

Program Assessment for New Managers

by David A. Leighow


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Leighow has written articles for Right of Way on hazardous wastes, displacement impact analysis, administrative settlements and consultant contracting. He has twice received IRWA's Mark A. Green award for journalistic excellence.

Mobility within a firm or agency carries both rewards and responsibilities. Movement into management, particularly the first assignment, can be especially challenging.

When a new manager steps into a program, he or she must be able to assess the current condition of that program and begin to develop a preliminary set of goals and objectives for maintaining program continuity and initiating program improvements.

The following questionnaire can be used by a new manager to assess the current status of a program. The data received can then be used to develop a strategy for achieving both short- and long-term goals.

1. What types of work units (e.g., appraisals, acquisitions, demolitions, training) is the section responsible for?
2. How many units of work are currently assigned to the section?
3. What problems is the section experiencing with currently assigned work units?
4. How many units of work are anticipated to come in for assignment during the next 90 days? The next 6 months? The next 12 months?
5. What problems are anticipated with work units due in to the section?
6. What programmatic problems (e.g., inadequate staff or resources, ineffectual policies and procedures) is the section experiencing?
 - a. Have proposed solutions been identified?
 - b. Has a chain of responsibility for problem solution been identified?
7. How is progress on work units tracked and measured?
8. Who is responsible for tracking and measuring progress on work units?
9. Who provides work units to the section?
10. Does the section have input into the scheduling of work unit delivery?
11. Does the section provide work units to other?
 - a. If "yes," who tracks progress in moving the work units forward?
 - b. If "yes," is feedback on the quality and timeliness of the work units provided by the receiving section? 

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