

NASPE Innovative State Human Resource Management Program Nomination – 2015

Louisiana State Civil Service – Performance Evaluation System

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Program Summary

The Performance Evaluation System (PES) was established to provide both a mechanism for an employer to evaluate the talent, skills, and abilities of their staff, but to also better align individual performance with agency goals and objectives. Initiated in 2011 and fully implemented in 2012, the PES is a performance management system that is adaptable to agency needs as well as individual employee and supervisor requirements. Agencies have the ability to determine, on their own, whether or not to establish competency-based expectations, overall work and behavior expectations that are more general or highly specialized goals that are based on the “SMART” concept. By having these decisions made at the agency level, the PES system provides a high level of flexibility and adaptability to agencies, which may operate on very different levels. For example, one agency may choose to use a highly developed, competency-based evaluation structure, and include the results of this program as part of their annual review for employee performance adjustments, while another agency may choose to align employee performance with agency goals in a more general fashion – either way is allowable in the PES system. The PES system, also, uses a standard planning and evaluation date range, as to allow supervisors to focus on developing expectations and then evaluating employee performance in specific time periods each fiscal year. This focused date approach allows year-round evaluation to occur in an informal fashion, with the official evaluations taking place at the same time, which results in a greater emphasis on the effectiveness of employee evaluation. Overall, the PES system is an adaptable, innovative program, that is customizable and compatible with the myriad of varying jobs, agencies, goals, and objectives of Louisiana’s diverse government.

1. Please provide a brief description of this program.

The PES is a 3-tiered evaluation system that uses a fiscal-year based performance year and a single evaluation date for all state classified employees. This system is designed to align individual performance with agency mission and goals to develop employees into high-performing individuals and to be highly adaptable and configurable based upon agency need. It contains a second level evaluation process to ensure supervisor consistency and accountability in the agency. Overall evaluation levels of performance are non-numeric, qualitative evaluations of Exceptional, Successful, or Needs Improvement/Unsuccessful to provide distinctions in performance. A “Not Evaluated” option has been included for when not enough time has elapsed to provide a sufficient evaluation. Emphasis has been placed on supervisor and second level evaluator accountability for administration of the system as well as focus on frequent review and year-round coaching of the employee. Tools, such as the bank of expectations, web-enabled performance documents, and online learning, were developed to provide efficiencies and assist agency supervisors and employees. The established expectations may be customized or individualized by each supervisor, if needed. PES also allows supervisors to use a combination of SMART goals, customized expectations, and workplace standards/behaviors to further foster communication offering an opportunity for employee feedback/planning for his own goals/expectations and professional development, and gives the employee an opportunity to recognize how his individual performance contributes to the agency mission.

2. How long has this program been operational?

PES was launched on July 1, 2012.

3. Why was this system created?

The previous Performance, Planning and Review (PPR) system was established in Louisiana in 1997 as a 5-tiered rating system based on individual anniversary dates and performance

factors that did not connect to the agency mission. The purpose of PPR was primarily to establish communication between supervisor and employee. In the PPR system, approximately 55,217 state classified employees statewide were provided ratings, and, of those, only 425 were rated less than satisfactory. With at least 99 percent of the total number of classified employees receiving satisfactory ratings, stakeholders felt the system needed enhancements.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?

The PES is a new and creative method of recognizing performance to foster a culture of communication and dialogue focusing on progress and development, but also a system in which each specific agency can craft its own performance management system within the overall programmatic guidelines set forth by SCS. This system and process encourage continuous coaching and communication throughout the performance year but also focus in on planning and evaluation at the beginning and end of the performance year, respectively. Employees are given a qualitative evaluation of Exceptional, Successful, or Needs Improvement/Unsuccessful, rather than simply a numeric value. PES provides for “eligibility for pay” rather than an “entitlement to pay” culture by allowing agencies to reward for performance how they see fit. Another creative component is the review process. Only Needs Improvement/ Unsuccessful evaluations are eligible for requests for review. Agencies are required to take ownership in providing substantive reviews of these evaluations. Evaluations that are upheld with Needs Improvement/Unsuccessful may proceed to State Director review but only for rule compliance and not substance. The “bank of expectations” addition is a huge asset to supervisors as it offers “cut and paste” functionality for placement on the web-enabled PES form rather than having to develop their own expectations. Moving to a single evaluation date and single pay date allows budget officials to plan and project expenditures more precisely for a given year. Online training was developed and delivered over the website through the Learning Solutions Option

in SAP. Overall, though, the program stands out as being creative due to its customizable nature, whereby agencies can craft their own system that better serves their own specific needs, whether this is a competency-based model, standard expectations across job families, or basic goals and objectives that tie to overall agency needs.

5. What was the program's start up costs?

There were no costs associated with implementation of PES.

6. What are the program's operational costs?

There are no additional operational costs associated with operation of PES. Performance data and budget projections are contained in the state's SAP HCM module. Online learning is a component of the SAP Learning Solutions Option.

7. How is this program funded?

Ongoing operational costs for SAP are funded through state agency budgets.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

Most states have some form of performance evaluation systems. Project team members researched other public and private entities to formulate ideas and plans as to what would work best for State of Louisiana.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If yes, how does this program differ?

Yes, other states have developed performance evaluation tools such as a "bank" or "storage" of already-established expectations; however, Louisiana took this a step further to actually develop and customize standard expectations for each possible job family or job group that is used in state government. Louisiana is also the first, to our knowledge, to have removed the numerical association to evaluations. Additionally, while some states mandate the use of competencies, Louisiana leaves this decision up to each agency, in order to allow them to have a

program that better suits their individual needs.

10. How do you measure the success of this program?

Success is measured by both required reporting to the State Legislature as well as audit of agency management of the PES by the SCS Accountability Division. Agencies provide information on the use of PES and specific data on employee evaluations to SCS annually; a statewide report is generated and shared with the State Legislature. Additionally, the SCS Accountability Division audits performance records via reporting and review of agency files to determine compliance with the performance management process. Performance data is required to be updated in the SAP system; data is collected and an annual report is prepared to reflect performance data on each employee as well as compliance with components of the performance rules.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

Since implementation, SCS has revised the PES form to better reflect the actual workflow of the PES system between employees, supervisors, and second level evaluations. Additionally, online learning tools and job aids are continually monitored and evaluated for possible revisions to better assist agencies. Finally, agencies have requested specific modifications to the PES forms, timelines for planning and evaluation, and various other exceptions in order to better modify the PES to their specific agency needs, thereby realizing one of the strongest indicators of the PES system's innovation and creativity – the ability for agencies to customize the system to fit their individual needs and thereby increased the level of communication between employer and employee, with the goal of continuous employee improvement.