

NB 360-16-42 PER - Individual Development Plans for Fiscal Year 2017

National Bulletin: 360-16-42

Date: October 5,
2016

Subject: PER - Individual Development Plans for Fiscal Year 2017

Action Required By: December 31, 2016

Purpose. To inform Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees about the procedures they must follow to complete their individual development plans (IDP) for fiscal year (FY) 2017.

Expiration Date. March 31, 2017

Explanation. NRCS requires each full-time, permanent employee to upload a new IDP to their AgLearn account annually. The employee and their supervisor should work together to design the IDP so that the training provides the developmental opportunities the employee needs to perform competently in their current position. NRCS IDPs run concurrently with the performance management planning cycle and should be created at the same time the employee's annual performance plan is created, and no later than December 31, 2016.

NRCS employees should create their FY 2017 IDP electronically in the AgLearn system (see attachment A). If necessary for section 508 accessibility purposes, an employee may use the paper version of the form (NRCS PERS-702) to create their IDP (see attachment B). If a paper IDP is created, the employee's local training officer must mark the employee as complete for the course "Web-based USDA-IDP-DECLINE-PAPERIDP-FY 2017" in AgLearn, and email a copy of the paper IDP to NRCS.AgLearn@ftw.usda.gov.

In the past, the NEDC used the results of its training needs inventories (TNI) to gather information about employees' needs and build its training schedule to accommodate those needs. In April 2016, NEDC launched a Lean Six Sigma project to examine the TNI process because the procedures were cumbersome and recent course offering were undersubscribed. NEDC studied the results and developed a data-driven scheduling method that the National Employee Development Board approved. NEDC will use data such as pilot participation rates, past course completion rates, and information from employees to validate future training schedules. Beginning in FY 2017 NRCS' NEDC will gather IDP data to help determine training needs for the agency. To advance this goal, employees are strongly encouraged to create FY 2017 IDPs that cover both FY 2017 and FY 2018.

Employees are advised to include one or two short-term goals that include activities to be accomplished in FY 2017, and one or two mid-term goals that include activities to be accomplished in FY 2018 (see instructions in attachment C).

If employees would like to choose an internal NRCS course they should select those courses from the AgLearn catalog so the training needs can be aligned with the NEDC course scheduling process. A fiscal year course rotation plan has been established for NEDC courses. Employees should refer to this plan when selecting NEDC courses for the IDP. The rotation plan has been posted in the files section on the [NEDC USDA Connect Site](#).

Employees can import goals from the prior year's IDP by using the goal wizard. Please see the attached instructions (attachment D). Where NEDC has identified proficiency gaps in competencies required for the employee's position, those competencies will load automatically as "goals" on the employee's IDP. Any employee can remove any competency-based goal manually by following the instructions on attachment E. "Activities" (such as formal courses or on-the-job training) are the stepping-stones employees must take to reach their "goals." As such, employees should add activities to each goal in the IDP.

If you have questions about the new needs assessment process, please contact your local training officer. Pathways employees should refer to the pathways guide for requirements. For a list of NRCS local training officers, click the "contact us" button on the right side of the AgLearn welcome page, or visit <http://www.aglearn.usda.gov/LandingPage/contact.html>.

After an employee has created their IDP in AgLearn, they should click the "submit" button to send the draft IDP to their supervisor for approval. Employees should update the IDP in AgLearn to track their progress and meet with their supervisor at least once during the fiscal year to review the progress they have made toward

reaching their developmental goals. After that meeting, employees should complete item ID NRCS-NEDC-000372 (FY 2017 IDP Progress Review). NEDC will load the IDP progress review to the to-do list of each employee at the beginning of the fiscal year. Supervisors will review the IDP with a new employee at least quarterly during that employee's first year in their position, and the IDP should serve as the executive development plan (EDP) for SES leaders. Employees can take the AgLearn Web-based course AgLearn1411-IDP and/or visit <http://www.idp.usda.gov/> for more information on IDPs.

Because the AgLearn system is slated to undergo a transition in FY 2017, NRCS recommends that each employee print their FY 2017 IDP after the supervisor approves it to ensure that the information captured is accessible. Please see attachment F for instructions for printing a pdf version of an IDP. Data that pertains to past IDPs will be maintained in the employee's completed work history.

Each employee must create an FY 2017 IDP in AgLearn, and each supervisor must approve it no later than December 31, 2016.

Contact. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact your local training officer.

/s/

Thomas W. Christensen
Associate Chief for Operations

[Attachment A](#) – Job Aid – Creating an IDP in AgLearn
[Attachment B](#) – IDP Paper Form: NRCS PERS-702
[Attachment C](#) – IDP Guidelines
[Attachment D](#) – Job Aid – Adding Goals from an Expired Plan
[Attachment E](#) – Removing Competency-Based Goals from the IDP
[Attachment F](#) – Printing a PDF of an IDP