Pinellas County Personnel - Employee Relations - Performance Appraisal Program - THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS



Our system is a graphic rating scale with narrative comments. The rater's objective is to **reduce a year's activity to a numerical rating with supporting comments**. This must be accomplished in a uniform way so that all concerned have a common understanding of what is communicated on the actual document. Uniformity is necessary so that personnel actions based on the Performance Appraisal are consistent throughout the system.

FORM LAYOUT

The rater and reviewer need to verify accuracy of the computer-generated rating form and personnel data and inform the Personnel Department of any errors. The rest of the form is divided into three sections: graphic rating scale, narrative, and the signature blocks.

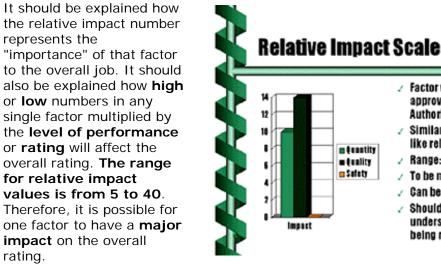
The graphic rating scale represents each factor measuring the employee's performance during the rating period. The Relative Impact (R/I) Scale allows each factor to be weighted according to the factor's importance to the specific job or position in which the employee works. This makes the form job specific and builds flexibility and supervisory discretion into the formal process. The more "job specific" an evaluation is, the more valid the process becomes. Assigning relative weights to the rating factors gives the employee and supervisor a more accurate tool for evaluating overall performance.

The block designated for the relative impact number is beside the rating factor. Overall performance is based on 10 rating factors commonly shared by all Classified employees plus possibly, some elective optional factors, and 2 factors for supervisors only. The relative impact numbers of the combined factors that are used total 100. This number actually represents 100% of the job being evaluated. The rater, in collaboration with the ratee and reviewer, will assign values to each factor as he/she feels they apply to the specific job.

"Appearance" is not graded or assigned a relative impact number but considered "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory." "Safety" can also be rated as "Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory" for some employees at the department's discretion. In that case, "Safety" is also not assigned a relative impact number.

RELATIVE IMPACT SCALE

The methods used to arrive at these values should involve the ratee, rater and the reviewing authority. The reviewing authority must approve the way factors are weighted for each like position within the work unit. How a rater begins the process of determining the values of each factor will be up to the individual. It is recommended that positions with similar tasks within the work unit have like relative impact numbers. A good way to begin would be to hand out copies of the rating form to all subordinates, asking their input on which factors of their job they see as most important.



Factor weights must be approved by the Reviewing Authority

- Similar positions to have like relative impact values Range: 5-40
- To be multiplied by rating
- Can be zero for Safety
- Should be completely understood by employee being rated

For this reason it is important that values assigned to each factor are **completely**

understood by the ratee prior to actually doing the appraisal. In the case of new hires, transfers, or promotions, these values should be covered in the orientation and reinforced in the three-month and six-month performance appraisals. Remember, positions with like duties within the work unit should have like relative impact values.

The levels of performance and relative impact scale represent numerically, in a concise and uniform way, the employee's performance for the rating period. The information represented on the scale should be supported by specific, job-related performance criteria, derived from the performance plan.

Raters will want to compute and review the relative impact and overall rating numbers before completing the actual forms. For new hires or employees not familiar with Pinellas County's Performance Appraisal System, the rater should take the time to explain the system and go over the form itself. It is important that all personnel understand the mechanics of the system.

After the employee and supervisor have discussed the relative impact numbers for the position, the rater will present them to the reviewing authority. The reviewing authority will have ultimate **authority to finalize** the values for each factor. The rater will then provide each employee with a copy of the relative impact values. Should there be cause to change the values of a position, this process will be repeated.

top of page

Rating Factors

A. FACTOR DEFINITIONS - SUPERVISORY AND NON-SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

Ten of the following factors (those marked with an asterisk (*)) apply to all Classified employees. Raters may add additional, optional factors applicable to the position being rated. Supervisory ratings include two additional factors (Supervisory Task Skills and Supervisory Leadership Skills).

* **QUANTITY OF WORK:** The amount or volume of acceptable work completed in a timely manner. Refers to how much of a product or service an employee or a supervisor/manager's work unit produces as compared to basic requirements of the position.

