



# VA Leadership Competencies

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## Contents

Leadership Competencies .....	3
Leading People .....	4
Inspires continual learning and development.....	4
Builds high-performing, diverse teams .....	5
Partnering.....	5
Builds and maintains partnerships .....	6
Demonstrates political savvy .....	6
Effectively manages conflict.....	7
Leading Change .....	8
Communicates vision and drives change .....	9
Results Driven.....	10
Fosters accountability to Veterans .....	11
Global Perspective .....	12
Enhances outcomes for Veterans .....	13
Business Acumen.....	14
Applies sound financial and material resource management principles .....	15
Employs Technology Effectively.....	15

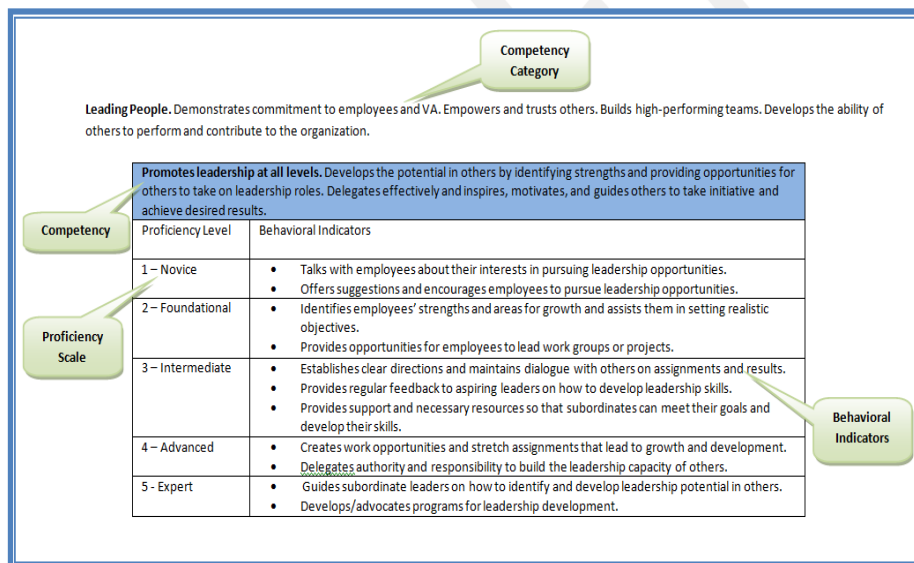
# Leadership Competencies

VA identified six broad leadership competency categories that apply to anyone in a formal leadership role. Each category includes more specific competencies, which define success for leadership roles across the Department.

Although these competencies are only required for formal leaders, aspiring leaders should refer to them to begin developing the skills needed for career progression into a leadership role.

A sample competency definition is presented below. Note that:

- The competency category is identified and described (i.e., Leading People)
- The name of the competency and definition is presented (i.e., Promotes leadership at all levels)
- Five proficiency levels are identified (e.g., Novice, Foundational, etc.)
- Each proficiency level is defined by specific behavioral indicators (e.g., Talk with employees about their...)



**Leading People.** Demonstrates commitment to employees and VA. Empowers and trusts others. Builds high-performing teams. Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks with employees about their interests in pursuing leadership opportunities.</li> <li>• Offers suggestions and encourages employees to pursue leadership opportunities.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies employees' strengths and areas for growth and assists them in setting realistic objectives.</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for employees to lead work groups or projects.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes clear directions and maintains dialogue with others on assignments and results.</li> <li>• Provides regular feedback to aspiring leaders on how to develop leadership skills.</li> <li>• Provides support and necessary resources so that subordinates can meet their goals and develop their skills.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates work opportunities and stretch assignments that lead to growth and development.</li> <li>• Delegates authority and responsibility to build the leadership capacity of others.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guides subordinate leaders on how to identify and develop leadership potential in others.</li> <li>• Develops/advocates programs for leadership development.</li> </ul>

The image above is a screen shot of the first table (Leading People) on page four of this document. A callout bubble with the words “competency category” points to the paragraph above the table. A callout bubble with the word “competency” points to the first row in table. A callout bubble with the words “proficiency scale” points to the left-hand side column of the table, second cell from the top. A callout bubble with the words “behavioral indicators” points right-hand side column of the table, fourth cell from the top.

# Leading People

**Leading People.** Demonstrates commitment to employees and VA. Empowers and trusts others. Builds high-performing teams. Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization.

