



USDA Virtual University

School of Talent Management

Leadership Essentials Certificate Program

Leadership Competency Self Assessment

Building Blocks for Workforce Development

**Based on
OPM Competencies**

Updated: March 2013

What is a Competency?

A competency is the integration of one's knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes in order to perform effectively on the job. Competencies are observable and measurable behaviors, which are critical to successful individual and agency performance. Competencies applied through behaviors help to ensure organizational/mission critical results and outcomes.

The 10 foundational leadership competencies for **all employees** form the foundation upon which leadership success is built. Knowledge, skill and ability in each of these ten competencies are the basis on which to build success as a leader.

Each of the five organizational leadership levels builds upon the foundation. Even though an upward progression of employee levels is shown, the progression of leadership development is not always linear. Leadership competencies displayed for each organizational leadership level in this chart are situational, and are not cast in stone.

As times change, our mission will require that the organization make changes too. The competencies leaders need now may not be the same competencies that leaders will need in the future. The Competency Chart may need to be updated as organizational changes evolve in the future.

This self-assessment is designed to educate leaders at the All Employees and Team Leader levels regarding the competencies required for their success. For the leader who has reached their target level, a competency self assessment can be useful to help identify strengths and areas for improvement for the purpose of continuous learning. Also, supervisors can use the self assessment as a tool for coaching and mentoring their aspiring subordinates.

Leadership Competency Self Assessment Directions

DIRECTIONS: Use the definitions and proficiency levels for a self assessment.

1. Determine your current employee level, using the Competency Chart and Leadership Journey on the next page.
2. Review your current job description to identify leadership competencies required.
3. Using the fill able assessment for your **employee level**, check the box next to your perceived proficiency.
4. If you are interested in a higher employee level you may assess your competency proficiency for that level as well.
5. Choose 2-3 of the competencies you wish to develop.
6. Share the self assessment with your supervisor if you wish or have them rate your proficiency on a blank set.
7. Research the types of learning experiences, courses, or programs that you would like to participate in. Use the Employee and Leadership Development catalog as a resource. Be sure to check for online (Aglearn) Skillsoft courses that specifically address competencies.
8. Document on your IDP.

Please note that the assessment does not provide a basis for acceptable level competencies. Your perceived level may be different than your supervisor. Use this as an opportunity to discuss your development and leadership skill gaps.

This assessment and all competencies are based on OPM competency definitions and proficiency levels.

Competency Chart and Leadership Journey

USDA Competency Chart and

Employee Level

Employee Level	Responsibility/Role	Competencies
<p style="text-align: center;">Manager</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Managing Programs</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Individuals in management positions who typically supervise one or more supervisors</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Creativity and Innovation Partnering Political Savvy Technology Management</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Supervisor</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Managing People</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">First line supervisors who do not supervise other supervisors; typically are responsible for employees' performance appraisals</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Developing Others Financial Management Human Resources Management Leveraging Diversity</p>

SUPERVISOR

Developing Others - Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization by providing ongoing feedback and by providing opportunities to learn through formal and informal methods.

Proficiency Level	Proficiency Level Definition	Proficiency Level Illustrations	Check
Level 5 Expert	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations</p> <p>Serves as a key resource and advises others</p>	<p>Designs and implements opportunities for career development in anticipation of agency restructuring, including mentoring staff and providing training</p> <p>Directs working group to design training programs focused on skills necessary for meeting strategic goals</p> <p>Designs, implements, and communicates leadership development opportunities for staff at all levels in the organization</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 4 Advanced	<p>Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations</p> <p>Generally requires little or no guidance</p>	<p>Recommends details and developmental assignments to staff based on career interests and work unit needs</p> <p>Recognizes staff potential and guides employees in developing skills by recommending appropriate training and sources of information</p> <p>Works with staff to develop individual development plans addressing employee needs and meeting organizational goals</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 3 Intermediate	<p>Applies the competency in difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Assesses staff and provides timely and consistent feedback regarding technical proficiency and effectiveness</p> <p>Provides constructive feedback, guidance, and reinforcement to employees regarding job performance</p> <p>Works with staff to identify work goals and create individual development plans</p> <p>Evaluates training programs to ensure content meets staff needs</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 2 Basic	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Encourages employees to participate in mentoring programs and other learning opportunities</p> <p>Pairs new staff with seasoned employees to facilitate understanding of the position and organization</p> <p>Provides orientation to new employees</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 1 Awareness	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations</p> <p>Requires close and extensive guidance</p>	<p>Provides developmental feedback to staff on job performance</p> <p>Involves staff in developing project goals and timelines</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUPERVISOR

Financial Management - Understands the organization's financial processes. Prepares, justifies, and administers the program budget. Oversees procurement and contracting to achieve desired results. Monitors expenditures and uses cost-benefit thinking to set priorities.

