

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)  
Submittal for NASPE Award  
Category: Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

*Program Title:* Performance Management Program

*State:* Washington

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*Summary:* The WSDOT created a competency driven, electronic web-based performance management program (PMP) approximately four years ago in an effort to ensure objective appraisals by providing standards of performance for every competency created. The intent was also to foster a positive, performance-based culture that supports:

- Employee competence,
- Productivity,
- Achievement of organizational goals and objectives, and
- Documentation of an employee's strengths and areas requiring improvement.

The program was developed over a two year period utilizing agency subject matter experts to create the behavioral competencies as well as the duty specific performance competencies. The final product was reviewed with the Unions representing the majority of the agency's employees and implemented over a one and a half year time period.

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- 1. Please provide a brief description of this program.* The performance management program is competency driven, web-based, and electronic. The supervisor is required to create the appraisal at the beginning of the rating period and meet with the employee at that time so they are aware of their expectations in both the areas of behavior and performance. They are also informed of any training that will be required during the rating period and how they will know if they are successfully meeting the identified competencies. Progress is typically discussed with the employee throughout the rating period and then ratings are provided at the conclusion.
- 2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?* The program was rolled out beginning February 2006 to the first couple of regions within the agency. Training and implementation for the remaining six regions and Headquarters was completed by October 2007.
- 3. Why was this program created? (What problem[s] or issues does it address?)* The program was created as our agency's plan to address our Governor's initiative to create a performance-based culture within the State.
- 4. Why is this program a new and creative method?* The agency utilizes several hundred various job classifications to accomplish its mission. Agency subject matter experts worked together to create 24 behavioral competencies that may be used for any classification as they are all important to our agency's culture. They also developed performance competencies that are specific to the various job

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classifications mentioned above and any unique disciplines within those classifications (for example our engineering classification has 11 distinct disciplines including design & construction, design, construction, traffic, survey, environmental, general materials, geo-tech materials, pavement management design, program management, and hydraulics). These subject matter experts further developed the standards for each of the competencies so that all supervisors/managers have an understanding of what it looks like when the competencies are being performed satisfactorily. This final piece perhaps is one of the most important in that it takes out as much subjectivity as possible. A supervisor typically chooses up to five each of the behavioral and performance competencies on which to appraise an employee.

5. *What was the program's start up costs? (Provide detailed information about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)* The start up costs were just under \$55,000 and included the following: \$28,000 for the software corporate license, \$5,600 for one year of vendor consulting during the development phase, and \$21,338 for a dedicated server to hold the program at the agency. The costs tracked did not include the time and travel relative to utilizing the agency subject matter experts during the development phase nor for the two to three trainers during the implementation phase. Upon final implementation, there is one lead Human Resource Consultant responsible for overseeing the agency-wide program which includes providing monthly and quarterly status reports, revising

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competencies and standards as required, and providing training to new supervisors as well as refresher training as necessary. This position earns an annual salary of \$64,740 plus benefits.

6. *What are the program's operational costs?* There are not specific operational costs associated with the program as they were absorbed by the administrative and overhead costs of the agency.
7. *How is this program funded?* There is not specific funding for this program. It is absorbed by the administrative and overhead costs of the agency.
8. *Did this program originate in your state?* The off the shelf 'program' was purchased through a vendor used by other small companies across the nation. However, the originality of the unique modifications made to the system for our agency's use was solely our creation.
9. *Are you aware of similar programs in other states? Our agency's research with other states' Departments of Transportation indicate nothing similar with the level of detail as it relates to classification and discipline specific competencies and standards of performance. If yes, how does this program differ?*
10. *How do you measure the success of this program?* The success was relatively easy to measure in terms of timely completion of performance appraisals. Prior to the implementation of this program, our agency had a 55% timely completion rate. As of the last annual report (10/08), that rate has increased to 95% for a 40% improvement since full implementation.

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*11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?* The program has not grown since its inception. However, there have been changes relative to developing new competencies and standards as classifications or specific disciplines are changed. Additionally, management reports continue to be developed for tracking purposes and determining such things as often used competencies, etc. Future changes will include meeting criteria so that the agency may utilize the information within the program for performance-based pay. The agency's Strategic Plan which was submitted as part of the biennial budget has been incorporated into the Performance Management Program. Elements of the strategic plan will be included in each manager's performance appraisal plan and they will be held accountable and measured against those outcomes.