

For: FSA Employees

Performance Management: Closing Out FY 2012 and Preparing for FY 2013

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

The FY 2012 performance cycle ends September 30, 2012. Therefore, FSA is preparing for:

- closing out the FY 2012 performance appraisal period
- the FY 2013 performance appraisal period.

B Purpose

This notice:

- introduces the new updated FSA Performance Management web site
- highlights key issues (due dates, responsibilities, and training,) related to closing out the FY 2012 performance appraisal period and preparing for the FY 2013 appraisal period
- obsoletes Notices PM-2826 and PM-2827.

C Accessing 5-PM

5-PM:

- covers the awards program and performance management
- may be accessed at <http://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/dam/handbooks/handbooks.asp>.

Note: Guidance for FAS and RMA will be issued in separate notices.

D Labor-management Obligations

Where exclusive representation exists, bargaining may be requested to the extent allowed by applicable statues and according to contract language.

Disposal Date	Distribution
November 1, 2013	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

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1 Overview (Continued)

E FSA Updated Performance Management Website

The updated FSA Performance Management web site may be accessed at http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsa/operations/hrd/workforce_succession/Performance_Management1/Performance_Management1.htm.

2 Closing Out the FY 2012 Performance Appraisal Period

A Due Dates

The FY 2012 appraisal period ends **September 30, 2012**.

Performance appraisals should be completed within 30 calendar days of the end of the appraisal period. EmpowHR processing should be completed by COB **November 1, 2012**. Managers should **only** enter FY 2013 performance plans in EmpowHR 2 workdays **after** they have verified that the reviewer concurs with the ratings. This will allow the rating to complete the process cycle in the EmpowHR system.

B Performance Appraisal Requirements

To rate an employee **both** of the following **must** be done:

- a performance plan **must** have been established
- the employee **must** have been under that performance plan for at least 90 calendar days.

Note: If it has **not** been 90 calendar days by the end of the appraisal period, the period may be extended to allow for an appraisal to be given.

C Properly Rating Employees

An employee's performance appraisal **must** be based on documented accomplishments that align with the expectations established in the employee's performance plan. Rating officials and reviewing officials **must**:

- rate appropriately with the standards in the employee's performance plan and make distinctions in levels of performance (see Exhibits 1 and 2)
- document/record prove-up: documentation is required of accomplishments, if employee is rated at the "Exceeds" level for any element.

Rating and reviewing officials will be held accountable for rating appropriately against the standards in the employee's performance plan and making distinctions in levels of performance.

Artificial targets (such as quotas or preset rating distributions) for performance appraisals should **never** be used to evaluate employee performance. Performance appraisals **must** be based on the individual accomplishments of the employee being rated (see Exhibit 3).

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2 Closing Out the FY 2012 Performance Appraisal Period (Continued)

C Properly Rating Employees (Continued)

Before any documentation begins in EmpowHR, the performance appraisal **must** be discussed by the rating official and the reviewing official, and by the rating official and the employee. It is strongly recommended that these discussions be done face-to-face.

D Appraising Elements and Preparing the Summary Rating

For details on appraising elements and preparing the summary rating, see 5-PM, Part 5.

E Rating Based Performance Awards

Because of FSA budgetary constraints, monetary awards will not be provided for rating-based awards, including quality step increases. Instead, FSA will grant time-off awards for employees who have received “Outstanding” and Superior” performance ratings for FY 2012.

3 FY 2013 Performance Cycle

A Coverage

All FSA employees nationwide are required to have a performance plan established according to 5-PM, Part 1, **except**:

- individuals in the Senior Executive Service
- individuals for which employment is not reasonably expected to exceed the minimum appraisal period (90 calendar days) in a consecutive 12- month period

Note: Temporary intermittent employees would only be subject to the performance management system if they actually work a continuous 90 calendar-day period, regardless of the length of their appointment.

- STC and COC members
- individuals excluded from coverage by statute or by OPM regulation.

3 FY 2013 Performance Cycle (Continued)

B Employee Participation (Continued)

Employee participation is **required** in establishing or revising performance plans. This may be accomplished by whatever method works best for the parties concerned.

Example: The supervisor could ask the employee to develop a draft performance plan for discussion or the supervisor could develop a draft performance plan for discussion.

The sample elements and standard found in Exhibit 1 and 5-PM should be used as starting points for draft plans.

C Required Features To Be Included in Every Employee Performance Plan

In addition to the required elements and standard every plan should clearly demonstrate both of the following:

- **Cascading Alignment**
- **Results-Focused Elements.**

D Cascading Alignment

Supervisors should develop the performance plan for their employees that include at least **1** critical element with at least 3 standards that identify clear and measurable tasks and results that are aligned to organizational goals. Alignment should be clear and transparent so that employees can see how their performance plan supports organizational goal achievement. Merely including a generic statement on the AD-435A and AD-435B that employees support organizational goals is **not** adequate for communicating alignment. Simply restating organizational goals without including the metrics for determining performance against those goals is not adequate. It should be possible to map the responsibility for specific organizational goals through the performance plan through the chain of responsibility (SES member, to manager, to supervisor) to the front-line employee.

In creating the performance plan, supervisors shall:

- ensure that all employees are aware of the:
 - FSA Strategic Plan or organizational goal at www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?mode=simple&q=strategic+plan&num=10&ie=UTF-8&sort=date:D:L:d1&entqr=3&entqrm=0&oe=UTF-8&ud=1&navid=SEARCH&start=10
 - current USDA Strategic Plan at www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/sp2010/sp2010.pdf

3 FY 2013 Performance Cycle (Continued)

D Cascading Alignment (Continued)

- communicate how organizational goals are linked and cascaded to individual performance, and how the employee's accomplishments support organizational goals within their organizations through:
 - Staff meetings
 - Individual or team meetings
 - Electronic and internal correspondence
- develop Performance plans (AD-435's and AD-435B's) that include at least 1 critical element with at least 3 standards that identify clear and measure (quality, quantity, cost, and/or timely) tasks and results that are aligned to organizational goals for each individual.

Aligned standards must be preceded by the following paragraph, modified as applicable, based on the part of the strategic plan the alignment standard is addressing:

“The following results-focused measures align with USDA Strategic Goal (), “(title of goal)”, Strategic objective (_._), “(title of goal)”, Strategic Objective (_._), “(title of objective)” in the FSA Strategic Plan.”

Note: This alignment statement is prepopulated in the FSA FY 2013 Performance Management element definitions along with a Results statement that **must** be completed by the reviewer.

E Results Focused Elements

Each performance plan element must include language that holds the employee accountable for achieving expected results. This must be shown by explaining the results gained by the employee achieving their standards.

Example: “Expanded 15 county crop programs in areas where none existed. *The result is* an increase in the number and efficiency of risk management opportunities through county crop program expansion.”

Results must be appropriate to the employee's level of responsibility.

A results focused statement must be included for every element within a performance plan.

3 FY 2013 Performance Cycle (Continued)

F Balanced, Credible Measures

All Performance plans must include balanced, credible measures; balanced, so that in addition to measuring expected results, plans include appropriate measures, such as:

- quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost-effectiveness
- indicators of competencies.

To be credible performance expectations must be:

- based on job analysis
- clear, specific, and understandable
- reasonable and attainable
- measurable, observable, or verifiable
- communicated in a timely manner
- foster continual improvement in productivity.

4 Elements and Standards

A Element Criteria

Number of elements in performance plans for nonsupervisory employees is 3 to 5. Rating officials shall establish at least 3, but no more than 5, performance elements.

Number of elements in performance plans for supervisors/managers is 5 to 7.

Each element must include a minimum of 3 standards. Standards must be observable, measurable, and attainable by the employee. Standards need only be written at the “Meets Fully Successful” level. However, rating officials should be prepared to explain performance at the “Does Not Meet Fully Successful” and “Exceeds Fully Successful” levels. Do not include phrases like “other duties as assigned”.

Note: Managers and supervisors of bargaining unit employees are encouraged to see their respective CBA to ensure that all performance management planning requirements are satisfied.

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4 Elements and Standards (Continued)

B Required Elements and Standards

The following is a summary of the required or mandatory elements and standards for the FY 2013 performance cycle. The “Mission Results” element, or at least 1 other critical element, **must** be aligned with FSA goals.

Note: No new required elements or standards are being introduced for the FY 2013 performance cycle.

Mandatory:

- elements for nonsupervisory employees
 - Civil Rights EEO (CR/EEO) and Diversity (Department definition)
 - Enhanced Customer Service (users may access EmpowHR for a menu of the suggested standards)
- standards for nonsupervisory employees
 - Health and Safety (under any element that supervisor deems appropriate)
 - PII (under any element that supervisor deems appropriate)
- elements for supervisors/managers
 - Civil Rights EEO (CR/EEO) and Diversity (Department definition)
 - Enhanced Customer Service (user may access EmpowHR for a menu of suggested standards)
 - Mission Results
 - Supervision
- standards for supervisors/managers:
 - Cultural Transformation Standard (under “Mission Results” element)
 - Diversity Roadmap (under “Supervision” element)
 - Recruitment and Hiring (under “Supervision” element)
 - Retention and Succession Planning (under “Supervision” element)
 - Performance Management (under “Supervision” element)
 - Health and Safety (required for all employees, under any element)
 - PII (required for all employees, under any element).

4 Elements and Standards (Continued)

C Mandatory Elements for Nonsupervisory Employees

The following 2 elements are mandatory for nonsupervisory employees:

- **CR/EEO, Diversity:**

“Performs assignments in a manner that demonstrates fairness, cooperation, and respect toward employees and customers. Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued. Leverages diversity to achieve the vision and mission of the organization. Supports and maintains an environment that is free of unlawful discrimination and reprisal.”

Must include a results statement.

- **Enhanced Customer Service:**

“Actively gathers feedback from customers to identify their needs and expectations. Provides responses to the customer that are prompt, consistent, professional, and address the individual customer’s circumstances. Exercising sound judgment; identifies information to be shared with customers. Refers issues when appropriate, and ensures a final response or completion for the customer. Follows up with customers on products and services to provide quality service. Recommends ways to improve performance using available customer satisfaction or trend data. Demonstrates the importance of customer service as a critical component of the Agency’s mission.”

To receive an “Exceeds” element rating, an employee’s performance accomplishments **must** “prove up” in **both** components of the “Customer Service” element (that is, “Customer Relations Management” and “Consulting and Service”).

D Mandatory Standards for Nonsupervisory Employees

The following 2 standards are mandatory for nonsupervisory employees:

- **Health and Safety** (under any element):

“Demonstrates a basic understanding of FSA’s Safety and Health Program. Complies with safety and health rules and regulations that apply to all employees. Ensures all reports of unsafe and unhealthful conditions are reported to supervisor or designated official within 48 hours.”

4 Elements and Standards (Continued)

D Mandatory Standards for Nonsupervisory Employees (Continued)

- **PII** (under any element):

“Demonstrates an understanding of the Privacy Act and applies the Act correctly when exercising controls and safeguards to preserve the integrity and confidentiality of materials containing PII. Ensures that PII is protected at all times, including when being transferred, in accordance with FSA policy. Reports any violations to supervisor within 4 hours of becoming aware of a problem.”

E Mandatory Elements for Supervisors/Managers

The following 4 elements are mandatory for supervisors/managers:

- **CR/EEO, Diversity:**

The following language **must** be built into the “**CR/EEO, Diversity**” element description:

“Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization through both personal leadership and appropriate managerial action. Performs in a nondiscriminatory manner that demonstrates behaviors that conform to civil rights and EEO laws, regulations, and policies, including fairness, cooperation, and respect towards employees and customers.”

- **Enhanced Customer Service:**

The following language **must** be built into the **Enhanced “Customer Service”** element description:

“Conducts on-going reviews and monitors organizational performance to achieve effective customer service results. Actively gathers feedback from customers to identify their needs and expectations. Ensures staff provides responses to organizational leadership, the public, internal and external customers that are prompt, professional, reliable, and address the individual customer’s circumstances. Ensures the delivery of high quality products, services, and solutions. Delegates issues when appropriate, and ensures a final response or completion for the customer. Follows up with customers on solutions, products, and services to provide quality service. Recommends ways to improve performance using available customer satisfaction or trend data. Demonstrates the importance of customer service as a critical component of FSA’s mission.”

Must include a results statement.

4 Elements and Standards (Continued)

E Mandatory Elements for Supervisors/Managers (Continued)

- **Mission Results:**

The following language **must** be built into the “**Mission Results**” element description:

“Demonstrates support for FSA strategic goals and initiatives within own organizational unit and contributes to the achievement of overall FSA initiatives. Stresses accountability and continuous improvement to employees / team members makes timely and effective decisions, and produces results through strategic thinking and decisive action. Ensures a high degree of responsiveness to management, the public, and internal and external customers. Continually reviews, monitors, and strives to improve organizational performance to achieve FSA mission results.”

Must include a results statement.

- **Supervision:**

The following language **must** be built into the “**Supervision**” element description:

“Work is assigned in a fair and effective manner. Technical guidance to subordinate staff is given timely. Performance management is implemented in accordance with procedure. Issues, concerns, or problems are handled promptly and fairly. To the extent possible, staff is properly trained and complies with occupational health and safety programs. Management decisions are supported and implemented within appropriate timeframes.”

Must include a results statement.

F Mandatory Standards for Supervisors/Managers

The following 7 standards are mandatory for supervisors/managers:

- **Cultural Transformation Standard** (under “Mission Results” element):

“Supports the Secretary’s initiative for Cultural Transformation by continually examining program delivery and surveying the workforce and/or stakeholders/customers. Creates an environment for inclusion, exceptional performance, effective leadership, and works to eliminate any barriers to operational and service excellence. Examines workforce and workplace processes and flexibilities and implements improvements where needed.

4 Elements and Standards (Continued)

F Mandatory Standards for Supervisors/Managers (Continued)

- **Diversity Roadmap** (under “CR/EEO, Diversity” element):

“Supports the Secretary’s initiative for USDA Diversity Recruitment Roadmap by expanding upon mission-specific activities and timelines to ensure diversity recruitment program success and leadership accountability.”

- **Recruitment and Hiring** (under “Supervision” element)

The Recruitment and Hiring standard applies to supervisors with hiring authority, as follows:

- “Recruits and selects new employees based on organizational goals, budget considerations, and staffing needs. When filling a position, the supervisor engages and collaborates with HRD to ensure skills required for the job are identified, posting of the job vacancy is accurate, and assists in indentifying contacts for diverse locations or organizations for recruiting purposes. Participates as needed with HRD in the proper screening of applications, and appropriate categorization of applicants based on qualifications.
- Utilizes flexible hiring authorities when filling a vacancy (for example, targeted disabilities, student employment, direct hire, appointing veterans, etc.) to ensure diversity in recruitment and hiring.”

- **Retention and Succession Planning** (under “Supervision” element)

The Retention and Succession Planning standard applies to all supervisors, as follows:

- “Successfully transitions new hires into the position by promptly providing an orientation into the workforce and establishing performance elements and standards. Supervisor provides ongoing feedback and coaching, and makes appropriate use of the probationary period to assess the new hire’s ability to perform in the position.
- Implements retention strategies that focus on key internal processes (for example, work environment, employee orientation, executing Individual Development Plans for all employees--subject to bargaining obligations, coaching, development, and mentoring, etc.) that promotes employee growth, supports the health of the workforce and drive the future success of the organization’s people and infrastructure.
- Assesses current workforce plans to ensure they are up-to-date in order to meet Performance Management Program/FSA goals and objectives. Works with senior management officials and HRD to comply with the workforce planning process as described in the Department’s position management policy.”

