



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

2V
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: December 16, 2025

Title of Item: Career Coaching Model

<input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	Action Requested: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only
Submitted by: Bobbie Danielson, HR Director		Department: Human Resources Dept.
Presenter (Name and Title):		Estimated Time Needed:
Summary of Issue: <p>The Revitalization Team, led by Dr. Bill Brendel, developed a new Career Coaching model, which will replace our traditional performance evaluations effective January 1, 2026. The leadership team received training from labor attorney Kristi Hastings on October 8, 2025. All staff will receive an introductory email from the County Administrator providing additional information about this new model. A summary of the new model is attached.</p>		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:		
Recommended Action/Motion: Motion to implement the new Career Coaching model, effective January 1, 2026.		
Financial Impact: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><div><i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i></div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</div></div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><div><i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i></div><div></div></div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><div><i>Is this budgeted?</i></div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</div><div><i>Please Explain:</i></div></div>		

Aitkin County Career Coaching Guide – Supervisor Instructions (2 Pages)

Purpose

We are replacing annual performance evaluations with **Career Coaching conversations** focused on helping employees grow and meet their career goals.

Disciplinary or performance issues are handled separately — not during these coaching meetings.

Core Principles

- **Employee-Centered:** Focus on the employee's aspirations, strengths, and career growth.
- **Forward-Looking:** Use feedforward (future-focused) conversations instead of rating past performance.
- **Simple & Efficient:** 2 conversations per year, 15 minutes to document.
- **Separate Performance Issues:** If there are job performance concerns, address them outside the coaching session.

Process at a Glance

Step	Action	Outcome
1. Invite	Supervisor invites employee to reflect on career goals.	Shared understanding of aspirations.
2. Align	Align goals with departmental needs.	Mutually beneficial growth goals.
3. Agree	Agree on 2–3 clear growth goals.	Documented plan with actions.
4. Coach	Conduct feedforward conversations at least 2x/year.	Ongoing development.
5. Follow-Up	Send short summary email after each session. CareerCoaching@aitkincountymn.gov	Shared accountability.

Step 1: Invite Employees to Dream

Ask open-ended questions to help the employee articulate their goals:

- "What aspects of your work are you most passionate about?"
- "Where do you see your career in the next 3-5 years?"
- "What skills would you like to develop to achieve these goals?"
- "How can your current role be adjusted to align more closely with your interests?"

Document aspirations on the **Career Coaching Form**.

Step 2: Align Employee's Dreams with Performance Goals

- Identify **how the employee's goals support departmental needs**.
- Analyze their idea of what a star performer would be in this position and then identify the skills and behaviors that would contribute to their success.
- Translate broad personal goals into **clear, actionable growth points**.
- Keep goals realistic and achievable within the year.

Example:

Employee: “I want to get better with technology.”

Supervisor: “Let’s focus on mastering the new document system to improve turnaround time.”

Step 3: Agree on Action Plan

- Limit to **2–3 growth goals**. Identify support/resources (training, mentoring, job shadowing, project work). Document on the form and agree on a timeline.
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Step 4: Feedforward Conversation

Hold at least **two sessions annually** (or more if desired).

- Keep it future-focused.
 - Celebrate progress.
 - Adjust goals as needed.
 - Use the **No-FEAR** framework:
 - **Frame** the conversation around specific development goals.
 - **Explore** the employee’s perspective and progress.
 - **Acknowledge** the efforts and challenges encountered.
 - **Respond** with support and agree on future actions.
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Step 5: Follow-Up Email Summary

Immediately after the session:

- Summarize key points from the discussion, agreed upon actions, and express appreciation for the employee’s efforts.
- CC: CareerCoaching@AitkinCountyMN.gov
- Keep it short and positive.
- Do **not** include disciplinary content.

Sample Email

Hi [Employee],

Thank you for today’s conversation. I appreciate your focus on [goal]. We agreed on next steps: [list]. I’ll support by [resource/training/etc.]. Let’s reconnect on [date].

Thanks for your commitment to growing your career.

– [Supervisor]

Handling Performance Problems

If performance concerns arise: Address them **immediately and separately**. Do not mix with career coaching. Consult HR as needed. Use performance improvement or disciplinary tools appropriately.

Key Tips for Supervisors

- Keep the conversation positive and solution oriented. Use active listening and open questions.
- Encourage employees to own their development. Celebrate small wins. Keep it simple: 2–3 goals, short follow-ups, clear next steps.

Career Coaching Form – Supervisor & Employee (1 Page)

Employee Name	Position	Department	Date

Step 1. Career Aspirations (Employee Input)

- What aspects of your work are you most passionate about?
- Where do you see your career in the next 3-5 years?
- What skills would you like to develop to achieve these goals?
- How can your current role be adjusted to align more closely with your interests?

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Step 2. Aligning Employee Career Aspirations with Performance Goals

- Identify how the employee's goals support departmental needs.
- Analyze their idea of what a star performer would be in this position and then identify the skills and behaviors that would contribute to their success.
- Translate broad personal goals into clear, actionable growth points.
- Keep goals realistic and achievable within the year.

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Step 3. Agreement on Action Plan

Hold at least **two sessions annually** (or more if desired). Keep it future-focused. Celebrate progress. Adjust goals as needed. Use the **No-FEAR** framework (see page 2).

Growth Goals (limit to 2-3)	Support/Resources	Timeline

Step 4. Feedforward Conversation / Check-In Date Progress Notes / Next Steps

[space reserved for notes]

Step 5. Follow-up Email Summary *(Email summary sent to CareerCoaching@aitkincountymn.gov)*

Summarize key points from the discussion, agreed upon actions, and express appreciation for the employee's efforts. Keep it short and positive.

[space reserved for notes]

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____