

Chapter 6: Performance Management

*Administrative/HR Manual for Virginia Local Departments of Social Services
(LDSS)*

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PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

POLICY STATEMENT

The State Board of Social Services to establishes performance management policies for Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) to ensure employees are given the resources they need to develop, the recognition they deserve to be motivated, and the accountability to know what is expected so they may actively aid in the improvement of organizational efficiency and service. [§§ 63.2-217](#) and [63.2-219](#) of the Code of Virginia, and [§ 22VAC40-675-170](#) of the Administrative Code of Virginia serve as the basis for this policy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time employees of Non-Deviating (ND) LDSS or Partially Deviating (PD) LDSS.

Additional Information:

Per [§ 22VAC40-675-50](#) of the Administrative Code of Virginia, in local jurisdictions where there is a performance evaluation policy or probationary period policy that applies uniformly to all local government employees, the local department of social services may deviate to either one or both of the locality policies, provided the deviation is approved by the [VDSS HR Policy Team](#) (hr.employeerelations@dss.virginia.gov) as being in substantial conformity with this policy.

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SECTION I: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CYCLE

THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CYCLE

Performance management helps employees enhance their job performance through continuous feedback, coaching, and assessment tools. Although performance reviews are usually conducted annually, they reflect ongoing performance management throughout the year.

The Performance Management Cycle has three phases: Plan, Perform & Monitor, and Evaluate. Each phase considers the department's mission, business goals, and the employee's career growth and development needs. Both the supervisor and the employee have specific responsibilities in each phase.

LDSS EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE PLAN & EVALUATION (EPPE)

The [LDSS Employee Performance Plan and Evaluation \(EPPE\)](#) is the main tool for the Performance Management Cycle. The performance plan is in “Part II” of the EPPE and includes the job description and qualifications, the core/essential responsibilities, weights, and performance measures, and the development plan. For a sample EPPE, see [Appendix 6.2](#). For more information on job descriptions in the recruitment process, see **Chapter 3** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#).



Helpful Hints: Getting the Most out of the EPPE

At a minimum, the **EPPE** is written or reviewed by the supervisor and the employee shortly after they are hired or at the beginning of a new evaluation cycle to determine work plans and development needs. However, it is a best practice for supervisors to review it on a regular basis to ensure performance expectations are clear and to make updates or changes, as necessary.

Set specific, measurable, performance-based objectives and expectations, and make sure the employee has a clear understanding what results, actions, and behaviors are necessary to be successful in the position.

PHASE I – PLAN

The performance management cycle begins with the performance planning phase. During this phase, both the supervisor and employee should work together to complete the EPPE.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Inform the employee(s) that performance management planning starts before creating or revising the EPPE.
2. Provide the employee with a copy so he/she may offer feedback, especially on the development plan.
3. Set a deadline for the employee to return feedback, learning goals, or training/education requests.

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4. Complete the [EPPE](#) using the [LDSS Employee Performance Plan & Evaluation Instructions](#), incorporating employee feedback and development requests. See [Appendix 6.2](#) for a sample EPPE.

To complete the EPPE:

1. Create or modify the Core/Essential Responsibilities column for the position and any tasks that may fall under these responsibilities. Add special assignments as needed; these are specific job duties or projects that typically do not extend beyond one performance cycle.
2. Create or modify the Performance Measures for each Core/Essential Responsibility.
3. Add a percentage weight to each Core/Essential Responsibility. Prioritize responsibilities based on their importance to the agency mission and the work unit.
4. Create or modify the Development Plan. This includes learning goals identified by the employee or supervisor, such as in-service training, cross-training, education, licensure, certification, or other learning methods.

Note: The Development Plan helps the employee and supervisor organize and strategically manage the employee's learning and development related to his/her role. Inability to reach learning goals or milestones on the Development Plan is not considered when determining the employee's performance evaluation rating.

Once complete, send the EPPE(s) to the reviewer for approval and signature. Meet with each employee to thoroughly review the plan, highlighting any changes in responsibility or new special assignments. If necessary, explain why any feedback or development requests could not be accommodated.

Obtain employee signatures on each plan, provide each employee with a copy, and place the signed original in his/her confidential general employee files. See **Chapter 8** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#) for more information on the general employee file.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Read the EPPE, and actively engage in the supervisor's request for feedback, learning goals, training/education requests, or any other resources or tools needed to complete the responsibilities and duties outlined in the plan.
2. Provide feedback by the requested deadline; if the deadline cannot be met, submit a request for additional time. However, the supervisor may deny the request if it is not submitted promptly or for an appropriate reason.
3. Attend and participate in meetings with the supervisor related to performance planning. Ask clarifying questions as needed to fully understand the performance plan.
4. Sign the performance plan and keep the employee copy.



Helpful Hints: Effective Employee Development Plans

By working together, the employee and supervisor can maximize the EPPE and achieve real results. Create S.M.A.R.T. goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. Here's some information to help you get started:

Questions for the Employee and Supervisor to Consider:

- ◆ What are my long-term goals with the agency? Where do I see myself in 2-5 years?
- ◆ What are our agency and team goals for the year? How can I contribute?
- ◆ What skills or additional education do I need to acquire or improve to meet both short- and long-term goals? How will I get these skills or the necessary education?
- ◆ Does the budget allow for what's needed? Is time available, or is the timing right?
- ◆ Are my goals realistic?
- ◆ How will we measure success?

Treat this plan as a living document, updating it regularly. Plan on meeting regularly to gauge progress toward the goals.

Be Flexible:

- ◆ If an employee can't meet a goal, consider adjusting the goal or moving the completion date. If the employee meets the goals early, great job! Set additional goals if time permits.
- ◆ Budget or time constraints? Consider alternatives. For example, if an in-person, out-of-state training program is too expensive, look for virtual or local courses, or see if the training can be done in-house.

Need additional help? Contact the [VDSS Local HR Support Team](#) to make this plan work for you!

PERFORMANCE PLANNING FOR LOCAL DIRECTORS

The locality Board of Supervisors/City Council or local board of social services structure determines who completes the performance plan and the performance evaluation for the local director.

1. If the locality has appointed an administrative board, the local board chair prepares the performance plan and completes the performance evaluation.

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2. If the locality has appointed an advisory board, the administrative entity prepares the performance plan and completes the performance evaluation.
3. If the locality has appointed an advisory board and the local director is the administrative entity, the locality Board of Supervisors/City Council or designee determines who will prepare the performance plan and complete the performance evaluation.

Follow the supervisor/employee responsibilities under the [Plan Phase](#), including giving the local director advance notice and the ability to provide feedback and learning objectives. The local director should meet deadlines and fully understand the duties, responsibilities, and performance objectives set forth in the plan.

Performance plans and evaluations for local directors are completed in collaboration with the [VDSS Regional Directors](#) from the Local Engagement and Support Division. All required signatures should be obtained. Provide the local director with a copy before placing the original in the local director's employee file.

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Helpful Hints: Responsibilities, Measures, & Weights

Spending time upfront to make these key elements clear and thorough will simplify the latter phases of the Performance Management Cycle. Here's how to optimize these essential areas of the performance plan.

Core/Essential Responsibilities:

- ◆ These are the functions or duties the employee must perform. Functions may be essential if the position was created to perform the function/duty, there are few employees available to perform it, or the function/duty is highly specialized.
- ◆ Core/essential responsibilities typically do not change over time. It's recommended to have no fewer than four (4) and no more than nine (9).

Performance Measures:

- ◆ Measures can be either *qualitative* or *quantitative*.
 - **Qualitative:** Assess the quality of performance – the standard or degree of excellence.
 - **Quantitative:** Assign a number to what's being assessed, such as dollars saved, cases closed, days for completion, items processed, etc.
- ◆ Use S.M.A.R.T. measures: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. S.M.A.R.T. measures make performance expectations clear.

Weights:

- ◆ Core/essential responsibilities may have equal or varying weights based on their critical nature. They are represented as a percentage, with the total equaling 100%.

Changes?

- ◆ Discuss any changes in the performance plan with employees ahead of presentation to prevent surprises and enhance understanding of performance expectations.

Need additional help? Contact the [VDSS Local HR Support Team](#).

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PHASE II – PERFORM & MONITOR

The Perform & Monitor Phase of the Performance Management Cycle is the longest of the three phases. It starts immediately after the supervisor presents and delivers the final [EPPE](#) performance and development plans to the employee and ends when the supervisor delivers the employee's performance evaluation. During this phase, work performance and performance monitoring occur simultaneously.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The supervisor is responsible for monitoring employee work performance and providing consistent feedback and coaching throughout this phase. Each LDSS may determine its own schedule for providing feedback and coaching, if consistent feedback is maintained. See "[Helpful Hints - Feedback and Coaching](#)" for more information on providing feedback and coaching to employees.

Feedback

There are two types of feedback: informal and formal. Supervisors should provide both types of feedback to employees and be receptive to employee feedback.

