



The Manager's Toolbox

Washoe County



The Individual Development Plan (IDP) Guidebook

Department of Human Resources

Learn... Grow... Lead... Excel

Committed to Excellence

Purpose of an Individual Development Plan

The Washoe County Individual Development Plan (IDP) is intended to help employees achieve their personal and professional development goals. By planning for continuous improvement and learning, the IDP focuses on building competencies for both the current job and/or future career opportunities. Employees collaborate with their supervisors/managers to identify strengths as well as learning and developmental objectives and together create an action plan for acquiring the competencies needed to meet IDP objectives.

Washoe County does not require all employees to have an IDP and most short term development needs for the current job can be addressed in the “Development” section of the Employee Performance Evaluation and Development Plan. However, we encourage employees with longer-term career development goals to write and take action on an individual plan as it can greatly improve the commitment to and accomplishment of those goals. An approved IDP is recommended for non-supervisory employees who aspire to promote into a supervisory role and required for them to attend Learning Center training classes in the Management Development Certificate Program. These employees will need to create a plan in partnership with the supervisor, sign, and forward it to Human Resources. Human Resources will review the plan, approve, and return the original IDP to the department and the employee. A copy of the IDP will be placed into the employee’s HR personnel file. Only those IDPs needing approval for Management Development class attendance need to be submitted to HR.

An IDP should not be confused with a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). A PIP is used when a corrective action is required. If an employee’s skill level is chronically impacting his or her ability to perform effectively in the job or if there is a behavioral issue that needs attention immediately, a PIP with a 30, 60, or 90 day timeframe for improvement is needed. See the *Performance Improvement and Discipline Guide* for information on implementing these measures.

Benefits of an Individual Development Plan

Creation and completion of an IDP is a collaborative effort between the employee, the supervisor, and Washoe County. It should benefit the employee by building competencies that enhance their contributions and help them achieve personal and professional career goals. In return for supporting employee development, the organization gains more highly skilled employees that result in greater productivity, efficiency and capability.

- An IDP can help an employee maintain his or her current level of job proficiency through continued development of needed competencies.
- An IDP can help an employee maintain his or her current level of job proficiency in the face of changes to the job or how it is done.
- An IDP can help an employee prepare for future job assignments or promotions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Creation and implementation of an IDP is collaborative effort that requires reflection, thoughtful dialog, commitment and action. There should be a personal reason for the employee to want to develop as well as management agreement and support of the development goals. Without these, the IDP will be simply another form that is filled out, filed, and forgotten.

The employee is responsible for:

- Identifying short and longer term career goals and development objectives
- Initial and on-going discussion and clarification of goals and the plan with manager
- Completion of development activities and application on the job

The manager or supervisor is responsible for:

- Critical evaluation of employee development needs in alignment with organizational needs
- Open and honest communication with employee regarding development needs and career objectives
- Assistance with and support of the development of the IDP
- Assistance, support and coaching to employees as they pursue development activities
- Evaluation of the completion of development assignments and development made against the stated objectives

The County is responsible for providing the opportunities for employees to grow and develop.

Tips for Getting the Most from an IDP

Remember an IDP's sole purpose is to help an employee develop. To achieve that outcome it must be completely voluntary on the part of the employee and should be something in which he or she sees the value. Therefore, development that is needed to improve or correct performance in the current job should be managed through either the performance management or disciplinary process.

Most research shows that successful development occurs when the learner has a vested interest in developing and the opportunity to apply what has been learned. Formal learning, education or training only accounts for about 10% of what it takes to develop a competency. Role models, mentors and coaches contribute about 20% and the rest, or 70%, of learning happens when the competency is applied in real-life, on-the-job experiences.

To increase its value and improve the chance of success, a well thought out IDP should:

- Be individual and specific
- Clearly state the development objective(s)
- Outline the steps that will be taken to achieve the goal(s)
- Identify a variety of learning methodologies to develop the competencies
- Set realistic timeframes for completing the overall plan as well as identify milestones along the way

The supervisor, in his or her role as a coach, helps the employee gain the most from his or her learning activities by giving them the time and assistance to reflect on:

- What specifically did they learn?
- What skills or lessons learned will they keep as part of their tool kit and use again?
- Were there any important things they learned about themselves during this process?

Did you know?



The tool, “Coaching Suggestions for Training Interventions,” can help employees gain the most learning from attending a Learning Center training program and apply new knowledge and skills back on the job. You can find this handy tool in the Manager’s Toolbox on the HR pages of the County website.

Checklist for a Successful IDP

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there alignment between the employee's stated development goal and the manager's assessment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the planned development actions prepare the employee for the future rather than focus on the current role?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the development need identify specific knowledge, skill, ability, and/or behavior that need to be acquired, changed or enhanced?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the development goal and development need align with current and future organizational objectives?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the development actions congruent with the development need?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have a variety of formal and informal learning approaches been incorporated into the action plan?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have some creative learning activities been identified?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have specific challenging assignments/projects been included in the action plan?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have opportunities for on-the-job application of learning been identified?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a detailed and realistic timeframe for completion of learning activities and for the overall plan?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a detailed plan for tracking progress toward the development goal?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have appropriate coaches or mentors been identified?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have realistic and appropriate rewards/recognition for IDP completion been identified?