

**For:** FSA State and County Offices

**Performance Elements and Measures**

**Approved by:** Deputy Administrator, Management



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

In 2002, the President’s Management Agenda (PMA) laid out 5 Governmentwide initiatives that have become the driving force behind the efforts for the Administration and Federal supervisors to improve government performance. Performance is the centerpiece of its policies about human resources issues. To supplement PMA, in early 2004, then Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, Mr. John Surina, issued a memorandum requiring agencies to focus on achieving a results-oriented performance culture.

These developments have led to a new philosophy that requires agencies to:

- identify, measure, and report on their efforts to continuously improve the performance of their major programs
- focus on results
- identify which processes best accomplish these results
- use a performance management and awards system that identifies and rewards the agency’s top performers.

As a result, FSA has changed its performance management system to focus on measurable results. To assist field offices in transitioning to the new performance management system, DAFO and HRD have prepared a:

- list of required elements for each field office position
- menu of measures for each element.

<b>Disposal Date</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
May 1, 2006	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

## Notice PM-2519

### 1 Overview (Continued)

#### B Purpose

This notice:

- lists the required elements for each field office position (Exhibit 1)
- provides a menu of measures for each element (Exhibit 2)
- stresses the importance of the new reviewing official position
- provides contact information.

### 2 Manager's and Supervisor's Action

#### A Elements

Select required critical and noncritical elements for the position from Exhibit 1.

**Note:** Do not forget the basic requirements of the new performance management system listed in Notice PM-2482. The basic requirements are that each:

- performance plan must have 3-5 elements
- performance plan must have the appropriate CR/EEO element (supervisory or nonsupervisory)
- supervisor must have the element "Supervision"
- performance plan must have at least 1 noncritical element.

#### B Measures

Select 3-5 measures for each element as appropriate from Exhibit 2. AO's may approve minor modifications to measures if necessary.

**Notice PM-2519**

**2 Manager's and Supervisor's Action (Continued)**

**C Reviewing Official Position**

The new performance management system introduced a new position to the process, the reviewing official. The reviewing official shall ensure conformance with policy and guidelines and consistency across the work unit at both the:

- beginning of the process, with the employee performance plans
- end of the process, with the employee ratings.

See Notice PM-2482 for more information on the role of the reviewing official. DD is the reviewing official for CED's and all subordinate CO positions.

**Note:** In the event of a disagreement between the rating official and the reviewing official, the reviewing official's rating stands. COC is the rating official for CED's. CED's are the rating officials for subordinate CO positions.

**D Contacts**

If there are any questions on the performance management program, managers and supervisors may contact the appropriate Servicing Personnel Office according to this table.

<b>IF the manager/supervisor is located in...</b>	<b>THEN contact...</b>
County Office	State Office.
State Office	Employee and Labor Relations Section, KC HR Office, at 816-926-6643 or TTY 816-926-3063.

**Required Elements for Field Office Positions**

The following table provides required elements for each field office position.

<b>Cluster</b>	<b>Positions</b>	<b>Elements</b>
Management: County Office	County Executive Director CO-7, 9, 11, 12  Farm Loan Manager GS-11, 12	4 critical: program management, customer service, civil rights, and supervision.  1 noncritical (pick 1): communication, research and analysis, or resource management.
Program Technician: County Office	Program Technician CO/GS-3, 4, 5, 6, 7  Lead Program Technician CO-8: Shared Management  Chief Program Technician CO-9: Supervisor  Program Technician-In-Charge CO-7, 8, 9, 11	4 critical: execution of duties, civil rights, customer service, and communications.  1 noncritical (pick 1): individual contributions to the team/team leadership, resource management, or research and analysis.
Farm Loan: County Office	Farm Loan Officer GS-7, 9, 11  Farm Loan Program Technician GS-3, 4, 5, 6, 7	4 critical: execution of duties, civil rights, customer service, and communications.  1 noncritical (pick 1): research and analysis or individual contributions to the team/team leadership.
Administrative/ Specialist/ Appraiser: State Office	Ag Program Specialist GS-9, 11, 12 Farm Loan Specialist GS-11, 12 Appraiser GS-9, 11, 12 Assistant AO/HR Specialist/Admin Specialist GS-9, 11, 12 Outreach/Information/EEO GS-11, 12 County Operations Reviewer GS-7, 9, 11, 12 GIS Specialist/Coordinator GS-9, 11, 12	4 critical: execution of duties, civil rights, customer service, and communications.  1 noncritical (pick 1): research and analysis, individual contributions to the team (use team leadership if appropriate), or resource management.