Proficiency Level	Proficiency Level Definition	Proficiency Level Illustrations	Check
Level 5 Expert	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations</p> <p>Serves as a key resource and advises others</p>	<p>Designs and implements an agency-wide financial management system to meet organizational objectives</p> <p>Develops agency-wide financial procurement procedures and policies</p> <p>Audits major acquisitions having agency-wide impact, presents findings, and recommends <u>corrective actions</u></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 4 Advanced	<p>Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations</p> <p>Generally requires little or no guidance</p>	<p>Develops and implements new procurement system to support agency program within time and budgetary constraints</p> <p>Ensures financial commitments and deadlines are met by facilitating and assessing processes, situations, and issues and takes corrective action, as needed</p> <p>Considers implications of financial decisions and suggests methods for meeting needs of staff and the organization overall</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 3 Intermediate	<p>Applies the competency in difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Conducts research to determine resource needs and guides the procurement process to acquire resources</p> <p>Conducts a cost-benefit analysis to develop sound financial plans with programmatic impact</p> <p>Follows established guidelines and procedures to ensure approval of funding for key initiatives</p> <p>Prepares and monitors office's annual operating budget</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 2 Basic	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Justifies requested budget allocation to management in relation to program objectives</p> <p>Allocates program budget across multiple projects</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 1 Awareness	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations</p> <p>Requires close and extensive guidance</p>	<p>Ensures inventory accounting is accurate and complete</p> <p>Monitors income and expenditures for projects</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUPERVISOR

Human Resource Management - Builds and manages workforce based on organizational goals, budget considerations, and staffing needs. Ensures that employees are appropriately recruited, selected, appraised, and rewarded; takes action to address performance problems. Manages a multi-sector workforce and a variety of work situations.

Proficiency Level	Proficiency Level Definition	Proficiency Level Illustrations	Check
Level 5 Expert	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations</p> <p>Serves as a key resource and advises others</p>	<p>Redesigns organizational structure to provide improved service to customers by considering organizational goals, timeframes for achieving goals, and staff responsibilities</p> <p>Creates new agency-wide human capital programs and activities to meet strategic objectives</p> <p>Leads task force to analyze agency-wide staffing needs and develops strategy to address recruitment needs</p> <p>Develops new agency-wide incentive program to retain employees with technical expertise</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 4 Advanced	<p>Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations</p> <p>Generally requires little or no guidance</p>	<p>Develops rewards system to recognize the impact of employee contributions to the organization</p> <p>Identifies creative strategies to recruit employees with the required skills and qualifications, despite having limited resources</p> <p>Identifies mission critical occupations and associated competencies needed to perform organizational functions</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 3 Intermediate	<p>Applies the competency in difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Reviews and updates position descriptions and performance plans</p> <p>Explains restructuring plan to staff and addresses concerns</p> <p>Recognizes employee contributions by rewarding employees publicly</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 2 Basic	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Recognizes and addresses deficiencies of human resources processes or tools</p> <p>Provides positive feedback to high-performing staff and rewards exceptional performance</p> <p>Considers impact of personnel decisions on current staff</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 1 Awareness	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations</p> <p>Requires close and extensive guidance</p>	<p>Makes personnel decisions based upon promotion criteria and position requirements</p> <p>Utilizes peer recognition process to recognize employees</p> <p>Meets with employees to set performance goals</p> <p>Hosts employee appreciation dinner for staff</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUPERVISOR

Leveraging Diversity - Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization.

Proficiency Level	Proficiency Level Definition	Proficiency Level Illustrations	Check
Level 5 Expert	<p style="text-align: center;">Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Serves as a key resource and advises others</p>	<p>Creates a diverse and inclusive environment after a major reorganization which brings together different cultures, ideas, and experiences</p> <p>Identifies creative approaches for targeted recruiting to develop a representative workforce that benefits from diverse strengths</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 4 Advanced	<p style="text-align: center;">Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Generally requires little or no guidance</p>	<p>Builds a diverse staff with a variety of skills who function effectively to accomplish the mission of the organization</p> <p>Develops a creative initiative focused on recognizing the various dimensions of diversity to encourage inclusiveness in the workplace</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 3 Intermediate	<p style="text-align: center;">Applies the competency in difficult situations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Recognizes and utilizes skills of staff with diverse backgrounds to benefit the organization, clients, and coworkers</p> <p>Addresses and corrects the use of inappropriate language or actions which deride diversity</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 2 Basic	<p style="text-align: center;">Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Adheres to EEO policies, goals, objectives, and philosophies of valuing diversity in performing everyday duties and responsibilities</p> <p>Builds teams leveraging diverse capabilities of staff</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 1 Awareness	<p style="text-align: center;">Applies the competency in the simplest situations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Requires close and extensive guidance</p>	<p>Attends diversity programs to increase staff awareness</p> <p>Meets with staff to obtain input on diversity issues within workgroup</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGER

Creativity and Innovation - Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas and innovations; designs and implements new or cutting edge programs/processes.