1. **Informal Feedback:** Informal feedback can be given at any time and can be either verbal or written. Types of written informal feedback include notes taken by a supervisor related to an employee interaction or conversation or a counseling memorandum. Any documentation is maintained in the supervisor's confidential file and used to complete the Evaluation Phase of the Performance Management Cycle. See **Chapter 8** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#) for more information on the supervisor's file.
2. **Formal Feedback:** Formal feedback must be documented, and original copies must be maintained in the confidential general employee file. All notices issued must be approved and signed by the reviewer, and the employee must receive a copy of the formal feedback documentation. Formal notices related to performance management include written notices for extraordinary or substandard performance, formal employee recognition, performance improvement plans, or interim evaluations resulting from a written notice. Contact the [VDSS HR Employee Relations Team](#) (hr.employeerelations@dss.virginia.gov) when considering formal feedback related to substandard work performance or behavioral issues. Formal notices related to behavioral issues are discussed in **Chapter 7** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#).
3. **Receiving Feedback from Employees:** Employees are encouraged to provide feedback to their supervisors about their responsibilities, performance and development plans, and the tools and resources needed to perform more effectively. It is the supervisor's responsibility to listen and be receptive to this feedback. See "[Helpful Hints – Effective Employee Development Plans](#)" for more information on working with employees to meet their performance and development goals.

Coaching

Schedule regular coaching sessions, using the [EPPE](#) performance and development plans as a discussion guide.

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When providing coaching to address an employee's performance:

1. Observe the employee's work to inform coaching and provide relevant feedback.
2. Review the employee's work products and results.
3. Update or amend the employee's EPPE performance and development plans as necessary.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

During the Perform & Monitor Phase, employees are primarily responsible for performing their assigned duties based on the agreed-upon expectations outlined in the performance plan. It is also recommended that employees document their own performance and accomplishments throughout this phase.

Feedback

When receiving feedback *from* a supervisor, be receptive and respectful, offer feedback and solutions, and maintain all feedback records received from the supervisor. When providing feedback *to* a supervisor, be respectful and courteous, provide specific examples, and request the tools and resources needed to succeed.

Coaching

Employees are responsible for attending, preparing for, and being engaged in all coaching sessions. The employee should keep his/her copy of the [EPPE](#) performance and development plans and bring it to each session. Employees are free to recommend discussion topics or changes to their plans.

Ineffective or Lacking Feedback or Coaching

Employees who believe that their developmental needs are not being met should first attempt to address their concerns with their supervisor. If this is not possible or was ineffective, employees should seek assistance from the next level of leadership within their agency. If these attempts fail or if there is a reason they cannot address their concerns within their agency, employees may reach out to the [VDSS HR Employee Relations Team](#) (hr.employeerelations@dss.virginia.gov) for assistance.

PERFORM & MONITOR FOR LOCAL DIRECTORS

The assigned [VDSS Regional Director](#) from the Local Engagement and Support Division (LES) should provide timely and effective feedback and coaching to the local director, collaborating with the local board. If the locality has an advisory board and the local director is the administrative entity (when the local director is acting as the local board), the regional director should collaborate with the party responsible for preparing the performance plan and evaluation, as determined by the locality Board of Supervisors/City Council or designee.

Follow the supervisor/employee responsibilities outlined in the [Perform & Monitor Phase](#). If a local director believes that his/her developmental needs are not being met, the director should address all concerns directly with the assigned regional director. If this is not possible or ineffective, the local director should then address the concerns with the local board or the next level of leadership in the [VDSS Local Engagement and Support Division](#). If there is no response or an articulable reason the concerns cannot be addressed with the board or LES, the local director may reach out to the VDSS HR Employee Relations Team for assistance.



Helpful Hints: Feedback & Coaching

Feedback provides an employee with information on current or past behavior, while coaching focuses on improving future performance or outcomes. Let's take a closer look –

Feedback:

- ◆ Provides an employee with information on current or past behavior.
- ◆ The focus of feedback can be either positive or corrective.
 - Positive feedback expresses appreciation for actions or behaviors the employee should continue.
 - Corrective feedback is constructive and expresses a need for the employee to adjust behaviors or actions.
- ◆ Informal and formal feedback are clear and specific.
 - As discussed earlier in the chapter, informal feedback can be delivered verbally or in writing. When verbal, it is typically given 'in the moment,' and is more casual or conversational in nature. Here are some examples:
 - Example 1: Taylor, your clients were very upset when they came in, and I was impressed with how you handled it. You remained calm and made use of open-ended questions to get a better understanding of their problem. You deescalated the situation quickly and met their needs. Great work!*
 - Example 2: Alex, I noticed that I didn't get your monthly report by the deadline. I know you've got a lot on your plate, and you mentioned that you forgot to send it. One way you can prevent this from happening in the future is to set a reminder in your calendar. This is a good way to help you stay on top of all your tasks.*
 - See [Appendices 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4](#) for examples of formal feedback.

Coaching:

- ◆ Helps to *prepare* the employee to gain skill, develop behaviors, or reach goals for the future.
- ◆ To be successful, coaching must be scheduled regularly and organized thoughtfully.
 - Both the supervisor and employee should have a copy of the employee's performance and development plans.
 - Use the time to discuss progress on the employee's goals and objectives, refine the employee's plan as needed, identify any barriers to progress, and brainstorm opportunities for continued growth and development.

Need help with either of these areas? Contact the [VDSS Local HR Support Team](#) to get the most out of these tools!

PHASE III: EVALUATE

The first two phases of the Performance Management Cycle are complete. The work done in these phases assists both the employee and the supervisor with the final step, the performance evaluation. During the Evaluate Phase, an employee's performance is assessed against the performance measures and expectations set for his/her core responsibilities, essential functions, and special assignments. This phase requires the use of several parts of the [EPPE](#): Part V – Performance Evaluation; Part VI – Other Significant Results for the Evaluation Period; Part VII – Overall Performance Rating; and Part VIII – Review/Acknowledgement of Performance Evaluation.

An employee's overall performance rating must not be reduced due to the use of overtime/compensatory leave, special duty leave, leave in relation to worker's compensation, military leave, or Family and Medical Leave, or the inability to achieve milestones or timeframes set in the employee's development plan.

Note: This section includes the evaluation process for both probationary and conditional status employees. For more information, see [Section IV, "Probationary Period & Conditional Status."](#)

ANNUAL EVALUATION REQUIRED

All employees must undergo an annual performance evaluation¹. Each employee will have an established performance evaluation date, chosen by the LDSS using one (1) of the following options:

1. For employees who have completed the probationary period successfully, the end date of the probationary status will be the annual performance evaluation date.
2. For employees who have successfully completed the conditional status period after a change in classification, the date of the classification change will be the annual performance evaluation date.
3. For all regular, restricted status, or permanent employees, the anniversary or evaluation date will be the annual performance evaluation date.
4. For local departments that opt to evaluate all employees annually at the same time, regardless of individual anniversary or evaluation dates, all permanent employees and those who have who have completed the probationary or conditional status period will receive interim evaluations until all employees can be evaluated simultaneously each year.

The annual performance evaluation is conducted at least one (1) month before the annual evaluation date, except in cases of extenuating circumstances result in a delay.

EVALUATION OF LDSS EMPLOYEES

Self-Evaluation

The LDSS may offer employees the opportunity to complete a self-evaluation, which is strongly encouraged. Employees can use Part V of the EPPE (Performance Evaluation) for this purpose.

¹ [§ 22VAC40-675-170](#)

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Provide employees with at least two weeks' notice to prepare and submit the self-evaluation to supervisors. The LDSS is not required to accept self-evaluations received after the specified deadline. For more information, see "[Helpful Hints – Savvy Self-Evaluations](#)."

Completing the Performance Evaluation*Preparation*

Begin by reviewing all the documentation completed and collected during the Plan Phase and the Perform & Monitor Phase of the Performance Management Cycle for each employee in the reporting chain. If applicable, the supervisor may also review each employee's self-evaluation. Complete Part V of the [EPPE](#) (Performance Evaluation) for each employee. Provide a rating for each performance measure and provide an overall performance rating. The LDSS should develop a method for determining an overall rating to ensure consistency among all employees. Refer to the [LDSS Performance Plan & Evaluation Instructions](#) for guidance on establishing a method.

1. Any rating other than "Meets Expectations" for any core/essential responsibility should be supported with supervisor comments.
2. A "Needs Improvement" rating for any core/essential responsibility should also include recommendations for improvement.
3. An overall rating of "Outstanding" overall rating should be supported by an Acknowledgment of Outstanding Contribution.
4. An overall rating of "Needs Improvement" should be supported by counseling memoranda, written notices based on the standards of conduct, notices of improvement needed, or documentation from performance coaching. A formal Performance Improvement Plan should be issued to the employee. Refer to [Section III, "Performance Improvement,"](#) for details.

The supervisor submits the completed performance evaluation, including any comments and recommendations, to the reviewer for approval and signature. The reviewer may make comments or change the recommendations of the supervisor. Do not present the performance evaluation to the employee until it has been approved and signed by the reviewer.

