performance problems and issues way in advance of the formal performance reviews, and given an opportunity to rectify the problems.
- You maintain records that include specifics of employee effective or ineffective performance. While it is true that documentation (e.g., notice, NOT performance reviews) CAN be useful in defending against a lawsuit, much depends on the QUALITY of that documentation. Use the “Record-Keeping” sheet provided at the back of the form.
- You communicate with employees about their performance and provide them feedback on regular basis. Documentation of poor performance, in and of itself, is not sufficient. Along with the documentation, there needs to be evidence of COMMUNICATION with the employee. That's why any documentation needs to be signed by the employee, as an acknowledgement that he or she has been suitably informed.
- Additionally, you and your department have taken any and all possible steps to help the employee improve -- reasonable effort. That, too, must be documented, i.e. efforts at coaching, opportunities for skill upgrades and training, a performance improvement plan. Use the “training matching Competencies/KSAs” list.

Prepared by: Department of Civil Service, City of New Orleans

Resources Used:

1. Rules of the Civil Service Commission, City of New Orleans (<http://www.nola.gov/civil-service/resources/rules>)
2. Performance Management: A roadmap for developing, implementing, and evaluating performance management systems (Author: Elaine Pulakos)
3. The Busy Learner's Kit For Making Performance Management and Appraisal VALUABLE: Walking The Path Together (Author: Robert Bacal)