

# **COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Outline

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# 1. OVERVIEW

The Communication Management Plan is the foundation for a successful project and is based on a philosophy of clear and accurate communications to stakeholders and team members. Clear, concise, timely, and accurate communication is essential to the success of any project. The Communication Management Plan defines and organizes the various communications that serves as a guide throughout the project.

The Communication Management Plan defines:

- Types of Project communication
- Frequency for the various types of communication
- Intent of each communication
- Participants of communications

The primary objective of the Communication Management Plan is to ensure that information disseminated to all internal and external stakeholders is relevant, timely, accurate, and consistent. Key communication objectives are:

- Enhance collaboration among the project team
- Provide the best and most reliable sources for information
- Ensure a consistent message
- Ensure cooperation and understanding among stakeholders
- Engage staff to create enthusiasm and support for the Modernization Planning Project
- Establish methods in which stakeholders can interact with the Project team

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section describes the key roles of the personnel who support and participate in the communication management process.

### 2.1 Project Teams and Members

Role	Purpose	Responsibilities

Table 1 provides the governance structure and listing of key roles and responsibilities for the communication management of the Project.

Role	Purpose	Responsibilities

**Table 1 - Communication Management Roles and Responsibilities Key Stakeholders**

### 3. COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The purpose of the Communication Management Plan is to define the types of communication that are needed during the project. Types of communication include intra-team and larger group meetings, reports, presentations, deliverables, web sites, e-mail, and voice mail among others. The Communication Management Plan defines the frequency for the various types of communication, the intent of each, the participants, and documents generated from the communication.

The approach focuses on the following key principles throughout the duration of the project:

- **Focus on people** – Allows for effective and useful communication and attends to the responsibilities of the sender and receiver, as well as individual communication preferences.
- **Use an incremental approach** – Facilitates learning and change while building confidence and correcting problems.
- **Attend to scope** – Maximizes the understanding of business, financial, and technical boundaries and uses them to the utmost advantage.
- **Employ an integrative process** – Provides for integration with other business processes (internal and external) to create an effective system for sharing information.
- **Address timing** – Allows for an understanding of time requirements and provides for processes that assure quality information is disseminated timely.

Clear, effective communication relies on understanding the parameters of a communication:

- **Who** – With whom are we communicating?
- **What** – What information or data are we communicating? Is it proprietary or confidential information that needs to be handled through specific security protocols?
- **When** – How frequently is this communication required?
- **Why** – What is the intended use of the information provided?
- **How** – What is the preferred method of communication?
- **Internal/External** – Is the receiver internal or external to the Project?
- **Influence** – How much influence does the stakeholder have on Project success (low, med, high)?
- **Impact** – What is the impact on the stakeholder or stakeholder's organization if the Project team does not meet this communication (low, med, high)?

#### 3.1 Communication Guiding Principles

Every project employs various methods of communications, including formal and informal, written and verbal, and ranging from non-technical to very technical. This section provides the guiding principles for communication delivery methods and practices. These help to provide messages that are accurate, clear, concise, and timely.

The following guiding principles apply to all stakeholders throughout the life of the Project:

- **Visible management support** – Active management commitment gives credibility to communication and demonstrates support throughout the life of the Project.
- **A strong and consistent message** – The Communication Management Plan reflects the mission of HFS, and supports, reinforces, and reflects the goals of the agency and of the project. The PM works to ensure consistent, timely, and accurate communications for internal and external stakeholders.
- **Central coordination** – Central coordination ensures a consistent, timely, and proactive approach.
- **Open two-way communication** – A bi-directional, accurate, informational communication flow ensures that information is shared between internal and external stakeholders, such as through e-mails, formal and informal meetings, meeting minutes, feedback on deliverables, etc.
- **Face-to-face communication** – Where possible, face-to-face communication assists to ensure communication is bi-directional, provides for a feedback mechanism, and assists participants with having a clear understanding of the objective of the discussion. Teleconferencing is used as an acceptable alternative to face-to-face communication when needed.
- **Proactive and timely** – Project related communications are developed to provide internal and external stakeholders with complete, accurate, and timely information. The dissemination of timely information also:
  - ✓ Takes into account the calendar of scheduled (and recurring) publications, postings, meetings, seminars, and workshops
  - ✓ Ensures the quick completion and dissemination of meeting minutes
- **Inclusive** – Stakeholders are included in the communication process to build teamwork and a sense of belonging. The goal is to include everyone who cares to participate and to motivate those who are not currently engaged.
- **Tailor communication to audience needs** – Providing information the audience needs or wants, not what the presenter wants to communicate, allows the information to appear “real” to the audience. The audience is more likely to listen, participate, and appreciate the value if the information is pertinent to their current frame of reference. Where possible, an objective is to obtain feedback from the audience to help guide upcoming or needed communications.

