



The DHS Performance Management Program

Employee Guide



Homeland Security

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THE DHS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Overview

The purpose of this employee guide is to give you important information related to your conversion to the DHS Performance Management Program (the Program).

The main elements of the Program are designed to align individual performance goals with the Department's strategic priorities, ensure we are prepared to meet our mission requirements and help employees further their professional development.

The development of the DHS Performance Management Program was based on:

- The Department's continuing need to address the ever-changing environmental imperatives of meeting the critical mission of homeland security and
- Organizational culture issues raised by the creation of DHS – combining 22 legacy agencies into eight components.

By addressing these two areas, the DHS Performance Management Program contributes to the fulfillment of the mission of DHS and its components.

Performance management positively influences both you and the organization by promoting higher performance (continuous improvement) and organizational culture changes. Within this Program, your supervisor will apply performance management principles to further both technical and behavioral accomplishment.

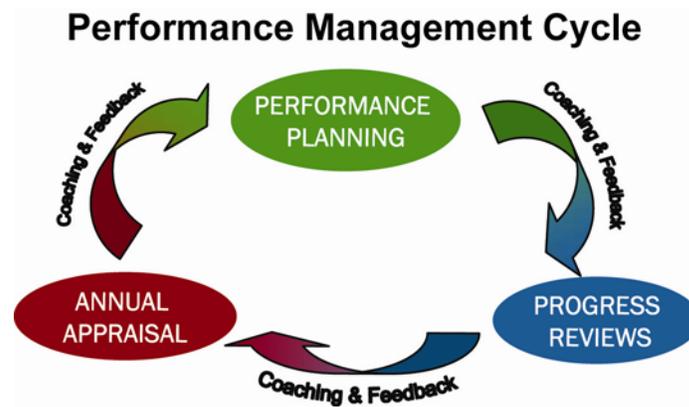
New elements of performance management will give you a clear understanding of both your supervisor's expectations for your performance and your own individual performance expectations. Through frequent communication, a mid-year performance review and your annual appraisal, performance management will be ongoing throughout the year.

THE DHS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Performance Management Cycle

The Performance Management Cycle is an ongoing process during which you and your supervisor jointly determine performance expectations in an initial performance planning meeting, receive feedback and coaching throughout the rating cycle and jointly review individual performance through the mid-year and annual appraisal. New supervisors and entry/developmental-level employees will participate in quarterly review meetings.

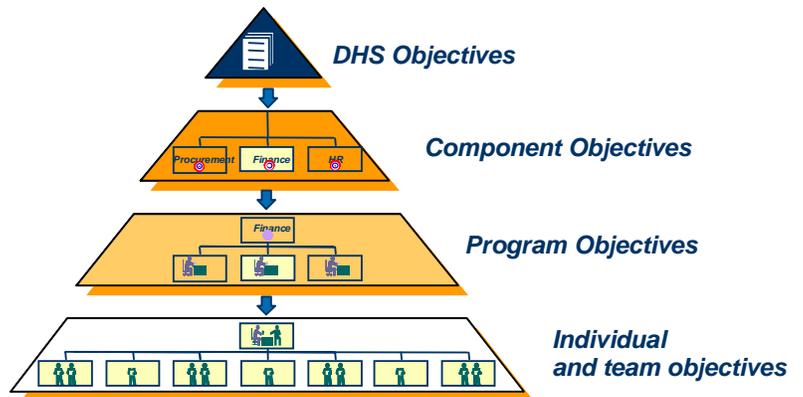
This Performance Management Cycle is an ongoing three-phase process supported by continuous feedback and coaching:



The DHS Performance Management Program ensures that every employee works towards clear objectives linked to higher-level goals and builds individual skills needed for the performance of individual job duties.

Through the improvement of each individual employee, work units and components become higher-performing organizations that enable DHS to achieve its primary mission.

Referred to as “line of sight”, this helps align everyone to make his or her greatest contribution to mission success.



For the Program to be successful there must be continual dialogue and collaboration between you and your supervisor throughout the Performance Management Cycle.

Supervisors will share performance information, engage in two-way discussions to clarify expectations and provide feedback and coaching to help you be successful. You will be an active participant in these discussions.

Throughout the process, you should:

- Propose ideas for annual goals.
- Provide input during your progress reviews.
- Participate in coaching conversations to improve your performance.
- Provide comments regarding key results and accomplishments for your annual appraisal.

YOUR ROLE IN THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

You play an active role in managing your own performance and personal development. Your supervisor will provide direction in setting performance goals and will support your personal development.

Your Primary Responsibilities Include

- Performing in a manner that meets the performance expectations that are established during the performance planning period.
- Drafting your Achieving Results (Performance Goals) (the “what” that you are expected to do) and understanding the Core Competencies (the “how” you do what you do) at the beginning of the Performance Management Cycle.
- Making sure that you understand what your individual goals mean and how they link to higher-level goals.
- Ensuring you have a clear understanding of the performance expectations for the rating cycle.
 - Understanding what success and failure look like.
 - Understanding how you are assessed against your goals and the target score you are expected to meet.
- Being open to new processes and procedures for developing new skills.
- Providing comments on your progress for the mid-year review and for your annual appraisal.
- Meeting with your supervisor throughout the rating period and at the end of the Performance Management Cycle to discuss your overall performance.

