



AFGE Council 222
10/18/2006 10:48 AM

To:
cc:
Subject: New EPPES To Be Implemented!



(<http://afgecouncil222.com>)

October 18, 2006

E:Alert - New EPPES Process To Be Implemented

Dear FHEO employee:

As part of the President's Management Agenda, HUD is implementing a new process and new criteria for creation of EPPES elements and standards. The new process is called ePerformance, which is an electronic system. The new criteria are called "SMART" and were first implemented in CPD and the Office of Administration. Many lessons were learned from the implementation in CPD and Admin, and these offices will be doing it again along with FHEO, GNMA, CIO, CPO, CFO and Healthy Homes. Other organizations will come on line next fiscal year.

The Council and Management signed a negotiated agreement on the new system Monday afternoon. A copy of Supplement 81 is attached. Implementation starts Wednesday in Headquarters FHEO with a series of mandatory briefing sessions. Briefings will be held for Field employees soon. These briefings include both ePerformance and SMART performance criteria.

Here are some of the highlights you can expect (we apologize in advance for the length and depth of this email, however the topic is complex):

ePerformance

ePerformance is more than just moving the current paper system to an electronic system. This new system requires that you be provided with a draft copy of the proposed elements and standards for your comment. You can write your comments in a write protected area of the system that cannot be overwritten or changed by your Rating or Reviewing Official. There is a similar feature when you are asked to provide feedback on your performance for preparation of the Progress Reviews and Final Rating. Listen carefully to the training program, however, as some of the boxes are not write protected. And as always, if you've submitted substantive comments that you may need to refer to in the future, print a copy for your records; this is a new system, and new systems always have quirks.

ePerformance also provides a "status" field. With this function, you will be able to look at a status report of your EPPES' journey through the system. This means that at the end of the

rating cycle, you'll be able to see if and when your Rating Official has communicated it to your Reviewing Official. You can better track the timeliness of your rating.

ePerformance also provides a direct link to the payroll system. So once your rating is communicated to you and accepted, if you are due an award, the information can be processed immediately.

For a complete copy of the training materials received by the Council in advance of the negotiations, go to <http://afgeCouncil222.com/bargaining.html>, scroll down to ePerformance, and click on [ePerformance Powerpoint Presentation and cover memo](#). The Powerpoint presentation is far more detailed than what you can expect to receive in the briefings.

SMART performance elements and standards

SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Performance elements and standards are supposed to be SMART, and Rating Officials are being required to review and redraft performance plans to meet this standard. These were the same criteria that supposedly were used for the Beta Site roll-out in CPD and Admin.

We remain concerned about changes to performance elements and standards. Elements and standards in the Beta Site roll-out in CPD and Admin often focused on widget counting, or held the employee responsible for the performance of contractors or grantees. The latter is not within the control of the employee, and therefore fails the "attainable" criteria. And while widget counting is measurable, it can be similar to holding the emergency room nurse responsible for proper paper work ahead of saving the patient's life. It remains important to measure something worth measuring, not something that is simply easy to measure.

Our concern increased on Tuesday when Regional FHEO Directors in at least two regions circulated an email to FHEO employees stating that Assistant Secretary Kim Kendrick believes that a fully successful rating should be the norm. The email also advised that AS Kendrick rejected higher ratings last year as part of the roll-up. Rating on the curve is illegal, and the Council is investigating if employees have the right to file grievances over last year's ratings based upon this new information.

So we go into this SMART roll-out with reservation. What the Supplement tries to do is ensure: that you and your Local Union are part of the performance planning process; that you and your Local have access to information that should affect the standards, such as staffing plans, REAP information, training and travel budgets, work load, and more; and that your Local can receive copies of the final performance plans to ensure equity and fairness.

The briefing that you receive will include three Powerpoint slides on SMART standards. Be sure to focus your attention and questions on this portion of the briefing, because, in a sense, there will be a test on this portion of the lesson. For more information on developing SMART standards, go to the website address above and look under ePerformance for the SMART training materials, in particular part 4. These are the training materials used for CPD and Admin. Management would not share their planned training materials for this next phase, but we believe that substantial portions will be the same.

Rating Officials are being directed by the Deputy Secretary to have in-person meetings with you to develop performance plans. These meetings may be individual, or they can be done as group meetings. We have advocated for group meetings to develop the basic standards and elements, with individual meetings to tailor the EPES to the particular workload of the employee. If management opts to have only individual meetings, many Local Unions will be holding lunch time meetings where employees can talk with each other about standards that all agree are fair as well as being SMART.

It remains unclear if a uniform set of standards and elements will be developed by Headquarters and distributed for use by Rating Officials. For the purpose of Rating Official training, sample performance plans were developed in FHEO and GNMA. Our review of the FHEO training sample revealed it to have major flaws. For example, for an FHEO Investigator to receive fully satisfactory, s/he would have to participate in two Title VI or Section 504 compliance reviews annually, and the Letter of Findings would have to be sent timely 70% of the time. The first problem is that management assigns work, and whether an Investigator receives one, two, three or no such compliance reviews is not within his/her control. But assuming s/he receives two such opportunities, with two Letters of Findings due, the mathematical possibilities are that either 0%, 50% or 100% of the Letters will be sent timely. It is nonsense to have a 70% standard. We will be scanning these and placing them on the bargaining page of our website, so that you can be on the look out for a set of standards we have already advised Management of being anything but SMART.

Conclusion

Expect to hear more from your Local Union about this process. Although Management has an obligation to provide your Local with notice of the briefings and the performance plan meetings, don't assume Management has followed the law. Forward any such notices you receive to your Local Union.

Remember that the Local Union brings knowledge about the process, but depends on you to bring knowledge about your job and your work place. Provide your Local Union with suggestions for the types of information that should be requested to help in the development of SMART standards. Participate in group meetings your Local may set up to discuss the development of fair and SMART standards.

As this rolls-out, the Council will send surveys to you seeking information about how the process is (or isn't) working. We surveyed CPD employees several times over the course of the last seven months, and the information they provided was essential to our success in getting changes to this round. We believe that the persons responsible for implementing this in Human Resources are sincere and seek a quality outcome. Please respond to our surveys. They are confidential, and we do not release any identifiers to Management without prior permission.

Finally, if you're not a member, please join us now. Only through collective action can we hope to make the work place fair and the working conditions positive. Your participation is valuable.

Thank you for your attention. Again, we apologize for the length and breadth of this message. This is not an easy topic, and we anticipate that implementation will not be easy either.

In solidarity,



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supp81.doc minus the signature page

[signature pg for Supp 81 to be scanned and placed on Council website with Supplement 81 when rec'd]