



# The Chronicle

## Excellence in Action

If you have any topics, questions or comments for The Chronicle, send an e-mail to: [dha.bethesda.ncr-med.mbx.the-chronicle@mail.mil](mailto:dha.bethesda.ncr-med.mbx.the-chronicle@mail.mil)

DoD Instruction 1400.25 Vol. 431  
National Capital Region Medical Directorate Personnel

## The Progress Review

### What is a Progress Review?

A **progress review** is a meeting in which the Rating Official and the employee discuss the employee's progress towards achieving the job objectives, expectations and outcomes in the employee's performance plan.

### Progress Review Overview for Rating Official and Employee

Progress reviews may only be initiated by supervisors. They are performance discussions that must be documented in the MyPerformance appraisal tool. A progress review can be done at any time during the rating cycle but must occur at least once.

### Who Participates in a Progress Review?

#### A Rating Official (RO):

- Schedules a Progress Review with the employee
- Discusses progress towards established goals with the employee
- Coordinates acknowledgement with the Higher Level Reviewer (HLR)
- Documents communication of the progress review to the employee

#### An Employee:

- Can provide input during the discussion
- Acknowledges the progress review discussion in the MyPerformance Tool

### New

An employee is not given a performance narrative or performance element rating at a progress review. The supervisor and employee should engage in meaningful communications throughout the appraisal cycle to review and convey:

- a. Organizational goals and priorities
- b. Performance elements and standards, including ensuring the performance plan accurately reflects the work being evaluated
- c. Supervisor's expectations
- d. Employee's accomplishments and contributions
- e. Employee's level of performance including any areas that need improvement
- f. Barriers to success
- g. Employee's developmental needs and career goals

### How to Conduct a Progress Review

#### 1. Focus on significant accomplishments:

- a. Difficulty
- b. One of a kind
- c. First time
- d. High visibility
- e. Large volume of work
- f. Close deadline
- g. Competing priorities
- h. Innovation required
- i. Scope and impact

#### 2. Document or retain enough information to jog memory, e.g., name of report rather than copy of entire report.

#### 3. Link accomplishment to critical element and position description.

#### 4. Document conversation as a Memorandum for the Record in the event the employee's closeout is less than satisfactory.

### The Discussion:

#### Be detailed

The primary objective of providing any type of productive feedback is to compliment or change conduct. Many times an employee does not understand why their conduct is a problem unless the rating official properly articulates the issues in detail.

#### Communicate feedback proactively

It's important to recognize conflicts when they first happen. Otherwise, supervisors are more likely to hold a grudge, which can manifest itself in snapping at the employee unintentionally later on.

#### Breathe

When you have to confront problematic behavior, it's important to take a step back and let yourself cool off first.

#### Be Fair

There are two sides to every story. Acknowledging a bias can help, especially if you're in a position of power.

#### Encourage Feedback

Initiate a discussion with the other person. Don't make it one-sided. Listen to the employee. You don't know what stresses outside of the workplace, they are experiencing.

#### In this Issue:

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- Motivating Employees through Change
- VERA/VSIP
- PATHWAYS: Hiring initiatives for Students/Recent Grads
- FEVS
- WorkLife4You
- Time to Hire

*"Start by doing what is necessary; then do what is possible and suddenly you're doing the impossible!"* Francis of Assisi

## Motivating Employees through Change

The National Capital Region Medical Directorate (NCR MD) encourages rating officials to train and develop their human relations skills and communication techniques continuously. These skills facilitate an employee-rating official's relationship and help to create an atmosphere of shared respect that value employees and their contributions. Employee motivation and support are crucial towards moving the NCR MD into the future. Successful leaders, managers and supervisors all over the world are aware that motivation is important to the quality performance.

### Motivating Employee to Improve Performance

Many Psychologists believe that motivation is the process that drives an individual towards achieving a goal. These days, most employers are gaining more and more interested to know how to motivate their employees to improve productivity. Performance bonuses and time off awards are a few examples of motivators. But many supervisors do not believe in rewarding an employee for doing their job regardless of how well the job is being performed. The Director, DHA supports rewarding employees through incentives and other established awards programs.

Caution: Negative feedback made to an employee may have unfavorable outcomes such as: Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints, grievances, bad performance appraisals challenges, warnings, suspensions and dismissal.

### Rewarding

Encouraging an employee to perform better includes, but not entirely based on, using rewards and incentives to help build employee confidence to yield efficiency. The NCR MD rewards and incentives programs consist of honorary awards, on-the-spot, special act of service, time off award, quality step increases, and promotions. In addition, like the military awards program, the NCR MD HQ, Regional Personnel Branch encourages public recognition for civilians that may consist of an explanation of why the recognition is given. Supervisors and employees can contact the NCR MD HQ, Regional Personnel Branch for more information or visit the CapMed website at: <http://www.capmed.mil/SitePages/Home.asp> for the Administrative Instruction containing the types of civilian awards that can be granted and the criteria for each award.

### Setting Goals

Supervisors should actively solicit employee input when setting goals and act upon the input from the employee. This small gesture shows employees that they are valued and their opinions and suggestions are heard.

