



360° Feedback Assessment Development Plan Guide



RECRUITMENT

ENGAGEMENT

DEVELOPMENT

RETENTION

A Countywide Succession & Workforce Planning Program Resource



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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

As a participant in the County of Los Angeles 360° Feedback Assessment (“360”), you have received valuable information about your strengths and development needs from the perspectives of your supervisor and your colleagues, direct reports, and/or customers. This guide is a resource to assist you in leveraging the insights gained from your 360 results to create your development plan. Specifically, this guide:

- Describes experience-based learning through stretch assignments as a highly effective approach to your development
- Outlines a 4-step process for creating your development plan
- Presents examples of development assignments
- Provides a template and sample completed development plan

WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE

This guide may be useful for anyone seeking to develop professionally. However, it has been written particularly for participants in the 360, which evaluates strengths and development needs according to defined competencies.

DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

A cornerstone of development is that management and supervisory-level employees primarily learn through experience; an estimated 70% of their development occurs this way. As these employees acquire a variety of experiences when work-related needs arise, those experiences shape their understanding of work operations and increase their confidence to effectively handle growing levels of complexity. This experience-based learning approach can be effective; however, it can be improved through the implementation of more structured and intentional development activities.

The next sections present information on *guided* experience-based learning that helps to make development a directed path of actions instead of an unplanned series of events.

Note: Other forms of development (e.g., online and in-person trainings; readings; discussions) can be valuable to your growth; however, this guide focuses on experience-based learning.



UNDERSTANDING STRETCH ASSIGNMENTS

One of the most effective ways to engage in experience-based learning is through **stretch assignments**. Stretch assignments are hands-on, competency-specific work experiences that serve as gateways to attaining the experience needed to close your competency gaps. As described below, there are several distinct characteristics that contribute to the effectiveness of stretch assignments.

Effective stretch assignments include

- **challenging work that forces you to learn by adjusting** (e.g., implementing major organizational change, working across organizational boundaries, influencing people, working with ambiguity, etc.), which can motivate you by requiring you to demonstrate your ability in new ways. However, the assignment should not be too challenging (e.g., too cognitively demanding; too many barriers or constraints to overcome; significant fear of failure in full view of peers), which can turn into an experience of defeat.
- **quality experiences that expand learning** by including unfamiliar work assignments that are multi-dimensional, have large scale and scope, and have major implications (i.e., high stakes).
- **multiple opportunities to perform the same or similar work within different contextual environments** (i.e., experiencing nuances of the specific work situations), which allows you to practice, apply previous lessons learned, and reach a higher level of understanding and confidence.
- **active, timely, constructive feedback** provided by others to guide learning and reduce uncertainty about how to best accomplish your work.
- **self-reflection on the work experience** through a systematic review of behaviors and outcomes. Reflection or after-event reviews provide a means for you to evaluate the work situation and then discuss it with others to receive guidance. These reviews help to ensure the appropriate lessons were understood, which can help maximize the learning potential from each work assignment.
- **consideration of assignment timing**. Timing in this case represents a moment when you are
 - in a *ready* learning state (e.g., willing, able, and possess the foundational knowledge needed to accomplish the challenge);
 - accepting of the challenge and willing to accomplish it;
 - carrying a regular workload that enables time to focus on accomplishing the stretch assignment; and
 - given support to clear barriers to the successful accomplishment of the assignment.



CONSTRUCTING YOUR 360 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Provided below is a 4-step process for constructing a development plan that includes stretch assignments. You may engage in this process independently; however, we recommend that you involve your supervisor to obtain his/her input, approval, and guidance on your development assignments.

1

Review your 360 Feedback Report. In addition to reviewing your 360 results, be sure to read the interpretation guidelines that can help you understand your results.

2

Identify your target competencies. Focus your efforts on a limited number (e.g., 3-5) of developmental targets. It is usually more effective to focus on a few substantive areas of development rather than attempting to close every competency gap identified in your 360.

After you select your competencies, review the behavioral statements comprising each competency as listed in your 360 Feedback Report. The behavioral statements can provide you with specific information to guide your development actions and goals.

3

Brainstorm potential stretch assignments that will develop the competencies. Page 6 lists example assignments that can serve as inspiration. As you review them, and any other potential assignments, evaluate each one to determine whether it will be truly effective and meaningful to your development. Asking yourself these questions can help in this step:

Does this assignment

- ...include an **unfamiliar responsibility**, such as managing new or different areas of work?
- ...involve taking a **new direction** that will create and/or manage strategic change?
- ...focus on an **inherited problem** that I must fix?
- ...have **broad scope** where I must manage multiple functions or services?
- ...have **large scale** (e.g., workload, locations, employees)?
- ...involve **high stakes** where there are critical outcomes or high pressure/visibility?
- ...give me **responsibility without authority** where I must nevertheless influence peers, higher-level management, and other stakeholders?

You should be able to answer “yes” to *at least one* of these questions for any assignment that you include in your development plan.

4

Narrow and document the assignments you will work on. The following questions can help you narrow multiple potential assignments to a manageable number:

- Which assignments have the most promise for learning?
- What other stakeholders must be involved to make the assignment happen?
- Which assignments are most appropriate and feasible given my current responsibilities?

A development plan template with instructions and sample completed development plan are provided on pages 7 and 8 to illustrate how to document your assignments. Use multiple pages of the template to reflect multiple assignments. Download your development plan template at <http://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/development-2/>.



EXAMPLE DEVELOPMENT ASSIGNMENTS

A challenging assignment is not necessarily a developmental assignment. You could use existing strengths to successfully complete challenging projects. True development assignments are challenging and stretch you beyond your comfort zone.