* **QUALITY OF WORK:** How good the products or services produced are. Refers to accuracy, neatness, thoroughness, and compliance with specifications, as compared to the basic requirements of the position.

* **JOB KNOWLEDGE:** An understanding or grasp of the skills, information and duties required to meet the responsibilities of the position. This includes staying current with changing technology, processes, legislation, methods, concepts and techniques.

* **DEPENDABILITY:** Acceptance of responsibility, ability to work under pressure, willingness to follow instructions, ability to meet deadlines. Reliability, flexibility and the willingness to change plans as necessary to accomplish basic requirements of the position.

* **COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION SKILLS:** Effective use of oral and written communication skills. Includes interpersonal behavior such as tact, courtesy, integrity, discretion, listening skills and helpfulness in dealing with others.

* **JUDGEMENT:** Effectiveness in making correct decisions and prioritizing the work load. The ability to determine the relative importance of information and choosing a worthwhile or appropriate course of action.

* **INITIATIVE:** The amount of direction needed to accomplish job responsibilities. The degree beyond the basic requirements the employee seeks to achieve. Self-starting as opposed to needing others to begin work efforts. Also may include creativity, improving work methods, and seeking additional work or responsibility.

* **ATTENDANCE:** Conformity to established working hours and schedules, and adherence to County expectations of attendance regarding use of annual and extended leave, scheduling, punctuality, etc. (Note: Excused absences that are FMLA qualifying or based on reasonable accommodation due to ADA cannot be used to evaluate this factor.)

***SAFETY:** Observation of safety rules and practices as prescribed by organizational policy, procedures, and supervisory direction.

* **APPEARANCE:** Appropriate physical grooming and attire for the position.

OPTIONAL: An organization may establish additional factors pertaining to that particular organization or position. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to "Goal Accomplishment," "Customer Service," "Teamwork" and/or "Self-development and Improvement." Any established OPTIONAL factors should be clearly described.

SUPERVISORY TASK SKILLS (for Supervisors only): Ability of supervisor to plan and organize the work, establish goals and priorities, analyze and evaluate organizational effectiveness, and make sound decisions. Ability to apply management techniques to ensure compliance with organizational policies and directives, to control quality, quantity, time and costs.

SUPERVISORY LEADERSHIP SKILLS (for Supervisors only): Ability of supervisor to provide encouragement, guidance and direction to subordinates with regard to their development and improvement. Coaching, counseling and helping employees overcome job problems and develop career plans. Assessing performance strengths and deficiencies, encouraging and rewarding employees, and/or exercising appropriate discipline. Complying with EEO laws and County EEO policy and Affirmative Action requirements.

While each factor must be evaluated independently, it is possible and even likely that there may be correlations between certain factors, where actions that lead to attainment of a certain level of performance in one factor may influence the rating in another factor. For example, the same actions by an employee that lead to "Excellent" performance in "Dependability" may result in a high rating in "Initiative." Similarly, the same actions that lead to a low rating in "Attendance" may lead to a correspondingly lower rating in "Dependability."

□ top of page

Levels of Performance

A. The levels of performance assigned to each of the ten factors must take into consideration the performance pattern for the entire appraisal period.

B. After reviewing all records of performance, the rater will select one of the five levels of performance listed below for all factors that have relative impact values.

4 points Excellent - Far exceeds performance expectations by regularly making contributions that improve the organization.

3 points Very Good - Exceeds performance expectations by making significant contributions.

2 points Good - Meets performance expectations by performing all responsibilities of this factor.

1 point Needs Attention - Performs some of the responsibilities of the factor but does not meet expectations. Failure to improve could result in termination.

O points Unsatisfactory - Not performing the responsibilities of this factor. Immediate corrective measures must be taken. Failure to improve could result in termination.

 $(+/- \frac{1}{2} \text{ point})$ Since the overall evaluation is a computation of the relative impact of the factors and the levels of performance, it is reasonable to use values between the numerical levels (such as 1.5, 2.5 or 3.5). Using a midpoint level is a good method of communicating or documenting an upward or downward trend in performance. Levels of performance less than half numbers (.5) shall not be used.

top of page

General Performance Appraisal Policies

A. The same performance appraisal system will apply uniformly for all Classified employees within the Unified Personnel System.

B. All official performance appraisals must be 1) sent to the Personnel Department on the form provided and 2) discussed in an interview with the employee.

