CROW WING COUNTY
Live here, work here, love here.

Performance Culture….
Alignment – Focus - Success

CROW WING COUNTY
EXCELLENCE
By you. For you.

What do you want to accomplish?

Better Service

Lower Costs
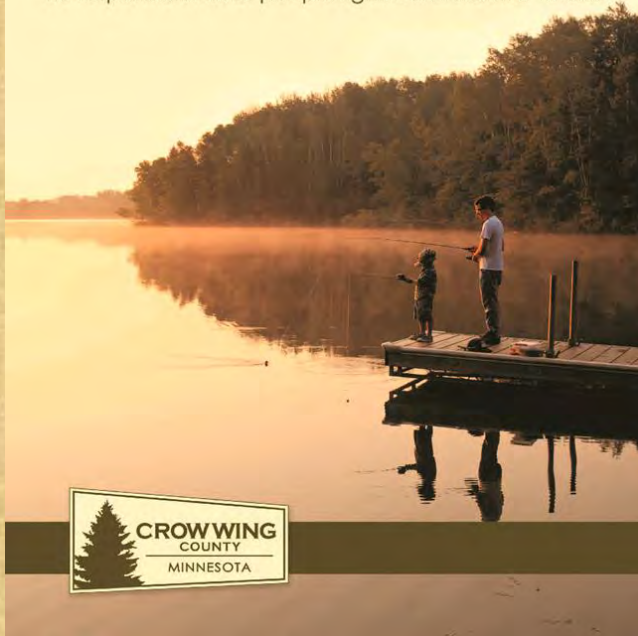
Making it Meaningful....

Our Vision
Being Minnesota's favorite place.

Our Mission
Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values
Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

CROW WING
COUNTY
MINNESOTA

Serve Well

Deliver Value

Drive Results

Getting to Work

Meaningful Measures

Interactive Process

Internal Consistency

Appeal Process

Technology

Getting to Work

- Rating Scale

- Predicted Distribution

- Budget Target

- Adjustment Opportunity

Rating Scale........

Three Point Scale (5-80-15)

Below Target: This employee does not consistently meet the performance expectations and/or demonstrates only a moderate level of proficiency in the competencies required in his/her job. Additional training or commitment is required.

At Target: This employee consistently meets and may occasionally exceed performance expectations while demonstrating proficiency in the competencies required in his/her job.

Above Target: This employee consistently exceeds performance expectations while demonstrating a high level of proficiency in all or most of the competencies required in his/her job.

Rating Scale........

Five Point Scale (5-20-60-10-5)

Distinguished Contributor	Effects measurable and lasting improvements in organizational performance.
Performance Improver	Contributes more than effective performance of essential functions and enhances the performance of self and others.
Valued Contributor	Performs all essential functions of the job effectively.
Improving Contributor	Learning the essential functions or improving toward effective performance of all essential functions.
Unsatisfactory Contributor	Not able or willing to perform the essential functions of the job.

Performance Based Pay Opportunity
Budget + Distribution + Adjustment Opportunity

Performance Based Pay Matrix

| PERFORMANCE	MIN-1/4	1/4-MID	MID-3/4	3/4-MAX
Exceptional	6.50%	6.00%	5.50%	5.00%
Exceeds Expectations	5.00%	4.50%	4.00%	3.50%
Achieves HIGHLY VALUED CONTRIBUTOR	3.50%	3.00%	2.50%	2.00%
In Development or Needs Improvement	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Unsatisfactory	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Achieves and "A": The organization culture and the language at the midpoint must clearly define the norm to be a highly valued contributor to the organizational effort.

2015 RESULTS.......it takes everyone

March 18, 2016

Rating	Number
U	1
NI	12
A	260
E	91
E+	15
Grand Total	386

Chart Title
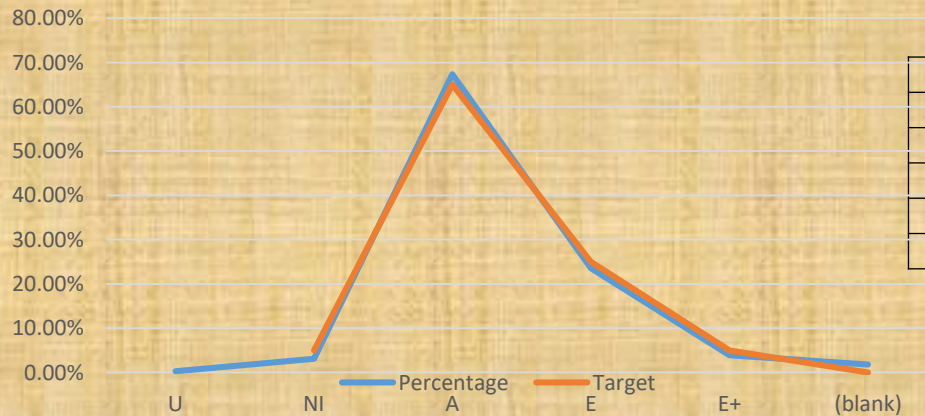
Rating	Actual	Target
U	<1%	
NI	3%	5.00%
A	67%	65.00%
E	24%	25.00%
E+	4%	5.00%

7 open 2%

Implementation……how do we get there?

Commissioners
- Clear Message
- Engagement
- Support

Leadership
- Learning Sessions
- Expectations
- Accountability

Staff
- Learning Sessions
- Participation
- Clarity of Expectations
- Accountability for Results

Results……..