Required Elements for Field Office Positions (Continued)

Cluster	Positions	Elements
Secretary/Assistant: State Office	SED Secretary GS-7  Program Assistant GS-7  Program Technicians GS-3, 4, 5, 6, 7  Print Shop Operator/Mail Clerk GS-3, 5, 7	4 critical: execution of duties, civil rights, customer service, and communication.  1 noncritical (pick 1): research and analysis, individual contributions to the team, or resource management.
Management: State Office	District Director GS-12, 13  Farm Program Chief GS-13  Farm Loan Program Chief GS-13  Chief Administrative Officer GS-13  Executive Officer GS-13, 14	4 critical: program management, customer service, civil rights, and supervision.  1 noncritical (pick 1): communication, resource management or research and analysis.
Contracting and Procurement: State Office	Contracting GS-7, 9, 11  Procurement GS-7, 9, 11	4 critical: execution of duties, civil rights, customer service, and communication.  1 noncritical (pick 1): resource management or research and analysis.
Trainee	County Operations Trainee CO-5, 7, 9  Farm Loan Officer Trainee GS-7, 9, 11	4 critical: execution of duties, civil rights, customer service, and communication.  1 noncritical: research and analysis.

**Menu of Measures for Each Element****A Civil Rights (Nonsupervisory)**

Attends optional EEO/AA/Diversity information sessions provided/scheduled by supervisor at least 2 times.

Assists supervisor or responsible individual with planning, preparing for, or presenting EEO/AA/Diversity information sessions at least 2 times per year.

Consistently treats coworkers with respect, fairness, and politeness including socially-disadvantaged (SDA), females, and persons with disabilities. Relates well to people from various backgrounds and situations.

Consistently treats customers/producers with respect, fairness, and politeness including SDA, females, and persons with disabilities.

Brings discriminatory issues or actions to the attention of the supervisor or other appropriate official as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after occurrence.

Ensures that the civil rights/EO actions and correspondence file is up-to-date and complete throughout the year, within the timeframes established by management, with no more than 2 exceptions.

Applies the same eligibility criteria to applicants including SDA, females, and persons with disabilities to increase participation by these groups.

Ensures that customers are provided with the information required; that is, appeal rights, program information, deadlines, etc., including SDA, females, and persons with disabilities within established timeframes.

Participates in available training or other EEO/AA/Diversity related activities at least 2 times a year.

Completes required civil rights/EEO/Sexual Harassment training within established timeframes.

Reviews and meets requirements established in Notice AO-1338.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****B Civil Rights (Supervisory)**

Makes progress towards the goal of ensuring that 97 percent of employees have measurable civil rights performance elements in their annual performance plans within established timeframes.

Provides Civil Rights/EEO/Sexual Harassment/Diversity information (USDA material) to employees through information sessions, staff meetings, etc. at least 2 times a year.

Ensures that employees receive required Civil Rights, EEO, and Sexual Harassment training within established timeframes.

Responds to issues/actions/allegations according to agency procedures and within established timeframes with no more than 3 approved exceptions.

Takes action to reduce the number of valid employee complaints by actions such as increasing information provided for interpersonal skills training to employees, etc. at least 2 times annually.

Reviews the USDA's civil rights policy with employees at least 2 times a year to ensure that customers and employees are treated in accordance with the policy

Increases awareness of all FSA programs with all SDA groups of the following activities: provides information to SDA high schools, establishes partnerships with SDA institutions and community-based groups, provides articles and success stories to newsletters and newspapers, uses COC and/or SDA advisor to identify all SDA organizations, places informational posters in public facilities and churches or businesses serving socially-disadvantaged members by holding at least 1 outreach meeting per year with SDA groups.

Develops an election outreach plan to increase the number of SDA producers on the COC within established timeframe that includes actively soliciting and accepting nominations from producers and groups representing SDA producers and holds at least 1 informational meeting in advance of the nomination period.

Is available to meet with SDA groups to fully explain COC nomination and election procedures and provides all election information to all SDA groups in the county annually and timely.

Increases the number of SDA candidates for COC based on election outreach plan.

Encourages employees to attend training to increase interpersonal skills; such as cross-cultural communication, negotiation, dispute resolution, problem solving, active listening, etc.

Provides pro-active assistance to employees to help with problem solving and resolving conflicts. Results based on employee feedback, surveys, random oral surveys from second level supervisor, and providing employee skills training in related topics by providing information at 2 staff meetings.

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****B Civil Rights (Supervisory) (Continued)**

Meets USDA-established civil rights/EEO goals for recruitment, selection, promotion, training, awards, and other personnel activities.

