

Performance Appraisal Assessment Tool Instructions

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Introduction

Developing a result-oriented performance culture is critical to successfully achieving organizational goals and objectives. One tool Federal managers can use to develop results-oriented performance cultures is their appraisal programs. Appraisal programs provide a formal process for communicating organizational goals and individual performance expectations, promoting accountability for achieving those goals, identifying developmental needs, assessing performance using appropriate measures, improving individual and organizational performance, and using the results of the appraisal as a basis for appropriate personnel actions. Effective appraisal programs are fair, credible, and transparent by providing for the following:

- **Alignment.** Employee performance plans align with and are designed to support organizational goals.
- **Results-focus.** Employee performance plans hold employees accountable for achieving results appropriate to their level of responsibility.
- **Credible Measures.** Employee performance plans provide for balance, so that in addition to measuring expected results, the performance plans include appropriate measures, such as quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost-effectiveness, indicators of competencies, and customer perspective. In addition, for managers and supervisors, performance plans should also incorporate employee perspective.
- **Distinctions in levels of performance.** The appraisal program provides for multiple levels to appraise performance and rating officials use those levels to clearly describe distinctive levels of performance and appropriately rate employee performance.
- **Consequences.** The result of appraisal is used for recognizing top performers and addressing poor performance.
- **Employee Involvement.** Employees are involved in the design of the appraisal program and in the development of their performance plans.
- **Feedback and Dialogue.** The appraisal program establishes a performance feedback process that ensures a dialogue between supervisors, managers, and employees throughout the year.
- **Training.** The appraisal program requires that executives, managers, supervisors, and employees receive adequate training and retraining on the performance appraisal program. In addition, supervisors must have the competencies necessary for managing performance.
- **Organizational Assessment and Guidance.** The appraisal program requires that appropriate organizational performance assessments are made and communicated to rating officials, and that guidance is provided by the head of the agency or designee on how to incorporate organizational performance into the assessment process, especially regarding the appraisal of managerial and supervisory employees.
- **Oversight and Accountability.** The head of the agency or designee has oversight of the results of appraisals and awards, ensures that the program operates effectively and efficiently, and ensures that appraisals and awards are based on performance. In addition, managers and supervisors are held accountable for the performance management of their subordinates.

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As the initiative owner for the Strategic Management of Human Capital, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is committed to providing products and technical assistance to help agencies design and operate appraisal programs that support results-focused high-performance cultures. This tool can help agencies assess their appraisal programs' status. By completing the tool, agencies will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their programs and provide the information they need to develop plans and strategies for making any improvements necessary.

Instructions

This document includes instructions for completing the Appraisal Program Assessment Tool. The assessment tool questions are included here and the instructions for answering the questions are in blue font and also labeled as instructions.

Each agency is to complete the assessment tool for *each* appraisal program operating within the agency. For example, if an agency has an appraisal system that has 10 appraisal programs operating within that system, an assessment tool must be completed for each program. (See the glossary for definitions of a system and a program.) A copy of the appraisal program description must be attached to the tool.

The assessment tool addresses appraisal programs that cover General Schedule, Prevailing Rate, and other employees, and excludes programs that cover the Senior Executive Service, the Senior Foreign Service, and the Foreign Service.

A glossary of terms follows these instructions. Following the assessment questions are the scoring sheets. Two scores will be given—the first score will be for the design and implementation of the program. The second score will be for the strategy for improvement of the appraisal program, if it is warranted. OPM will be completing the scoring sheets and providing the scores to the agency. (If the appraisal program scores above 90 for design and implementation, the agency may not need to develop strategy for improvement and so may not receive the second score.)

If you have questions as you are conducting this assessment, please contact your OPM Human Capital Officer.

Return the completed assessment to your OPM Human Capital Officer by email or by mail at:

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Division for Human Capital Leadership
and Merit System Accountability
1900 E Street, NW, Room 7470
Washington, DC 20415

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Glossary

Appraisal means the process under which performance is reviewed and evaluated.

Appraisal period means the established period of time for which performance will be reviewed and a rating of record will be prepared.

Appraisal program means the specific procedures and requirements established under the policies and parameters of an agency appraisal system.

Appraisal system means a framework of policies and parameters established by an agency for the administration of performance appraisal programs.

Critical element means a work assignment or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance on the element would result in a determination that an employee's overall performance is unacceptable.

Performance expectation in this document has the same definition as critical element.

Performance plan means all of the written, or otherwise recorded, performance elements that set forth expected performance.

Performance standard means the management-approved expression of the performance threshold(s), requirement(s), or expectations(s) that must be met to be appraised at a particular level of performance.

Progress review means communicating with the employee about performance compared to the performance standards and critical and non-critical elements.

Rating of record means the performance rating prepared at the end of an appraisal period for performance of agency-assigned duties over the entire period and the assignment of a summary level within a pattern (as specified in 5 CFR 430.208(d)) or in accordance with 5 CFR 531.404(a)(1).

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Program Information

Sections 1 through 5 ask for basic background information about the appraisal program. While this information does not address the effectiveness of the program, it sets the stage for understanding how the program operates. Effectiveness questions are included in sections 6 through 16.

1. Coverage

a. What department/agency does this appraisal program operate within?

Instruction: Use the highest level of your organization for this response. For example, if this appraisal program covers the employees of a component/organization/bureau/operative within a Department, list the name of the Department here.

b. What component/organization/bureau/operative within the agency does this program operate within?

Instruction: List the name of the component/organization/bureau/operative here. For example, if this appraisal program covers the employees of the Federal Highway Administration within the Department of Transportation, report the Federal Highway Administration here.

If the appraisal program covers the same organization as was reported in 1a, repeat the name of the organization here. For example, if the Department has one appraisal program that covers all Departmental employees (excluding SES), repeat the name of the Department here.

c. How many total employees are covered by this appraisal program (including supervisors)?

Instruction: Identify the total number of employees covered by this program at the end of the appraisal period. Do not include executives, but do include managers and supervisors. The answer to this question will be used when computing percentages of employees in several of the following questions in this tool. (This data will not be used when computing percentages for the Federal Human Capital Survey questions).

d. How many managers and supervisors are covered by this appraisal program?

Instruction: Identify the number of managers and supervisors (that is, the number of rating officials) who are covered by this appraisal program at the end of the appraisal period. Do not include executives. This document assumes that the managers and supervisors are the rating officials who are responsible for the performance management of subordinates.

e. What pay plan covers the employees who are covered by this program, that is, General Schedule, Wage Grade, etc.?

Instruction: List the pay plan(s) that apply to the employees covered by this appraisal program. This could include General Schedule (GS), Wage Grade, GS-equivalents,

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Administratively Determined (AD), Senior Level (SL) or Scientific and Professional (ST), etc.

f. Who is excluded from this appraisal program?

Instruction: List all the positions or groups of positions that are excluded from this appraisal program. This includes any administrative exclusions as outlined in 5 CFR 430.202c or specific agency exclusions approved by OPM as outlined in 5 CFR 430.202d, or any other exclusions that your appraisal program has established.

g. When was this appraisal program implemented? (Month and Year)

Instruction: Report the month and year that this appraisal program was implemented. For agencies covered by 5 U.S.C. 43, the month and year of the implementation of your appraisal program is not necessarily the same month and year that OPM approved the agency's appraisal system. The appraisal system approved by OPM is generally an "umbrella" system that establishes very broad parameters for the operation of appraisal programs within the agency. (See the Glossary.) While an agency will have one appraisal system approved by OPM, it may have several appraisal programs operating within that system. For the purposes of answering this question, report the month and year of the implementation of the appraisal program, not the agency's system.

2. Appraisal Period

a. What is the length of the appraisal period?

Instruction: Generally, the length of an appraisal period is one year.

b. What are the beginning and ending months and dates of the appraisal period?

Instruction: Report the dates of the cycle of the appraisal period. For example, if the appraisal period coincides with the fiscal year, report that the appraisal period runs from October 1 through September 30.