- Culture is Different
  - Clarity
  - Accountability
  - Recognition
  - Innovation

- Progress
  - Ten of Twelve groups have transitioned
  - LELS Deputies and LELS Corrections have not

- Financial
  - Three years of achieving 3% budget target
  - Wage inflation has been flat
  - Levy decreased for six consecutive years

Take care……

Culture

Engagement

Well-being

HiPo Talent

LEAD Program

Providing unparalleled service to those we serve.

CROW WING COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY

CROW WING COUNTY
EXCELLENCE
By you. For you.

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Being Minnesota's favorite place.

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CROW WING
COUNTY
MINNESOTA

Building a Performance Culture

Contact: Tamra Laska
218 824 1019
tamra.laska@crowwing.us

Calibrating Performance

Calibration Purpose: Calibration is a process that brings various team leaders together to jointly review rater assessments to ensure ratings across the organization are consistent, appropriate and properly distributed. Calibration is not to be confused with *forced ranking* where managers are required to force ratings to achieve specific rating percentages. While the county has a predicted rating model to help forecast salary budgets, there is no forced ranking requirement at Crow Wing County.

Calibration sessions typically include supervisors who are responsible for conducting performance evaluations, reviewers which are the next level of management responsible for reviewing the content and closely examining the employee evaluations, the department head or senior leader accountable for the workgroup and a calibration leader to facilitate the session.

The calibration process provides a forum for the discussion of employees' performance with the goal of ensuring supervisors apply similar standards for all employees and eliminate biases to the greatest extent possible. Calibration relies on an honest and confidential dialogue among supervisors, reviewers and the responsible department head.

Calibration Timing: Calibration occurs after a supervisor has: (1) received the employee self-appraisal; (2) completed the supervisor appraisal comments and ratings; (3) routed it for approval; and (4) addressed any revisions requested by the reviewer. The calibration occurs **BEFORE** the reviewer approves and returns the evaluation to the supervisor. **In all cases, calibration occurs before the scored performance evaluation has been shared with the employee.**

Pre Calibration Process: December 1 – January 31

Employee completes self-appraisal	Rater adds comments, scores and forwards to reviewer	Reviewer examines content and ratings for accuracy	Prepare for calibration

Step 1. The performance appraisal is opened for scoring on December 1st. Departments assign specific due dates for employees to complete their self-appraisal.

Step 2. The supervisor completes their portion of the appraisal including the performance ratings and routes the appraisal to their reviewer for approval. Departments are accountable for managing this process by assigning specific completion dates.

Step 3. The reviewer reads the appraisal, looking for constructive supervisory comments and ensuring evaluations are thorough and logical and contain specific examples of performance, results achieved and behaviors. If the reviewer decides a supervisor should alter a particular evaluation, the reviewer sends the evaluation back and waits for revision.

Step 4. The reviewer prepares for calibration by viewing Trakstar Reports for their reporting area examining the ratings distribution, performance history and rater bias reports to highlight any trends

that warrant follow-up. The reviewer, or supervisor as assigned, prepares the documentation needed to report on his/her employee performance ratings at the calibration session.

January 31st is the target date for completion of this initial process. When completed, the reviewer contacts human resources to schedule a calibration meeting. A calibration meeting is scheduled between the designated reviewer, the department head or senior leader accountable for the workgroup and a calibration leader to facilitate the session.

Supervisor's attendance at the calibration session may or may not be required based on the department structure and perspective of the reviewer and/or department head. In all cases it is essential that calibration participants have an in-depth understanding of the performance ratings for their employee appraisals.

Calibration Process: February 1 – March 1

Review ratings distribution → Present individual ratings → Discussion and feedback → Ratings distribution review → Update appraisals → Meet with employees

Step 1. At the calibration meeting participants look at ratings distribution for all participating departments as an early indicator of rating trends. This helps ensure use of the ratings are being consistently and fairly applied to all employees irrespective of reporting relationships and/or departmental assignments.

Step 2. The reviewer presents the individual employee ratings. The discussion content includes performance relating to key performance measures and rating; core competencies – those with the highest and lowest ratings; progress on key projects and goals, the overall rating and closing comments.

Step 3. Calibration meeting participants may ask questions about specific ratings or interpretation of ratings and may suggest adjustments based on the discussion of performance, results and behaviors considered and documented when determining the rating or their own experiences with the employee.

Step 4. Re-review ratings distribution report against the predicted ratings model. If distributions trend higher or lower than the predicted model, revisit employee ratings that were on the cusp between ratings to determine if they are rated appropriately.

Predicted Ratings Distribution			
In Development or Unacceptable	**Achieves**	**Exceeds**	**Exceptional**
5 - 10%	60-70%	15-20%	5%

Step 5. Following the discussion, reviewers send any appraisals requiring revision, back to the supervisor. After the supervisor makes the revisions, the appraisal is sent again to the reviewer for approval.

Step 6. The reviewer approves the evaluation and forwards it to the supervisor who meets with the employee to review the content and ratings. If changes are needed, the supervisor reengages the approval process with the reviewer prior to completing the appraisal. When the process is complete, the appraisal is approved by the supervisor and employee.