C. All regular status employees must be officially appraised at least **annually**.

D. An **appraisal period** includes the time from which the last appraisal was completed, except in the case of newly hired, promoted or demoted employees, where **the effective date of the action starts the cycle**. Employees who are on probation receive performance appraisals minimally at the three-month, six-month and twelve-month periods and annually thereafter. Employees are eligible for a pay increase at the six and twelve-month reviews. Reviews for employees who have been promoted from one department (and in some cases divisions) are to be completed by the losing department or division. Where there is a promotion involved in the change, the employee will be considered for a prorated merit increase in accordance with Personnel Rule VI-A. **Unscheduled** or **special performance appraisals** are sometimes appropriate and may be scheduled at the discretion of the rater. These reviews will not normally change the individual's anniversary date and may not involve a merit increase.

E. The rating authority who completes the employee performance review forms **should be the employee's immediate supervisor**. In those cases where an employee may be assigned work for various supervisors, a single rating authority will be designated and will normally make rating decisions after consulting with others for whom the employee has performed work.

F. A rating of "Unsatisfactory" in any factor will lead to an overall rating of "Unsatisfactory" (regardless of total points) and result in a denial, reduction, or delay of a merit salary increase.

The rater must indicate in the narrative section of the review form or on a separate attached sheet **why** the merit increase is being denied, reduced, or delayed. Any intention to reevaluate the employee at a date other than the next regularly scheduled review date, e.g., "Will reevaluate in 3 months," should also be included in the narrative section.

G. A rating of "Needs Attention" in any factor will be calculated into the total amount of points the employee receives on the Appraisal, as is the case with all other factors rated above "Unsatisfactory." In such cases, in spite of the "Needs Attention" rating, the employee's overall rating score will determine the amount of the merit increase.

As is the case with "Unsatisfactory" ratings, remedial action must be taken, however, to help the employee attain a "Good" or better rating. This can be in the form of coaching and counseling or a performance improvement plan.

H. In no case shall an employee's rating authority **reveal the contents** of his/her performance review to another employee.

I. The reviewing authority shall be the immediate supervisor of the rating authority, unless otherwise dictated by organizational structure. All official performance appraisals should be reviewed. Before the reviewing authority signs the forms, the review is discussed by the rating and reviewing authorities. Differences between the rating and reviewing authorities shall be resolved **before** the rating is discussed with the employee.

J. Changes made on an employee's evaluation subsequent to the appraisal interview will be presented to an employee in a second interview, which will normally be conducted by the reviewing authority initiating the change.

K. An employee is not allowed to refuse to sign his or her review once it has been discussed with the rating authority. The employee's signature indicates that the ratings have been communicated to the employee. The signature bears no reflection as to whether or not the employee agrees with the conclusions of the rater. The employee may add written comments that shall be appended to the performance review.

L. A Classified employee (whether probationary or permanent) has ten (10) working days, from the date of signing his/her performance review, to **grieve** his/her rating in writing in accordance with the procedures provided in Personnel Rule XX, "Adjustment of Employee Grievance."

M. A copy of the performance review form is kept in the **employee personnel file**. This is considered a public document and available for inspection.

N. If a rater or reviewer chooses to rate "**Safety**" as a "Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory" factor, the safety factor will have a relative impact of "0", and the level of performance shall be noted as "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory." The 100 relative impact points will then be distributed over the other remaining rated factors.

O. Since the overall **evaluation is a computation** of the relative impact of the factors and the levels of performance, it is reasonable to use values between the numerical levels (such as 1.5, 2.5 or 3.5). Using a midpoint level is a good method of communicating and documenting an upward or downward trend in performance. Levels of midpoint performance other than half numbers (.5) shall not be used.

□ top of page

Completing the Standard Performance Appraisal Form

A. The following steps are arranged sequentially to assist the rater in preparing the standard form and computing the **overall rating**:

1. **Review** the employee's position description, performance plan, rater's notes, and any pertinent administrative records.

2. Where indicated, obtain feedback on the employee's performance from other supervisors and coworkers.

3. After reviewing the key responsibilities and performance expectations, choose the **level of performance that is appropriate for each factor** (relative impact values will already be in place). For the performance level, write the **point value** for the corresponding description of performance (i.e "Good" = 2 points). Enter the appropriate values for each of the factors. ("Appearance" does not carry point values.)