3. Minimum Appraisal Period

a. What is the minimum period of performance that must be completed before a performance rating can be given (e.g., 90 days, 120 days)? (Note: if different groups under this program have different minimum period lengths, identify each group and the length of its minimum period.)

Instruction: Generally, most appraisal programs establish one period of time for which employees must work at a minimum before they can be rated (that is, the minimum period). But, if your program has established different minimum periods for different types of work, such as 60 days for administrative support positions and 120 days for professional or scientific positions, report those different groups and applicable minimum periods here.

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4. Summary Levels

a. How many summary levels does the appraisal program use?

Instruction: For agencies covered by 5 U.S.C. 43, the number of summary levels you will report will be two, three, four or five. For example, a “pass/fail” program has two summary levels for appraising performance.

b. List the pattern (ranging from patterns A through H as described in 5 CFR 430 subpart B).

Instruction: The regulations at 5 CFR 430.208d include a matrix of the available patterns of summary levels, ranging from two levels to five levels:

Pattern	Summary level				
A	1		3		
B	1		3		5
C	1		3	4	
D	1	2	3		
E	1		3	4	5
F	1	2	3		5
G	1	2	3	4	
H	1	2	3	4	5

Select and report the appropriate pattern. If your agency is not covered by 5 U.S.C. 43 and none of the patterns match your summary levels, describe your summary ratings here.

4c. List the names of the levels (e.g., Outstanding, Exceeds, Fully Successful, Minimally Successful, Unacceptable).

Instruction: If your program does not use descriptors as level names, but instead uses numbers or letters, list the numbers or letters and explain the level of performance that represents. For example, if your program uses a “1” to describe Unacceptable performance, list the number and explain that it denotes Unacceptable performance.

5. Element Appraisal (Expectations)

5a. How many appraisal levels are required for appraising elements?

Instruction: In order to determine a summary level, each element (or expectation) must first be rated. This question is asking for the number of levels for which you rate elements (or expectations). In most cases, elements are rated at the same number of levels as the summary level uses. For example, if the appraisal program summarizes performance at five levels, it will also appraise elements (or expectations) at five levels. Report the number of levels here.

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If you have some elements that are rated at different levels than other elements, report that here. For example, if you have an element required by all employees that is rated at only two levels, but all other elements are rated at five levels, report that here.

5b. List the names of the levels (e.g., Outstanding, Exceeds, Fully Successful, Minimally Successful, Unacceptable).

Instruction: If your program does not use descriptors as level names, but instead uses numbers or letters, list the numbers or letters and explain the level of performance that represents. For example, if your program uses a “1” to describe Unacceptable performance, list the number and explain that it denotes Unacceptable performance.

Characteristics of an Effective Appraisal Program

6. Alignment

(10 points for design and implementation score)

6a. Does the program description require that employee performance plans align with organizational goals, such as the specific goals identified in the organization’s annual performance plan?

Check Yes or No

Instruction: To ensure that appraisal programs support organizational goal achievement, the program description should require that employee performance plans align with organizational goals. Review your program description to see if it includes this requirement. If it is not a requirement, your agency should consider revising the program. Having employee performance plans aligned to organizational goals is necessary for effective performance management.

6b. How many employees have performance plans that align with organizational goals?

Instruction: Present here the number of employees with plans that you have determined align with organizational goals. See instructions for 6bi below that define and explain alignment.

i. Describe how many plans were reviewed, how alignment was verified, if sampling was involved, etc.

Instruction:

NOTE: Reviewing performance plans is required for answering questions in Sections 6, 7, and 8 of this tool. We suggest using the same performance plans for the reviews required for these three sections.

Background

Employee performance plans should align with (i.e., support) organizational goals and targets that are established in an organization’s annual performance plan and/or that have

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been included in the Senior Executive Service (SES) members' performance plans. Alignment should be clear and transparent so that employees can see how their performance plans support organizational goal achievement. Ideally, a person would be able to map the responsibility for specific organizational goals and objectives through the performance plans of the chain of authority (i.e., SES members, to managers, to supervisors) to the front-line employee. Merely including a generic statement in performance plans that employees support organizational goals is not adequate for communicating alignment.

Alignment in performance appraisal should begin with SES member performance plans. SES plans should hold executives accountable for achieving business results. Business results should be the goals established in the organization's annual performance plan or work plan. Simply restating organizational goals without also including the metrics for determining performance against those goals is not adequate.

Examples of Alignment

Employee performance plans can show alignment in several ways. Here are some examples:

- The appraisal form includes a block in which the supervisor and employee indicate which of the organization's annual performance goals or objectives the results-focused element aligns with. Be sure that organizational goals are not merely copied into employee performance plans or referred to without the element also including the specific results, with metrics, that the employee is to accomplish in order to support that goal. (For information on metrics, see the instructions for section 8, Balanced, Credible Measures.) In other words, the element should directly relate to the organizational goal and include clear, credible measures of performance of quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost-effectiveness.
- The language in the element explains which organizational goal and objective the element aligns with. For example, "In order for the Bureau to achieve its goal of completing X during FY05, the employee must complete an average of Y each month, with Y meeting the requirements outlined in the Agency's Operating Procedures."
- Some agencies have broad strategic goals that can be used in employee performance plans as elements. For example, if the agency has a broad strategic goal of customer satisfaction, the agency could transfer that goal into employee performance plans as a critical element, as long as the standard for that element holds the employee accountable for a specific result, has measures of performance, and supports any other specific targets that may be found in an organization's annual work plan.

Observation: It is easier to align employee performance plans to organizational goals when organizational goals are clear, measurable, and include specific targets.

Review Process

The review should include a representative sample of performance plans for positions across the organization. *You do not have to review every single performance plan.*

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NOTE on sample size: When an organization is completing sections 6 through 8 of the PAAT, the information it is gathering and its ability to answer the questions with accuracy depends largely on the sample of performance plans reviewed and the methodology of the self-assessment performed. When planning for adequate sampling, organizations need to consider statistical significance, confidence, and representation. Also, when dealing with a large population covered by the same performance elements and standards, the term coverage is key. For the purpose of the PAAT, representation and coverage are very important concepts. Keeping the concepts of representation and coverage in mind when making sampling determination for the organization's PAAT will help the organization conduct a thorough review of the performance plans covered under its system and make determination and decisions that lead to any needed improvements.

Sample Size

- For the purpose of the PAAT, a SMALL organization is defined as 1500 or less employees
- The larger the organization, the greater the number of plans that should be reviewed to ensure adequate sample size.
- A smaller organization may have to review a greater percentage of performance plans to be able to make inferences from the sample to the population.
- When completing the PAAT, small organizations should plan on reviewing approximately 7-10% of their organizations' performance plans, as long as the sample is representative of the population covered by the program.
- A larger organization should look to review at least 3-5% of its plans, as long as the sample is representative of the population covered by the program.

These percentages are not set in stone and, depending on your organization, may meet, fall below or above what would be considered statistically significant and have an acceptable confidence level. However, the above percentages are a good place to start.

Representation

For the purpose of the PAAT, representation will make a considerable difference in the success of the organization's self-assessment process.

- While it is good to have the correct number of plans sampled, if all the plans are from one occupational series in one part of your organization, you can not make reasonable inferences about the quality of the performance plans throughout the organization.
- When sampling plans for the organization's PAAT, representation is critical. The organization should attempt to sample a wide variety of occupational series in many parts of the organization. While an organization's initial PAAT submission may have focused on its mission critical occupations, subsequent PAATs should reach other areas and occupations within the organization.
- The organization should count the number of employees working in its various occupational groups and ensure that the percentage of plans reviewed for its sample corresponds to the percentage of that occupation within the organization.

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Coverage

Another important component of obtaining an adequate sample and conducting a sufficient evaluation for the PAAT is **coverage**.

- If within an organization there are occupations with common and standardized performance plans such that the organization can ensure that all plans are identical, then it is acceptable to conduct an evaluation that looks at a smaller number of plans but corresponds to a larger percent of the organization. The organization would still need to review a representative sample of the occupations, but if, for example, (using the figures above) all 175 of the organization's GS-0399s have identical performance plans, then it would be acceptable to look at 1-3 performance plans and infer that the results of that review apply to 7% of the total population of the organization. This information would need to be thoroughly explained in the organization's PAAT methodology sections.