Calibration Tips

- **Communicate County/Department Goals.** Goals for each area should be communicated in advance and as thoroughly as possible so employees understand how their daily work contributes to the success of the county/department, and so that employees understand the measures on which they will be evaluated.
- **Educate supervisors.** Ensure supervisors understand what calibration is, why it is necessary, how it works, and what their roles are.
- **Understand the ratings.** Understand the performance ratings and their intended application.
- **Support the process.** Be open about the process, but maintain confidentiality outside of the calibration meeting.
- **Do your best.** The calibration process is new to us; there will be a learning curve. It is our commitment to helping each other in building a performance management and rating process that has a high level of integrity and reliability across the entire organization.
- **Get the right people involved.** Make sure that the calibration participants can adequately represent the employee appraisals being discussed by articulating what the employee has accomplished and can respond appropriately to questions or challenges from the group. If questions arise, make sure the supervisor is available to clarify them.
- **Set appropriate ground rules for meetings**. Participants must feel open to challenge and debate. They must also feel comfortable asking their peers for advice if they need help in determining or communicating a rating.
- **Leverage the information gathered during the process.** The power of calibration goes beyond performance ratings. These discussions yield important insight into the county's talent and overall development needs.

Calibration Benefits

- Calibration ensures supervisors are well versed in the definitions and the application of the rating scale.
- Calibration ensures supervisors have objective and measurable examples of performance, results and behaviors that support the basis for the particular rating assigned to an employee.
- Calibration prepares supervisors for improved performance discussions with their employees.
- Calibration exposes talent to a larger group of managers, promoting internal development and succession planning.
- Calibration supports our performance based pay process by ensuring consistency in our differentiation of performance levels.

Rating Definitions

(E): Exceptional An Exceptional performance rating identifies situations in which performance significantly surpasses expectations and where the work product and results achieved represent exceptional and unique contributions, those having or very likely to have a significant and positive impact on work unit, department or organization. The Exceptional rating is generally reserved to recognize unique and extraordinary performance, most often associated with a specific accomplishment of great significance.

Think of the Exceptional rating as one that distinguishes an exceptional performance accomplishment – the top 5% county wide.   Using the golf analogy it's like scoring an eagle. It is a career highlight, performance accomplishments that are highly unique and impactful. Expect a fair amount of churn in those receiving the Exceptional rating. It is reserved for the individual who is leading innovative practices that have a significant impact on county and/or department performance. It implies that all of the criteria under the Exceeds rating were met plus the frequency, size and/or scope of the accomplishments more

than exceeded expectations; they demonstrate extraordinary initiative, extraordinary innovation and extraordinary pro-active leadership for the role. The rater should easily be able to identify the accomplishments that caused this individual to stand out from the rest – what it was that placed them in the top 5% of all employees.

(EE): Exceeds Expectations An Exceeds Expectations performance rating identifies situations in which performance meets and frequently surpasses expectations and where the work product and results achieved represent contributions to the work unit, department or organization that are significant and beyond the traditional expectations of the role. The Exceeds Expectations rating is used to recognize performance that extends beyond achieving the performance requirements and general expectations associated with successful performance in the role. It will often involve project work or other contributions that extend beyond the critical goals and performance measures established for the role.

Think of the Exceeds Expectations rating as one that applies to a unique and impactful accomplishment. Using the golf analogy it's like scoring a birdie. It implies that all of the criteria under the Achieves rating were met plus there were accomplishments that demonstrated significant initiative, innovation and pro-active leadership for the role. The rater should easily be able to identify the accomplishments that caused this individual to stand out from the rest – what placed them in the top 20% of all employees.

(A): Achieves An Achieves performance rating identifies situations in which performance consistently achieves expectations and where the work product and results achieved are reflective of successful performance. The Achieves rating is awarded to recognize highly effective performance where the most critical goals and performance measures have been successfully met.

Think of the Achieves rating as being the equivalent of a letter grade A or a par score in golf. This is representative of really good work, a strong contributor to the organization, one whose performance is aligned with department and county vision; whose project assignments were effectively completed and whose performance was aligned with the core competencies. The Achieves rating is a mark of highly effective performance.

(I): In Development or Needs Improvement An In Development or Needs Improvement performance rating identifies situations in which performance did not consistently achieve expectations in one or more areas, and/or one or more of the most critical goals were not met. A development plan to improve performance must be outlined, including timelines, and monitored to measure progress. A six-month review to evaluate progress is required.

(U): Unsatisfactory An Unsatisfactory performance rating identifies situations in which performance was consistently below expectations in most areas of responsibility, and/or reasonable progress toward critical goals was not made. Significant improvement is needed in one or more important areas. A plan to correct performance must be outlined, including timelines, and progress reports completed monthly to measure progress. A three-month review to evaluate progress is required.

Employees New to the Role When rating performance it should be relative to expectations given, time in the job and experience on entry. For example, a new employee whose learning curve is progressing as expected in all areas might receive an overall performance rating of Achieves in year one even though there are ongoing training and development needs relating to job mastery. On the other hand, a well-experienced new hire who is not progressing as expected may receive an In Development or Unsatisfactory performance rating. It will be important to set performance expectations at hire with clear milestones for first year performance.

