

This highlights the responsibilities of the three key players in the performance management process - the Rating Official, the Reviewing Official, and the employee.

The Rating Official's chief responsibilities are as follows:

(1) at the beginning of the appraisal cycle:

- (a) determine and communicate the appropriate office, Program Area, agency, and USDA mission, goals, objectives, priorities - and relative performance standards, measures, and results - to your employees
- (b) communicate performance expectations to your employees clearly and to hold your employees responsible by establishing individual performance plans and by creating a performance culture and environment that promotes a high performing work unit
- (c) engage your employees in the process of establishing and documenting performance plans and provide a copy of their performance plan to them at the beginning of each appraisal period or assignment of an employee to a position, or when performance plans are revised during the appraisal period
- (d) ensure that each of your employee's performance plans has at least 1 critical element that is aligned to the mission, goals, and outcomes of the agency and of USDA

(2) during the appraisal cycle, monitor your employee's performance during the appraisal period and provide feedback to those employees on their performance, develop employees wherever possible, and conduct 1 or more progress reviews as provided for in agency regulations

(3) at the end of the appraisal cycle, prepare performance ratings timely, making meaningful distinctions among your employees based on performance, and fostering and rewarding excellent performance and addressing poor performance.

The Reviewing Official's chief responsibilities are as follows:

(1) at the beginning of the appraisal cycle:

- (a) verify that all your subordinate rating officials properly review performance plans with their subordinates
- (b) review and approve performance plans from your subordinate rating officials for consistency, fairness, objectivity, completeness, and to ensure that they reflect the larger organization's overall needs and goals

(2) throughout the appraisal cycle:

- (a) manage individual and organizational performance and create a work culture and

environment that promotes a high-performing work unit

- (b) implement the principles, policies, procedures, and requirements of the performance management program within your span of control
- (c) ensure that your subordinate rating officials carry out their performance management responsibilities and assess your subordinate rating officials' performance in fulfilling these responsibilities

(3) at the end of the appraisal cycle:

- (a) review and approve ratings from your subordinate rating officials for consistency, fairness, objectivity, completeness
- (b) ensure equity and consistency in consideration for awards within your organization
- (c) resolve disagreements between your subordinate rating officials and employees. In all discussions, the reviewing official shall make the final decision. However, you should only change a rating after discussing it with the Rating Official and if supported by solid documentation.

The employee's chief responsibilities are as follows:

(1) at the beginning of the appraisal cycle:

- (a) participate in the discussions and documentation of your performance plan with your Rating Official, developing performance elements, standards and measures
- (b) ensure that you have a clear understanding of your Rating Official's performance expectations and how your performance relates to the mission of the organization, requesting clarification if necessary

(2) throughout the appraisal cycle:

- (a) participate in the discussions and documentation of your progress reviews with your Rating Official
- (b) take responsibility to continuously improve your performance, support team endeavors, develop professionally, and perform at your full potential
- (c) identify work problems and cooperate with your Rating Official to resolve them
- (d) seek performance feedback from your Rating Official and from internal and external customers as appropriate

(3) at the end of the appraisal cycle, participate in the discussions and documentation of your summary rating with your Rating Official

By all working together, we can make a success of our performance management program.

Handbook 5-PM, "Performance Management and Awards Program", has been updated and is now available at: ftp://ftp.fsa.usda.gov/manuals/5-pm_r11_a01.pdf. This handbook contains complete, up-to-date details on all aspects of the performance management and awards program.

Additional information is available on the HR website at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/hrdapp?area=home&subject=erpm&topic=prm>.