When answering this question, be sure to describe how many plans you reviewed, how you determined alignment, and how you determined the number of plans you are reporting in 6b of this tool.

While some agencies have had their managers and supervisors certify that the performance plans of their subordinates align with organizational goals, we recommend validating that certification with a review of some of those plans by someone other than the supervisors who certified the alignment.

- ii. If all your employees are not covered by performance plans that are aligned with organizational goals, what is the agency doing to get those plans aligned with organizational goals? Develop a strategy for improvement and include a timeline for actions. Consider the results of 6c in your response.

Instruction: If greater than 10 percent of your employees are not covered by performance plans that are aligned with organizational goals, your agency should make the alignment of their plans a priority before your next appraisal period begins, or as appropriate. Develop a strategy and plan for revising your appraisal program and its employee performance plans so that they are aligned with organizational goals and include other aspects that will be mentioned in sections 7 and 8 of this tool, that is, focusing on results and including credible measures of performance. Also consider the results identified in 6c and the observations in 6ci when developing your strategy.

6c. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address alignment? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond "N/A" for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.)*

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Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
I know how my work relates to the agency's goals and priorities.						
Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization.						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

While the questions above do not specifically ask about the alignment of performance plans to organizational goals, they do address employee perceptions of understanding organizational goals and how they are communicated in the work unit. Be aware that the responses to first question above are generally favorable across the Government. While responses tend to be favorable, the data relating specifically to the organization covered by this appraisal program can be used as an indicator of how well the organization communicates organizational goals to employees and how employees support those goals. The appraisal process is one way of communicating organizational goals and linking employees to the goals. The designers of the appraisal program may want to consider ways of improving the appraisal program so that it better communicates organizational goals to employees and aligns employees to those goals.

If the responses to the first question above are relatively favorable, that is, a large percentage of employees responded Strongly Agree or Agree to the question, and you have fewer than 10 percent of performance plans that are not aligned with organizational goals, you may have no response to this question. If, however, a significant percentage of employees responded unfavorably (that is, responded Disagree or Strongly Disagree) or responded Neither Agree or Disagree or Do Not Know, and if more than 10 percent of performance plans are not aligned with organizational goals, you may want to consider how this information can help you formulate the answer to 6bii. If responses are unfavorable, you may want to determine how your appraisal program can best support the goal of communicating organization goals to employees and showing employees how their work supports those goals.

7. Results

(10 points for design and implementation score)

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7a. Does the program description require that each employee's performance plan include at least one critical element (performance expectation) that holds the employee accountable for achieving results (at the appropriate level of responsibility)?

Check Yes or No

Instruction: Performance appraisal programs should require that employees are held accountable through at least one critical element (or performance expectation) for achieving an accomplishment that supports organizational goals. If the program does not require this, your agency should consider revising the program description.

7b. How many employees have performance plans with critical elements that make it possible to hold them accountable for results?

Instruction: Present the number of plans here that you have determined include a critical element that holds employees accountable for results.

i. Describe how many plans were reviewed, how results-oriented critical elements were identified, etc.

Instruction:

NOTE: Reviewing performance plans is required for answering questions in Sections 6, 7, and 8 of this tool. We suggest using the same performance plans for the reviews required for these three sections. See the instructions at 6bi for an explanation of sample size, representation, and coverage.

Background

Employees should be held accountable for achieving expected results through at least one critical element in their performance plans. Critical elements that focus on competencies (such as teamwork or customer service, for example) can also be important and desirable to include in plans, but a results-oriented performance plan should have at least one critical element (or performance expectation) that holds an employee accountable for achieving a result that directly supports organizational goal achievement. If your appraisal program focuses solely on competencies or behaviors, without including an element that defines specific results to be achieved, with measures of performance, your agency should consider revising its employee performance plans.

Example of Results-Oriented Elements

Below are a few examples of results-oriented elements and standards (or performance expectations). Note that the results being measured are products or services, not a competency, behavior, or activity.

- A critical element and standard for a program manager responsible for an adult literacy program with the intended outcome of improved literacy in adults might be written as, "Within the X region during the fiscal year, at least 95 percent of participating adults passed a standard literacy test. The program had less than a 2 percent drop-out rate."

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The result is the literacy rate among participating adults in that region. It is aligned to an organizational goal that specifies a certain percentage of adult literacy improvement.

- A critical element and standard for a supervisor of a work unit that completes casework might be written as, “The work unit reduces the case backlog by 50 percent by the end of the fiscal year, with at least 98 percent accuracy in the cases completed.” The result is a reduced case backlog. It is aligned to an organizational goal of customer satisfaction that specifies reducing the case backlog during the fiscal year.
- A critical element and standard for an Administrative Officer responsible for the budget of an organization might be written as, “A budget for X organization for the next fiscal year is completed by June 15. The budget contains well-justified descriptions of budget requests, is accurate, and meets all the specifications as outlined by the CFO.” The result is a complete budget document. It supports the organizational goal of operational excellence.

Review Process

See 6bi instructions for Review Process.

- ii. If all your employees are not covered by performance plans that include at least one critical element that makes it possible to hold employees accountable for results, what is the agency doing to ensure that performance plans include a critical element focuses on achieving results? Consider the results of 7c in your response. Include a timeline for actions.

Instruction: If your performance plans do not hold employees accountable for expected results, your agency should make appropriate changes to the performance plans for the next appraisal period, or as appropriate. Develop a strategy for revising your appraisal program and its employee performance plans so that they are aligned with organizational goals (Section 6), focused on achieving results (Section 7) and include credible measures of performance (Section 8). Also consider the results identified in 7c and the observations in 7ci when developing your strategy.

7c. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address results? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond “N/A” for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.)*

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes.						
I am held accountable for achieving results.						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

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Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

Questions in this section listed above address employee perceptions about being held accountable for achieving results and whether they feel empowered in their work processes. When a significant percentage of employees respond they Strongly Agree or Agree to the question "I am held accountable for achieving results," it appears that employees feel that the appraisal process focuses them on achieving results. Pay close attention to how many employees Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed. Large percentages of employees answering negatively to this question indicate a problem with the appraisal program. Also look at the number of employees who Neither Agreed or Disagreed, or Did Not Know. If all the negative or neutral responses outweigh the favorable responses, the agency needs to review its appraisal program to see how it might better focus employees on achieving results. Next, look to see if, in general, responses were favorable to this question but were unfavorable to the question, "Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes." If this occurred, employees are saying that while they are held accountable for achieving results, they do not feel they are empowered to do what they need to do in order to achieve the results. In this case, you will want to look at your findings in section 10 regarding employee involvement activities your program requires.

If a significant percentage of employees responded unfavorably to these questions (that is, responded Disagree or Strongly Disagree) and/or responded Neither Agree or Disagree or Do Not Know, and if more than 10 percent of performance plans do not have at least one result-oriented critical element (or performance expectation), you may want to consider how this information can help you formulate the strategy you are developing for 7bii. If a significant percentage of responses are unfavorable, you may want to determine how your appraisal program and its performance plans can better support the goal of focusing employees on achieving results.

8. Credible Measures

(Credible measures means that standards include descriptions of quality, quantity, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and/or manner of performance)

(10 points for design and implementation score)

8a. Does the *appraisal program* require that elements and standards (performance expectations) include credible measures of performance that are observable, measurable, and/or demonstrable?

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Check Yes or No

Instruction: If the appraisal program does not require that employee performance plans include credible measures of performance, your agency should revise its program to include this requirement.

8b. How many employees have performance plans that include *credible measures of performance*?

Instruction: Present the number of plans here that you have determined include credible measures of performance.

i. Describe how many plans were reviewed, how you determined that credible measures were present, the types of measures used, how competencies were identified and described if they are used, etc.

Instruction:

NOTE: Reviewing performance plans is required for answering questions in Sections 6, 7, and 8 of this tool. We suggest using the same performance plans for the reviews required for these three sections.