Calibration Meeting Agenda

1. **Desired Outcomes of Meeting**

2. **Confidentiality**
   a. *It should go without saying that the information discussed and the resulting outcomes should be kept confidential by all managers involved. Nonetheless, participants should be reminded of the expectation regarding confidentiality at the start of the meeting.*

3. **Clarify Standards**
   a. *Review of the rating scale/s and scale definitions used in the performance evaluation process.*

4. **Performance Trends of Group**
   a. *Examination of the performance distribution of the business unit, including how the distribution compares to the previous performance period and/or desired distribution.*

5. **Alignment with Business Unit Results**
   a. *Discussion of the linkage between initial performance ratings with the results produced by the business unit.*

6. **Individual Presentation**
   a. *Review of each employee's performance rating/s and the supporting rationale behind the rating/s.*

7. **Rating Adjustments**
   a. *Modification of ratings, as necessary, to accurately reflect performance over the performance period.*

8. **Next Steps in the Performance Management Process**

Appendix D

Performance Management and Planning Process

(Revised September 2015)

(Article 39 of the Crow Wing County Personnel Manual)

Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.
Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.
Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Purpose
The purpose of this program guide is to provide a resource to help team members implement a performance plan for those they supervise; a performance plan that clearly articulates performance expectations and is aligned with the strategic priorities of the organization, department, workgroup and the individual role.

This program guide is also intended to be a resource for performance plan participants, promoting an understanding of the process, the role of the individual in performance planning and also guidance for completing the self-evaluation portion of the performance plan.

The County's Expectations Regarding Performance Management
Aligning resources to accomplish organizational priorities is one of the most important functions of managers and supervisors. The supervisor is accountable for ensuring each team member has clearly defined performance plans including key performance measures, core competencies, department and/or role specific competencies, project assignments and developmental initiatives.

As you prepare to develop a performance plan, begin with a review of the county's mission, vision and values. They are the foundation on which we build; the mission speaks to what we do, the vision speaks to where we're heading and the values reinforce how we work. These foundational pieces, together with department specific mission, vision and values, help to align individual roles with organizational interests.

Our organization uses performance tools such as the Balanced Scorecard to identify and communicate key strategic priorities for the organization. We've selected the balanced scorecard approach because it ensures focus on four important perspectives; our customer, our financial performance, our work processes and our people. For information on Crow Wing County's guide to the Balanced Scorecard review the Managing for Results Implementation Guide.

Strategy maps are a component of the balanced scorecard. The strategy map identifies key strategic priorities and objectives for the organization. The county's strategic priorities and objectives are developed as part of a strategic planning process involving the county board of commissioners, elected officials and senior management.   Understanding the organizations priorities is an important step in developing the strategic priorities and objectives that are unique and specific to your department.

The county strategy map provides direction by identifying the big-picture goals for the organization. This information is cascaded through the organization to create alignment, ensuring department priorities and objectives support the important strategies of the organization. Department strategy maps identify the strategic priorities and objectives for the department. The departmental priorities and objectives translate into individual roles and include key performance measures, competencies and

assignments that are specific to the individual role and ensure the accomplishment of the departmental and organizational objectives.

Individual roles are defined in job descriptions. The supervisor is accountable for creating job descriptions for each individual role in their department. This includes determining what duties are important to include in a job, what qualifications are needed to fulfill those duties and what level of performance is needed to meet the strategic priorities and objectives of the department and organization. Contact the Human Resource department for information relating to writing effective job descriptions.

Performance management also involves filling the job with the best candidate, training new team members and providing continuous coaching to clarify expectations. Management of performance is important to being a good supervisor and introducing the performance plan early, when an employee joins the department, serves as an effective means for communicating expectations and helping staff understand how their role links to the strategic priorities of the organization and department. All supervisors are expected to participate in a performance management program with their staff.

Performance Management Definition
Performance management is an ongoing, continuous process of communicating and clarifying job responsibilities, priorities and performance expectations in order to ensure mutual understanding between supervisor and employee. It is a philosophy that values and encourages employee engagement and development through a style of management which provides frequent feedback and fosters teamwork. It emphasizes communication and focuses on adding value to the organization by promoting improved job performance and encouraging skill development. Performance management involves clarifying the job duties, defining performance standards, and documenting, evaluating and discussing performance with each employee.

Performance Management Objectives
- Promote understanding of the mission, vision, values, strategic priorities, key objectives and expectations for the department and organization.

- Cascade the strategic priorities and key objectives of the organization to departments and individual roles to ensure alignment with and achievement of important organizational and departmental priorities.

- Promote proactive performance planning and communication between supervisors and employees.

- Identify and resolve performance improvement needs through early intervention and coaching.

- Recognize quality performance

- Serve as a resource for administrative decisions such as promotions, succession planning, strategic planning, and performance based pay.

Performance Plan Development
- Performance management is considered a process, not an event. It follows good management practice in which *continual* coaching, feedback and communication are integral to success.

- The Performance Plan is primarily a communication tool to ensure mutual understanding of work responsibilities, priorities and performance expectations.

- The Performance Plan is job specific. The major duties and responsibilities of the job are defined and communicated as the first step in the process.

- The Performance Plan contains performance measures for each major duty/ responsibility. The performance measures are clearly defined and communicated.

- The performance planning process encourages employee involvement and participation.

- The developmental initiatives section is used to identify opportunities for professional growth within the assignment and for future career interests and succession planning.

- Documentation of performance is an important component of performance management. Quarterly and midyear performance discussions are encouraged.

- The overall performance rating is intended to reflect the individual's actual performance in relation to the performance criteria established in the performance plan for the entire evaluation period.

- Supervisors are evaluated on successful administration of the plan and ongoing performance management responsibilities.

- Training for supervisors and employees is available through the county's human resource representatives.

- Content of the performance management plan must comply with all federal and state laws addressing non-discrimination.

Supervisor's Responsibilities
- Communicate and clarify major job duties**,** priorities and expectations at the beginning of the year or when a new member joins the department.

- Establish and communicate performance standards.

- Monitor ongoing performance through observation, discussion, etc.

