U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION	Number: 4040-410
SUBJECT: Creating Individual Development Plans (IDP)	DATE: February 7, 2011
	OPI: Office of Human Resources Management

Section	Page
1 Purpose	1
2 References	1
3 Background	1
4 Special Instructions	2
5 Policy	2
6 Responsibilities	4
Appendix A Guidance for Developing and Individual Development Plan (IDP)	A-1
Appendix B OPM Core Competencies	B-1

1. PURPOSE

This Regulation establishes guidance for Individual Development Plans (IDPs) throughout USDA.

2. REFERENCES

This Regulation must be used in conjunction with:

a. The Government Employees Training Act, Title 5, United States Code, Chapter 41 and related guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management;
b. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 410 - Training;
c. 5 CFR, Part 412, Executive, Management, and Supervisory Development; and
d. Departmental Regulation 4040-430, Performance Management, Section 9a(7); and 9c.

3. BACKGROUND

a. IDPs can be an effective tool for the development of USDA employees. As part of long term career planning, employees, supervisors and training managers can use IDPs to outline training and more importantly, create activities that will lead to a more engaged, effective and skilled workforce. IDPs are also an important part of succession planning by helping employees develop skills that will be needed in the future. The use of IDPs can also help close employee competency gaps.

b. The use of IDPs to develop USDA employees was requested in the Listening Sessions in the 2010 Cultural Transformation Initiative.

c. Agencies must create a culture that encourages, supports, and invests in the short- and long-term development of their employees. Employees' professional development should be an ongoing process to ensure employees are staying current—if not one step ahead—in their fields and mission-critical competencies. Planning for continuous development must be anchored to the agency's mission, goals, objectives, and needs, as well as be tied to the employee's work and career goals.

4. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

This is a new policy.

5. POLICY

a. USDA promotes the use of IDPs as a positive way to develop effective and engaged employees. In that context, every employee should have an IDP. USDA requires IDPs for the following categories of employees (be sure that IDPs comply with any specific program guidance):

(1) Presidential Management Fellows.
(2) Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program participants.
(3) All non-bargaining unit employees.
(4) Any employee who requests an IDP.

If an employee declines an IDP, the supervisor should note on the IDP "No further development desired/required at this time," or if the form has a related check box, check that box. The supervisor should also explain to the employee that the lack of an IDP does not preclude the employee from attending mandatory training or job-related, technical training when directed to do so. When using AgLearn as the primary tool for developing IDPs, create a "no training" IDP in AgLearn to reflect the declination.

b. Agencies with bargaining units should provide notice to the appropriate labor organization and bargain with that organization to include IDPs for bargaining unit employees.

c. Agencies and staff offices may establish additional categories of employees for whom an IDP is required.

d. The use of "My Plan" in AgLearn is encouraged as the common tool for development of IDPs. An AD Form 881, Individual Development Plan, should be used when the My Plan tool is not.

e. IDPs offer the opportunity for a variety of training and development options including, but not limited to classroom and online training. Supervisors and training managers should help identify creative activities to develop employees. Some possible options include:

(1) Establishing an employee mentoring program. Assign mentors to individual employees;

(2) Create a career development center that can serve as an organizational (agency) resource for supervisors and employees;

(3) Formalize "shadowing" programs where employees can shadow other staff members. This can include coworkers as well as organizational leaders;

(4) Facilitate employee participation in special task forces and work groups within and outside the program area that study, develop recommendations and monitor progress of important organizational issues;

(5) Facilitate employee participation in details. While details are typically created to support special projects, or cover short term needs, organizations can establish "training details" whose sole purpose is career development versus completing a specific task;

(6) Include visits to other organizations inside and outside of USDA to learn more about the organization's mission;

(7) Include networking opportunities in IDPs. Organizations can structure events to promote networking or find opportunities in the local area that can be used to help employees develop relationships outside the organization; and

(8) Encourage structured interviews with subject matter experts and organization leaders.

