



AFGE Council 222  
10/19/2006 09:31 AM

To:  
cc:  
Subject: E:Alert CPD Employee - Beta Site Redux



(<http://afgecouncil222.com>)

**October 19, 2006**

### **E:Alert - Beta Site Redux**

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Dear CPD employee:

First, please accept our thanks for your response to our surveys regarding implementation of the Beta Site in CPD. Because of your participation, Management agreed to negotiate implementation of ePerformance and the extension of the Beta Site (now referred to as SMART) to FHEO, GNMA, CIO, CPO, CFO and Healthy Homes. Furthermore, Management agreed to include CPD and the Office of Administration in the negotiated agreement. Your participation in the surveys was critical to helping Human Resources understand that the Beta Site implementation was problematic and had to be changed.

The Council and Management signed a negotiated agreement on the new system Monday afternoon. A copy of Supplement 81 is attached. Unlike with the Beta Site, Management will conduct training for employees, as well as Rating and Reviewing Officials, in 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://www.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.

Since SMART was the same criteria that supposedly was used for the Beta Site roll-out in CPD and Admin, we remain concerned about this part of the ePerformance implementation. As you have told us, elements and standards in the Beta Site roll-out in CPD 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.

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. 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 advocated for group meetings to develop the basic standards and elements, with individual meetings to tailor the EPPES to the particular workload of the employee. Our surveys showed that where CPD employees were allowed to work together to draft model performance plans for the office, performance plans were more acceptable. If your managers opt 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.

We presume that Rating Officials in your offices will use the Beta Site performance plans as a starting point for development of this year's plans. CPD will have until December 31, 2006, to put new performance plans in place. Don't wait to get involved in the performance plan process. Use your experience from this year to critique the performance plans and push them to truly be 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 with the Beta Site implementation, the Council will send surveys to you seeking information about how the process is (or isn't) working. We believe that the persons responsible for implementing this in Human Resources are sincere and seek a quality outcome. Please continue to respond to our surveys. They are confidential, and we do not release any identifiers to Management without prior permission.

With regard to the most recent rating period (the ratings under phase 1 of the Beta Site), participate in the evaluation process. Use the materials from the SMART training to challenge unattainable and irrelevant standards. Look for math absurdities. For example, if you are required to do two of a certain task, your completion rate can only be 0%, 50% or 100%. Performance standards that require 70% or 95% are nonsense under the circumstances--and MSPB has found 100% standards to be illegal unless a single failure would result in death or large financial loss. You have the right to grieve your performance rating. If you would like more information, please talk with your Local President.

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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President, AFGE Council 222

Bargaining Team Members,  
Sherry Norton, President Local 3412  
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