Background

Employees should be rated against elements and standards (or performance expectations) that include credible measures of performance. A results-oriented appraisal program ensures that credible measures are included in all performance plans. If the performance plans in your organization do not include measures of performance, your agency should consider improving those plans. General measures of performance include quality, quantity, timeliness, and or cost effectiveness. Specific measure of quality, quantity, timeliness, and or cost effectiveness requires supervisors and employees to identify which measures are appropriate.

Example of Credible Measures of Performance

Below are a few examples of results-oriented elements and standards (or performance expectations) that include credible measures of performance. Note these are the same examples provided in the instructions for section 7. We are identifying the credible measures after the example.

- A critical element and standard for a program manager responsible for an adult literacy program with the intended outcome of improved literacy in adults might be written as, “Within the X region during the fiscal year, at least 95 percent of participating adults passed a standard literacy test. The program had less than a 2 percent drop-out rate.” The result is the literacy rate among participating adults in that region. It is aligned to an organizational goal that specifies a certain percentage of adult literacy improvement. The credible measures used in this example are the percent of participating adults who passed the test (quality), the percent drop-out rate (quantity) and the fiscal year (timeliness). Without using these measures, the targets and standards could not be established.

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- A critical element and standard for a supervisor of a work unit that completes casework might be written as, “The work unit reduces the case backlog by 50 percent by the end of the fiscal year, with at least 98 percent accuracy in the cases completed.” The result is a reduced case backlog. It is aligned to an organizational goal of customer satisfaction that specifies reducing the case backlog during the fiscal year. The measures of performance are the percent of reduction of backlog (quantity), the accuracy rate (quality), and the fiscal year (timeliness).
- A critical element and standard for an Administrative Officer responsible for the budget of an organization might be written as, “A budget for X organization for the next fiscal year is completed by June 15. The budget contains well-justified descriptions of budget requests, is accurate, and meets all the specifications as outlined by the CFO.” The result is a complete budget document. It supports the organizational goal of operational excellence. The measures of performance are the deadline of June 15 (timeliness) and meeting all the specifications of the CFO (quality).

Review Process

The review should include a representative sample of performance plans for positions across the organization. See the Review Process section in 6bi.

- ii. Provide examples of credible measures of performance used in employee performance plans.

Instruction: You need only include two or three examples of some elements and standards that include credible measures of performance.

- iii. If all your employees do not have performance plans that include credible measures of performance, what is the agency doing to ensure that those plans include credible measures of performance in the future? Consider the results of 8e in your response. Include a timeline for actions.

Instruction: If your performance plans do not hold employees accountable for expected results using credible measures of performance, your agency should make appropriate changes to the performance plans for the next appraisal period, or as appropriate. Develop a strategy for revising your appraisal program and its employee performance plans so that they are aligned with organizational goals (Section 6), focused on achieving results (Section 7) and include credible measures of performance (Section 8). Also consider the results identified in 8e and the observations in 8ei when developing your strategy.

8c. Does the *appraisal program* require that performance plans for supervisors take into consideration employee and customer perspective?

Check Yes or No

Instruction: Balanced measures of business results, customer perspective and employee perspective are required for executive performance plans. In order to have supervisory performance plans that align with organizational goals and executive plans, these

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measures of business results, customer perspective, and employee perspective should also be included, at the appropriate level, in supervisory performance plans. If your appraisal program does not require this kind of alignment, your agency should revise its program to include these requirements.

8d. How many supervisors have *performance plans* that take into consideration employee and customer perspectives?

Instruction: Present the number of supervisors here that you determined have performance plans that take into consideration employee and customer perspectives.

i. Describe how many plans were reviewed, how you determined employee and customer perspectives, the types of measures used, etc.

Instruction: Performance plans for supervisors should take into account customer and employee perspectives when the plans are aligned effectively with executive performance plans. You should ensure the representative sample of plans you pull for 6bi, 7bi, and 8bi also include a sample of supervisory plans. Below is a discussion of customer and employee perspectives, the types of measures these could include, and examples.

Customer Perspective

Customer perspective measures consider the organization's performance through the eyes of its customers, so that the organization retains a careful focus on customer needs and satisfaction. To achieve the best in business performance, agencies must incorporate reasonable customer needs and wants consistent with the agency's mission and must take them into account as part of their performance planning. To do this, Federal executives, managers, and employees must determine who their customers are, and what those customers expect from them, in the context of the employing agency's business purpose and mission. There must be some evidence of two-way communication with customers.

Customer perspective performance measures should not measure popularity. Sometimes the interests of public groups or other agencies differ from, or are inconsistent with, those of the agency that employs the executive or manager or conflict with the employing agency's mission. All executives and managers are the agents of the head of the employing agency. Therefore, when an agency factors customer feedback into the performance rating process, the appraising official makes the rating determination, not the customer.

For executives and managers of line organizations (i.e., an organization that directly affects the agency's mission), customers may include a wide variety of public groups, other agencies, other governments, and Congress. Examples of customer perspective measures for line organizations could include—

- Visitors to a specific national park had a satisfactory experience during their visit.
- Most patients on a specific ward in a hospital rate the nursing staff as exceptionally competent and helpful.
- Agencies respond that the regulations a policy work unit proposed are flexible, easier to read and follow, and take into account agencies' previous comments.

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Examples of customer perspective goals and measures for various support organizations could include—

- Most managers of the agency believe they receive adequate assistance when they call their human resources office.
- Employees are generally satisfied with the food service provider in their building.
- Managers believe that the procurement office provides adequate instruction on new procurement procedures.

Employee Perspective

Employee perspective indicates there is open, two-way communication between supervisor and employee. Employee perspective measures can range from a description of behaviors or competencies demonstrated, to including the results of customer and employee surveys.

Examples of customer perspective goals and measures for various support organizations could include—

- Implement action plan to improve the agency's score on the Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) and the Annual Employee Survey. Obtain employee feedback that indicates plan is working.
- Takes into account employee perspective and encourages employees to develop creative and effective ways to accomplish successfully the organization's goals and objectives.
- Proactively seeks and listens to employees and objectively considers others' ideas and opinions, even when they are in conflict with one's own.

ii. Provide examples of employee and customer perspectives that were incorporated in supervisory plans.

Instruction: You need only include two or three examples of some elements and standards that incorporate customer and employee perspectives.

iii. If all your supervisors do not have performance plans that take into account employee and customer perspectives, what is the agency doing to ensure that those plans incorporate employee and customer perspectives in the future? Include a timeline for actions.

Instruction: If your supervisors' performance plans do not incorporate customer and employee perspectives, your agency should make appropriate changes to its supervisors' performance plans for the next appraisal period, or as appropriate. Develop a strategy for revising your appraisal program and its supervisors' performance plans so that they are aligned with organizational goals (Section 6), focused on achieving results (Section 7) and include credible measures of performance, with customer and employee perspectives (Section 8). Also consider the results identified in 8e when developing your strategy.

8e. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address customer perspective? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond "N/A" for not available. If your organization conducts its own*

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employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.)

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
Employees are rewarded for providing high quality products and services to customers.						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

Negative responses for the survey item included in this section may be improved if employee performance plans included a focus on customer satisfaction. It may also be helpful for you to break down the responses to this question by employees and by supervisors, especially in regards to whether supervisory performance plans include customer perspectives. If supervisory performance plans included a customer perspective, supervisors' responses to this question may be more favorable than otherwise.

If your appraisal program does not have credible measures of performance, if supervisory performance plans do not take into consideration customer and employee perspectives, and if there is an unfavorable response to the survey question in this section, the agency may want to consider improving the appraisal program in this particular area.

9. Differentiate among various levels of performance

(10 points for design and implementation score)

9a. For the latest appraisal period, show the distribution of ratings.