- Document performance, identifying successes and opportunities.

- Provide continuous coaching and constructive feedback in a timely manner.

- Hold performance discussions throughout the year; quarterly and semi-annually is recommended.

- Correct unsatisfactory performance and reinforce effective performance.

- Help employees develop skills and abilities for improved performance.

- Provide necessary resources and information needed to ensure accomplishments of key results.

Available Resources

Human Resource staff are available to provide consultation with supervisors interested in developing a performance management plan. Individual and/or group training on all aspects of Performance Management is provided upon request.

Performance Planning Cycle

Common Review Date

The county's performance planning cycle aligns with the calendar year. All employees receive an annual performance appraisal that accounts for performance in the preceding calendar year. The year-end appraisal is completed in January. The calibration and rating approval process occurs in February. Rating communication occurs in March and performance based pay awards, for participants in the performance based pay program, are processed the first pay period in April and effective retroactively to January 1. The planning calendar is outlined below:

June – December: Budget planning begins in June and concludes with adoption of the final budget during the last board meeting in December. Budget planning generally identifies resources available and resources needed, including organizational, departmental and role specific projects and initiatives.

Developing your individual employee performance plans in coordination with the budget planning process ensures the performance plans align with important goals and commitments identified for the coming year.

January: Performance results from the preceding year are summarized in January. Employees complete their self evaluation and supervisors finalize their evaluation. Performance plans for the coming year are finalized.

February: Performance rating recommendations are made by the supervisor and the approval and calibration process is completed. The calibration process requires supervisors to support rating recommendations with data that demonstrates a basis for an exceeds or exceptional rating. This also applies to an in-development or unsatisfactory rating. This process ensures rating equity across the organization. The calibration process is facilitated by the county administrator or his/her designee and may include elected officials, senior managers and leadership team members. All performance plan ratings require approval of senior manager in charge.

March: Rating communications occur; performance results from the preceding year are finalized and discussed with staff. Performance based pay awards are communicated.

April: Performance based pay awards, for participants in the performance based pay program, are processed the first pay period in April. First quarter progress reports are completed.

Quarterly Progress Reports
Quarterly progress reports are recommended. These are update meetings to check progress, readjust as needed and ensure performance is on track to meet critical goals. Quarterly progress reports generally occur in April, July and October; year-end results are finalized in January.

New Hires
Staff joining the organization during the first three quarters of a calendar year will receive a performance evaluation at the conclusion of that calendar year, consistent with the performance planning cycle. Staff joining the organization during fourth quarter, will be eligible to a full performance evaluation at the conclusion of the following year, consistent with the performance planning cycle.

Transfers, Promotions and Job Changes
Staff changing jobs and/or departments during the year will receive a performance evaluation from their current supervisor. The evaluation will incorporate feedback from the prior supervisor and the rating will reflect the combined performance.

Getting Started

Determine Major Job Duties
Major job duties are those specific duties that are essential to a specified job. These are the duties that the job was established to perform; those that if they were not performed, would severely impact the nature of the job. They are distinct from marginal functions, which are peripheral to the core duties. Resources to help you identify major job duties are:

- The position description on file in the department or available through human resources.
- A recent job posting for the position

Some things to consider in determining and prioritizing major job duties:

- What are the primary responsibilities of the position?
- What duties are critical to the job?
- What duties are sufficiently important to the overall success such that performance below standard would result in unacceptable overall performance?
- What percentage of time is spent on the duty?

A main purpose of a Performance Plan is to increase two-way communication between supervisor and employees regarding the job itself. This is best done when the process of determining major job duties is done collaboratively between supervisor and employee. This allows for differing perceptions of

responsibilities, priorities, etc. to be addressed and clarified. Ultimately it is the role of the supervisor to define the job.

Define Performance Standards for Each Duty

While the list of major job duties describes *what* is to be done, performance standards provide specific performance expectations for each major duty. They are the observable behaviors and actions which explain *how* the job is to be done and the results that are expected for satisfactory job performance.

The purpose of performance standards is to communicate expectations. Our goal is to be as specific and measurable as possible. Performance standards are:

- Based on the position, not the individual
- Observable, specific indicators of success
- Meaningful, reasonable and attainable
- Describe "fully satisfactory" performance once trained
- Expressed in terms of quantity, quality, timeliness, cost, safety, or outcomes

In determining performance standards, consider the following:

- What does a good job look like?
- How many or how much is needed?
- How long should it take?
- When are the results needed?
- How accurate or how good is acceptable?
- Are there budget considerations?
- Are there safety considerations?
- Are there legislative or regulatory requirements?
- What results would be considered satisfactory?
- What condition will exist when the duty is well performed?
- What is the difference between satisfactory and unsatisfactory performance?

Common Standards Applicable to all Crow Wing County Roles

The county has identified four core competencies that are common to all jobs. The core competencies identify standards and behaviors that are expected from everyone. For example, all team members are expected to demonstrate customer service excellence. This is only one of the four core competencies that are common to all county jobs and contained into each employee's performance plan.

Common Standards Applicable to Everyone in a Particular Group

There may be one or more competencies identifying common standards and behaviors that are expected from everyone in a particular workgroup or role. For example, compassion is a core competency for all community service jobs and referenced in each member's performance plans. Technical learning is a competency assigned to all technology positions and referenced in each member's performance plan.

To assess competencies and determine which are important to your workgroup or a given role, review the competency listing found in the Lominger resources including the FYI Book or the competency sort cards. These resource materials are available in most departments and also the human resource office.

