



Guide to Talent Development

January 2021

The way employees perform their work impacts an organization. Nowhere is this more evident than in the public sector, where employees deliver mission-critical services. Approaching development strategically reflects a result that reaches beyond the employee and to the organization's performance.

One of the top priorities for public sector employers is the retention of employees. Research reveals employees who have opportunities to develop are more likely to remain employed. Development drives retention. With this in mind, the Mississippi State Personnel Board (MSPB) revised the Individual Development Plan (IDP), which was part of the Performance Development System (PDS) used from January 15, 2013 – December 31, 2019, and moved it to talent development effective January 1, 2021.

This Guide provides an overview of talent development and development planning with templates for coordinating individual development with specific agency needs. Training is available on the resources provided in this Guide through MSPB's Office of Training and Development. The Guide and templates are available at www.mspb.ms.gov.

How does this apply to my agency?

Talent development reflects an agency's commitment to continual improvement. Developing employees can have a big impact on an agency when the development leads to improvement in agency services. Developmental activities increase technical, interpersonal, and managerial skills. When employees are equipped to work better, the agency's overall performance and reputation in the industry improves.

A crucial part of development is development planning, which focuses on building talent from within. Planning occurs at all levels of an agency. Agencies that regularly identify gaps in service delivery and proactively bridge those gaps with better-developed employees will find it easier to accomplish mission-critical services.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Talent development is building the knowledge, skills, and abilities of others to help them achieve their potential. Development may occur in many ways, from updating a process that improves workflow to providing a training session that increases knowledge. Some developmental activities can improve performance within a job function, such as job shadowing or on-the-job training. Regardless of the type, development always seeks to improve performance or potential.

How is performance developed?

Over 50 years of research have been devoted to studying performance at the individual, team, and organizational levels. Research findings show performance is influenced by external forces

(i.e., an existing process) and internal forces (i.e., an individual's knowledge or skills). Since both external and internal forces *affect* performance, they can also *develop* performance.



Agencies that excel balance organizational and individual needs so that the agency's goals are optimized. Achieving this balance results in a positive environment that is mutually beneficial for employees and the agency. For instance, when a process hinders performance, agencies that excel change the process. When inadequate knowledge hinders performance, access is provided to gain the knowledge needed. Using the principles covered in this

Guide, agencies can reinforce a positive work environment and develop a culture where people want to work. To assist agencies with this process, the MSPB Office of Training and Development offers classes in talent development.

What is potential?

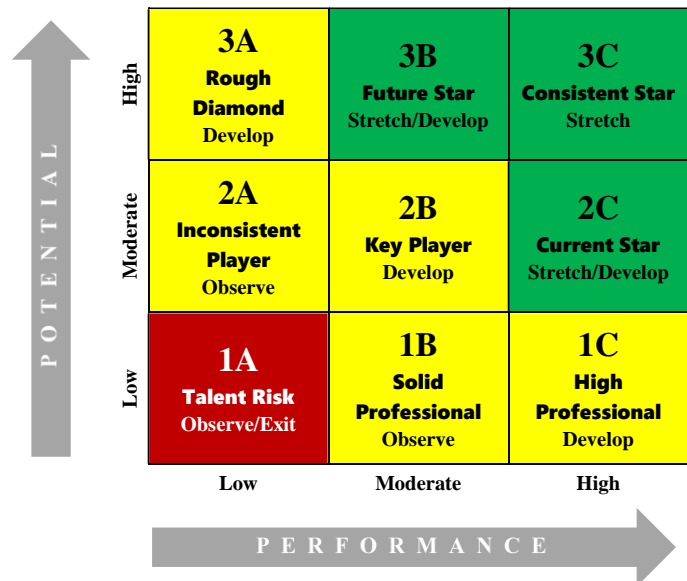
Willingness + Possibility = POTENTIAL

to take on more responsibility or to develop new skills

of performing well and contributing to broader or different roles in the future

Potential is demonstrated by the *willingness* to take on more responsibility or develop new skills and the *possibility* of performing well and contributing to broader or different roles in the future. The potential an individual possesses is fluid, increasing as expertise in a role develops. Agencies benefit from having employees at all levels of potential.

