

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

At the September 2014 Human Resources Community Meeting Georgia Department of Banking and Finance (DBF) Commissioner Kevin B. Hagler and Personnel Officer Marilyn Harris accepted for their agency the Commissioner's Recognition Award for outstanding performance in the FY2014 Human Resources Audit, Performance Management Module.

The DBF is responsible for oversight, including regulation and examination, of Georgia State-chartered banks, credit unions, and holding companies. DBF also has regulatory and/or licensing authority over mortgage brokers, lenders, and more, including money service business organizations. Because the agency deals with targeting mortgage fraud and unlicensed activity, this oversight requires a dedicated staff whose job performance affects many Georgia businesses and residents.

Ms. Harris has been with the agency for 19 years, of which the most recent 7 years have been in Human Resources (HR) management. Her previous experience at DBF as a Financial Examiner and Accounting Manager has built a foundation for understanding the importance of staff engagement through the use of Performance Management.

What is the secret to being a model State agency in the Performance Management process? Ms. Harris revealed a few of her agency's strategies. First is the use of ePerformance. DBF was one of the first state agencies to use this process. Having received training herself, she now provides one-on-one training to new managers, going over the process with them step-by-step.

Within 45 days of hire or at the beginning of a new cycle, Ms. Harris explains, a manager creates a Performance Plan for each of his/her employees. The plan specifies job responsibilities and goals and also includes a strong emphasis on employee development. Each plan has an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that offers specific development goals to be accomplished during the Performance year. The manager makes sure each employee is given the opportunity to provide feedback and participate in developing the IDP. This process keeps each employee, whether in administration or in the field, challenged and engaged.

Although DBF does not use formal interim reviews for field examiners, Ms. Harris explains management reviews performance following each customer visit, which provides continuous feedback to field employees.

According to Ms. Harris, verbal coaching is a very necessary part of the Performance Management process, and especially new employees expect to have this communication with management. This feedback encourages and helps the employee to remain engaged and aware of any areas that need improvement.

HR gives managers plenty of time and support for completing performance evaluations. These yearly summaries enable the agency and employee to show stability, progress, continuous history, and goal attainment. Ms. Harris strongly feels the most important requirement in the evaluation is consistency. She states emphatically, "There should never be any surprises." After completion, evaluations are reviewed by management staff up through the Deputy Commissioner for each DBF program unit. HR then reviews for comments, which should be made for all rankings below 3 (i.e., Successful Performer - Minus and Unsatisfactory Performer). Each employee reviews the evaluation and can provide comments,

after which the direct manager reviews the evaluation with the employee and provides feedback. DBF then formally recognizes exceptional service by presenting Commissioner's Awards to the top 3 performers in the Administrative Office and the top performer in each of the 4 Field Districts.

Ms. Harris attributes DBF's success as a model agency in Performance Management to having criteria-based plans, setting developmental/training goals, using feedback and coaching, requiring consistency in evaluations, providing recognition, and having support from senior staff. She added, "We have great managers; that's the truth. They make it happen. They have dedication to the job and have a desire to keep employees engaged through Performance Management."