**Supervisor’s Guide to Developing Individual Development Plans**

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a valuable performance enhancement tool for all federal employees. The IDP can assist those who want to enhance their skills and strengths, learn more about issues relevant to the performance of the agency, and grow personally and professionally. Bureaus/Offices may require the use of an IDP at their discretion. Check with your Human Resources Office for the IDP or other appropriate form used by your Bureau/Office to document employee development needs.

The following is a brief outline of the goals, definition, and steps in creating an IDP.

**Goals:** The employee and the supervisor should develop goals together. The IDP should connect the employee’s career interests with the organizational mission and priorities. The most common goals of an IDP are to:

* Learn new skills to improve current job performance
* Maximize performance in support of organizational requirements
* Increase interest level, challenge, and satisfaction in current position
* Establish a career path, identifying the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for professional growth

**Definition:** An IDP may identify a broad spectrum of developmental activities, including on-the-job training, distance learning, formal classroom training, details, shadow assignments and self-development. It balances the needs of the organization and of the employee beginning with a focus on maximizing employee performance in the current job.

An IDP is a guide to help employees reach individual career goals within the context of organizational objectives. It is a developmental action plan to grow employees from their current state by providing systematic steps to improve and build on strengths. An IDP is a partnership between the employee and the supervisor for personal and professional development. Preparing an IDP involves open feedback, clarification, and discussion about developmental needs, goals, and plans. Periodic communication between the supervisor and the employee is key to ensure currency and relevance of an IDP.

***An IDP is not a:***

* Performance appraisal. It is not used to determine pay, awards or other personnel actions based on performance.
* Contract for training. Final approval of training opportunities is made based on factors such as timing and budget availability.
* Position description. It is not used for clarifying discrepancies in the job duties.
* Guarantee of promotion or reassignment to another position. While the developmental activities in an IDP may include training that might qualify the employee for another position or grade, there is no guarantee of advancement.

**Responsibilities:** As in all aspects of the employee/supervisor relationship, direct and open communication is the key to the success of an IDP. The following responsibilities address the IDP process specifically.

The **employee** is responsible for:

* Assessing their own skills necessary for performing the current position
* Suggesting developmental experiences which would enhance the skills necessary for performing in the current position and to achieve desired career goals
* Identifying personal career goals
* Understanding what skills are necessary for meeting career goals
* Participating in open discussions with the supervisor concerning the elements of the IDP
* Completing the developmental experiences in the IDP as approved by the supervisor
* Alerting the supervisor when the IDP needs review and updating

The **supervisor** is responsible for:

* Providing constructive feedback to the employee about skills necessary to perform the duties of the current position
* Reviewing employee suggestions for developmental experiences and making additional suggestions which would enhance the skills necessary to perform in the current position
* Coaching the employee about stated career goals
* Identifying developmental experiences which would enhance the skills necessary for performing in subsequent positions aligned with the employee’s career goals
* Participating in open discussions with the employee concerning the elements of the IDP, and periodically reviewing and updating the IDP
* Giving final approval for specific developmental experiences
* Monitoring the progress of the employee in completing training and the developmental experiences in the IDP

**Individual Development Plan (IDP)**

Bureaus/Offices may require the use of an IDP at their discretion. Check with your Human Resources Office for the IDP or other appropriate form to be used by your Bureau/Office for documenting employee developmental needs.

**IDP Performance Year: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Employee’s Name | Position Title/Grade | Office Phone | Office Fax | Email Address |
| Current Supervisor’s Name | Supervisor’s Title | Office Phone | Office Fax | Email Address |
| Goals for Successful Performance in Current Position | Short-term Career Goals (2-3 years) | Long-term Goals (3+ years) | | |
| Developmental Objectives: What do you need to do this year to work towards your goals? | Developmental Activities (training, assignments, projects, details, etc.) | Proposed Dates | Estimated Costs | Date Completed |
| Notes: | | Employee’s Signature/Date | | |
| Supervisor’s Signature/Date | | |

**Instructions for Completing the IDP**

**Employee Development and Career Goals** – The employee and supervisor work together to complete the goals for successful performance in the employee’s current position and the employee’s short- and long-term career goals.

**Developmental Objectives** – Describe what the employee needs to do this year to work toward his/her goals. Objectives describe what the employee needs to learn or achieve in order to reach his/her goals.

**Method of Training and Time Frame** – Determine what type of training or activity is needed to accomplish the employee’s developmental goals. It could be on-the-job training, a detail, a formal training course or a combination of methods. Identify the proposed dates for the training or activity in the “Proposed Dates” column. Enter the actual or estimated cost of the activity in the “Estimated Costs” column. This column can be used in preparing your office’s annual budget. Once the training is completed, write the date in the “Date Completed” column.

Methods of Training:

* On-the-Job Training – Can include coaching by a skilled individual or details into positions that will give the employee the skills and knowledge needed.
* Details – Temporary assignments to another location and/or position to gain specific knowledge and/or experience.
* Courses – Formal training courses, e.g., from your bureau/office, local universities, commercial vendors.
* Webcasts/Computer-Based/Online Learning – A variety of topics are available through your Bureau/Office via webcasts, software packages, and online training.

**Discussing the Development Plan** – Supervisors should discuss the IDP with the employee and make any necessary modifications. The supervisor and employee should sign and date the plan. The IDP should be completed within 45 days from the beginning of the performance year.

**Review and Modifications** – The IDP should be reviewed at each performance review and modified as situations or needs change.