



## Individualized Professional Development Plan: Guide

Setting career goals is an excellent means of motivating yourself and actively steering your life in a desired direction. Career goals serve as your guide toward a specific career path. Goals may include continuing education or training to fulfill requirements of a current position or exploring a new career pathway.

Career development planning is a valuable opportunity for you to identify your career goals and create a road map to achieve them. A well-designed professional development plan should consider your aspirations, motivations, and preferred learning styles. It should also encompass your overall career, rather than focusing solely on your current job responsibilities.

The Individualized Professional Development Plan (IPDP) is a reference tool for you to track your progress, set new goals, and adjust your career plans as needed. It can also be used to communicate career objectives and achievements to direct supervisors and other professional contacts. By creating and following an IPDP, you can take ownership of your professional development and enhance your career opportunities.

The Office of Head Start does not require a specific form or method for staff to develop their professional development plans. Each Head Start program must collaborate with employees to create a plan that is regularly evaluated ([Sec. 648A\(f\)](#)). This IPDP Guide provides sample forms that your program can opt to use and a process to design and document your professional development efforts. The process and related forms may be of special interest to programs without a formal approach to staff professional development or programs exploring planning options.

### Process

#### **STEP 1: Complete the IPDP Profile.**

The IPDP Profile can help you reflect on your skills, knowledge, interests, and abilities. Your completed form provides valuable information that can be used to create your an IPDP Action Plan.

#### **STEP 2: Create IPDP Action Plan.**

The IPDP Action Plan is developed by staff and in consultation with the supervisor or a human resource professional. It captures career goals and outlines the steps, resources, and time frames expected to achieve desired career goals. The form includes a mid-point review date for revising the plan. The IPDP Action Plan provides space for one goal. It is recommended to use one Action Plan for each career goal and make additional copies of the form as needed.

#### **STEP 3: Document progress.**

The IPDP Action Plan Follow-up Notes and Status Updates section of the IDPD Action Plan is where the person advising you on your career development captures key meeting takeaways and identify personal barriers, coaching opportunities, related resources, and additional considerations as needed.

The IPDP Profile and Action Plan are sample forms. Head Start programs are not required to use them. Regardless of the form used, the intent is to help staff and their supervisor, or a human resource professional explore potential career goals and plan steps to achieve them. Users can include additional copies of each form as needed.



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## IPDP Profile

**Instructions:** Prior to your IPDP meeting with a supervisor or human resources professional, reflect and write responses to the prompts below.

<b>Staff Name</b>	
<b>My knowledge:</b>	Describe how you process information and the skills that you have acquired through your job (e.g., knowledge of federal, state, and local regulations; problem-solving skills; interpersonal skills; communication skills).
<b>My skills:</b>	Describe the learned abilities and competencies that enables you to perform a particular task or activity and that you have developed through a combination of education, training, practice, and experience (e.g., public speaking, Excel spreadsheets skills, budgeting skills, technology skills).
<b>My abilities:</b>	Describe the natural or acquired skills, talents, or aptitudes that you possess and can use to perform specific tasks or activities (e.g., the ability to organize, analyze, communicate well).
<b>My passions:</b>	Describe the personal interests, hobbies, and activities that excite you (e.g., volunteering, advocacy, health and fitness, mindfulness).
<b>My experience:</b>	Describe practices related to your career, such as work assignments, job responsibilities, or training programs (e.g., accounting, bookkeeping, project management, direct reports, on-boarding, employee benefits).
<b>My network:</b>	Describe the professional networks or connections you have established that can help you in career development (e.g., recruiters, colleagues met at industry-related conferences, former job colleagues, relevant professionals on LinkedIn).