Potential is expected to be lower for someone who is learning how to perform the functions of a job. As processes are mastered, potential increases. However, if processes have been mastered and the individual does not demonstrate a *willingness* to take on more responsibility or develop new skills, the potential for contributing in broader or different roles at some point in the future drops. The 9-box grid shown on this page is widely



used to illustrate the relationship between performance and potential. A brief description and examples of talent development for each of the nine boxes is presented below.



Box 3A – Rough Diamond (high potential/low performance): Demonstrates a high level of willingness to take on more responsibility or develop new skills even though proficiency is inconsistent. Development examples include being coached or mentored to increase knowledge.



Box 3B – Future Star (high potential/moderate performance): Demonstrates a high level of willingness to take on more responsibility or develop new skills even though proficiency is moderate. Talent development examples include short term assignments that stretch the person beyond current responsibilities.



Box 3C – Consistent Star (high potential/high performance): Demonstrates a high level of willingness to take on more responsibility or develop new skills and a high proficiency level. Talent development examples include stretch assignments. If new challenges are not offered, the person is more likely to leave the position for a higher-level role.



Box 2A – Inconsistent Player (moderate potential/low performance): Demonstrates a moderate level of willingness to take on more responsibility or develop new skills even though proficiency is inconsistent. Talent development examples include being coached or mentored to increase knowledge.



Box 2B – Key Player (moderate potential/moderate performance): Demonstrates a moderate level of willingness to take on more responsibility or develop new skills and a moderate proficiency level. Development should focus on increasing consistency.



Box 2C – Current Star (moderate potential/high performance): Demonstrates a moderate level of willingness to take on more responsibility or develop new skills and a high proficiency level. Talent development examples include short term assignments that stretch the person beyond current responsibilities, such as mentoring others.



Box 1A – Talent Risk (low potential/low performance): Demonstrates a low level of willingness to take on more responsibility or develop new skills, and proficiency is inconsistent. Clarify performance expectations and focus on performance improvement. Corrective action or formal discipline may be necessary.



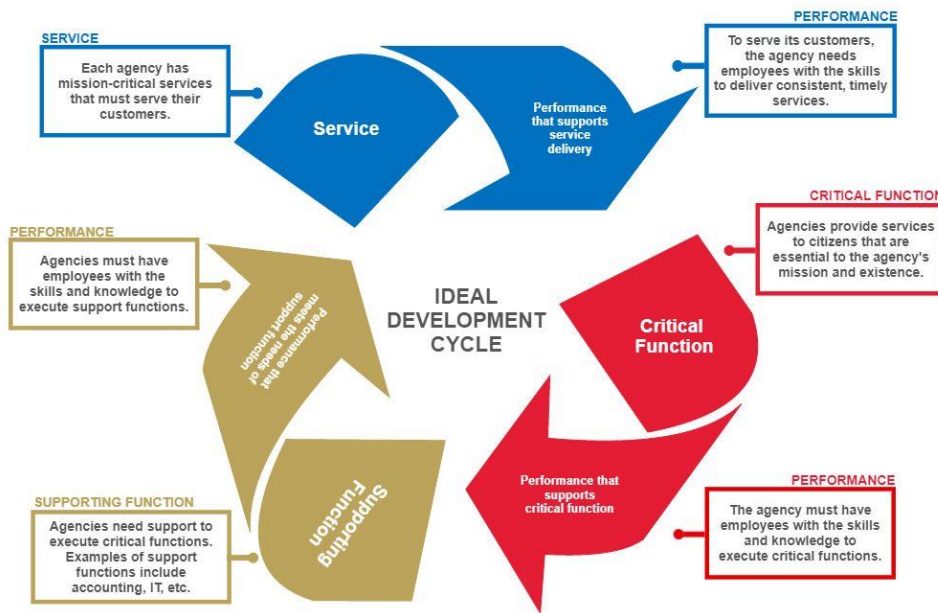
Box 1B – Solid Professional (low potential/moderate performance): Demonstrates a low level of willingness to take on more responsibility or develop new skills and a moderate proficiency level. Development should focus on increasing consistency.



