

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency  
Washington, DC 20250

Notice PM-3074

For: FSA Employees

**FY 2023 Performance Management Closeout**

Approved by: Administrator



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

The FY 2023 performance cycle ended September 30, 2023. Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Mission Area performance management guidance requires that performance ratings be completed by October 30, 2023.

A performance management program is critical to the success of any organization. According to OPM, performance management **must** effectively differentiate between high and low performance. According to **DR 4040-430** (issued June 24, 2020), all performance plan elements are critical in the USDA two-tier (Fully Successful or Unacceptable) performance management system. If any element is rated “Does Not Meet,” the summary rating is “Unacceptable.” FSA also follows FPAC performance guidance.

**Note:** This notice does not apply to employees covered by the National Treasury Employees Union Chapter 264 collective bargaining unit with a duty station of Kansas City, MO. Instructions for Kansas City employees will be provided directly to those supervisors.

**B Purpose**

This notice provides deadlines and responsibilities for the FY 2023 performance appraisal period closeout. Additional FY 2024 performance plan guidance will be provided in a future notice.

**Disposal Date**

March 1, 2024

**Distribution**

All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

## 2 FY 2023 Performance Appraisal Closeout

### A Due Dates and Processing

The FY 2023 appraisal period ended **September 30, 2023**. Performance appraisals must be completed by first-line supervisors (rating officials) and second-line supervisors (reviewing officials), entered in the Enterprise Performance Management Application (EPMA) and acknowledged by the employee in EPMA no later than **October 30, 2023**.

If the appraisal cannot be conducted, a valid exception for not completing the appraisal must be entered into EPMA before the deadline. Only supervisors can enter exceptions into EPMA.

### B Performance Appraisal Requirements

To rate an employee, the following **must** have occurred:

- a performance plan **must** have been established
- the employee **must** have been under that performance plan for at least 90 calendar days before the end of the performance year

**Note:** If an employee has not been under the performance plan for at least 90 calendar days, supervisors must bypass the final rating. A job aid can be found at <https://ehrrapps.usda.gov/epma-wiki/performance-appraisals/bypass-final-rating/>.

- supervisors must complete the 4Q conversation step in EPMA. Supervisors can mark the 4Q conversation as incomplete, noting that it “will be held in conjunction with the final appraisal” in the “Explanation” field, and that will allow the supervisor to enter a final appraisal in EPMA.

### C Properly Rating Employees

An employee’s FY 2023 performance appraisal **must** be based on accomplishments that align with the expectations established in the employee’s performance plan.

Employees are encouraged to provide a list of FY 2023 contributions and accomplishments to their respective rating official. This summary assists the supervisor in accurately assessing the employee’s performance. This tool serves 3 main purposes:

- helps the supervisor assess performance strengths and weaknesses
- facilitates ongoing feedback between a supervisor and employee during the performance cycle
- supports the Individual Development Plan.

**2 FY 2023 Performance Appraisal Closeout (Continued)**

**C Properly Rating Employees (Continued)**

Rating officials **must**:

- accurately assess the performance of the employee throughout the entire appraisal period according to the elements, standards, and measures in the employee's FY 2023 performance plan
- ensure that employee's performance upon which the rating is based is well documented
- submit the proposed ratings to the reviewing official before issuing them to the employee
- issue the final ratings of record to employees after the reviewing official has signed them
- complete the ratings within the prescribed deadlines.

Reviewing officials **must**:

- evaluate their subordinate rating officials to ensure accountability for effective performance management according to the standards and measures in the performance management element
- review the ratings proposed by their subordinate rating officials for accuracy, objectivity, completeness, and consistency with the plan's standards
- direct revisions as necessary
- sign the final ratings of record before they are issued to employees.

2 **FY 2023 Performance Appraisal Closeout (Continued)**

**D Preparing the Summary Rating**

Performance appraisals and ratings must **not** be communicated to the employee until after both the rating and reviewing officials have concurred.

If all elements are rated Fully Successful, the summary rating is Fully Successful. If any element is not rated Fully Successful, the summary rating is Unacceptable. See subparagraph E.

