

## SECTION 8.05: INTRODUCTION

Last Update: 10/11

Clarity of performance expectations and constructive feedback are keys to enhancing successful performance on the job. These two concepts underlie the basic philosophy of the State of Iowa performance planning and evaluation process.

**Clarity of performance expectations** includes the following components:

- Focus on the most critical parts of the job
- Results-orientation
- Connection to the agency's mission and the position's contribution to achieving it
- Succinct, concretely described performance expectations
- Achievable
- Employee input, as applicable

**Constructive feedback** includes the following components:

- Timely, both in relation to specific accomplishments or problems and in relation to the overall evaluation period
- Objective, based on concrete results and observations; non-judgmental
- Formal and informal
- Solution/enhancement oriented; where problems have been evident, focuses on how to avoid in the future; where performance has been exceptional, focuses on how to leverage this achievement to future performance as well as career development for the employee
- Two-way communication; the supervisor clarifies expectations and assesses performance for the employee and then listens to the employee's view of performance achievement and future needs

The State of Iowa performance planning and evaluation process is also flexible in its open-ended nature in order to cover the wide range of work performed in Iowa state government. Although the performance planning and evaluation form is based on a set format, each element of the form requires input from the supervisor or agency leadership.

The form can be used by and for any employee in any agency, regardless of job assignment or agency philosophy.

The State of Iowa performance planning and evaluation process is on-going. It begins with the supervisor preparing the Individual Performance Plan six months to a year before the employee's upcoming performance evaluation period. The individual performance plan and the evaluation are part of the same document. The individual performance plan consists of the performance goals, the action steps to achieve those goals, how the goals will be measured and the timeline for goal completion. The evaluation consists of the results of meets, does not meet, and exceeds expectations; it also provides space for the supervisor's and the employee's comments.

The employee should be involved in the preparation of the performance plan goals. Once the individual performance plan has been discussed with the employee and the employee has had the opportunity to clarify expectations, the plan is signed by the employee and the supervisor and is implemented. The

employee retains a copy. Significant changes in responsibilities, standards or expectations that occur during the rating period shall be included in the individual performance plan, and a revised copy shall be given to and discussed with the employee. Throughout the next several months, the supervisor may monitor performance by collecting various status reports and other products produced by the employee. These may be used as part of the evaluation. It is also beneficial to meet routinely with the employee to discuss the employee's progress and performance.

Because DAS sub rule 11—IAC 62.2(2) requires that each employee receive a performance evaluation every 12 months, most evaluation periods are one year in length. Many coincide with the dates for within grade pay increase eligibility, although evaluation period dates are not the same as these dates. Evaluation periods can be less than a year, particularly when performance needs to be monitored more closely.

**Probationary employees** – Although performance evaluation during the probationary period is not required by administrative rule, probationary employees need more frequent and specific feedback on their performance during their first six months in the job. To promote a successful probationary period, probationary employees should receive an individual performance plan on or shortly after their first day on the job. They should receive periodic informal feedback throughout the probationary period, culminating in a formal evaluation prior to their becoming permanent.

The requirement for an annual performance evaluation covers all employees in the executive branch, excluding employees of the board of regents. Exit performance evaluations are also required on or before the last day the employee moves to another section, bureau, division or agency of state government. [11—IAC 62.2(2)] covers the period between the previous review up to the movement to the other position. A copy of the exit performance evaluation is to be forwarded to the new supervisor.