4. To calculate the **performance points** for a particular factor, multiply the **relative impact** X (times) the **level of performance** = **performance** (points). For example: 20 R/I x3 Perf. level =60 Perf.points

5. Obtain the **overall rating** by **adding the performance points** for all graded rating factors. The "total points" figure is placed in the appropriate box. To obtain the recommended merit salary increase, refer to annually published merit salary guidelines.

6. Complete a draft of the appraisal form and computations. Give special consideration to the narrative/comments section: a wide range of activity must be documented on the official form. Raters must **explain their ratings in the narrative**. Attach additional narrative pages when necessary. Confer with the reviewing authority and revise as necessary. Remember that the performance being rated is **only for the current rating period**. Each performance appraisal cycle begins with a blank slate. The employee's performance **during that rating period only** is evaluated in comparison to previously established performance expectations.

7. Give the ratee at least **three working days advance notice** of the performance appraisal interview. When scheduling the interview, give the employee a copy of the **interview worksheet** (Save Microsoft Word documents before altering). The employee should be requested to either bring the completed worksheet to the meeting or to return it prior to the meeting, based on your preference. (Completion of the worksheet is optional.)

top of page

Writing the Narrative

Narratives that support the rating **must** be provided for each Rating Factor in which the employee is rated "Excellent," "Needs Attention," or "Unsatisfactory." Regardless of the assigned rating, it is a good management practice to provide some narrative comment that summarizes the employee's performance for the record. Narratives can be written in prose paragraphs or bulleted outlines. Following are some general guidelines for writing a narrative:

The narrative must support the assigned rating by providing specific examples
of performance during the rating period that show why the employee earned
that rating

- Examples provided should cover the entire rating period-not just recent events
- The narrative, like the appraisal form, is a permanent record that reflects on you and the employee. It should be written objectively and constructively
- Performance problems should be described in constructive terms, i.e. noting what the employee needs to do to improve rather than unduly focusing on past failures
- Any disciplinary action taken against the employee for performance that falls below expectations must not be mentioned in the narrative. The problem itself that led to the discipline must be mentioned in the narrative, but the corrective action taken must not be
- Any accommodation made to an employee as a result of a medical condition must absolutely not be mentioned in the narrative. Neither the condition nor the fact that the rater is making a medical accommodation should be mentioned. The rater should, instead, prorate standards and expectations to reflect only the actual output the employee was capable of providing or the actual amount of time the employee was available to work.

Sample narrative evaluations that may be used as prompters by narrative writers can be found in the following section.

SAMPLE NARRATIVES

□ top of page

Conducting the Interview

The core of any performance appraisal system is a formal discussion between a supervisor and a subordinate, the purpose of which is to:

- Obtain direct feedback from the employee
- Communicate expectations
- Motivate

The appraisal interview should be a restatement and summarization of "performance reviews" the rater has been conducting informally throughout the rating period. Ideally there will be **no surprises** for either the supervisor or subordinate. The discussion ought to focus on documenting the work performed according to the rating factors on the form. This will be guided by the previously discussed performance plan.

The success of the appraisal interview depends largely on the skills of the rater.

There is evidence that performance appraisal interviews that give "real" and specific **performance related feedback** do affect performance positively. Likewise, a poorly conducted interview can be discouraging and actually have a negative impact on motivation and performance.

The following are ideas to assist the rater in setting up and completing a successful interview. The interview will get off to a good start if the rater:

A. Shows concern for the **physical setting** (for example, sits next to the employee instead of across a desk).

B. Expresses concern for the employee's **comfort** (for example, offers the employee a cup of coffee).

C. Conveys a **positive attitude** and **receptivenes**: **listens** to the employee.

D. Makes sure the employee is told about the review session **three working days in advance**.

E. Makes sure the review session is conducted in **private**. It may be necessary to schedule a conference room or "borrow" a private office or vehicle.

F. Strives for a **level of informality** (but not too informal) since this will facilitate communication. Encourages employee participation and avoids "telling it like it is."

G. Plans the interview.

Events that should occur before the performance appraisal interview:

- Ask employee to complete an interview or self appraisal form (optional)

- Review notes related to employee performance
- Review performance expectations and key responsibilities for the position
- Rate employee on all applicable criteria
- Prepare preliminary employee evaluation for reviewing authority
- Plan for specific corrective and/or developmental actions
- Write the final appraisal.