Delivery

The supervisor should meet with the employee to review the performance evaluation. The employee may request additional time to provide comments and sign the evaluation. If the employee chooses not to sign, note this on the evaluation. Refusal to sign does not affect the evaluation's validity. The evaluation becomes part of the employee's confidential general employee file after the meeting.

The employee receives a copy of the signed evaluation. Information in the evaluation is confidential and can only be accessed by authorized personnel without the employee's written consent. See **Chapter 8** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#) for more details.

APPEAL OF A PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

An employee who disagrees with the performance evaluation may appeal to the reviewer. The appeal process is as follows:

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1. The employee may submit a written appeal to the reviewer within ten (10) workdays of the evaluation meeting.
2. The reviewer will discuss the appeal with the employee and the supervisor.
3. The reviewer provides a written response to the appeal within five (5) workdays of the discussion.
4. The response must indicate one (1) of the following:
 - a. Agreement with the evaluation as written.
 - b. A decision for the supervisor to revise the evaluation.
 - c. A decision for the reviewer to revise the evaluation.
 - d. A decision for the reviewer to conduct a new evaluation.

Probationary employees do not have access to the grievance procedure and cannot request an appeal. See [Section IV, "Probationary Period & Conditional Status,"](#) for more information.

INTERIM EVALUATIONS

When Interim Evaluations are Required

Interim evaluations are required in the following situations and must be completed six (6) months into the performance evaluation cycle, in the same manner as the annual evaluation:

1. **Newly Hired or Rehired Employees:** Complete an interim evaluation for employees serving a twelve (12) month probationary period. An annual performance evaluation must be conducted in the eleventh (11th) month, no later than two (2) weeks before the end of the probationary period, unless a delay is justified.
2. **Employees with Changed Status or Classification:** Complete an interim evaluation for employees who have completed probation and have been promoted, demoted, redefined, or had a change in classification, requiring a twelve (12) month conditional status period. An annual performance evaluation must be conducted in the eleventh (11th) month, no later than two (2) weeks before the end of the conditional status period, unless a delay is justified. These employees retain their grievance rights.

Probationary or conditional status employees will achieve regular or restricted status if both the interim evaluation and the annual evaluation have an overall rating of "Meets Expectations" or above. See Section IV, "Probationary Period & Conditional Status," for more information. Also, see [Section III, "Performance Improvement,"](#) for further instructions on employees who receive an overall rating of "Needs Improvement" on an interim evaluation.

When Interim Evaluations are Optional

Interim evaluations are recommended for all employees but are not required unless they meet the criteria described above. If an LDSS chooses to complete them for all employees, interim evaluations are conducted six (6) months into the performance evaluation cycle. They follow the same process as annual evaluations, with one exception: an interim evaluation is kept in the general employee file only if it supports an annual evaluation, is part of a Written Notice, or contributes to an end-of-probationary or conditional status evaluation. Otherwise, it is placed in the confidential supervisor's file.

Appeal of an Interim Evaluation

The LDSS follows the same process for the [appeal of a performance evaluation](#).

EVALUATION OF LOCAL DIRECTORS

Annual Evaluations

The annual performance evaluation for the local director follows the same process as for all other local department employees. The party responsible for preparing the performance plan and evaluation collaborates with the assigned [VDSS Regional Director](#) from the Local Engagement and Support Division.

Interim Evaluations

Directors with an original appointment must undergo a twelve (12) month probationary period. The party responsible for preparing the performance plan and evaluation completes the interim evaluation in collaboration with the assigned VDSS Regional Director from the Local Engagement and Support Division.

Interim evaluations are conducted six (6) months into the performance evaluation cycle and follow the same process as annual evaluations. An annual performance evaluation is conducted in the eleventh (11th) month, no later than two (2) weeks before the end of the probationary period, unless a delay is justified. Subsequently, directors must receive an annual performance evaluation. Local directors on probationary or conditional status will achieve regular or restricted status if both the interim evaluation and the annual evaluation have an overall rating of “Meets Expectations” or above.

Refer to [Section IV, “Probationary Period & Conditional Status,”](#) for more details. See [Section III, “Performance Improvement,”](#) for guidance on employees who receive an overall rating of “Needs Improvement” on an interim evaluation.

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Helpful Hints: Savvy Self-Evaluations

Why Do They Matter?

It can be tempting to reject the opportunity to complete a self-evaluation because it takes time to reflect on the work done during the year. However, there are several reasons why employees should embrace this practice.

- ◆ It helps employees feel engaged in the evaluation process.
- ◆ Reflecting on successes and accomplishments boosts confidence. It also helps supervisors remember events they may not have recorded, especially those managing several employees.
- ◆ It assists employees in identifying the types of training, coaching, tools, or resources they need to improve their performance. It also equips employees with the information needed to articulate their requests.

Making Self-Evaluations Easier:

Self-evaluations don't have to be a chore. Employees can use a few strategies to make self-evaluations easier:

- ◆ It's hard to remember accomplishments from several months ago. Complete a bi-weekly or monthly report based on the core responsibilities and performance measures in the performance plan, recording both successes and areas for improvement. This makes completing the self-evaluation quick and creates a tool for more engaging feedback and coaching sessions throughout the year.
- ◆ Keep a work calendar. Make 'appointments' for noteworthy meetings, assignments, projects, and training. This provides a record of data that allows employees to be specific about how they're meeting their goals and enables more accurate goal setting with their supervisor.

Need additional help? Contact the [VDSS Local HR Support Team](#) with questions about this topic!

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SECTION II: EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS & OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

IDENTIFYING HIGH PERFORMANCE

Supervisors are encouraged to recognize high performance through the [EPPE](#), which includes two (2) ratings: “Exceeds Expectations” and “Outstanding.” Consider the following definitions when evaluating whether an employee’s performance meets these standards.

EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

1. The employee consistently surpasses the core/essential responsibility measures established in the performance plan.
2. The employee consistently meets expectations and demonstrates significant innovation, initiative, or makes a major contribution to the agency.

Examples

- ◆ **Exceeds Expectations in One Area of the Evaluation:** An employee required to provide outside training four times annually exceeds expectations by conducting six sessions and increasing attendee participation through proactive outreach.
- ◆ **Exceeds Expectations as an Overall Rating:** An employee met or exceeded performance expectations across all core/essential responsibilities while also successfully completing a large special project to revise a training program, enhancing its effectiveness for agency use.

OUTSTANDING

In addition to exceeding expectations across most of all core/essential responsibilities, the employee demonstrates significant innovation, initiative, or makes a major contribution to the agency.

Example

- ◆ An employee receives a rating of “Exceeds Expectations” in 3 out of 5 core/essential responsibility categories while also successfully completing a two-year special project where he/she took the initiative to request approval to establish an outreach program as a response to an emerging community problem. After the second year, the program was evaluated, adopted as a permanent solution by the agency, and regularly offered to clients.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

Supervisors should maintain records of instances where an employee demonstrates performance that exceeds expectations. To assign an individual or overall rating of “Exceeds Expectations,” the supervisor should include supportive comments on the performance evaluation. Retain relevant documentation in the confidential supervisor’s file, as detailed in **Chapter 8** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#).

OUTSTANDING

Outstanding employee performance is documented on the [LDSS Acknowledgement of Outstanding Contribution form](#) (or agency-developed form), and supervisors are strongly encouraged to recognize the employee promptly after the performance occurs. Both the supervisor and reviewer sign the documentation, and it is provided to the employee. A copy of the documentation is retained in the supervisor’s confidential file until completion of the annual performance evaluation. If the employee receives an overall annual evaluation of “Outstanding,” the form must be attached to the annual evaluation to support the rating. Otherwise, it is kept in the confidential supervisor’s file as detailed in **Chapter 8** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#).

Note: Receipt of one or more Acknowledgement of Outstanding Contribution forms does not automatically guarantee an overall annual rating of “Outstanding.”



Helpful Hints: Supporting High Performers

- ◆ **Understand their goals.** Do they aim for higher positions and responsibilities, or prefer to excel as independent contributors and refine their skill sets? Maximize their development plans and provide consistent, constructive feedback. Identify opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- ◆ **Provide the tools and equipment necessary for their success.** Some employees are more vocal about their needs than others. Use feedback and coaching sessions to gather this information.
- ◆ **Provide autonomy.** High performers are typically self-starters; emphasize flexibility and be attentive to signs of burnout.
- ◆ **Avoid task overload.** Monitor workload levels, and don’t consistently rely on high performing employees to take on the least desirable tasks or tasks or assignments others fail to complete due to poor performance.

MERIT INCREASES

LDSSs are responsible for determining the overall performance evaluation rating for performance-based merit increases. Eligibility to receive a performance-based merit increase is based on an employee's ability to achieve the overall performance rating set by the LDSS. Employees who receive an overall performance rating of "Needs Improvement" or have active Standards of Conduct violations in the same performance evaluation cycle are not eligible for a merit increase.