Models appropriate behavior by treating employees, peers, supervisors, and customers with respect, fairness, and politeness.

Ensures requirements of Notice AO-1338 are met.

Ensure that complete application materials are provided to all customers or potential customers of FSA, ensuring that all SDA and persons with disabilities receive complete applications within established timeframes.

Ensure that all SDA and persons with disabilities are provided guidance and instructions for completing applications for loans or farm program benefits within established timeframes.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****C Communication**

Communicates clearly with producers and shares accurate information with no more than 5 exceptions.

Responds to general program questions within 24 hours with no more than 6-exceptions. Elevates more complex questions to supervisor, team leader, or other individual responsible within 2 hours of inquiry.

Schedules staff meetings on a regular basis (at least monthly and after major program conferences and meetings or more often if required by management). (**Supervisors only**)

Prepares written documents that are clear, concise, and understandable as well as following prescribed procedures within established timeframes with no more than 3 exceptions.

Responds in writing (when appropriate) to customer inquiries within established timeframes with no more than 3 exceptions.

Regularly shares program information the employee is responsible for with co-workers to increase staff awareness of all program areas within timeframes established by management (cross-training, collaboration, reports at staff meetings, etc.) with no more than 3 exceptions.

Resolves disputes and problems with others through use of problem solving, conflict resolution, and negotiation. Must respond to disputes and problems within 24 hours of becoming aware.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****D Customer Service**

Responds to customer questions accurately and according to procedures with no more than 4-6 valid complaints. Responds by at least acknowledging receipt of an inquiry as soon as possible, but within 24 hours with no more than 6 exceptions.

Provides internal training that is accurate and given within established timeframes 90 percent of the time.

Completes assigned program training within established timeframes 90 percent of the time.

Ensures external customers are acknowledged within 3 minutes of the time they enter the office with no more than 10 exceptions.

Uses a customer transaction checklist to ensure all required information is obtained and applications are completed and accurate with no more than 5 exceptions.

Provides program benefit information to producers and other customers; such as, newsletters, counter information, producer meetings, producer organizations, newspaper articles, and radio announcements within established timeframes with no more than 3 exceptions.

Ensures that customer applications are accurate and processed within established timeframes with no more than 1-3 exceptions.

Ensures that payments are processed within timeframes with no more than 1-3 exceptions.

Responds to other agencies (NRCS, RMS, Conservation Districts, Extension Services, etc.) regarding shared programs within established timeframes with no more than 1-5 exceptions.

Receives no more than 4-6 valid customer complaints.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****E Execution of Duties (Nonsupervisors Only)**

Prepares reports required with duties that are accurate and complete within established timeframes with no more than 1-3 exceptions.

Achieves use of EFT for 90 percent of loan obligations.

Achieves use of EFT for 95 percent of payments.

Deposits and processes payments within 24 hours of receipt, in accordance with FSA policy with no more than 3 exceptions.

Achieves or demonstrates progress toward ensuring that no late payment interest accrues.

Achieves or demonstrates progress towards working to provide information about program benefits to producers to ensure that they can make informed decisions; such as, newsletters, counter information, producer meetings, meeting with producer organizations, etc.

Achieves or makes progress toward ensuring payment amounts are accurate.

Ensures applications are completed accurately to minimize inaccurate payments with no more than 5 exceptions.

Completes all actions required on an application within established timeframes with no more than 3 exceptions.

Achieves or makes progress toward ensuring farm loan transactions or other assigned work is accurate and complete.

Loads software within 2 workdays of receipt with no more than 5 exceptions.

Achieves or makes progress toward delinquency rates within the States established goals.

Ensures that operations occur in an efficient manner to support the program areas; like, printing and distributing materials, creating regulations and guidance, etc., with no more than 3 exceptions.

Meets Federal contracting regulations with respect to processing, follow through, and life span with no more than 3 exceptions.

Processes requests in a timely manner with no more than 3 complaints.

Files notices and amendments within two workdays of posted receipt with no more than 5 exceptions.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****F Individual Contributions to the Team (All Positions Except Team Leaders and Supervisors)**

Demonstrates collaborative efforts between farm programs and farm loan programs by regularly sharing information and providing other support. Attends and participates in joint staff meetings with no more than 2 exceptions (unless excused because of scheduled leave).

Regularly cooperates with coworkers and others in meeting commitments and accomplishing assigned work on time; such as, sharing information freely with no more than 3 exceptions.

Responds constructively to feedback within 24 hours, seeking ways to improve.