**Promotes leadership at all levels.** Develops the potential in others by identifying strengths and providing opportunities for others to take on leadership roles. Delegates effectively and inspires, motivates, and guides others to take initiative and achieve desired results.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks with employees about their interests in pursuing leadership opportunities.</li> <li>• Offers suggestions and encourages employees to pursue leadership opportunities.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies employees' strengths and areas for growth and assists them in setting realistic objectives.</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for employees to lead work groups or projects.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes clear directions and maintains dialogue with others on assignments and results.</li> <li>• Provides regular feedback to aspiring leaders on how to develop leadership skills.</li> <li>• Provides support and necessary resources so that subordinates can meet their goals and develop their skills.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates work opportunities and stretch assignments that lead to growth and development.</li> <li>• Delegates authority and responsibility to build the leadership capacity of others.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guides subordinate leaders on how to identify and develop leadership potential in others.</li> <li>• Develops/advocates programs for leadership development.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Promotes leadership at all levels**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Inspires continual learning and development

**Inspires continual learning and development.** Designates resources and time for learning across the full range of development opportunities (e.g. education, training, knowledge sharing, mentoring, coaching, and assignments). Removes barriers to and encourages application of new knowledge and skills.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes the value of long-term development to others.</li> <li>• Supports development initiatives of the organization.</li> <li>• Encourages employee involvement in learning opportunities.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists employees in developing short- and long-term career goals.</li> <li>• Identifies resources and opportunities for growth and development.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjusts behavior to support the different development needs of individual employees.</li> <li>• Allows flexibility and provides resources in accomplishing daily work to support employees' efforts to participate in training and other developmental opportunities.</li> <li>• Supports employees' efforts to apply what they have learned in training on-the-job.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides challenging and stretch assignments to employees to leverage and improve their skills.</li> <li>• Allocates unit or department-level resources in support of employees' development needs.</li> <li>• Serves as a coach or mentor to employees, emphasizing the value of continuous development.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates opportunities and processes for others to develop and apply new skills in the organization.</li> <li>• Evaluates success of development initiatives in the organization and makes adjustments as necessary.</li> <li>• Establishes and supports organization-wide training and development policies that foster continual learning and development.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Inspires continual learning and development**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Builds high-performing, diverse teams

**Builds high-performing, diverse teams.** Builds high-performing, diverse, and inclusive teams that capitalize on the skills of all members. Promotes teamwork and participative work processes in VA by building a supportive work environment where employees feel free to raise questions and concerns.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourages team members to participate in discussions.</li> <li>Defines characteristics of a high performing team and ensures a common understanding of purpose and direction among members.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manages team in a way that builds morale and achieves results.</li> <li>Fosters and models an open dialogue among team members.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates an environment that promotes collaboration among team members.</li> <li>Recognizes and rewards team efforts and individual accomplishments.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizes and utilizes the strengths of all members.</li> <li>Gives credit to and shares successes with the team.</li> <li>Creates an environment where team members can raise sensitive issues and concerns.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates an overall climate in the organization that is conducive to high-performing teams by establishing expectations and reward and recognition systems that reinforce teamwork, honest communications, diversity, and inclusion.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Builds high-performing, diverse teams**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Partnering

**Partnering.** Develops networks and builds alliances. Collaborates with stakeholders to better achieve objectives. Finds common ground with a wide range of stakeholders and uses these contacts to build and strengthen internal support bases to better serve Veterans.

**Drives integration.** Recognizes interdependencies among internal and external processes, resources, and capabilities. Demonstrates understanding of how Administrations, Staff offices, stakeholders, partners, and customers work together to achieve the VA’s mission. Applies a departmental perspective when planning, coordinating, and communicating the organization’s policies and processes. Considers cross-organizational requirements and information-sharing needs so that initiatives are integrated across organizational lines.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains how organizational units and external stakeholders work together to fulfill the VA’s mission.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourages others to make decisions with all key stakeholders in mind.</li> <li>Keeps work unit’s stakeholders updated on changes that may affect them.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures programs and policies are integrated with needs and/or resources of key stakeholders within and outside of own department.</li> <li>Champions a stakeholder perspective to decision making at all levels.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly conveys information to multiple stakeholders so that initiatives are integrated across the entire organization.</li> <li>Implements processes that foster a cross-organizational approach to achieving VA’s mission and strategic goals.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates systems and processes for sharing information to facilitate the integration of initiatives across the VA.</li> <li>Considers and aligns the various perspectives and needs of the entire VA when planning, coordinating, and communicating organization’s policies and processes.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Drives integration**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Builds and maintains partnerships