f. Supervisors should consider the following sources to help identify possible training ideas:

(1) The Agency's Chief Training Officer who can provide assistance in assessing employee training requirements;

(2) The Agency's Office of Human Resources to see if the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has established specific competencies for the employee's occupation; and

(3) OPM's core competencies for federal employees in Appendix B.

g. While IDPs are independent of an employee's performance plan they may be discussed with the employee during performance counseling sessions since training and individual development are closely aligned with performance.

h. OHRM has established a web site that provides guidance and tools for the creation and use of IDPs. That site is at www.IDP.usda.gov. Much of the material on the web site is also included in Appendix A. The information on the web site and in Appendix A is provided

to assist you in the development of IDPs. The mandatory policy in this Regulation is in the main text of the document and not in the Appendices or on the web site.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. The Director, OHRM is responsible for:

(1) Establishing USDA's IDP policy and providing technical assistance and advice on issues that arise to Agencies and Staff Offices; and

(2) Monitoring and evaluating compliance with Departmental policy.

b. Agency and Staff Office Heads are responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that supervisors and employees are aware of the value of IDPs; and

(2) Affording training to supervisors and employees during leadership courses, new employee orientation and through recurring notices to employees on how to develop, how to use, and the value of, IDPs. These topics should also be made a regular part of staff and employee meetings.

c. Agency and Staff Office Human Resources Officers are responsible for providing technical assistance to supervisors and employees in the development and use of IDPs.

d. Supervisors are responsible for:

(1) Ensuring employees have an IDP and that the IDP remains current;

(2) Providing feedback to employees about job strengths and areas for improvement; and

(3) Supporting employee training and development, and providing training opportunities and funding if related to the Department's mission and funds are available.

e. Employees are responsible for:

(1) Working with their supervisors to create and maintain an IDP; and

(2) Taking responsibility for self development and improvement on a continual basis.

END

APPENDIX A
GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

SECTION A - INTRODUCTION

1. What is an IDP?

   a. An IDP is:
      (1) A clear statement of an employee's career goals.
      (2) A map for attaining goals that specifies immediate and long-range developmental need.
      (3) An individually-tailored action plan to develop specific competencies (knowledge and skills) needed to improve performance in the employee's present position or to prepare for new responsibilities.
      (4) A written plan for scheduling and managing an employee's development.
      (5) A tool for a supervisor to estimate resources needed for employee development training.
      (6) An agreement between the employee and supervisor based on funds available to meet the employee's and the organization's goals.
      (7) A tool for an organization to develop its workforce to meet future needs.

   b. An IDP is not:
      (1) A corrective action tool for poor performance.
      (2) An unofficial reward system.
      (3) A contract.

2. An IDP can be key to growth and development of an employee and instrumental in helping the employee advance.

3. Before creating an IDP for bargaining unit employees, be sure to check with your labor relations staff to ensure that you comply with any labor-management agreement.

4. Uses of the IDP include to:
   a. Identify employee skill gaps.
   b. Train and develop the organization's workforce.
   c. Promote communication between employees and supervisors.
   d. Determine resources needed for training and developing the workforce.

5. Table A1 outlines the benefits of an IDP to Employees and Supervisors.

TABLE A1

IDP BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES AND SUPERVISORS

EMPLOYEE	SUPERVISOR
Perform duties according to established job standards. Enhance job performance. Set reasonable goals. Assess particular strengths and weaknesses. Schedule and plan individual development each year. Be engaged and make a serious commitment of time. To be successful at career development, it may take several hours of your personal time, but can prove to be well worth the investment.	Aid in the development of their employees to achieve the knowledge, skills and competencies according to their performance standards. Accurately document the current developmental needs of their employees. Consider the unit's and/or agency's organizational needs, mission changes, changes in technology, expected turnover, staffing needs, program plans and future needs for particular skills.