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## Action Plan: Developing IPDP Goals

While vision defines the direction of development, goals and action plans support professional development outcomes that bring the greatest rewards. Here are some points to consider when developing IPDP SMART goals:

- Identify desired career goal. Goals should be simple and clearly define what will be done. Consider the SMART model for writing goals.
- List steps needed to achieve the goal. Examine and identify gaps in training and education.
- Identify key resources needed to achieve the goal. These might include training and professional development, non-credit training or college courses, financial resources, coaching, mentors, etc.
- Create a timeline to review and revise the IPDP plan as needed.
- Identify potential challenges that may prevent goal achievement and ways (the program and staff) can address them.
- Consider how to measure progress toward achieving goals and how and when to adjust the plan if needed.
- Schedule regular meetings to assess the need for additional resources, determine if adjustments to the plan is necessary, and to celebrate progress toward goals.
- Share your goals. Telling others about goals boost accountability and commitment to the action plan.

### SMART Model

<b>S</b> <sub>pecific</sub>	Is the goal clearly written, with no uncertainty?
<b>M</b> <sub>easurable</sub>	What is the metric that will show you have accomplished the goal?
<b>A</b> <sub>chievable</sub>	Does the goal stretch you while still being possible? Will the goal make a difference in your career? Will the goal significantly impact your work in the field of early childhood education?
<b>R</b> <sub>elevant</sub>	Does the goal connect to your true direction? Can you get support to achieve the goal? Do you have all the resources needed? Are the expected results realistic?
<b>T</b> <sub>ime-based</sub>	Does the goal state a clear and specific completion date?

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## Action Plan: Goal Development

**Instructions:** Develop a plan to support career development within the current job role or in preparation for a new position. This form is completed by staff in consultation with your supervisor or human recourse professional. Use separate Action Plan forms for each goal. It's best practice to limit the number of goals to ensure success in attaining them.

<b>Staff Name:</b>	<b>Supervisor Name:</b>	Date when IPDP goal is successfully accomplished.	<b>Date Developed:</b>	Date IPDP is developed.
<b>Staff meets HSPPS qualifications for job role:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not yet. If not yet, job-related degree/certification completion needed:  <input type="checkbox"/> CDA or equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> AA degree <input type="checkbox"/> BA degree <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> Coursework, clock hours or CEUs to maintain certification		<b>Ongoing training, professional development, coaching/mentoring included in plan:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Coursework or training in an area of interest <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coaching/Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Reflective Supervision/Practice <input type="checkbox"/> Team Project(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Rotational Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
<b>GOAL:</b> Use IPDP to develop career goals that support practice in your current or desired role, using the SMART Goals model.				
<b>Steps needed to achieve this goal</b>	<b>Resources needed</b> (People, materials, financial support)	<b>Timeframe</b> (Realistic time needed to complete step)	<b>Date completed</b>	
Consider steps/objectives needed to achieve the goal. The steps may be enrolling in a specialized certificate program (e.g., CDA, AA, CPA, HR), registering to take courses through the iPD Portfolio, gaining CEUs toward in-service training classes, attending a local college/university or an online degree program).	Consider how resources, such as program technical and training assistance/PD funds, iPD Portfolio, and community professional development partnerships can be used to support your goals. Note: Covering tuition, books, and substitutes, is an allowable program cost.	Determine time needed to complete the step. Keep in mind the time to acquire resources and people involved.	Date the step is successfully completed.	
<b>Potential challenges:</b> What are the barriers to achieving the goal? How can these barriers be addressed?				
<b>Date to revisit goal:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> I have achieved this goal.	<input type="checkbox"/> I am making progress toward this goal and will keep implementing my action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> I need to make changes to my plan to achieve this goal by revising the goal or changing the action steps.	
	Midpoint between date developed and date achieved.			

**Staff Signature and Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor Signature and Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Action Plan: Follow-up Notes and Status Updates

**Instructions:** This form is completed by you and those in attendance to capture progress made toward achieving your career goal.

Follow-up Notes and Status Updates	Attendees	Date
<p>Capture key meeting takeaways and follow-up needed. Discuss and document use of new learning, skills, or resources Include who is involved (e.g., mentor, coach, instructor, supervisor). Include any additional considerations such as coursework or professional development workshops. Talk about opportunities to address barriers to achieving the goal. Indicate follow-up meeting dates.</p>	<p>Capture signatures of people present in the meeting.</p>	<p>Capture date of the meeting.</p>

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