

**YAKIMA COUNTY
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
POLICY NO. HR-035**

Signed Copy Available at
Yakima County Human Resources
128 N. 2nd Street, Room B27
Yakima, WA 98901

Policy Statement:

The purpose of the Employee Engagement Policy is to foster a positive, inclusive, and motivating workplace environment where every employee feels valued, heard, and empowered. By prioritizing engagement, we aim to enhance job satisfaction, boost morale, and cultivate a culture of collaboration and innovation. This policy is dedicated to improving overall organizational performance through continuous investment in our employees' professional growth, well-being, and personal development. Through open communication, recognition, and opportunities for involvement, we strive to build a committed and productive workforce that drives the success of our County.

The County's goal is at least one (1) check-in for regular full-time and part-time employees each year. Probationary evaluations should be conducted on all newly hired employees or existing employees who change departments or classifications. Reclassifications are excluded from the probationary evaluation requirement.

Annual check-ins or probationary evaluations are required for departments that report to the Board of County Commissioners. Elected Officials have the discretion to conduct evaluations and are encouraged by the Board of County Commissioners to do so.

- Departments that have employees whose essential duties are conducted in an environment with limited computer access (such as heavy equipment operators, road maintenance crews, or Department of Corrections Officers) may be evaluated on the core competencies specific to their duties. These evaluations may be conducted outside of Workday, with the understanding that all documentation for each employee will be uploaded to the employee's documents in Workday, the County's system of record. The Workday evaluation in these cases will be allowed to expire.

Provisions of negotiated collective bargaining agreements (labor contracts) which conflict with this policy take precedence over this policy to the extent applicable.

A. Definitions:

1. **Days:** Refers to calendar days.
2. **Regular Full-time:** Employees scheduled to work thirty-seven and one-half (37.5) hours or more per week who have successfully completed a probationary period in a regular budgeted position and who are eligible for benefits.
3. **Regular Part-time:** Employees scheduled to work less than thirty-seven and one-half (37.5) hours per week who have successfully completed a probationary period in a budgeted position. Pro-rated benefits are provided for regular part-time employees who work at least twenty (20) hours per week. Regular part-time employees who work less than twenty (20) hours per week receive pro-rated holiday pay benefits only.

4. **System of Record:** Workday is the County's system of record; however, certain performance records (i.e., attachments) will be retained outside of Workday until such time as the system can accommodate this function.
5. **New Hire Employee:** New hire employee means an individual in employment who:
 - a. Has not previously been in the employment of the County; or
 - b. Was previously in employment of the County but has been separated from such prior employment.
6. **Recency:** The delay between observing a person and conducting the evaluation that causes a variance in rating as a result of memory decay.

B. Type & Timing Requirements.

The system is set up to utilize two (2) types of check-ins/evaluations:

1. **Probationary** – evaluation conducted within the probationary period for the position. Probationary evaluations should be completed within the timeframe specified as the probationary period as stated in policy or collective bargaining agreement. Management may elect to extend the probationary period as needed to provide the employee with a fair timeline during the initial induction to the position.
2. **Annual** – Check-in driven by the position start date or a set date each year.

C. Annual Check-Ins.

Each employee will be provided with an annual check-in. The annual check-in process includes:

- Engagement Survey: The opportunity for the employee to respond to a brief questionnaire addressing their overall assessment of their work environment. The Engagement Survey will be sent out to all employees in July each year.
- Check-In: The opportunity for the employee to conduct their own self-evaluation based on the core competencies.

D. Annual Check-In Timing for System Kickoff

The County's System of Record will automatically initiate the necessary check-in tasks for employees and managers. The initial date for the annual check in will be assigned by one of two (2) methodologies to be determined by the Department Head / Elected Official:

1. A set or specific time each year. A department may elect to conduct annual check-in for their employees within a set period each year. Example: October of each year.
2. Based on the employee's anniversary or position change date.

E. Check-In Document Sections

There are three (3) core sections that comprise the check-in:

1. **Competencies** – the knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors that contribute to performance.
 - a. Five (5) Core Competencies for all employees
 - i. Accountability
 - ii. Communication Skills/Customer Service

- iii. Results Oriented
- iv. Teamwork/ Interpersonal Skills

- b. Additional two (2) Core Competencies for management level positions:
 - i. Leadership Skills
 - ii. Talent Management

Competency definitions are provided in Exhibit #1.

- 2. **Goals** – can be individual or organizational, as determined by employee and management.
- 3. **Development Plan** – as determined by employee and management.

F. Process Flow for the Check-In Process

Management is encouraged to check-in, monitor and document the employee’s performance throughout the evaluation time frame to avoid recency.

At the end of the Employee Evaluation Period, the System of Record is programmed to automatically initiate the check-in process and send notifications to the employee and the employee’s manager.

Both the employee and Manager (or designee) are responsible for the completion of tasks within the process. If the check-in task is not completed within six (6) months from the due date, the check-in task will be removed from the inbox for all applicable parties. If the check-in is not completed within six (6) months from the due date, a note detailing why the check-in was not completed will be added to the supervisor/manager’s paper file and a note will be added by the Supervisor/Manager in the Development Items on the Workers Performance Section in Workday.