6. Relationship between the IDP and Performance Appraisals. An IDP and a performance appraisal have the same focus; fostering individual and organizational improvement. However, a performance appraisal is based on past performance while an IDP is focused on developing the individual's future performance. They should work together, but they have different purposes.

SECTION B - OVERVIEW OF THE IDP PROCESS

1. The IDP Process. The IDP process is a continuing cycle of planning, implementation and evaluation between an employee and supervisor, for the mutual benefit of both the employee and the organization. It is more than a swift review of course catalogs. It requires time to analyze job requirements; assess current competencies; assess career goals; and make informed decisions about developmental needs.

2. The critical factors throughout all phases of the IDP process are interaction and effective communication between the employee and supervisor. For the process to be effective and meaningful, each phase must be approached as a joint endeavor.

3. Tools for the IDP Process. There are tools available for analyzing jobs to determine

requirements. One that is readily accessible is the position description. Performance standards and performance elements also spell out job requirements.

4. Phases of the IDP Process. The IDP process consists of six phases. Table A2 gives an overview of the process and tells you where in this appendix to look for information on how to complete each phase.

TABLE A2

IDP PHASES

Phase	What Needs to be Done	Section
1	Pre-Meeting Planning	B
2	Employee-Supervisor Meeting	C
3	Selecting Optimum Developmental Activity	D
4	Preparing the IDP Form	E
5	Implementing the IDP	F
6	IDP Follow-Up	G

SECTION C – PLANNING FOR AN IDP MEETING

1. Purpose of Planning. The purpose of the planning phase is to prepare the supervisor and employee for their joint meeting. Both the employee and the supervisor have specific preliminary data-gathering responsibilities. This planning will not only provide time for discussion during the meeting, but should also facilitate the discussion by having this information readily available.

2. Overview. This section describes specific roles and responsibilities related to planning. As you will see, both the employee and the supervisor have many questions to answer and things to consider in preparation for the employee-supervisor meeting.

3. The table A3 gives an overview of the meeting planning process:

TABLE A3

MEETING PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Employee's Role	Supervisor's Role
Ask: Where Have I Been? Ask: Where Am I Now? Ask: Where Can I Go?	Review position description. Review performance appraisal. Review performance standards. Consider future possibilities for employee.

4. Responsibility for Developing an IDP. Both the supervisor and the employee are responsible for developing an IDP. While the employee completes the IDP, with the cooperation and assistance of the supervisor, it is the supervisor who normally has to approve individual activities/training on the IDP.

5. Developing an IDP is a collaborative effort. When the employee and supervisor systematically work through the steps in this guide, an important opportunity exists to:

   a. Discuss critical job requirements and responsibilities.
   b. Outline the knowledge and skills needed to perform the work.
   c. Identify an employee's talents and needs.
   d. Define individual job satisfaction.
   e. Improve both organizational and individual performance.

6. Employee's Responsibilities. This planning process should enable the employee to enter the employee-supervisor meeting with some confidence and a firmer perspective on where he/she is going. Employees have a two-fold role in developing their IDP.

   a. Initiator: Assesses current skills and competencies, explores developing options, looks at the needs of the organization and sees realistic, constant improvement as a responsibility to oneself and the Agency.

   b. Owner: Assembles information, weighs alternatives, makes trade-offs, and proposes objectives and activities.

   c. Employees should also themselves the following questions:

      (1) "Where Have I Been?" To determine where you have been, consider all previous training, development and job experiences. Include:
      (a) On-the-job training.
      (b) Formal training.
      (c) Developmental assignments.

(d) Self-development activities.

(2) *"Where Am I Now?"* To determine where you are now, read your present position description, performance elements, performance standards and past performance evaluations. Think about the work performed over the past year and develop these lists:

(a) I am good at these parts of my job: _____.
(b) In general, I am good at this kind of work: _____.
(c) These managerial or technical competencies are necessary to perform my current duties: _____.
(d) I need to develop or strengthen these competencies: ____.
(e) I need these kinds of assignments or training to develop or strengthen these competencies: _____.