4 Elements and Standards (Continued)

F Mandatory Standards for Supervisors/Managers (Continued)

- **Performance Management** (under “Supervision” element)

“The supervisor establishes subordinate employee performance Plans within established timeframes and that align with FSA and Departmental goals and objectives. Communicates to employees how their work supports FSA’s mission and strategic plan/initiatives. Employee performance plans contain clear, results-focused measures and the supervisor provides accurate and timely feedback to determine progress and success in meeting expectations.

- The supervisor completes Performance Plans, progress reviews, and appraisals of subordinate employees by the due dates established by the Department or FSA. Performance Plans for each employee must include at least 1 element that is aligned with FSA’s goals and objectives (that is, “Mission Results” performance element).
- Provides ongoing feedback and coaching as demonstrated through performance feedback sessions as evidenced by 100 percent of employees receiving at least 1 feedback session at the midpoint of the rating period.
- Ensures appropriate action is taken to address performance problems in a manner that supports organizational goals and objectives.
- Ensures subordinate managers and supervisors adhere to FSA’s performance management policy with regard to performance appraisal and employee recognition.
- Performance and employee feedback data is used as an indicator of compliance and general satisfaction or needed improvement with regard to the planning, developing, monitoring, rating, and rewarding of performance. Performance Plans, shall be in place within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the appraisal period. Midyear reviews are conducted according to FSA guidelines. Ratings are accurate and issued within 30 calendar days of the end of the appraisal period.”

- **Health and Safety** (required for all employees, under any element)

“Demonstrates a basic understanding of FSA’s Safety and Health Program. Complies with safety and health rules and regulations that apply to all employees. Ensures all reports of unsafe and unhealthful conditions are reported to supervisor or designated official within 48 hours.”

4 Elements and Standards (Continued)

F Mandatory Standards for Supervisors/Managers (Continued)

- **PII** (required for all employees, under any element):

“Demonstrates an understanding of the Privacy Act and applies the Act correctly when exercising controls and safeguards to preserve the integrity and confidentiality of materials containing PII. Ensures that PII is protected at all times, including when being transferred, in accordance with FSA policy. Reports any violations to supervisor within 4 hours of becoming aware of a problem.”

5 Required Documentation

A Required Documentation by Manager/Supervisor

“Exceeds” element ratings or a summary performance rating above “Fully Successful” **must** be supported by written “Prove-up” documentation.

B Required Employee Writeup of Accomplishments and Contributions

Employee Writeup of Accomplishments and Contributions –Employees are required to provide their supervisor/manager with a narrative/list of contributions and accomplishments achieved during the performance cycle. The writeup will assist supervisor/managers in accurately assessing the employees’ performance. If supervisors and employees are relying mostly on memory to evaluate employee performance, this renders the appraisal process far more difficult than necessary. For this reason, it is best for supervisor and employee alike, to institute a simple recording system to document performance and achievements. The employee writeup of accomplishments can be an effective tool in that it assists the employee in honestly assessing strengths and weaknesses during the performance of job functions. The writeup can also be a very useful in facilitating feedback between manager and employee during the performance cycle and in developing required IDP’s.

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6 Other Resources, Guidance, Tools, and Training on Performance Management

A Resources, Guidance, Tools

For additional guidance on:

- distinguishing levels of performance, see Exhibit 1
- competencies for selected FSA occupations, see Exhibit 2

Note: May be used as a reference tool by supervisors and employees to assist in distinguishing performance level.

- common rating errors and how avoid them, see Exhibit 3
- writing employee's accomplishments, see Exhibit 4
- supervisor checklist for employee review, Exhibit 5.

Note: 5-PM will be amended to include all previously issued performance management guidance and policy changes.

B Performance Management Training

Training is critical to an effective performance management program. Each year, supervisors and nonsupervisors should receive training and continuous retraining on the requirements and operation of the program. All supervisors, managers, and employees **must** know how the performance management program operates.

Training courses are available for both supervisory and nonsupervisory employees in AgLearn.

DD's shall ensure that each COC chairperson receives a hard copy of training materials: Supervisory and Nonsupervisory Performance Management Desk Guides. DD's and CED's shall continue to educate and involve COC in discussions involving the performance appraisal and in performance plan development.

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6 Other Resources, Guidance, Tools, and Training on Performance Management (Continued)

C Available Training

The following are required performance management training courses for managers/supervisors and nonsupervisory employees in AgLearn:

Type	Title
Managers Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSA Performance Management for Supervisors • Advance Performance Management • Managing Performance (video).
Nonsupervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management for Nonsupervisors • Preparing for Your Performance Appraisal (video).
Additional AgLearn Training Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light the Fire Leverage Appraisals for Maximum Performance • CyberFeds-Employee Performance in the Federal Workplace-Performance Evaluation • CyberFeds-Employee Performance in the Federal Workplace-Performance Management • CyberFeds-Employee Performance in the Federal Workplace-Performance Problems.

For more information on the many performance management training courses available, access AgLearn at www.aglearn.usda.gov.

Additional training resources are available on HRD’s web site located at www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/hrdapp?area=home&subject=erpm&topic=prm.

Note: This includes a link to the training provided at the 2008 AO/SED National Training Conference that State Offices have been providing to their employees and is available for all employees to view.

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7 Reporting and Contacts

A Required Data Reporting

During the FY 2012 and FY 2013 performance cycles, FSA is required to attain and report to the Department 100 percent completion rates on the following for eligible FSA employees.

All supervisors/reviewers shall ensure:

- 100 percent completion of all FY 2012 performance appraisals by **November 1, 2012**
- 100 percent completion of all FY 2013 performance plans by **November 15, 2012**
- that performance plans are provided to the employee (as demonstrated by employee signature or EmpowHR system date stamp) at the beginning of the rating period or **within 30 calendar days, that is November 15, 2012**
- 100 percent completion of all FY 2013 mid-year progress reviews by **April 30, 2013**.

Note: Because of a 2013 Departmental reporting requirement this is 30 calendar earlier than required in 5-PM.

B Contact Information

Supervisors may contact the appropriate SPO as follows.

IF located in...	THEN contact...
Washington, DC, National Office for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• awards and processing• performance management processing• servicing personnel specialist	Kedra Watts, HRD, at by telephone at 202-401-0678. Note: TTY is 202-205-9057.
a branch at any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kansas City, Missouri• St. Louis, Missouri• Salt Lake City, Utah	
any location for EmpowHR Assistance	EmpowHR Help Desk by telephone at 816-823-3996.
State or County Office	State Office administrative officer.

If there are any questions about this notice, contact Michael Braswell by telephone at 202-401-0392.

Distinguishing Levels of Performance

Performance standards for each performance element must be written to describe behaviors at the “Fully Successful” level of performance for the specific job position and grade level (knowledge and skills required by the position).

Performance standards written at the “Fully Successful” level requires the employee to consistently and reliably perform all the duties of the position with no greater level of supervision than described by the position description. This is important because it sets the baseline for the employee’s overall rating and helps all parties (manager/supervisor and employee) gauge whether the employee’s performance fell above or beneath established line. Differentiating levels of performance is important because it signals to your workforce the value placed on a job well done.

Fully Successful: Reliably performs duties and responsibilities. Work is of good quality. Fulfills position requirements, established goals and expectations are met. Solid performance results in valuable contributions to unit goals.

Exceeds Fully Successful: Works consistently at a superior level in most aspects of position, consistently exceeds goals and expectations. Employees performing at this level consistently displays initiative, ownership and/or unusual independence. Employee makes an exceptional or distinctive contribution to the unit/department.

Distinguishing Levels of Performance for the Summary Rating

Examples of behaviors that employees should exhibit at the 5 performance summary levels are listed on the following pages. These behaviors are not exhaustive, but are intended to provide you, the supervisor/manager, with a good idea of what to look for and should serve as a gauge against which you can evaluate the accuracy of the assignment of performance element ratings and, ultimately the accuracy of the employee’s final summary rating.

Benchmark Employee Performance Summary Rating

Outstanding (Rated “Exceeds” in all elements):

Employee: The employee demonstrates particularly excellent performance that is of such high quality that organizational goals have been achieved that would not have been otherwise. The employee demonstrates mastery of technical skills and a thorough understanding of the mission of the organization and has a fundamental impact on the completion of program objectives. The employee exerts a major positive influence on management practices, operating procedures and/or program implementation, which contribute substantially to organizational growth and recognition. The employee plans for the unexpected and uses alternate ways of reaching goals.

Difficult assignments are handled intelligently and effectively. The employee has produced an exceptional quantity of work, often ahead of established schedules and with little supervision. The employee’s oral and written communications are exceptionally clear and effective. He/she improves cooperation among participants in the workplace and prevents misunderstandings. Complicated or controversial subjects are presented or explained effectively to a variety of audiences so that desired outcomes are achieved.

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

Superior (Rated “Exceeds” on majority of elements, but not all):

Employee: Employee demonstrates unusually good performance that exceeds expectations in critical areas and exhibits a sustained support of organizational goals. The employee shows a comprehensive understanding of the objectives of the job and the procedures for meeting them.

Effective planning by the employee improves the quality of management practices, operating procedures, task assignments and/or program activities. The employee develops and/or implements workable and cost-effective approaches to meeting organizational goals.

The employee demonstrates an ability to get the job done well in more than 1-way while handling difficult and unpredicted problems. The employee produces a high quantity of work, often ahead of established schedules with less than normal supervision.

The employee writes and speaks clearly on difficult subjects to a wide range of audiences and works effectively with others to accomplish organizational objectives.

Fully Successful (Rated “Successful” on a majority of elements):

Employee: The employee demonstrates good, sound performance that meets organizational goals. All critical activities are generally completed in a timely manner and supervisor is kept informed of work issues, alterations, and status. The employee effectively applies technical skills and organizational knowledge to get the job done. The employee successfully carries out regular duties while also handling any difficult special assignments. The employee plans and performs work according to organizational priorities and schedules. The employee communicates clearly and effectively.

Benchmark Supervisory Employee Performance Summary Rating

Outstanding:

Supervisory: The Supervisory employee demonstrates excellent leadership skills and with only rare exceptions develops effective working relationships with others; immediately handles difficult situations with subordinates with professionalism and effectiveness, and demonstrates foresight in correcting situations that may cause future problems before they arise; encourages independence and risk-taking among subordinates, yet takes responsibility for their actions; is open to and solicits the views of others, and promotes cooperation among peers and subordinates, while guiding, motivating and stimulating positive responses.

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

The employee demonstrates a strong commitment to fair treatment, equal opportunity and the affirmative action objectives of the organization, and has a significant positive impact on achievement of goals in this area. In addition, the employee demonstrates innovation and specific positive achievements in meeting other management obligations such as safety, internal management controls, merit systems principles, performance management, and management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues. The employee systematically monitors quality, delivery, and customer satisfaction levels and makes adjustments accordingly; and works with staff to proactively implement solutions to prevent problems and avoid gaps in customer expectations.

Effective Performance Management: Uses employee preferences and performance information to identify both immediate and long-term developmental needs, helps staff to identify their own developmental needs and provides challenging assignments to address those needs; promotes cooperation among peers and subordinates, while guiding, motivating and stimulating positive responses to accomplishments; and provides continuing constructive performance feedback, working with employees to identify ways to improve their strengths.

Superior:

Supervisory: The Supervisory employee demonstrates good leadership skills and establishes sound working relationships; almost always handles difficult situations with subordinates with professionalism and effectiveness; shows good judgment in dealing with others and considering their views; has a strong sense of mission and seeks out responsibility; demonstrates a commitment to fair treatment, equal opportunity and the affirmative action objectives of the organization, and has a positive impact on achievement of goals in this area. In addition, the employee promotes a safe working environment and solutions to problems encountered in meeting other management obligations including internal management controls, merit systems obligations, managing performance, and management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues; and anticipates customer needs and resolves or avoids potential problems, resulting in high customer satisfaction. Supervisory employee tailors methods of reward and recognition to the individual to the extent possible, resulting in increased motivation in staff; and solicits employee input and takes initiative to seek out and arrange for a variety of developmental opportunities beyond standard training.

Effective Performance Management: Using effective planning works with employees to exceed expectations in critical areas and shows sustained support of organizational goals; establishes sound working relationships with subordinates and shows good judgment in dealing with them, considering their views; works with employees to develop plans and timeframes to improve performance.

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)**Fully Successful:**

Supervisory: The Supervisory employee is a capable leader who works successfully with others and listens to suggestions. The employee generally handles difficult situations with subordinates with professionalism and effectiveness. The employee also works well as a team member, supporting the group's efforts and showing an ability to handle a variety of interpersonal situations. The employee's work with others shows an understanding of the importance of fair treatment and equal opportunity and meets all management commitments related to providing a safe working environment, merit systems obligations, performance management, and internal controls, and management of ethics, conduct and discipline issues. The employee maintains contact with customers (internal and/or external), and is effective in understanding their needs and using feedback to address customer requirements. Provides timely, flexible, and responsive products and/or services to customers, resulting in valued products and services. Solicits employee input to improve work products and/or services and to develop employee skills. Recognizes and rewards employee contributions in a fair and consistent manner.

Effective Performance Management: The employee identifies and ensures alignment of unit goals with agency goals, seeks input of employees in the development of performance criteria, effectively translates and communicates project or work unit goals into concrete work assignments for staff; provides feedback and conducts reviews according to established timeframes; ensures performance distinctions are made among individuals and awards are reflective of employee contributions toward organizational performance; and addresses poor performance in a fair and timely manner.

Examples of Characteristic Behaviors at Summary Rating Levels for All Employees**Outstanding**

This rating level is appropriate when the employee:

- Significantly and consistently exceeds expectation(s) by producing a high quality and quantity of work.
- Undertakes additional job functions/duties, through their own initiative, that further the goals of and make significant contributions to the branch, Division, Agency or Department.
- Is dependable, highly reliable and follows through on all provided or otherwise undertaken assignments and effective in a variety of settings including 1-on-1 communication, writing skills, correspondence, and public situations.
- Demonstrates exceptional in-depth knowledge of their job functions/duties and are highly recognized by others within their area of expertise as an authority in their area of work.
- Exhibits model behavior that exemplifies the values and qualities of the organization and are worthy of emulation by supervisors/staff members. Skillfully and in a highly reliable manner handles multiple and varied types of tasks with competing priorities.

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

- Skillfully resolves conflict in the midst of differing opinions by creatively developing a compromise within competing interests.
- Exhibits teamwork or is a team player in varied settings and influences others to work collaboratively to bring about a positive impact while furthering the goals of the department, division and organization.
- Demonstrates unusually high initiative and autonomy.
- Is a technical pioneer.
- Produces results that are exceptionally accurate and precise.
- Is viewed as the preeminent authority in the field.
- Delivers work products that are superior/breakthrough in critical mission areas.
- Demonstrates an exceptionally high degree of originality, innovation and creativity.
- Is frequently sought out for opinions by peers and/or industry.
- Is highly regarded for expertise.
- Is widely recognized for achievements.
- Builds strong and lasting collaborative relationships both internal and external to the Agency/Department.
- Excels in written and oral communication of management expectations and/or strategic direction.
- Consistently completes quality work ahead of schedules and deadlines by adapting to rapid changes by adjusting priorities.
- Is a risk taker.
- Develops and implements highly successful solutions to complex problems or situations.
- Excels in cost containment while maintaining exceptional quality.
- Excels in obtaining additional funding when costs exceed original estimates and approvals.

Superior

This rating level is appropriate when the employee:

- Consistently delivers thorough, high quality work products.
- Completes work in accordance with prescribed deadlines and does not require major, substantive changes.
- Seeks new ideas and approaches to develop creative solutions to challenging problems or situations.
- Demonstrates a high level of expertise in the field.

