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RULE 12.5: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (PIP)

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Performance Improvement Program (PIP) is to define areas of concern, gaps in work performance, reiterate expectations, and provide employees with an opportunity to demonstrate improvement and commitment. PIP **is not** a disciplinary tool. The Civil Service Board differentiates between conduct and performance issues and PIPs are authorized for use with job related performance issues. While some issues such as attendance, harassment and other behavioral types of conduct can affect performance, when the root problem is the employee's conduct, use of a PIP is not appropriate, and progressive discipline should be initiated.

GENERALLY: In order to perform well, employees require instruction from their Raters as to the nature of the work to be performed and feedback on the effectiveness of their efforts. However, not all employees are able to perform at a successful level without more detailed instruction and feedback than is generally given, even though the employee may be entirely willing and able to perform at a successful level following a period of closer supervision.

Employees whose performance could benefit from closer supervision should be placed on a Performance Improvement Program, as soon as practicable.

A rating supervisor does not have to wait until the end of the performance review period to begin a Performance Improvement Program. But, don't start a PIP at the end of a performance period when an employee has been rated as meeting the performance measures.

BASIC COMPONENTS: An employee placed on a PIP should be able to count on:

- (1) Clear communication of performance expectations.
- (2) Objective observation and counseling of the employee and a sincere effort to assist the employee in improving job performance.
- (3) An adequate, but not overly prolonged, opportunity for the employee to perform at a successful level.
- (4) A realistic evaluation of the employee's performance followed by appropriate action.

WHO CAN BE ENROLLED IN PIP: Only tenured classified employees whose performance in any single rating area falls below Meets Expectations can be placed on a PIP.

WHEN CAN AN EMPLOYEE BE ENROLLED IN PIP: An employee may be placed on a PIP at any time during the performance review period. Note that the employee should have been made aware of a performance deficiency well before their enrollment in a PIP. It is important to document all prior communication with the employee which specific deficiencies; measurable expectations; and give the employee an opportunity to improve their performance. An employee should also be made aware that he/she may be enrolled in a PIP to assist them in improving their performance.

HOW LONG CAN AN EMPLOYEE BE ENROLLED IN PIP: All PIPs are initiated for a period of not less than 30 and not more than 180 days. However, if an employee shows sustained improvement, the employee can be removed from the PIP prior to the end of the period at the supervisor's discretion. A PIP may be extended as necessary, but cannot be extended beyond 270 days.

REQUIRED FORMS:

1. Civil Service Form 16 – PIP Enrollment Form
2. Civil Service Form 16A – PIP Record of Counseling/Status Change

REQUIRED MEETINGS: The supervisor is encouraged to meet with the employee to provide the employee with proper guidance and supervision as frequently as necessary. The supervisor is required to meet with the employee "formally" to discuss the employee's progress at least every 30 days.

TERMINATING THE PIP: If the employee remains enrolled in a PIP at the end of 180 calendar days, the employee will be provided with a Civil Service Form 16A indicating one of the following:

1. The employee's job performance has improved to a successful or better level and the PIP is discontinued.
2. The employee's job performance has not improved to a successful or better level, and one of two actions will be taken by the supervisor
 - a. The PIP will be extended for a specific period of time due to noticeable performance improvement; OR
 - b. The employee has not successfully completed the PIP, and steps will be taken to disciplinary the employee.

QUESTIONS: For more information contact Alma R. Gonzalez, Civil Service Board, gonzalezar@hillsboroughcounty.org; (813)-274-6763.