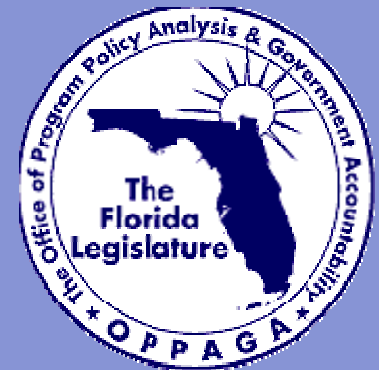


Underperforming Employees

Marti Harkness

Staff Director, Criminal Justice

Florida Legislature's OPPAGA

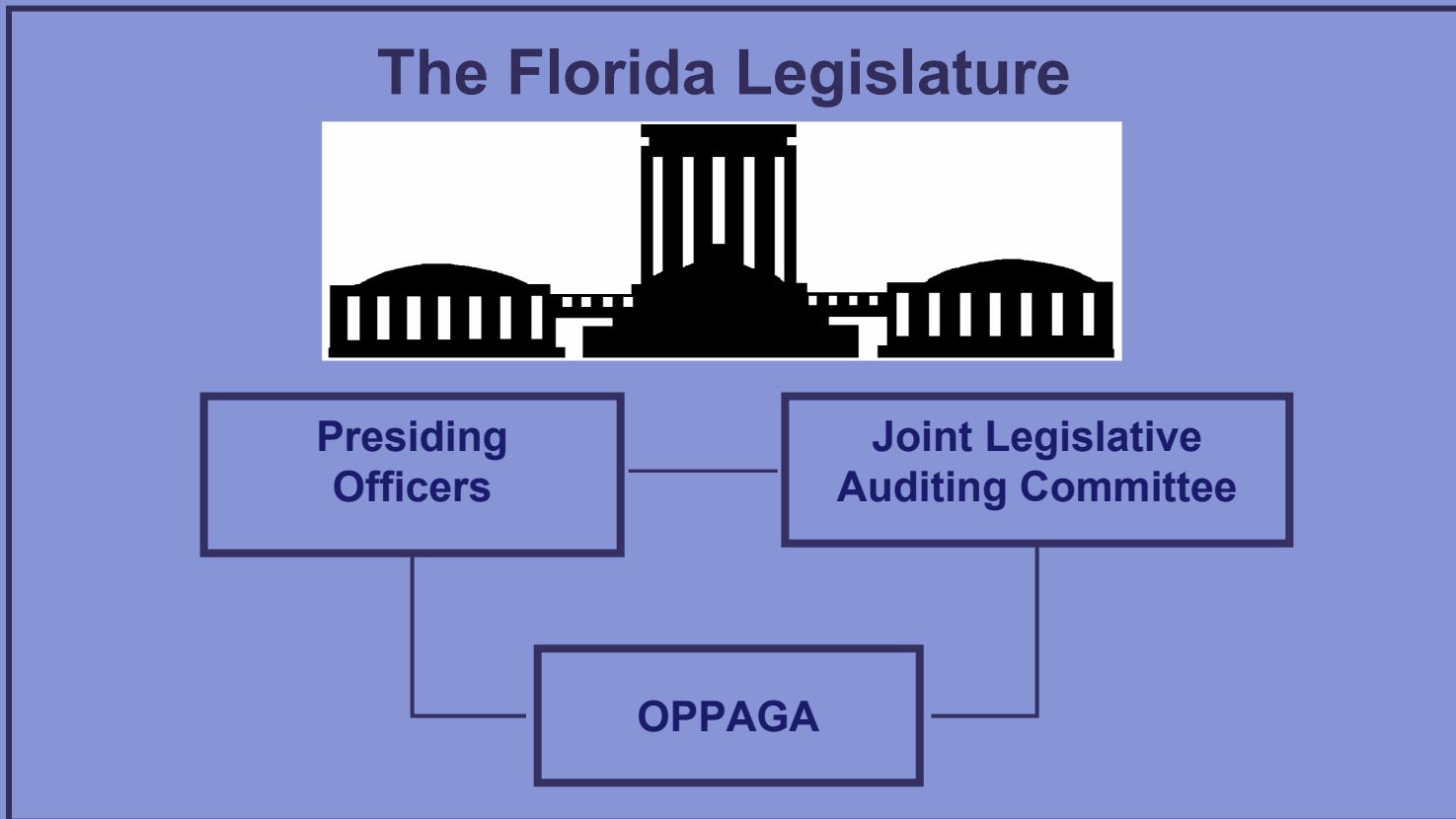


Topics for discussion

- Why should we care?
- Types of underperforming employees
- How does OPPAGA deal with them?
- Success stories and “not so successful” stories

What is OPPAGA?

- Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability



Background Information

- We hire Masters, Ph.D.-level researchers with strong analytical skills and good written/verbal communication skills (team-centered)
- We have a training/staff development/mentoring coordinator
- We have a formal annual performance evaluation process

Why should we care about underperforming employees?

- Underperforming employees diminish organizational effectiveness, morale
- It's expensive – hiring, training
- We want people to be successful because we're such nice people
- “Employee disposal” is problematic – contract hit man costs rising, digging shallow graves in summer is tough, need good lawyers

Types of Underperforming Employees

- **Hiring “mistake”** – Employee does not have capacity to do the work
- **Skills-related** – Employee has not yet learned one or more key skills necessary for expected performance, but has the capacity
- **Motivation-related** – Employee has skills, but lacks motivation, he/she is disgruntled, or has “checked-out,” or is distracted

Addressing Poor Performance

- **Mentoring**
- **Increased supervision**
- **Evaluation process**
 - Six month evaluation
 - Individual Development Plan
- **KEY: Identify underperformers EARLY and be specific**
 - Go from “We’re not happy” to “You lack A and B skills”
 - Separate “bad hires” from “skill deficient” early

Performance Issues

- Recognize short-term performance issues
 - Change in supervisor, workload, team dynamics
 - Be open and honest with employee – understanding but frank
- Identify when non-work related or mental health issues are a factor
 - Can't ignore the problem
 - Get general counsel or human resource professionals involved

Performance Issues

- Motivation issues hardest to deal with
 - Not measurable
 - Tend to be more experienced staff, but not our best employees
 - Must use due diligence in documenting deficiencies
 - Can be poisonous to organization

“Not so Successful” Stories



FAILURE

WHEN YOUR BEST JUST ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH.

- DON'Ts
 - DON'T postpone the inevitable
 - DON'T pass a poor performer on to other supervisors
 - DON'T rely on the “eventually they will leave” strategy
 - DON'T be vague about skill deficiencies

Success Stories



- Staff have overcome performance problems and succeeded at OPPAGA !