## 3.2 Communication Considerations

When communications are developed, there are considerations to understand that will shape the content and usefulness of the communication.

### 3.2.1 Communication Inputs

For any communication, the following are considered to ensure it is developed with the right content for the right audience:

- **Information needed**
- **Style**, whether formal or informal
- **Content**
- **Frequency** of the information

- **Urgency** of the information
- **Media**, such as the Project Library, e-mail, telephone call, teleconferencing, video conferencing, webcast, webinar meeting, external-facing website, file exchange, or live meeting
- **Structure**, such as meeting agenda, meeting minutes, memo, status report, press release, brochure, bulletin, newsletter, letter, presentation, voice mail recording, fax, or other document
- **Communicator**
- **Audience**, including level of knowledge of the Project or the topic
- **Feedback cycle** for questions, issues, and comments

### 3.2.2 Assumptions and Constraints

While face-to-face communication is the preferred mode of communication, online delivery of Project information, e-mails, or a presentation link is likely to be the most efficient delivery mechanism for documents. The Project team may use one or all of the delivery methods in conjunction with each other. All communication critical to Project success, including face-to-face, is documented.

### 3.2.3 Key Decisions

Every project requires decision making. Projects which involve a significant change in the paradigm of fundamental organizational working-relationships, will likely require many decisions to be addressed. The process of identifying, resolving, documenting and publishing decisions is critical to ensure that all parties who are impacted by the decision are informed and aware. It is also practical to document key decisions to save valuable time which can be lost revisiting issues where a decision has already been made.

#### Key Decisions Log

Decisions which are significant to the project are documented and managed in the Project Repository.

#### Decision Management

As noted in the Issue Management Plan, issue resolution may be a source of decisions which needs to be documented and managed in the Key Decisions Log.

## 3.3 Project Team Directory

The Project Team Directory is a document listing all team members, their role, and contact information such as telephone and e-mail address. The Project team members use the listing to support communications with relevant individuals (i.e., looking up phone numbers or e-mail addresses). The team maintains the Project Team Directory throughout the duration of the project, and it is stored in the Project Library along with other contact lists.



Individual	Role & Organization	E-mail & Phone Number

### 3.4 Communication Matrix

A Communications Matrix identifies the primary points of communication that will take place throughout the life of the Project. The matrix provides details of the communication activity, and identifies the parties involved. The Communication Matrix format provides a method to determine:

- What is the communication event or tool
- What is the appropriate delivery method
- Who is the appropriate audience
- When the communication should occur
- Who will deliver the communication

What	Audience/Attendees	When / Frequency	How (Method & Tool)	By Whom
Project Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Executive Sponsor</li> <li>➤ Steering Committee</li> <li>➤ Project Team Members</li> <li>➤ Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>➤ Management Staff</li> <li>➤ Other Authorized Staff as needed</li> </ul>	Ongoing for duration Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All Project Team Members</li> <li>➤ Authorized stakeholders</li> </ul>
Project Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Executive Sponsor</li> <li>➤ Executives</li> <li>➤ Steering Committee</li> <li>➤ Project Team Members</li> <li>➤ Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>➤ Management Staff</li> <li>➤ Other Authorized Staff as needed</li> </ul>	Ongoing for duration Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All Project Team Members</li> <li>➤ Authorized stakeholders</li> </ul>
Project Management Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Executive Sponsor</li> <li>➤ Executives</li> <li>➤ Steering Committee</li> <li>➤ Project Team Members</li> <li>➤ Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>➤ Management Staff</li> </ul>	Developed during planning phase and updated as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintained in Project Repository</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project Manager</li> <li>➤ Lead Business Analyst</li> <li>➤ Lead Technical Analyst</li> </ul>
Project Deliverables and Work Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Executive Sponsor</li> <li>➤ Steering Committee</li> <li>➤ Management Staff</li> </ul>	On Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Print and Online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project Manager</li> <li>➤ Project Team Members</li> </ul>

