Performance Improvement Plan Toolkit

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| About this Resource When a staff member is struggling in their role, a **performance improvement plan (PIP)** can be enormously helpful. A PIP is a written plan with clear steps to help your staff member get to the expected level of performance for their role. It lays out the standard you need to see, the actions the staff member needs to take, and the support and oversight they will receive during the process.  This toolkit has two parts:   1. [**Manager Prep Worksheet**](#qk6axybwfl5t)**:** Use this reflection tool to workshop your thinking *before* you finalize a written plan. The work you do will also help you prepare for verbal feedback [using CSAW](https://www.managementcenter.org/article/give-more-and-better-feedback-with-csaw/). 2. [**Performance Improvement Plan**](#g0bdasawwkyj)**:** Use this template to develop the written Performance Improvement Plan you will share with your staff member. Include a [written warning letter](https://www.managementcenter.org/resources/formal-performance-warning-sample/) as well. |

As you use these templates:

* **Reflect on your management practices** and the ways this could impact staff performance. Read [Four Steps for Addressing Performance Problems](https://www.managementcenter.org/resources/four-steps-for-addressing-performance-problems/)**.**
* **Open a dialogue with your staff member** before you get to this stage. **A written PIP should never be the first way your staff member hears your concerns.**
* **Design a PIP that gives them the best chance to turn things around**, while helping you make an informed decision. Invest and stay open to the possibility that they should remain on your team, and consider your options [when approaching a tricky performance problem](https://www.managementcenter.org/resources/how-to-approach-tricky-performance-improvement-plans/)**.**
* **Communicate the PIP in person and in writing, and check for understanding.** Explain its purpose: to scaffold development and coaching in a formal, time-bound way so their goals for improvement and your commitment to support them are clear.
* **Be sure to check your HR policies or union agreements.** Be explicit with the staff member about your process. (We also advise against using a PIP if you already know you need to fire someone; this creates false hope. If your policies require a PIP as part of progressive discipline, use the tool early as part of a genuine effort to support your team member’s growth.)

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| **Manager Prep Worksheet** | |
| **Staff Name:**  **Manager Name:** | **Today’s Date:**  **Timeframe:** [from start date] **to** [end date] |
| 1. **What do I need to see improved and why is it important? What is the impact of the problem?** | \* What [must-have](https://www.managementcenter.org/resources/role-expectations/) expectations for the role aren’t being met, and what specific example(s) will I give? |
| 1. **What have I done or can I do to support improvement?** | \* How well have I performed my role as a manager (bias check, feedback, check-ins, delegation, communication about role/expectations, etc.)? What will I need to do better or differently? |
| 1. **What would success look like in [x]\* weeks?** | \* How will I know improvement when I see it? |
| 1. **How and when will I provide support, such as coaching, feedback, modeling, or training?** |  |
| 1. **What actions will I take as a result?** | \* If I see improvement:  \* If I see no or little improvement:  \* Do those possible actions tell me anything I need to make explicit or do differently now? |

***\**** *Use your best judgment to decide the time frame (usually weeks, not months, but consider your context). Very serious problems may warrant immediate action.*

**Other questions to consider:**

* What factors do I need to consider (context, staff relationships, potential bias, etc.)?
* What additional input do I need to gather and from whom?
* Who can I run my thinking past to check for any unintended bias?
* What staff member strengths can we leverage or build upon?

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| **Performance Improvement Plan** | | | |
| **Staff Name:**  **Manager Name:** | **Date Shared/Discussed:**  **Timeframe:** [from start date] **to** [end date] | | |
| **What needs to improve to meet performance standards (must-haves)?** | **Goal(s) for the improvement period** | **Actions to be taken by staff member** | **Support from manager or organization** |
| *Attention to detail and deadlines  Advance communication when support is needed* | *Submission-ready grant reports complete 3 days before deadline for manager review* | * *Create proofreading & report requirements checklist* * *Update calendar with due dates and alerts* | *Review/approve checklist & calendar*  *Weekly check-ins, with 1 hour week for support requests* |
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| **Schedule for Checking In / Reporting Back:** | | **What may happen if expectations aren’t met?** | |
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