Number Of Employees Receiving The Rating

Performance Rating	Number of Employees
Level 5 (i.e., Outstanding or equivalent)	
Level 4	

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Performance Rating	Number of Employees
(i.e., Exceeds or equivalent)	
Level 3 (i.e., Fully Successful or equivalent)	
Level 2 (i.e., Minimally Successful or equivalent)	
Level 1 (i.e., Unacceptable)	
Not rated	
TOTAL*	

** Total number of employees here should match the total number of employees covered by this program, as reported in #1c.*

Instruction: Ratings of record information should be available through the operating human resources office. You should include the number of those not rated as well so that the total number of employees rated and not rated equals the total number of employees covered by the program. If you have trouble getting the numbers to match, it may be because of employee turnover or some other reason. Make a note in this section regarding why the totals from 9a and 1c do not match, if that occurs. Also, if a summary level is not available in your program, report in the appropriate space “N/A” for not available. Also be sure to answer question 15e appropriately. In 15e, you need to explain if or how this rating distribution reflects organizational performance.

9b. Compare the results identified in 9c to the rating distribution reported in 9a. In particular, how do the responses to the survey question in 9c support the rating distribution reported in 9a?

Instruction: The purpose of this question is to ask program evaluators to determine if the appraisal program is successful at making distinctions in levels of performance. First, does the agency have a realistic rating distribution or, for example, do more than 90 percent of employees receive the top rating, such as an Outstanding rating? If most employees are all rated at the same, very high level, the organization is not making distinctions in levels of performance. One solution to improving the process of making distinctions in levels of performance is to develop results-oriented elements and standards that include clear, credible measures of performance, with the Fully Successful level incorporating a wide range of successful performance—so that employees must reach challenging and stretch goals in order to be rated above Fully Successful. Once good standards are established, the organization then needs to hold the rating officials accountable for rating performance appropriately against those standards.

Next, look at the responses reported in 9c. Is the rating distribution supported by the employees’ perception that there are or are not distinctions in performance being made? For example, in an agency that rates over 90 percent of its employees as Outstanding, the agency may have had a significant number of employees that answered Disagree or Strongly Disagree to Item #31. Review and compare the data in 9a and 9b to see if any information can be used to improve the appraisal program and how it operates.

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9c. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address levels of performance? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond “N/A” for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here*

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

The survey question used in this section addresses employee perceptions about how well the organization addresses differentiation in performance, particularly regarding top performers. When a significant percentage of employees respond favorably to this question, that is, when they Strongly Agree or Agree, it appears that employees feel that the organization makes distinctions in levels of performance and appropriately recognizes top performers. Pay close attention to how many employees Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed, Neither Agreed or Disagreed, or Did Not Know. If those percentages outweigh the favorable responses, the agency needs to review its appraisal program to see how it might better make distinctions in levels of performance that are clearly evident to employees.

10. Consequences based on performance

(10 points for design and implementation score)

10a. **CASH AWARDS** – *Provide the following information for the last (most recent) fiscal year or calendar year, whichever is more appropriate for your agency appraisal and award cycle. (Please specify whether you used calendar or fiscal year.) For questions related to rating-based awards, report the awards that were based on the ratings that were reported in 9a above.*

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Information	Number and Cash Amount
Total number of cash awards given to covered employees	
Total dollar amount of cash awards given to covered employees	
Number of cash awards <i>not</i> based on rating of record	
Amount of cash awards <i>not</i> based on rating of record	

Information	Rated Level 5	Rated Level 4	Rated Level 3	Rated Level 2	Rated Level 1
Number of cash awards based on assigned rating of record					
Amount of cash awards based on assigned rating of record					

Instruction: For reporting purposes for this question, use the same designators as the Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) uses for reporting rating level.

Level 5 = Outstanding or equivalent

Level 4 = Exceeds or equivalent

Level 3 = Fully Successful or equivalent

Level 2 = Minimally Successful or equivalent

Level 1 = Unacceptable

Note: Do not include SES performance awards or rank awards.

10 b. **TIME OFF AWARDS** - *Provide the following information for the last (most recent) fiscal year or calendar year, whichever is more appropriate for your agency appraisal and award cycle. (Please specify whether you used calendar or fiscal year.) For questions related to rating-based awards, report the awards that were based on the ratings that were reported in 9a above*

Information	Number of awards and hours
Total number of time off awards granted	
Total number of hours of time off granted	
Number of time off awards <i>not</i> based on rating of record	
Number of hours of time off granted <i>not</i> based on rating of record	

Information	Rated Level 5	Rated Level 4	Rated Level 3	Rated Level 2	Rated Level 1
Number of time off awards based on assigned rating of record					
Number of hours of time off granted based on assigned rating of record					

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Instruction: Time-off awards can be granted to employees to recognize a performance rating or to recognize other types of performance such as a special act or service. If your agency does not identify whether a time-off award was given as a rating-based award, only complete the first two items in this table, that is, the total number of time-off awards granted and the total number of hours of time off granted.

For reporting purposes for this question, use the same designators as the CPDF uses for reporting rating level.

- Level 5 = Outstanding or equivalent
- Level 4 = Exceeds or equivalent
- Level 3 = Fully Successful or equivalent
- Level 2 = Minimally Successful or equivalent
- Level 1 = Unacceptable

10c. **QUALITY STEP INCREASES (QSI)** – *Provide the following information for the last (most recent) fiscal year or calendar year, whichever is more appropriate for your agency appraisal and award cycle. (Please specify whether you used calendar or fiscal year.)*

Information	Number of awards				
Total QSI awards given as a result of last rating of record	Rated Level 5	Rated Level 4	Rated Level 3	Rated Level 2	Rated Level 1

Instruction: QSIs are only to be given to employees with Outstanding or equivalent ratings, or, if the appraisal program does not have an Outstanding or equivalent rating, QSIs should only be given based on a full justification by the supervisor. As a result, if you have a five-level program, your data should show that all QSIs were given to employees who received an Outstanding rating of record, that is, a Level 5 rating.

For reporting purposes for this question, use the same designators as the CPDF uses for reporting rating level.

- Level 5 = Outstanding or equivalent
- Level 4 = Exceeds or equivalent
- Level 3 = Fully Successful or equivalent
- Level 2 = Minimally Successful or equivalent
- Level 1 = Unacceptable

i. Analyze the results identified in 10a, 10b, and 10c and consider the survey results in 10d. Does your awards program support organizational goal achievement and make distinctions in levels of performance? Identify any findings, relationships, or other information that may be helpful for your organization when providing consequences for performance.

Instruction: The purpose of this tool is not to evaluate your awards program, but when discussing consequences to performance, awards and recognition are integral to the discussion. The purpose of this question is to ask program evaluators to determine if the appraisal program and related awards programs provide consequences to performance. First, does it appear that the agency grants awards based on performance and employee achievements? Are higher performers given higher cash or time-off awards? Analyze

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your data from 10a, 10b, and 10c and see what it is telling you. Then compare that data to the employee responses reported in 10d.

Note: Even though this tool is not designed for evaluating awards programs, you should consider evaluating your awards program to see how it supports creating a performance culture. When evaluating your awards program, analyze specific metrics from the data that include average award amounts per rating and grade, rate of awards per hundred employees, the percent of aggregate salary spent on awards, and how the awards program aligns to and supports organizational goals. Also include the employee perception data gathered in the FHCS, AES, or other employee surveys you may have conducted.

10d. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address consequences of performance? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond “N/A” for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.*

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
Awards in my work unit depend on how well employees perform their jobs.						
How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job?						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

The survey questions in this section address awards and recognition programs. Even though these do not appear to apply specifically to your appraisal program, they address important aspects of performance culture and are related to the appraisal program through the rating used for rating-based awards or through achievements identified through the appraisal of employee performance. Appraisal programs need to make distinctions in

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levels of performance so that rich performance information effectively feeds into the organization’s recognition and awards programs. The employee perceptions to these questions can give program designers information for how employees perceive that performance is taken into account when awards and recognition are determined.

10e. **UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE** (unacceptable performance on a critical element)
 — Provide the following information for the last (most recent) appraisal period. Use the same time period used to answer section 9 above.

