

## A Supervisor's Guide to ENGAGE

Supervisors and team members across all departments have said that you want to get back to basics. You want to have real professional development conversations that help individuals and teams achieve their goals and better serve the citizens of Missouri.

This guide provides an overview of the basic steps for these conversations.

For additional information and guidance, please see the videos and other resource materials on the **ENGAGE** webpage: <https://oa.mo.gov/engage>.

If you have ideas for how we can improve **ENGAGE**, please submit your feedback at <https://oa.mo.gov/engage/feedback>.

What is most important is to get started, have regular conversations about what is working well and what can be improved, learn from each other, and get better at helping each other excel.

### BEFORE THE CONVERSATION:

#### Schedule – Establish monthly check-ins.

- Reserve time for regular conversations with all your team members. Expect to spend about 30-45 minutes for your conversations at the start and end of the year in order to develop development goals for the year, confirm work priorities, and review progress at the end. Other check-ins may take 15-20 minutes.
- Remember that feedback delivered in the moment is often most effective, so don't "hold back" any immediate feedback until your monthly conversation.

#### Prepare – Review your notes and priorities before your conversation.

- Block time on your calendar to prepare for your conversation with your team member.
- Review your notes from your previous conversations, as well as any additional relevant information (i.e. annual and monthly development goals; status of current projects, etc.).
- Identify a few priorities for feedback based upon your observation of the team member in action (i.e. quality of the team member's work, how the team member manages his or her time, and how the team member engages with other team members and citizens).
  - Specific:* Select specific examples to prevent misunderstanding and to be as helpful as possible to the team member.
  - Actionable:* Make sure that any feedback leads to a practical recommendation.

- Balanced*: Blend positive and improvement feedback in one session.
- Strength-based*: Build upon the team member's existing strengths wherever possible.
- Review your priorities with your own supervisor before the conversation with the team member to ensure that you are on the same page, and to refine what topics to cover with the team member.
- Ensure that if the team member will be receiving a new work assignment you can clearly communicate:
  - The team member's role and expectations (i.e. what should be done; when should it be completed; what does "good look like" or what would be successful).
  - Who the team member should work with (if appropriate).
  - What decisions the team member can make and which ones should be brought to you.
- Practice delivering feedback, especially if it will be critical.
- Consider sending a brief agenda for the conversation and remind the team member about how he or she should prepare for it.

## DURING THE CONVERSATION:

### **Reflect – Be open to feedback. Whether it feels positive or more critical, feedback is meant to help you.**

- Review the agenda with the team member.
- Recognize specific tasks that were done well in the past month.
- Listen as the team member shares any initial thoughts about his or her progress toward his or her development goals since your last conversation.
- Review how the team member's work relates to the department's overall objectives, and, if needed, discuss with the team member any changes to his or her current work objectives, priorities, or tasks due to unforeseen circumstances or shifts in organizational direction.
- Share your assessment of the team member's performance to date with respect to the team member's specific job function and development goals (i.e. is the team member improving?).
- Provide feedback linked to the team member's development goals using our 4-step feedback model:
  1. "I observed that... *[describe specific situation and behavior].*"
  2. "The impact upon me was... *[describe impact].*"
  3. Pause for understanding. If necessary, ask questions to ensure you understand each other.
  4. "I suggest that next time... *[offer recommendations to improve].*"
- Ask the team member if he or she has any observations or feedback to share. If so, listen and take it seriously.
- Discuss any areas of disagreement to ensure that once the meeting is over, the team member agrees with and/or at least understands your perspective.

- As much as possible, let team members determine solutions to challenges to increase their ownership of the next steps.

### **Focus – Agree to work on a few specific development goals for the next month.**

- Identify one or two specific goals for the next month that link back to the team member's professional development goals. For the first conversation of the year, work with the team member to identify specific professional development goals for the coming year (usually not more than five). Ask team members to consider:
  - What were your biggest development successes of the previous year? What strengths do you want to build upon?
  - What skills would you like to develop or master this year?
  - Are there any additional responsibilities you would like to try?
  - Are there any projects you are passionate about pursuing?
  - Looking beyond this year, how do you see your role or position changing through time? Do you see yourself moving to a different role, and, if so, what skills will you need to demonstrate to get there?
- Identify ways for the team member to demonstrate progress in tangible ways in the next month (i.e. during your upcoming shifts, do A; when leading the next meeting, try B; in your next written report, do C; in your next conversation with a citizen, use D approach; etc.).
- Suggest potential additional professional development activities as appropriate (i.e. training, meetings, seeking advice from others, etc.).
- Remember every team member has different strengths and areas for development – some may need more guidance than others.
- Take notes and document action items for review in the next conversation (preferable to use one notebook for each team member).

### **AFTER THE CONVERSATION:**

#### **Act – Commit to using the feedback to get better and reach your goals.**

- Document the results of the conversation in the notebook you have for each team member. You may also want to provide similar information to the team member. Example points include:
  - Notable achievements in the past month.
  - Any changes in responsibilities or expectations.
  - Examples of progress toward professional development goals.
  - Specific development goals to focus upon during the coming month.

- Record any feedback that you received during the conversation and your own next steps to adjust or improve.

**Ask – Seek input from your supervisor, colleagues, and customers about how you are progressing toward your development goals.**

- Update your supervisor on the outcome of your conversation with the team member, and the team member's development goals for the coming month.
- Look for opportunities to see the team member in action.
- Provide real-time feedback, especially when you see a team member trying to implement the feedback you have provided. Positive, immediate feedback is powerful!