What	Audience/Attendees	When / Frequency	How (Method & Tool)	By Whom
Project Status Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Executive Sponsor</li> <li>➤ Executives</li> <li>➤ Steering Committee</li> <li>➤ Project Team Members</li> <li>➤ Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>➤ Management Staff</li> </ul>	Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Print and Online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project Manager</li> </ul>
Project Status Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Steering Committee</li> </ul>	Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Oral Presentation</li> <li>➤ Printed agenda</li> <li>➤ Structured Walkthrough</li> <li>➤ Telephone Conference Call</li> <li>➤ Written Meeting Notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project Manager</li> </ul>
Monthly Status Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Executive Sponsor</li> <li>➤ Executives</li> <li>➤ Project Manager</li> <li>➤ Project Manager</li> </ul>	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Print</li> <li>➤ Online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project Manager</li> </ul>
Ad-hoc Meeting	As required	On Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Oral</li> <li>➤ Presentation</li> <li>➤ Print</li> <li>➤ Structured Walkthrough</li> <li>➤ Telephone</li> <li>➤ Written Meeting Notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project Manager</li> <li>➤ Project Team Member</li> <li>➤ Stakeholder or Group</li> </ul>

Table 2 – Sample Project Communication Matrix

## 4. STATUS REPORTING

Status reports are the most common project communication tools. They serve as the integration point for project management disciplines and processes.

### 4.1 Weekly Project Status Report

Status reports describe the results of project team tasks performed for each of the major activities. The Weekly Project Status Report provided to the project sponsor is discussed weekly.

The Weekly Status Report includes:

- Progress of work performed, describing the status, by project phase, of each major task in the project plan and the deliverables associated with that task
- Project task updates, incorporating agreed upon changes to the work breakdown structure and defining the implications for resources and schedules
- Updated schedule, defining the major tasks, milestones, and deliverables that have been started or completed
- A listing of significant departures from the overall Project Plan with explanations of causes and strategies
- Overall plans and activities for the next period
- Identification and assessment of:
  - ✓ High probability and high impact risks
  - ✓ High priority issues
  - ✓ Any needed corrective actions and resolutions associated with Project activities
- Change requests and status or progress of implementation
- Other items requiring HFS Management attention with action recommendations

Appendix C contains the Status Report Template format.

### 4.2 Monthly Status Report

The Monthly Status Report summarizes project progress and hours expended.

Monthly Status Reports include:

- All of the components of the Weekly Project Status Report
- Summaries of Change Control Board activities and decisions and any updates to change management strategies
- Project Hours by resource for the reporting month and for the project up to the end of the month reported.
- Planned activities scheduled for the next month
- Problems encountered, proposed resolutions, and actual resolutions

- Risk management activities including analysis of risks anticipated, proposed mitigation strategies and risk response plans and resolved risks
- Issue management activities including analysis of issues anticipated, proposed resolution plans, and resolved issues

The monthly report will be provided in the same basic format as the Weekly Status Report with additional sections for monthly totals, and for planned activities for the following month.

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## 5. PROJECT MEETINGS

The communication activities related to meetings are vital for communicating pertinent information to the project team.

The following sections identify the planned meetings and provide information regarding the meeting definitions, expected frequency, format, and attendees.

### 5.1 Status Meetings

Describe the frequency and intended participants for status meetings.

Detail	Description
Frequency	
Format	
Attendees	➤
Responsibility	
Meeting Output	➤
Typical Agenda	➤

**Table 3 – Sample Project Status Meeting Parameters**

#### 5.1.1 Risk Review

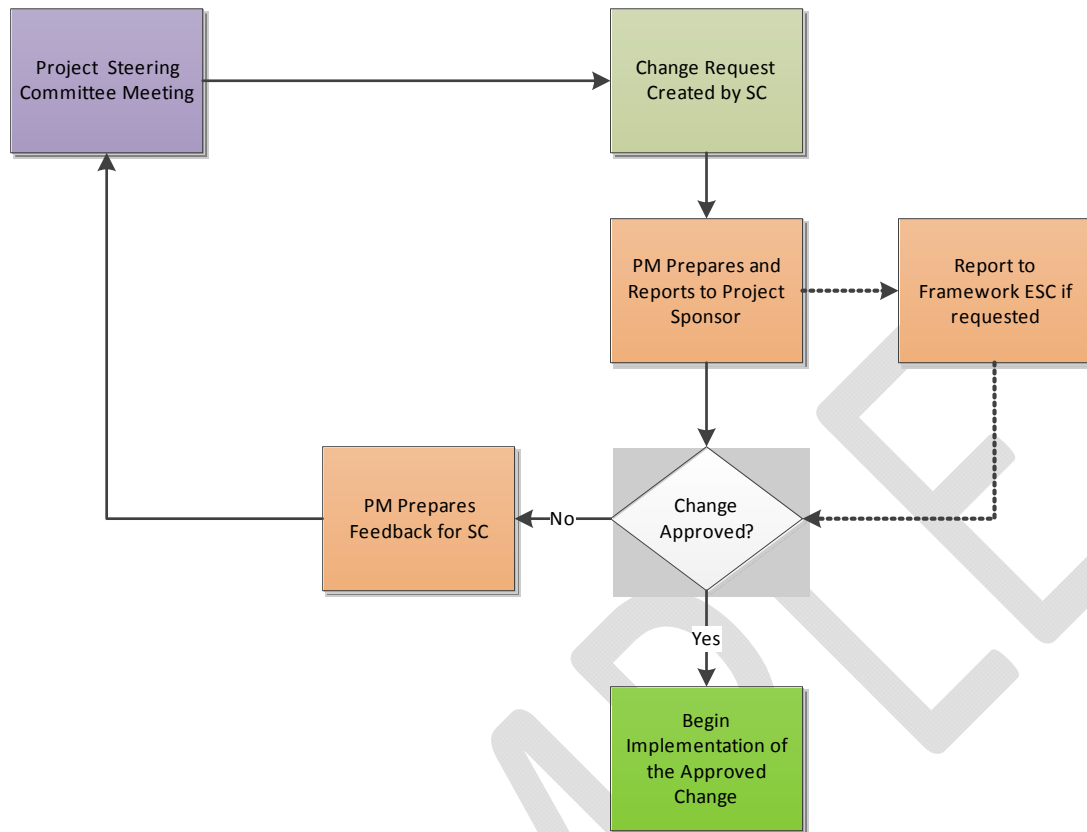
The meeting content includes the review and discussion of project risks at each weekly update meeting. The Project Manager includes risk updates in the weekly report and includes discussion of risk on the regular agenda for this meeting.