YOUR SUPERVISOR'S ROLE IN THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Your Supervisor's Primary Responsibilities Include

- Establishing individual performance plans and creating a working culture and environment that promotes high-performance.
- Communicating performance expectations clearly and holding employees accountable for achieving them, monitoring employees' performance and providing feedback, developing employees, making meaningful distinctions among employees based on performance and fostering and rewarding excellent performance.
- Reviewing, developing and modifying your Achieving Results (Performance Goals) with you.
- Meeting with you to finalize your performance plan.
- Clarifying the linkage between your individual goals and DHS strategic goals, component goals and work unit goals.
- Ensuring consistency with plans established for similar positions within their jurisdiction and conformity with organizational goals.
- Ensuring that you understand how you will be assessed against your performance plan and the target score you are expected to meet.
- Ensuring that you understand what success and failure look like—the Summary Ratings given at the end of the performance cycle.
- Providing ongoing feedback and coaching to help you meet your Performance Goals.
- Conducting progress reviews (including mid-year and quarterly reviews), and preparing interim evaluations and ratings of record in support of Management Directive 3181, "Performance Management".
- Meeting with you at the end of the performance cycle to discuss overall performance.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

What Are They

Performance expectations describe “what” and “how” work will be accomplished and “how” the accomplishments will be measured. Performance expectations may take the following form:

- Goals that set general or specific performance targets at the individual, team, and/or organizational level.
- Organizational, occupational, or other work requirements, such as standard operating procedures, operating instructions, administrative manuals, internal rules and MDs, and/or other instructions that are generally applicable and available to the employee.
- A particular work assignment, including expectations regarding the quality, quantity, accuracy, timeliness, cost effectiveness, and/or other expected characteristics of the completed assignment.
- Competencies an employee is expected to demonstrate on the job, and or the contributions an employee is expected to make.

The Program adopts performance expectations that balance competency measures and achieving results. The DHS competency model has six pre-established core competencies for all employees (plus two additional competencies for supervisors and managers) that supervisors will use in appraising performance. The core competencies for DHS employees are:

- Achieving Results (Performance Goals)
- Technical proficiency
- Customer service (except for positions in the 1811 and 1896 series)
- Teamwork/cooperation
- Communications
- Representing the agency
- Assigning, monitoring and evaluating work (supervisors and managers only)
- Leadership (supervisors and managers only)

The first core competency “Achieving Results (Performance Goals)” is the results-based portion of the rating. It accounts for 60% of the annual rating of record. It ensures that the DHS Performance Management Program focuses on results.

- Performance goals are the “what” that you are expected to accomplish.
- Only one goal is required but three to five goals are recommended for a rating cycle.
- Each goal will be written with performance standards at the “Achieved Expectations” and the “Achieved Excellence” levels. These performance standards are used to evaluate progress in achieving the goals.
- Goals are flexible and can be changed dependent upon the needs of the Department, component or work unit up to 90 days prior to the end of the rating cycle.
- The minimum time for you to be under an approved performance plan and receive a rating of record is 90 days.

The five additional core competencies (seven core competencies for supervisors and managers) shown above account for the remaining 40% of the annual rating of record.

- These competencies focus on rating your work behaviors, or “how” you accomplish your work.
- The Department has established these competencies and their associated Department-wide performance standards based on the type of job performed (professional or technical) and the level of work (grade) at the “Achieved Expectations” and “Achieved Excellence” level.
 - These standards will be used to evaluate your performance on each of the remaining five (seven for supervisors and managers) core competencies.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CONVERSATIONS: PERFORMANCE PLANNING

What It Is

The performance planning conversation is the first formal meeting—in an ongoing series of formal and informal conversations (coaching and feedback)—where you and your supervisor set your annual goals.

You should prepare for the performance planning discussion with your supervisor by:

- Reviewing your component and work unit goals.
- Developing your 3 to 5 Achieving Results (Performance Goals) prior to the performance planning discussion. (These draft goals will be written at two rating levels - Achieved Expectations and Achieved Excellence)
- Reviewing the five additional core competencies that will comprise the remainder of your performance plan
- Meeting with your supervisor to discuss and refine the draft goals and confirm your understanding of the goals

How to Do It

The key to an effective performance planning discussion is planning and collaboration. Review your draft goals. Identify the critical actions. Note areas that require clarification or which have assumptions/dependencies.

During the performance planning discussion, you and your supervisor will:

- Discuss performance goals and requirements for success, that is, assumptions/dependencies, such as budget, timeframes, and so on.
- Identify and discuss any other goals that may be necessary.
- Discuss the linkage of your goals to higher-level goals.
- Decide if you will develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP). An IDP is an optional part of the DHS Performance Management Program showing your short and long term developmental interests both behaviorally and technically.
- Discuss performance levels—Summary Rating Levels:
 - Level 4-Achieved Excellence.
 - Level 3-Exceeded Expectations.
 - Level 2-Achieved Expectations.
 - Level 0-Unacceptable.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CONVERSATIONS: MID-YEAR REVIEW

What It Is

Good performance management is a continuous reinforcing process. You and your supervisor should discuss your progress throughout the rating cycle.