Box 1C – High Professional (low potential/high performance): Demonstrates a low level of willingness to take on more responsibility or develop new skills and a high proficiency level. Talent development examples include opportunities for increasing expertise or training others in the area of technical expertise.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

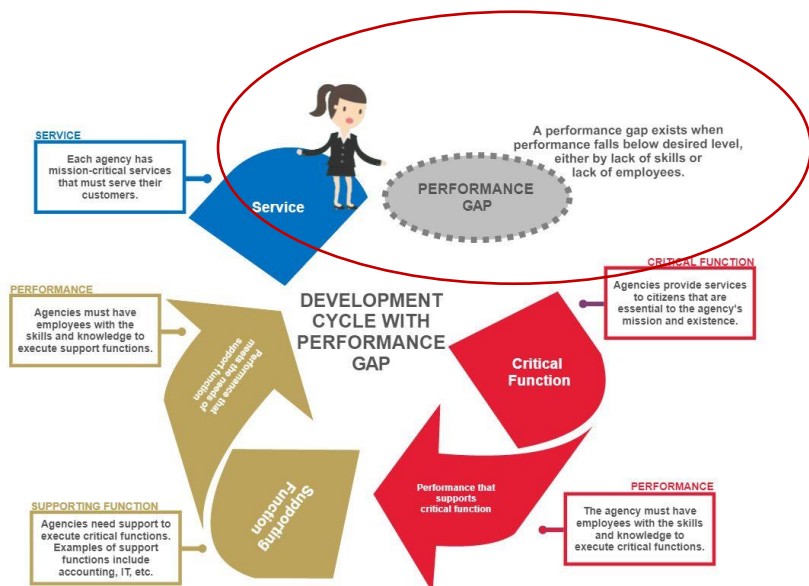
Development planning is a cyclical process that identifies trends and the resources needed to ensure the future delivery of mission-critical services. Planning focuses on critical functions; therefore, the highest priorities are determined by the functions critical to the agency's



mission, along with new and likely trends facing the agency. Other functions that support these critical functions are assigned the next highest priority, and so on. As a result of planning, the agency's capacity to meet future stakeholder needs increases.

When performance in a critical or supporting function meets desired levels, services are provided without interruption, as illustrated above.

When performance in a critical or supporting function is inadequate to meet needs, a performance gap exists. Development planning can be used to document the right kind of development to close the performance gap. As gaps close, the capacity of both the agency and individuals increases. The process then cycles back to the beginning, ensuring new priorities and future trends remain at the forefront of planning.



The six-step process outlined in this Guide aids in planning

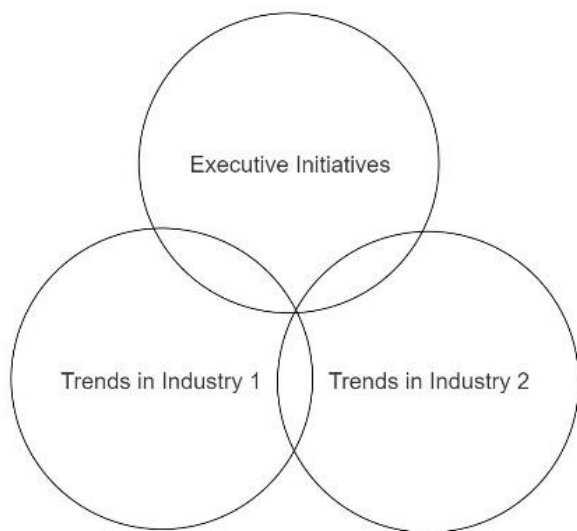
at the macro level (all agency services) and the micro level (within a functional area). Using this process, agency heads, managerial teams, and human resources departments can identify specific agency needs that reveal specific areas for individual development.

The Appendix provides planning templates that benefit both employees and the agency. The MSPB Office of Training and Development includes development planning in talent development classes.

Step 1: Assess the present status and future trends

Who is involved in this step: cross-functional managerial team

A group of managers from different functional areas drives the first phase of development planning. The human resources department can offer valuable support in this first step. The current environment, current performance levels, and industry trends are reviewed to determine action items. Decisions from this team are submitted for approval and permission to proceed.



