

Individual Development Planning

INTRODUCTION

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.

This tool contains the following information and guidance:

- Purpose and benefits of individual development planning
- Roles and responsibilities
- Individual development planning process
- Key elements of an individual development plan.

Associated Web sites are included at the end of this section.

PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Individual development planning helps identify the employee's career development goals and the strategies for achieving them. Typically, the employee will complete an Individual Development Plan on an annual basis. This plan is intended to:

- Encourage the employee to take ownership of his/her career development
- Provide an administrative mechanism for identifying and tracking development needs and plans
- Assist in planning for the agency's training and development requirements.

Individual Development Planning (continued)

PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (continued)

Individual development planning benefits the organization by aligning employee training and development efforts with the mission, goals, and objectives of the agency. Supervisors develop a better understanding of their employees' professional goals, strengths, and development needs—which can result in more realistic staff and development planning. Employees take personal responsibility and accountability for their career development, acquiring or enhancing the skills they need to stay current in required skills.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors and employees work together to complete the employee's development plan, but employees are ultimately responsible for taking the initiative for their professional development.

Employees should:

- Assess their level of competence vis-à-vis the competencies, skills, and knowledge required in their jobs
- Identify their professional career goals and development needs and various training and development opportunities that will help them achieve those goals and meet those needs
- Periodically assess their progress toward reaching their goals.

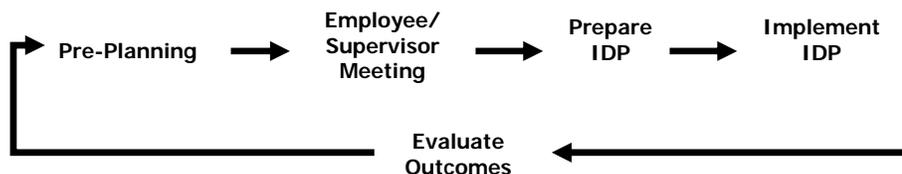
Supervisors should:

- Realistically assess employees' strengths and development needs vis-à-vis organizational requirements
- Provide regular (e.g., annual) opportunities to discuss and plan for employees' development
- Ensure the alignment of employees' career goals and development needs to work unit goals/objectives
- Help employees identify appropriate training and development opportunities
- Evaluate outcomes of employees' training and development efforts.

Individual Development Planning (continued)

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

The individual development planning process requires communication and interaction between the supervisor and the employee. It involves five phases:



1. **Pre-Planning** – Supervisor and employee prepare independently for meeting
2. **Employee/Supervisor Meeting** – Discuss employee strengths, areas for improvement, interests, goals, and organizational requirements
3. **Prepare Individual Development Plan** – Employee, in consultation with supervisor, completes plan for individual development
4. **Implement Plan** – Employee pursues training and development identified in plan
5. **Evaluate Outcomes** – Supervisor/employee evaluate usefulness of training and development experiences

KEY ELEMENTS OF AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Within the Federal Government, there are no regulatory requirements mandating employees complete Individual Development Plans (IDPs). However, it is considered a good management practice, and many agencies have developed their own IDP planning process and forms. While there is no one “correct” form for recording an employee’s development plan, an effective plan should include the following key elements:

- **Employee profile** – name, position title, office, grade/pay band
- **Career goals** – short-term and long-term goals with estimated and actual completion dates

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KEY ELEMENTS OF AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CONTINUED)

- **Development objectives** – linked to work unit mission/ goals/objectives and employee's development needs and objectives
- **Training and development opportunities** – specific formal classroom training, workshops, rotational assignments, shadowing assignments, on-the-job training, self-study programs, professional conferences/seminars, etc., that employee will pursue with estimated and actual completion dates
- **Signatures** – including supervisory and employee signatures and date.



This OPM site provides sources for training information and human resource development issues, including:

- Career assessment
- Core competency resources
- Learning technology resources
- Training resources
- Knowledge management resources.

<http://www.opm.gov/hrd/lead/trnginfo/trnginfo.asp#career>

Below are the Web sites of several agencies that have individual development planning and career management programs in place. Please note OPM does not endorse any particular IDP format. The information you will find on these Web sites is for illustrative purposes.

- Department of Commerce
<http://ohrm.doc.gov/employees/training/idp-2001.pdf>
- Department of Energy
<http://worklifecenter.doe.gov/CPTD.htm#IDD>
- Department of the Interior, Personnel Manager
www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/develop.html

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- Department of the Interior, Career Manager
www.doi.gov/octc/index.html
- National Institutes of Health
<http://wlc.od.nih.gov/careers/idp/>
- Department of Labor
www.doleta.gov/