1. Conduct a feasibility study (e.g., conduct a study on enhancing current services or investigate the possibility of outsourcing a function or service)
2. Develop an efficiency initiative (e.g., redesign a work process, identify a new technology, evaluate a policy, etc.)
3. Develop a new, complex training program
4. Lead the preliminary development of the department's strategic plan
5. Establish or maintain a functional work-group that spans across departments (e.g., develop or maintain a quality assurance program)
6. Take responsibility for a failing/faltering project
7. Take on the responsibility for developing a group of high potential employees
8. Establish an inter-agency consortium to solve a common problem
9. Add a work responsibility that is "falling through the cracks" in a work group or pick up a neglected but needed work function
10. Handle the press or external political entity
11. Develop a budget proposal
12. Conduct a system-based review of all policies or procedures related to a major work function
13. Manage a department-wide customer service improvement initiative
14. Lead a high-profile, publicly visible project that requires working with multiple external organizations
15. Write high-profile reports covering sensitive or complex information/work situations
16. Implement a new IT system
17. Mediate a dispute between organizational units
18. Evaluate a new law's impact on a major departmental function
19. Redesign a major departmental function
20. Manage an annual organizational event
21. Establish a new satellite office or facility
22. Develop and negotiate a new service contract
23. Develop a forecasting model to predict an outcome of interest
24. Represent the organization during an audit
25. Take on any responsibility of the next higher-level position





360 Development Plan (Template & Instructions)

Your Name, Title

Your Supervisor's Name, Title

Title of Stretch Assignment

Period Covered

1

Developmental/Stretch Assignment Description		Target Competencies to Develop	Competency Strengths to Leverage
2		3	4
Major Sub-Activity*		Completion Date	Feedback Method(s)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.		6	7
5.			
6.			
7.			
Resources Needed	8		

* There may be additional sub-activities NOT listed that are necessary for the successful completion of the development/stretch assignment. Only those sub-activities that directly relate to development of the target competencies are listed. You should engage in all activities necessary to successfully complete the development/stretch assignment.

Instructions for Using the Template:

- 1 – Describe the duration of the plan (e.g., 3-12 months)
- 2 – Define the assignment in terms of what will be accomplished or attempted
- 3 – List the target competencies to develop
- 4 – List the strengths to leverage in completing the assignment
- 5 – Outline the major sub-activities needed to complete the assignment

- 6 – List the proposed completion dates for each sub-activity
- 7 – List the feedback methods that will be used
- 8 – Describe or list the resources needed and/or available to complete the assignment



360 Development Plan (Sample Completed)

Alison Jones, Assistant Manager

Your Name, Title

Adrianna Gutierrez, Deputy

Your Supervisor's Name, Title

Title of Stretch Assignment **Training Program Proposal**

Period Covered **September 12, 2016 – January 31, 2017**

Developmental/Stretch Assignment Description		Target Competencies to Develop	Competency Strengths to Leverage
Lead a team to develop a comprehensive proposal to augment the existing training program to include value-added training skill sets that would enable employees to meet the needs of the changing public service environment		Creativity/Innovation Strategic Thinking HR Management Team Building	Decisiveness Problem Solving Partnering
Major Sub-Activity*		Completion Date	Feedback Method(s)
1. Assemble a project team and create a project plan		10/7/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly development meetings with Deputy Gutierrez Project team feedback Self-reflection
2. Evaluate the current training program, including course topics, curricula, student evaluations and test scores, manager feedback, etc.		10/21/16	
3. Determine needed skill sets and understand changing public service needs (e.g., internal/external surveys, focus groups, other research)		11/18/16	
4. Conduct a benchmarking study of training programs in other departments and public agencies		12/9/16	
5. Develop an employee training plan (e.g., topics, delivery method, how training is provided, cost, timeline) to equip the department to meet changing needs of the public		12/30/16	
6. Develop and present a 10-page proposal to the department executives		1/31/17	
Resources Needed	Timely and appropriate input from Paul Stevens, Training Manager; surveying system or resources		

* There may be additional sub-activities NOT listed that are necessary for the successful completion of the development/stretch assignment. Only those sub-activities that directly relate to development of the target competencies are listed. You should engage in all activities necessary to successfully complete the development/stretch assignment.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

After you have constructed your development plan, the real work begins. As you close competency gaps and build your portfolio of work experiences through stretch assignments, we encourage you to engage in self-reflection. Keep a work journal of new knowledge and insights gained, and how you can apply them to future experiences.

Additionally, recognize that development is long-term and requires commitment; it is not an absolute, continuous linear process. There will be ups and downs with plateaus as your accomplishments accrue. Participating in another 360 Feedback Assessment will provide you with updated feedback to gauge your development progress.

We hope this guide was useful in helping you to leverage your participation in the 360 and experience-based learning to develop your professional capability. We wish you well in achieving your career goals.

If you have any questions regarding the County's 360, please contact DHR's Talent Management team at DHR360@hr.lacounty.gov.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Marc holds an M.S. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology and professional certificates in Human Resources Management, Project Management, Technical Writing, and Business Management. He has over 17 years of experience in public, private, and consulting organizations. His areas of practice include succession and workforce planning, selection research and test development, organizational surveys, recruitment, training, compensation administration, and other human resources activities. He has presented at regional and international conferences and has been published in professional journals.

Angela C. Hawkins, HR Analyst IV

Angela holds an MBA and has over 14 years of public-sector human resources experience involving succession and workforce planning; recruitment and selection; survey and training program development and implementation; and other human resources activities. She has presented at a regional conference sponsored by the International Public Management Association – Human Resources and has been published in its publication.

David Miller, HR Analyst IV

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