



County of Yolo

BUILDING PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS GUIDE

- Where do I want to be?**
- What am I great at?**
- What is important to learn or to get better at?**
- What does the organization need?**
- What do I love doing?**
- What energizes me?**

Planning for your professional growth is a shared responsibility. Both you and your manager will be working together to enhance your skills and expand your opportunities by:

- Identifying your personal expectations for professional development, emphasizing the professional goals that matter most to you
- Identifying the strengths, skills, experience and behaviors that will help you to achieve those goals
- Aligning your personal goals within the framework of the County's goals
- Determining your professional development needs
- Creating an action plan for achieving your professional goals
- Implementing, supporting and monitoring your progress toward achieving those goals

Through this professional development program you will become part of a collaborative process aimed at creating and sustaining a high-performing organization that capitalizes on you reaching your full potential as a Yolo County employee, assuring that you have the means both to be the best that you can be and to prepare for your future. Our shared commitment will build your expertise, your confidence and your readiness for further opportunity.

Professional development does not take place only when you are preparing for a new position or promotional opportunity. This process works equally well to help you grow in the position you now hold. It can help you to more completely master specific skills, develop technical proficiency in an environment of ever-changing technology, and acquire expertise in all facets of your job. Acquiring competency in new areas provides opportunities to participate in projects that interest you, enhancing your job satisfaction and helping you to remain current in your chosen field of endeavor.

You and your manager will be collaborating on the design of an individualized professional development plan. Elements of that plan will include a variety of learning models including traditional training courses, job-shadowing, serving on a project team, self-study, mentoring, unique rotational or temporary assignments, and other opportunities that will help you expand your current talents and acquire new knowledge, skills, and abilities. The emphasis will be on

creating a high involvement, action learning environment that takes advantage of on-the-job resources and is tailored to the greatest extent possible to meet your specific developmental activity needs. Your manager will be the supporter and enabler of your development and will help you to explore options you might not otherwise consider in pursuit of your developmental goals.

The plan will also include a project management component so that you and your manager can develop a timeline, schedule activities to reach your goals, identify measures of success, and establish a reliable mechanism for ongoing feedback and guidance. A well-described and shared understanding of the “how and when” will be essential in achieving your professional development goals and ensuring the support you will need as you move toward them. Your manager will play a significant role in making resources available to you, removing obstacles when necessary, and consistently providing you with candid feedback.

So, now, let’s step it out:

- Step 1 Review your employment history
 - Read your current job description
 - Revisit your past few years’ evaluations for insights on your current performance

- Step 2 Complete the Self-Assessment Worksheet
 - Identify your professional goals
 - Identify what motivates you at work
 - Determine your talents and strengths
 - Determine areas for improvement or learning

- Step 3 Meet with your manager
 - Share and discuss the results of your self-assessment
 - Share and have an initial discussion of your professional development action plan

- Step 4 Draft a plan to achieve your objectives and the action steps you have identified as needed to reach those objectives
 - Determine from your Self-Assessment those areas for development that will be your focus
 - Define which areas are building capability and which are preparing for new opportunities (or both)
 - Use the SMART model to draft an action plan for achieving your learning objectives

- Ask questions of your manager and listen closely to the impressions, insights, and suggestions offered for your benefit

Step 5

Act on your plan

- Own the process – this is your future we are talking about
- Share the responsibility for revisiting the plan on a regular basis
- Schedule follow-up meetings with your manager as necessary
- Set deadlines and make sure they are honored