The diagram on the left illustrates how priorities are identified from different perspectives: the initiatives of agency executives and, in this example, two distinct industries whose functions overlap with agency services. Each agency has at

least one industry counterpart that interacts with the services the agency provides. See Appendix for templates.

Step 2: Clarify goals and responsibilities

Who is involved in this step: agency executives or department managers

Agency executives (or departmental managers) drive this phase of the planning process. Once the appropriate goals are prioritized from step one, the positions that contribute to them can be identified. If needed, the human resources department can provide information. See Appendix for templates.

Step 3: Identify critical functions and performance gaps

Who is involved in this step: frontline managers

Frontline managers directly oversee the services provided to citizens. These managers are the most appropriate team for this phase of the process. With the information obtained in step two, frontline managers can identify critical functions, and the functions that support them. Areas

where the performance in a critical or supporting function are inadequate represent performance gaps that should be addressed with individual development planning. Development recommendations are communicated to the human resources director and agency executives by this team of frontline managers. See Appendix for templates.

Step 4: Provide relevant opportunities for prioritized knowledge and skill development

Who is involved in this step: supervisors and HR representatives

Create a development plan (i.e., IDP) such as the one shown here to address areas where performance gaps exist or where a higher level of performance is needed. It is not unusual for a plan to identify a combination of technical, interpersonal, or managerial skills for development.

Human resources managers are included in this phase to coordinate development activities. The IDP shown here is available on the MSPB website and in the Appendix.

Individual Development Plan	
Employee Name _____	
Position _____ Date _____	
Agency Need/ Upcoming Trend	Type of Development
	Activity: _____
	Provider: <i>(person to be observed or entity offering program)</i> _____
	Location: _____
	Time away from workplace: _____
	Expected result: _____
	Activity: _____
	Provider: <i>(person to be observed or entity offering program)</i> _____
	Location: _____
	Time away from workplace: _____
	Expected result: _____
	Activity: _____
	Provider: <i>(person to be observed or entity offering program)</i> _____
	Location: _____
	Time away from workplace: _____
	Expected result: _____
How does this help the individual?	
How does this help the agency?	

Step 5: Close the gap and measure new level of performance

Who is involved in this step: supervisors and department managers

Once development activities are transferred back to the work environment, a higher performance level is observed and measured. Agency performance should be measured regularly to confirm gaps are closing or no longer exist in critical and supporting functions.

