



THE BRIDGE: Connecting Civil Service and You

December 2011
Volume 2 Issue 4

The DSCS Mission:

To provide human resource services and programs that enable state government to attract, develop and retain a productive and diverse workforce that excels in delivering quality services to the citizens of Louisiana.

We Want Your Feedback!

This publication is intended to provide for increased communication between the Department of State Civil Service and all stakeholders within our system. E-mail your questions, comments, or suggestions to us, and we'll do our best to respond promptly. Your feedback may even be chosen for publication as part of this feature! Participants will remain anonymous if requested. Please note that not all feedback will be published and that only fact-based questions will receive a response.

[Click HERE](#)
to submit your feedback!

STAYING CONNECTED

From the Desk of Shannon S. Templet, DSCS Director



Over the years, the Department of State Civil Service has been committed to developing progressive solutions for human resource programs. Historically, our mission has been based on our ability to provide state agencies with options for recruiting and retaining a workforce that effectively serves the needs of our citizens. As a department, we still strive for this goal today.

Inside this issue of the Bridge, we have included an overview of two innovative changes that we hope will further our mission by increasing efficiency and effectiveness for our training program and performance rating system. I am proud to report that our nationally recognized training program will be implementing online course technology in January 2012, making it easier than ever for supervisors to complete their required supervisory group training. Additionally, we are proposing changes to the PPR system at the December Civil Service Commission meeting, which we hope will enhance uniform application of performance standards and better link individual performance goals to the missions of state agencies. We encourage Bridge readers to provide comments on the proposed changes to the PPR system through the link provided on page two.

The last article in this issue touches on the idea of a return on investment for rewards and recognition policies established under Rule 6.16.1. With careful planning, rewards programs can provide fiscal savings to state agencies. Although usage of this rule is optional for appointing authorities, even non-monetary awards could prove beneficial in assisting state agencies in achieving their missions.

The Bridge is produced quarterly by a committee of [Civil Service staff members](#).

DSCS Proposes New Statewide Performance Evaluation System

By Max Reichert
Staffing Assistant Administrator

The Department of State Civil Service is proposing to replace the current five-tier Performance Planning and Review System with a new three-tier Performance Evaluation System in order to enhance uniform application of performance standards and to better link individual performance goals to the missions of state agencies. Formal rule change proposals will be presented at the December 14th Civil Service Commission meeting. Some features of the Performance Evaluation System include:

- The new system is proposed to take effect July 1, 2012. Transition and training is planned to take place from January through June, 2012.
- The proposed system has three tiers (Exceptional, Successful, and Unsuccessful) compared to the five tiers in the current system.
- The pre-defined rating factors described by Rule 10.3 in the current system are to be abolished. Instead, each employee would be evaluated on his overall performance based on the work tasks and behavior standards identified in the employee's individual performance plan by the evaluating supervisor.
- There would be a mandatory second-level supervisory review of all performance plans and performance evaluations.
- A single evaluation date for all employees would replace the current use of individual anniversary dates. All employees would be evaluated on a uniform performance evaluation year of July 1-June 30, which coincides with the state's fiscal year. If the new system is adopted, all evaluations will be due on August 31 with an effective date of July 1.
- Merit increases would be designated as "performance adjustments" under the new system.
- Presently, merit increases become effective on the employee's anniversary date. Under the new system, all performance adjustments would become effective on October 1. No re-ratings would be allowed under the new system. However, an employee would be able to request an agency review of an overall rating of



DSCS Executive Staff discuss proposed changes to the PPR system. From left: Byron Decoteau, Kenyetta Sewell, Shannon Templet, Adrienne Bordelon, Mary Gloston, and Jean Jones.

"Unsuccessful," and thereafter a review by the Director of DSCS.

- The new system would require that employees be evaluated if they are employed on June 30 of the performance evaluation year. As long as an employee is rated "Successful" or higher, he would be eligible for a performance adjustment .
- The new system provides that alternative evaluations of "Not Evaluated" and "Unrated" may be given in certain circumstances.
- Both the "Not Evaluated" and "Unrated" evaluations would have the effect of a "Successful" evaluation for purposes of layoffs and eligibility for performance adjustments.
- There would be no eligibility for new hires to receive performance adjustment after six months. Instead, agencies would have the option to give a flat 2% increase between the sixth and twelfth months of employment to employees hired at the minimum of the their pay ranges.

Submit Your Comments on the Proposed Changes!

Individuals who wish to comment on the proposal may do so in person at the December 14th public hearing, or by the methods provided in General Circular #2011-034.

For the complete text of the proposed new rules, click [HERE](#) to view the General Circular.

