

## City of Willard Merit Evaluation and Performance Policy

### Purpose:

To establish a structured and transparent process for assessing employee performance and determining merit-based compensation, fostering continuous improvement, accountability, and excellence across all city departments.

### Performance Evaluation Policy

#### 1. Annual Evaluations:

- All employees shall receive a **formal annual performance evaluation** to assess their individual contributions, performance outcomes, and alignment with organizational goals.
- The evaluation must be:
  - **Completed, approved, and reviewed** with the employee by their **employment anniversary date**.
  - Documented and signed by both the employee and their supervisor, with an opportunity for employee comments.
  - Filed in the employee's personnel record.
- *If an employee is on extended leave (e.g., medical leave or FMLA) near their anniversary date, the evaluation may be delayed until their return, with approval from the HR Director.*

#### 2. Evaluation Framework:

- Performance evaluations shall consider:
  - **Core Job Responsibilities:** Proficiency in assigned duties and adherence to job descriptions.
  - **Goal Achievement:** Progress toward established departmental and organizational goals.
  - **Behavioral Competencies:** Communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adherence to city values.
  - **Professional Development:** Efforts toward skill-building and continuous learning.

#### 3. Performance Rating Scale:

- Evaluations shall utilize the following standardized rating system:

- **1 – Unsatisfactory:** Performance fails to meet minimum expectations; immediate action required.
  - **2 – Needs Improvement:** Performance meets some but not all expectations; improvement necessary.
  - **3 – Satisfactory:** Performance meets expectations in all key areas.
  - **4 – Above Average:** Performance consistently exceeds expectations in most areas.
  - **5 – Role Model:** Performance significantly exceeds expectations; exemplary behavior and results.
- *Supervisors must document specific examples of employee achievements or performance challenges to support each rating, particularly for ratings of 4, 5, or 1.*

#### 4. Review of Ratings:

- Ratings of **4 (Above Average)** or **5 (Role Model)** shall be reviewed by the **City Administrator (CA)** and the **Human Resources (HR) Director** to ensure that similar standards are applied consistently across all staff and departments.
- Ratings of **1 (Unsatisfactory)** shall be reviewed by the **HR Director**, along with any supporting disciplinary documents or **Performance Improvement Plans (PIP)**, prior to presenting the evaluation to the employee.
- *If a rating is downgraded during the review process, the supervisor is responsible for owning the revised score.* Supervisors shall not inform employees that a higher score was proposed but downgraded by the HR Director or CA. Supervisors must justify their proposed ratings during the review process, any failure to provide sufficient justification is solely their responsibility.

#### 5. Expectations for Improvement:

- Employees receiving a **1 (Unsatisfactory)** rating:
  - Must be placed on a **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)** detailing specific areas for improvement, clear performance metrics, and a 90-day timeline.
  - Supervisors shall provide consistent coaching and monitoring during the PIP period.

- Failure to improve may result in **disciplinary action up to and including termination**.
- Employees receiving a **2 (Needs Improvement)** rating:
  - Shall receive targeted feedback and opportunities for growth within the annual review process.

#### 6. Merit Raise Eligibility:

- Employees with a **2 (Needs Improvement)** or higher rating are eligible for consideration of a **merit raise**, contingent upon the availability of funds.
  - Employees with a **1 (Unsatisfactory)** rating are ineligible for a merit increase until the next evaluation cycle provided performance improves to a satisfactory level or higher..
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#### Policy Effective Date:

##### 1. Step Increase Transition:

- This policy will become effective for an employee **following the completion of their 12-month annual step increase**.
  - For example:
    - If an employee is eligible for their next step increase on **August 1, 2025**, this policy will become effective the following day.
    - The employee's first merit payment, if performance warrants and funds allow, will be due will be effective the **first full payroll period following** their evaluation.
    - A **midpoint evaluation** shall be conducted in **December 2025** to provide feedback and guidance ahead of the annual evaluation.
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#### Midpoint and Ad Hoc Evaluations

##### 1. Midpoint Evaluation (6-Month Check-In):

- Midpoint evaluations, while **informal**, shall focus on the same areas assessed in the **official evaluation form** to ensure continuity and alignment with performance standards.

- Supervisors should document key discussion points to track progress and address areas for improvement. This documentation should be provided to HR for retention in the employee's personnel file.

## **2. Ad Hoc Evaluations:**

- Supervisors may conduct evaluations at any time when performance issues arise or to provide additional guidance and support.
- Ad hoc evaluations can serve as tools to document specific incidents or achievements, reinforcing accountability.
- Documentation should be provided to HR for retention in the employee's personnel file.

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## **Supervisor and Employee Responsibilities**

### **1. Supervisor Responsibilities:**

- Set clear expectations, goals, and measurable performance metrics at the start of the evaluation period.
- Provide ongoing feedback, coaching, and support throughout the year.
- Conduct fair and unbiased evaluations based on documented evidence and objective criteria.
- Engage employees in meaningful conversations during evaluations to foster understanding and growth.
- *Supervisors should receive annual training on conducting evaluations, setting measurable goals, and providing constructive feedback. This shall be the responsibility of the HR Director or designee to facilitate.*

### **2. Employee Responsibilities:**

- Actively seek feedback and clarification on performance expectations.
- Commit to professional development and skill enhancement.
- Address any performance concerns or improvement areas identified by their supervisor.

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## **Merit Raise Determination and Payment Timeline:**

### **1. Eligibility and Timing:**

- Merit raises are contingent upon satisfactory performance (rating of **2 or higher**) and the availability of funds.
- Raises, if awarded, shall be effective beginning in the **first full payroll period following the annual performance evaluation.**

## 2. Annual Timeline for Evaluations and Raises:

- **Midpoint Evaluation:** Conducted 6 months after the employee's annual employment anniversary to provide structured feedback.
- **Annual Evaluation:** Conducted on or before the employee's anniversary date, determining merit eligibility.
- **Merit Raise:** If approved, will be effective beginning in the **first full payroll period following the evaluation date.**

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### Administration:

This policy shall be administered by department heads and overseen by the City Administrator (CA) and Human Resources (HR) Director to ensure consistency, transparency, and alignment with city values.

#### 1. Notification of Evaluation Due Dates:

- The **HR Director** will notify department heads of upcoming evaluation due dates no later than **30 days before the anniversary date** of each employee.
- Department heads are responsible for:
  - Notifying subordinate supervisors of evaluations due within their teams.
  - Ensuring that all evaluations are completed and submitted on time.

#### 2. Submission Timeline:

- Completed evaluations must be submitted to the HR Department no later than **7 days before the employee's anniversary date** to allow adequate time for review and approval by the HR Director and/or CA.

#### 3. Oversight of Ratings:

- Ratings of **4 (Above Average)** or **5 (Role Model)** will be reviewed by the HR Director and CA to ensure consistent standards are applied across all departments.

- Ratings of **1 (Unsatisfactory)** will be reviewed by the HR Director, along with any supporting disciplinary documentation or Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs), prior to presenting the evaluation to the employee.

**Responsibility for Downgraded Ratings:**

- If a rating is downgraded during the review process, it is the **responsibility of the supervisor** to "own" the revised score.
- Supervisors shall not inform employees that a higher score was proposed but downgraded by the HR Director or CA.
- It is the supervisor's responsibility to **justify higher ratings** during the review process. Failure to justify a higher proposed rating is the responsibility of the supervisor and shall not be attributed to others.

**Effective Date**

This policy is effective immediately and applies to all employees of the City of Willard.