Step 1 – Employee Portion

- Employees are sent the “Employee Check-In” document to be completed in fourteen (14) days. The employee has the ability to attach relevant documentation, if applicable.
- If the “Employee Check-In” document is not completed within the fourteen (14) day timeframe, the task will be permanently removed from the employee’s inbox and the process moved forward to the Manager Check-In.
- The Manager has the ability to “send back” to the employee to complete the check-in.

Step 2 – Manager Portion

- The employee’s Manager (or designee) is sent the check-in document to begin the review process forty-four (44) days before the due date.
- The Manager (or designee) may solicit feedback from others (County employees or outside agencies) to validate the employee’s performance. Feedback should come from others whom the employee has frequent contact with for the completion of work-related duties or tasks. The Manager (or designee) can determine the timeframe for others to provide feedback. Feedback from County employees will be completed through Workday.

- The Manager (or designee) can review and consider the information provided on the employee check-in and the feedback from others when completing the evaluation.
- Manager comments will be required for any rating except “Meets Expectations”.
- The Manager (or designee) has the ability to attach relevant documentation, if applicable.

Step 3 –Check-In Meeting

Check-In Meeting – Once the Manager (or designee) submits the Check-In, the Manager (or designee) will receive a To Do Task in Workday to conduct a meeting with the employee to discuss and review the evaluation. It is important to meet with employees for the Check-in as these meetings provide a structured platform for discussing performance, highlighting strengths, identifying areas for improvement, and fostering a two-way conversation about career growth and development.

- Once the meeting has occurred, the Manager (or designee) should complete the Workday To Do Task by submitting that the task has been completed.

Step 4 –Finalize Document

- The Manager (or designee) will update the Check-In in Workday if needed based on feedback during the Check-in Meeting. The employee will acknowledge the final document and make comments as needed.
- The Manager (or designee) will acknowledge the final document and make comments as needed.
- The Manager’s Manager will acknowledge the final document and make comments as needed.

G. Performance Improvement Plan: If the employee rating is below Meets Expectations, the manager will receive a To Do to create a performance improvement plan for the deficient areas.

H. Documentation

1. The Workday report “YCWA Check-In Status Details” is available for departments to check the status of check-ins (Completed, In-Progress, Canceled). Human Resources will provide this report to the Board of County Commissioners on a periodic basis (as determined by the Board of County Commissioners) for their review.
2. The formal probationary evaluation and annual check-in will be documented in the County’s System of Record under the Performance section of the employee’s profile.
3. All other check-ins not included in the system of record shall be documented in the employee’s official personnel file located in Human Resources.

Exhibit #1– Core Competencies

Competency & Description	Competency Category
<p><u>Accountability.</u> Accepts full responsibility as a team member; displays honesty and truthfulness; confronts problems quickly; displays a strong commitment to organizational success and delivering on his/her public duty and presenting oneself as a credible representative of the County.</p>	CORE for all
<p><u>Communication Skills/Customer Service.</u> Uses effective verbal, written, and listening skills to validate understanding; appropriately expresses opinion and respects other’s opinions; keeps others informed of work status and requirements; maintains a professional, courteous, respectful and patient demeanor and professional appearance under normal and stressful circumstances; effectively works with people from diverse backgrounds by treating them with dignity and respect.</p>	CORE for all
<p><u>Results Oriented.</u> Consistently delivers and achieves required business results; complies with policies, procedures, and quality standards in daily performance; meets deadlines; demonstrates the knowledge, skills, abilities and judgment to do the essential functions of the position; identifies and takes action to address challenges and opportunities.</p>	CORE for all
<p><u>Teamwork/Interpersonal Skills.</u> Ability to work in a team, both as a member and leader when called upon; maintains a positive and collaborative attitude towards others; fosters working relationships and contributes towards a positive work environment; cooperates with others to accomplish common goals.</p>	CORE for all
<p><u>Leadership Skills.</u> Complies with and enforces policy; takes responsibility; sets an example; provides guidance; accepts challenges; shows initiative; implements decision making processes; effective at planning/organizing; addresses conflicts by focusing on the issues at hand to develop effective solutions when disputes or disagreements occur; helps others resolve conflicts by providing impartial mediation when needed.</p>	+MGR CORE
<p><u>Talent Management.</u> Establishes and communicates expectations; monitors and evaluates employee engagement; provides interactive and effective feedback and coaching; identifies employee development needs, and addresses them.</p>	+MGR CORE

Exhibit #2 – Employee Engagement Rating Scale

Not Rated	1	2	3	4	5
<p><u>Not Rated</u> New hire or transferred near end of performance period.</p>	<p><u>Needs Improvement</u> Consistent performance with significant deficiencies and a definite need for improvement.</p>	<p><u>Below Expectations</u> Performance has some deficiencies and/or elements requiring greater than expected instruction and supervision which are not balanced by other performance factors</p>	<p><u>Meets Expectations</u> Consistent performance at a level generally expected of and achieved by employees with similar duties. Any deficiencies are balanced by other superior performance factors.</p>	<p><u>Exceeds Expectations</u> Overall performance is consistently meeting the requirements and expectations of the position. Met all and exceeded most of the established performance expectations. There are specific areas identified and recognized where the employee performed exceptionally.</p>	<p><u>Exceptional</u> A superior performance level meeting all position requirements including results consistently surpassing what is generally expected of employees with similar duties.</p>