

Employee Performance Management (EPM) FAQs

Question	Answer
How can employees provide input to the development of a County-wide appraisal system?	Because employee input is an important part of developing a successful appraisal system, there are a number of opportunities to provide input. In addition to the all employee survey distributed August 10, employees may volunteer to participate in focus groups that will be held in September.
How will the focus groups work?	We anticipate there will be eight focus groups, each with 10-12 participants. Focus groups will meet once for approximately two hours. The groups will be structured in a manner that provides good representation of departments/agencies and job functions. Depending upon employee interest, it may not be possible for everyone who signs up to participate by serving on a focus group.
Will managers, supervisors and employees participate in the same focus group?	While it is possible that supervisors and employees may be placed together, it is anticipated that there will be a separate focus group specifically for managers and supervisors.
Will the feedback provided by employees in focus groups be disseminated using employee names?	No, the focus group facilitator will provide a summary of the results to the project team. The summary will <u>NOT</u> include employee names.
How can we have consistency with an appraisal system across the County but still allow for flexibility?	There most likely will be certain behavioral expectations of all County employees included in everyone's performance plan. Behavioral expectations are defined as how you do your job. Additionally, it is anticipated that the rating scale would be consistent across the County. The plan would, however, be customizable to allow job-specific expectations to be included.
How can there be consistency in applying ratings across managers/supervisors and departments?	Applying rating scales consistently among managers and supervisors will be improved by developing clearly defined rating criteria and by providing training to users, both of which are key components of this project.
Will there be flexibility at the individual level? For example, will two people with the same job have identical appraisal plans?	Employees who have the same job may have similar duties but the system will allow for flexibility to customize the appraisal to reflect differences in job focus and/or individual development needs.
Will employees be able to provide input on their appraisals or conduct self-appraisals?	It is important to design a system using best practices, and the ability for employees to provide input is considered a best practice in developing employee performance management systems. The project team will consider employee survey and focus group feedback when determining the usage of self-appraisals in the new system.
What are some other examples of best practices?	A few examples include having a clearly defined rating system; providing regular feedback to employees; and automating the system to allow for tracking performance throughout the year.
How will an automated system work?	The appraisal document and workflow will be automated, but will never replace the face-to-face conversation between an employee and his/her supervisor. The County's long-term goal is to move toward paperless, electronic files which are easily accessible to those who need access. Paper copies of the appraisal form may still be available for those without computer access.

Employee Performance Management (EPM) FAQs (CONTINUED)

<p>Why is the new system scheduled to be implemented in September 2010? Wouldn't it make sense to start the new process at the beginning of the year?</p>	<p>The new system is scheduled to launch in September 2010 to provide enough time to successfully design, train, and launch the program. In September 2010, it is anticipated that employees and managers/supervisors will work together to develop performance plans and establish goals for the upcoming twelve months. Employees would receive their first formal review using the new system in 2011.</p>
<p>Will review dates continue to be associated with anniversary dates?</p>	<p>There was a recommendation in the 2010 Budget Overview presented to the Board of County Commissioners that would entail moving to a 'focal point' review in which all employees would receive their evaluations at a specified time period during the year. You will receive additional information on this as the County determines how to move forward with this recommendation.</p>
<p>Will reviews continue to be conducted annually?</p>	<p>The frequency of reviews is an aspect that needs to be discussed, but should be conducted at least on an annual basis. Employee feedback will be important!</p>
<p>Will there be a different appraisal form for exempt and non-exempt employees?</p>	<p>Since it is early in the planning process, the details of the appraisal form still need to be developed. However, the form will be based on specific job duties and requirements of the position. It is anticipated that the flexibility of a new system will eliminate the need for separate evaluations for different employee groups.</p>
<p>Will developmental goals be required as part of the appraisal process?</p>	<p>Currently there is a wide variety in how developmental goals are being used throughout the County. The vision is to have some component of an individual development plan incorporated into the system.</p>
<p>Will we continue to use the same rating criteria, i.e. 'exceeds', 'fully meets', etc?</p>	<p>There is variability across the County today in terms of rating scales that are used. While specific rating criteria, terms, and definitions have yet to be determined, the goal is to implement a rating system that is well-defined and used throughout the County.</p>
<p>Will appraisal ratings be tied to raises?</p>	<p>Yes, the County is committed to awarding a merit pay increase on the basis of an employee's contribution. It's important to remember that the guidelines for distributing merit pay increases may vary from year-to-year based upon budgetary considerations.</p>
<p>Before implementing the new appraisal system County-wide, will there be a pilot? How will it be determined who participates in the pilot?</p>	<p>Yes, one or more pilot programs will be conducted to allow for adjustments and tweaks to the system before implementing across the whole organization. The pilots may be conducted at a departmental/agency, division, and/or team level to ensure good representation of the County as a whole.</p>
<p>Is the disciplinary system being reviewed along with the appraisal system?</p>	<p>Disciplinary issues should be addressed year-round as they arise. There will be no change to the disciplinary tools currently used. However, an improved appraisal system will assist with tracking performance more effectively throughout the year.</p>