The amount of leave taken may affect an employee's eligibility for merit increases during the performance evaluation cycle. For questions regarding the impact of leave on merit increases, consult with the [VDSS Local HR Support Team](#). Contact the [VDSS Classification & Compensation Team](#) (hr.class-comp@dss.virginia.gov) with questions related establishing criteria for performance-based merit increases.

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SECTION III: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

IDENTIFYING POOR & SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE

Employees may demonstrate performance that does not meet the expectations outlined in their performance plan. Supervisors should promptly identify instances of poor performance and address initial minor or marginal issues through performance counseling and coaching. Supervisors are encouraged to maintain detailed documentation of performance counseling/coaching related to poor performance.

Poor performance is defined as substandard when it:

1. Is significant, sustained, or repetitive at any point during the performance evaluation cycle.
2. Results from a “Needs Improvement” overall performance rating on an interim or annual performance evaluation.
3. Violates the Standards of Conduct.

Substandard performance must be addressed through a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). A PIP is documented on the [LDSS Performance Improvement Plan](#) form, signed by the employee, supervisor, and reviewer, and filed in the employee’s general employee file.

This chapter specifically addresses PIPs for performance-related issues, not behavioral concerns. Inappropriate behavior is covered in **Chapter 7** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#) in relation to the Standards of Conduct, while procedures for terminations based on any type of PIP are also detailed in Chapter 7.

An employee may receive a “Needs Improvement” rating for one or more individual core/essential responsibilities without receiving an overall performance rating of “Needs Improvement.” An employee may receive a “Needs Improvement” rating for specific core/essential responsibilities without receiving an overall “Needs Improvement” rating. In such cases, a formal PIP is not mandatory, but supervisors are encouraged to collaborate with the employee on an informal plan to improve those specific responsibilities.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Before implementing a PIP, make every effort to promptly address instances where an employee fails to meet the expectations specified in his/her performance plan. Support the PIP with documentation detailing previous attempts to improve performance. Attach a Notice of Improvement Form, Written Notice, or re-evaluation to the PIP.

When preparing a PIP:

1. Develop the PIP with input from the employee. The PIP may be drafted without employee input if the supervisor reasonably believes the employee's involvement would inappropriate or unproductive.
2. Provide a timeframe of 30 to a maximum of 180 days for the employee to improve performance.
3. Give the employee a copy of the PIP and all required supporting documentation (Notice of Improvement Form, Written Notice, or re-evaluation).
4. Retain the original copies of all documentation of substandard performance in the supervisor's file until after the completion of the evaluation or re-evaluation at the end of the probationary period, conditional status period, or performance evaluation cycle.
5. Unless extenuating circumstances cause a delay, ensure the PIP is:
 - a. Prepared and signed by the reviewer within ten (10) workdays.
 - b. Delivered to the employee within fifteen (15) workdays of the performance evaluation meeting where the employee received the overall rating of "Needs Improvement."
6. The timeframe for completing the PIP begins after the employee has reviewed, signed, and received his/her copy of the document.

RE-EVALUATION

A re-evaluation period is mandatory regardless of whether the employee appeals the initial performance evaluation. Employees are still subject to disciplinary action (i.e., written notice, etc.) and may also receive additional Notices of Improvement Needed. The performance re-evaluation review meeting should occur two (2) weeks before the period ends.

Any employee who receive an overall performance rating of "Needs Improvement" must receive a PIP and a new [EPPE](#), labeled "Re-Evaluation," even if the core/essential responsibilities or performance measures remain unchanged from the original plan. The supervisor must conduct a meeting with the employee to discuss strategies for achieving the performance measures during the re-evaluation period.

The re-evaluation process concludes if the employee transfers to another position or secures a new role, If the re-evaluation results in an overall rating of "Needs Improvement," the employee may face demotion or termination.

For questions about demotion or termination, contact the [VDSS HR Employee Relations Team](#) (hr.employeerelations@dss.virginia.gov).

RE-EVALUATION APPEAL

The LDSS follows the same process outlined for the [appeal of a performance evaluation](#).

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Helpful Hints: Delivering & Receiving a PIP

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is customized to address specific employee needs and, when implemented and received appropriately, can serve as a valuable tool for employee development.

Delivering the PIP:

- ◆ **Be Prepared:** Ensure you can articulate all aspects of the PIP clearly and be ready to address questions.
- ◆ **Be Prompt:** Deliver the PIP without delay, adhering to required timeframes.
- ◆ **Be Precise:** Ensure the employee leaves the meeting with a clear understanding of the goals, expectations, support from the supervisor, completion timelines, and potential consequences of not meeting goals.
- ◆ **Be Polite:** Recognize that receiving a PIP can be stressful for the employee. Be respectful, listen to their input or feedback, and refrain from using the PIP to threaten job security.

Receiving the PIP:

- ◆ **Be Open to the Process:** View the PIP as an investment in your success. Stay positive and open to receiving constructive feedback. Embrace the opportunity for personal and professional growth.
- ◆ **Be Clear on the Plan:** Ensure you fully comprehend the PIP, including its purpose, goals, meeting schedules for progress updates, timelines for completion, and potential consequences if goals are not achieved. Ask questions for clarification if needed.

Need additional help? Contact the [VDSS HR Employee Relations Team](#) (hr.employeerelations@dss.virginia.gov) for any questions regarding this topic!

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SECTION IV: PROBATIONARY & CONDITIONAL STATUS

PROBATIONARY STATUS

REQUIRED PROBATIONARY PERIOD

All new employees, employees hired from other local LDSS or the Virginia Department of Social Services, or employees re-employed following more than a thirty (30) day break in service must serve a probationary period.

1. Every employee newly hired by a LDSS must serve a twelve (12) month probationary period, beginning on the first day of employment.
2. To serve the LDSS's legitimate interests, the probationary period may be extended to eighteen (18) months under circumstances determined by agency leadership.
3. The probationary period must be extended for leaves of absence exceeding fourteen (14) calendar days, limited to an equivalent duration of the leave of absence.
4. Temporary employment does not count toward calculating the probationary period.

At-Will Employment

An employee in probationary status is employed on an at-will basis and has no expectation of continued employment beyond the probationary period. During this period, termination may occur for any reason, with or without notice or cause.

EXCEPTIONS, EXPECTATIONS, & BENEFITS DURING THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

No Right to Grievance Procedure

An employee does not have the right to use the grievance procedure during the probationary status period.

Evaluation

Employees should receive regular feedback and performance coaching throughout the probationary period and be aware of areas where improvement is required.

1. An [interim evaluation](#) is mandatory for all newly hired or rehired employees who must serve a twelve (12) month probationary period.
2. An annual performance evaluation is conducted in the eleventh (11th) month but must occur no later than two (2) weeks before the probationary period's end, unless justified by a delay in conducting the evaluation.

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3. A satisfactory evaluation results in the employee attaining regular or restricted status with the agency at the end of the twelve (12) month probationary period.
4. An unsatisfactory performance evaluation will likely result in the termination of the employee.

Benefits

An employee in probationary status enjoys the same benefits as non-probationary employees. These benefits may include participation in health plans, leave accrual, and retirement benefits.

CONCLUSION OF PROBATIONARY STATUS

Employees must receive notification when transitioning from probationary status to regular or restricted status. If termination is planned at the end of the probationary period, reasons for termination must be documented. It is strongly recommended that the LDSS consult with the [VDSS HR Employee Relations Team \(hr.employeerelations@dss.virginia.gov\)](mailto:hr.employeerelations@dss.virginia.gov) before beginning the termination process. For more details on employee termination, refer to **Chapter 7** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#).

CONDITIONAL STATUS

REQUIRED CONDITIONAL STATUS PERIOD

Like probationary status, conditional status involves a twelve (12) month evaluation period to assess employee performance. Employees are placed in conditional status when they:

1. Have successfully completed a twelve (12) month probationary period; and
2. Have been promoted, demoted, redefined, or otherwise experienced a change in classification.

EXPECTATIONS DURING THE CONDITIONAL PERIOD

Right to Grievance Procedure and Potential Pay Actions

It is important to note that employees in conditional status retain grievance rights and are not subject to the conditions listed under the “[At-Will Employment](#)” for probationary employees. There may also be potential pay actions associated with conditional status. Refer to **Chapter 2** of the [LDSS Administrative/HR Manual](#) for details.

Evaluation

Employees should receive regular feedback and performance coaching throughout the conditional period and be aware of areas where improvement is required.

1. An [interim evaluation](#) is mandatory for all newly hired or rehired employees who must serve a twelve (12) month conditional period.
2. An annual performance evaluation is conducted in the eleventh (11th) month but must occur no later than two (2) weeks before the conditional period's end, unless justified by a delay in conducting the evaluation.

3. A satisfactory evaluation results in the employee attaining regular or restricted status with the agency at the end of the twelve (12) month conditional period.
4. An unsatisfactory performance evaluation will likely result in the termination of the employee.

