



CRAFTING YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS: THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUALIZED DEVELOPMENT PLANS (IDP)

Congratulations on your new role in the DAF! As you embark on this exciting journey, one of the first tasks you've been entrusted with is developing your Individualized Development Plan (IDP). While it may seem like just another task on your to-do list, creating an IDP is a crucial step in your professional growth. Let's explore what an IDP is, why it's important, and how you can craft a plan tailored to your unique needs and aspirations.

What is an IDP?

An Individualized Development Plan (IDP) is a personalized roadmap outlining your professional and personal goals and the steps needed to achieve them. It serves as a strategic tool to enhance your skills, competencies, and overall performance within your current role and future career aspirations.

Why is an IDP Important?

1. Personalized Growth

An IDP is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Tailor it to your specific needs, ensuring that you focus on areas crucial to your development.

2. Increased Engagement:

Taking an active role in your professional development increases your engagement and satisfaction in your role.

3. Career Advancement

An IDP is a proactive approach to career advancement. It helps you identify and acquire the skills necessary for future opportunities within the organization.

4. Continuous Improvement

Regularly revisiting and updating your IDP allows for continuous improvement, ensuring that your skills stay relevant in a rapidly changing work environment.

Understanding DAF References and Requirements Regarding IDPs

Understanding the Who, What, When, Where and Why of IDPs, as defined by DAF policy...

WHO: “Completion of an IDP is mandatory for all civilian employees” Section 4.2. of DAFMAN 36-142

WHEN: “Employee IDPs should be developed concurrently with the individual’s annual performance plan and should be reviewed during each feedback session.” Section 4.2.3.2. of DAFMAN 36-142

“Each employee must have a written performance plan established and approved normally within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the appraisal cycle or the employee’s assignment to a new position or set of duties.” DoDI 1400.25-V431

HOW: “It is highly recommended that IDPs be completed via the automated MyVector IDP tool.” Section 4.2.3.1. of DAFMAN 36-142

WHAT and WHY: “IDPs will be used to:

- Record employee short-term and long-term professional goals.
- Record employee annual training and development plan to assist in meeting the employee’s professional goals.
- Align employee training and development with organizational core values, mission, and vision.
- Acquire an understanding of employee strengths and developmental needs.”

Section 4.2.1. of DAFMAN 36-142

Five Steps to Creating an IDP

1. Choose Your Goals

Take time to identify both short-term and long-term goals. Consider how these goals can help you better succeed on your current job, as well as help you grow along the career path you desire.

For first year employees, we recommend considering the following three as potential IDP goals:

- **Learn your job.** Are there trainings you need? Systems you need to learn? Discuss this with your supervisor, or get suggestions from your coworkers.
- **Develop yourself in the Foundational Competencies.** Read more in Air Force Handbook 36-2647. See the Self-Assessment section in the next step to learn more.
- **Increase your DAF Civilian Knowledge.** Explore the New Employee Toolkit on the [CLDS site](#) or join one of the live events on the Developing Better Civilians (DBC) webinar series.

After your first few years in the DAF, you’ll want to begin defining your career goals. If you need help identifying what career path might be right for you, explore the Civilians We Need Roadmaps as well as discuss the concept with your supervisor and/or mentor.

- DAF-level civilian career roadmap for “Enterprise Leaders”
https://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/2022SAF/Enterprise_Leaders_Roadmap.pdf
- DAF-level civilian career roadmap for “Functional Experts/Leaders”
https://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/2022SAF/Functional_Experts_Leaders_Roadmap.pdf

- In addition to the DAF-level career roadmaps, Career Field Managers (CFMs) have now developed career-field specific roadmaps within their civilian career field management chapters, which can be viewed/accessed by going to this link: <https://myfss.us.af.mil/USAFCommunity/s/knowledge-detail?pid=kA0t00000004Y1cCAE>

2. Self-Assess

Start by reflecting on your strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in terms of what you need to succeed in your short-term and long-term career goals. Use tools like self-assessment surveys or feedback from colleagues or your supervisor to gain insights into your current performance.

To do: Explore the [Foundational Competencies assessment on MyVector](#):

3. Identify Learning Resources

What do you need to achieve your goals? This may include training programs, workshops, online courses, mentorship opportunities, or conferences. Places to find DAF-related courses and resources include:

- Civilian Leadership Develop School (CLDS) courses <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/CLDS/>
- Civilian Development Education (CDE) call <https://myfss.us.af.mil/USAFCommunity/s/knowledge-detail?xid=13085>
- Percipio <https://usaf.percipio.com/>
- Digital University <https://digitalu.af.mil/>

4. Create your draft IDP on MyVector

It is highly encouraged that employees and supervisors use the automated MyVector IDP tool located within MyVector. Use this system to easily document your plan and then share it with your supervisor. <https://myvector.us.af.mil/DevelopmentPlan/Home>

When developing the specifics of your plan, it will be helpful to use smart goals. To learn more, explore the IDP page on the [Civilian Leadership Development School](#) website

5. Discuss Your Thoughts for Your IDP With Your Supervisor

When discussing your IDP with your supervisor, consider covering these points:

- **Goal Alignment:** Ensure that your development goals align with the overall objectives of your team and the organization.
- **Measurable Objectives:** Clearly define objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).
- **Timeline:** Establish a realistic timeline for achieving your goals. This helps in tracking progress and making adjustments as needed.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Discuss how feedback will be provided and how often. Constructive feedback is invaluable for continuous improvement.
- **Support and Resources:** Identify the support and resources needed to achieve your objectives. This may include access to certain tools, mentorship, or additional training opportunities.

Questions For Quality Discussions with Your Supervisor



1. *What skills do you think are most important for me to work on right now to help me advance?*
2. *I'd like to build a plan for my development. My career goal is _____. What do you see as important steps for me?*
3. *What developmental steps did you take to get where you are today?*
4. *When you think about the best team members you've managed, what skills or traits make them stand out in your mind?*
5. *Can you recommend some networking or professional development events and organizations?*

Conclusion

Your IDP is more than just a document; it's a dynamic tool that empowers you to take control of your professional development. By investing time and effort into crafting a thoughtful plan, you set the stage for personal and career success. Regularly revisit and revise your IDP as your goals evolve, ensuring that it remains a relevant and powerful guide throughout your journey.