Information	Number
Employees rated “Unacceptable”	
Employees placed on Performance Improvement Period as a result of unacceptable performance	
Employees removed based on unacceptable performance (i.e., a performance-based or adverse action)	
Employees reassigned based on unacceptable performance (i.e., a performance-based or adverse action)	
Employees who were reduced in grade based on unacceptable performance (i.e., a performance-based or adverse action)	

Instructions:

Employees rated “Unacceptable”. Although you have already provided answers in section 9 regarding rating distribution and the number of employees rated at a specific level, repeat number rated “Unacceptable” or Level 1 here. (We are asking you to repeat this number because it makes it easier to analyze unacceptable performance data when it is all in one place.)

Employees placed on Performance Improvement Period (PIP) as a result of unacceptable performance. Supervisors can determine that employees are failing a critical element (or performance expectation) at any time during the appraisal period and do not have to wait until the end of the appraisal period when a rating of record of “Unacceptable” would be assigned. When a supervisor determines an employee is demonstrating unacceptable performance (that is, when the employee is failing a critical element), but before the supervisor can take a performance-based action, the supervisor must give the employee an opportunity to improve. This opportunity to demonstrate acceptable performance is defined in 5 CFR 432.103 and is commonly referred to a performance improvement period or a PIP. Report the number of employees placed on PIPs here.

Note: A performance-based action taken under 5 CFR 432 or an adverse action for performance taken under 5 CFR 752 can result in removal, reassignment, or reduction-in-

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grade of the unacceptable performer. The next three questions ask for information regarding performance-based actions or adverse actions based on performance.

Employees removed based on unacceptable performance (i.e., a performance-based or adverse action). Report the number of employees who have been removed from their positions because of a performance-based action taken under 5 CFR 432 or 752.

Employees reassigned based on unacceptable performance (i.e., a performance-based or adverse action). Report the number of employees who were reassigned as a performance-based action taken under 5 CFR 432 or 752.

Employees who were reduced in grade based on unacceptable performance (i.e., a performance-based or adverse action). Report the number of employees who were reduced in grade as a performance based action taken under 5 CFR 432 or 752.

- i. Analyze the results identified in 10e and compare it to the survey responses in 10f. Identify any findings, relationships, or other information that may be helpful for your organization when or if you revise your appraisal program and the efforts to address poor performance.

Instruction: Comparing the number of performance-based actions your organization has taken to the FHCS data regarding employee perceptions of how the agency addresses poor performers can help you formulate strategies for dealing with poor performers. When poor performance occurs, several things need to happen.

- Supervisors need to address poor performance immediately to correct the problem. Poor performance should not be ignored. The longer the poor performance continues, the larger the problem grows. Employees in a work unit who have to “cover” the work of a poor performer resent the situation. If poor performance is ignored, everyone in the organization knows that performance is not important in that organization. This destroys a performance culture.
- Upper-level management needs to support the supervisor in all actions necessary to correct the performance problem. If upper-level managers don’t want a front-line supervisor to “rock the boat” by addressing performance problems, poor performance will continue to occur. The negative consequences to the supervisor for addressing poor performance will ensure that that supervisor will never try to improve poor performance again.
- Employees need to be given the opportunity to improve. This can include coaching, training, and any other action needed to correct the problem.

When evaluating your appraisal program, make sure the design of the program includes the steps necessary for addressing poor performance, but also analyze the implementation of the program to ensure that supervisors have the skills and support for addressing poor performance.

10f. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address consequences of poor performance? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this*

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information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond “N/A” for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve.						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

Instruction: The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The most recent survey was administered in fiscal year 2004. The FHCS is a tool that measures employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions that characterize successful organizations are present in their agencies. The FHCS includes specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

This survey question specifically deals with employee perceptions of how poor performance is handled by the agency. Part of building a performance culture means that performance is important to the organization, that top performers are recognized, and that poor performance is addressed.

11. Employee Involvement

(10 points for design and implementation score)

11a. Was the appraisal program designed with input from employees and their representatives, if applicable?

Check Yes or No

i. If **yes**, describe the process.

Instruction: Performance appraisal programs should be designed with employee input. When employees are covered by a bargaining unit, representatives of the bargaining unit should be involved. Describe here the process you used for designing the appraisal program.

ii. If **no**, describe why.

Instruction: Explain why employees and/or their representatives were not involved in the design process.

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11b. Does the appraisal program require employee involvement in the development of the employee's performance plan?

Check Yes or No

i. If **yes**, describe the process.

Instruction: Your appraisal program should require that employees be involved in the development of their performance plans. Include here the paragraph from your program description that requires employee involvement in the plan development.

ii. If **no**, describe why.

Instruction: If your appraisal program does not require employee involvement or input in the development of performance plans, we suggest you revise your appraisal program.

11c. Are employees actually involved in the development of their performance plans?

Check Yes or No

i. If **yes**, describe how this occurs.

Instruction: Employees better understand the supervisor's performance expectations if they are involved in the development of their performance plans. While it is ultimately the right of management to assign work, it is desirable to get employee input into the development of their plans so that performance elements and standards (or performance expectations) are clear, credible, and transparent to both the rating official and the employees being rated. Report here how employees are involved in the development of performance plans.

ii. If **no**, describe why.

Instruction: If employees are not involved in the development of their performance plans, explain why here.

iii. Analyze the results identified in 11a, 11b, and 11c and compare it to the survey responses in 11d. Identify any findings, relationships, or other information that may be helpful for your organization when or if you revise your appraisal program and the efforts of the organization to involve employees in the performance appraisal process.

Instruction: If your appraisal program does not require or encourage employee involvement in the development of the program or the performance plans, and if there are significant percentages of employees responding negatively to Item #59 of the FHCS, the agency may want to consider improving the appraisal program in this particular area.

11d. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address employee involvement? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal*

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program. Otherwise, respond “N/A” for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.

Survey Question	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work?					
Item from agency survey (if applicable)					

Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

This survey question gathers information about employee perceptions of their involvement in the work processes, which could include the involvement of developing their performance expectations in their performance plans. Significant percentages of employees responding Disagree or Strongly Disagree to this question could indicate that employees feel helpless about or don't know how they can affect work processes. Ensuring that employees are involved in the development of their performance plans can help improve feelings of personal empowerment with respect to work processes.

12. Feedback Process

(10 points for design and implementation score)

12a. Does the appraisal program require that employees receive a progress review on their performance (that is, feedback) at least once during the appraisal period?

Check Yes or No

Instruction: By regulatory requirement, appraisal programs must require that employees receive a progress review during the appraisal period. A progress review means communicating with the employee about performance compared to the performance standards (or performance expectations) established in their performance plans. If your appraisal program does not require a progress review, your agency must revise the program to include this.

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b. Approximately how many employees received a progress review?

Instruction: Provide the number of employees you have determined received a progress review during the most recent appraisal period.

c. How do you track whether employees receive a progress review?

Instruction: Describe the process the agency uses to determine if progress reviews are being done with employees. Be sure to describe whether the process is done during the rating cycle, or whether it is done after the rating cycle has ended.

i. Analyze the results identified in 12b and 12c and compare it to the survey responses in 12d. Identify any findings, relationships, or other information that may be helpful for your organization when or if you revise your appraisal program to ensure it provides for adequate employee feedback.

Instruction: Comparing employee perspectives to your information about whether progress reviews are being done can give you an idea as to the effectiveness of the progress reviews. If progress reviews are not being done, the employee responses to Item #34 may be lower than they might be if progress reviews were done as required. If progress reviews are occurring, but employee responses are still negative to Items #34 and 50, the agency may want to focus on training supervisors on how to provide effective feedback to employees. Use this information to help you formulate your strategies for improving your appraisal program.

12d. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address feedback discussion with supervisors? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond “N/A” for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.*

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
Discussions with my supervisor/team leader about my performance are worthwhile.						
Supervisors/team leaders provide employees with constructive suggestions to improve their job performance.						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by

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OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

The survey items used here address employee perspectives in regard to communications with supervisors about performance, which could include progress reviews. The responses to these questions can indicate to the agency whether progress reviews are successful in providing feedback to employees.