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)**Fully Successful**

This rating level is appropriate when the employee:

- Completes work as instructed, in accordance with prescribed guidelines and timeframes.
- Competently performs job functions/duties on a day-to-day basis and regularly meets expectations and job description requirements with some tasks performed beyond expectations; may exceed some performance requirements but not enough to meet the “Exceeds” level.
- Possess full knowledge of their job functions/duties.
- Actively participates in meetings and projects.
- Communicates effectively with superiors, peers subordinates and customers.
- Perceived by peers, colleagues and/or customers as collaborative, skilled and dependable.
- Regularly interacts effectively with peers, managers and others.
- Exhibits teamwork or is a team player in varied settings and collaborates with others.

Marginal

This rating level is appropriate when the employee:

- Delivers products that occasionally require extensive revision.
- Occasionally misses deadlines that impact but are not detrimental to the assignment, project or program.
- Does not always work at the appropriate level of autonomy expected for his/her pay grade.
- Sometimes needs help working on assignments.
- Sometimes completes their assignments/tasks in an incompetent manner or frequently requires clarification or time extensions.
- Inconsistently performs their job functions/duties or responsibilities.
- Demonstrates minimal initiative.
- Requires supervision due to low performance or skill level.
- Engages in less effective or less than positive interactions with peers, colleagues, management, or customers.

Unacceptable

This rating level is appropriate when the employee:

- Frequently misses deadlines without clear or valid reasons.
- Generally delivers products that do not meet expectations.
- Seems to be ill-suited for the job.
- Performance is subpar.

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Supervision (Mandatory for All Supervisors and Managers): Work is assigned in a fair and effective manner. Technical guidance to subordinate staff is given timely. Performance management is implemented in accordance with procedure. Issues, concerns, or problems are handled promptly and fairly. To the extent possible, staff is properly trained and complies with occupational health and safety programs. Management decisions are supported and implemented within appropriate timeframes.</p>	
<p>FULLY SUCCESSFUL</p>	<p>EXCEEDS</p>
<p>Addresses situations/problems in an effective manner as they come to his/her attention.</p>	<p>1. Proactively addresses situations/problems; takes measures to prevent problems.</p>
<p>Involves employees in planning. Encourages collaboration and accountability.</p>	<p>2. Open to the views of others, promotes cooperation among peers and subordinates, while guiding, motivating, and stimulating positive responses.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates plans that are thorough without being cumbersome. • Establishes plans that are realistic and workable. 	<p>3. Is equally skilled at long-term and short-term planning.</p>
<p>Provides employees with the tools and guidance they need to succeed.</p>	<p>4. Provides employees with the tools and guidance needed to succeed and develops high-performing teams.</p>
<p>Posses coaching skills and coaches employees.</p>	<p>5. Has “A-level” coaching skills and coaches effectively. Uses innovative coaching strategies to generate measurable improvement in employee performance.</p>
<p>Treats employees equitably.</p>	<p>6. Has the highest standards of fairness.</p>
<p>Carefully monitors the progress of employees to be sure that deadlines are met.</p>	<p>7. Plans and organizes to beat deadlines, rather than just meet them.</p>
<p>Effectively plans unit work load to meet deadlines.</p>	<p>8. Is typically well ahead of plan when it comes to progress and performance.</p>
<p>Conducts performance reviews timely.</p>	<p>9. Conducts performance reviews timely and works with employees on an individual and group basis to build skills and performance.</p>
<p>Monitors employees’ compliance with AgLearn and IDP’s.</p>	<p>10. Encourages employees to seek out additional training and education.</p>
<p>I. Recruitment and Hiring (Required Standard by the Department) <i>Recruits and selects new employees based on organizational goals, budget considerations, and staffing needs. When filling a position, the supervisor engages and collaborates with HR to ensure skills required for the job are identified, posting of the job vacancy is accurate, and assists in indentifying contacts for diverse locations or organizations for recruiting purposes. Participates as needed with HR in the proper screening of applications, and appropriate categorization of applicants based on qualifications.” “Utilizes flexible hiring authorities when filling a vacancy (e.g., targeted disabilities, student employment, direct hire, appointing veterans, etc.) to ensure diversity in recruitment and hiring.”</i></p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

2. Retention and Succession Planning (Required Standard by the Department)

Successfully transitions new hires into the position by promptly providing an orientation into the workforce and establishing performance elements and standards. Supervisor provides ongoing feedback and coaching, and makes appropriate use of the probationary period to assess the new hire's ability to perform in the position. “Implements retention strategies that focus on key internal processes (e.g., work environment, employee orientation, executing Individual Development Plans for all employees--subject to bargaining obligations, coaching, development, and mentoring, etc.) that promotes employee growth, supports the health of the workforce and drive the future success of the organization's people and infrastructure.” “Assesses current workforce plans to ensure they are up-to-date in order to meet Program/Agency goals and objectives. Works with senior management officials and HR to comply with the workforce planning process as described in the Department's position management policy.”

3. Performance Management Standard (Required Standard by the Department)

The supervisor establishes subordinate employee performance plans within established timeframes and that align with Agency and Departmental goals and objectives. Communicates to employees how their work supports the Agency mission and strategic plan/initiatives. Employee performance plans contain clear, results-focused measures and the supervisor provides accurate and timely feedback to determine progress and success in meeting expectations:

- *“The supervisor completes performance plans, progress reviews, and appraisals of subordinate employees by the due dates established by the Department or Agency. Performance plans for each employee must include at least 1 critical element that is traceable to the agency's goals and objectives (e.g., Mission Results critical performance element).”*
- *“Provides ongoing feedback and coaching as demonstrated through performance feedback sessions as evidenced by 100% of employees receiving at least 1 feedback session at the midpoint of the rating period.”*
- *“Ensures appropriate action is taken to address performance problems in a manner that supports organizational goals and objectives.”*
- *“Ensures subordinate managers and supervisors adhere to the Agency performance management policy with regard to performance appraisal and employee recognition.”*
- *Performance and employee feedback data is used as an indicator of compliance and general satisfaction or needed improvement with regard to the planning, developing, monitoring, rating and rewarding of performance.*

These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Team Leadership: Routinely leads individuals and team members toward specific goals and accomplishments. Provides encouragement, guidance, and direction, as needed. Adjusts style to fit situation. Delegates appropriate authority in an effective manner. Coordinates functions of the team members. Demonstrates a sincere interest in employees’ activities, abilities, etc.</p>	
<p>Corresponding Validated Competency: <i>Team building.</i></p>	
<p>FULLY SUCCESSFUL</p>	<p>EXCEEDS</p>
<p>Emphasizes the importance of teamwork in the department and company at large.</p>	<p>1. Demonstrates outstanding team-building skills.</p>
<p>Promotes a team approach to solving work problems.</p>	<p>2. Takes a marginally functional department and converts it into a team.</p>
<p>Fosters the participation, involvement, and commitment of team members.</p>	<p>3. Develops high performing teams.</p>
<p>Recognizes and rewards team oriented behaviors and action.</p>	<p>4. Has an extraordinary ability to turn a group in to a team.</p>
<p>Generates positive measurable outcomes as a result of teamwork.</p>	<p>5. Consistently generates positive measurable outcomes as a result of teamwork.</p>
<p>Structures projects and assignments to further strengthen teamwork among employees.</p>	<p>6. Structures projects and assignments to strengthen teamwork and produce products of superior quality.</p>
<p>Uses a team approach to develop and utilize the unique talents of each employee.</p>	<p>7. Knows and utilizes the special skills and talents of each employee. Motivates team to back up each other in the absence of supervisor.</p>
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Program Management: Manages program(s), resolving issues and problems within the employee’s control. Monitors all aspects of program(s) for quality, effectiveness, and consistency. Program plans and guidance are responsive to objectives and requirements of the Agency. Policy instructions are appropriately issued and are accurate. Evaluates effectiveness of work and adjusts plans accordingly.</p>	
<p>Corresponding Validated Competency: <i>N/A</i></p>	
<p>FULLY SUCCESSFUL</p>	<p>EXCEEDS</p>
Utilizes techniques and methods to identify problems.	1. Utilizes a variety of techniques and methods to identify problems and develop clear, concise and accurate resolutions to the applicable problems.
Demonstrates an adequate method to disseminate recommendations.	2. Demonstrates a thorough cooperative and resourceful process to disseminate the appropriate recommendations, which positively impacts the customer or work environment.
Analyzes problems and recommends solutions.	3. Identifies, analyzes and evaluates reoccurring problems and initiates, recommends and presents problem solving solutions.
Ensures that payment amounts are accurate, necessary supporting documents are up to date and on file, and applications are complete.	4. Has exceptional track record of ensuring that payment amounts are accurate, necessary supporting documents are consistently up to date and on file, and applications are complete.
Ensures compliance checks are made and reported.	5. Proactively ensures compliance checks are made and reported.
Ensures that staff is fully trained in the program areas for which each employee is responsible.	6. Consistently trains and or coaches program staff.
Manages within the established budget/allocation for program, function or work assigned, notifies appropriate individual of potential budget short falls.	7. Consistently manages within the established budget/allocation for program, function or work assigned, notifies appropriate individual of potential budget shortfalls. Anticipates budget overruns and takes corrective actions.
Good program management skills and successfully monitors all programs/ projects in his/her area of responsibility.	8. Program plans and guidance are consistently responsive to Agency goals, objectives and requirements; policy instructions are issued timely and are consistently accurate.
Successfully resolves problems and issues.	9. Anticipates problems/issues and resolves in a timely manner.
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Research and Analysis: Thoroughly and accurately researches issues timely, using available reference sources (e.g., USDA manuals, or applicable law or regulations. Makes reasonable recommendations or decisions based on available guidance.</p>	
<p>Corresponding Validated Competency: N/A</p>	
<p>FULLY SUCCESSFUL</p>	<p>EXCEEDS</p>
<p>Researches issues and which lead to the production of a good product/service.</p>	<p>1. Thoroughly researches issues before acting which leads to a thorough product/service of good quality.</p>
<p>Generally uses appropriate analytical techniques to perform assigned tasks that usually result in solid recommendations/actions.</p>	<p>2. Independently utilizes appropriate analytical techniques, skills and judgment to perform assigned tasks which consistently result in sound proactive recommendations or actions.</p>
<p>Utilizes standard research or analytical techniques.</p>	<p>3. Utilizes innovative research or analytical techniques that result in process improvements.</p>
<p>Utilizes resources (including colleagues) and skills to design, administer, and interpret surveys.</p>	<p>4. Utilizes resources and/or state -of -the art skills in designing, administering and interpreting surveys.</p>
<p>Generates usable data from readily available sources.</p>	<p>5. Generates reliable data from the best sources and resources.</p>
<p>Uses adequate statistical measurements and tests.</p>	<p>6. Uses a broad range of appropriate statistical measurements and tests.</p>
<p>Produces research reports that are well reasoned, well written and well received.</p>	<p>7. Consistently produces thorough research reports that are well reasoned, well written and well received.</p>
<p>Research and analysis deadlines are usually met.</p>	<p>8. Research and analysis deadlines are met consistently.</p>
<p>Produces standardized reports by retrieving data from various systems or data sources.</p>	<p>9. Develops sophisticated technological solutions or methods to troubleshoot and resolve retrieval and reporting requirements.</p>
<p>Performs initial, preliminary analyses of straightforward information to be used in reports.</p>	<p>10. Develops new and customized queries to create reports that are used by others within and across areas of responsibility.</p>
<p>Analyzes data to identify weaknesses, patterns and trends and communicates to supervisor.</p>	<p>11. Consistently and reliably analyzes data to identify weaknesses, new patterns and trends and communicates to supervisor.</p>
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Resource Management: Monitors allocated funds and maintains complete and accurate records of expenditures. Routinely utilizes resources in an efficient and effective manner. Ensures that funds, property and other resources are guarded against waste, loss, unauthorized use, and misappropriation.</p>	
<p>Corresponding Validated Competency: N/A</p>	
<p>FULLY SUCCESSFUL</p>	<p>EXCEEDS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids wasting money materials or resources. • Operates with in the budget. 	<p>1. Employee’s planning skills result in significant cost-savings to the government.</p>
<p>Clearly communicates cost- related issues to employees.</p>	<p>2. Consistently communicates cost-related issues to employees and encourages and rewards cost-saving suggestions from employees.</p>
<p>Carefully monitors and controls costs, resources and encourages employee to do the same.</p>	<p>3. Consistently monitors costs/resources and creates and implements highly productive cost-saving practices, policies and programs.</p>
<p>Accurately analyzes costs.</p>	<p>4. Is financially astute; shares knowledge with employees.</p>
<p>Understands and implements solid financial planning and or resource management.</p>	<p>5. Understands solid financial planning and or resource management and takes a wide range of actions to cut wasteful expenditures.</p>
<p>Maintains good financial controls.</p>	<p>6. Creates highly effective systems and processes to monitor and control costs.</p>
<p>Clearly communicates cost-related issues to employees.</p>	<p>7. Consistently communicates cost-related issues to employees and develops a high degree of cost consciousness among employees.</p>
<p>Understands sources of budget data, such as NFC, Congress, OPM, OHRM.</p>	<p>8. Utilizes Knowledge of resource management to make sound recommendations to supervisors and management.</p>
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Individual Contributions to the Team: Ordinarily displays dependability and reliability. Promotes open communication. Contributes creative ideas and actively participates in team meetings resulting in added value to the team’s products and services. When problems arise, explores causes and assists in resolving them. Works with team members to appropriately implement decisions. Is usually open-minded to new ideas and approaches in implementing the team’s goals. Willingly accepts and acts on constructive criticism.</p>	
<p>Corresponding Validated Competency: <i>Contributing to Team Success</i></p>	
<p>FULLY SUCCESSFUL</p>	<p>EXCEEDS</p>
Participates in identifying workgroup issues	1. Proactively identifies workgroup issues and works with the team to see issues resolved.
Participates in activities that maintain workgroup efficiencies.	2. Consistently participates in activities that maintain or improve workgroup efficiencies.
Provides suggestions to team to team/unit work group.	3. Provides guidance and suggestions to the team/unit/work group; shares new approaches, innovations and best practices across the work groups.
Contributes to the effectiveness of the work group	4. Contributes proactively to the overall effectiveness of the work group.
Assists team members by contributing ideas.	5. Helps others implement decisions as a team.
Regularly cooperates with co workers and others in meeting commitments and accomplishing assigned work on time.	6. Assists team members and takes on added responsibility without hesitation.
Performs assigned work within program area. Trouble shoots and resolves problems that arise.	7. Troubleshoots within assigned program areas and cross trains in other program areas to become knowledgeable in order to assist other team members.
Generally participates during discussion and or team/staff meetings.	8. Projects a positive attitude during discussions and or team/staff meetings; encourages other team members by offering constructive comments, explanations, contributions, etc.
Demonstrates collaborative efforts between farm programs and farm loan programs by sharing information and providing other support.	9. Consistently demonstrates collaborative efforts between farm programs and farm loan programs by regularly sharing information and providing other support.
Accepts constructive criticism in a positive manner.	10. Uses constructive criticism to change and improve his/her role as a team player.
Is open and communicative with others.	11. Is communicative and utilizes team member’s ideas to strategize; is consultative and innovative. Where there are obstacles collaborates with team to eliminate barriers to success.
Is usually dependable and reliable.	12. Consistently dependable. Does not cancel meetings or fail to attend scheduled meetings.
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Execution of Duties/Technical Knowledge and Skill: Demonstrates technical competence and/or knowledge of his/her work. Work assignments are routinely performed in a timely manner, assuring a quality of work that meets the needs of the organization with the appropriate level of supervision. Appropriate work methods are selected for the development of work products. Work products do not require substantive revisions. Assignments are completed in accordance with applicable agency guidelines.</p>	
<p>Corresponding Validated Competency: <i>Technical Knowledge and Skill</i></p>	
<p>FULLY SUCCESSFUL</p>	<p>EXCEEDS</p>
<p>Completes work assignments that demonstrate good planning organization, coordination, and consultation.</p>	<p>1. Completes thorough work assignments that demonstrate appropriate planning, organization, coordination, consultation and scheduling and makes suggestions for improvement that should be considered in relationship to the big picture items related to those assignments.</p>
<p>Generally completes tasks that demonstrate appropriate application of technical and subject matter knowledge within the program area.</p>	<p>2. Consistently completes tasks that demonstrate appropriate application of technical and subject matter knowledge within the program area.</p>
<p>Completes work assignments and products that are accurate, timely, and of good quality.</p>	<p>3. Completes thorough work assignments and products that are accurate, timely, of excellent quality, and rarely require revision or supervisor followup.</p>
<p>Employs established methods and approaches in order to meet customer's expectations and objectives.</p>	<p>4. Employs innovative methods and approaches in order to exceed customers' expectations and objectives.</p>
<p>Effectively manages workload.</p>	<p>5. Effectively manages work load and demonstrates superior flexibility and ability in managing that workload.</p>
<p>Handles problems and adapts to priorities and changes in procedures without losing sight of the purpose of the work.</p>	<p>6. Proactively develops contingency plans to handle potential problems and adapts quickly to new priorities and changes in procedures and programs without losing sight of the long term purpose of the work.</p>
<p>Work is well organized and submissions timely.</p>	<p>7. Work is well organized, submissions timely and organization of work is used as a model for others; work is clearly superior.</p>
<p>Utilizes adequate techniques and methods to identify problems and develops workable solutions.</p>	<p>8. Utilizes a variety of techniques and methods to proactively identify problems and develop clear, concise and accurate resolutions.</p>
<p>Possess good understanding of prevailing technical and subject matter knowledge.</p>	<p>9. Consistently demonstrates superior or mastery level of prevailing technical and subject matter knowledge.</p>

