

# **Individual Development Planning (IDP)**



**Prepared for Commerce Employees**



**U.S. Department of Commerce  
Office of Human Resources Management**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) employs a concept that emphasizes discussion and joint decisions by the employee and the supervisor, with input from mentor(s), on the specific developmental experiences necessary to fulfill the mutual goals of individual career development and organizational enhancement. Each IDP is uniquely tailored to the needs of the individual and the organization.

The IDP is a personal action plan, jointly agreed to by you and your supervisor, that identifies your short and long-term career goals. An IDP also identifies the training and other developmental experiences needed to achieve those goals, for the benefit of the individual and organization, within a specified time frame.

## **THE BENEFITS OF CAREER PLANNING**

Why should you be concerned about planning your career? It is your career. If you don't take responsibility for the success of your career, then who will? Besides, considering all the time and energy you spend at work, why not ensure you get maximum satisfaction from your work and career? Additionally, the Department of Commerce benefits from having a competent and motivated workforce, capable of "re-tooling" itself to meet the demands placed on it by constant organizational and technological changes.

The workplace has been affected by a number of significant changes and trends, which have definite ramifications for your career planning:

### **Less job security**

The era of high job security is gone. In response to increased pressures to reduce costs, solutions like restructuring, down-sizing and automation will continue to eliminate some jobs and drastically alter others. Workers will need to be more mobile in finding the right job and employer.

### **Up is not the only way**

With fewer management positions and flattened organizational structures, the traditional linear career patterns will be less available. Employees will need to be more flexible, adaptable and creative in identifying their next job, and may need to consider lateral moves or rotational assignments to broaden their experience or leverage their skills.

### **Technical knowledge and skills obsolescence**

Rapid advancements in technology and state-of-the-art knowledge requires employees to upgrade their skills and "re-tool" themselves just to remain current with their job requirements.

It is definitely to your advantage to position yourself for long-term employability in the rapidly

changing world of work. Begin preparing now for the future.

## **YOUR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)**

To the extent that any of your career goals involve acquiring some new skills or expertise, an IDP is very helpful. Follow the IDP process to begin drafting your IDP by incorporating your current and future goals. To assist you in formulating your goals, complete the worksheets. You can incorporate the goals you will formulate on the “Goal Development Worksheet” and the relevant developmental activities from the “Method for Taking Action Worksheet.” In selecting developmental activities, try to achieve a balance between formal training activities (e.g., courses, seminars) and other kinds of learning experiences (e.g., work assignments, reading books). Also, include realistic time frames for completing your actions.

### **Your Supervisor’s Role**

Your supervisor is in an excellent position to support your development by:

- Providing feedback on your performance in your current job and identifying your strengths and areas for improvement.
- Acting as a mentor and coach.
- Representing the organization’s needs, goals and opportunities.
- Communicating what is happening around your organization and within DoC.
- Helping assess your advancement potential and your qualifications for other positions.
- Acting as a resource and referral for exploring your career development options.
- Supporting your training and development, providing training opportunities and funding if related to the Department’s mission and funds are available.

## **THE IDP PROCESS**

There are four steps to the IDP process. As with any major decision, you will need a certain amount of data upon which to make your career decisions. It pays to be as thorough as possible, so you may need to spend a significant amount of time at one or more steps.

**Step 1** The following worksheets can be used as tools to assist you in gathering information to achieving a solid understanding of your current and future developmental goals.

- 1 - Current Career Issues
- 2 - Knowledge of Work Environment
- 3 - Knowledge of Self Assessment
- 4 - Integration of Knowledge of Self and Work Environment
- 5 - Goal Development
- 6 - Method for Taking Action

**Step 2** Once you have completed the worksheets, you are ready to gather all your information and Prepare a **draft IDP** that states your developmental goals. Use the blank IDP found on the last page of this booklet. Your IDP plan will state how your developmental goals align with organizational goals. It will list competencies you wish to acquire or develop. It will include your proposed developmental activities, projected completion dates for each activity and resources you will need.