CONCLUSION OF CONDITIONAL STATUS

Employees must receive notification upon transitioning from conditional status to regular or restricted status. If an employee is unable to complete his/her conditional status period, it is recommended that the LDSS seek guidance from the [VDSS HR Employee Relations Team](mailto:hr.employeerelations@dss.virginia.gov) (hr.employeerelations@dss.virginia.gov).

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GLOSSARY

SECTION I: THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CYCLE

1. Anniversary Date: The annual day and month corresponding to the effective date of an employee's hire, rehire, promotion, demotion, redefinition, or other change in an employee's classification.
2. Annual Performance Evaluation: An annual assessment of an employee's performance of core responsibilities and performance measures.
3. Classification Change: A change in an employee's position classification resulting from a promotion, demotion, redefinition, or other change in an employee's employment classification.
4. Coaching: A performance management technique led by a supervisor or other subject matter expert, focused on preparing the employee to acquire skills, develop behaviors, or achieve future goals.
5. Core/Essential Responsibilities: Broad sets of major duties or functions that are primary to the type of work performed by an employee or must be performed to meet the business need for creating a position. These job responsibilities normally remain relatively consistent during the performance cycle.
6. Counseling Memorandum: A written summary of a discussion or meeting between a supervisor and an employee regarding misconduct, substandard performance, performance needing improvement or failure to meet expectations. The counseling memorandum is stored in the confidential supervisor's file.
7. Disciplinary Action: Action taken by a supervisor in response to an employee's conduct that violates the Standards of Conduct or policy, or to address substandard performance of work responsibilities.
8. Employee Development Plan: A component of "PART II – Performance Plan" within the LDSS Employee Performance Plan and Evaluation (EPPE). It lists personal learning goals identified by the employee or the supervisor for the performance evaluation cycle. The plan outlines steps, goals, and resources required, such as training, coaching, or other learning methods.
9. Employee Performance Plan and Evaluation (EPPE): An LDSS-specific instrument used to document and communicate the employee's annual performance plan, development plan, and evaluation. Parts I, II, III, and IV are prepared by the supervisor with input from the employee and reviewed with the employee at the beginning of the evaluation cycle. Parts V, VI, VII, and VIII are completed by the supervisor and reviewed with the employee at the end of the cycle. The form and its instructions are [accessible on FUSION](#).
10. Evaluation Date: The specific month and day each year when an employee's performance of core responsibilities and performance measures is assessed.
11. Feedback: A performance management technique that provides an employee with information on current or past behavior.
12. Interim Evaluation: An evaluation conducted six (6) months into the performance evaluation cycle to document and assess an employee's progress toward meeting performance measures.
13. Meets Expectations: A performance rating given when the employee consistently meets the core responsibility measures established in the performance plan.

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14. Merit Increase: An increase in compensation based on an employee's performance of job responsibilities at an overall performance rating of "Meets Expectations" or higher.
15. Needs Improvement: A performance rating given when the employee's performance is unsatisfactory because it either consistently does not meet or frequently fails to meet the core responsibility measures established in the performance plan.
16. Notice of Improvement Needed: An LDSS-specific form used to document substandard performance or performance that does not meet the performance measures recorded on the performance evaluation form. The form is [accessible on FUSION](#).
17. Overall Performance Rating: The comprehensive evaluation of an employee's performance during the Evaluate Phase of the Performance Management Cycle. The LDSS determines a standardized method for calculating this score for all agency employees. Examples of calculation methods are detailed in the [LDSS Performance Plan & Evaluation Instructions](#).
18. Performance Evaluation: A method used to assess an employee's performance of job responsibilities and performance measures. Typically conducted annually, it involves completing an evaluation form and holding a conference between the employee and supervisor to review the written performance assessment.
19. Performance Evaluation Appeal: An option available to employees who believe that their overall rating or individual performance factor ratings do not accurately reflect their work performance during the appraisal period. Probationary employees do not have access to the grievance procedure and are therefore unable to exercise this option.
20. Performance Management: The process of assisting employees in increasing, maintaining, or improving their job performance through continuous feedback, coaching, and tools for guidance and assessment.
21. Performance Management Cycle: A continuous improvement process comprising three phases: Plan, Perform & Monitor, and Evaluate, used for planning, checking, and measuring employee performance.
22. Performance Measures: Criteria used to evaluate each core/essential responsibility, special assignment, or agency objective listed in an employee's performance plan (Part II of the EPPE). Effective measures are formulated using Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely (S.M.A.R.T.) goals.
23. Performance Ratings: Scores assigned to individual core responsibilities or totaled to determine an overall score on a performance evaluation. There are four (4) approved ratings under the LDSS Employee Performance Plan and Evaluation (EPPE): "Outstanding," "Exceeds Expectations," "Meets Expectations," and "Needs Improvement."
24. Reviewer: The immediate supervisor of the employee's supervisor, responsible for reviewing the employee's work description, performance plan, performance rating, re-evaluation plan, and handling appeals of performance ratings. For local directors, this role may be fulfilled by their local board or the VDSS Regional Director when acting in place of the local board.
25. Self-Evaluation: An assessment conducted by an employee regarding his/her own work performance and capabilities. Employees may utilize Part V (Performance Evaluation) of the LDSS Employee Performance Plan and Evaluation (EPPE) for this purpose.

26. S.M.A.R.T. Goals: An acronym outlining criteria for setting effective goals and objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.
27. Special Assignments: Additional job duties or responsibilities that are temporary and not part of an employee's core responsibilities or essential functions. Typically, special assignments span a single performance management cycle.
28. Start Date: The specific date on which an employee commences employment in a particular position.
29. Supervisor: An employee responsible for overseeing and managing the performance of other employees. Supervisors develop work descriptions and performance plans, conduct performance evaluations and assessments, and determine performance ratings for their direct reports.
30. Weights: Refers to the relative importance assigned to each core/essential responsibility within a group of responsibilities outlined in an employee's performance plan (Part II of the EPPE). These weights are typically expressed as percentages, where the total adds up to 100%.
31. Written Notice: A formal notification documenting a disciplinary offense. Offenses are categorized into three levels of severity: Group I, Group II, and Group III. Written notices must be issued using the [LDSS Written Notice Form](#).

SECTION II: EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS & OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

1. Acknowledgement of Outstanding Contribution: Form used to document and recognize employee's outstanding contribution to the agency during the performance evaluation cycle.
2. High Performance: In the context of performance management and evaluation, high performance is defined as either exceeding expectations or being outstanding:
 - a. Exceeds Expectations: This rating is given when an employee either (1) consistently surpasses the core responsibility measures outlined in the performance plan, or (2) consistently meets expectations while demonstrating significant innovation, initiative, or making a major contribution to the agency.
 - b. Outstanding: This rating is given when an employee consistently exceeds expectations and demonstrates significant innovation, initiative, or makes a major contribution to the agency.

SECTION III: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

1. Performance Improvement: The process of identifying employees whose performance fails to meet the expectations specified in their performance plan and assisting them in improving over time. Immediate identification of poor performance is crucial, addressing first-time minor or marginal issues through performance counseling and coaching. Substandard performance must be formally addressed through a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).
2. Performance Improvement Plan (PIP): A plan developed by an employee's immediate supervisor to address substandard performance or standards of conduct violations. This plan can be implemented at any time during the performance evaluation cycle and is mandatory for any required re-evaluation plans developed after the annual performance evaluation.

3. Poor Performance: Performance that does not satisfactorily meet the expectations specified in the performance plan.
4. Re-Evaluation: A process initiated for employees who receive an overall performance rating of "Needs Improvement" during the annual performance evaluation. It begins with the formulation of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) within ten (10) days after the evaluation meeting. The process includes re-evaluating the employee's performance over a specific period, up to 180 days. The PIP requires approval from the reviewer before implementation and presentation to the employee.
5. Substandard Performance: Performance that goes beyond poor performance and is characterized by being significant, sustained, or repetitive throughout the performance evaluation cycle. Substandard performance may result from receiving a "Needs Improvement" overall performance rating on an interim or annual evaluation or from violations of the Standards of Conduct. When identified, substandard performance must be addressed through a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

