Leader’s Guide
Supervisor Round-Table Discussion on Performance Goals

Introduction:
If your organization incorporates a process of setting individual employee goals as part of your periodic performance evaluation cycle, it can be beneficial to bring supervisors and managers together for discussion on how to best approach this process. Establishing a shared understanding of the norms and expectations related to employee goals at your County, taking time for supervisors and managers to prepare to guide their staff in an effective goal-setting process, and exchanging helpful strategies for making the most of this process are just a few of the positive outcomes your leadership team will achieve during these discussion sessions.

Important Points on Establishing Effective & Meaningful Goals:
- Supervisors and managers play a key role in ensuring their team members are on-track when establishing performance goals. Not only is it critical that goals be drafted in a format that is clear and easy to measure or evaluate later; but goals should also align with the organization and department’s philosophy, strategic plan, mission, vision, and objectives, or further employee development in a way that supports or aligns with these factors.
- Many organizations use the SMART goals format to help guide their process in establishing individual employee goals. We’ve found it is not uncommon for employees to propose a goal that’s on the right track, but could be improved or developed through supervisor feedback to include all elements of a SMART goal. We recommend holding an interactive goal-setting process, and ultimately believe it is the supervisor’s responsibility to work with employees to ensure that goals align with organizational direction and follow the SMART criteria:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Relevant
  - Time Targeted
- It is also critical that supervisors have regular follow-up with each employee throughout the year to touch base on how they are progressing toward reaching goals that were set, and to discuss any challenges or barriers they are encountering. Open communication helps to ensure the supervisor and employee are on the same page regarding how to address challenges or changing circumstances that might modify goal expectations.

Goals Exercise:
- The supervisor round-table discussion on performance goals is based on real questions that we’ve encountered from supervisors working in organizations where individual employee goals are incorporated in the performance evaluation process.
• Supervisor / manager / department head participants in this exercise should be asked to divide into small groups for discussion. Each small group is provided a set of questions [see handouts with Question Set A, B, C].

All groups are asked to provide a numerical response to the first question:
**What is the ideal number of employee performance goals?**
- Supervisors should be advised not to spend too much time on this question.
- We’ve found it’s helpful to gauge immediate responses based on gut reaction and what has worked well in each leader’s area in the past, particularly if your organization has been through the goal setting and related evaluation process before.
- Pick a number!

Once each small group has decided on a response to the first question, they should work through an assigned set of four additional questions and prepare responses and recommendations on these topics to share with the large group.
- Each small group should be advised to choose a presenter to share their responses.
- There’s value in working through these questions with other supervisors, and for everyone to hear how others are approaching issues to help establish greater consistency across the organization.
- We recommend providing around 10 - 15 minutes to work through the small group questions before reporting back.

Group Reports / Large Group Discussion:
- Go through all groups’ responses to the first question. There is no right answer, but this exercise will help give supervisors a general point of reference as they’re working with their employees. The objective is to ensure employees are not overwhelmed and set up to fail when it comes to goals, but that individual performance goals are appropriately challenging in number and content.
- Have each spokesperson report on their small group’s discussion of their assigned set of questions, presenting to the large group. Depending on number of participants, you may have more than one small group respond to the same set of questions. [Tip – Use the PowerPoint presentation for everyone to follow along as small groups report back to the large groups on the questions they have considered.]
- We’ve found that even experienced supervisors who have established an effective performance management approach, feel much more confident when they know what the norms and general expectations are across the organization, and have an opportunity to reflect with their peers. Those who are newer to the process of goal setting will gain useful information on how to guide this process with their direct reports, providing effective leadership and feedback.