**Step 3** Schedule an appointment to meet with your supervisor or manager and review your proposed IDP. After considering supervisory input, finalize and sign the IDP. Obtain your supervisor's signature.

**Step 4** Remember that your IDP is a living document. Review your IDP, especially at your mid-term performance review, and make any appropriate adjustments.

# 1. CURRENT CAREER ISSUES WORKSHEET

## What are your career issues?

How much time and effort you need to spend at any one step in the process depends on your career issues. It is important to be clear about these career issues, so that you can develop an effective strategy for dealing with them. Career issues cover a broad spectrum, ranging from getting up to speed in a new job, to making a major career field change, or planning your retirement. The following is a list of statements that reflect the full range of career issues people face at one time or another. Which ones are relevant for you now? Place an "X" in front of the statements that are true for you at this time.

- You are new in your job and must learn the basics to get up to speed and feel comfortable and productive.
- You have been in your job for a while and are striving for increased competence, in general.
- You need to improve your performance in certain areas of your current job.
- You need to update your skills or expertise to keep up with the changing technologies or state-of-the-art knowledge in your line of work.
- Your job duties have changed recently (or will change), requiring some new skills or expertise on your part.
- Your job may be eliminated due to re-engineering or restructuring, and you want to begin "re-tooling" to be ready for future opportunities.
- You want to prepare for a promotion or move to the next higher level of responsibility.
- You want to broaden your skills or expertise to allow yourself more flexibility for future job moves.
- You want to change jobs within your current job category, and...
  - stay at your Organization
  - stay within Commerce
  - stay in the Federal Government
  - leave the Federal Government
- You want to change job categories, and...
  - stay at your Organization
  - stay within Commerce
  - stay in the Federal Government
  - leave the Federal Government
- You don't see much of a future if you remain in your current job, but aren't sure of your options.
- You want to plan your retirement.
- Other



## 2. KNOWLEDGE OF WORK ENVIRONMENT WORKSHEET

Answer the following questions to identify what is currently going on around you and your organization. What changes do you expect to occur in the near future:

1. How is the mission of my organization (e.g., bureau, office or division) changing? What other changes are occurring regarding our customers, services, work processes, organizational structure, reporting relationships and personnel? Is this a change of which I want to be a part or is it time for me to consider a move?
2. What are the organization's changing needs regarding the workforce and what new expertise and skills will be required or desirable?
3. What opportunities are available for developing this new expertise and skills (work experiences, training, rotational assignments, professional conferences, mentoring, etc.)?
4. How might my role (job) change in my organization? How can I prepare for or develop new skills for these changes?
5. New expertise and skills my organization wants me to learn include...
6. What new missions or projects in my organization or within DoC appeal to me? What are the organization's future needs? What kinds of development activities would help position me for participation in another work project?

### 3. KNOWLEDGE OF SELF WORKSHEET

To gain a better understanding of your self, answer the following questions:

1. Of the new and recent developments in my organization or field, what interests me the most?
2. What are my current strengths for pursuing these interests? What do I need to do to reposition my career so that I can get involved in these new developments?
3. Is it time for me to consider working outside of my organization? If I am considering a complete career change, what experiences and learning would help reposition my career in the direction of my new interests?
4. Of all the things I have done in the last 5 years (work and non-work related), what specific activities and functions have energized me the most? What developmental activities—work experiences, learning, skill building--would help me grow in or increase these energizing functions?
5. Other things I would like to learn are...
6. What non-work related issues do I need to consider that will likely impact my career plans (e.g., health, family, financial, and social)?

#### **4. INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE OF SELF AND WORK ENVIRONMENT WORKSHEET**

To address the match between you and your career goals and organizational needs, answer the following questions:

1. In what areas do my interests and personal plans overlap with the changing needs of my organization?  
Any areas of overlap represent “first choice” development targets?
  
2. What knowledge, skills or abilities are important for increasing or maintaining the quality of my performance in my present assignments?
  
3. What knowledge, skills or abilities would help prepare me for opportunities or roles I might have in the future?
  
4. Compared to the development needs suggested by these factors, other interests for development that are important to me include...