SECTION IV: PROBATIONARY & CONDITIONAL STATUS

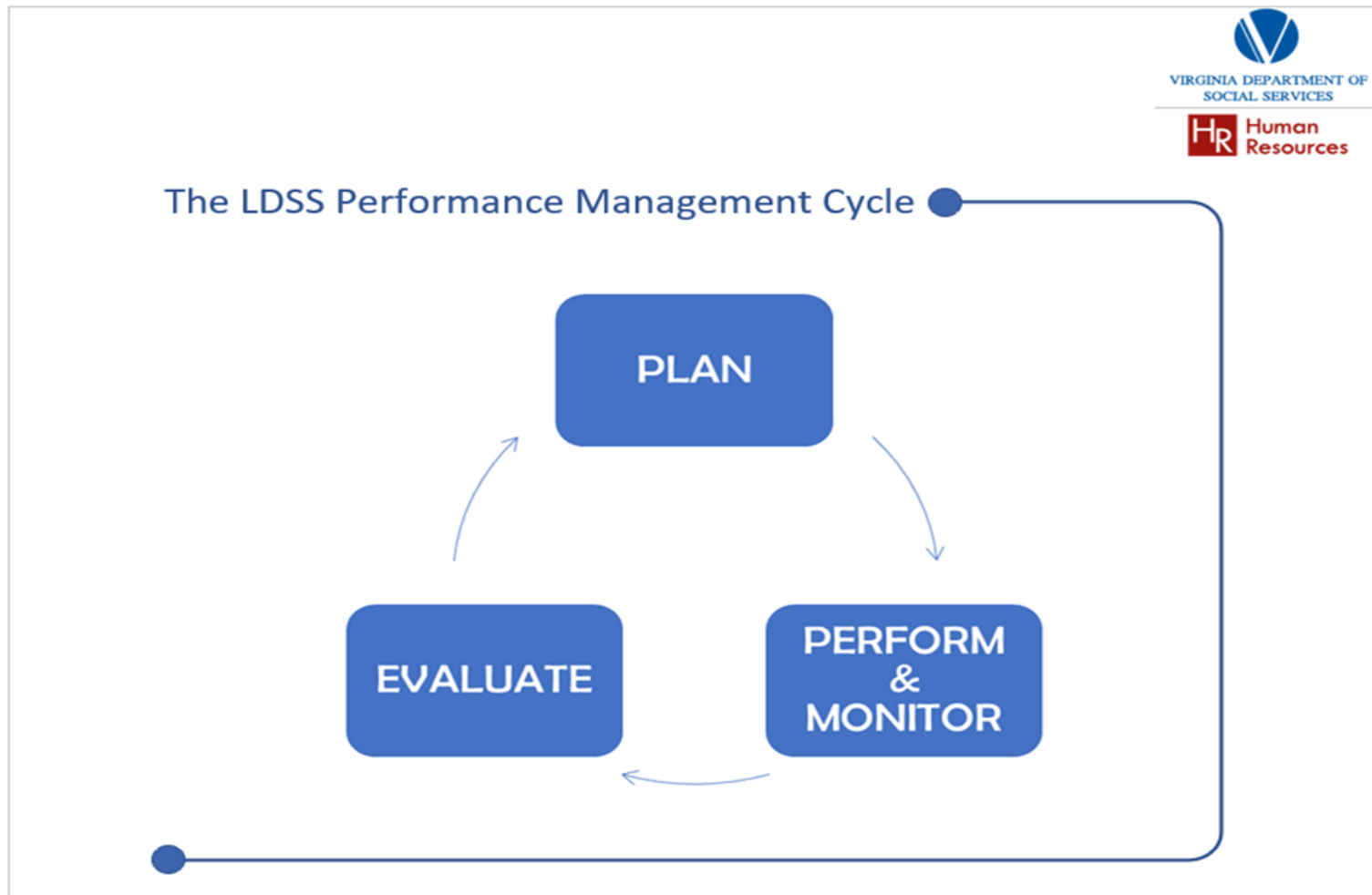
1. Conditional Status Period: A twelve (12) month period of evaluation to assess the performance of employees who have (a) successfully completed a twelve (12) month probationary period in a regular position and (b) have been promoted, demoted, redefined, or otherwise had a change in classification. These employees retain grievance rights.
2. Probationary Period: An initial, at-will period of employment lasting twelve (12) months, designed for assessing the employee's suitability for the position. It applies to all new hires, employees transferring from other local LDSS or the Virginia Department of Social Services, or those re-employed after more than a thirty (30) day break in service. During this period, employees do not have access to the grievance procedure.
3. Termination: The involuntary separation of an employee from employment.

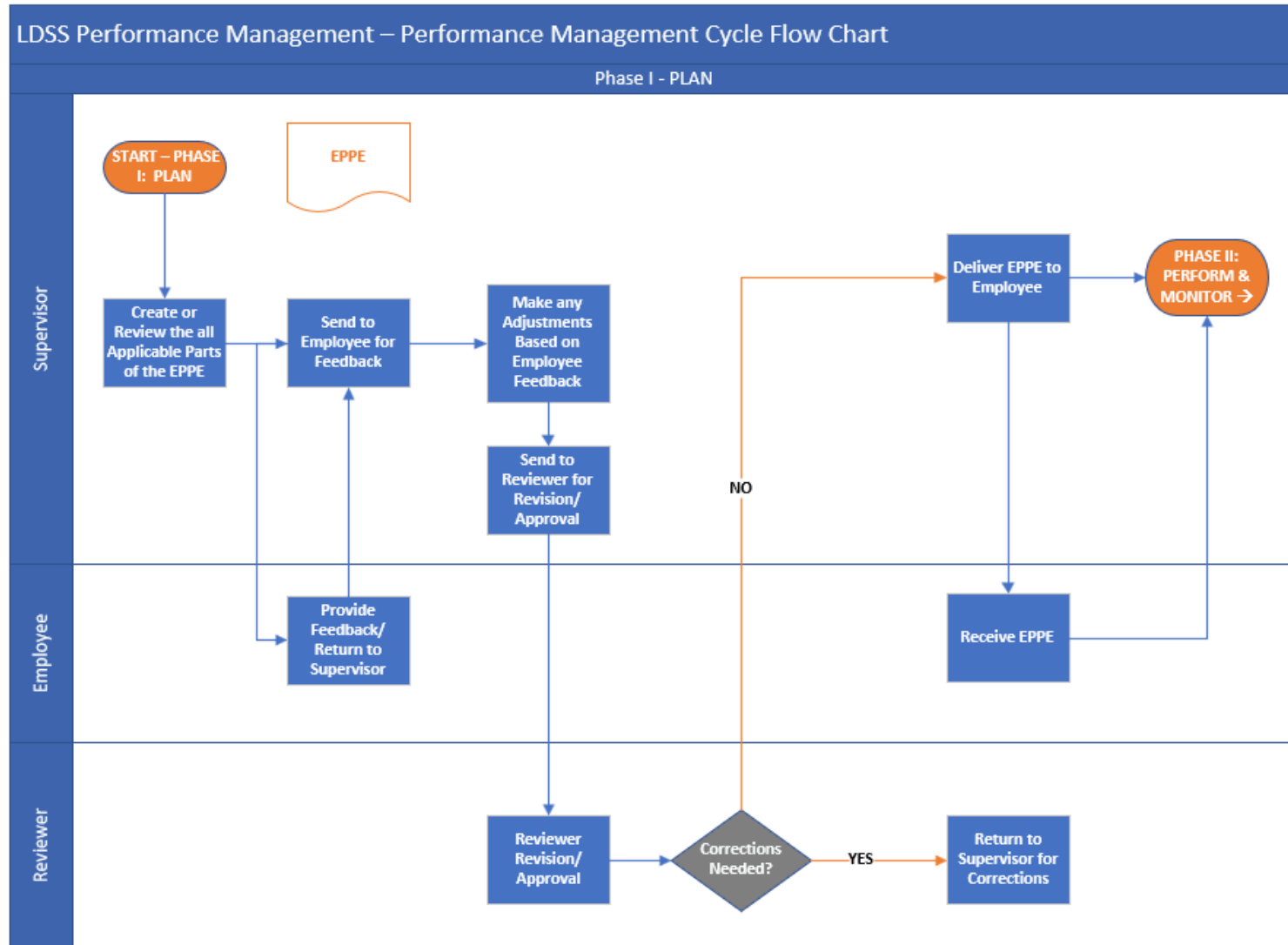
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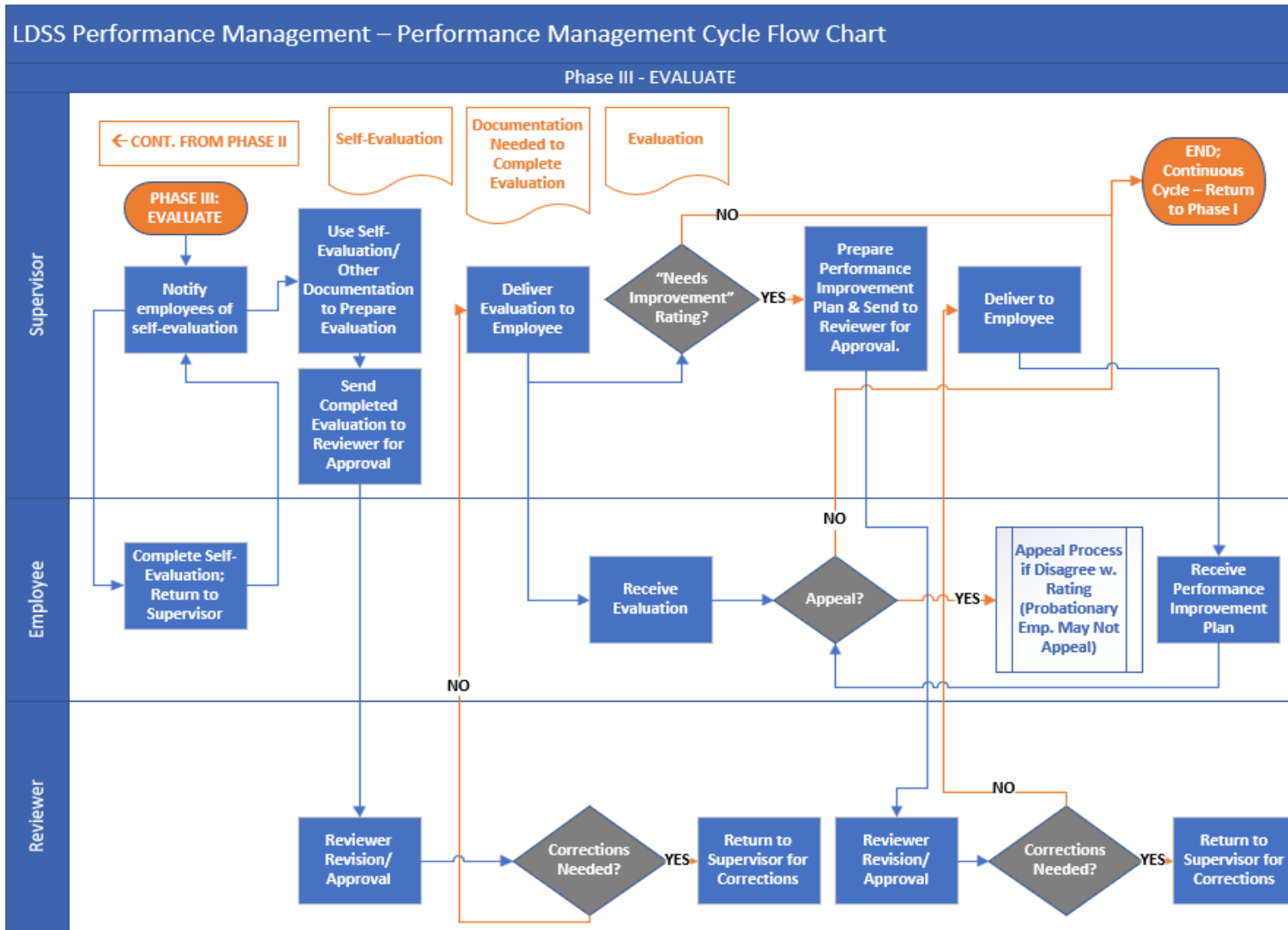
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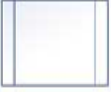
Chapter 6: Supplementary Information