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

Generally researches issues to produce a product/serve of good quality.	10. Thoroughly researches issues before acting which leads to an accurate and quality product /service.
Identifies obstacles to the execution of duties and recommends procedures to enhance work products and/or processes.	11. Regularly identifies obstacles to execution of duties and recommends sound procedures to streamline and or/enhance work products and/or processes.
Generally provides staff/colleagues with information, resources and/or training that contribute to key deliverables.	12. Consistently and proactively provides staff/colleagues with information, resources and /or training that advance the quality and/or timeliness of key deliverables.
Demonstrates innovation in the development and submission of core deliverables.	13. Consistently demonstrates outstanding tenacity and/or innovation in the development and submission of core deliverables when confronted by exceptional challenges and obstacles.
Provides good oversight and/or execution of the development and submission of core deliverables within agreed upon timelines, in accordance with Agency/Departmental guidance.	14. Consistently provides effective oversight and/or execution of the development and submission of core deliverables within agreed upon timelines, in accordance with Agency/Departmental guidance.
Completes tasks that demonstrate appropriate application of technical and subject matter knowledge within the assigned area.	15. Consistently completes tasks that clearly demonstrate appropriate application of technical and advanced subject matter knowledge within the assigned area.
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

Customer Service (Supervisory): Conducts on-going reviews and monitors organizational performance to achieve effective customer service results. Actively gathers feedback from customers to identify their needs and expectations. Ensures staff provides responses to organizational leadership, the public, internal and external customers that are prompt, professional, reliable, and address the individual customer’s circumstances. Ensures the delivery of high quality products, services, and solutions. Delegates issues when appropriate, and ensures a final response or completion for the customer. Follows up with customers on solutions, products, and services to provide quality service. Recommends ways to improve performance using available customer satisfaction or trend data. Demonstrates the importance of customer service as a critical component of the Agency’s mission.

Corresponding Validated Competency: *Customer Service*

FULLY SUCCESSFUL	EXCEEDS
Contributes to workable solutions to projects/problems.	1. Contributes and leads innovation and workable solutions to project/problems.
Maintains good rapport with external and internal customers, and maintains established working relationships with several external organizations. Employee reviews customer feedback to enhance the delivery of good quality customer service by planning, implementing and training the office staff in the importance of customer relations.	2. Consistently maintains an excellent rapport with external and internal customers, and has initiated and established working relationships with several external organizations. Employee reviews customer feedback to continuously enhance the delivery of high quality customer service by planning, implementing and training the office staff in the importance of customer relations.
Identifies obstacles to communication and recommends processes to enhance organizational communications and implements processes and procedures to prevent reoccurrence.	3. Consistently identifies obstacles to communication and recommends processes to streamline and/or enhance organizational communications and implements processes and procedures to prevent reoccurrence.
Generally, provides staff and colleagues with resources and/or training to better convey information. Usually conveys a clear message tailored to the intended audience. Communications seldom require more than minimal rework or editing. Provides supervisor and coworkers with resources and/or training to improve conveyance of information to prevent problems.	4. Proactively provides staff and colleagues with resources and/or training to better convey information. Consistently conveys a clear message tailored to the intended audience. Communications seldom require more than minimal rework or editing. Proactively provides supervisor and coworkers with resources and/or training to improve conveyance of information to prevent problems.
Responds to other agencies (RNCS, RMS, Conservation Districts, Extension Services, etc.) regarding shared programs.	5. Established exceptional working relationships with other agencies regarding shared programs.

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Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Customer Service (Non Supervisory): Actively gathers feedback from customers to identify their needs and expectations. Provides responses to the customer that are prompt, consistent, professional, and address the individual customer’s circumstances. Exercising sound judgment; identifies information to be shared with customers. Refers issues when appropriate, and ensures a final response or completion for the customer. Follows up with customers on products and services to provide quality service. Recommends ways to improve performance using available customer satisfaction or trend data. Demonstrates the importance of customer service as a critical component of the Agency’s mission.</p>	
<p>Corresponding Validated Competency: <i>Customer Service</i></p>	
<p>FULLY SUCCESSFUL</p>	<p>EXCEEDS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits positive behavior that promotes and influences cooperation from others. • Promotes cooperation with external and internal customers. Employee demonstrates the importance of customer in a variety of ways. • Seeks /implements improvements in customer relationships; helps remove barriers to excellent customer service. 	<p>1. Consistently exhibits positive behavior that promotes and influences cooperation with external and internal customers. Employee constantly demonstrates the importance of customer service by the development of plans to dissolve (remove) barriers that prevent external/internal customer relations.</p>
<p>Employee effectively communicates with customer base.</p>	<p>2. Routinely Identifies obstacles to communication and recommends processes to streamline and/or enhance organizational communications.</p>
<p>Articulates in a manner that is understood by colleagues; writing is generally free of errors and of good quality.</p>	<p>3. Ensures delivery of clear, concise, comprehensive, organized, and grammatically correct products in all forms of communication. Expresses complex ideas and information clearly, logically, and accurately.</p>
<p>Identifies appropriate resources/training. Communicates clearly orally and in writing.</p>	<p>4. Proactively provides staff and colleagues with resources and/or training to better convey information. Always conveys a clear message tailored to the intended audience. Communications seldom require more than minimal rework or editing. Proactively provides supervisor and coworkers with resources and/or training to improve conveyance of information to prevent problems</p>
<p>Cooperates with other departments/divisions, etc. to meet customer’s needs. Collaborates effectively with colleagues and working teams.</p>	<p>5. Seeks input from colleagues and staff members and promotes sharing of ideas. Contributes to and/or conducts team activities/ discussions that encourage open communication and build trust. Is proactive and takes practical steps to identify and address any areas needing attention.</p>
<p>Builds a positive respectful relationship with customers; meets their needs and requests.</p>	<p>6. Consistently works to develop a positive relationship with customers and fellow employees by respecting their needs and requests. Response to customers is always timely</p>

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Actively seeks customer feedback; seeks to understand customer needs.</p>	<p>7. Exhibits thorough understanding of customer requirements as demonstrated in most forms of communications and follows through in a timely manner until issues are resolved.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses customers’ requirements and issues. • Readily adapts to needs of diverse customers. 	<p>8. Understands customer culture (mindset) and history- Often anticipating their needs. Recommends ways to improve serving diverse audiences.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses customers’ requirements and issues; and with respectable attitude. • Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems. 	<p>9. Consistently displays a thorough understanding of customer requirements on issues.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides appropriate products and services to customers. 	<p>10. Routinely identifies ways to improve products/services and ensures appropriate product/service is provided.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses customer needs in a consistent manner showing courtesy and phone etiquette. • Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive. • Is accessible. 	<p>11. Demonstrates patience, superb telephone etiquette; is frequently sought to handle problem calls; regularly updates and shares pertinent information.</p>
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Civil Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Diversity and Inclusion (Supervisory): Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization through both personal leadership and appropriate managerial action. Performs in a nondiscriminatory manner that demonstrates behaviors that conform to civil rights and EEO laws, regulations, and policies, including fairness, cooperation, and respect towards employees and customers. (DEPT) MANDATORY</p>	
<p>FULLY SUCCESSFUL</p>	<p>EXCEEDS (Created by DEPT)</p>
<p>Demonstrates an understanding of diversity and inclusion, Civil Rights and equal opportunity goals by enhancing outreach programs designed to attract and retain minorities, women and persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>1. Demonstrates increase over time of the representation of women, minorities, or individuals with disabilities in the workforce.</p>
<p>Assures culturally competent customer service. Sets the tone for creating a welcoming environment, assures that service delivery is provided in a culturally competent way; assures that printed materials are available in alternate formats and in different languages as requested, and facilities are accessible for all customers.</p>	<p>2. Demonstrates increase in the participation of women, minorities, or individuals with disabilities in USDA programs.</p>
<p>Encourages a fair and equitable work environment by encouraging the use of, and when appropriate, utilizing problem solving and dispute resolution processes by addressing EEO complaints and employee issues in a timely and effective manner.</p>	<p>3. Demonstrates reduction over time of the number of unresolved EEO or other administrative complaints through the use of alternative dispute resolution.</p>
<p>Promotes awareness and understanding of the disabled.</p>	<p>4. Implements projects that increase the accessibility of facilities or workplace to individuals with disabilities or for customers with limited English proficiency.</p>
<p>Utilizes diversity within the workforce by incorporating the diverse perspectives into business decisions. The manager routinely seeks out the perspectives of all employees. The manager uses a variety of methods for ensuring that employee suggestions are elicited acknowledged and utilized.</p>	<p>5. Provides examples of improving the integration of civil rights, EEO, and diversity and inclusion into program planning and program implementation.</p>
<p>Demonstrates an understanding of career development, training, recognition and advancement opportunities for employees at all levels by providing equitable training and career development opportunities and performance awards for all grade levels.</p>	<p>6. Regularly promotes and utilizes Special Emphasis Programs, which result in improved representation and utilization of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. When progress or program participation is limited due to budgetary consideration or other constraints, develops alternative strategies and long-term plans or initiates other actions, which demonstrate commitment to EEO/Civil Rights.</p>

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Effectively recruits, hires, promotes, and maintains a diverse workforce. Works with Human Resources and other networks as appropriate to assist in the recruitment process and expand the diversity of the applicant pool. Ensures that interview panels are diverse and trained in cross-cultural interviewing techniques, supports the use of special programs designed to attract and utilize minorities, women and persons with disabilities to the workforce,</p>	<p>7. Makes significant contributions to the development and implementation of the Agency’s Affirmative Employment Plan for Individuals with Disabilities and Disabled Veterans, and the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan.</p>
<p>Provides EEO/Civil Rights/Sexual Harassment/Diversity information (USDA material) to employees through information sessions, staff meetings, etc., at least two times a year.</p>	<p>8. Solicits advice or assistance from Agency Civil Rights Officials and initiates action to achieve EEO/Civil Rights goals and objectives</p>
<p>Provides proactive assistance to employees to help with problem solving and resolving conflicts. Positive outcomes based on employee skills training in related topics.</p>	<p>9. Actively pursues or implements new ideas to improve the work environment and/or enhance progress toward achieving workforce diversity.</p>
<p>Provides opportunities for and encourages employees to attend training to increase interpersonal skills, e.g., cross-cultural communication, negotiation, dispute resolution, problem solving, active listening, etc. For example, gives all employees equitable consideration for appropriate training and /or developmental opportunities. Shows evidence of counseling employees in the development of Individual Development Plans.</p>	<p>10. Volunteers to serve as a mentor or establishes mentoring relationships, which results in positive feedback concerning assistance provided by the supervisor.</p>
<p>Integrates diversity development into performance planning and evaluation. The manager holds staff accountable for participating in activities that support these efforts. The manager holds staff accountable for behaviors that are exclusionary and offensive.</p>	<p>11. Proactively develops and implements initiatives and programs that are consistent with civil rights performance and strategic plans within specified timeframes.</p>

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

	12. Actively seeks assistance from Human Resources and Civil Rights Divisions in locating minorities, women and individuals with disabilities as applicants. Establishes recruitment contact with schools (e.g., 1890 Land Grant colleges/Universities, vocational schools) with significant minority and female enrollment. Outreach activities with 1890 Land Grant Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other institutions with a high enrollment of minorities, females and individuals with disabilities result in the implementation of research projects, the hiring of students, or the implementation of partnerships (e.g., Adopt a School) in order to achieve long-term EEO objectives.
	13. Consistently contributes to EEO/Civil Rights efforts through the implementation of effective ideas/employee suggestions.
	14. Is recognized as a positive influence in the furtherance of EEO/Civil Rights based on noticeable results or changes within the organization supervised. Ideas are accepted and utilized by other organizations.
	15. Consistently provides leadership by motivating employees to contribute to meeting the goals and objectives in the civil rights performance and strategic plans.
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Civil Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Diversity and Inclusion (Nonsupervisory): Performs assignments in a manner that demonstrates fairness, cooperation, and respect toward employees and customers. Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued. Leverages diversity to achieve the vision and mission of the organization. Supports and maintains an environment that is free of unlawful discrimination and reprisal. (DEPT) MANDATORY</p>	
FULLY SUCCESSFUL	EXCEEDS
Understands the importance of diversity. Performance is demonstrated when employees exhibit behaviors that encourage acceptance in a culturally diverse environment.	1. Demonstrates a commitment to the implementation of the civil rights, EEO, and diversity programs through effective ideas or activities.
Maintains fair and impartial delivery of programs, activities, and services.	2. Obtains approval for an employee suggestion which promotes or improves the effectiveness of the civil rights, EEO, and diversity programs.
Actively pursues knowledge and understanding of different perspectives and ideas.	3. Makes a presentation on a relevant civil rights, EEO, or diversity topics during staff or work unit meetings.
Demonstrates an understanding and knowledge of cross-cultural issues, cultural differences, non verbal cues, feelings and emotions when dealing with and resolving complaints.	4. Actively assists new employees in their adjustment to the workplace and consistently contributes to team efforts in carrying out assignments.
Demonstrates a belief in the concept of treating all others with consideration, respect and fairness and openly, consistently challenging bias, intolerance and incivility.	5. Suggests or actively supports new ideas that improve the work environment and/or enhance progress toward achieving workforce diversity.
Effectively works with customers, peers and stakeholders from all backgrounds.	6. Is recognized as a positive influence in the furtherance of diversity based on noticeable results/changes within assigned area of responsibility.
Supports a workplace culture that welcomes and values new thoughts, different perspectives, and nonconventional approaches.	7. Actively plans, conducts or participates on inter-office projects which promote the program. Recommends or plans activities which bring individuals of diverse backgrounds together for the opportunity to share concerns and interests.
Demonstrates a basic knowledge and understanding of individual and cultural differences.	8. Is openly recognized as someone who consistently meets and deals with others in a nondiscriminatory manner.
Demonstrates prevention of complaints and actively pursues resolution of complaints.	9. Participation on task groups results in significant EEO/Civil Rights contributions.
Demonstrates support for diversity strategies that strengthen service delivery for a diverse customer base.	10. Assists in the recruitment of individuals either directly or through the referral of others, which contribute to workforce diversity.
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Distinguishing Levels of Performance (Continued)