(3) *"Where Can I Go?"* To determine where you can go, focus on these major areas:

(a) Positions in which you are interested.
(b) Short-range goals.
(c) Long-range goals.

d. Tables A4 through A6 will help employees determine where to go and how to focus on positions they are interested in, as well as their short and long range goals.

TABLE A4

POSITIONS

Step	Employee's Action
1	Consider a range of options (such as, positions in your unit, other units of your agency, other USDA agencies) that might interest you.
2	To find out more about other unit positions, talk to the unit's supervisor or contact the servicing personnel office.
3	Based on this examination of options, decide on short-range goals (1-2 years) and long-range goals (3-5 years).

TABLE A5

SHORT-RANGE GOALS
(1-2 years)

Step	Employee's Action
1	Identify the technical or leadership competencies needed to obtain your short-range goals.
2	Ask: • How strong or weak am I in these competencies? • Is it possible for me to develop these competencies? • What kind of training or developmental activities will enable me to develop these competencies?
3	Review short-range goals again to ensure that they are realistic and attainable.

TABLE A6

LONG RANGE GOALS
(3-5 years)

Step	Employee's Action
1	Identify the technical or managerial competencies needed to obtain your long range goals.
2	Ask: • How strong or weak am I in these competencies? • What kind of training or experience will enable me to develop these competencies? • How much? • How long will it take? • Are resources (such as funding and training opportunities) available for me to develop these competencies? • What contribution can I make to the organization?
3	Review long-range goals to ensure that they are realistic and attainable.
4	Rank in priority all the technical or managerial competencies that need to be developed.

7. Supervisor's Responsibilities. In preparing for the employee-supervisor meeting, the supervisor should remember that he/she serves in the following roles:

   a. Consultant: Provides insights about employee's skills and potential and suggests ways to develop these skills, and where employee should focus efforts; shares limits and possibilities

for financing training.

b. Advisor: Shares knowledge about the organization, personal career experiences and recommended training.

c. Planner: Gives insight into the employee's IDP and decides what is in the best interest of the work unit as a whole.

d. Evaluator: Determines if the investment in the training and developmental activities resulted in improved individual and work unit performance.

8. The supervisor should consider the following points concerning the employee's development in preparing for the employee-supervisor meeting: the employee's current level of performance and future possibilities for the employee.

TABLE A7

SUPERVISOR ACTIONS

Step	Supervisor's Action
1	Review the employee's current performance appraisal.
2	Ask: • What are the employee's strengths with regard to leadership or technical competencies? • Is the employee lacking some technical and leadership competencies to perform well? • How can the employee attain these competencies? • Are there any other problems that may be affecting the employee's ability to meet the performance standards? • What program resources can be used to help the employee improve competency levels?
3	Review the current performance standards used for the appraisal.
4	Consider the unit's and/or agency's organizational needs and strategic priorities over the next few years, along with the employee's needs and goals. Ask: • What changes in mission, technology, programs or staff are expected? • Should the employee be developed for added responsibilities? If so, what kind? Where? How? • What kind of development will the employee need to reach the goals? • What resources can be assigned to support this IDP?

SECTION D - EMPLOYEE-SUPERVISOR MEETING

1. Purpose of the Employee-Supervisor Meeting. The employee-supervisor meeting provides the opportunity for open communication about all that has been considered during the pre-meeting planning phase. The employee and supervisor each have specific responsibilities to ensure that the meeting is effective and objectives are met so that an IDP can be prepared.

2. Employee's Responsibilities. Table A8 describes what the employee should review and discuss with their supervisor during the meeting.