APPENDIX 6.1: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FLOWCHART







LDSS Performance Management Flowchart Key	
Symbol	Definition
	Start/End – Indicates the start or end of a process or phase within a process.
	Process – Represents an action or function in the process.
	Decision - A decision or branching point; lines representing different responses (yes/no) may emerge from different points of the diamond.
	Subprocess - Indicates a sequence of actions that perform a specific task embedded within a larger process.
	Document(s) – A printed document, report, or file.
	Output or Data – Information produced from a process step.
	Optional Step – A step that may or may not be taken based on need.
	Arrow – Indicates directional flow.

APPENDIX 6.2: NOTICE OF IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

NOTICE OF IMPROVEMENT/SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE

Name: David Person	Employee ID#: 0088888888800
Position Number: 8888	Agency Name: James County DSS
Work Title: Benefit Programs Supervisor	Date: November 1, 2022

This form documents that immediate improvement in your job performance is required. Continued poor performance, as described below, may result in an overall “Needs Improvement” rating on the annual performance evaluation conducted in this cycle. Below, you will find a description of specific performance deficiencies and improvements needed.

Performance expectations in areas where immediate improvement is required:

- **Review and authorize new cases for BPS workers in your reporting chain. Monitor the casework of workers and make decisions on difficult or controversial cases.**
 - *David, you currently have a backlog of 25 cases awaiting review and authorization for assignment to your team. Questions from employees on difficult cases are going unanswered. We’ve previously discussed these issues on 6/12/2022, 7/18/22, and 10/17/22. I understand the challenges of transitioning to a supervisory role, but it’s important for you to delegate and manage your time effectively rather than taking on your employees’ tasks.*
- **Conduct weekly 1:1 meetings with BPS workers in your reporting chain. Conduct coaching sessions as needed and complete an annual training needs assessment for all BPS workers in reporting chain.**
 - *David, you oversee 6 BPS employees (2 BPS I, 2 BPS II, and 2 BPS III) with 2 current vacancies on your team. Two employees recently resigned (August 2022, September 2022), citing inadequate development opportunities. One employee had only been with the agency for three months. Employee development constitutes the largest weighted portion of your core responsibilities on the EPPE (35%). Manage your time effectively to ensure regular meetings with employees (at least one 30-minute 1:1 per week and at least one 30-minute coaching session per month, or as needed for more experienced employees).*
- **Respond to employees’ requests for assistance with critical questions within 24 hours.**
 - *David, it has come to my attention that your employees are not receiving timely responses to critical questions about their casework. Alongside supporting your employees in challenging situations, providing excellent customer service is crucial in your role. When an employee is unable to make progress on a case, a client is also affected.*

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- Complete accurate and timely performance evaluations, including interim evaluations for all probationary or conditional status employees in reporting chain. Promptly and appropriately address performance or behavioral issues.
 - *David, you had 2 performance evaluations due during this period (1 interim and 1 annual). While you eventually completed and delivered them, each was significantly delayed by over a month. Our agency schedules performance evaluations on each employee's anniversary date to distribute the workload evenly among supervisors managing multiple staff members. You received a counseling memo in October 2022 addressing the overdue evaluations.*

Improvement plan:

David, over the next 6 months, you must:

- Immediately review and delegate all backlogged cases appropriately. Your case review will be monitored, and it is expected that backlogs will not recur unless there is a justifiable reason.
- Effectively monitor your employees' work and respond to critical questions within 24 hours.
- Conduct weekly 30-minute 1:1 meetings with all staff and schedule at least one 30-minute monthly coaching session with each employee.
- Complete all interim and annual performance evaluations on time. Promptly address any performance or behavioral issues as they arise.

Supervisor's Signature: <i>Mary Doe</i>		Date: 11/1/2022
Reviewer's Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.	Signature: <i>Peter Smith</i>	Date: 11/1/2022
Employee's Comments: Click or tap here to enter text.	Signature: <i>David Person</i>	Date: 11/1/2022

Note: An employee who receives at least one *Improvement Needed* form during the performance cycle may receive an overall "Needs Improvement" rating on the performance evaluation conducted in the same performance cycle. Receipt of one or more of these forms does not automatically warrant a "Needs Improvement" rating.

APPENDIX 6.3: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

LDSS PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The primary purpose of this plan is to assist the employee to reach a satisfactory level of job performance.

Employee's Name:	David Person	Date:	04/20/2023
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Reason for the Performance Improvement Plan:

- ☐ Violation of the Standards of Conduct (*Written Notice attached*)
- ☒ Significant, sustained, or repetitive substandard performance (*Notice of Improvement Needed attached*)
- ☐ An overall rating of "Needs Improvement" on an interim evaluation (*Interim Performance Evaluation attached*)
- ☒ An overall rating of "Needs Improvement" on an annual evaluation (*Performance Evaluation attached*)
- ☐ An overall rating of "Needs Improvement" on a re-evaluation (*Performance Re-Evaluation attached*)

What performance was expected of the employee? *David was promoted to a Benefit Programs Supervisor from a Benefit Programs Specialist III position. While David was meeting, and in some cases exceeding, the expectations of a benefit programs worker, he is still struggling to meet the requirements related to all supervisory tasks.*

Performance expectations in areas where immediate improvement is required:

- Review and authorize new cases for BPS workers in his reporting chain. Monitor the casework of workers and make decisions on difficult or controversial cases.
- Conduct weekly 1:1's with BPS workers in his reporting chain. Conduct coaching sessions as needed, and complete annual training needs assessment for all BPS workers in reporting chain.
- Respond to employees' critical requests for assistance within 24 hours.
- Complete accurate and timely performance evaluations, including interim evaluations for all probationary or conditional status employees in reporting chain. Promptly and appropriately address performance or behavioral issues.

When and how were the expectation(s) communicated to the employee?

On April 20, 2022, David was promoted into this position. Since then, I have met with him on a weekly basis. Performance gaps were identified starting in June of 2022. Immediate, informal feedback was given on the areas where improvement was needed, and these areas were always included on our 1:1 agenda. At this time, coaching sessions were occurring once per month, and David had the ability to choose the coaching topic.

As of August 12, 2022, performance issues were still occurring. On this date, I provided David with a counseling memo and began bi-weekly coaching sessions with him where I set the topics for coaching. I also scheduled time for him to shadow other BPS Supervisors to make sure he was getting exposure to a variety of leadership and performance styles.

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On November 1, 2022, a Notice of Improvement Needed form was delivered to David because he was exhibiting significant, sustained, and repetitive substandard performance in his role related to the performance expectations listed above. David was given an interim evaluation on December 20, 2022, with a rating of "Needs Improvement."