13. Training and Competency Development

(10 points for design and implementation score)

13a. Does the appraisal program description require that supervisors receive training and retraining on the requirements and operation of the performance appraisal program?

Check Yes or No

Instruction: Appraisal programs should require that supervisors know how the appraisal program operates. If your appraisal program does not require supervisory training on the program, your agency should revise its program to incorporate this.

13b. Has the agency conducted training for at least 50 percent of its supervisors on the performance appraisal program sometime during the last 2 years?

Check Yes or No

i. If yes, describe the training, how many attended, the content of the course, and any other information that would show adequate training was provided.

Instruction: You can insert a training plan, curriculum, a management competency model upon which the training was based, or any other documentation to explain the training.

ii. If fewer than 50 percent of supervisors were trained on performance management in the last 2 years, what is the agency doing to ensure that supervisors receive training in the future? Include a timeline for actions.

Instruction: Include here a training plan for future training if fewer than 50 percent of supervisors were trained during the last 2 years.

13c. Does the *appraisal program* description require that employees receive training and retraining on the requirements and operation of the performance appraisal program?

Check Yes or No

Performance Appraisal Assessment Tool Instructions

Instruction: Employees should understand how their appraisal program operates. The appraisal program should require that employees are trained on the operation of the program.

13d. Has the agency conducted training for at least 50 percent of employees on the performance appraisal program sometime during the last 2 years?

Check Yes or No

i. If yes, describe the training, how many attended, the content of the course, and any other information that would show adequate training was provided.

Instruction: You can insert a training plan, curriculum, a management competency model upon which the training was based, or any other documentation to explain the training.

ii. If fewer than 50 percent of employees attended performance appraisal training in the last 2 years, what is the agency doing to ensure that employees receive training in the future? Include a timeline for actions.

Instruction: Include here a training plan for future training if fewer than 50 percent of employees were trained during the last 2 years.

13e. When a supervisor performs poorly on the required supervisory element (see Oversight and Accountability section), what action has the agency taken to improve the supervisor's performance management competencies (that is, interpersonal communication, leading people, setting goals, performance measurement, business acumen, appraising performance, recognition)

Instruction: The response to this question could include training provided, coaching, mentoring, actions during supervisory probationary periods, or performance-based actions. Describe how your agency approaches poor performance in supervisory duties and how it resolves those problems. You should describe something more than merely putting a supervisor on a Performance Improvement Period.

13f. Describe the agency's competency development activities for supervisors.

Instruction: Describe your agency's approach to developing its supervisors and for improving their performance management skills. If your agency has developed a competency model for its managers and supervisors, provide a description here and how that model guides training for supervisors.

13g. What were the results from responses of **supervisors and managers** to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address training and competency development? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond "N/A" for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.*

Performance Appraisal Assessment Tool Instructions

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

From the standpoint of evaluating the appraisal program, you need to consider the skills of the supervisors, who are key to the program's effectiveness. The supervisors' perspectives as reflected in this survey question capture supervisors' opinions on whether they feel they have they right skills to do their jobs effectively, which could include skills for managing the performance of subordinates. By isolating the way supervisors responded, you may be able to identify possible training needs of supervisors and can follow up to see if those needs include training on the appraisal program or skills necessary for operating the appraisal program effectively. Also consider employee perspectives on how well supervisors give feedback, which you can review in section 12d.

Also, comparing your supervisors' perspectives to the training you have given them regarding the appraisal program can give you an idea for future training needs. Use this information to help you formulate your strategies for improving your appraisal program and upcoming performance management training.

14. Assessment and Guidance

(10 points for design and implementation score)

14a. Does the agency assess organizational unit performance?

Check Yes or No

- i. If **yes**, explain how unit performance is assessed (e.g., using PAR, or some other assessment tool). Provide an example of the assessment tool, if applicable.

Performance Appraisal Assessment Tool Instructions

Instruction: One way to assess and report agency performance is through requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. Agencies must report on their performance in achieving specific goals and objectives that they establish at the beginning of the fiscal year. OMB also assesses program performance. Describe how your organization assesses its performance.

ii. If **yes**, explain how organizational unit performance was communicated throughout the organization.

Instruction: If available, provide a copy of the memo or guidance that was issued.

iii. If **no**, that is, if the agency does not assess organizational unit performance, what is the agency doing to ensure that unit performance is assessed and communicated in the future? Include a timeline for actions.

Instruction: Develop a plan for assessing organizational performance and for communicating that performance throughout the organization.

14b. Did an agency official provide guidance to rating officials about how unit performance should be considered when deciding ratings and awards?

Check Yes or No

i. If **yes**, either describe the guidance or provide a copy.

Instruction: If available, provide a copy of the memo or guidance that was issued.

ii. If **no**, what is the agency doing to ensure that guidance is given about ratings and work unit performance in the future? Include a timeline for actions.

Instruction: Rating officials need to accurately assess individual performance, while at the same time consider the work unit's performance as a whole. If the work unit exceeds its annual goals, the ratings of the members of the work unit would likely reflect successful performance. On the other hand, if a work unit's performance is poor, the rating official must determine the reasons for the poor performance. If unit members were not achieving the performance expectations established in their performance plans, the rating official must determine the reason. If the employees have the resources and training they need to accomplish their goals but fail to do so, and if the goals were clear, credible, and obtainable, the rating official needs to rate employee performance appropriately.

The agency should have a communication process in place for communicating organizational performance and providing guidance to rating officials regarding that performance. The guidance should advise rating officials regarding their work unit's performance and how that should be considered when rating employees overall. If your agency does not have this type of communication in place, you should consider establishing one.

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14c. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey questions that address organizational assessment? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond “N/A” for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.*

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
Managers review and evaluate the organization’s progress toward meeting its goals and objectives.						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

This survey question addresses employee perspectives regarding how well the agency assesses its performance. If employees know that performance is important in the organization, their perception of the performance culture is positive.

Also, comparing whether an organization takes actions to assess and communicate its performance, and the employees' perspectives of the importance of organizational performance, may give program evaluators insights for using the appraisal program to help assess and communicate organizational performance in the future.

15. Oversight and Accountability

(10 points for design and implementation score)

15a. Do the performance plans of supervisors include a critical element (performance expectation) that holds the supervisors accountable for the performance management of subordinates, that is, the agency holds supervisors responsible for ensuring that subordinate performance plans are aligned with organizational goals and for the degree of rigor the supervisor demonstrates in the appraisal of subordinates?

Check Yes or No

Performance Appraisal Assessment Tool Instructions

- i. If **yes**, how many supervisors have this element included in their performance plans?

Instruction: If your program has a required element for all supervisors that holds them accountable for the performance management of subordinates, report that all supervisory plans include this. The number would be the same number as reported in 1d above.

- ii. If **no**, what is the agency doing to ensure that in the future all supervisors are held accountable for the performance management of subordinates? Include a timeline for actions.

Instruction: Develop a plan for revising the performance plans of supervisors to incorporate a critical element (or performance expectation) that holds them accountable for the performance management of subordinates.

- 15b. Was this program approved by the agency head or designee before it was implemented?

Check Yes or No

Instruction: The agency should have a process for approving programs that operate within the agency. The head of the agency or designee is often the approver of programs.

- i. If **yes**, provide the title of the designee if the agency head was not the approver.

Instruction: Self explanatory.

- ii. If **no**, describe the process used for obtaining approval for implementing the program within the agency.

Instruction: Describe how this program was approved within your agency.

- 15c. Is there a high-level agency official who has oversight of the results of appraisals and awards under this program?

Check Yes or No

Instruction: Agencies should have an official at headquarters with oversight responsibilities for the appraisal program and its results. This is the person who approves the strategy developed for improving the appraisal program asked for in Section 16.

- i. If yes, provide the title of the official.

Instruction: Self explanatory.

- ii. If no, what is the agency doing to ensure that in the future a high-level agency official will oversee the results of appraisals and awards under this program? Include a timeline for actions.

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Instruction: As part of an oversight and accountability program, your agency should ensure that an official has oversight of the appraisal program, reviews the results of the program, and periodically evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of the program.

