



User Guide

Performance Evaluation System

Town of Littleton, Massachusetts

Developed by:

Human Resources Services, Inc.

1 Introduction

Human Resources Services, Inc. has developed this Performance Evaluation System for the Town of Littleton, Massachusetts so that it may provide a workable and uniform practice of performance management for municipal employees throughout the Town's departments and organizations. The following chapters below provide the general guidelines for the accompanying evaluation forms.

1.1 Purpose of the System

This performance evaluation system has been developed to accomplish several goals:

- To continuously improve the effectiveness and efficiency of town services;
- To provide an opportunity for two-way communication and planning between supervisors and employees;
- To provide a mechanism for the establishment of individual and departmental goals and objectives;
- To serve as the basis of acknowledging employee accomplishments and recognizing potential need for guidance, training, and/or support; and
- To provide documentation of performance to serve as a basis for salary adjustments and other personnel related actions.

1.2 Scope – Who it Covers

The system covers non-union Littleton municipal employees, excluding schools and light department. This document serves as the sole reference for the scope of the system for the Town of Littleton. Any changes to the scope of this evaluation system will require agreement via the town administration, the personnel board, and the directives of the Town's Personnel Bylaw and Rules and Regulations. The Town Administrator provides overall administration of the system on a day-to-day basis.

1.3 The System Developed for Littleton

The system developed for Littleton is a traditional *Uniform Performance Criteria and Performance Objectives* method. There are two forms:

- *Annual Performance Review-Evaluation Form 1 – Uniform Performance Criteria Only*
- *Annual Performance Review-Evaluation Form 2 – Criteria and Objectives*

The Final Evaluation Definitions are the same for both forms:

- 5 - Excellent** - *Performance is clearly extraordinary; results almost always exceed requirements.*
- 4 – Superior** - *Performance significantly exceeds standards; results usually exceed requirements.*
- 3 – Satisfactory** - *Performance meets acceptable standards; results usually meet requirements.*
- 2 – Needs Improvement** - *Performance is below acceptable standards; results fall short of requirements.*
- 1 – Unsatisfactory** - *Performance is clearly unacceptable; results usually fall far short of requirements.*

The forms are computer friendly with prompts in Microsoft Word Form format. It is up to the discretion of the appointing authority or department head as to which form would be most appropriate for the particular employee or group of employees to be evaluated.

Performance management includes all activities associated with **planning, monitoring, developing, rating and rewarding** performance.

2 Uniform Performance Criteria - Definitions

There are Seven *Uniform Performance Criteria* that relate to position functions across the organization of town government in Littleton. They are: **Communication, Personnel Management, Financial Management, Planning and Organization, Leadership/Problem Solving/Innovation, Customer Service/Time Management and Technology Competence**. In limited instances there may be an employee(s) who would have less than seven criteria. (*For example, an employee who does not supervise employees.*) Below are descriptive examples for each Criterion.

2.1 Communication

Presents plans, ideas, and issues in a clear, concise and persuasive manner to diverse audiences. Listens intently to others. Is open to and solicits reactions and ideas.

Cooperates with other departments by consistently meeting commitments, freely sharing information, informing them about actions that will affect them, and seeking their input where appropriate.

Handles conflict situations calmly and constructively by reducing tensions, getting at the real issues and reconciling differences.

Written reports are clear, well organized, and accurate.

Keeps Town Administrator and/or Appointing Authority informed on issues, needs, and operations.

2.2 Personnel Management

Adheres to all federal, state, and local laws, procedures and regulations regarding personnel practices.

Fully delegates responsibility and authority to employees. Demonstrates ability to both supervise employees and to work independently.

Selects, manages, motivates, and develops staff according to prescribed personnel policies and practices. Ensures that equal employment opportunity is incorporated into all employment decisions.

Resolves conflict between employees and manages employee performance problems.

Monitors sick leave usage in accordance with established policy. Monitors other leave usage.

Ensures that safety procedures and practices are followed.

2.3 Financial Management

Demonstrates ability to develop effective plans to meet goals and objectives within budgetary limitations. Provides effective service within appropriate budget allocations.

Prepares a proposed budget for the department or unit fully in accordance with required guidelines and timetable with clear explanation of options, recommendations, and reasons for significant change.

Monitors and controls all departmental/unit expenditures and ensures budget compliance. Makes cost effective decisions. Reports budget status.

Devises and implements ways to reduce cost, increase productivity, or increase revenue to the Town.

Performance appraisal is a process of assessing a person's work against a set of predetermined criteria. It looks at what the person does, not at personal characteristics or traits.

2.4 Planning and Organization

Visualizes the end results of projects and develops effective strategies for achieving those results.

Anticipates problems before they arise and plans for ways to deal with them.

Sets priorities; gets important things done first. Involves staff and other critical people in the planning process, helping to become better partners.

Sets priorities for staff and ensures the achievement of long and short-term goals.

Involves staff and other critical people in the planning process.

2.5 Leadership, Problem Solving and Innovation

Establishes a clear sense of direction, sets specific objectives, and mobilizes the people and resources to meet those objectives.

Develops within the staff the skills for effective teamwork, ensuring that staff cooperates with each other and other departments.

Anticipates changes in the community, the profession, and the department and helps the staff adapt creatively to those changes. Initiates and carries out unanticipated tasks without specific instructions.

Defines problems, collects and analyzes pertinent information, generates multiple options, and develops effective solutions.

Makes sound decisions under difficult or pressurized circumstances.

Comes up with fresh, new approaches to departmental problems and to serving citizens.

