

ACTION REQUIRED BY: May 13, 2011

Purpose: To remind all supervisors to complete mid-year performance reviews.

Expiration Date: June 30, 2011

Background: Monitoring performance includes conducting progress reviews and providing ongoing feedback. Monitoring and documenting employees' work efforts are critical to managing and evaluating performance. Supervisors are encouraged to provide performance feedback regularly to their employees throughout the performance year and to promote an environment that encourages performance discussions. The monitoring process includes conducting at least one formal progress review during each appraisal period at approximately midway through the rating cycle to discuss the employee's current level of performance.

Explanation: Supervisors are required to conduct at least one formal progress review during the performance appraisal period. Although NHQ recently published a NB (NB_360_11_14) indicating a due date of May 31, 2011, we are requiring that all New Hampshire Employees have completed their Mid Year Reviews by May 13, 2011. Each year, supervisors are required to conduct a mid-year progress review with each of their employees. Supervisors are reminded that a mid-year progress review is not considered complete until the supervisor and employee have both checked their respective acceptance boxes in EmpowHR. The progress review should include a discussion of the employee's performance against the objectives and standards documented in the employee's performance plan. Supervisors should use the mid-period process as an opportunity to make changes to the performance plan, as appropriate. Plans may be revised to reflect new organizational goals, outside influences beyond an employee's control that make the original goals and standards unachievable; changes in work assignments; or new organizational or management priorities.

If you make changes to the performance objectives or corresponding standards within an element, employees must be given the opportunity to perform under the modified standards for at least 90 days before they can be rated against the modification. Changes to alignment and linkage enhance the existing performance plan with no changes to the existing performance, thus the 90 day period does not apply. If you plan to make any changes to a 2011 Performance Plan, you should make the changes to the Performance Plan in EmpowHR prior to initiating Progress Reviews in EmpowHR.

The supervisor should prepare a written narrative outlining the employee's accomplishments against the standards. The narrative should be documented in EmpowHR, be brief and specific, and include examples of performance, where appropriate. The employee and the supervisor must note in EmpowHR that the progress review has been conducted.

Mid-year Progress Review Process

Monitoring performance is the process of observing an employee's performance results and collecting data on those results during the appraisal period. At a minimum, supervisors are required to evaluate employee performance against the elements and measurable standards in each of their employees' performance plans during a mid-year progress review and the year-end summary rating.

Feedback on performance should be an ongoing process that communicates expectations and what employees should continue doing, stop doing, do less of, or start doing. The feedback process gives supervisors the opportunity to make changes to unrealistic or problematic measurable standards. It also allows supervisors to identify unacceptable performance at any time during the appraisal period. When focusing on performance management as an ongoing, year-round process, the focus shifts from "justifying a rating" at the end of the year to continually improving performance.

Feedback should be objective and fact-based. When providing feedback, avoid making judgments that inhibit impartiality, such as the use of subjective criteria and rater bias.

Guidance is available on the New Hampshire Share Point Site under the HR Tab in the Performance 2012 Folder. There are also online training courses available in AgLearn and on the Department's website. The first is an AgLearn Training Session, titled "USDA NRCS Giving and Receiving Feedback." The course number is NRCS-NEDC-000261. Two additional resources available at http://www.dm.usda.gov/hrsd/perform_mgmt.htm, they are titled: "Great Reviews - How to conduct Effective Mid-Year Reviews", and "Performance Discussion Guide".

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Coupled with Mid-year Progress Reviews, the Supervisor and Employee should also be reviewing the employee's IDP to ensure the employee is on track with his/her IDP. Since an IDP is a working document, changes may be necessary. This is especially important if the employee's duties or responsibilities change.

Training Needs Inventory

While reviewing the IDP, supervisors and employees are encouraged to complete the employee's Training Needs for FY 2012. Supervisors, please use the attached formatted spreadsheet to document your staff's FY 2012 training needs. You only have to complete the sections that are highlighted in yellow and each of your staff should be identified on the sheet. If you have a staff member that does not require training in FY 2012, please document it on the spreadsheet. Also, please consider recent budget cuts when submitting your requests. As you know, we do not have the resources we had in the past. Karen Goulet, HR Specialist, will compile the information and meet with the Leadership Team to determine FY 2012's training needs for New Hampshire. Complying with this request will ensure the State Leadership Team has ample time to review, consolidate and approve training needs for New Hampshire in order to respond to NEDC's request for training needs inventories late spring/early summer. The Draft "Employee Development Guide", which is located on the NH SharePoint site under the HR Tab/Employee Development File can provide information on the Training Needs Inventory Process as well as processes for State Initiatives, external training, NEDC training and any other training processes you may encounter throughout the year.

Questions regarding regulations or either of these processes should be directed to Human Resources. You can reach Karen Goulet at (603) 868-9931 x127.

Sincerely,



RICHARD P. ELLSMORE
State Conservationist - New Hampshire

Attachment (s)

NB 360 -11-14
Training Needs Inventory Spreadsheet

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