Consistently raises concerns in constructive manner and offers potential solutions.

Fosters productive and cooperative working relationships by showing understanding, courtesy, tact, and politeness to others with no more than 4-6 valid complaints.

Updates records that affect other programs in the office within timeframes established by management.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)**

**G Program Management (Supervisors Only)**

Processes loans within the States established goals with no more than 3 exceptions.

Achieves or demonstrates progress toward ensuring that no late payment interest accrues.

Ensures that reviews are conducted and reports are filed and submitted within established timeframes.

Achieves or makes progress toward delinquency rates within the States established goals.

Ensures that applications for benefits are processed within required timeframes.

Ensures that producer payments are made within required timeframes.

Ensures that staff is fully trained in the program areas for which each employee is responsible.

Ensures that compliance checks are made within established timeframes.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****H Research and Analysis**

Reviews and analyzes temporary directive notices and handbook procedure on a daily basis 95 percent of the time.

Takes actions required by temporary directive notices or handbook procedure within the timeframes required with no more than 4 exceptions.

Asks questions for clarification and makes suggestions for implementation within the timeframes established by management.

Writes State temporary directive notices required by the supervisor that are clear, concise, and understandable within established timeframes 95 percent of the time. [**State Office Only**]

Conducts research and gathers data in response to legal issues and other assignments that are complete, accurate, and relevant within established timeframes with no more than 3 exceptions.

Assembles, indexes, and organizes work papers to expedite analysis and develop quality summaries and report segments with no more than 3 revisions by supervisor 90 percent of the time.

Analyzes data to identify weaknesses, patterns, and trends that are communicated to supervisor and other required staff within established timeframes.

Prepares case files that are complete and accurate within established timeframes for use in legal or administrative forums with no more than 3 exceptions.

Prepares case files for program appeals that are complete and accurate within established timeframes with no more than 3 exceptions.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****I Resource Management**

Manages within the established budget for program, function, or work assigned; notifies appropriate individual of potential budget shortfalls at least 30 calendar days in advance.

Ensures that budget object codes are correctly entered with no more than 3 exceptions.

Ensures that travel, training, and other administrative forms are properly completed, timely, and followed-up to ensure proper processing with no more than 3 exceptions.

Plans resource needs accurately with no more than 3 exceptions.

Ensures bills are paid by established deadlines to avoid late payment interest with no more than 2 exceptions.

Plans projects or other assignments, monitors, and completes projects or assignments within schedule and quality goals 95 percent of the time.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****J Supervision (Supervisors Only)**

Schedules staff meetings at least monthly and after major program conferences or meetings or more frequently if required by management.

Prioritizes work of staff to deal with workload shifts and to ensure that mission-critical work is accomplished with 95 percent accuracy.

Ensures that all new employees receive training on operational and procedural requirements within timeframes required by management.

Ensures that all employees are assessed and training needs are identified, communicated to employees, and planned on an annual basis.

Ensures that all employees receive required training within established timeframes.

Ensures issues and problems are identified, documented, and dealt with in a timely manner (immediately for minor issues, usually within 1 week for others, or within agency established timeframes as applicable) 90 percent of the time.

Ensures that all individual performance plans are linked to SED goals and that the links are explained to employees by the required deadline.

Conducts all requirements of the performance management cycle including encouraging 2-way discussions of planning, reviews, evaluations, and career development, setting goals and conducting reviews and evaluations within established timeframes, encouraging and implementing on-going feedback throughout the year, 99 percent of the time.

Ensures fair treatment of staff by dealing with issues such as absenteeism, tardiness, and other chronic problems within 1 week of identification of problem.

Prepares required reports that are accurate, according to stated requirements, and within established timeframes with no more than 3 exceptions.

Ensures that all personnel responsibilities (recruitment, staffing, promotion, training, evaluation, and discipline) are conducted fairly, meet established procedures, and within established timeframes.

**\* Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**

**Menu of Measures for Each Element (Continued)****K Team Leadership**

Provides leadership or oversees subordinate or co-workers' work and achieves desired results 90 percent of the time.

Plans projects and monitors or reviews work within schedule and quality goals for assigned program or functional work 90 percent of the time.

Identifies and pursues opportunities to improve services or products.

Demonstrates collaborative efforts between farm programs and farm loan programs by ensuring team regularly shares information and provides other support. Joint staff meetings will be held on a regular basis as established by management, frequency of the meetings must be established in writing.

Informs coworkers and backup employee of work in progress or issues before taking leave at least 90 percent of the time.

**\*Supervisors must include established timeframes, dates, numbers, and percentages where required.**