Assisting Your Employee with the Self-Appraisal

What is a Self-Appraisal?

A self-appraisal is an employee’s narrative description of accomplishments related to the job objectives or previously established performance goals. While writing an effective self-appraisal takes some effort, it does not have to be lengthy; however, the self-assessment should provide the supervisor with a clear picture of the employee’s perception of his or her own performance and contributions.

This is an opportunity for an employee to describe major contributions and how the work meets or exceeds the supervisor’s performance expectations. Documenting everything an employee accomplishes during the appraisal period is not expected. Employees are encouraged to keep a calendar or journal throughout the appraisal period to record significant activities as they occur. The calendar or journal makes the self-appraisal activity easier to complete and keeps it specific and relevant to job objectives.

Employee Guidelines for Writing a Self-Appraisal

When writing a self-appraisal, the following guidelines may help:

- **Restate objectives.** Paraphrasing job objectives and contributing factors gives supervisors a clear picture of how well the employee understood performance expectations.

- **Highlight most significant achievements for the rating cycle.** The self-appraisal does not need to be lengthy. The employee should highlight what mattered most during the rating cycle.

- **Make the connection between what was done and why it matters to the Institute.** Highlight how the organization is better off because of the achievement or contribution by describing the tangible benefit (i.e., a cost savings to the organization or a solution that enabled employees to better perform their jobs).

- **Cite instances where employee actions or conduct influenced performance.** Employee actions and conduct can influence the performance rating. Be sure to highlight specific instances where employee behavior made a positive difference in the outcome of a job objective.

- **Note challenges faced and how employee fared.** Overcoming challenges is an important part of the overall performance rating. Challenges may be technical or interpersonal in
nature. They may also involve the ability to succeed despite limited resources or difficult circumstances.

**What is the purpose of self-appraisal?**

Employees use the self-appraisal to describe accomplishments related to expectations, objectives, contributing factors, organizational mission and goals, and other factors. The self assessment also provides the manager/supervisor with a clear picture of how the employee perceives his or her own performance and contributions.

**How can an employee be sure that he/she has captured major achievements when completing a self-appraisal?**

Employees are encouraged to maintain an ongoing calendar or record of major achievements throughout the appraisal cycle. By documenting major achievements as they occur, employees will have ready access to the information needed to complete their self-appraisal.