

Evaluation Best Practices Local Gov CAOs

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Weldon Cooper Center
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Introduction & Purpose

- Strengthens accountability, performance, and alignment with the elected bodies' strategic vision
- Promotes professional development
- Informs compensation and contract decisions
- Guided by Virginia law: Closed session allowed for personnel (§2.2-3711(A)(1))

Key Principles of Effective Evaluations



- Transparency and fairness within confidentiality
 - Objectivity and consistency year over year
 - Dialogue, not judgment
 - Link evaluation to strategic goals and measurable outcomes
 - Promote professional and ethical governance
- ICMA Code of Ethics and 14 core competencies for effective leadership and management

Structure of Evaluation Process

- **Performance goals and objectives**
- **Manager's leadership and management**
- Establish clear evaluation criteria & strategic alignment
- Use a structured, consistent evaluation tool
- Collect comprehensive input & ensure confidentiality
- Conduct a constructive, collaborative evaluation meeting
- Document results & link to future goals and contract

Structure of Evaluation Process

- Solicit written input from each council member
- Discuss evaluation in closed session per Virginia law
- Use specific examples, avoid generalities
- Respect transparency and ethical limits on anonymous feedback

Sample Evaluation

SAMPLE APPRAISAL OF PERFORMANCE¹
NAME: _____
EVALUATION PERIOD: _____

Rate Category 1: 1= Exceptional; 2= Exceeds Expectations; 3= Meets Expectations; 4=Below Expectations.

I. MANAGEMENT and LEADERSHIP PRACTICES (20–40%) _____

A. Elected Body Relationships

Does not surprise board; all board members are informed of organization activities, progress, and problems on a regular basis.

Is receptive to board member ideas and suggestions

Makes sound recommendations for board action

Effectively implements policy decisions of the board

Facilitates the decision-making process for the board

Follows up on all problems and issues brought to his or her attention

Is nonpartisan; does not show favoritism

Accepts responsibility

B. Organizational

Leads a smooth-running and continuously improving organization

Proposes organizational goals and objectives prior to each fiscal year

Anticipates and plans well in advance

Is progressive in attitude and action

Follows through on set plans and deadlines

Emphasizes development and enhancement of the skills of all employees

Hires and retains competent staff members who know what is expected of them

Delegates effectively

Encourages high staff productivity and demands accountability

¹ Adapted and used with permission from Gregory J. Bielawski, ICMA Senior Advisor and Illinois Range Rider, g_bielawski@hotmail.com

Sample Evaluation

C. Community Relations

Is appropriately visible and active within the community

Understands and is knowledgeable about the needs of the community

Encourages and honestly considers community input

Requests feedback from the community on the performance of the organization

Provides programs and services that are up to community standards and expectations

D. Fiscal Performance

Prepares and presents a long-range financial plan, which is updated as circumstances dictate

Presents balanced annual budgets with programs and service levels clearly identified

Recognizes and manages the budget within fiscal constraints

Displays common sense and good judgment in business transactions

Seeks all available funding sources

Provides accurate and complete financial reports in a timely manner

E. Intergovernmental/Agency/Association Relationships

Participates in professional management and leadership organizations

Effectively collaborates, coordinates, and communicates with other communities, regional associations, and similar organizations

F. Communication

Responds to all requests for information in a timely and thorough manner

Speaks and writes clearly

Responds to correspondence, phone calls, and requests for information in a timely and thorough manner

Provides all necessary and required reports and records

Ensures that information of general interest is current and timely, that website is up-to-date, and that available technology is used effectively

Provides details about specific projects to those affected in a timely manner

G. Personal

Is ethical, honest, and of high integrity

Projects professional demeanor and respect in all interactions

Is cordial and approachable

Explain and support your rating—whether 1, 2, 3, or 4—and support it with specific examples

Sample Evaluation

II. GOAL/TARGET ACHIEVEMENT (60–80%) ____

Rate Category II: 1= Exceptional; 2= Exceeds Expectations; 3= Meets Expectations; 4=Below Expectations.

(Place the letter or number of each goal/target for the year on the appropriate line below).

____ Achieved

____ Partially achieved

____ Not achieved

Comments:

III. SUGGESTED GOALS/TARGETS FOR UPCOMING YEAR

A.

B.

C.

IV. WHAT SHOULD THE MANAGER START DOING, STOP DOING, AND CONTINUE DOING?

OVERALL EVALUATION: _____

Board Member Name _____ Date _____

Questions to Answer When Doing Your Appraisal

- 1) What impressed you the most favorably about _____'s performance this past year?
- 2) In what areas has _____ shown exceptional performance?
- 3) What's your major area(s) of concern regarding _____'s performance this past year?
- 4) What specific recommendations/expectations do you have for _____ to improve performance?
- 5) What should be _____'s top three goals/targets for the next year?

What are others doing?

- Self Evaluations
- Periodic Check-Ins – No Surprises!
- 360 Degree Assessments
- Facilitated Performance Evaluation

Evaluations Summary

- Regular performance evaluations are essential to the council – manager form of government
- Agreed upon process that is documented and scheduled in the employment agreement to ensure clarity and consistency

Evaluations Summary

- Criteria should be outcome based, jointly defined, and measurable when possible
- Primarily a communication and improvement tool – not a punitive device tied to political motives
- Check-ins or periodic reviews help reduce surprises, promote alignment, and accommodate shifts in priorities

Questions?



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