

**CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

Policy Memorandum No. 150

January 28, 2026

TO: All Departments, Boards, Agencies and Commissions

FROM: Joseph I. Giarrusso III, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: **DEPARTMENT HEAD PERFORMANCE PLANNING AND EVALUATION**

I. PURPOSE

This CAO Policy Memorandum establishes a Citywide process for regular performance planning, monitoring, and evaluation of Department Heads to promote accountability, effective service delivery, sound financial management, and compliance with applicable laws and City policies. This policy applies to Department Heads within the City of New Orleans executive branch, including Department Heads within Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chief Administrative Officer portfolios and Department Heads reporting directly to the Mayor or the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). To the extent allowed by law, the Performance Evaluations provided for herein will be kept confidential and withheld from disclosure in response to public records requests (see La. Const. art. I, § 5 (right to privacy) and *Trahan v. Larivee*, 365 So.2d 294 (La. App. 3rd Cir. 1979)).

II. DEFINITIONS

Department Head. The director, superintendent, chief, commissioner, or other senior executive appointed or designated to lead an executive-branch Department listed in Section 4-102(1) of the Home Rule Charter of the City of New Orleans. The term Department Head also includes Deputy CAOs and leaders of offices, bureaus, and agencies assigned to a Deputy Mayor or Deputy CAO or reporting directly to the Chief Administrative Officer. Leaders of entities that are not under executive-branch supervision are excluded.

Performance Year. The annual cycle for establishing goals, monitoring progress, and completing evaluations. Unless otherwise directed, the Performance Year will align to the City's fiscal year.

Annual Performance Plan. The written set of goals, performance measures, and management expectations approved under this policy for a Department Head for a given Performance Year, which are established in the Department Head Performance Evaluation Form.

Department Head Performance Evaluation Form. The template attached to this policy that shall be completed by Department Heads prior to established deadlines for Performance Planning and by evaluators prior to established deadlines for evaluations.

III. GOVERNING AUTHORITY

- A. Home Rule Charter of the City of New Orleans, § 4-302(5), which authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer to prescribe accepted standards of administrative practice to be followed by all offices, departments, and boards.
- B. Applicable Civil Service Rules.
- C. Applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement provisions.

IV. **GENERAL DEPARTMENT HEAD EVALUATION POLICY**

- A. **Annual Performance Planning.** Each Department Head shall have an Annual Performance Plan for each Performance Year. The Annual Performance Plan shall include measurable goals and management expectations aligned with the Mayor's priorities, applicable Deputy Mayor's or Deputy CAO's portfolio goals, legally mandated departmental responsibilities, and the Department Head's approved budget and operational plan.
 - 1. **Minimum Required Plan Elements.** At a minimum, each Annual Performance Plan shall address: (i) service delivery outcomes (including deadlines) and key performance indicators; (ii) budget execution, fiscal stewardship, and internal controls; (iii) workforce management, including time-and-attendance compliance, vacancy management, and workplace standards; (iv) compliance with ethics, procurement, and contracting requirements; and (v) interdepartmental coordination and stakeholder responsiveness.
 - 2. **Issuance and Approval.** Annual Performance Plans shall be completed during the period of November 1 to January 31 each year, unless a different timeline is established in writing by the Mayor or the Chief Administrative Officer. For Department Heads within a Deputy Mayor or Deputy CAO portfolio, the Deputy Mayor or Deputy CAO is the primary approving official, with administrative coordination by the Chief Administrative Officer.
- B. **Monitoring and Mid-Year Review.** Supervising Deputy Mayors or Deputy CAOs (or the Mayor/Chief Administrative Officer) shall conduct performance monitoring throughout the year and shall complete one structured Mid-Year Review during the period of June 1 to July 31 of the Performance Year. The Mid-Year Review shall document progress toward goals, identify material risks to performance, and specify corrective actions and timelines where needed.
- C. **Annual Evaluation.** An Annual Evaluation shall be completed for each Department Head during the period of November 1 to January 31 for the preceding Performance Year, unless a different timeline is established in writing by the Mayor or the Chief Administrative Officer (for example, Annual Evaluations completed on January 5, 2027 will reflect a Department Head's performance during 2026).
 - 1. **Evaluation Roles and Final Determination.** For Department Heads within a Deputy Mayor or Deputy CAO portfolio, the Deputy Mayor or Deputy CAO is the primary evaluator and shall submit completed evaluations to the Chief Administrative

Officer. The Mayor or Chief Administrative Officer may alter evaluations once completed by the Deputy Mayor or Deputy CAO.

For Department Heads who report directly to the Chief Administrative Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer shall complete the evaluation process. For Department Heads who report directly to the Mayor, the Mayor shall complete the evaluation process.

2. Use of Standard Forms and Rating Scale. Evaluations and Performance Plans shall be completed using the Department Head Performance Evaluation Form and rating scale.
3. Exception for Annual Evaluation in First Year of Policy. Annual Evaluations will not be feasible due to the mayoral transition and are therefore not required for 2026, the first year of this Policy's issuance. However, Annual Performance Plans shall be submitted by Department Heads on or before March 31, 2026, and Mid-Year Reviews shall be completed during the period of June 1, 2026 to July 31, 2026.

D. Department Heads on Leave from the Classified Service. Department Heads who are unclassified employees on leave from the classified service are not required to complete the Performance Planning and Evaluation process mandated herein. Instead, they will be subject to the classified performance planning and evaluation process pursuant to the requirements of Civil Service Rule XI, Section 1.2, as required by Civil Service Rule XII, Section 5.2(a).

E. Documentation and Records. Performance Plans, Mid-Year Reviews, and Annual Evaluations shall be maintained as confidential personnel records to the extent permitted by law. Departments shall retain records consistent with the City's records retention requirements and shall provide records to the Chief Administrative Officer upon request for audit, compliance, or executive review purposes. Department Heads must retain documentation of all forms related to their Performance Planning, Mid-Year Reviews, and Annual Evaluations.

V. INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this memorandum should be directed to the Chief Administrative Office at (504) 658-8600.

Attachments

- Department Head Performance Evaluation Form