## 5. GOAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

A development goal is a statement of a desired outcome or accomplishment that is specific, observable and realistic. Based on the data you have generated about yourself on the previous worksheets and your specific career issues, write some career goals for the next 1, 2 and 3 years and answer the following questions. You can use the list of competencies on page 10 to assist you. Definitions for each listed competency can be found on pages 11 through 14.

1. What I want to accomplish and the competencies (knowledge/skills) I want to acquire or improve by this time next year are...
2. What I want to accomplish and the competencies (knowledge/skills) I want to acquire or improve by the end of the second year are...
3. What I want to accomplish and the competencies (knowledge/skills) I want to acquire or accomplish by the end of the third year are...
4. What barriers or obstacles might prevent me from accomplishing my goals on time (e.g., time, money, and other commitments)?
5. What can I do to overcome these barriers or obstacles? What resources are available to help me?

## 6. METHOD FOR TAKING ACTION WORKSHEET

To achieve your career developmental goals, identify the actions you plan to take by placing an “X” in front of all applicable actions. In planning your career moves, consider all of the following possibilities. Remember that “Up” is not the only way:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Lateral Move:** Change in position within or outside an organization, but not necessarily a change in status or pay.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Job Enrichment:** Expand or change my job in order to provide growth experiences for myself.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Exploration:** Identify other jobs that require skills I have and also tap my interests and values. Job rotation is an example.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Downshifting:** Take an assignment or job at a lower level of responsibility, rank, and/or salary in order to reposition my career for something new and interesting to me, or to achieve a better balance between work and personal life.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Change Work Setting:** No significant change to my job duties, but have a different boss, organization or employer.

\_\_\_\_\_ **No Change:** Do nothing, but only after careful consideration.

1. There are a wide range of potential actions for me to consider in order to achieve my goals. Put an “x” next to the actions that you might consider.

- New assignments in my current job
- Rotation to a different project/job
- Seek a mentor(s)
- Volunteer for a task force or process action/re-engineering team
- Obtain on-the-job guidance from someone who is more expert in a specific area
- Attend seminars/conferences (on-site and off-site)
- Enroll in university courses
- Attend commercial/contracted courses
- Experience self-paced learning (books, videos, computer-based instruction, etc.)
- Pursue an academic degree or certification program
- Conduct informational interviews
- Move to a new job within my organization
- Move to a new job within DoC or the Federal Government
- Move to a new job outside of the Federal Government
- Plan retirement
- Other actions:

## **SAMPLE COMPETENCY LIST**

- G Vision**
- G External Awareness**
- G Creativity and Innovation**
- G Strategic Thinking**
- G Continual Learning**
- G Resilience**
- G Flexibility**
- G Service Motivation**
- G Conflict Management**
- G Cultural Awareness**
- G Team Building**
- G Integrity / Honesty**
- G Accountability**
- G Problem Solving**
- G Decisiveness**
- G Customer Service**
- G Entrepreneurship**
- G Technical Credibility**
- G Financial Management**
- G Technology Management**
- G Oral Communication**
- G Written Communication**
- G Influencing / Negotiating**
- G Partnering**
- G Political Savvy**

## **G Interpersonal Skills**

### **COMPETENCY LIST DEFINITIONS**

#### **Vision**

Takes a long-term view and acts as a catalyst for organizational change; builds a shared vision with others. Influences others to translate vision into action.

#### **External Awareness**

Identifies and keeps up to date on key national and international policies and economic, political, and social trends that affect the organization. Understands near-term and long-range plans and determines how best to be positioned to achieve a competitive business advantage in a global economy.

#### **Creativity and Innovation**

Develop new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to make organizational improvements; creates a work environment that encourages creative thinking and innovation; designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs/processes.

#### **Strategic Thinking**

Formulates effective strategies consistent with the business and competitive strategy of the organization in a global economy. Examines policy issues and strategic planning with a long-term perspective. Determines objectives and sets priorities; anticipates potential threats or opportunities.