15d. Has this program been evaluated by the agency within the last 3 years to determine compliance and effectiveness?

Check Yes or No

Instruction: The regulations at 5 CFR 430 require that agencies evaluate their appraisal programs periodically. Report if the program has been evaluated or not.

i. If **yes**, when?

Instruction: Report the month and year of the evaluation.

ii. If **yes**, what were the results? (Provide a copy of the report.)

Instruction: If the report is available electronically and you are submitting your responses to this tool electronically, email the report with this tool. If you are submitting your responses by mail, include a hard copy of the evaluation report.

iii. If **no**, that is, if the agency has not evaluated the appraisal program within the last 3 years, what is the agency doing to ensure that in the future regular evaluations of the program will occur? Include a timeline for actions.

Instruction: By using this tool, you are evaluating your appraisal program. In the future, you may reevaluate your program, as required, using this tool or other methods. As part of your accountability system, ensure that appraisal program evaluation is done periodically.

15e. Does the rating distribution of employees reflect organizational unit performance, that is, is there a relationship between the ratings of employees and the performance of the unit?

Check Yes or No

Instruction: Looking at the performance of the organization as a whole and the rating distribution of its employees, determine if there seems to be a relationship. For example, ninety percent of employees should not be rated Outstanding if the organization has failed to meet any of its goals. A significant number of employees rated at high levels may be appropriate if the organization has achieved all of its goals as reported to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Congress, or if the agency has programs that are rated Effective by OMB.

i. If **yes**, explain

Instruction: Explain why you think the rating distribution is reflective of organizational performance.

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ii. If *no*, what actions is the agency taking to ensure that rating distributions in the future reflect unit performance?

Instruction: This answer should also be included in the strategy developed in section 16.

16. Purpose of Performance Management

(100 points for strategy for improvement)

16a. What were the results to the most recent Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) or Annual Employee Survey question that addresses results? Be sure to consider survey results when developing strategies for improving your appraisal program. *(Include this information if you are able to isolate the data for only those employees covered by this appraisal program. Otherwise, respond “N/A” for not available. If your organization conducts its own employee survey and has similar questions with results, include the applicable question(s) and results here.*

FHCS Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know
My performance appraisal is a fair reflection of my performance.						
Item from agency survey (if applicable)						

Instruction: Agencies are required to survey their employees annually. The Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) is a Governmentwide survey conducted periodically by OPM. The Annual Employee Survey (AES) is given by agencies to ensure the annual survey requirement is met. These surveys are tools that measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The surveys include specific questions that measure employees' perceptions regarding performance culture. Data from the FHCS can be obtained for an entire agency and often for specific components/bureaus/operatives within an agency. You must contact your Chief Human Capital Officer to obtain permission to look at FHCS data that covers organizational units smaller than the entire agency.

In many ways, this question summarizes the appraisal process from the employees' perspective. Consider the results of this question when answering 16b.

16b. Do you feel this appraisal program helps the organization achieve its goals? (The response to all of 16b is to be approved by the person that has oversight responsibility for the program, as identified in 15c.)

Check Yes or No

i. If *yes*, explain.

Instruction: This question gives the agency the opportunity to review its appraisal program and explain how its successful program has helped communicate organizational

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goals, keep employees focused on achieving results, identify and recognize top performers, address poor performance, and accomplish organizational goals. If the agency has a good story to tell, it should tell it here. This answer is to be approved by the person identified in 15c.

ii. If *no*, what is the agency doing to the design or operation of its program to improve program effectiveness at helping employees achieve organizational goals? Note: This answer should be the summarizing plan for how the agency intends to improve its performance appraisal program. Include all the answers from previous sections that address improvement actions.

Instruction: This question gives you the opportunity to review and summarize a complete plan for addressing and improving the weaknesses you may have found as identified in other sections of this tool. All of the other sections asked you to develop a strategy for improving the alignment, results-focus, measures of performance, consequences, employee involvement, feedback, training, organizational assessment, oversight, and the accountability for in the appraisal program. This question asks you to pull all those together into a plan, with timelines, for how you can improve your appraisal program overall. (Be sure to capture your strategies for 6bii, 6ci, 7bii, 7ci, 8ciii, 8diii, 8ei, 9c, 10di, 10fi, 11,di, 12di, 13bii, 13dii, 13gi, 14aiii, 14bii, 14ci, 15aii, 15cii, 15dii, and 15eii.) This answer is to be approved by the person identified in 15c.

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Scoring Sheet

Score 1: Design and Implementation

Because the characteristics of effective appraisal programs that this tool assesses are equally important, each characteristic has been weighted the same for scoring purposes. Sections 6 through 15 score 10 points each, with a total score of 100 points possible. The scoring scheme, with possible points in parentheses after the item scored, follows:

Characteristics of Effective Performance Appraisal Programs

Alignment

- 6a. Program requires alignment. (1 point)
- 6b. Number of employees with aligned plans. (3 points)
- 6bi. Describe methodology and verification. (4 points)
- 6c. Survey results (2 points)

Results-Focused

- 7a. Program requires results-focused elements. (1 point)
- 7b. Number of employees with results-focused plans. (3 points)
- 7bi. Describe methodology and verification. (4 points)
- 7c. Survey results. (2 points)

Balanced, Credible Measures

- 8a. Program requires balanced, credible measures. (1 point)
- 8b. Number of employees plans including measures. (1 point)
- 8bi. Describe methodology and verification. (1 point)
- 8bii. Provide examples. (1 point)
- 8c. Program requires supervisory plans include measures of customer and employee perspective. (1 point)
- 8d. Number of supervisors that have customer/employee perspectives in plans. (1 point)
- 8di. Describe methodology and verification. (1 point)
- 8dii. Provide examples. (1point)
- 8e. Survey results. (2 points)

Distinctions in levels of performance

- 9a. Rating distribution (8 points)
- 9b. Survey results. (2 points)

Consequences

- 10a. Cash awards (2 points)
- 10b. Time-off awards (1 point)
- 10c. Quality step increases (1 point)
- 10d. Survey results (2 points)
- 10e. Addressing unacceptable performance. (2 points)
- 10f. Survey results. (2 points)

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Employee Involvement

- 11a. Employees involved in program design. (2 points)
- 11b. Program requires employee involvement. (2 points)
- 11c. Employee involved in developing performance plans. (4 points)
- 11d. Survey results. (2 points)

Feedback

- 12a. Program requires progress review. (1 point)
- 12b. Number of employees who received a progress review. (3 points)
- 12c. Tracking progress reviews. (4 points)
- 12d. Survey results. (2 points)

Training

- 13a. Program requires training of supervisors. (1 point)
- 13b and bi. Number of supervisors trained on program and details of training. (1 point)
- 13c. Program requires training of employees (1 point)
- 13d. Number of employees trained on program. (1 point)
- 13di. Details of training. (1 point)
- 13e. Addressing poor supervisory performance (1 point)
- 13f. Supervisory competency development (2 points)
- 13g. Survey results (2 points)

Organizational Assessment and Guidance

- 14a. Assesses organizational unit performance. (1 point)
- 14ai. Describe the methodology for assessment. (2 points)
- 14aai. Assessment results communicated to employees. (2 points)
- 14b. Guidance provided to rating officials. (1 point)
- 14bi. Describe guidance. (2 points)
- 14c. Survey results. (2 points)

Oversight and Accountability

- 15a. Supervisors held accountable for the performance management of subordinates. (2 points)
- 15b. Program approved by agency head or designee. (2 points)
- 15c. Official with oversight. (2 points)
- 15d. Program previously evaluated. (2 points)
- 15e. Rating distribution reflects organizational performance. (2 points)

Rating: *We can score the program at these levels when each section scores at least 2 points. If a section scores 0 points, the program does not adequately meet requirements.*

Determination	Point Total
Effectiveness Characteristics Present	85-100
Effectiveness Characteristics Present but Not as Strong as Could Be	70-84
Characteristics Adequately Present But Many Weaknesses Identified	50-69
Characteristics Not Adequately Present	0-49