Supervisors should discuss with employees their role in the organization and how they contribute to achieving organizational goals. When employees know where they fit in and can see how their efforts help to meet mission goals, it also empowers them to know that they can make a positive difference.

### Engaging the Employee

Being engaged imparts parity and demonstrates a supervisor's ability to be an effective leader who is in touch with his/her employee. Engage an employee discussion for their opinion when looking for ways to improve working conditions. If their answer improves morale, efficiency, productions, etc., you can often reward the employee by following through on the request.

### Something to Consider??

The role of supervisors is pivotal in developing an excellent performance culture. Good supervisors communicate well with employees and can help them feel that their performance is valued and that they are important to carrying out the mission.

#### *Motivation and Performance.*

***"Motivation is the combination of a person's desire and energy directed at achieving a goal. It is the cause of action. Influencing people's motivation means getting them to want to do what you know must be done." Military Leadership, 1993.***

## VERA/VSIP

Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP) are workforce reshaping flexibilities for the civilian population. Providing VERA/VSIP opportunities to civilian employees will provide the NCR MD the opportunity to restructure the organization to best meet the mission. Civilian employees who are eligible, apply and are approved can either retire earlier than normal and may receive a monetary incentive to do so.

### Requirements

**VERA:** To apply, an employee must be on a permanent appointment and be either a) 50 yrs old and have 20 years of service, or b) any age with 25 years of service. VERA temporarily lowers the age and service requirements for retirement to increase the number of employees who are

eligible years before normal.

**VSIP:** To apply, employees must be on a permanent appointment and have 12 continuous months of Department of Defense (DoD) employment (includes previous Navy and Army time).

Incentives for VSIP are a 'buyout' of up to \$40,000 and/or retirement earlier than is normally permitted. Employees occupying positions designated by DoD and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) as severe shortage of candidates, critical hire, and/or mission critical are not eligible for VSIP.

### Application and Approval Process

Employees may begin filling out the application and submit it for processing beginning February 5 through 23, 2018.

Once the application is submitted it will be routed to recommend approval or disapproval as follows:

- Department Head
- Chief of Staff
- MTF/Center Director,
- Civilian Human Resources Center (to verify eligibility)
- NCR MD
- Director, Defense Health Agency (FINAL)

The Defense Health Agency (DHA) is the executive agent for the NCR MD civilian personnel authorities. Therefore, the Director, DHA will be the final approving authority for employee applications.

### Stay Informed

Throughout the coming weeks and months, pay careful attention to any information that may come out via email or on our websites about VERA/VSIP.

In the meantime, we encourage all that might be interested in applying to start preparing themselves by logging into EBIS to obtain your retirement estimate. You can access EBIS by going to <https://www.abc.army.mil/>.

Questions regarding VERA or VSIP eligibility or general retirement and benefit questions may be sent to the CHRC by emailing: [dha.bethesda.ncr-medical.mbx.ncr-md-chrc@mail.mil](mailto:dha.bethesda.ncr-medical.mbx.ncr-md-chrc@mail.mil)

## Federal Academic Alliances: Training and Development for Federal Employees

The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) government-wide mission is to recruit, retain, and honor a world class federal workforce to serve the American people. Their main focus is to ensure that Federal employees have access to training and development opportunities. OPM is currently partnering with various colleges and universities to provide Federal employees post-secondary education at reduced tuition rates. All Federal employees can take advantage of this program to attain their higher education. Some of the agreements extend the benefits to spouses and dependents. The academic alliances address the demand for high-quality learning and development as well as the fast change of pace in the learning industry.

With the endorsement of the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council, OPM began leading this effort to develop relationships with colleges and universities to:

- Address current Government-wide and agency-specific skills gaps
- Support career development among Federal employees
- Provide greater opportunities for Federal employees to obtain college degrees and certifications
- Provide the opportunity for colleges and universities to offer an online component to Federal employees
- Provide current college students with a greater understanding of the Federal Government
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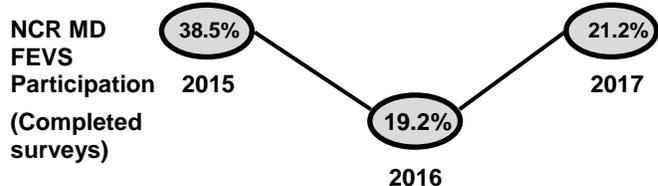
For more information on OPM's partnership with colleges and universities, please visit:

<https://www.opm.gov/wiki/training//Our-Academic-Partners.ashx>

## Early Thoughts on FEVS 2018

Though it is barely the start of the new year, the timeline for the 2018 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) put out by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has officially begun. The FEVS is an important tool used by the government to measure *only civilian* (CIV) employees' perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. Feedback from the FEVS also serves as an opportunity for individual agencies or commands to understand the feelings, concerns, and satisfaction of their civilian workforce enabling them to take the necessary steps to address and correct potentially negative issues. FEVS data is also used by Climate Assessment Teams (volunteers which represent diverse, departmental groups within an MTF) throughout the MTF's to address negative perceptions/ issues as well.