I would like to note that I do believe that David is trying to improve, and he has not been argumentative, nor has he refused to try the coaching techniques or recommendations offered to him by me and several other supervisors. All our supervisors and managers go through the required leadership training, and David has completed all the training modules.

Provide specific examples of the gap between the employee's performance and the expectation(s).

- **Review and authorize new cases for BPS workers in reporting chain. Monitor the casework of workers and make decisions on difficult or controversial cases.**
 - *On June 12, 2022, I discovered that David had a large backlog of cases that needed to be assigned to employees reporting to him. David was aware that cases were backing up and was attempting to work the surplus himself versus delegating the work. As a result of taking on extra work, he was unable to monitor his employees effectively. David was an excellent BPS worker; his decision making on cases is sound, but he was not effective in timeliness on responding to these requests. This problem wasn't constant because other supervisors and I would assist him with delegation. However, once the assistance stopped, the same issues would occur. After June 12, this issue was also documented and discussed with David on July 18, 2022, October 17, 2022, January 23, 2023, and March 6, 2023.*
- **Conduct weekly 1:1's with BPS workers in reporting chain. Conduct coaching sessions as needed, and complete annual training needs assessment for all BPS workers in reporting chain.**
 - *Due to David's inability to effectively manage his own workload, he has never been able to successfully maintain weekly 1:1's or coaching sessions with the 5 benefit specialists on his team (2 BPS I, 1 BPS II, 2BPS III, 2 vacancies). David also failed to complete the annual training needs assessment for his team.*
- **Respond to employees' requests for assistance within 24 hours.**
 - *David's employees have reached out to other workers and other supervisors on numerous occasions requesting assistance with questions and other tasks. They advised that they had requested assistance from David but received little or no help. David and I went over time management in several feedback sessions, and this was also documented in two of the counseling memos that David received (July 18 and January 23).*
- **Complete accurate and timely performance evaluations, including interim evaluations for all probationary or conditional status employees in reporting chain. Promptly and appropriately address performance or behavioral issues.**
 - *David had 3 performance evaluations due during this timeframe (1 interim and 2 annual). He ultimately completed and delivered them. However, all were significantly late (over 1 month for each). Our agency chooses to complete performance evaluations on the anniversary date of the employee to spread out the workload for supervisors who manage many staff. David was provided with a counseling memo in October of 2022 when it was brought to my attention that his evaluations were well past due.*

Describe actions that will be taken to assist the employee to achieve a satisfactory level of performance.

- ☒ Performance Coaching
☐ Counseling Memorandum

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☒ **Other:** *David will attend an external, in-person time management and delegation course (2 days – April 27-28) and an external, in-person effective communication course (1 day – May 1) that are available through a partnership with one of our local community colleges.*

Describe how the supervisor (and perhaps others) will assist the employee in reaching a satisfactory level of performance. *I will increase coaching sessions to weekly; coaching agendas will focus only on areas where improvement is needed – particularly around organization and delegation of tasks to employees. David will be responsible for working his full caseload while also completing his management tasks.*

What must the employee do to reach a satisfactory level of performance?

For the next 90 days, David

- Must not have a backlog of assigned cases at any point during the re-evaluation period.
- Must effectively monitor the work of his employees and respond to critical questions from staff within 24 hours.
- Must conduct weekly 1:1's with all staff and schedule at least 1 monthly coaching session with each.
- Must complete all interim and annual performance evaluations and deliver them on time. David has two that are due – one interim due on May 25, 2023, and one annual due on June 13, 2023. David must also appropriately and promptly address any performance or behavioral issues that occur.
- David must complete all these tasks and successfully manage his personal caseload.

How will the employee's performance be monitored? *David's assigned cases (that are delegated to other employees) will be monitored. David will be required to keep a brief log of responses to employee questions and responses regarding critical issues; we will review this weekly. David will reflect 1:1s and coaching sessions on his shared calendar. David will provide all performance reviews to me in advance (normal process).*

How frequently will the employee and supervisor meet to review progress toward attaining a satisfactory level of performance? We will continue to meet on a weekly basis and any time David requests a meeting.

On what date will the employee's performance be re-evaluated? July 19, 2023 (90 days) (not to exceed 180 days)

If the employee's performance does not meet expectations in the above timeframe, what will be the consequence?

- ☐ Extension of Probationary Period for _____ and Re-evaluation
- ☐ Extension of Conditional Status Period for _____ and Re-evaluation
- ☒ Demotion
- ☐ Termination
- ☐ Other: _____

Signatures:
Mary Doe

Supervisor Signature

4/20/2023

Date

Peter Smith

Reviewer Signature

4/20/2023

Date

David Person

4/20/23

APPENDIX 6.4: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION EXAMPLE

LDSS ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION

Employee Name: Andrew Thomas	Employee ID#: 00888888800
Position #: 8888	Local department: James County DSS
Work Title: Family Services Specialist III	

This form documents and recognizes your outstanding contribution to the performance of your duties. You are commended for your exemplary accomplishment/performance.

Description of specific outstanding contributions:

Andrew is an FSS III and has been with James County DSS for three years. He maintains a full caseload primarily made up of young parents aged 14 to 25. He is responsible for completing all minor parent assessments and works to prevent deeper involvement with the system. Andrew is especially passionate about working with dads, particularly those dealing with substance abuse.

Before joining James County DSS, Andrew worked as a youth and family mentor and facilitated a sobriety support group for youth for over five years. He has extensive experience working with dads experiencing chemical addiction. Andrew connects with clients to set meaningful goals and supports them in their quest for sobriety, achieving much success.

During this performance cycle, one of Andrew's goals on his development plan was to take his experience with facilitating support groups and build something similar at James County DSS, focusing entirely on fathers. Andrew presented his idea to me, our director, and our administrative board at the end of the last performance cycle. The project was well received, and with agency leadership and board approval, he initiated a weekly sobriety and skills group for young dads.

While completing all his regular casework and duties on his EPPE performance plan, Andrew proposed to:

- Have the sobriety and skills program in place by the end of the first quarter.
- Enroll and have a minimum of 3 dads participating by the end of the second quarter.
- Enroll and have a minimum of 10 dads participating by the end of the performance cycle year.
- Provide clear data to support the continuation of the program, with metrics developed in collaboration with the James County DSS leadership team.

Andrew worked with our leadership team to tailor a curriculum specifically for our agency. This curriculum was one he developed and had used in his past work. He also collaborated with me and our director to develop

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specific performance metrics to determine the program's success, focusing on areas such as parenting, sobriety, continuing education, and employment.

Starting this initiative by the end of the first quarter was possible because many of the required resources already belonged to Andrew and were easily adapted to suit DSS needs. Andrew exceeded the goals he set for this program throughout the performance cycle. By the end of the second quarter, Andrew had 6 dads enrolled in the program and began collecting data to support its continuance. By the end of the third quarter, Andrew had 10 dads enrolled, was still collecting necessary data, and had begun marketing the program to other community service partners.

By the end of this performance management cycle, Andrew had 15 dads enrolled in the program – a 40% increase over his original goal. With the increase in participation, one of Andrew's FSS III co-workers became interested in assisting. Andrew trained her, and they divided the group to avoid turning away interested and eligible dads. Additionally, the data Andrew collected throughout the year showed that the sobriety and skills program positively impacted treatment success, with 95% of the dads becoming gainfully employed and remaining substance-free through the entire program. Two of the dads also successfully achieved their GEDs. One of them is now enrolled in a program to become an electrician, while the other is actively applying to a local community college to pursue a counseling career.

Throughout this period, Andrew exceeded expectations in every area of his performance plan. One of his most prominent strengths is his ability to establish a positive rapport with all his clients, regardless of their circumstances. He works diligently with each family member to develop meaningful goals and helps them acquire the skills they need to be healthy and successful while holding them accountable in a firm yet supportive manner. He accomplishes this by modeling skills with real-life examples and practicing the skills with his clients.

Andrew manages all his casework autonomously and consistently takes the initiative to assist coworkers with questions on their cases and to act as a mentor. His case reports are excellent and always submitted timely. Andrew is an asset to me, our team, and our community. He is dependable, and I have full confidence in his capabilities. Andrew deserves this rating, and we are proud of his success!

Supervisor's Comments: Fantastic work, Andrew!	Supervisor's Signature: <i>James Johnson</i>	Date: 4/20/23
Reviewer's Comments: James is very proud of your work and this initiative!	Reviewer's Signature: <i>Peter Smith</i>	Date: 4/20/23
Employee's Comments: Thank you for your support and guidance!	Employee's Signature: <i>Andrew Thomas</i>	Date: 4/20/23

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Note: An employee must receive at least one Acknowledgement of Outstanding Contribution during the performance evaluation cycle to be eligible for an overall performance rating of “Outstanding” on the annual performance evaluation. Receipt of one or more Acknowledgement of Outstanding Contribution forms does not automatically entitle an employee to the overall performance rating of “Outstanding”.

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