Proficiency Level	Proficiency Level Definition	Proficiency Level Illustrations	Check
Level 5 Expert	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations</p> <p>Serves as a key resource and advises others</p>	<p>Devises new methods, procedures, and approaches having agency-wide impact</p> <p>Develops new performance management system aligned with agency vision to measure staff performance</p> <p>Develops, introduces, defends, and gains support for a new approach impacting the budget process agency-wide</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 4 Advanced	<p>Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations</p> <p>Generally requires little or no guidance</p>	<p>Creates new methods for planning, designing, and carrying out program objectives</p> <p>Organizes and leads cross-divisional work group in developing creative solutions to address problems</p> <p>Creates new units to streamline functions based on work flow analysis</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 3 Intermediate	<p>Applies the competency in difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Creates a system to redistribute work across units during unexpected situations</p> <p>Solicits feedback from team members in the creation of new agency initiatives and services</p> <p>Displays creativity by deviating from traditional methods in developing new procedures</p> <p>Reevaluates current procedures and suggests improvements to ensure an effective, streamlined process</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 2 Basic	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Creates a new quality control system to monitor unit processes</p> <p>Uses cutting-edge ideas to develop business unit services</p> <p>Works with coworkers to coordinate a project using a creative process</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 1 Awareness	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations</p> <p>Requires close and extensive guidance</p>	<p>Recognizes creativity in work unit</p> <p>Considers innovative ideas generated by others</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGER

Partnering -Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.

Proficiency Level	Proficiency Level Definition	Proficiency Level Illustrations	Check
Level 5 Expert	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations</p> <p>Serves as a key resource and advises others</p>	<p>Develops, publicizes, and garners support for programs and policies by meeting with key officials, executives, unions, employees, and other interested parties</p> <p>Partners with key officials from various offices and agencies to develop strategic goals</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 4 Advanced	<p>Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations</p> <p>Generally requires little or no guidance</p>	<p>Collaborates with headquarters, regional offices, and key stakeholders to implement new initiatives</p> <p>Partners with various parties by sharing information and resources across multiple levels to establish new programs</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 3 Intermediate	<p>Applies the competency in difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Builds consensus with partners by considering input and promoting trust between various parties</p> <p>Gains support from key leaders and staff within the organization to ensure support for work objectives and team initiatives</p> <p>Coordinates with partners regarding new strategies to ensure consistent communication with agencies</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 2 Basic	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Considers stakeholder input when developing strategies to ensure mutually-agreeable initiatives</p> <p>Coordinates with various agencies to plan and conduct annual events</p> <p>Coordinates across and within organizations to determine required resources to support goals</p> <p>Works with a team of managers or employees across agencies to address mutual issues and concerns</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 1 Awareness	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations</p> <p>Requires close and extensive guidance</p>	<p>Meets regularly with peers and supervisors to identify recurring issues</p> <p>Develops and maintains network of stakeholders for collection and sharing of information</p> <p>Meets with staff to discuss plans to implement strategic goals</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGER

Political Savvy - Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization. Perceives organizational and political reality and acts accordingly.

Proficiency Level	Proficiency Level Definition	Proficiency Level Illustrations	Check
Level 5 Expert	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations</p> <p>Serves as a key resource and advises others</p>	<p>Understands political issues and effectively works with Congress to receive legislative approval</p> <p>Leads reorganization of an agency by meeting with stakeholders to understand perspectives and reach consensus on organization-wide plan</p> <p>Responds to allegations during Congressional hearing</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 4 Advanced	<p>Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations</p> <p>Generally requires little or no guidance</p>	<p>Ensures staff understands documentation and required metrics to analyze political issues</p> <p>Meets with community leaders to discuss political issues and address concerns</p> <p>Establishes a clear vision for the organization by meeting with managers agency wide to ensure initiatives are understood</p> <p>Addresses controversial political issues by conducting research and considering best practices</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 3 Intermediate	<p>Applies the competency in difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Evaluates political implications by considering different courses of action on a key issue</p> <p>Meets with key decision makers to ensure approval of new office space to support an agency manpower increase</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 2 Basic	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Addresses political issues that may impact internal and external stakeholders</p> <p>Develops relationships with new political leaders in the agency</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 1 Awareness	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations</p> <p>Requires close and extensive guidance</p>	<p>Considers impact of union when addressing employee performance expectations</p> <p>Considers staff concerns regarding organizational changes</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGER

Technology Management - Keeps up-to-date on technological developments. Makes effective use of technology to achieve results. Ensures access to and security of technology systems.