<p>Mission Results (Supervisory): Demonstrates support for agency strategic goals and initiatives within own organizational unit and contributes to the achievement of overall agency initiatives. Stresses accountability and continuous improvement to employees/team members, makes timely and effective decisions, and produces results through strategic thinking and decisive action. Ensures a high degree of responsiveness to management, the public, and internal and external customers. Continually reviews, monitors, and strives to improve organizational performance to achieve agency mission results. MANDATORY</p>	
FULLY SUCCESSFUL	EXCEEDS
Decisions and actions demonstrate organizational awareness including knowledge of mission, function, policies, technological systems, and culture.	1. Decisions and actions are exemplary and demonstrate organizational awareness including knowledge of mission, function, policies, technological systems, and culture;
Demonstrates ethical behavior, practices and integrity and accountability in achieving Agency goals.	2. Consistently demonstrates the highest level of ethics, integrity and accountability in achieving Agency goals.
	3. Innovation, improvements, and contributions to management, administrative, technical, or other functional areas that impact outside the work unit and facilitate organizational recognition.
Fully supports and work to fulfill the Agency’s mission.	4. Takes a wide range of actions that help support and fulfill the Agency’s mission.
Encourages employees to focus on the Agency’s mission.	5. Takes a wide range of actions that encourages other employees to focus more clearly on the Agency’s mission
<p>1. Cultural Transformation (Required Standard by the Department) <i>Supports the Secretary’s initiative for Cultural Transformation through continuous examination and survey of the workforce, customer service, training, and leadership; creates an environment of inclusion, exceptional performance, and effective leadership; and works to eliminate any barriers to operational and service excellence. Actively engages in the transformation of FSA and USDA by supporting process improvements in the organization.</i></p> <p>2. Diversity Roadmap (Required Standard by the Department) <i>Supports the Secretary’s initiative for USDA Diversity Recruitment Roadmap by expanding on mission-specific activities and timelines to ensure diversity recruitment program success and leadership accountability.</i></p>	
<p>These listed behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but broad examples and guidelines to assist you in distinguishing levels of performance. The attainment, documentation or the attempt to attain 1 or more of the behaviors on the list does not constitute or assure a rating at the “Exceeds” level for an element. Determination of element rating and summary rating is decided by the manager/supervisor based on actual results achieved during the performance period.</p>	

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations

[Items were rearranged by series and grade in numeric order to be user friendly.]

A Overview**Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (GS and CO)
(Performance at the Fully Successful Level)**

Competency Model/List for FSA

The following behaviors and skills for selected FSA series and grades were developed by a team of FSA Subject Matter Experts (SME's) to assist FSA in identifying appropriate competencies. Competencies help organizations focus on the characteristics employees must possess for them to be successful. Competencies also provide a way to measure employee performance and align performance with business strategies. This list may be used as a reference tool by supervisors and employees to assist in developing standards and performance expectations. **The text in parenthesis indicates viable corresponding FSA performance management elements.** These are **not** standards and should **not** be used as such. Possessing 1 or more of the listed competencies does **not** ensure a rating of "Fully Successful". The employee's rating should be based on the elements and standards documented in their performance plan.

Note: These competencies are being shared in the FY 2013 performance cycle and should **not** be used to evaluate performance plans that were in effect for FY 2012. The supervisor and the employee must have the opportunity to confer on the content of the employee's performance plan.

B GS Employment**301 Administrative Specialist GS-9/11/12**

Self management and independent work orientation.

Human resources administration.

Procurement and property management.

Analysis and problem solving.

Budget estimates and fiscal reviews.

Oral and written communication.

Technical leadership.

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1101 Program Technician GS-5/6/7****Agricultural-business Technical Competencies- (Execution of Duties Technical Knowledge and Skill)**

- Displays knowledge of agricultural program policies, regulations and procedures
- Demonstrates the ability to research, interpret, and apply agricultural program provisions and regulations
- Displays knowledge of agricultural production practices

Non-technical Competencies (Research and Analysis, Program Management)**Data gathering, analysis, and problem solving**

- Identifies trends, patterns, and connects diverse sources of information to gain an understanding of an issue
- Gathers and compiles data using various data collection techniques
- Processes information from different sources to come to a logical, well-constructed solutions
- Works to generate multiple potential solutions for solving various types of problems and acts to prevent their reoccurrence
- Develops solutions to complex problems that reflect both short- and long-term thinking and planning

Innovation and creativity (Customer Service, Program Management)

- Generates new and creative ideas that further the success of the unit
- Thinks creatively and comes up with unique ways of approaching issues
- Is not confined by the apparent boundaries and limitations of the a situation; does not settle for the status quo
- Looks to continually improve on what is already effective
- Approaches tasks with an open mind and curiosity
- Combines ideas and information in unique ways to generate creative solutions

Customer service (Customer Service)

- Is accessible and regularly updates and shares pertinent information with customers
- Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive
- Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems
- Takes proactive steps to prevent future issues or problems for the customer

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1101 Program Technician GS-5/6/7 (Continued)****Oral and written communication (Communication)**

- Transmits verbal and written information and ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner
- Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and grammar; articulates well
- Writes using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Communicates ideas with impact, particularly in small group meetings
- Adjusts communication style and content to the needs of the audience; avoids excessive use of jargon
- Packages a message in a way that enhances its acceptance and effectiveness

Adaptability: Responding to new and changing situations (Program Management)

- Remains focused while facing constant interruptions and changing priorities
- Adjusts style appropriately to a given audience and/or situation
- Functions effectively in ambiguous and uncertain circumstances
- Stays calm when dealing with rapidly changing circumstances
- Reacts rapidly in an effective manner to changing demands; can think on your feet
- Changes the way things are done in response to new situations
- Overcomes shortcomings and obstacles by adjusting strategies or bringing compensatory strengths to bear on an issue

Team facilitation (Team Leadership, Individual Contributions to the Team)

- Fosters the participation, involvement, and commitment of team members
- Serves as an effective team member and helps team attain goals
- Draws out each team member's diverse talents
- Promotes a team approach to solving work problems
- Encourages team members to contribute
- Promotes a sense of trust and efficacy within the team
- Values contributions to the group and celebrates team success

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1101 District Director GS-13****Technical Competencies (Execution of Duties Technical Knowledge and Skill, Supervision**

- Ability to research, interpret and apply regulations relating to farm program or farm loan program policy
- Ability to maintain effective contacts with agricultural agencies, civic groups, farmers, and the public
- Ability to analyze problems and develop solutions relating to agricultural programs and administrative management operations
- Ability to provide technical leadership and supervision (includes promoting EEO/Civil Rights) relating to farm program or farm loan program activities
- Knowledge of agricultural production, marketing and farm/ranch management practices
- Knowledge of farm programs (i.e., production flexibility, price support, conservation, compliance, etc.)

Non-technical Competencies**Customer service (Customer Service)**

- Is accessible and regularly updates and shares pertinent information with customers
- Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive
- Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems
- Takes proactive steps to prevent future issues or problems for the customer
- Grows team's customer service capabilities and promotes a climate and culture of effectively serving the customer

Facilitating change (Supervision, Program Management, Cultural Transformation)

- Continually uses evolving approaches and methods
- Ties change efforts to key goals and objectives in an actionable and meaningful way
- Involves others in change efforts and draws on appropriate resources
- Adopts continuously improving methods and approaches
- Equips others and the unit to deal with change (e.g., regarding new skill acquisition, appropriate communication, etc.)
- Views change as opportunity to improve
- Encourages others to embrace change efforts by linking their personal future success to the results of the change
- Supports change efforts by supplying others appropriate facts and information

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1101 District Director GS-13 (Continued)****Managing projects and resources (Supervision, Program Management)**

- Generates the detailed plans required to guide the successful completion of projects
- Ensures projects will be completed in a timely manner; generates or oversees timelines that contains key milestones and checkpoints for accomplishing the goals of projects
- Organizes personnel, equipment, and other resources in a logical manner
- Develops realistic action plans given available resources and constraints
- Identifies and garners the resources needed to implement projects
- Ensures projects are completed within the approved budget and timeframe
- Meets deadlines and delivers on what is promised

Coaching and developing others (Supervision, Program Management)

- Promotes continuous learning and improvement
- Identifies others' skill deficits and training needs or opportunities
- Encourages others to broaden their knowledge and gain additional skills and capabilities; fosters a desire to learn and improve
- Provides and identifies opportunities for others to learn and develop
- Provides support and resources for training and development
- Gives constructive feedback to facilitate the learning process
- Leverages the needs and interests of others when generating developmental goals and action steps
- Builds the rapport and trust required to have meaningful discussions regarding growth and development

Supervision and guidance (Supervision, Program Management)

- Makes team aware of expectations and standards for performance
- Establishes clear priorities that need to be addressed
- Provides direction and helps define priorities for others
- Guides others toward common goals
- Creates a culture and climate of respect for others
- Delegates appropriate tasks and responsibilities to others
- Seeks and elicits participation and input from others

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1101 District Director GS-13 (Continued)****Leading and managing Teams (Team Leadership)**

- Energizes the team around a new sense of direction, strategy, and/or commitment
- Provides clarity of purpose to generate enthusiasm for pursuing the new direction or strategy for the team or organization
- Ensures own behavior reflects a pro-team approach and models effective team member behavior
- Encourages others to work collaboratively
- Uses a team approach to drive the business of the organization
- Acknowledges and celebrates team success
- Develops common goals that others can pursue as a team
- Builds an effective team by assembling and organizing members with appropriate skills who can work together effectively
- Proactively works to reduce team conflict

Negotiation and conflict management (Supervision, Program Management)

- Identifies and proactively engages conflict situations and problems
- Develops solutions that meet the needs of all parties
- De-escalates tension while addressing the substance of the problem
- Adapts style and tactics to the needs of different situations and people
- Mediates between two conflicting parties
- Makes difficult conflict decisions and delivers the “tough message” when appropriate

Written and oral communication (Communication)

- Transmits verbal and written information and ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner
- Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and grammar; articulates well
- Writes using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Communicates ideas with impact, particularly in small group meetings
- Adjusts communication style and content to the needs of the audience; avoids excessive use of jargon
- Packages a message in a way that enhances its acceptance and effectiveness

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1145 Agricultural Program Specialist GS-9/11/12**

Knowledge and experience in planning, developing and coordinating programs involving highly diverse and complex agricultural commodities and enterprises.

Experience applying farm program policy and the application of program requirements.

Experience working with various complex agricultural entities such as partnerships and corporations, Limited Liability Corporations, trusts, and estates.

Knowledge of agricultural production practices.

Knowledge of crop and livestock marketing alternatives.

Knowledge of farm programs (i.e., production adjustment, price support, conservation) – Grades 11 & 12 only.

Knowledge of writing user requirements for the development of software applications - Grades 11 & 12, Automation Program Branch only.

Ability to provide informal supervision and guidance – Grade 12 only.

Expertise or experience regarding expert testimony – Grade 12 only.

Oral Communication.

Written Communication.

Customer Service.

Self-management.

Innovation.

Analysis & Problem Solving.

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1146 Agricultural Marketing Specialist GS-9/11/12****Technical Competencies (Execution of Duties Technical Knowledge and Skill)**

- Tracking and monitoring technical information
- Planning and coordinating commodity-related programs
- Researching, evaluating, and applying technical information
- Reasoning in a commodity-related context
- Knowledge of agricultural commodities
- Applying and using knowledge of agricultural production practices
- Ability to read and interpret agricultural commodity-related rules and regulations (including licensing, warehousing, and/or merchandizing)

Non-technical Competencies**Oral and Written Communication (Communication)**

- Transmits verbal and written information and ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner
- Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and grammar; articulates well
- Writes using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Communicates ideas with impact, particularly in small group meetings
- Adjusts communication style and content to the needs of the audience; avoids excessive use of jargon
- Packages a message in a way that enhances its acceptance and effectiveness

Customer service (Customer Service)

- Is accessible and regularly updates and shares pertinent information with customers
- Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive
- Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems
- Takes proactive steps to prevent future issues or problems for the customer

Self management and independent work orientation (Execution of Duties Technical Knowledge and Skill)

- Executes tasks provided by a supervisor with some help and guidance from others
- Independently performs tasks provided by a supervisor with minimal oversight
- Provides input and suggestions on what type of work needs to be done and independently executes tasks
- Decides what work needs to be done and independently performs tasks

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1146 Agricultural Marketing Specialist GS-9/11/12 (Continued)****Negotiation and conflict management (Supervision, Program Management)**

- Identifies and proactively engages conflict situations and problems
- Develops solutions that meet the needs of all parties
- De-escalates tension while addressing the substance of the problem
- Adapts style and tactics to the needs of different situations and people
- Mediates between two conflicting parties
- Makes difficult conflict decisions and delivers the “tough message” when appropriate

Team facilitation (Team Leadership, Individual Contributions to a Team)

- Fosters the participation, involvement, and commitment of team members
- Drives team results and employs a team approach to solving business problems where appropriate
- Draws out each team member’s diverse talents and aligns with team goals
- Effectively manages competing inter- and intra-group interests and encourages a collaborative approach
- Applies the learning and best practices from 1 team or experience to other teams
- Promotes a sense of trust and efficacy within the team
- Values contributions to the group and celebrates team success

Supporting change

- Views change as opportunity to improve
- Challenges assumptions on how things are usually done in order to find a better way
- Embraces creative solutions offered by others and encourages others to come up with unique approaches to solving problems
- Supports new or revamped procedures to improve or replace traditional systems
- Questions the use of existing procedures in an effort to improve work efficiency

Innovation and creativity (Program Management,

- Generates new and creative ideas that further the success of the unit
- Thinks creatively and comes up with unique ways of approaching issues
- Is not confined by the apparent boundaries and limitations of the a situation; does not settle for the status quo
- Looks to continually improve on what is already effective
- Approaches tasks with an open mind and curiosity
- Combines ideas and information in unique ways to generate creative solutions

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)

B GS Employment (Continued)

1146 Agricultural Marketing Specialist GS-9/11/12 (Continued)

Analysis and problem solving (*Research and Analysis, Program Management*)

- Identifies trends and patterns, detects discrepancies, and connects diverse sources of information to gain an understanding of an issue
- Processes information from different sources to come to a logical, well-constructed solutions
- Works to generate multiple potential solutions for solving various types of problems and acts to prevent their reoccurrence
- Develops solutions to complex problems that reflect both short- and long-term thinking and planning

Managing projects and resources (*Resource management, Supervision, Program Management*)

- Generates the detailed plans required to guide the successful completion of projects
- Ensures projects are completed in a timely manner; generates or oversees timelines that contain key milestones and checkpoints for accomplishing the goals of projects
- Organizes personnel, equipment, and other resources in a logical manner
- Develops realistic action plans given available resources and constraints
- Identifies and garners the resources needed to implement projects
- Ensures projects are completed within the approved budget and timeframe
- Meets deadlines and delivers on what is promised

1165 Farm Loan Assistant – GS-5/7

Agricultural-business Technical Competencies

- Displays knowledge of credit principles, farm loan program policies and regulations to make and service loans
- Demonstrates the ability to research, interpret and apply agricultural or lending regulations and policies and procedures to attain objectives
- Uses knowledge of agricultural production practices to service customers