#### **Continual Learning**

Grasps the essence of new information; masters new technical and business knowledge; recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; pursues self-development; seeks feedback from others and opportunities to master new knowledge.

#### **Resilience**

Deals effectively with pressure; maintains focus and intensity and remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks. Effectively balances personal and work life.

#### **Flexibility**

Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles. Adjusts rapidly to new situations warranting attention and resolution.

### **Service Motivation**

Creates and sustains an organizational culture which encourages others to provide the quality of service essential to high performance. Enables others to acquire the tools and support they need to perform well. Shows a commitment to public served and meaningful contributions to mission accomplishment.

### **Conflict Management**

Identifies and takes steps to prevent potential situations that could result in unpleasant confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a positive and constructive manner to minimize negative impact.

### **Cultural Awareness**

Initiates and manages cultural change within the organization to impact organizational effectiveness. Values cultural diversity and other individual differences in the workforce. Ensures that the organization builds on these differences and that employees are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

### **Team Building**

Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward goal accomplishments. Consistently develops and sustains cooperative working relationships. Encourages and facilitates cooperation with the organization and with customer groups; fosters commitment, team spirit, pride, and trust. Develops leadership in others through coaching, mentoring, rewarding, and guiding employees.

### **Integrity / Honesty**

Instills mutual trust and confidence; creates a culture that fosters high standards of ethics; behaves in a fair and ethical manner toward others, and demonstrates a sense of corporate responsibility and commitment to public service.

### **Accountability**

Assures that effective controls are developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the organization. Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities. Can be relied upon to ensure that projects within areas of specific responsibility are completed in a

timely manner and within budget. Monitors and evaluates plans; focuses on results and measuring attainment of outcomes.

### **Problem Solving**

Identifies and analyzes problems; distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions; provides solutions to individual and organizational problems.

### **Decisiveness**

Exercises good judgment by making sound and well-informed decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; makes effective and timely decisions, even when data is limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; is proactive and achievement oriented.

### **Customer Service**

Balancing interests of a variety of clients; readily readjusts priorities to respond to pressing and changing client demands. Anticipates and meets the needs of clients; achieves quality end-products; is committed to continuous improvement of services.

### **Entrepreneurship**

Identifies opportunities to develop and market new products and services within or outside of the organization. Is willing to take risks; initiates actions that involve a deliberate risk to achieve a recognized benefit or advantage.

### **Technical Credibility**

Understands and appropriately applies procedures, requirements, regulations and policies related to specialized expertise. Is able to make sound hiring and capital resource decisions and to address training and development needs. Understands linkages between administrative competencies and mission needs.

### **Financial Management**

Demonstrates broad understanding of principles of financial management and marketing expertise necessary to ensure appropriate funding levels. Prepares, justifies, and/or administers the budget for the program area; uses cost benefit thinking to set priorities; monitors expenditures in support of programs and policies. Identifies cost-effective approaches. Manages procurement and contracting.

## **Human Resources Management**

Assesses current and future staffing needs based on organizational goals and budget realities. Using merit principles, ensures staff are appropriately selected, developed, utilized, appraised and rewarded; takes corrective action.

## **Technology Management**

Uses efficient and cost-effective approaches to integrate technology into the work place and improve program effectiveness. Develops strategies using new technology to enhance decision making. Understands the impact of technological changes on the organization.

## **Oral Communication**

makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals or groups; listens effectively and clarifies information as needed; facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters an atmosphere of open communication.

## **Written Communication**

Expresses facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing and organized manner.

## **Influencing / Negotiating**

Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals; facilitates "win-win" situations.

## **Partnering**

Develops networks and builds alliances, engages in cross-functional activities; collaborates across boundaries, and finds common ground with a widening range of stakeholders. Utilizes contacts to build and strengthen internal support bases.

## **Political Savvy**

Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization. Approaches each problem situation with a clear perception of organizational reality; recognizes the impact of alternative courses of action.

## **Interpersonal Skills**

Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful, compassionate and sensitive, and treats others with respect