TABLE A8

EMPLOYEES ACTION DURING IDP MEETING

Step	Employee's Action
1	Review performance appraisal results.
2	Ask: • Were the performance standards met? If not, identify career goals if skills or knowledge gaps exist that are amenable to development through an IDP.
3	Review short- and long-range goals.
4	Ask: • Are the goals realistic? • Discuss the unit's and/or agency's goals, needs and priorities. To what extent do my individual goals mesh with those of the unit and/or agency? • Are the goals attainable? • What is my level of commitment toward attaining the goals.
5	Review current technical and/or managerial competencies.
6	Ask: • What competencies are currently possessed? • What competencies need to be developed?
7	Identify developmental needs by determining the difference between the competencies currently possessed and those needed to meet goals.
8	Rank developmental needs based on the unit's and/or agency's organizational needs and priorities, as previously reviewed.
9	Discuss training and developmental activities to meet my needs.
10	Select developmental activities and training that will meet needs. Consider a variety of developmental approaches and strategies, and listen to the supervisor's ideas. See Section D of this guide.

3. Supervisor's Responsibilities. During the meeting, the supervisor should:

a. Provide feedback to the employee on everything discussed, striving for a two-way discussion.
b. Be realistic and objective about which activities will best suit the needs of the employee, as well as the broader needs of the unit and/or agency.
c. Discuss in detail the optimum developmental activities that are possible and appropriate.
d. Take time to prioritize the developmental activities with the employee.
e. Identify criteria used to evaluate employee's development.
f. Provide employees to the extent possible time on the job, fiscal resources, or access to training and learning activities.

SECTION E - SELECTING OPTIMUM DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

1. The matching of identified developmental needs with available developmental activities (training and non-training) is a major step in the IDP process.

2. A major difficulty supervisors and employees encounter in matching needs with activities is that of selecting the optimum developmental activity, which provides maximum learning within the boundaries of the organization's:

   a. Mission.
   b. Budget.
   c. Workload.
   d. Travel.
   e. Staffing.
   f. Time constraints.

3. To minimize this problem, a variety of developmental approaches and strategies should be considered. We often think of training only in terms of formal training courses. Actually there are four basic types of developmental experiences to consider in planning the IDP:

   a. On-the-job-training.
   b. Formal classroom training.
   c. Self-development.
   d. Developmental activities.

4. While all four types of experiences have their individual advantages and disadvantages, it is crucial to stress the importance of choosing the appropriate experience that most effectively and efficiently meets specific needs. Although it would be ideal to incorporate a combination of all four types, the resources available to the supervisor may not make this possible. That is why an open discussion between the employee and supervisor concerning all options is necessary to pinpoint what is feasible for approval.

   a. On-the-Job-Training. Structured on-the-job-training is the most frequently used method of individualized learning. In this situation, the employee is counseled and coached while actually performing official duties. It usually involves individual instruction by the

supervisor or a designated staff member because of his/her experience in the task or procedure to be learned. This approach can be used to teach employees new procedures, tasks and technology.

b. Formal Classroom Training. This training may take place away from your work site. Depending on the objectives, specific program and instructor's approach, this experience can be very valuable. It may be the only alternative you have to acquire specific or specialized technical or managerial competency.

c. Self-Development. When an employee aspires to a new career and his/her developmental needs cannot be directly related to present or anticipated work assignments, or resources are not available, the employee may undertake self-development activities:

(1) Taking evening or weekend courses at local schools.
(2) Watching educational or training videotapes.
(3) Using correspondence and other self-study courses.
(4) Reading books and other publications or journals.
(5) Using PC tutorials or computer assisted training programs.

Remember, what employees want in terms of development and what the supervisor can authorize may be different. The supervisor by law can only authorize certain types of activities on the job. To meet all goals, it may be necessary for the employee to gain some competencies on their own time. Funding should be discussed between the employee and the supervisor.

d. Developmental Activities. One of the best ways to train for added responsibilities or higher job opportunities is through developmental activities. With the support and assistance of the supervisor, the employee's present job can be restructured or arrangements made to have the employee temporarily transferred to another area to learn firsthand the necessary technical and managerial competencies required for effective performance in that job. Examples of developmental activities include the following list:

(1) Shadowing: Providing the opportunity to observe a well qualified, journeyman level employee perform a particular skill. Immediately after the shadowing period, the employee needs to have the opportunity to perform the same skill and be given feedback on that performance.
(2) Detail/Rotational Assignments: Short-term assignment particularly appropriate for important skills that make up a small portion of an individual's job, but can lead to full-time work in that field.
(3) Task Force Assignments: This is particularly effective if the employee has an opportunity to work with well qualified people who will provide feedback to the learner on his/her performance and participation in the group.