Non-technical Competencies**Analysis and problem solving** (*Research and Analysis, Program Management*)

- Identifies trends, patterns, and connects diverse sources of information to gain an understanding of an issue
- Processes information from different sources to come to a logical, well-constructed solutions
- Works to generate multiple potential solutions for solving various types of problems and acts to prevent their reoccurrence
- Develops solutions to complex problems that reflect both short- and long-term thinking and planning

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1165 Farm Loan Assistant GS-5/7 (Continued)****Innovation and creativity (Mission Results)**

- Generates new and creative ideas that further the success of the unit
- Thinks creatively and comes up with unique ways of approaching issues
- Is not confined by the apparent boundaries and limitations of a situation; does not settle for the status quo
- Looks to continually improve on what is already effective
- Approaches tasks with an open mind and curiosity
- Combines ideas and information in unique ways to generate creative solutions

Training and developing others (Supervision, Program Management,

- Helps to develop others by directing them to appropriate learning materials
- Facilitates others' learning by providing information on a subject
- Helps others to learn by demonstrating proper techniques and providing them the opportunity to practice
- Conducts training in multiple formats (e.g., informal 1-on-1 instruction, formal workshops and classroom instruction, etc.)
- Evaluates the performance of others and provides developmental feedback

Customer service (Customer Service)

- Is accessible and regularly updates and shares pertinent information with customers
- Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive
- Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems
- Takes proactive steps to prevent future issues or problems for the customer

Negotiation and conflict management (Supervision, Program Management)

- Identifies and proactively engages conflict situations and problems
- Develops solutions that meet the needs of all parties
- De-escalates tension while addressing the substance of the problem
- Adapts style and tactics to the needs of different situations and people
- Mediates between two conflicting parties
- Makes difficult conflict decisions and delivers the "tough message" when appropriate

Oral and written communication (Communication)

- Transmits verbal and written information and ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner
- Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and grammar; articulates well
- Writes using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Communicates ideas with impact, particularly in small group meetings
- Adjusts communication style and content to the needs of the audience; avoids excessive use of jargon
- Packages a message in a way that enhances its acceptance and effectiveness

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1165 Farm Loan Specialist GS-9****Agricultural-business Technical Competencies (Execution of Duties Technical Knowledge and Skill)**

- Displays knowledge of credit principles, farm loan program policies and regulations to make and service loans
- Demonstrates the ability to research, interpret and apply agricultural or lending regulations and policies and procedures to attain objectives
- Uses knowledge of agricultural production, marketing, and farm/ranch management practices to service customers

Non-technical Competencies**Team facilitation (Team Leadership, Individual Contribution to Team)**

- Fosters the participation, involvement, and commitment of team members
- Drives team results and employs a team approach to solving business problems where appropriate
- Draws out each team member's diverse talents and aligns with team goals
- Effectively manages competing inter- and intra-group interests and encourages a collaborative approach
- Applies the learning and best practices from 1 team or experience to other teams
- Promotes a sense of trust and efficacy within the team
- Values contributions to the group and celebrates team success

Supporting change (Program Management, Individual Contributions to a Team)

- Views change as opportunity to improve
- Challenges assumptions on how things are usually done in order to find a better way
- Embraces creative solutions offered by others and encourages others to come up with unique approaches to solving problems
- Supports new or revamped procedures to improve or replace traditional systems
- Questions the use of existing procedures in an effort to improve work efficiency

Training and developing others

- Helps to develop others by directing them to appropriate learning materials
- Facilitates others' learning by providing information on a subject
- Helps others to learn by demonstrating proper techniques and providing them the opportunity to practice
- Conducts training in multiple formats (e.g., informal 1-on-1 instruction, formal workshops and classroom instruction, etc.)
- Evaluates the performance of others and provides developmental feedback

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1165 Farm Loan Specialist GS-9 (Continued)****Analysis and problem solving (Research and Analysis)**

- Identifies trends, patterns, and connects diverse sources of information to gain an understanding of an issue
- Processes information from different sources to come to a logical, well-constructed solutions
- Works to generate multiple potential solutions for solving various types of problems and acts to prevent their reoccurrence
- Develops solutions to complex problems that reflect both short- and long-term thinking and planning

Innovation and creativity

- Generates new and creative ideas that further the success of the unit
- Thinks creatively and comes up with unique ways of approaching issues
- Is not confined by the apparent boundaries and limitations of the a situation; does not settle for the status quo
- Looks to continually improve on what is already effective
- Approaches tasks with an open mind and curiosity
- Combines ideas and information in unique ways to generate creative solutions

Customer service (Customer Service)

- Is accessible and regularly updates and shares pertinent information with customers
- Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive
- Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems
- Takes proactive steps to prevent future issues or problems for the customer

Negotiation and conflict management

- Identifies and proactively engages conflict situations and problems
- Develops solutions that meet the needs of all parties
- De-escalates tension while addressing the substance of the problem
- Adapts style and tactics to the needs of different situations and people
- Mediates between two conflicting parties
- Makes difficult conflict decisions and delivers the “tough message” when appropriate

Oral and written communication (Communication)

- Transmits verbal and written information and ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner
- Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and grammar; articulates well
- Writes using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Communicates ideas with impact, particularly in small group meetings
- Adjusts communication style and content to the needs of the audience; avoids excessive use of jargon
- Packages a message in a way that enhances its acceptance and effectiveness

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1165 Farm Loan Specialist GS-11****Agricultural-business Technical Competencies (Execution of Duties, Knowledge and Technical Skill)**

- Displays knowledge of credit principles, farm loan program policies and regulations to make and service loans
- Demonstrates the ability to research, interpret and apply agricultural or lending regulations and policies and procedures to attain objectives
- Uses knowledge of agricultural production, marketing, and farm/ranch management practices to service customers

Non-technical Competencies**Team facilitation (Team Leadership, Individual Contributions to a Team)**

- Fosters the participation, involvement, and commitment of team members
- Drives team results and employs a team approach to solving business problems where appropriate
- Draws out each team member's diverse talents and aligns with team goals
- Effectively manages competing inter- and intra-group interests and encourages a collaborative approach
- Applies the learning and best practices from 1 team or experience to other teams
- Promotes a sense of trust and efficacy within the team
- Values contributions to the group and celebrates team success

Supporting change

- Views change as opportunity to improve
- Challenges assumptions on how things are usually done in order to find a better way
- Embraces creative solutions offered by others and encourages others to come up with unique approaches to solving problems
- Supports new or revamped procedures to improve or replace traditional systems
- Questions the use of existing procedures in an effort to improve work efficiency

Coaching and developing others

- Promotes continuous learning and improvement
- Identifies others' skill deficits and training needs or opportunities
- Encourages others to broaden their knowledge and gain additional skills and capabilities; fosters a desire to learn and improve
- Provides and identifies opportunities for others to learn and develop
- Provides support and resources for training and development
- Gives constructive feedback to facilitate the learning process
- Leverages the needs and interests of others when generating developmental goals and action steps
- Builds the rapport and trust required to have meaningful discussions regarding growth and development

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1165 Farm Loan Specialist GS-11 (Continued)****Self management and independent work orientation (Execution of Duties, Knowledge and Technical Skill)**

- Executes tasks provided by a supervisor with some help and guidance from others
- Independently performs tasks provided by a supervisor with minimal oversight
- Provides input and suggestions on what type of work needs to be done and independently executes tasks
- Decides what work needs to be done and independently performs tasks

Analysis and problem solving (Research and Analysis)

- Identifies trends, patterns, and connects diverse sources of information to gain an understanding of an issue
- Processes information from different sources to come to a logical, well-constructed solutions
- Works to generate multiple potential solutions for solving various types of problems and acts to prevent their reoccurrence
- Develops solutions to complex problems that reflect both short- and long-term thinking and planning

Innovation and creativity

- Generates new and creative ideas that further the success of the unit
- Thinks creatively and comes up with unique ways of approaching issues
- Is not confined by the apparent boundaries and limitations of the a situation; does not settle for the status quo
- Looks to continually improve on what is already effective
- Approaches tasks with an open mind and curiosity
- Combines ideas and information in unique ways to generate creative solutions

Customer service (Customer Service)

- Is accessible and regularly updates and shares pertinent information with customers
- Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive
- Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems
- Takes proactive steps to prevent future issues or problems for the customer

Negotiation and conflict management

- Identifies and proactively engages conflict situations and problems
- Develops solutions that meet the needs of all parties
- De-escalates tension while addressing the substance of the problem
- Adapts style and tactics to the needs of different situations and people
- Mediates between two conflicting parties
- Makes difficult conflict decisions and delivers the “tough message” when appropriate

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****1165 Farm Loan Specialist GS-11 (Continued)****Informal supervision and guidance (Project management, Individual Contributions to a Team)**

- Makes team aware of expectations and standards for performance
- Helps to establish clear priorities that need to be addressed
- Provides direction and helps define priorities for others
- Guides others toward common goals
- Builds an atmosphere of respect for others
- Assists in channeling appropriate tasks and responsibilities to others
- Solicits participation and input from others

Oral and written communication (Communication)

- Transmits verbal and written information and ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner
- Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and grammar; articulates well
- Writes using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Communicates ideas with impact, particularly in small group meetings
- Adjusts communication style and content to the needs of the audience; avoids excessive use of jargon
- Packages a message in a way that enhances its acceptance and effectiveness

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 Java****JAVA Technical Competencies (Execution of Duties, Knowledge and Technical Skill)****JAVA Fundamentals****Analysis & Design**

- Object Oriented Concepts
- UML
- Design Patterns
- Sequence Diagrams

J2EE Concepts**Application Security (note: security issues are intertwined with every other skill)**

- Basic Security Concepts (e.g., authentication, authorization)
- Security Threats and protection approaches (e.g., OWASP Top 10)

Unit Testing (e.g., JUnit, DBUnit)**Application Performance (e.g., load Testing)****Continuous Integration (e.g., Automated Builds, Maven/Ant, PMD, Emma)****Tools**

- Source Code Management (e.g., Subversion)
- Ounce
- Application Servers (e.g., JBoss, Websphere)
- IDE's (e.g., Eclipse)

Software Development Processes

- Code Reviews
- RUP
- Agile
- SDLC

Persistence Tier

- SQL
- JDBC
- Spring JDBC

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 Java (Continued)****Business Tier**

- Spring
 - Dependency Management
 - Transaction Management
- Stateless Session Beans (EJB 2.1)
 - Remote access
 - Transaction Management
- Messaging
 - JMS
 - Queue
 - Topic
 - Message Driven Beans (EJB 2.1)
- Web Services
 - JSR-109
 - Basic Profile
 - Axis
- JNDI

Presentation Tier

- HTML
- Cascading Style Sheets
- JavaScript
- JSP (JSP 2.0)
- Servlets
- Expression Language and JSTL
- Struts (Version 1.x)

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 Java (Continued) 1101****Non-Technical Competencies****Managing Projects and Allocating Resources (Program Management, Resource Management)**

- Generate the detailed plans required to guide the successful completion of projects
- Ensure projects will be completed in a timely manner; generates or oversees timelines that contains key milestones and checkpoints for accomplishing the goals of projects
- Organize personnel, equipment, and other resources in a logical manner
- Develop realistic action plans given available resources and constraints
- Identify and garner the resources needed to implement projects
- Make sure that the various aspects of projects are properly coordinated
- See that the scope of projects are established and maintained
- Create control systems to regulate project execution
- Ensure projects are completed within the approved budget; generate or oversee accurate cost estimates and manage monetary expenditures
- Make sure completed projects will satisfy the needs for which they were undertaken; ensure quality of projects and their outcomes are at the expected level
- Manage and mitigate risk and assign priorities to ensure critical objectives can be met
- Meet deadline and deliver on what is promised
- Bring projects to completion and quickly move on to another challenge

Establishing and Maintaining Communication with Stakeholders (Communications)

- Represent and articulate own viewpoints in a way that positively influences others' perspectives or decisions
- Communicate effectively throughout the organization to build effective partnerships
- Persuasively use relevant data or information to create a meeting of the minds among stakeholders with differing viewpoints
- Transmit information and ideas, both verbally and in writing, in a clear, concise, comprehensive, accurate, and organized manner including articulation, grammar, and volume
- Adapt message content and wording to make it easily understood by the intended recipients including technical and non-technical audiences (e.g., avoid using overly technical jargon when talking to business people)
- Distill complex information and messages into easily understood chunks and ideas
- Create a culture which values free and open exchange of views and information by demonstrating own commitment to a "right to know and be heard" philosophy
- Distill ideas into focused messages that inspire support or action from others
- Align messages internally and get 'buy-in' from relevant parties within function prior to expressing them cross-functionally
- Know the right time and right people to communicate with and keep informed in order to facilitate project success
- Communicate potential issues and problems in a positive manner to stakeholders

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 Java (Continued)****Leading Change**

- Initiate process and system changes to meet business objectives
- Continually use evolving approaches and methods
- Involve others in change efforts and draw on appropriate resources
- Adopt continuously improving methods and approaches
- View change as opportunity to improve
- Challenge assumptions on how things are usually done in order to find a better way
- Drive innovation by pushing team and self to seek new solutions and build on what already works

Demonstrating critical thinking, analytical, and problem solving skills (Research and Analysis)

- Understand the business and how critical organizational processes function
- Recognize the key issues facing the business
- Be creative and employ unique ways of approaching issues
- Leverage insights regarding people, structure, strategy, and process in terms of how they operate and function
- Identify the underlying root cause of a problem to generate a permanent vs. temporary fix
- Trace a process backwards in order to identify the source of a problem (i.e., backwards troubleshooting)
- Develop contingency plans for dealing with crises and business imperatives that must be addressed immediately
- Ensure analytical and problem solving efforts are linked to demonstrable business results

Building relationships with clients and within/across organizational boundaries (Customer Service)

- Drive and support efforts that go beyond the scope of one's own organizational function
- Actively communicate with other organizational functions/customers and keep them informed
- Build a network across organizational functions
- Coordinate activities with other organizational functions; involve other functions in the planning of any project that will impact them
- Provide service and assistance to other organizational functions
- Serve as a trusted and respected consultant to customers/other functions
- Develop productive strategic relationships throughout the organization

Demonstrating Energy and Drive

- Work accomplishments and results reflect a desire to take on ever greater responsibility
- Responsible for increasingly complex and bigger-scope projects
- Accomplish a lot of quality work in a short period of time

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 Java (Continued)****Delivering High Quality Customer Service (Customer Service)**

- Develop technical solutions to customer business problems and needs
- Understand problems and issues from the customer's perspective
- Identify and understand customer needs and priorities
- Frame and deploy technological solutions not as ends in themselves but as vehicles to meet customer business needs

Demonstrating a Commitment to Learning

- Seek out new information and approaches to work
- Take steps to grow own skills and continuously develop oneself
- Remain informed and up to date on new and cutting-edge technologies that can be leveraged to improve and create new products and processes

2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 .NET**.NET Technical Competencies (Execution of Duties, Knowledge and Technical Skill)****.NET Fundamentals**

- C# fundamentals
- .NET Framework API

Analysis & Design

- Object Oriented Concepts
- UML
- Design Patterns
- Sequence Diagrams

Implementation

- .NET Assemblies (e.g., Strong Naming)
- GAC
- .NET dependency management

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 .NET (Continued)****Application Security (note: security issues are intertwined with every other skill)**

- Basic Security Concepts (e.g., authentication, authorization)
- Security Threats and protection approaches (e.g., OWASP Top 10)

Application Performance

- Load Testing
- Unit Testing (e.g., NUnit)