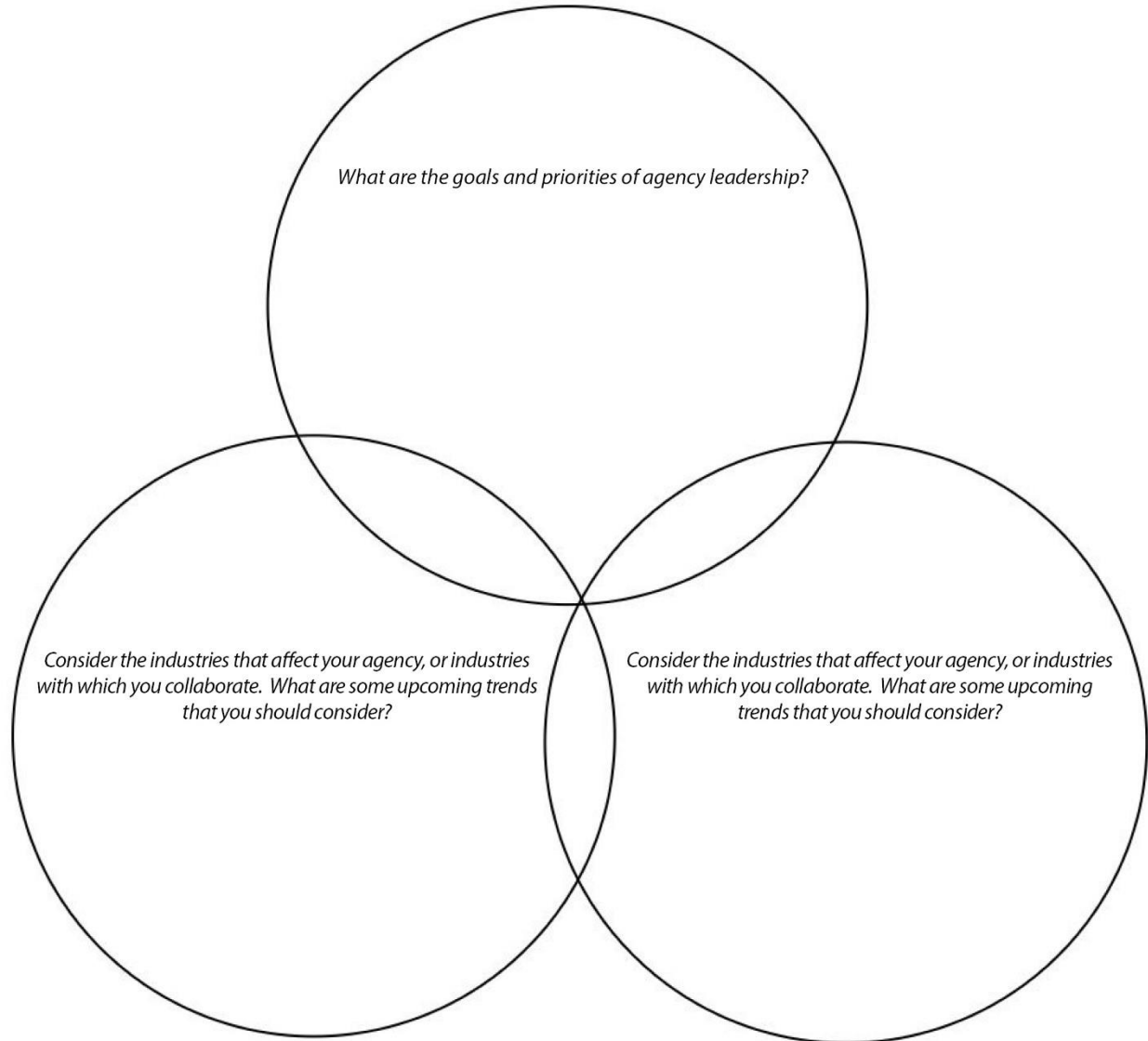
Step 6: Begin again with clarifying goals and accountabilities as listed in Step one.

At regular intervals, the planning process is repeated so that the agency can perform at the leading edge of industry needs.

Appendix

Development Plan: Step 1

Goal and Priority Setting based on Executive Initiative



Goals (in order of priority):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Development Plan: Step 2

Prioritized List of Goals with Responsible Party Identified

Goal 1:

Action Steps to Achieve Goal 1	Responsible Party	Due Date

Goal 2:

Action Steps to Achieve Goal 2	Responsible Party	Due Date

Goal 3:

Action Steps to Achieve Goal 3	Responsible Party	Due Date

Goal 4:

Action Steps to Achieve Goal 4	Responsible Party	Due Date

Goal 5:

Action Steps to Achieve Goal 5	Responsible Party	Due Date

Current Environment and Future Trends

For each industry trend, which agency functions will be affected? Determine current performance level (ability) and new skills/knowledge needed.

Industry Trend	Functional Area Affected	Technology Requirements	Current Ability	Future Needs

Development Plan: Step 3

Critical Functions and Performance Gaps

Critical Function	Skill Needed (Gap)	Type of Development	Responsible Party	
			Current Employee(s)*	Acquisition
Supporting Function	Skill Needed (Gap)	Type of Development	Responsible Party	
			Current Employee(s)*	Acquisition

*Use the Individual Development Plan in Step 4 to elaborate on each employee's development and how it will benefit the agency.

**For a more detailed plan, we recommend creating an Excel spreadsheet for this process.

Development Plan: Step 4

Individual Development Plan

Employee Name _____ Date _____

Agency/Position _____

Agency Need/ Upcoming Trend	Type of Development
	Activity:
	Provider: <i>(person to be observed or entity offering program)</i>
	Location:
	Time away from workplace:
	Expected result:
	Activity:
	Provider: <i>(person to be observed or entity offering program)</i>
	Location:
	Time away from workplace:
	Expected result:

How does this help the individual employee?

How does this help the agency?

Employee Signature _____

Supervisor Signature _____