

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

Employee Development and Training

Part 231 Training Management

Chapter 2 Individual Development Plans

231 FW 2

2.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter:

- A. Describes the Service's policy on Individual Development Plans (IDP) for employees, and
- B. Provides guidance on how to write a good IDP.

2.2 What is an IDP?

A. An IDP is a document ([FWS Form 3-2020B](#)) that we use to:

- (1) Record an employee's current training needs and short- and long-term career goals;
- (2) Schedule training and developmental activities; and
- (3) Improve performance, sharpen professional competencies, and prepare the individual for positions of changing or greater responsibility.

B. An IDP is not a wish list. It documents activities that the supervisor approves for an employee to complete during a performance year.

2.3 What is the scope of this chapter? Employees in the following appointments should develop IDPs:

- A. Permanent employees in the competitive or excepted service,
- B. Employees in a temporary appointment for a period longer than 180 days,
- C. Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignees,
- D. Students we hire under programs such as the Student Career Experience Program and Federal Career Internship Program, and
- E. People from other Federal agencies serving on a detail to the Service of 180 days or longer.

2.4 What is the policy? To ensure that the development of Service employees reflects the applicable performance goals of both the individual and the office, the employees in section 2.3 should have an approved IDP.

A. The employee completes the IDP based on his/her annual performance plan.

B. The IDP must describe:

(1) Short- and long-term career goals, and

(2) Learning activities (including mandatory training) that the employee will complete to address his/her developmental needs. It is our policy to give each permanent full-time employee continuous learning opportunities, with a minimum goal of 40 hours annually (see [231 FW 1, Continuous Learning](#)), and to give other employees training opportunities based on the immediate skills they need to conduct their assigned responsibilities. Learning activities may include, but are not limited to:

(a) Formal classroom training and distance learning;

(b) Workshops;

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- (c) On-the-job training;
- (d) Detail assignments;
- (e) Rotational assignments and cross training;
- (f) Coaching and mentoring; and
- (g) College courses.

C. The employee's supervisor must approve the IDP no later than 60 days into the performance year or within 60 days of assignment of new duties or assignment to a new position. Final approval to attend training/developmental activities is subject to other factors, such as available funding.

D. Although an IDP is optional for a non-permanent employee, we recommend that employees have them if they will be participating in training/development activities.

2.5 What is the authority for this chapter? [Departmental Manual 370 DM 410](#), Human Capital Training and Development, is the authority for this chapter.

2.6 Who is responsible for IDPs?

A. Line Managers must hold subordinate supervisors accountable for implementing the policy in this chapter.

B. Supervisors:

- (1) Discuss and review the continuous learning needs and activities with each employee during the annual performance review/evaluation in order to create an IDP that meets those developmental needs,
- (2) Approve an IDP ([FWS Form 3-2020B](#)) for each permanent employee no later than 60 days into the performance year,
- (3) Budget for IDP activities at the beginning of the fiscal year, and
- (4) Work with the employee throughout the year to implement the IDP and discuss any major funding or workload changes that might prevent the employee from taking training or participating in other learning activities.

C. Employees:

- (1) Identify the goals of their current position, their short- and long-term goals, learning objectives, and continuous learning activities through discussion with their supervisor;
- (2) Complete [FWS Form 3-2020B](#) to include the training and other activities agreed upon with the supervisor;
- (3) Give [FWS Form 3-2020B](#) to the supervisor for final approval. Both the supervisor and the employee retain a copy; and
- (4) Work with their supervisor throughout the year to meet the goals set in the IDP.

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2.7 Where can I find guidance on how to create a good IDP? The National Conservation Training Center has an online training course called [Career Planning and the IDP](#) that you can take to learn more about IDPs. Exhibit 1 also includes tips on how to create a good development plan.

2.8 I have a number of “required” training courses to take each year. Can my IDP consist of only those courses? Your IDP should include your mandatory training as well as any other training and development activities that you and your supervisor jointly determine would build and improve your competencies.

2.9 Can I include training on my IDP for the purpose of earning an academic degree and ask the Service to pay for it?

A. We may use Federal funds to pay for or reimburse employees for the cost of academic degree training at an institution that is accredited by a nationally recognized body if the training:

- (1) Contributes to a planned, systematic, and coordinated program of professional development;
- (2) Significantly meets an identified agency, administration, or staff office training need;
- (3) Is preplanned rather than ad hoc;
- (4) Will produce measurable improvement in either individual or organizational performance;
- (5) Will not be used for the sole purpose of providing an employee an opportunity to obtain an academic degree or to qualify for appointment into a particular position for which the academic degree is a basic requirement; and
- (6) Is related to your current position and duties.

B. See [370 DM 410](#) or [231 FW 5](#) for more information.

2.10 What is the relationship of the IDP to the annual performance plan? You should describe in your IDP the developmental activities that will help you achieve the performance required of your job, which is what is in your annual performance plan. You can learn more about the annual performance plan by reading the instructions on Forms [DI-3100](#) and [DI-3100S](#).

2.11 If I identify a new training need some time after I complete the IDP, or I can't do something on my IDP because of funding issues, do I have to update my IDP at that time? The IDP is a planning and forecasting document you prepare at the beginning of the performance year. You do not have to update it through the year, although you may update it if you want. You can use your IDP to record what developmental activities you did complete and to record why you weren't able to complete activities.

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