Continuous Integration (e.g., Automated Builds)**Tools**

- Source Code Management (e.g., Subversion, Visual Source Safe)
- Ounce
- Application Servers (e.g., IIS, Windows Server)
- IDEs (e.g., Visual Studio)

Software Development Processes

- Code Reviews
- RUP
- Agile
- SDLC

Persistence Tier

- LINQ
- OLEDB/ODBC
- SQL

Business Tier

- Messaging
- Web Services
 - Windows Communication Foundation
 - Web Services Enhancements
 - XML/SOAP
 - REST

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 .NET (Continued)****Presentation Tier**

- HTML
- Cascading Style Sheets
- JavaScript
- ASPX
- Code-Behinds
- Web Forms
- Python Scripting
- Silverlight

GIS Application Development

- ArcObjects
- ArcGIS Server
- ArcGIS Desktop
- ArcEngine

Spatial Database Design

- Spatial Database Engine (SDE)
- SQL Spatial Types
 - Geometry
 - Geographic

GIS Systems

- Reporting System with GIS Components
- Enterprise GIS System Architecture

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 .NET (Continued)****Non-Technical Competencies****Managing Projects and Allocating Resources (Resource Management, Program Management)**

- Generate the detailed plans required to guide the successful completion of projects
- Ensure projects will be completed in a timely manner; generates or oversees timelines that contains key milestones and checkpoints for accomplishing the goals of projects
- Organize personnel, equipment, and other resources in a logical manner
- Develop realistic action plans given available resources and constraints
- Identify and garner the resources needed to implement projects
- Make sure that the various aspects of projects are properly coordinated
- See that the scope of projects are established and maintained
- Create control systems to regulate project execution
- Ensure projects are completed within the approved budget; generate or oversee accurate cost estimates and manage monetary expenditures
- Make sure completed projects will satisfy the needs for which they were undertaken; ensure quality of projects and their outcomes are at the expected level
- Manage and mitigate risk and assign priorities to ensure critical objectives can be met
- Meet deadline and deliver on what is promised
- Bring projects to completion and quickly move on to another challenge

Establishing and Maintaining Communication with Stakeholders (Customer Service, Communication)

- Represent and articulate own viewpoints in a way that positively influences others' perspectives or decisions
- Communicate effectively throughout the organization to build effective partnerships
- Persuasively use relevant data or information to create a meeting of the minds among stakeholders with differing viewpoints
- Transmit information and ideas, both verbally and in writing, in a clear, concise, comprehensive, accurate, and organized manner including articulation, grammar, and volume
- Adapt message content and wording to make it easily understood by the intended recipients including technical and non-technical audiences (e.g., avoid using overly technical jargon when talking to business people)
- Distill complex information and messages into easily understood chunks and ideas
- Create a culture which values free and open exchange of views and information by demonstrating own commitment to a "right to know and be heard" philosophy
- Distill ideas into focused messages that inspire support or action from others
- Align messages internally and get 'buy-in' from relevant parties within function prior to expressing them cross-functionally
- Know the right time and right people to communicate with and keep informed in order to facilitate project success
- Communicate potential issues and problems in a positive manner to stakeholders

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 .NET (Continued)****Leading Change**

- Initiate process and system changes to meet business objectives
- Continually use evolving approaches and methods
- Involve others in change efforts and draw on appropriate resources
- Adopt continuously improving methods and approaches
- View change as opportunity to improve
- Challenge assumptions on how things are usually done in order to find a better way
- Drive innovation by pushing team and self to seek new solutions and build on what already works

Demonstrating critical thinking, analytical, and problem solving skills (Research and Analysis)

- Understand the business and how critical organizational processes function
- Recognize the key issues facing the business
- Be creative and employ unique ways of approaching issues
- Leverage insights regarding people, structure, strategy, and process in terms of how they operate and function
- Identify the underlying root cause of a problem to generate a permanent vs. temporary fix
- Trace a process backwards in order to identify the source of a problem (i.e., backwards troubleshooting)
- Develop contingency plans for dealing with crises and business imperatives that must be addressed immediately
- Ensure analytical and problem solving efforts are linked to demonstrable business results

Building relationships with clients and within/across organizational boundaries (Communications, Customer Service)

- Drive and support efforts that go beyond the scope of one's own organizational function
- Actively communicate with other organizational functions/customers and keep them informed
- Build a network across organizational functions
- Coordinate activities with other organizational functions; involve other functions in the planning of any project that will impact them
- Provide service and assistance to other organizational functions
- Serve as a trusted and respected consultant to customers/other functions
- Develop productive strategic relationships throughout the organization

Demonstrating Energy and Drive

- Work accomplishments and results reflect a desire to take on ever greater responsibility
- Responsible for increasingly complex and bigger-scope projects
- Accomplish a lot of quality work in a short period of time

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 IT Specialist GS-12/13 .NET (Continued)****Delivering High Quality Customer Service (Customer Service)**

- Develop technical solutions to customer business problems and needs
- Understand problems and issues from the customer's perspective
- Identify and understand customer needs and priorities
- Frame and deploy technological solutions not as ends in themselves but as vehicles to meet customer business needs

Demonstrating a Commitment to Learning

- Seek out new information and approaches to work
- Take steps to grow own skills and continuously develop oneself
- Remain informed and up to date on new and cutting-edge technologies that can be leveraged to improve and create new products and processes

2210 Project Manager GS-13**Project Management Technical Competencies (*Execution of Duties, Resource Management, Research and Analysis*)****Project Proposal and Procurement/Acquisition Process**

- Use technical expertise to produce a statement of work.
- Manage and review technical proposals
- Conceptualize, analyze, and define program/project plans and requirements
- Use technical expertise to write, manage, and review successful proposals
- Develop an independent government cost estimate
- Develop, implement, and monitor acquisition strategies, procurement processes, contract activities, and approval requirements to support project requirements

Applied Project Initiation and Planning

- Develop effective project management plans (e.g., communication, risk, quality control, project schedule, etc.) and technical integration of project elements
- Develop project charter that includes a high-level schedule and resource estimation, key stakeholders, alignment with strategic objectives project, and manager authority (especially the division of responsibility and authority)
- Develop high-level milestones and timelines

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 Project Manager GS-13 (Continued)****Monitoring and Managing the Project**

- Establish change control procedures and manages changes to requirements to completion
- Support the importance of monitoring and controlling
- Define the elements of project time management and ensure steps are completed in a timely manner which meets quality and budget standards
- Establish project goals including "go" and "no-go" decision points
- Analyze optimal labor utilization for cost effectiveness and produce approved performance measurement baseline (PMB)
- Use earned-value concepts for cost and schedule control by using variance analysis to assess project performance
- Calculate the impact of change on project cost and performance.
- Manage project steps and people even in the absence of direct authority and control
- Provide requirements traceability
- Develop and execute a risk management plan
- Develop and execute a quality assurance plan
- Support the value of diversity in a project team

Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) Process

- Ensure compliance with the CPIC process (OMB 300/business case)

Project Organizational Behaviors and Structures

- Define the organization and its authority and responsibility
- Adjust one's style to the specific needs and approach of the stakeholders to effectively deliver project results
- Manage groups and individuals in order to increase the effectiveness of working on a project team
- Analyze stakeholders' interests in a project and determine how those interests can be satisfied
- Develop key working relationships with others, including vendor and client, to facilitate support for a project and the ability to effectively handle issues when they arise

Cost Estimating and Budgeting

- Develop annual budget requests including all requirements, justification, and documentation
- Develop cost estimates for individual procurement activities
- Ensure compliance with earned value management (EVM) to track expenditures to budgeted cost accounts

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 Project Manager GS-13 (Continued)****Project Evaluation and Termination**

- Perform Use technical expertise to produce a statement of work.
- Manage and review technical proposals
- Conceptualize, analyze, and define program/project plans and requirements
- Use technical expertise to write, manage, and review successful proposals
- Develop an independent government cost estimate
- Develop, implement, and monitor acquisition strategies, procurement processes, contract activities, and approval requirements to support project requirements
- Develop effective project management plans (e.g., communication, risk, quality control, project schedule, etc.) and technical integration of project elements
- Develop project charter that includes a high-level schedule and resource estimation, key stakeholders, alignment with strategic objectives project, and manager authority (especially the division of responsibility and authority)
- Develop high-level milestones and timelines
- Establish change control procedures and manages changes to requirements to completion
- Support the importance of monitoring and controlling
- Define the elements of project time management and ensure steps are completed in a timely manner which meets quality and budget standards
- Establish project goals including "go" and "no-go" decision points
- Analyze optimal labor utilization for cost effectiveness and produce approved performance measurement baseline (PMB)
- Use earned-value concepts for cost and schedule control by using variance analysis to assess project performance
- Calculate the impact of change on project cost and performance.
- Manage project steps and people even in the absence of direct authority and control
- Provide requirements traceability
- Develop and execute a risk management plan
- Develop and execute a quality assurance plan
- Support the value of diversity in a project team
- Ensure compliance with the CPIC process (OMB 300/business case)
- Define the organization and its authority and responsibility
- Adjust one's style to the specific needs and approach of the stakeholders to effectively deliver project results
- Manage groups and individuals in order to increase the effectiveness of working on a project team
- Analyze stakeholders' interests in a project and determine how those interests can be satisfied
- Develop key working relationships with others, including vendor and client, to facilitate support for a project and the ability to effectively handle issues when they arise

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 Project Manager GS-13 (Continued)****Project Evaluation and Termination (Continued)**

- Develop annual budget requests including all requirements, justification, and documentation
- Develop cost estimates for individual procurement activities
- Ensure compliance with earned value management (EVM) to track expenditures to budgeted cost accounts
- Integrated Baseline Reviews (IBR's) and track to completion any issues found
- Conduct tradeoff analyses of project performances considering cost and schedule constraints
- Identify causes associated with project success and failure
- Articulate and implement steps required for closeout of project including lessons learned

Non-Technical Competencies**Leading Change**

- Initiate process and system changes to meet business objectives
- Continually use evolving approaches and methods
- Involve others in change efforts and draw on appropriate resources
- Adopt continuously improving methods and approaches
- View change as opportunity to improve
- Challenge assumptions on how things are usually done in order to find a better way
- Drive innovation by pushing team and self to seek new solutions and build on what already works

Demonstrating Critical Thinking, Analytical, and Problem Solving Skills

- Understand the business and how critical organizational processes function
- Recognize the key issues facing the business
- Be creative and employ unique ways of approaching issues
- Leverage insights regarding people, structure, strategy, and process in terms of how they operate and function
- Identify the underlying root cause of a problem to generate a permanent vs. temporary fix
- Trace a process backwards in order to identify the source of a problem (i.e., backwards troubleshooting)
- Develop contingency plans for dealing with crises and business imperatives that must be addressed immediately
- Ensure analytical and problem solving efforts are linked to demonstrable business results

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 Project Manager GS-13 (Continued)****Building Relationships with Clients and within/across Organizational Boundaries (Customer Service, Communications)**

- Drive and support efforts that go beyond the scope of one's own organizational function
- Actively communicate with other organizational functions/customers and keep them informed
- Build a network across organizational functions
- Coordinate activities with other organizational functions; involve other functions in the planning of any project that will impact them
- Provide service and assistance to other organizational functions
- Serve as a trusted and respected consultant to customers/other functions
- Develop productive strategic relationships throughout the organization

Demonstrating Energy and Drive

- Seek out and take on ever greater responsibility
- Take on increasingly complex and bigger-scope projects
- Accomplish a lot of quality work in a short period of time

Delivering High Quality Customer Service (Customer Service)

- Develop technical solutions to customer business problems and needs
- Understand problems and issues from the customer's perspective
- Identify and understand customer needs and priorities
- Frame and deploy technological solutions not as ends in themselves but as vehicles to meet customer business needs

Establishing and Maintaining Communication with Stakeholders (Communications)

- Represent and articulate own viewpoints in a way that positively influences others' perspectives or decisions
- Communicate effectively throughout the organization to build effective partnerships
- Persuasively use relevant data or information to create a meeting of the minds among stakeholders with differing viewpoints
- Transmit information and ideas, both verbally and in writing, in a clear, concise, comprehensive, accurate, and organized manner including articulation, grammar, and volume
- Adapt message content and wording to make it easily understood by the intended recipients including technical and non-technical audiences (e.g., avoid using overly technical jargon when talking to business people)

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 Project Manager GS-13 (Continued)****Establishing and Maintaining Communication with Stakeholders (Communications) (Continued)**

- Distill complex information and messages into easily understood chunks and ideas
- Create a culture which values free and open exchange of views and information by demonstrating own commitment to a “right to know and be heard” philosophy
- Distill ideas into focused messages that inspire support or action from others
- Align messages internally and get ‘buy-in’ from relevant parties within function prior to expressing them cross-functionally
- Know the right time and right people to communicate with and keep informed in order to facilitate project success
- Communicate potential issues and problems in a positive manner to stakeholders

Demonstrating a Commitment to Learning

- Seek out new information and approaches to work
- Take steps to grow own skills and continuously develop oneself
- Remain informed and up to date on new and cutting-edge technologies that can be leveraged to improve and create new products and processes

Coaching and Developing Others (Contributions to a Team)

- Seek out new information and approaches to work
- Promotes continuous learning and improvement
- Identifies others’ skill deficits and training needs or opportunities
- Encourages others to broaden their knowledge and gain additional skills and capabilities; fosters a desire to learn and improve
- Provides and identifies opportunities for others to learn and develop
- Provides support and resources for training and development
- Gives constructive feedback to facilitate the learning process
- Leverages the needs and interests of others when generating developmental goals and action steps
- Builds the rapport and trust required to have meaningful discussions regarding growth and development

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**B GS Employment (Continued)****2210 Project Manager GS-13 (Continued)****Facilitating a Team (Team Leadership, individual Contributions to a Team)**

- Foster the participation, involvement, and commitment of team members
- Drive team results and employ a team approach to solving business problems where appropriate
- Draw out each team member's diverse talents and align with team goals
- Effectively manage competing inter- and intra-group interests and encourage a collaborative approach
- Apply the learning and best practices from 1 team or experience to other teams
- Promote a sense of trust and efficacy within the team
- Value contributions to the group and celebrates team success

Informal Supervision and Guidance (Individual Contributions to a Team)

- Make team aware of expectations and standards for performance
- Help to establish clear priorities that need to be addressed
- Provide direction and help define priorities for others
- Guide others toward common goals
- Build an atmosphere of respect for others
- Assist in channeling appropriate tasks and responsibilities to others
- Solicit participation and input from others

C CO Employment**1101 Program Technician CO-5/6/7****Agricultural-business Technical Competencies- (Execution of Duties Technical Knowledge and Skill)**

- Displays knowledge of agricultural program policies, regulations and procedures
- Demonstrates the ability to research, interpret, and apply agricultural program provisions and regulations
- Displays knowledge of agricultural production practices

Non-technical Competencies (Research and Analysis, Program Management**Data gathering, analysis, and problem solving**

- Identifies trends, patterns, and connects diverse sources of information to gain an understanding of an issue
- Gathers and compiles data using various data collection techniques
- Processes information from different sources to come to a logical, well-constructed solutions
- Works to generate multiple potential solutions for solving various types of problems and acts to prevent their reoccurrence
- Develops solutions to complex problems that reflect both short- and long-term thinking and planning

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**C CO Employment (Continued)****1101 Program Technician CO-5/6/7(Continued)****Innovation and creativity (Customer Service, Program Management)**

- Generates new and creative ideas that further the success of the unit
- Thinks creatively and comes up with unique ways of approaching issues
- Is not confined by the apparent boundaries and limitations of the a situation; does not settle for the status quo
- Looks to continually improve on what is already effective
- Approaches tasks with an open mind and curiosity
- Combines ideas and information in unique ways to generate creative solutions