Anticipate the structure you will use during the performance appraisal interview:

There are three general approaches the rater can use to adjust his/her style to suit the ratee. A particular style that works well with some will not work with others. Since the rater will want to create a positive atmosphere, he/she must be aware of the type of conversation that is taking place.

THE PARTICIPATORY EMPLOYEE	THE PASSIVE EMPLOYEE
- Eager to supply feedback	- Little feedback
- Thoughts and ideas about goals, performance, etc.	- No real interest
- Upwardly mobile	- Uncomfortable in a one-to-one conversation
- Wants constructive criticism	- May, however, be a good, productive employee

Most employees fall somewhere in between the above two general categories. Three approaches to be considered are:

- **TELL AND SELL** Inform the employee on how he/she is doing (in each factor), then set goals for improving or maintaining performance.
- **TELL AND LISTEN** Inform the employee on how he/she is doing, then just listen. If there is no feedback, continue with open-ended questions, observe nonverbal behavior, practice allowing "quiet time."
- **PROBLEM SOLVING** Discuss areas of concern. Concentrate on employee development, removing obstacles to performance, and goal-setting.

The following is a logical sequence of events for preparing and structuring the interview.

1. Discuss **general** issues about the job and/or the work unit.

2. Give specific feedback on performance - use the rating form, but be careful to discuss positive areas **first**. Give the ratee an opportunity to respond.

3. Give constructive criticism or observations about performance -- be careful to discuss positive areas **first**. Give the ratee an opportunity to respond.

4. Formulate an employee development plan, which includes:

- Ways to improve performance
- Opportunities for growth or promotion (use the previously completed interview form)
- · Commitment from the employee receiving the rating

5. Thank the employee.

□ top of page

Sample Agenda

1. General discussion of last year's overall objectives.

2. Key result areas: the employee's performance in each area.

3. Employee's strengths:

-their opinion -your opinion

4. Areas of performance that could be improved:

-their suggestions -yours

5. General concerns confronting both of you within the organization.

6. Review of last year's goals and setting new ones for the year to come (joint effort).

7. Discuss future plans, training and other developmental needs (planning performance).

8. Close the meeting with a summary and agreement of key points.

9. Put mutually agreed upon objectives in writing for both of you and to help stimulate next year's appraisal.

10. Finish on a positive note.

top of page

Handling Employee Reactions

Disagreements

Some disagreement should be expected during the review. The supervisor's and the employee's perspectives are not identical. Employees understand and accept this. What they do not (and should not have to) accept are evaluations that come as a surprise or that unfairly berate them for minor deficiencies, while failing to mention their strengths or accomplishments.

Major disagreements about appraisals arise from either the numeric rating or the narrative. If employees focus on the numbers and perceive that lower than expected ratings will impact their pay, they may get angry and file grievances. On the other hand, employees may feel the numbers are fair, but they disagree with the way the supervisor describes their performance. To prevent unnecessary disagreements, make sure you clearly communicate with employees about performance issues as they occur.

To minimize conflict during the appraisal review, allow the employee time to get beyond the shock, anger and rejection they are likely to feel when presented with surprising information during the review. This may mean addressing what actions must be taken to improve performance later during the review session or perhaps setting up a follow-up meeting.

Overcoming Negative Reactions

Common Responses to "Constructive" Feedback:

S hock	I thought he/she knew what I intended.
A nger	This really makes me mad. I deserve better.
R ejection	He/she doesn't know what's really going on.
A cceptance	Maybe there's some truth or value to this.
H elp	Maybe I can use this feedback to improve.

From Frustration to Collaboration:

Understand and accept the SARAH process. Listen to the employee's point of view. Seek to understand and acknowledge employee's perspective. Patiently explain your position. Reach agreement or agree to disagree.

□ top of page

Common Rating Errors

Halo Effect. This term refers to a rater's tendency to rate all aspects of performance based on the observance of one trait. For instance, if you observe that a certain employee is a meticulous and thorough worker, you might rate the employee high on

all characteristics. This is a very common error among evaluators.

Horn Effect. The opposite of the "halo" effect, this refers to a supervisor's tendency to let one poor rating influence all other ratings -- resulting in a lower overall evaluation than is really deserved.