Putting It All Together

Introduce the Performance Plan
The performance plan is introduced at the beginning of the calendar year and when a new employee joins the department. The performance plan provides focus and direction, helping to ensure team members have a clear understanding of key priorities, performance measures and outcomes expected for the coming year. The performance plan can be updated as the year progresses to accommodate changes in project assignments, key priorities and/or performance measures.

Document Job Performance
It is important to document performance over the entire year. Good documentation procedures help to reduce the possibility of rating errors, as referenced in the next section. Be sure to make notes of performance successes and items to recognize as well as opportunities and performance that did not achieve expectations. Good documentation is important in justifying evaluations and resultant administrative decisions. Effective documentation is:

- Accurate
- Specific
- Consistent
- A record of a discussion – never done in isolation
- Factual, not inferential

Performance documentation may focus on:

- *Actions* of the employee:
  "Joe's month end documentation was incomplete, missing important data and leaving the department unable to prepare accurate utilization reports. This matter has been discussed with Joe on two prior occasions. Immediate and sustained improvement is necessary.

- *Results* of job performance:
  "A mentoring program pilot for at risk families was initiated during the current rating period; a program that would not be possible without Mary's expert work in securing $250,000 in grant funding."

Documentation should be in written form and shared with the employee.

Evaluate Job Performance
In evaluating performance, always compare actual performance to the performance standards as determined at the beginning of the evaluation period. Review the performance measures, competencies, project assignments and developmental objectives contained in the performance plan.

Compare the stated objectives to the actual results achieved, using your notes, the employees notes and other sources of feedback to obtain an accurate accounting of performance.

Sources of Feedback
The most common source of performance feedback is the supervisor and the employee's self-assessment. Performance feedback can also include reviews from peers and customers or anyone in contact with the employee.

Factors Impacting Performance
Before discussing performance assess factors that may have had an unanticipated negative or positive impact on performance. Consider:

- Unanticipated events that redirected work activities
- Staffing issues
- Lack of proper equipment
- Excessive work load fluctuations
- Working conditions
- Delays from internal or external sources
- Unclear objectives or performance standards
- Policy changes

Assigning the Performance Rating
The county uses a five point rating scale. A five point scale is the most commonly used rating format. The overall performance rating should be reflective of the performance in its entirety for the rating period. For information relating to the county's performance rating click on the following link: Performance Rating.

Approval Process
Prior to communicating the performance rating to the review participant the performance plan and recommended rating is subject to review and approval. This process is designed to minimize the potential for rating errors. For additional information regarding the approval process click on the following link: Calibration.

Common Rating Errors
- Leniency: Giving everyone high ratings regardless of actual performance
- Central Tendency: Clustering all employees in the middle performance categories.
- Recency: Focusing on a recent performance rather than the entire rating period.
- Halo Effect: Letting one favored trait or work factor influence all other areas of performance.
- Horns Effect: Allowing one negative incident to unduly influence more positive performance elements.
- Contrast: Evaluating an employee in relation to another rather than actual performance in relation to job duties, goals and stated performance standards.
- Past Performance: Rating on past performance rather than current year performance.

- Biased Rating: Allowing personal feelings toward employee to influence rating.
- High Potential: Confusing potential with performance.
- Guilt by Association: Evaluation influenced by employee's associations rather than performance.

Hold Performance Discussions

The performance review discussion is one of the most important processes a supervisor completes. This is a time to have a more formalized discussion about performance and it should reflect the day to day coaching that has transpired throughout the year. It should be undertaken with great care and preparation, as the way you handle it can have significant impact on the morale and future performance of your staff members. Formal performance discussions should be held at least once a year. Coaching should occur on a frequent basis. Informal performance update discussions are also valuable and recommended quarterly, at a minimum semi annually.

Prepare for the discussion

Establish date, time and suitable private location. Notify the participant well in advance; providing the date, time, location and what to prepare. Consider providing an outline of discussion items:

- What questions do you have about your job such as priorities, the purpose of particular activities, goals for the future?
- What barriers affect the performance of your job?
- How do you spend the majority of your time?
- What are you doing that you think doesn't seem to add value?
- What do you think you should be doing that you are not?
- What ideas do you have about processes that could be changed to provide better customer service, eliminate waste or make work easier?
- How can I help you succeed?

Review responsibilities and expectations. Compare actual performance to the performance standards. Consider the following:

- What has performance been over the entire evaluation period?
- What performance expectations were met or exceeded; list specific examples.
- What performance standards were not met; list specific examples. What can be done to improve performance?
- Were expectations reasonable and attainable?
- What factors may have affected performance or been beyond the employee's control?
- What has informed my opinions about the employee's performance? Have I been fair and objective?

Conduct the Discussion
- Schedule the performance review meeting in advance to allow both parties sufficient time to prepare for the meeting.
- Conduct the performance discussion in a private area with no interruptions.

