

Tips for Writing Your Individual Development Plan (IDP)

An IDP is an employee development tool that identifies activities that will help you enhance your knowledge, skills, and abilities by improving performance, sharpening professional competencies, and preparing you for positions of changing or greater responsibility. The IDP process provides an opportunity for you to share with your supervisor your goals and communicate your strengths and developmental needs. You should work with your supervisor to develop realistic goals and activities to achieve them, and your supervisor will assist you by providing feedback and suggestions.

Completing an IDP should be a joint effort between you and your supervisor. You should consider the Service's needs, technology changes, expected turnover, program plans, etc. The IDP should not be a "wish list," but a realistic working document. You are accountable for following through with IDP activities.

Listed below are tips on what you should put in each of the fields on the Service's IDP form (FWS Form 3-2020B).

IDP Field Descriptions

Goals for Successful Performance in Current Position - The purpose of the IDP is not just to move you ahead to get a promotion. You should also use it to develop your skill in your current position. Here you should list a variety of goals that will help you in your current position. Examples include:

- Learn more about the Endangered Species Act,
- Become a motivational team leader,
- Enhance my computer skills,
- Work on my writing skills so my memos are easier to understand,
- Learn how the Service receives appropriations and budgets for programs, etc.

Short-Term Career Goals - This is a statement of what you hope to achieve within the next 3 years. Examples include:

- A promotion,
- Managing a particular project, and
- Changing to a different position.

Long-Term Career Goals - This is a statement of what you hope to achieve more than 3 years out. Examples include:

- Become a supervisor for a Service division,
- Become a nationally recognized expert on invasive plants, and
- Manage a Refuge.

Developmental Objectives - These are statements defining what you need to do that will help you reach your short- and long-term goals. Examples include:

- Becoming a good public speaker,
- Understanding the political nature of public service, and
- Learning more about fire management.

Developmental Assignments - This is a list of the strategies you will use to achieve a developmental objective. For someone who wants to become a better public speaker, examples may include:

- Attend a public speaking course, or
- Join a Toastmasters International public speaking group.

Proposed Dates - List dates when you plan on working on the specific developmental assignments. You could also list the date you plan on completing the activity.

Estimated Costs - List of the approximate costs of each of the activities. Be sure to include the tuition or course fees and any travel, per diem, and other costs associated with the activities.

Date Completed - List of the actual dates you complete the developmental assignment.

Notes – Add any additional comments that are appropriate to your IDP.

Signature/Date Block – Both you and your supervisor should sign the IDP when you agree that it is complete.