#### 5.1.2 Issue Review

The team includes the review and discussion of project Issues at each weekly update meeting. The Project Manager includes issue updates in the weekly report and includes discussion of issues on the regular agenda for this meeting.

### 5.2 Change Control

An established group or person should be identified as the project's official source for the origination and processing of change requests. Changes requested would be subject to the approval of the Project Sponsor. The Project Manager prepares summarized reports or PowerPoint presentations as appropriate. The Project Manager summarizes the status of the Change Requests to review and presents it in a graphical format whenever possible. The following illustrates the process an example for the review and approval of change requests.



**Figure 2: Change Control Process**

## 5.3 Ad-hoc Meetings

The project team may use ad-hoc meetings as an informal way to address important Project topics during the life of the project.

- This technique is particularly effective for reinforcing methodology, discussing technical issues or approaches, or addressing process issues with the Project team.
- Because of the informal nature of these meetings, a casual setting (e.g., lunch-and-learns) can be utilized to promote teamwork as well as provide another feedback loop among project team members and stakeholders.
- Project leaders can also use this technique to communicate pertinent information with the project staff.

## 6. PROJECT REPOSITORY AND DISTRIBUTION

The project team uses various Project meetings and reports as a means for information collection and distribution. This Communication Management Plan and all other key communication documents are available in the Project Library.

The Project Library is the official repository for all pertinent Project information. The Library is for sharing Project related files, including deliverables, working documents, templates, procedures, and minutes.

Benefits of the Project Library include the ability to:

- House Project information for the project team
- Allow collaboration with team members on all Project activities
- Publish and maintain Project documents, such as discovery findings, meeting notes and draft deliverables
- Track team events



## 7. DOCUMENT FORMATS AND FILE MANAGEMENT

The Project Team ensures that documents are created and stored for ongoing project use and historical reference. To do this, project documents are created using standard formats for ease of review. In addition, standard file naming conventions are used and document control is implemented to ensure easy access and retrieval of current, valid project documents.

### 7.1 Standard Document Formats

Document authors use a document template appropriate for the type of document being created.

### 7.2 File Naming Conventions

Efficient management of electronic records begins with accurate file naming. The following file-naming conventions incorporate best practices in electronic records management and information technology. When other individuals access a record, they may be using different operating systems (Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® Mac OS®), different versions of the system (e.g. Windows Vista®, Windows® XP), or different software (e.g. Microsoft® Word®, Apache® OpenOffice.org® Writer, Microsoft® Notepad); therefore, it is important to follow rules that will allow the recognition of a file in as many different environments as possible.

The naming convention should be based on the following rationale:

- Using the year month day format in front arranges the files by date
- The doc name should be the file purpose (i.e. Project Plan, Communication Plan, Roadmap, status reports, etc.)
- Avoid using special characters in a file name. \ / : \* ? " < > | [ ] & \$ , .
- Include all necessary descriptive information in the file name independent of where one stores it. (The ABC Planning Project team may move records from their original location.)
- Be consistent with file naming conventions

### 7.3 Document Version Control

Incorporate version control standards to ensure the most recent version of documents are being shared and reviewed.