- Provide a relaxed setting. Clearly explain the purpose and format of the discussion.
- Start on a positive note; this is an opportunity for recognition and coaching, identifying successes and improvement opportunities.
- Discuss each component of the performance plan. Use documentation to discuss specific instances of performance.
- Give credit for achievement and work done well. Give specific examples and mention resulting benefit to the organization.
- Focus on important performance measures and goals. Minor infractions of little significance can be discussed when they occur and dropped unless you see a trend developing.
- Apply effective communication skills. Encourage engagement by asking open-ended questions gaining insight to the employee's assessment, comments and suggestions.
- Focus on performance, not personality. Describe behaviors, not personality traits or attitudes. Constructive feedback focuses on the specific behavior or action not the individual. Discuss positive as well as unsatisfactory performance. Provide specific examples and explain why these behaviors are problematic or how they benefit the organization.
- Avoid comparisons between employees.
- Seek to understand the presence of any barriers or constraints impacting performance.
- Work for understanding, rather than complete agreement. Be supportive and seek to understand what you can do to be of greater help.
- Avoid surprises; performance problems need to be addressed at the time of occurrence. If performance has not improved, discuss it again and develop an action plan. The performance review discussion is not the place to mention it for the first time. If poor performance is significant, a performance improvement plan should be considered.
- Avoid common rating errors in forming your opinion of performance. Receive feedback in a constructive manner. Listen carefully and seek to understand what is being said. Don't interrupt. Ask questions – get more information.
- Review the major job duties and performance standards to determine if changes need to be made for next year.
- End the Performance Review Discussion on a positive note.

Appeal Process

The county offers an appeal process as a method for addressing and reconciling differences relating to the performance rating. Click on Appeal Process for additional information.

Crow Wing County Performance Plan Document

The following instructions relate to completing the performance plan document. The participant's self-assessment process is explained in greater detail at the end of this section.

Position Objective

This section helps create focus, using a few key sentences to highlight the primary purpose of the position, the reason it exists. This information is generally contained in the job description in the

position objective section. You'll likely find a few sentences that serve to define the primary purpose of the position. These can be used to complete this section of the performance plan document.

Strategic Goal Alignment
Aligning people and resources to meet the strategic priorities of the organization, the department and the work team are critically important. Use this section to reflect critical goals and priorities that are relevant to the position. Review the county strategy map, the department strategy map and related mission, vision and values statements to identify important priorities that help guide the focus of the position and ensure strategic priorities and critical goals are achieved.

Key Performance Measures
Using performance tools such as the balanced scorecard has increased the county's focus on results that matter. These are performance measures that help to ensure that critical goals and priorities for the organization and department are achieved. The job description describes the work that is performed; the accountabilities assigned to the role. Most often these responsibilities are described as tasks such as process mail, perform reception duties, operate equipment, or prepare reports.   The performance measures speak more specifically to the outcomes expected. These generally contain a clearly articulated benchmark or performance target that provides clarity as to what is expected, how much, and by when. Look to the department scorecards and key performance measures for identification of the important priorities. Translate those into actions required from each of the roles you supervise, for example, "answer all calls by the third ring" or "return messages within one business day" or "accurately process all applications within three business days".

Core Competencies
The four core competencies speak to the culture at Crow Wing County. They shape how work gets done, what's valued and important. For us it is about results, relationships, work processes and service to our customers. Every performance plan contains these four core competencies. Our organization uses the Lominger Competency Set. Resources such as the *Lominger Leadership Architect Competency Sort Cards* and *For Your Improvement, a developmental guidebook*, provide clear definitions on skilled versus unskilled behaviors for these four core competencies as well as developmental coaching tips.

Department or Role Specific Competencies
This section identifies additional competencies the department has identified as being important to the operation or individual role. Often these identify skills or abilities the department would like to develop or holds as critically important for the success of their operation. As a general rule, there should be no more than 1- 4 department or role specific competencies. Competencies such as functional/technical skills, decision quality and priority setting are examples of department or role specific competencies. Resources such as the *Lominger Leadership Architect Competency Sort Cards* and *For Your Improvement, a developmental guidebook*, are tools for identifying department and role specific competencies.

Project Assignments
This section is used to identify important projects that require completion or have milestones that will be due during the performance plan cycle. Project assignments may include individual projects, team

projects, department and potentially county-wide initiatives. Projects are generally closely related to the work assignment and involve something that is in addition to the day to day accountabilities.

When completing the project assignment section it is important to identify what is expected to occur and by when. The acronym SMART is used to provide guidance for clearly communicating project assignments. Click SMART to link to more information on writing SMART goals.

Project assignments are often initiated by the individual staff member. These would be job related initiatives the staff member would like to commit to during the coming rating period. The project should be something of value that benefits the organization and supports the departments and/or organization's strategic priorities and/or objectives.

Developmental Initiatives
This section is used to identify training, experience and skill development opportunities for both the current role and future career interests. Consider succession planning including the development of internal candidates for future staffing needs. Developmental initiatives may include traditional educational tracks including post secondary education, seminars and workshops. Development also includes processes such as cross training, mentoring assignments and project assignments that build skills and increase knowledge. When communicating developmental initiatives use the SMART process as a guide for clearly stating the expected action and outcome.

Review of Job Description
Keeping job descriptions current and relevant to the work assignment is an important component of performance communications. At the beginning of the performance planning cycle a review of the job description will help promote common understanding of the position purpose and accountabilities. Changes should be noted as they occur to ensure the description remains relevant and a clear representation of the role. At the conclusion of the performance planning cycle it is again important to review the job description and alert human resources of any changes needed. In situations where there are significant and material changes in the job duties refer to the Compensation Administration Guide to assess whether a reevaluation of the position is appropriate.

Performance Rating
The county uses a five point rating scale. A five point scale is the most commonly used rating format. The overall performance rating should be reflective of the performance in its entirety for the rating period. The "achieves" rating is reflective of "A" level performance. It is used to describe performance that has achieved expectations, where key goals and performance outcomes have been achieved after considering any environmental factors that may have had a positive or negative impact on performance.