Error of Central Tendency. This is both the most common and most serious type of error. The error of central tendency describes the tendency of an appraiser to cluster appraisals around a central point -- usually an "average" or "middle" point on a scale. This can result from the fear of rating too high or too low. It may seem safer to cluster all scores toward the center to lend greater "validity" to the appraisal.

Latest Behavior or Recency. We have a tendency to forget about past problems or past accomplishments and to focus on what's been happening recently. Recent events are thus afforded more weight or carry more influence.

Leniency or Generosity Error. This attitude involves high ratings for most employees, perhaps because of a reluctance to "rock the boat" by seeming too critical. A harried manager may find it much easier and more pleasant to offer unconditional praise to employees than to bring up instances of substandard performance.

Strictness. This is the opposite of leniency; to be overly harsh when rating employees.

Stereotyping or Initial Impression. This may be the hardest type of error to deal with. Stereotypes may be either conscious or subconscious -- often we may be unfairly biased toward an employee without actually being aware of the bias. First impressions really do make lasting impressions. Because of this, it is extremely important to base any evaluation on observable, objective behaviors rather than subjective opinions.

Favoritism. "Pat is such a nice person and really means well. . . . " Overlooking poor performance because an employee is extremely pleasant or easy-to-get-along-with. This error can also be overcome by basing evaluations on observable, objective behaviors.

Projection or Similarity Error. "Birds of a feather flock together..." It's easy to realize that we tend to like people who are like us and to dislike people who are unlike us. This can become a problem in the rating process when we give high scores to employees because they either consciously "remind me of myself when I was just starting out," or low scores to other employees who "just don't have the ambition that I have."

Spillover Error. This refers to allowing past evaluations to reflect, positively or negatively, on the current rating, even though actual behavior during the current rating period has not been the same.

Inter-individual Error. Basing each employee's evaluation on a comparison with other employees causes this error. This can be especially unfair since one employee may have received very high marks.

Grudge Holding. Results from not letting go of or forgiving prior negative behavior of an employee. Evaluations must reflect the entire rating period without undue weight being placed on one specific incident.

□ top of page

Twelve Steps to an Effective Performance Appraisal Discussion

1. Preparation

- A. Arrange for an informal environment
- B. Ensure there will be no interruptions

2. Introduction

3. General discussion of last year's overall objectives

4. Key result areas: the employee's performance in each area.

- A. Describe specific behavior and illustrate with examples.
- B. Express your appreciation for employee's accomplishments.

5. Employee's strengths:

- A. Ask for their opinion.
- B. Provide your opinion.

6. Areas of performance that could be improved:

- A. Explore possible causes of the situation.
- B. Ask for their suggestions.
- C. Provide your suggestions.

7. General concerns confronting both of you within the organization.

8. Review of last year's goals and setting new ones for the year to come (joint effort).

9. Discuss future plans, training, and other developmental needs.

10. Put mutually agreed upon objectives in writing for both of you and to help stimulate next year's appraisal and establish follow-up dates.

11. Close the meeting with a summary and agreement of key points.

12. Thank the employee and finish on a positive note.

□ top of page

Total Performance Points as a Guideline for Merit Salary Increases

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

Levels of Performance and	Range of Overall Rating	Guidelines
Performance Rating Factor	(Performance Points)	for MI
EXCELLENT (4)	350 - 400	3.0%

	318 - 349	2.5%
VERY GOOD (3)	265 - 317	2.0%
GOOD (2)	211 - 264	1.5%
	180 - 210	1.0%
NEEDS ATTENTION (1)	80- 179	0.0%
UNSATISFACTORY (0)	0 - 79	0.0%

Effective September 30, 2007

EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

Levels of Performance and Performance Rating Factor	Range of Overall Rating (Performance Points)	Guidelines for MI
EXCELLENT (4)	350 - 400	3.0%
VERY GOOD (3)	265 -349	2.0% - 2.5%
GOOD (2)	180 - 264	1.0% - 1.5%
NEEDS ATTENTION (1)	80 - 179	0.0%
UNSATISFACTORY (0)	0 - 79	0.0%

GUIDELINES WILL BE DETERMINED ANNUALLY

Effective September 30, 2007 Revised 6/26/07

top of page

Home | Contact Us | What's New | Pinellas County Home