2.6 Customer Service/Time Management

Meets the public in a friendly and professional manner and treats them with courtesy and respect; strives to establish department norms that emphasizes courtesy and respect at all times when dealing with the public.

Regularly goes out of his/her way to find prompt solutions to citizens' problems. Listens and responds to customer needs.

Handles complaints of citizens, addressing the complaint and working towards solutions.

Regularly meets required standards of output. Has the ability to judge the time needed to complete assignments. Organizes work and manages time in such a way as to consistently meet deadlines.

Ensures contributions of the department to the town as a whole. Maximizes department productivity through direction, coaching, and motivating.

2.7 Technology Competency

Demonstrates efficient skill in utilizing popular word-processing, database, spreadsheet, graphic, and presentation computer applications; efficient skill in utilizing Internet, email, and town-wide servers.

Stays current with changing and emerging technologies within professional field (i.e. accounting, assessing, library, etc.)

Ability to provide general training and guidance on a wide variety of computer software and hardware as needed.

3 Performance Objectives – The Process

The following guidelines are offered as a way to ensure that the process of setting objectives is both effective and fair. Below is a sequential process in developing performance objectives as part of the total performance evaluation process.

3.1 Performance Planning

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Employee and Evaluator will negotiate a set of five objectives which represent the most important aspects of the employee's responsibilities for that year. Where possible, those objectives should be linked to town-wide goals formulated by the Board of Selectmen. To prepare for this meeting, the Employee must write his/her proposed objectives in advance of the meeting.

3.2 Selecting Types of Objectives

There are four types of objectives to consider: (1) Improvement Objectives, (2) Maintenance Objectives, (3) Innovative Objectives, and (4) Professional Development Objectives.

Improvement Objective: To increase participation in the October flu vaccine clinic by elderly residents and "at risk" groups by 5%.

Maintenance Objective: To maintain the same refuse collection routes and number of pick ups as last year, at the same level of quality, with a 4% increase in costs.

Innovative Objective: To pursue an additional highway interchange off of Rt. 495 for better access to business and ease traffic; meeting with economic development agency; hearing with residents.

Professional Development Objective: To become fully knowledgeable and conversant in the new HIPAA regulations to the point where I can make public presentations on the subject by January 2009.

3.3 Writing Good Objectives

Objectives should be **S-Specific M-Measurable A-Achievable R-Realistic and T-Time Sensitive**.

- *Objective.* Briefly describe each objective and when the objective should be met or accomplished.
- *Measurement.* How will the objective be evaluated? (Use quantitative measures such as budget savings or use qualitative measures which are descriptive of criteria.)
- *Importance.* Rank the objective in terms of importance and priority to the department or organization. High, Medium, or Low

Sample Objective for an IT Employee: *Implement new Financial, Police, and Permitting software systems by June 2009. Participate during selection process and obtain training to ensure efficient transition and maintenance. Work to reduce downtime as much as possible during transition periods.*

3.4 Mid-year Meeting

About six months after the Employee and Evaluator have established objectives together, the two parties will sit down to discuss progress on the objectives (and possibly renegotiate them, if warranted), as well as the performance in relation to the seven criteria mentioned above. It is a good opportunity to reinforce good performance and/or redirect unsatisfactory performance.

3.5 Annual Review

This is the formal appraisal of the Employee's complete performance record for the year by the Evaluator. It includes a final assessment of the performance objectives (level of achievement) as well as a final assessment of the uniform performance criteria. The final evaluation will include a total percentage score and written comments. Professional development plans or corrective actions steps may be outlined.

Objective: A specific, measurable statement of the desired immediate or direct outcome.

4 Completing the Forms – Step-by-Step

Appraisal Cycle: Selectmen Town-wide Policy Goals (May); Performance Planning (June); Mid-Year Review (November); Annual Review (April) Communication is the key to success!

Evaluation Forms 1 or 2

Steps	Employee Actions
Step 1	Review Evaluation Form in its entirety. Ask questions!
Step 2	Enter your name, position, department, evaluator in Header.
Step 3	Prepare a paragraph or two on accomplishments; enter on page 1.
Step 4	Submit your Evaluation Form to Evaluator.
Step 5	Prepare in advance to discuss your performance outcomes on Uniform Performance Criteria with Evaluator.
Step 6	Attend designated meeting with Evaluator. Be there timely!
Note:	Form 1 end here. Form 2 continue below.
Step 7	Prepare to discuss status and accomplishments on current Performance Objectives; discuss with Evaluator.
Step 8	Prepare in advance your “preliminary” Performance Objectives on page 4 for the next appraisal year.
Step 9	Discuss your Proposed Performance Objectives with your Evaluator.

Evaluation Forms 1 or 2

Steps	Evaluator Actions
Step 1	Review the Employee’s accomplishments and position description.
Step 2	Schedule a date/time to meet with the Employee to discuss performance. Be timely!
Step 3	Rate the employee’s performance in the evaluation areas and assign overall rating for the year; annual review.
Step 4	Meet with the employee to review their accomplishments, performance, and to jointly set some new benchmarks for the next appraisal year.
Step 5	Sign/date Form, ask the employee to sign/date Form. Write comments. Submit final evaluation form to Personnel Benefits/Payroll Coordinator.
Note:	Form 1 end here. Form 2 continue below before submittal of form.
Step 6	Review and rate achievement level of objectives with Employee, and discuss “preliminary” performance objectives for the next appraisal year.
Step 7	Sign and date the Form on page 4, and ask the employee to sign and date the Form on page 4. Write comments and notes on form.
Step 8	Outline professional development or corrective action steps for the Employee, if needed.
Step 9	Submit final evaluation form to Personnel Benefits/Payroll Coordinator.