

MILESTONES GUIDE

Best Practices and What Not to Do
2012 Draft



Milestones in Performance Management

- Milestones are an important part of the goal implementation process
- Agencies can use milestones to track progress towards goal achievement on a quarterly basis
- Milestones are especially helpful for goals with only annual measures and targets
- Milestones can be qualitative or quantitative in nature

Considerations for Milestone Setting

Project Management – critical path milestones

- Key milestones driving project schedule

Other types of milestones

- Finding and learning what works
 - Analyzing best practices to understand how to improve performance of goals
 - Testing the replication of best practices
 - Evaluations and studies
- Spreading and scaling success
- Coordination across organizations
 - Both within components of the agencies and cross-agency
- Improving ability to measure progress
 - Developing milestones that depict key actions to advance progress where it is otherwise difficult to develop quantitative indicators

Characteristics of Milestones

GOOD Characteristics

- ✓ Milestones should be concise and easy to understand
- ✓ Milestones should articulate concrete actions the agency plans to take that quarter that connect to an achievement of a strategy and/or outcome (e.g. inclusion of an “*in order to...*” statement)
- ✓ Milestones should be specific, measurable, actionable, results-oriented and time-bound
- ✓ Milestones should be jargon-free
- ✓ Great milestones will clearly articulate the projected impact of the anticipated action

BAD Characteristics

- Progress updates should not be milestones
- A meeting with no definition of purpose or the planned outcome should not be a milestone
- If an agency is “continuing to do [insert activity]”, that is not a milestone
- Training, without any explanation as to the target audience, purpose or expected result, is a bad milestone
- General stakeholder outreach, without any planned targeting, strategy or purpose, is a bad milestone

Examples of Good Milestones

Project Management – critical path milestones

- Award contract to begin training services to support implementation of revised Job Development Program at all CONUS and OCONUS training locations

Process

- Implement Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACT) at 32 sites with the goal of eliminating barriers to quality healthcare and improving housing outcomes for Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness

IT

- Complete the FY2011 release and evaluation of iClaim, incorporating a language option for those who preferred language is Spanish, as well as accepting applications from eligible individuals who live in foreign countries

Stakeholders

- Conduct targeted marketing to representative payees of working SSI recipients, to increase the use of the SSI Telephone Wage Reporting System

Training

- Conduct hurricane disaster assistance training for 300 staff in Region 4 in order to equip them with the latest tools leading to a faster response time

Reports

- Publish X Report which contains the combined information from all states and territories that will communicate accomplishments from the past year as well as areas for improvement to follow up on

Bad Milestones – The “What Nots”

Process

- Continue to make progress on this goal as applications are received

Meeting

- Hold a meeting with senior leadership

IT

- Plan to launch next phase of IT roll-out

Stakeholders

- Perform outreach to stakeholder groups

Progress

- Perform status check and/or achieve the goal

Training

- Conduct awareness training

Reports

- Publish quarterly report on [insert topic]