Customer service (Customer Service)

- Is accessible and regularly updates and shares pertinent information with customers
- Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive
- Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems
- Takes proactive steps to prevent future issues or problems for the customer

Oral and written communication (Communication)

- Transmits verbal and written information and ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner
- Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and grammar; articulates well
- Writes using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Communicates ideas with impact, particularly in small group meetings
- Adjusts communication style and content to the needs of the audience; avoids excessive use of jargon
- Packages a message in a way that enhances its acceptance and effectiveness

Adaptability: Responding to new and changing situations (Program Management)

- Remains focused while facing constant interruptions and changing priorities
- Adjusts style appropriately to a given audience and/or situation
- Functions effectively in ambiguous and uncertain circumstances
- Stays calm when dealing with rapidly changing circumstances
- Reacts rapidly in an effective manner to changing demands; can think on your feet
- Changes the way things are done in response to new situations
- Overcomes shortcomings and obstacles by adjusting strategies or bringing compensatory strengths to bear on an issue

Team facilitation (Team Leadership, Individual Contributions to the Team)

- Fosters the participation, involvement, and commitment of team members
- Serves as an effective team member and helps team attain goals
- Draws out each team member's diverse talents
- Promotes a team approach to solving work problems
- Encourages team members to contribute
- Promotes a sense of trust and efficacy within the team
- Values contributions to the group and celebrates team success

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**C CO Employment (Continued)****1101 County Operations Trainee CO-5/7/9****Agricultural-business Technical Competencies- (Execution of Duties Technical Knowledge and Skill)**

- Displays knowledge of agricultural program policies, regulations and procedures
- Demonstrates the ability to research, interpret, and apply agricultural program provisions and regulations
- Displays knowledge of agricultural production practices

Non-technical Competencies (Research and Analysis, Program Management**Data gathering, analysis, and problem solving**

- Identifies trends, patterns, and connects diverse sources of information to gain an understanding of an issue
- Gathers and compiles data using various data collection techniques
- Processes information from different sources to come to a logical, well-constructed solutions
- Works to generate multiple potential solutions for solving various types of problems and acts to prevent their reoccurrence
- Develops solutions to complex problems that reflect both short- and long-term thinking and planning

Innovation and creativity (Customer Service, Program Management)

- Generates new and creative ideas that further the success of the unit
- Thinks creatively and comes up with unique ways of approaching issues
- Is not confined by the apparent boundaries and limitations of the a situation; does not settle for the status quo
- Looks to continually improve on what is already effective
- Approaches tasks with an open mind and curiosity
- Combines ideas and information in unique ways to generate creative solutions

Customer service (Customer Service)

- Is accessible and regularly updates and shares pertinent information with customers
- Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive
- Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems
- Takes proactive steps to prevent future issues or problems for the customer

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**C CO Employment (Continued)****1101 County Operations Trainee CO-5/7/9 (Continued)****Oral and written communication (Communication)**

- Transmits verbal and written information and ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner
- Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and grammar; articulates well
- Writes using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Communicates ideas with impact, particularly in small group meetings
- Adjusts communication style and content to the needs of the audience; avoids excessive use of jargon
- Packages a message in a way that enhances its acceptance and effectiveness

Adaptability: Responding to new and changing situations (Program Management)

- Remains focused while facing constant interruptions and changing priorities
- Adjusts style appropriately to a given audience and/or situation
- Functions effectively in ambiguous and uncertain circumstances
- Stays calm when dealing with rapidly changing circumstances
- Reacts rapidly in an effective manner to changing demands; can think on your feet
- Changes the way things are done in response to new situations
- Overcomes shortcomings and obstacles by adjusting strategies or bringing compensatory strengths to bear on an issue

Team facilitation (Team Leadership, Individual Contributions to the Team)

- Fosters the participation, involvement, and commitment of team members
- Serves as an effective team member and helps team attain goals
- Draws out each team member's diverse talents
- Promotes a team approach to solving work problems
- Encourages team members to contribute
- Promotes a sense of trust and efficacy within the team
- Values contributions to the group and celebrates team success

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**C CO Employment (Continued)****1101 County Executive Director CO 11/12****Technical Competencies (Execution of Duties Technical Knowledge and Skill, Supervision**

- Ability to research, interpret and apply regulations relating to farm program or farm loan program policy
- Ability to maintain effective contacts with agricultural agencies, civic groups, farmers, and the public
- Ability to analyze problems and develop solutions relating to agricultural programs and administrative management operations
- Ability to provide technical leadership and supervision (includes promoting EEO/Civil Rights) relating to farm program or farm loan program activities
- Knowledge of agricultural production, marketing and farm/ranch management practices
- Knowledge of farm programs (i.e., production flexibility, price support, conservation, compliance, etc.)

Non-technical Competencies**Customer service (Customer Service)**

- Is accessible and regularly updates and shares pertinent information with customers
- Corrects customer problems promptly without becoming defensive
- Seeks information about the underlying needs of the customer to get at the cause of problems
- Takes proactive steps to prevent future issues or problems for the customer
- Grows team's customer service capabilities and promotes a climate and culture of effectively serving the customer

Facilitating change (Supervision, Program Management, Cultural Transformation)

- Continually uses evolving approaches and methods
- Ties change efforts to key goals and objectives in an actionable and meaningful way
- Involves others in change efforts and draws on appropriate resources
- Adopts continuously improving methods and approaches
- Equips others and the unit to deal with change (e.g., regarding new skill acquisition, appropriate communication, etc.)
- Views change as opportunity to improve
- Encourages others to embrace change efforts by linking their personal future success to the results of the change
- Supports change efforts by supplying others appropriate facts and information

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)**C CO Employment (Continued)****1101 County Executive Director CO 11/12 (Continued)****Managing projects and resources (Supervision, Program Management)**

- Generates the detailed plans required to guide the successful completion of projects
- Ensures projects will be completed in a timely manner; generates or oversees timelines that contains key milestones and checkpoints for accomplishing the goals of projects
- Organizes personnel, equipment, and other resources in a logical manner
- Develops realistic action plans given available resources and constraints
- Identifies and garners the resources needed to implement projects
- Ensures projects are completed within the approved budget and timeframe
- Meets deadlines and delivers on what is promised

Coaching and developing others (Supervision, Program Management)

- Promotes continuous learning and improvement
- Identifies others' skill deficits and training needs or opportunities
- Encourages others to broaden their knowledge and gain additional skills and capabilities; fosters a desire to learn and improve
- Provides and identifies opportunities for others to learn and develop
- Provides support and resources for training and development
- Gives constructive feedback to facilitate the learning process
- Leverages the needs and interests of others when generating developmental goals and action steps
- Builds the rapport and trust required to have meaningful discussions regarding growth and development

Supervision and guidance (Supervision, Program Management)

- Makes team aware of expectations and standards for performance
- Establishes clear priorities that need to be addressed
- Provides direction and helps define priorities for others
- Guides others toward common goals
- Creates a culture and climate of respect for others
- Delegates appropriate tasks and responsibilities to others
- Seeks and elicits participation and input from others

Competencies for Selected FSA Occupations (Continued)

C CO Employment (Continued)

1101 County Executive Director CO 11/12 (Continued)

Leading and managing Teams (Team Leadership)

- Energizes the team around a new sense of direction, strategy, and/or commitment
- Provides clarity of purpose to generate enthusiasm for pursuing the new direction or strategy for the team or organization
- Ensures own behavior reflects a pro-team approach and models effective team member behavior
- Encourages others to work collaboratively
- Uses a team approach to drive the business of the organization
- Acknowledges and celebrates team success
- Develops common goals that others can pursue as a team
- Builds an effective team by assembling and organizing members with appropriate skills who can work together effectively
- Proactively works to reduce team conflict

Common Rating Errors Supervisors Should Avoid

Common Rating Errors	How to Avoid the Error
Halo - ratings based on an “overall impression (either positive or negative of the individual rather than on an individual’s performance relative to each performance element.	Evaluate performance of each element independently from other objectives/elements.
Primacy - ratings based only on positive or negative performance early in the performance cycle rather than on performance exhibited throughout the cycle. Regency - ratings based only on positive or negative performance toward the end of the performance cycle rather than on performance exhibited throughout ht cycle.	Keep notes on individual’s performance throughout the cycle so that you can recall a particular individual’s full performance more easily at the end of the cycle.
Overemphasis on positive or negative performance - relying too heavily on either the positive or negative aspects of an individual’s performance when assigning ratings rather than considering both aspects equally.	Be sure to consider both positive and negative performance during the entire performance cycle because all of an individual’s actions on the job are important.
Similar/different from me - assigning higher or lower ratings for an individual based on certain qualities or characteristics which are similar to those of the rater.	Make a conscious effort to ignore any similarities or differences you may have with particular individuals. Don’t rate people who resemble you more highly that you rate others. Suzie, a single mother, had worked hard and been promoted to supervisor. She unconsciously rated several women who were also single parents higher than their performance warranted. Do respect differences in talents among your staff.
Stereotyping - basing ratings on an individual’s group membership (e.g., ethnicity, gender, religion) rather than on his/ her performance.	Be aware of the stereotypes that you hold about different groups, and make a conscious effort to ignore these stereotypes when assigning performance ratings.
Contrast - basing ratings on a comparison of the individual to others previously rated rather than on the performance objectives/elements.	Don’t evaluate people in comparison with others. “No, he doesn’t really deserve an ‘Outstanding’ rating, but compared to the other employees, he really stands out.” Interpret and apply performance elements specifically and consistently to ensure that differences in ratings reflect difference in performance.
Central tendency - giving average ratings to all individuals, despite differences in their performance. Severity - giving low ratings to all individuals, despite differences in their performance. Leniency - giving high ratings to all individuals, despite differences in their performance.	Since the purpose of conducting performance appraisals is to accurately reflect and differentiate an individual’s performance through ratings, you should strive and make every effort to provide fair and accurate assessments.

Writing Your Accomplishments

Make Sure Your Voice is Heard and Your Achievements are Recognized.

What is the Writeup?

The writeup is an employee's narrative description of accomplishments related to the job objectives (elements) identified on the employee's performance plan. Although writing your accomplishments takes some effort, it does not have to be lengthy or burdensome; however, it should clearly remind the supervisor of your significant achievements, and provides an opportunity for further discussion about performance. It gives the supervisor your perspective of your own contribution and performance.

Your writeup of accomplishments is not an exercise in good writing. Rather, it is an opportunity for you to describe major contributions and how the work meets or exceeds the supervisor's performance expectations (standards) as outlined on your performance plan. Your writeup is not intended to nor does it relieve your supervisor of the responsibility for writing an assessment of your contributions.

Documenting everything you achieve during the appraisal cycle is not expected. You are encouraged to keep a journal (notes, documentation, examples, etc) throughout the appraisal period to record significant activities as they occur. The journal makes the writeup of accomplishments activity easier to complete and keeps the writeup specific and relevant to job objectives.

Employee Guidelines for Writing Up Accomplishments

When writing accomplishments, the following guidelines may help:

- **Restate objectives.** Paraphrasing job objectives gives managers/supervisors a clear picture of how well the employee understood performance expectations.
- **Highlight most significant achievements for the rating cycle.** The writeup does not need to be lengthy. The employee should **highlight what mattered most** during the rating period.
- **Make the connection between what was done and why it matters to the agency.** Highlight how the agency is better off because of the achievement or contribution by describing the tangible benefit (i.e., a cost savings to the organization or a solution that enabled employees to better perform their jobs).
- **Cite instances where employee actions or conduct exemplified elements and or standards (CR/EEO, customer Service, Cultural Transformation).** Employee conduct relative to these can influence the performance rating. Be sure to highlight specific instances where your behavior made a positive difference in the outcome of a job objective.

Note challenges faced and how you fared. Overcoming challenges is often an important part of the overall performance rating. Challenges may be technical or interpersonal in nature. They may also involve the ability to succeed despite limited resources or difficult circumstances.

Writing Your Accomplishments (Continued)

Create a System to Record Accomplishments

You can use hard copy or electronic, depending on what works best for you. Some suggestions include:

- E-mail Folder (keep separate folder for performance related items)
- Word Document, updated as needed
- Notes on Planner or Calendar
- File Folder(s) to maintain copies of documents.

Establish a process for reviewing and recording your accomplishments on a regular basis, e.g., once a week. Make a note of significant items or put a copy into your file. Identify the objective (element) which is linked to the accomplishment.

What are Significant Accomplishments?

The following are characteristics of significant assignments:

- Difficult
- Controversial
- First Time or 1-of-a-Kind
- High Visibility
- Large Volume of Work
- Short Deadlines
- Competing Priorities
- Require Innovation
- Significant Scope and Impact.

Supervisor's Checklist for Preparing for Employee Performance Reviews

Holding successful mid-year and end-of-year performance appraisal discussions requires preparation. For example, developing a comprehensive written appraisal narrative can be extremely helpful when preparing for the face-to-face appraisal review. Appraising officials can use the following checklist as a tool to help them prepare for employee appraisal reviews.

- **Gather the Material**
- **Review and Write**
- **Schedule the Interview**

Gather the Material Have all the necessary tools close at hand before starting to write the appraisal narrative, including all of the following.

- A copy of the employee's performance plan.
- Notes of previous meetings with the employee (remember what was discussed with the employee during previous meetings).
- Employee self-evaluation documents, which could include a list of completed projects and accomplishments prepared by the employee.
- Written or recorded feedback on employee performance from other sources (these can include letters of appreciation, customer feedback, etc.).
- Appraisal program instructions that describe the performance appraisal process and procedures.

Review and Write. Become familiar with the appraisal form and review how to derive the summary rating (e.g., numerical formula, percentages, numerical weights). Take the time to review the employee's elements and standards, knowing which elements are critical, non-critical, and additional, and how to measure employee performance. Finally, review all the documentation. When writing the narrative, consider these points:

Responsibilities and Duties. Review employee responsibilities/

- Have the employee's work responsibilities changed? If so, how?
- Has the employee been assigned additional responsibilities which were not included in the performance plan? If so, consider acknowledging these additional responsibilities in the narrative and the performance interview. Also, consider whether to include the new responsibilities in next year's performance plan.

Supervisor's Checklist for Preparing for Employee Performance Reviews (Continued)

Performance. Include performance data for the entire appraisal period, not just the most recent information. The appraisal narrative should address all of the following.

- How well the employee performed the assigned responsibilities and the quality and/or timeliness of the employee's accomplishments;
- Whether and how well the employee met performance goals.
- Areas of performance that improved over the appraisal period.
- Areas of performance that might need improvement.

Review Developmental Needs. In addition to the information in the narrative, prepare to talk to the employee about developmental needs. Identify skills and competencies that may enhance or improve the employee's performance. Look into a variety of ways of improving skills, such as classroom or on-line training, professional conferences and workshops, details to other work units or to positions with higher responsibilities, or on-the-job training. Enter the appraisal review with this information on hand, but during the review, be sure to ask the employee for input on development needs. If employees participate in creating their own development plans, those plans likely will be more successful.

Schedule the Interview. The final preparation step is to set aside a time and a place to meet with the employee. When scheduling the appraisal interview, make sure to do the following.

- Schedule a time that is convenient for you and the employee. This should be uninterrupted time so that you and the employee can concentrate on the appraisal.
- Give the employee a copy of the performance appraisal with its narrative before the meeting so that he or she can have time to prepare for the appraisal interview.

When the supervisor takes time to prepare, conducting the appraisal interview can be less complicated, less stressful, and more successful at providing the employee valuable feedback on performance.