5. Development of Job Aides. A job aid requires that the employee develop a product that will assist in the performance of the job, while, at the same time, serving as a vehicle for learning job-related information. Three types of job aids include: cross-program assignments; special work

projects; and coaching lower level employees.

SECTION F - PREPARING THE IDP FORM

1. The IDP form is a means of formally documenting a training plan. Once the employee-supervisor meeting has been held, use the My Plan feature in AgLearn or AD form 881, Individual Development Plan to create an IDP.

2. Table A9 describes the process of completing the IDP form.

TABLE A9

IDP COMPLETION

Step	Who	Responsibilities
1	Employee	Completes the form.
2	Employee and Supervisor	Discusses and agrees on contents of the form.
3	Supervisor	Ensures that the form is properly completed.
4	Employee and Supervisor	Signs the form.
5	Employee and Supervisor	Keeps a copy of the form.
6	Supervisor	Forwards a copy of the form to the appropriate office.
7	Employee	Implements the IDP.

SECTION G - IMPLEMENTING THE IDP

1. Employee's Responsibilities. Completion of the IDP form acknowledges the employee's commitment to accomplish the planned training and development. To implement the plan effectively, three actions are required on the employee's part:

   a. Documentation: Formal training and developmental activities that involve exchange of funds, official time or both must be documented.
   b. Participation: Once the request for training is approved, it is up to the employee to carry through with the experience. The supervisor will support and guide the employee, but the primary responsibility for successfully reaching the goals rests with the employee. It will take time to reach the goals, but the long-term investment will be worth it.
   c. Evaluation: Just taking a course or being involved in a developmental assignment does not necessarily mean the employee has fully met his/her commitment. Training and development needs are identified primarily to enable one to perform with greater ease and efficiency on the job, thus helping the agency accomplish its mission. The crucial step is

applying what is learned to the job and practicing it. After each developmental activity, the employee should meet and discuss with the supervisor the developmental experience and lessons learned and how those lessons can be applied to the employee's current work.

2. Supervisor's Responsibilities. These include: periodically reassess employee's plan; meet with employee after each training and developmental activity; and document how the IDP has resulted in changes to the employee's performance.

SECTION H - AFTER THE IDP IS COMPLETED

1. What will happen to the IDP? An analysis of all of the organization's IDPs can be used to identify the agency's training needs and set its priorities. This process provides the agency with a tool to develop total budget data regarding training, as well as scheduling work to accommodate training needs. The IDP also provides the agency with some measure of the supervisor's interest in employee development.

2. Reviewing or revising an IDP. An IDP is a plan for development, not a contract in stone. IDPs should be reviewed, revised or both as follows: at progress reviews of the performance plans; upon completion of training; and as performance plans and job assignments change.

APPENDIX B
OPM CORE COMPETENCIES

1. A competency is an observable, measurable pattern of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully. The reminder of this appendix describes OPM's core competencies and their associated behaviors.

2. Core Competency – Integrity/Honesty

a. Definition: Instills mutual trust and confidence; creates a culture that fosters high standards of ethics; behaves in a fair and ethical manner towards others, and demonstrates a sense of corporate responsibility and commitment to public service.

b. Behaviors

- Uses honesty and appropriate disclosure with management, peers, and partners.
- Encourages others to consider ethics as an integral factor in making individual and team decisions.
- Takes actions which are consistent with stated personal and organizational values.
- Makes a personal effort to treat and delegate to all group members fairly.
- Models and encourages high-standards of honesty, integrity, trust, openness, and respect for others.
- Demonstrates congruence between statements and actions.
- Ensures that the organization's activities, services, or products reflect higher management policies.
- Creates a culture of ethical standards within organizations and communities.
- Helps create key values and shared vision and uses these principles to guide action.
- Uses formal authority and power in a fair and respectful manner.
- Gives people considerable responsibility for their work.
- Earns and maintains the trust of others by acting with statements made.
- Maintains principles even when it is unpopular to do so.