Administration of the FEVS is done through random, electronic invitation to selected federal employees and is completely anonymous by law. Participation is also voluntary. The key to the success of any survey is in participation. Many of us have been through several FEVS cycles in our civilian personnel careers but for those that are at the beginning their careers in civil service, it is crucial to understand just how important your voice is. As a group the NCR MD/ J-11 has an extremely powerful voice. In fact, **more than 65%** of all civilian employees within the Defense Health Agency (DHA) work in the NCR MD. Unfortunately, the previous 2 cycles' participation in the FEVS has suffered greatly within the directorate.



Thus, this year we will see a more robust marketing campaign and increased awareness of the FEVS throughout the late winter/ early spring, along with timelier and more transparency in the distribution of the results following survey completion.

Currently FEVS invitations are tentatively planned to go out in early May and, again, they will be randomly generated. It cannot be stressed enough how important participation in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey is. When any of us get invited to the survey, we should make an effort to be heard through its' completion and submission. Sometimes it doesn't take much effort to have an impact.

For questions regarding the survey, or if you would like a copy of your department's results from the 2017 FEVS contact Rob Judd: [robert.j.judd2.CTR@mail.mil](mailto:robert.j.judd2.CTR@mail.mil)

*“Without change there is no innovation, creativity, or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable” William Pollard*

## Employee Assistance Program: WorkLife4You

NCR MD has expanded its EAP benefits for employees by adding WorkLife4You this fiscal year.

WorkLife4You serves as a huge resource center to help employees simplify their lives. Basically almost anything that you would spend time researching can be done for you through WorkLife4You specialists and expert guidance.

Worklife4You can assist you in finding appropriate child care, adult care, schools, fitness centers, home improvement professionals, movers, pet care, adoption resources and much more – all with confirmed availability and personally matched to your needs.

Another great benefit of the WorkLife4You program is the free in-person senior care assessment. Everyone needs the peace of mind that their older loved ones or loved ones with significant care needs are in good hands. WorkLife4You will arrange for highly credentialed Professional Care Managers (PCMs) to provide up to three hours of in-person services at no cost to you. PCMs are trained to assess the health, safety and emotional needs of loved ones and direct families to the right resources at the right time. PCMs can provide:

- In-home assessments and recommended care plans
- Facility reviews and evaluations (assisted living, retirement homes, etc.)
- Post-hospitalization assessments prior to discharge
- Ongoing care coordination of medical services, bill payment, appointment coordination and access to community and senior services

Plus, WorkLife4You specialists can provide referrals to resources recommended in your care plan and ongoing support and assistance.

The WorkLife4You program also provides WorkLife4You Kits containing free products and information. The following kits are available: Prenatal Kit for expecting parents; Child Safety Kit for parents and toddlers; College Kit for college-bound students; Adult Caregiver Kit for caregivers and Be Well Kit for those trying to get healthier.

Free and up-to-date educational materials on a wide range of topics such as child care, parenting, pregnancy, adoption, senior care, aging, fitness, weight loss, budgeting, relocation, college, pet care, deployment, balancing home and work life and much more are also

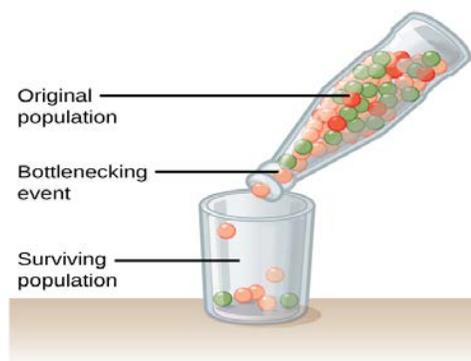
available. Employees can request any of this information by calling the Worklife4You phone number: 1-800-222-0364 (TTY: 1-888-262-7848).

Additionally, employees can obtain information online by becoming a NCR MD WorkLife4You member. Online access provides tips and tools including articles, webinars, moderated discussion groups, educational guides and more. To create your member account, login into [worklife4you.com](http://worklife4you.com). Look for the Member login box, follow “start now” link and enter Registration Code: NCR MD.

Register today and begin to enjoy a paid for benefit that will help you better manage your work and life responsibilities.

## Time-to-Hire

Many agencies across the federal government face the challenge of recruiting and retaining top tier candidates throughout the hiring process. The hiring process in the federal government can be lengthy, and filled with many steps that sometimes cause an agency to lose these individuals. The hiring process is often accompanied by bottlenecks that inadvertently cause the loss of preferred candidates chosen by hiring managers. Bottlenecks are the inefficiencies brought about by factors that create delays and higher production costs.



NCR MD leadership has employed the Time-to-Hire initiative aimed at reducing the average number of days by 30%. Attaining this goal will simultaneously increase the retention of top tier candidates during the hiring process, reducing amount of days used to complete a recruit/fill billet, reduce financial losses, and increase the desired skillsets from an initial selection...which ultimately increase patient satisfaction.