Proficiency Level	Proficiency Level Definition	Proficiency Level Illustrations	Check
Level 5 Expert	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations</p> <p>Serves as a key resource and advises others</p>	<p>Prioritizes and approves agency investment in information technology (IT) applications and systems</p> <p>Identifies IT system shortcomings, researches options, and advocates a redesign and restructure of the process to implement new system</p> <p>Reforms infrastructure and develops innovative IT business systems by leveraging expert IT knowledge and sharing information with staff</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 4 Advanced	<p>Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations</p> <p>Generally requires little or no guidance</p>	<p>Improves ability of agency to gather and act on data from stakeholders by using online surveys and related IT tools</p> <p>Improves agency productivity by expanding the use of existing IT applications for use by clients and staff</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 3 Intermediate	<p>Applies the competency in difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Applies technical knowledge of IT system to ensure access to, and security of, the system</p> <p>Uses IT knowledge to streamline nationwide data collection processes and increase output</p> <p>Develops automated system formulas to calculate costs</p> <p>Manages the implementation of a new electronic processing system in the agency</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 2 Basic	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance</p>	<p>Works with contractors to implement an IT system change to meet requirements of a new legislative mandate</p> <p>Researches information technology systems to meet specific program needs</p> <p>Adapts processes to keep pace with new technological developments</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level 1 Awareness	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations</p> <p>Requires close and extensive guidance</p>	<p>Determines specifications for a new technology system</p> <p>Streamlines online training to eliminate redundant information</p> <p>Promotes IT security by disseminating IT security information and reinforcing it</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Self Assessment Resources

There are a variety of instruments you can use and actions you can take to assess your current competency level. A self-assessment is scored and interpreted by the individual completing the questionnaire. Self-assessments can provide immediate insight into leadership characteristics, how to use job assignments as opportunities to develop valuable skills, and preferred learning behaviors and styles.

Give copies of this self-assessment to a colleague, your supervisor, or a customer and ask that person to rate you as well.

If you supervise others, use a 360° Assessment to assess your leadership proficiency.

If your work unit or program has administered a customer survey, use information from that survey if it refers to you or to your position.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

What's My Communication Style

Strengths Finder

Center for Creative Leadership suggests the following self-assessments

Learning Tactics Inventory

Job Challenge Profile

Campbell Leadership Descriptor

Campbell TM Interest & Skill Survey (CISS)

A GOOGLE search will help with finding the above assessment resources

Experience Opportunities

Training doesn't always have to be formal training. Explore ideas in the following list for additional ways to stretch and develop competencies through experiences.

- Work groups --serve on a special work group to use your current skills in a new environment.
- Teams/Projects --request to join a special team, project or assignment
- Focus groups
- Cross-Training --acquire knowledge and skills from coworkers, usually with similar grade levels and experiences. A new skill can make an employee more valuable
- Details-check outreach database
- Shadow assignments - Designed to give you exposure to managerial duties, responsibilities, and to show you different approaches to handling them. It is also designed to provide exposure and some experience in a different unit than your own.
- Developmental stretch assignments
- Be a Mentor -- Find a Mentor: Mentoring - The mentoring process links a less experienced employee with a more experienced one to help facilitate professional growth. A mentor is someone not in the employee's chain of command who is in a position to help with job and career issues, and who is committed to doing so. For more information or to register to participate in the USDA Mentoring Program please visit the USDA Mentoring Portal at the following link:
<http://www.eservices.usda.gov/usdamentoring/>.
- Be coached -- Engage as a Coach -- Through a highly competitive process, coaches are chosen by the Forest Service Executive Leadership Team based on their dedication to other people's careers. Coaches sharpen listening skills, and learn to ask probing questions. Learning coaches are not mentors, counselors, or life coaches. A USDA formal coaching program is currently in development phase.
- Complete online courses
- Join professional organizations
- Participate in Supervisor training
- Serve as a representative on a special emphasis committee

For more information on The Virtual University School of Talent Management and other developmental programs, please visit the Virtual University website located at the following link:

<http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/vu/index.php>.