The performance rating is applied at the end of the performance planning cycle, covering the period of January 1 to December 31. The rating period would be less for individuals who start their employment during the year, representing year to date performance for those whose employment started prior to fourth quarter. Individuals who start their employment in fourth quarter will not receive a performance

rating for the current year; their performance planning cycle will incorporate the fourth quarter of the current year and a full year for the upcoming performance planning cycle.

The rating definitions are contained on the performance planning document. For reference, the "Achieves" rating is representative of effective performance; think of it as being the equivalent of receiving a letter grade "A" rating.

The ratings of "Exceeds" and "Exceptional" are reserved for those situations where performance has surpassed expectations. Often this involves work products or activities that have gone beyond the scope of the assignment and have had a positive impact on the work unit or organization.

The "In Development or Needs Improvement" applies to situations where performance is not achieving expectations; one or more critical goals are not met. Previous discussion regarding the performance improvement needs should have occurred prior to the rating assignment. A follow-up review is required in six months.

An "Unacceptable" performance rating identifies situations where performance is not meeting expectation and has not adequately progressed following coaching.   A follow-up review is required in three months and again in six months.

Calibration
Performance ratings require the approval of the supervisor and senior management member who oversees the department. This oversight is intended to ensure consistency among raters. Supervisors are required to present objective data for ratings that are above or below the "achieves" level.

Appeal Process
 An appeal process is available to staff members who disagree with the performance rating. For represented staff the appeal process involves the business agent, a county representative and third party neutral from the bureau of mediation services. The three person panel will receive up to ½ hour of presentation from the employee and ½ hour from the rater. The panel will issue a bench decision which will serve as the final and binding rating. The non contract staff will have access to a similar appeal process; the panel will include the county administrator, an elected official and personnel committee representative.

Request for appeals are initiated by the review participant and must be submitted prior to the close of the review period (March 31st) or within 7 days of receiving the review, whichever date occurs later. The request for appeal must be submitted in writing and forwarded electronically to the department head and the human resource director. The appeal request must clearly specify the content and performance rating subject to the appeal as well as the recommended remedy. Represented employees must also send the appeal to their business agent.

Completing the Self-Assessment
The self assessment is an important component of the performance management process. It serves as your reflection on the contributions of the past year as well as your thoughts on the future. This is an opportunity to inventory your accomplishments, include feedback and recognition that has been received throughout the year as well as areas for improvement and opportunities for further development. The self assessment helps keep us focused on the mission critical priorities and the key objectives associated with our role, the department and the organization.

Self-Assessment Paper Work
As the year begins use your copy of the current year's performance plan to log self assessment data, recording accomplishments, milestones, notes and recognition received as well as opportunities and developmental activity as they occur. Capturing performance accomplishments and opportunities in real time makes the year end completion much smoother. We highly recommend adding comments to your copy of the performance plan throughout the year.

You will be notified when your self-assessment is due. When preparing your self-assessment allow for a couple of hours of quiet uninterrupted time. Review the performance plan document, any notes you made throughout the year, and documents or records that you have to reflect on. Consider projects or assignments that you would like to commit to in the coming year, also consider developmental or training opportunities to build needed skills and prepare for future assignments or career opportunities.

Using an electronic copy of your performance plan, enter your self assessment comments under the employee comment section for each area of the performance plan. Refer to the instructions for The Crow Wing County Performance Plan for further information.

Forward the completed self-assessment to your supervisor. The supervisor will add their assessment comments and arrange for a time to meet and discuss the evaluation content. At the review discussion it is important to clarify the points of difference and ensure understanding of performance expectations for the future.

Performance Based Pay Administration
For Performance Based Pay Participants

Wage Adjustment Matrix
For performance based pay participants, (consult labor contract for eligibility), the wage adjustment matrix is developed annually. It represents the annual wage adjustment opportunity. The adjustment amounts are designed to be market competitive, considering local market data, regional and national data. Sources such as the economic cost indicator, local and regional surveys of private and public agencies and local economic conditions are considered in the development of the annual wage adjustment matrix. The wage adjustment matrix is subject to collective bargaining for represented positions. In the case of multi-year labor agreements, a wage adjustment matrix is established for each year of the agreement.

Effective Date

Performance based pay adjustment awards are processed the first pay period in April and effective retroactively to January 1.

Prorated Performance Based Pay Awards

Staff, in a performance based pay eligible position, who join the organization during the first three quarters of the year, are eligible for a prorated performance based pay award based on the number of full months worked during the year. For example an individual who started their employment in mid march would have 9 full months of employment. The prorated formula applied to the wage adjustment would be as follows: 9/12 = 75%.

Staff receiving an "in development or needs improvement" rating during their annual review may be eligible for a prorated wage adjustment after 6 months. If the mid-year evaluation reflects improvement to an "Achieves" performance rating or above, the individual is eligible to receive a prorated portion of the corresponding wage adjustment reflected on the current year wage adjustment matrix. The mid-year prorated formula is 50% representing a wage adjustment earned for ½ of the current rating period.

Staff receiving an "Unacceptable" rating during their annual review may be eligible for a prorated wage adjustment after 6 months. Eligibility for a wage adjustment requires two consecutive quarters of an "Achieves" rating or above. The proration formula is either 50% or 25% of the annual performance based pay award, depending on the quarter in which two consecutive "Achieves" awards are attained.

Resources

Contact the human resource department for additional information and resources relating to the performance management and planning process.