3. Core Competency - Resilience

a. Definition: Deals effectively with pressure; maintains focus and intensity and remains optimistic and persistent even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks. Effectively balances personal life and work.

b. Behaviors

- Maintains a state of readiness for emergencies, outbreaks, recalls, or other public health incidents so that rapid deployment or other actions may be executed without delay.
- Maintains professional composure when others disagree with own professional opinion or analysis.
- Reflects on negative experiences in order to draw out meaningful lessons and knowledge.
- Thinks flexibly and creatively under stress.
- Moves past unfortunate situations and faces new tasks with a clear mind and optimism.
- Recognizes and effectively deals with stress and pressure.
- Demonstrates a belief in one's own abilities, ideas, and self worth and maintains a positive view of self during difficult times.
- Responds constructively to reversals and setbacks.
- Maintains a professional demeanor in stressful and difficult situations.
- Maintains a healthy balance between personal life and work.

4. Core Competency - Flexibility

a. Definition: Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing conditions or unexpected obstacles. Adjusts rapidly to new situations that warrant attention and resolution.

b. Behaviors

- Recognizes and helps remedy barriers to implementing change.
- Successfully provides a visible anchor for others in times of great change.
- Questions the status quo by asking how things can be done more efficiently or inefficiently to support the organization's mission.
- Recognizes potential opportunities and is open to change when presented with a new perspective.
- Is open-minded and positive when dealing with change and uncertainty.
- Adapts to the situation or to others' responses by basing actions and decisions on the situation.
- Prioritizes actions effectively and efficiently in order to respond to numerous and diverse challenges and/or demands.
- Changes mid-term strategies and operations, or modifies processes to meet long-term challenges and demands.
- Shifts gears at a moment's notice to support the team in a crisis.
- Balances what needs to be done with what others want done.
- Remains open to new ideas and approaches.
- Works concurrently on relating or conflicting priorities without losing focus or attention.

- Maintains organization's productivity, quality, and morale during periods of change.
- Establishes a balance among competing objectives to accomplish overall organizational goals.
- Focuses on high priority issues or tasks while facing constant interruptions.

5. Core Competency - Interpersonal Skills

a. Definition: Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful, compassionate and sensitive, and treats others with respect.

b. Behaviors

- Provides stability for other members of the team by remaining calm and rational in challenging situations.
- Establishes rapport with people by sharing own experiences, listening to others and identifying commonalities that create personal connections.
- Acts in a fashion that fosters an environment of understanding and acceptance of differences.
- Removes information barriers by listening to and respecting the ideas of others.
- Acts as an effective listener with diverse audiences.

6. Core Competency - Oral Communication

a. Definition: Makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals or groups; listens effectively and clarifies information as needed; facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters atmosphere of open communication.

b. Behaviors

- Communicates effectively when speaking to both technical and non-technical audiences.
- Maintains professional composure when others disagree with own professional opinion or analysis.
- Represents and articulates viewpoints in a manner that effectively influences people from other disciplines.
- Values diversity when communicating orally and in writing to internal or external audiences.
- Communicates effectively both internally and externally to build effective partnerships and inspire support and/or actions from others.
- Represents and articulates own viewpoints in a way that positively influences the conversation.
- Uses relevant data or information to create a meeting of the minds among stakeholders with differing viewpoints.

