

1.0 BACKGROUND

- The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2010 provided the Secretary of Defense authority to promulgate agency rules and regulations providing for: 1) a new performance management program and 2) redesigned procedures for use within the Department of Defense (DoD) to make appointments to positions within the competitive service. The NDAA also provided the Secretary, at his discretion, authority to establish a “DoD Civilian Workforce Incentive Fund.”
- Section 9902(c)(2) of title 5, United States Code, requires DoD to ensure “a means for involving employees (for bargaining unit employees, through their exclusive representatives) in design and implementation of . . .” the new authorities and practices. Executive Order 13522, “Creating Labor Management Forums to Improve Delivery of Government Services,” requires agencies to allow employees and their unions “to have pre-decisional involvement in all workplace matters to the fullest extent practicable.”
- Representatives from the DoD Components, organizations that represent DoD employees (i.e., unions, Federal Managers’ Association), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and other stakeholders worked collaboratively for more than 18 months to plan and carry out the pre-decisional process for developing recommendations for the new personnel authorities. The process came to be known as “New Beginnings.”
- Three New Beginnings joint labor-management design teams—Performance Management, Hiring Flexibilities, and Civilian Workforce Incentive Fund— met and engaged in extensive research, analysis, discussion, and consultations with subject matter experts, and developed proposals for the design of the personnel authorities for consideration by the Department’s leadership. The vast majority of Design Team recommendations were endorsed.
- The inclusive collaborative process was beneficial in that it provided the Department with the perspectives and ideas from those most directly affected by the Department’s civilian personnel policies and practices—its employees, supervisors, and managers.

2.0 THE DEFENSE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND APPRAISAL PROGRAM (DPMAP)

- The new Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program (DPMAP) will focus on improving the Department’s overall performance management and on-going and continuous supervisor and employee involvement.
- The program will link organizational mission and goals to individual performance plans, ensure regular feedback during the appraisal cycle between employees and supervisors, and result in increased employee engagement, morale, and effectiveness. It is not about the “365th day”; it is about clear guidance and continuous feedback.

- This shift in focus will require DoD to fully realize a culture that embraces and supports a high-performing workforce, emphasizes the importance of employee engagement, and acknowledges the critical role of supervisors in an effective performance management program.
- The DPMAP:
 - Is consistent with the legislative requirement of the NDAA 2010, which requires the Secretary, in coordination with the Director, OPM, to promulgate regulations providing for “[a] fair, credible, and transparent performance appraisal program for linking employee bonuses and other performance-based actions to performance appraisals of employees”;
 - Fosters a high-performance culture by making meaningful distinctions in performance that will be acknowledged formally in the rating process and will be used to inform other personnel-based decisions, including not only awards and recognition, but also promotions, training, and developmental opportunities;
 - Is consistent with the requirements in section 351.504 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, as it continues to provide the ability to retain high performing employees to meet the Department’s mission by granting greater service credit for top performers during reductions-in-force; and
 - Consists of the following proposed major tenants:
 - a 3-level rating pattern;
 - a rating cycle of April 1 through March 31;
 - a minimum period of 90 days required to be eligible for a rating; and
 - a minimum of three performance review discussions required between the supervisor and employee.
- Deploying a performance management and appraisal program across the Components for the vast majority of civilian employees will enable seamless transition of employees throughout the Department during career progression and workforce restructuring.
- The DPMAP will cover the majority of the Department’s civilian workforce; however, the Department is currently reviewing authorities granted to cover certain groups of employees under other performance management programs.
- The Department will continue to develop and implement the NDAA initiatives while emphasizing pre-decisional involvement and training. The Department plans to begin a phased implementation of the DPMAP in April 2016.

3.0 OTHER INITIATIVES

- The DPMAP is one of many initiatives that resulted from Congressional direction and Design Team recommendations to implement improved civilian personnel authorities. The Department is also focused on:
 - Streamlining the hiring process, to include the enhancement of existing automated hiring tools and the DoD Hiring Manager’s Toolkit, available at <https://dodhrinfo.cpms.osd.mil/>
 - Training for supervisors and managers, as well as training to improve the skills and advisory capabilities of DoD’s human resource practitioner workforce.

- Implementing effective means of recruiting, compensating, and incentivizing the workforce, which includes a focus on strategic workforce planning to shape an effective workforce for today and into the future.