**Builds and maintains partnerships.** Networks with others internally and externally. Builds and maintains strategic relationships to achieve common goals. Participates in and contributes to collaborative work by sharing information and soliciting input from others.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies networking opportunities inside and outside of the organization.</li> <li>Establishes relationships with internal and external colleagues.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds upon existing and new relationships to achieve organizational goals.</li> <li>Uses internal projects as opportunities to collaborate and establish strategic relationships.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintains strategic relationships and collaborates with internal and external colleagues to fulfill the organization’s mission.</li> <li>Identifies and works to eliminate conditions that impede within-department and across-department collaboration and knowledge sharing.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes to collaborative work by proactively sharing information and providing input and support to strategic partners.</li> <li>Provides guidance to others that fosters the development of cross-department and organization partnerships.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops strategic partnerships with other organizations.</li> <li>Creates a process and develops criteria for evaluating the success of internal and external collaborative efforts.</li> <li>Possesses an extensive professional network across and outside the VA and leverages this network to contribute to the mission.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Builds and maintains partnerships**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Demonstrates political savvy

**Demonstrates political savvy.** Understands how the organization works and the impact of dynamics and culture and acts accordingly. Applies sound judgment and diplomacy when dealing with others.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directs complaints, makes special requests, or brings concerns to the attention of the appropriate party.</li> <li>Considers impact when addressing employee expectations (e.g., working with union, relocations).</li> <li>Explains to employees who the top decision makers are and their roles within VA.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses necessary diplomacy when sharing opinions and stating decisions.</li> <li>Maintains awareness of the organizational political climate.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies and works within the dynamics of the organization to achieve results.</li> <li>Expresses needs, concerns, or requests at the appropriate time, using the appropriate method and forum.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views organizational dynamics/politics as a normal part of an organization and adjusts to this reality (e.g., routinely includes the process of gaining buy-in from key stakeholders in project plans).</li> <li>Evaluates how changing conditions, current events, and historical contexts impact the work of the organization.</li> </ul>
5 - Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectively navigates complex and sensitive situations with internal and external stakeholders.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Demonstrates political savvy**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Effectively manages conflict

**Effectively manages conflict.** Embraces differences of opinion and openly considers alternative perspectives. Manages and resolves conflicts in a constructive manner and creates a positive environment that leads to accomplishment of VA's goals. Creates and maintains an environment where employees can raise difficult issues and engage in constructive disagreements and debates.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to conflicts as if they are an inevitable and potentially productive part of business, rather than personal attacks.</li> <li>• Acknowledges differences of opinion and considers alternative perspectives.</li> <li>• Resolves simple disagreements with others, with supervisor (or other third party) acting as mediator.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages discussion of differences of opinion as a means to stimulate healthy debate.</li> <li>• Addresses conflicts by providing a safe and respectful environment for each party to discuss their needs and concerns.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediates conflicts in a direct and straightforward manner that focuses on the issues and keeps the situation from escalating.</li> <li>• Creates an environment where employees can openly raise and debate difficult issues.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediates complex conflicts and disagreements to ensure solutions that are satisfactory to all parties.</li> <li>• Identifies potential conflicts and proactively addresses them before they escalate.</li> </ul>
5 - Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diffuses high-tension situations comfortably, empowering others to develop their own approaches to effective conflict resolution.</li> <li>• Uses conflict productively to address challenging issues without damaging relationships.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Effectively manages conflict**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

# Leading Change

**Leading Change.** Positions the organization for future success by identifying new opportunities, implementing new strategies, and developing and improving products and services. Creates a culture that fosters creativity and applies innovative solutions to drive organizational change. Communicates the mission and values and provides milestones for decision-making and action.

**Champions Innovation.** Looks beyond current reality and the “status quo.” Challenges assumptions. Creates a work environment and culture that values, fosters, and rewards creativity and innovation. Positions the organization for success by identifying, developing, and implementing new or cutting-edge programs, processes, or strategies. Anticipates the potential impact of decisions on existing delivery systems.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes trends and innovations within personal area of expertise.</li> <li>• Makes incremental improvements by adapting solutions from similar settings.</li> <li>• Recognizes and supports creative ideas proposed by others.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies new ways of performing work that may increase efficiencies.</li> <li>• Makes improvements by adapting solutions from loosely related settings.</li> <li>• Supports others in challenging the status quo.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks beyond organizational boundaries to identify opportunities for improvement.</li> <li>• Makes small, but meaningful shifts in programs or processes by helping to develop and implement novel ideas.</li> <li>• Encourages creativity of others by recognizing employee efforts to generate new ideas.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks inside and outside of the government to identify opportunities for improvement or anticipated demands for improvement.</li> <li>• Makes significant shifts in programs, processes or overall strategy by generating novel ideas.</li> <li>• Develops new procedures or processes for increasing efficiencies and works with senior leaders to communicate the ideas and implement changes.</li> </ul>
5 - Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually scans the broad environment, looking for strategic opportunities or demands for strategic change.</li> <li>• Transforms organizational processes, programs, and overall strategies by generating groundbreaking ideas and creating movement in an unprecedented direction.</li> <li>• Inspires creativity of others by challenging them to think beyond current assumptions and conventional wisdom and guiding them to generate innovative and viable new ideas.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Champions Innovation**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.