## APPENDIX A – MEETING AGENDA TEMPLATE

### Status Meeting

**Date/Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Purpose:** Weekly project updates and status meeting

No.	Agenda Topic
1.	Updates from the Project Manager
2.	Standing Agenda Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Status Update</li> <li>➤ Upcoming Meetings</li> </ul>
3.	Topic 1*
4.	Topic 2*
5.	Other Topics / Walk On Issues

### Participants:

Name	Organization	Attendance

\* Present for the meeting.

## APPENDIX B – MEETING MINUTES TEMPLATE

### Status Meeting

**Date/Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Purpose:** Weekly project updates and status meeting

No.	Agenda Topic
1.	Updates from the Project Manager
2.	Standing Agenda Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Status Update</li> <li>➤ Upcoming Meetings</li> </ul>
3.	Topic 1*
4.	Topic 2*
5.	Other Topics / Walk On Issues

### Participants:

Name	Organization	Attendance

\* Present for the meeting.

**Topics of discussion**

No.	Agenda Topic / Notes
1.	Updates from the Project Manager
2.	Standing Agenda Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Status Update</li> <li>➤ Upcoming Meetings</li> </ul>
3.	Topic 1*
4.	Topic 2*
5.	Other Topics / Walk On Issues

**Decisions:**

No.	Decisions Taken
1.	

**Action Items:**

No.	Action Item	Owner
1.		
2.		
3.		

**Next Meeting: MM/DD/YYYY**

## APPENDIX C –PROJECT STATUS REPORT TEMPLATE

### WEEKLY PROJECT STATUS REPORT

AS OF:[DATE]

<b>Project Name:</b>					
Project Start Date: MM/DD/YYYY			Project End Date: MM/DD/YYYY		
Status Report Date: MM/DD/YYYY			Prepared By:		
Status for Week: MM/DD – MM/DD/YYYY			Presented To:		
Project Health	Overall	Schedule	Risk	Resource	Trending

<b>Key Message / Highlights</b>
<b>Highlights:</b> ➤ XXXXXXXX ➤ XXXXXXXX ➤ XXXXXXXX

**Summary of Activities:**

<b>Activities Completed This Reporting Period</b>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

<b>Activities In Progress This Reporting Period</b>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	

### Key Upcoming Meetings

Meetings scheduled for Next Reporting Period			
Date	Time	Subject	Owner

Meetings scheduled past Next Reporting Period			
Date	Time	Subject	Owner

### Milestone Tracking Matrix

Milestone / Deliverable	Planned Delivery Date	Actual Delivery Date	Status	Signoff Date

Milestone / Deliverable	Planned Delivery Date	Actual Delivery Date	Status	Signoff Date



### Risk Status

ID	Title : Description	Mitigation Strategy	Assigned To	Consequence	Overall Ranking	Probability	Priority	Severity	Created Date

Please note: Resolved Risks are “grayed” out

### Issue Status

Issue ID	Description	Resolution Needed by	Resolved	Current Update

Please note: Resolved Issues are “grayed” out

**Time Reporting:**

Team Member	Hours Worked for week ending MM/DD/YY	Total Hours as of MM/DD/YY	Hours Remaining	Allocated Total Project Hours thru MM/YYYY

## APPENDIX D – MONTHLY STATUS REPORT TEMPLATE

### MONTHLY PROJECT STATUS REPORT

AS OF: [DATE]

<b>Project Name: Child Support Modernization Planning</b>					
Project Start Date: 05/06/2013			Project End Date: 01/06/2014		
Status Report Date: MM/DD/YYYY			Prepared By: Joe Mamlin		
Status for Month: MONTH, YEAR			Presented To: Dave Johnson and Kathleen Monahan		
Project Health	Overall	Schedule	Risk	Resource	Trending

#### Key Message / Highlights

##### Highlights:

- XXXXX
- XXXXX
- XXXXX
- 

#### Summary of Activities:

##### Activities Completed This Reporting Period

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

##### Activities In Progress This Reporting Period

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

### Milestone Tracking Matrix

Milestone / Deliverable	Planned Delivery Date	Actual Delivery Date	Status	Signoff Date

### Risk Status

ID	Title : Description	Mitigation Strategy	Assigned To	Consequence	Overall Ranking	Probability	Priority	Severity	Created Date

Please note: Resolved Risks are “grayed” out

### Issue Status

Issue ID	Description	Resolution Needed by	Resolved	Current Update

Please note: Resolved Issues are “grayed” out

**Time Reporting:**

Team Member	Hours Worked Month Ending MM/DD/YY	Total Hours as of MM/DD/YY	Hours Remaining	Allocated Project Hours through 1/2014

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