- Demonstrates competence in oral communications through one-on-one, small group and large group settings.
- Solicits input from individuals and organizations.
- Communicates effectively with diverse populations through the accurate use of demographic, statistical, programmatic and scientific information customized to the level of understanding, interest and comprehension represented by the audience.
- Uses data or concrete examples to provide direct persuasion in a discussion or presentation.
- Expresses ideas and facts in a clear, organized and convincing manner.
- Demonstrates the ability to express concepts, thoughts, and ideas clearly and concisely so as to be easily understood by all audiences.
- Communicates effectively with diverse populations.

7. Core Competency - Problem Solving

a. Definition: Identifies and analyzes problems; distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions; provides solutions to individual and organizational problems.

b. Behaviors

- Thinks "outside the box" when troubleshooting problems.
- When investigating particular conditions, facts, or programs, soundly integrates professional, scientific and/or regulatory perspectives.
- Asks questions to try to piece together "unrelated" information, events, or situations.
- Searches for and conceptualizes the underlying, systemic causes driving a problem.
- Identifies trends or patterns when reviewing data; rapidly identifies all possible references.
- Intuitively forms ideas that bring clarity to the many possibilities in a complex situation.
- Makes connections between and among seemingly different situations that reveal key issues or opportunities.
- Analyzes and integrates information to draw reasonable, logical conclusions.
- Solves problems by identifying causes and analyzing alternative solutions.
- Sees patterns or trends in the problem areas and develops and implements innovative approaches for addressing.
- Uses simple rules, past experience and common sense to identify and solve problems.
- Uses knowledge of theory or past trends to look at current situations.
- Creates new concepts that are not obvious to others nor learned from education or experience in order to solve issues.

- Uses several analytic or creative ways to break apart complex issues into component problems or issues.
- Displays foresight when approaching issues and finding a resolution.
- Takes corrective action when problems arise.

8. Core Competency - Continual Learning

a. Definition: Grasps the essence of new information; masters new technical and business knowledge; recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; pursues self-development; seeks feedback from others and opportunities to master new knowledge.

b. Behaviors

- Learns and develops new skills or behaviors to adapt to constant, sometimes turbulent change.
- Shows interest in or seeks out new approaches, tools, methods and/or technologies in own field or expertise on the job.
- Stays current with respect to industry standards, procedures, emerging trends, etc.
- Takes steps to maintain an in-depth understanding of key business issues and implications.
- Demonstrates an in-depth understanding of potential solutions in areas of expertise that could impact the business.
- Maintains broad learning perspective by tapping into the knowledge of a wide variety of sources to create a vision of the future and resulting problems or issues.
- Seeks and makes use of feedback from others.
- Invests time and energy into self development and growth.
- Creates a learning network or environment.
- Grasps new knowledge; masters new information.
- Seeks new sources of information to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Integrates knowledge, skills, and abilities into work process.
- Recognizes own strengths and weaknesses.

9. Core Competency - Written Communication

a. Definition: Expresses written facts and ideas in a clear, convincing, and organized manner.

b. Behaviors

- Communicates ideas effectively both internally and externally to build effective partnerships and inspire support and/or action from others.
- Articulates viewpoints in a way that positively influences the position of the document/report.

- Communicates effectively with diverse populations through the accurate use of various sources of information customized to the level of understanding, interest and comprehension represented by the audience.
- Develops and keeps up-to-date technical or regulatory guidance, often for complex topics, that is readily understood by its users.
- Communicates effectively in writing to both technical and non-technical audiences.
- Presents technical information in a manner that effectively influences people from other disciplines.
- Values diversity when communicating orally and in writing to internal or external audiences.
- Transmits written information and ideas in a clear, concise, comprehensive, accurate, and organized manner, including articulation and grammar.
- Uses relevant supporting data, concrete examples or other information to persuade others and build a common understanding among stakeholders with differing viewpoints.
- Uses the media, advanced technologies, and community networks to communicate information, when applicable.
- Communicates effectively in formal and informal written communications.
- Conveys complex concepts in simple language.