The Edge comes to DSCS!

By Dana LeBherz
Training Consultant

The Department of State Civil Service is excited to introduce the EDGE, a comprehensive training and development program for all state employees. The EDGE stands for Employee Development, Growth, and Engagement and includes all the training you currently receive through CPTP. Once fully implemented, the EDGE will enable employees and supervisors to plan for and complete their minimum training requirements, get additional job training, and access personal development tools.

Beginning in January 2012, the EDGE introduces a new approach to learning. The program will include both online and classroom activities designed to enhance your learning experience. The EDGE online course series will allow employees to access training from any computer, eliminating the costs and time commitment associated with travelling to an instructor-led course for most classes in the EDGE program. The instructor-led capstone workshop will allow employees to practice handling challenging real world situations by using skills gained from the online classes and will also provide a forum to learn from other supervisors across the state. Each online course takes approximately one hour to complete and all online courses must be completed before participants can register for the instructor-led workshop.

All employees who have not completed all Supervisory Group 1 requirements by December 31, 2011, will be required to complete the new curriculum. This includes taking the online versions of previously completed instructor-led courses. However, users may skip directly to the course exam in order to test out of previously completed courses. As long as users pass the assessment with a 70% score or higher, they do not need to retake the entire course.



The EDGE kicks off in January 2012 with updated Supervisory Group 1 requirements. Here is an outline of what to expect:

Online Courses

- Civil Service Essentials
- Hiring and Retaining Top Talent
- Common Myths That Affect Good Supervision
- Leave Management
- Validating Employee Performance

Instructor-Led Course

- Supervision Capstone Workshop

The EDGE is coming! Stay current on all of the updates and information through the EDGE web page: <http://www.civilservice.la.gov/Training/CPTP/edge.asp>!

Considering ROI for Rewards and Recognition

By Janelle Haynsworth
Compensation Consultant

With the holiday season upon us, many employees in private industry are looking forward to their annual “Christmas bonuses.” However, for state employees, the month of December will come and go with no expectation of additional pay. This difference between private and public employees is due to [Article VII, Section 14\(A\)](#) of the Louisiana Constitution, which prohibits the donation of public funds.

This constitutional prohibition has been considered by the Louisiana Attorney General’s office in connection with many situations relating to the use of public funds over the years. In accordance with a 2006 Louisiana Supreme Court decision, the Attorney General announced a new three-prong test in 2007 which determines the validity of public fund usage. State agencies seeking to establish rewards and recognition programs under Civil Service Rule 6.16.1 should consider this test when deciding what rewards to include in their policies.

According to the Attorney General, an expenditure of public funds is not a prohibited donation if:

- *The expenditure serves a public purpose*
- *The expenditure does not appear to be gratuitous*
- *The public entity has a reasonable expectation of receiving a benefit or value at least equivalent to the amount of funds expended.*

The business concept, “return on investment,” is a widely accepted method used in private industry to quantify expected outcomes in financial terms, and may prove useful for state agencies in evaluating rewards programs. Essentially, in using ROI, the money used for reward programs is viewed as an investment which yields an outcome that benefits the mission of the agency, and ultimately, the citizens of Louisiana. For example, if the goal of the reward and recognition program is to increase employee engagement, a potential measure of this may be a reduction in voluntary turnover.

Research has shown that voluntary turnover has been directly linked to employee satisfaction and would be a good indicator of employee engagement. Additionally, turnover costs are significant for some state jobs and a reduction in turnover would yield a cost savings to the agency. As each state agency has a different mission, the criteria used to measure the effectiveness of rewards programs will depend upon the performance indicators of the agency.

A rewards and recognition program under Civil Service Rule 6.16.1 is one of the many discretionary pay mechanisms that assist appointing authorities in recruiting, developing, and retaining a workforce that excels in delivering quality services to the citizens of Louisiana. Although it may be difficult for some appointing authorities to grant monetary awards during lean budget years, it is important to maintain a culture of appreciation by continuing rewards programs with non-monetary awards. Human resource experts agree that the most effective reward is generally a non-monetary form of appreciation, so even something as simple as thanking an employee can be an effective way to achieve your organizational goals.

Quick Facts on Rule 6.16.1

(Rewards & Recognition)

- Agencies must have a policy approved by the Civil Service Commission
- Awards are limited to 10% of an employee’s base pay
- Only lump sum awards are available under this rule
- Awards do not count towards retirement calculations
- Funds dispersed to employees must come from existing agency budgets
- Agencies report recipients annually to DSCS and the Civil Service Commission

Click [HERE](#) for more information on Rule 6.16.1.