

PROBATION & PROBATIONARY PROTOCOLS #175

1.0 – PURPOSE - In alignment with the requirements outlined in Utah State Code, Davis County has established probationary employment periods for individuals who are hired into career service or merit employment positions. Seasonal, temporary, appointed and part-time (0-19 hrs/wk) positions are not subject to merit employment provisions.

The probationary time period is an essential part of an employee's onboarding and subsequent successful employment. In the probationary period, an employee can assess if the position s/he has accepted is enjoyable, rewarding and presents an equitable opportunity for career advancement. Likewise, the probationary time period is an opportunity for a supervisor to observe how well a new employee is learning and adjusting to a new position. This is the most important time for ensuring the immediate, and future, success of a new employee. From an organizational perspective, the importance of the probationary time period cannot be overstated.

2.0 – DEFINITIONS – The following definitions are applicable to this policy:

Documented Performance Update – Refers to a less formal method of providing performance and conduct feedback to an employee. This method of providing feedback does not utilize the Davis County evaluation system. Rather, this method of providing feedback involves a discussion with the employee followed by the generation of documentation about the topics of the conversation. This less formal method of providing feedback should document issues or concerns with performance or conduct, if any. It should also document the strategies identified to correct such concerns. The documentation should be dated, and the employee should receive a copy of the document.

Eligibility Date – The eligibility date for merit employees will be the date of successful completion of a probationary period. The eligibility date is generally six months from date of hire, unless the probationary period has been extended. If probation has been extended, the eligibility date is the date the employee has successfully passed the probationary period. The eligibility date for sworn law enforcement and correctional employees will be twelve months from the date of hire.

Formal Evaluation – The end of probation or annual evaluation prepared using the Davis County evaluation system. A formal evaluation utilizes the system's template in which goals are entered, weighted, evaluated and an overall average score is calculated. The employee and the supervisor both sign this document and the rating result is entered into the Human Resources information system.

3.0 – DURATION OF PROBATION – There are two probationary time periods associated with employment in Davis County.

Non-sworn positions – An individual who is hired by Davis County, and who IS NOT hired into a sworn law enforcement or corrections position, will serve a probationary period of six (6) months. This probationary time period may be extended for a solid business reason, and in accordance with, the procedures outlined in Section 6.0 of this policy.

Sworn positions – An individual who is hired by Davis County, and who IS hired into a sworn law enforcement or corrections position, will serve a probationary period of twelve (12) months. This probationary time period may be extended beyond the twelve (12) months, if necessary, for a solid business reason. For example: probation may be extended for good cause to allow an employee to complete, and receive a certificate of completion, from an approved Peace Officer Training Program. The probationary time period must be extended in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 6.0 of this policy.

4.0 – PROBATIONARY FEEDBACK - During the probationary period, supervisors are urged to complete performance reviews at regular intervals throughout probation – especially when conduct or performance issues are a concern. Probationary feedback sessions should be documented in some fashion. Notes to the supervisor’s file or an email to the employee regarding the topics discussed are ways to document the conversation.

5.0 – RESPONSIBILITY TO CONDUCT EVALUATIONS – Departmentally designated supervisors have the responsibility to conduct evaluations with the employees they supervise. Moreover, supervisors have the responsibility to provide feedback about performance to employees on a regular basis. An issue or concern should not be “saved up” for the performance evaluation. Employees should not receive surprises when it’s time for their evaluations. Rather, employees should have an awareness of any problems related to conduct or performance as those issues occur. Administrative Officers have the final responsibility to ensure evaluations are completed.

6.0 – EXTENDING PROBATION – The probationary period may be extended for a solid business reason and also provided a supervisor can present documentation about the need to do so.

A solid business reason might include, but is not limited to, the following:

- The need for additional training not available during probation.
- Performance which does not quite meet performance expectations.
- An employee’s extended absence during the probationary period which has the effect of limiting the employee’s ability to successfully learn the new job. For example – an employee who is deployed for extended military service may need more time to thoroughly learn her or his job. Weekend deployment which does not overlap the employee’s work schedule does not constitute an extended absence.
- An employee’s unexpected extended medical issue during probation.

As mentioned above, a supervisor who is requesting an extension of probation must provide documentation about the need to do so. Documentation may include, but not be limited to, supervisor notes from regularly scheduled meetings during the probationary period; coaching sessions related to specific issues or examples of poor conduct/performance. A failure on the part of the supervisor to adequately train a new employee or a failure on the part of the

supervisor to appropriately address concerns with performance until the last minute are not generally considered reasons to extend probation under normal circumstances. An employee must be notified of an extension of probation prior to the end of his or her probationary period.

Maximum Probationary Time Extensions

For Non-Sworn Positions: Not to exceed 6 months
For Sworn Positions: Not to exceed 6 months

7.0 – FORMAL EVALUATION AT THE END OF PROBATION - For employees in a career position, upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the employee’s status will become career service or merit. After that time the performance of the employee should be reviewed at least once a year on an annual basis. Such reviews should be signed by both the employee and the supervisor and the employee shall receive performance goals and expectations for the coming evaluation cycle. Employees successfully passing the initial probationary period will receive a 2% hourly wage increase, as noted below.

8.0 – PERFORMANCE PAY INCREASE FOR EMPLOYEES UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD:

Performance Rating	Performance Category	Performance Pay Earned
200 or higher	Successful	2.00% wage increase
< 200	Unacceptable	Working with HR, consider options

9.0 – FAILURE TO MEET PROBATIONARY EXPECTATIONS - Sometimes, even after coaching and feedback, an employee will not successfully meet the expectations required to pass probation. Hopefully, a concern about the employee’s ability to pass probation is identified early in the probationary period. Regardless of when the concern is identified, if a supervisor believes an employee may not successfully pass probation s/he should communicate this information as soon as possible to the Human Resources Generalist assigned to the department.