Training on how to enter FY 2023 performance appraisals into EPMA will be provided on Thursday, October 5, 2023, at 2 p.m. EST. Supervisors can register for the training at **[FY 2023 FPAC Performance Appraisals in EPMA and EmpowHR](#)**.

The session will be recorded and available for viewing after the session is completed. A job aid on completing final appraisals is also available in the EPMA system at **<https://ehrapps.usda.gov/epma-wiki/performance-appraisals/>**.

Employees must acknowledge their performance appraisal in EPMA by October 30, 2023. Employees should receive a notification from EPMA when their appraisal is ready to sign.

Instructions on acknowledging appraisals can be found at **<https://ehrapps.usda.gov/epma-wiki/employee-page/acknowledging-your-final-appraisal/>**.

If an employee is unable to acknowledge their performance appraisal in EPMA, the rating official can log a signature in EPMA for the employee at **<https://ehrapps.usda.gov/epma-wiki/performance-appraisals/final-appraisal/logging-appraisal-signatures/>**.

**Note:** For County Office employees, COC must sign the hard-copy appraisal as the rating or reviewing official, as appropriate and as required by 5-PM.

**E Employee Performance and Addressing Performance Problems**

For performance that does not meet 1 or more performance elements, supervisors must contact Employee Relations for advice and guidance before conducting the performance appraisal.

The rating official will be required to prepare a narrative assessment supporting the proposed evaluation of any element below the Fully Successful level. The assessment must:

- specify the factual details about any expectations not met relative to each element that is evaluated at the Does Not Meet Fully Successful level
- be based on documentary or other evidence that objectively and clearly describes the employee's performance during the appraisal period.

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### 2 FY 2023 Performance Appraisal Closeout (Continued)

#### E Employee Performance and Addressing Performance Problems (Continued)

The appraisal period will not be extended for the purpose of permitting the employee to demonstrate performance at the Fully Successful level in any element to the extent that the rating of record is not completed by the deadline.

#### F State Office Tracking of Appraisal Completion

State Office EPMA Data Administrators must periodically run the **Performance Cycle Report** in EPMA to track completion of FY 2023 appraisals and ensure 100 percent completion by the October 30, 2023, deadline.

### 3 FY 2024 Performance Plans

#### A Forthcoming FY 2024 Performance Plan Guidance

Guidance is forthcoming in a separate notice on the creation of FY 2024 performance plans. Supervisors **must not use the copy plan functionality or create any FY 2024 performance plans** until further FPAC guidance is provided and a PM notice is issued.

### 4 Contacts

#### A Contact Information

For system issues with EPMA, enter an ECC Portal ticket as follows:

- non-supervisors needing system assistance with plans or appraisals at [https://usdafpacbc.servicenowservices.com/fpacnow?id=sc\\_cat\\_item&sys\\_id=89f4bcd1dbe7b700865dfd721f9619c5](https://usdafpacbc.servicenowservices.com/fpacnow?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=89f4bcd1dbe7b700865dfd721f9619c5)
- supervisors needing system assistance with plans or appraisals at [https://usdafpacbc.servicenowservices.com/fpacnow?id=sc\\_cat\\_item&sys\\_id=f2257015dbe7b700865dfd721f9619b4](https://usdafpacbc.servicenowservices.com/fpacnow?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=f2257015dbe7b700865dfd721f9619b4)
- EPMA access issues at [https://usdafpacbc.servicenowservices.com/fpacnow?id=sc\\_cat\\_item&sys\\_id=11f94316dbdbff003d93fb0e0f96190e](https://usdafpacbc.servicenowservices.com/fpacnow?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=11f94316dbdbff003d93fb0e0f96190e).

For questions about this notice, contact the following.

| Location or Office                   | Contact  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| National Office employees            | Patrick Spalding at <a href="mailto:patrick.spalding@usda.gov">patrick.spalding@usda.gov</a> |
| FSA State or County Office employees | State Administrative Officer/Executive Officer (AO/EO)                                       |
| AO/EO                                | Amy Webbink at <a href="mailto:amy.webbink@usda.gov">amy.webbink@usda.gov</a>                |