



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
210 Walnut Street, Room 693  
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

November 17, 2011

IOWA BULLETIN NO. IA360-12-7

SUBJECT: PER – FISCAL YEAR 2012 PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

**ACTION BY: NOVEMBER 21, 2011**  
**ACTION BY: NOVEMBER 30, 2011**

**PURPOSE.** To provide guidance and information about setting up fiscal year (FY) 2012 performance plans.

**EXPIRATION DATE.** September 30, 2013

I have received notification that an extension of the November 30, 2011, FY2012 performance plan deadline will most likely not be approved. Accordingly, we must meet this deadline.

Performance plans are documents that should be periodically changed and improved to reflect changes in the agency's goals and objectives. I recently received my Performance Elements and Standards from which all Iowa employee performance goals and objectives must cascade. All State Conservationist performance is aligned as follows:

“The mission results objectives align with **USDA Priority 2:** Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change while enhancing our water resources; and the following NRCS Priorities: **NRCS Priority 1:** Getting more conservation on the ground by improving conservation program/initiative implementation (i.e., Farm Bill, Strategic Initiatives), developing innovative, field focused tools to meet current/future environmental demands, and providing reliable science-based data to customers. **NRCS Priority 2:** Increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency by reforming financial processes, streamlining business processes, enhancing the workforce, and increasing information quality. **NRCS Priority 3:** Create a climate where private lands conservation will continue to succeed by strengthening a culture of innovation and performance and enhancing relationships, resulting in better positioning the Agency for the future.”

The State Conservationist performance objectives for Mission Results are:

**Objective 1:**

Improve the State's operations management, reform financial processes, streamline business processes, enhance the workforce, and increase information quality.

**Outcome:** More efficient and effective use of the State's resources (i.e., time, money, staff) and increased organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

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**Objective 2:** Improve delivery of financial assistance programs, improve contract management, and accelerate conservation implementation.

**Outcome:** Getting more conservation on the ground.

**Objective 3:** Improve delivery of easement programs, management of stewardship lands, and accelerate conservation implementation.

**Outcome:** Getting more conservation on the ground.

**Objective 4:** Accelerate conservation implementation to address critical resource concerns through Landscape Conservation Initiatives and other Special Projects.

**Outcome:** Getting more conservation on the ground.

I have made my plan available to all Leadership Team members. They will begin implementing these priorities into the performance plans for their employees in the state of Iowa.

In addition, the following are new standards to be added to employee performance plans:

**Managers and supervisors must have:**

- **Cultural Transformation (new for FY2012)**
  - Appropriate standards and measures that support inclusion, diversity, and high performance through: customer service, training, and leadership; creating an environment of inclusion and exceptional performance, and; working to eliminate any barriers to operational and service excellence.
  - These standards and measures are to be included in the Supervision/Leadership/Management element. At a minimum, these standards should include the following language: “Supports the Secretary’s initiative for Cultural Transformation through continuous examination and survey of the workforce, customer service, and training. Creates an environment of inclusion, exceptional performance, effective leadership, and works to eliminate any barriers to operational and service excellence. Examines workforce and workplace processes and flexibilities and implements improvements where needed. Supports the Secretary’s initiative for USDA Diversity Recruitment Roadmap by expanding upon mission-specific activities and timelines to ensure diversity recruitment program success and leadership accountability.”

**All employees must have:**

- **Safety and Health (new for FY2012)**
  - Appropriate standards and measures for supervisors/managers and non-supervisory employees that promote safety and health.
  - See samples at:  
<https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/multi/nrcspeople/Performance%20Management/Performance%20Planning/Safety%20and%20Health%20Objective.%20Outcome.%20and%20Performance%20Standards.pdf>.

**When pertinent to the official duties of the position, employees must have:**

- **Outreach (new for FY2012)**
  - Appropriate Objective, Outcomes, and Standards, along with appropriate Measures, to prioritize outreach efforts and service to Socially Disadvantaged Groups.
  - See samples at:  
<https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/multi/nrcspeople/Performance%20Management/Performance%20Planning/Outreach%20Objective,%20Outcomes,%20and%20Standards.pdf>.

As has occurred in the past, generic performance plans are being reviewed and updated for the following list of positions. The Leadership Team is working on these and will have them completed by November 21, 2011. If you are a supervisor of any employee in one of the

positions listed below, please wait until your supervisor has directed you to begin using the new performance plans:

<b>POSITION</b>
Area Program Specialist
Area Resource Conservationist
Area Engineer
Easement Specialist
Project Engineer
Agricultural and Civil Engineer
Administrative Management Assistant (AMA)
Resource Soil Scientist
District Conservationist
Soil Conservationist
Soil Conservation Technician
Resource Conservationist
Engineering Technician (Civil)

If the employees you supervise are not included in the above list, you should begin reviewing your employees' performance plans and implement the changes described above. However, you will need to ensure that your employees' performance plans are cascading from the goals and objectives provided in my performance plan and/or your supervisor's.

**NOTE:** Please review National Bulletin (NB) 360-11-30, Performance Planning for FY2012, dated August 8, 2011. In this bulletin it states that all employees will have between three and seven performance elements. All employees will also have the following critical elements: Mission Results and Customer Service. Additionally, all managers and supervisors will have the following critical elements: Supervision/Leadership/Management and Equal Opportunity/Civil Rights. Non-supervisors must have Personal Contacts – Equal Opportunity/Civil Rights as a stand-alone critical element or it can be incorporated into another critical element.

Additionally, many helpful tools to assist you in preparing FY2012 performance plans are available on the NRCS People Share Point site:

<https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/multi/nrcspeople/Performance%20Management/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fmulti%2fnrcspeople%2fPerformance%20Management%2fPerformance%20Planning&FolderCTID=&View=%7b206C40FF%2d9076%2d4AFA%2dA8B9%2d02EF2F4314E5%7d>.

All performance plans must be complete by November 30, 2011. This means that employees must review the plan and complete EmpowHR processing by checking off in the appropriate box and clicking "Save" by the due date.

If you have any questions concerning this bulletin please work with your supervisor or call the Human Resources staff at 515-284-4587.

/s/Richard Sims  
State Conservationist