A mid-year progress review is a formal, documented discussion between you and your supervisor about your performance to date, as compared to the performance expectations set forth in your performance plan.

Supervisors are required to conduct mid-year reviews with all employees covered by the DHS Performance Management Program. This review occurs at the mid-point of the rating cycle and focuses on performance during the first half of the rating cycle. Goals and expectations may be reviewed and changed, if necessary.

The mid-year review does not result in a rating of record and no summary rating of overall performance is assigned.

Having this discussion reduces the potential for “surprises” during the annual appraisal.

How to Do It

Mid-year performance review conversations are enhanced by planning and collaboration.

Before the mid-year review, you should:

- Provide comments on your key results and accomplishments.
- Identify sources of feedback, in addition to your supervisor, on your exhibition of competency proficiency.
- Request feedback from agreed-upon sources and forward to supervisor.
- Identify questions and concerns to discuss with your supervisor.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CONVERSATIONS: ANNUAL APPRAISAL

What It Is

Your supervisor will meet with you at the end of the rating cycle in a formal meeting to discuss your key results and accomplishments (Achieving Results - Performance Goals) from your performance plan.

The annual appraisal is the annual review and evaluation of your performance.

The basis for your annual appraisal is your success at accomplishing your established goals and how you exhibit the core competencies of the DHS Performance Management Program.

Your supervisor must complete your rating of record within 30 days after the end of the appraisal period.

How to Do It

Planning and collaboration enhance the effectiveness of the performance appraisal discussion.

Before the annual appraisal, you should:

- Provide comments on your key results and accomplishments.
- Collect core competency feedback from agreed-upon sources and forward to your supervisor.
- Identify performance successes above Level 2, Achieved Expectations and highlight achievements in the face of negative conditions.
- List any shortfalls in performance caused by barriers to performance or extraordinary circumstances, which negatively affected success.
- Identify questions and concerns to discuss with your supervisor.

SEEKING COACHING AND FEEDBACK

What It Is

Coaching is an ongoing series of actions—formal and informal, planned and spontaneous—that managers, supervisors and team members take to help people they work with learn and develop. The majority of these actions are informal. However, coaching takes place in all of the three formal conversations (performance planning, mid-year review and annual appraisal) as well.

Coaching helps to build individual capability leading to improved results. Your supervisor will provide ongoing coaching to ensure your success. This will primarily take the form of providing feedback and acting as a “sounding board” to help you think through alternatives. It is also your responsibility to seek feedback and coaching when faced with new or challenging situations.

There are three types of coaching and feedback:

- “Reinforcing Feedback” is used to:
 - Increase the likelihood of future use of an observed, positive skill or behavior.
 - Describe individual contributions to component and work unit successes.
 - Describe the degree individual progress is being made toward desired outcomes.
 - Express appreciation.
- “Developmental Feedback” is used to:
 - Change behavior in a positive direction or improve a skill level.
 - Communicate and resolve potential roadblocks in performance.
 - Redirect actions and behaviors towards expectations.
 - Foster a shared understanding of expectations.
- “Thinking Partner Coaching” is used to:
 - Help others discover or arrive at their own analysis of organizational issues.
 - Provide a sounding board for alternate approaches and ideas.
 - Offer an opportunity to reflect on experiences and identify lessons learned.
 - Deepen a person’s awareness of their current behavior and its motivators; uncovering beliefs and assumptions.

How to Receive Feedback

Some of the feedback you receive will be positive and reinforcing. Other feedback will be developmental and will identify things that you can do differently or better. How you receive feedback will determine how effective that feedback is for you.

- Listen first. Do not react!
- Do not be afraid to ask your supervisor how you are doing. You want to know what you are doing well and areas where you can improve.

When you receive feedback about:

What you are doing well – take time to consider how you can apply what is working to your other responsibilities.

Areas for Improvement – try not to be defensive. Instead, ask for specific examples of how you need to improve and clarify any questions and concerns you may have.

- Take a moment to note the outcome of your feedback so you have a record of it and you can use the information later when preparing for your annual appraisal.
- Summarize the feedback to ensure your understanding

For example, “Let me make sure I understand. When someone accuses me of forgetting to do something, you do not want me to try to prove him/her wrong. Instead, you want me to focus on how we can provide what the person needs. Is that right?”

- Recognize the intent of the feedback. Feedback provided to help you succeed is a gift.
- Thank the person for taking the time (and risk) to provide feedback.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

What Is Available

Performance Management website at

<https://dhsonline.dhs.gov/portal/jhtml/dc/sf.jhtml?doid=31393>

Employee Job Aids available on the PM website

Performance Management Directive MD 3181 available on the PM website

Making Performance Management Work for You - computer-based training module (Contact your component's Training POC)

DHS ePerformance tool

Competencies and Performance Standards at

<https://dhsonline.dhs.gov/portal/jhtml/dc/sf.jhtml?doid=95805>