

For: FFAS Employees, Except Foreign Service Employees

FY 2009 Mid-Year Performance Reviews

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Mid-Year Performance Reviews

A Purpose

This notice reminds FFAS rating officials and employees (except FAS Foreign Service) to complete the FY 2009 Mid-Year Performance Reviews by **May 29, 2009**. If an employee has not been under a performance plan for 90 calendar days by this date, conduct and document the Mid-Year Review once 90 calendar days have elapsed.

B Forum for Discussion

Mid-Year Performance Reviews provide a forum for rating officials and employees to:

- review performance elements and standards, and make any necessary changes
- discuss accomplishments or shortcomings during the past 6 months (or after the employee’s first 90 calendar days if performance plan has not been in place for 6 months)
- revisit or develop Individual Development Plans (IDP’s).

Communication and dialogue between rating officials and employees is essential for mutual understanding of performance expectations and requirements. Like formal reviews, periodic informal reviews can be very useful in ensuring that short-term assignments and longer term projects are progressing as planned and expected. There is no substitute for frequent and timely dialogue on work in progress, expectations, constraints, priorities, etc. Frequent dialogue between rating officials and employees:

- helps ensure timely and effective delivery of services to customers
- reinforces a results-driven performance culture
- affects collaborative associations.

<p>Disposal Date</p> <p>October 1, 2009</p>	<p>Distribution</p> <p>All FAS, FSA, and RMA employees, except Foreign Service employees; State Offices relay to County Offices</p>
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2 Responsibilities

A Rating Official Responsibilities

Rating officials are responsible for the following:

- monitoring performance during the rating period
- providing feedback to employees on their performance
- developing employees
- conducting 1 or more progress reviews.

B Reviewing Official Responsibilities

Reviewing officials are responsible for the following:

- ensuring that rating officials carry out their performance management responsibilities
- assessing the rating official's performance in fulfilling these responsibilities.

C Employee Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for the following:

- participating in discussions and documentation of their progress reviews
- ensuring that they have a clear understanding of their performance expectations and how performance relates to the mission of the organization, and requesting clarification if necessary
- seeking performance feedback from their rating official and internal and external customers, as appropriate.

3 Conducting Performance Reviews

A Mid-Year Performance Reviews

The rating official shall:

- conduct at least 1 performance review during the 12-month appraisal period between the fifth and eighth month
- conduct a timely review with new employees or transferred employees
- inform the employee of their level of performance as it relates to their performance elements and standards

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3 Conducting Performance Reviews (Continued)

A Mid-Year Performance Reviews (Continued)

- document that the performance review took place, as follows:
 - for FSA, documentation should be done in EmpowHR; go to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/hrdapp?area=hrdwebapp&subject=landing&topic=emp> and scroll down to Mid-Year Review for an example of how to document a performance review in EmpowHR

Note: EmpowHR will only allow the documentation of a Mid-Year Review if the employee's performance plan has been established and approved in EmpowHR for at least 90 calendar days. If this requirement has not been met, the rating official will need to wait until it has to document the Mid-Year Review.

- for FAS and RMA, documentation should be done on the employee's AD-435A/AD-435B; everything discussed should be noted on AD-435A/AD-435B; and both parties should initial and date AD-435A at the bottom.

Note: If there has been a change of rating official since the performance plan was established, the new rating official shall **not** conduct the performance review until at least 90 calendar days has passed. If there has been no rating official of at least 90 calendar days, the reviewing official shall conduct the review.

B Periodic Optional Performance Reviews

Even though only a Mid-Year Performance Review is required, it is in the best interest of the rating official and employee to periodically hold performance discussions. An employee may request a meeting for this review. Periodic performance reviews with the employee will:

- provide regular feedback
- keep the channels of communication open
- assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses
- help avoid an unexpected performance rating at the end of the appraisal period.

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4 Monitoring Poor Performance

A Unacceptable Level Reviews

The Mid-Year Performance Review provides a timely discussion opportunity for employees who are performing at the “Does Not Meet” level in 1 or more elements. The rating official shall:

- inform the employee as soon as the “Does Not Meet” level of performance is apparent in an element and give the employee a chance to demonstrate “Fully Successful” performance
- assist the employee in improving the “Does Not Meet” level of performance by:
 - determining whether training is needed
 - providing closer supervisory review of work
 - holding discussions and providing correction of work products
 - advising the employee when they have achieved “Fully Successful” performance.

If the employee is performing at the “Does Not Meet” level in a critical element, the rating official must contact their Servicing Personnel Office for guidance. Rating officials shall:

- assist the employee in improving the “Does Not Meet” level of performance in a critical element
- inform the employee in writing as soon as the “Does Not Meet” level of performance is apparent and give a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate “Fully Successful” performance through an opportunity to improve (OTI).

Note: Any actions taken to address unacceptable performance must be done in consultation with the Servicing Personnel Office and/or the State Office Administrative Officer.

B OTI’s

OTI’s:

- provide formal notice to the employee that performance is unacceptable
- provide the employee the opportunity to demonstrate “Fully Successful” performance
- may include activities like developmental assignments, structured employee assistance or counseling, formal or on-the-job training, and mentoring.

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4 Monitoring Poor Performance

B OTI's (Continued)

Careful records must be kept of the assistance offered and results achieved under OTI's. Rating officials should provide the following:

- notification of elements in which performance is unacceptable
- specific examples of the unacceptable performance
- performance requirements or standards that must be attained to demonstrate "Fully Successful" performance
- a reasonable opportunity period, usually at least 90 calendar days, to demonstrate "Fully Successful" performance on the elements at issue
- notice that the employee must:
 - improve to the "Fully Successful" level by the conclusion of the opportunity period
 - sustain that level of performance for at least 1 year from the start of OTI.

Note: If an employee's performance becomes unacceptable again in 1 or more of these critical elements, a performance-based adverse action or other alternative action may be proposed without the benefit of an additional OTI.

5 Additional Information and Contacts

A Additional Information

Additional performance management information can be found on the performance management web page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/hrdapp?area=home&subject=erpm&topic=prm>.

In addition, an 18-minute video is available from the Department, produced by the Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA on how to and how not to conduct a performance review. This video can be found at http://www.da.usda.gov/hrsd/perform_mgmt.htm; scroll down to "Great Reviews - How to Conduct Effective Mid-Year Reviews".

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5 Additional Information and Contacts

B Contacts

If there are any questions about Mid-Year Performance Reviews, rating officials and employees may contact the appropriate Servicing Personnel Office according to this table.

IF located in...	THEN contact...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS, FSA, and RMA Washington, DC • RMA Regional and Compliance Offices, except Kansas City Offices • FAS Overseas Offices 	HRD, Employee Programs Branch at 1 of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 202-401-0679 • 202-401-0694 • 202-205-9057 (TTY).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSA APFO • FSA Kansas City or St. Louis • RMA Kansas City Offices 	Kansas City Human Resources Office, Human Capital Management Section at either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 816-823-4669 • 800-735-2966 (TTY).
FSA State or County Office	State Office Administrative Officer.