## Communicates vision and drives change

**Communicates vision and drives change.** Builds a shared sense of purpose and communicates the need for change. Acts as a catalyst for organizational change. Translates vision into action by inspiring others to act, while providing guideposts for decision-making and action. Recognizes challenges and deals effectively with resistance.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates the vision and need for change to others within own work group.</li> <li>Follows guidelines for decision-making that have been established to achieve changes.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Translates the organization’s vision for the future into work group actions and provides direction by helping employees understand what is important.</li> <li>Communicates the work unit’s mission and vision clearly to others.</li> <li>Addresses challenges and resistance to implementing changes with guidance.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates a vision that is simple, clearly captures a desired future state, and provides direction by helping employees see their role in achieving that vision.</li> <li>Communicates the work unit or department’s vision in a way that establishes a shared understanding of the desired future state of VA.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates a compelling vision and communicates it in a way that motivates and mobilizes employees to help achieve it.</li> <li>Translates broad organizational goals into well-defined strategies, plans, priorities, and assignments.</li> <li>Anticipates challenges and resistance to implementing planned changes and develops strategies to address them.</li> </ul>
5 - Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates a vision that guides the short and long-term activities of VA at every level or the Department.</li> <li>Communicates a vision for the future in a way that inspires and captures employee’s imagination.</li> <li>Considers various viewpoints from internal and external sources when developing new organizational mission and vision.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Communicates vision and drives change**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

# Results Driven

**Results Driven.** Guides and inspires others to achieve results and improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Implements effective control measures. Fosters a climate of reasonable risk taking.

**Fosters reasonable risk taking and drives execution.** Determines priorities and sets clear objectives for workgroup. Defines evaluation criteria and continuously collects, shares, and evaluates data to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Takes calculated risks to accomplish organizational objectives and empowers employees to do the same.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritizes day-to-day activities with supervisor’s guidance and provides input into standard operating procedures.</li> <li>• Identifies performance measures and evaluation criteria that apply to own workgroup.</li> <li>• Clearly explains tasks and expectations to work group members.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitors performance of workgroup and reports results; relates workgroup performance to organizational performance.</li> <li>• Identifies potential barriers to achieving results and provides recommendations for overcoming them.</li> <li>• Identifies the potential costs and benefits of taking specific business risks.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzes performance measure data and takes action to improve or sustain performance.</li> <li>• Interprets organizational goals and directives and translates them into procedures and guidelines.</li> <li>• Makes well-reasoned recommendations for taking calculated risks based on a cost/benefit analysis.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes criteria against which project/program success will be evaluated.</li> <li>• Specifies data to be gathered and utilizes data and information to formulate policy and strategic plans.</li> <li>• Identifies potential risks and barriers; removes barriers and takes calculated risks to achieve results.</li> </ul>
5 - Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specifies data to be gathered and develops systems for collecting and sharing data on progress towards achieving organizational objectives.</li> <li>• Sets organizational goals and performance measures based on the VA’s mission/vision/values.</li> <li>• Establishes a climate of reasonable risk-taking, empowering and rewarding employees who demonstrate entrepreneurial behavior and the ability to take calculated risks.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Fosters reasonable risk taking and drives execution**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Fosters accountability to Veterans

**Fosters accountability to Veterans.** Acts in a manner that instills public trust while accomplishing the mission. Ensures compliance with established control systems and rules. Holds self and team members accountable for measurable, high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Balances competing demands, and employs sound management processes and procedures to ensure that Veteran, employee, and other stakeholder interests are well-served.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With guidance, ensures that established control systems and rules have been correctly followed.</li> <li>• Maintains accountability when faced with competing demands and priorities.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitors and ensures adherence to established control systems and rules.</li> <li>• With guidance, measures work quality against established standards.</li> <li>• Holds employees accountable for achieving results.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes to establishing control systems and rules.</li> <li>• Guides employees in prioritizing among tasks with competing deadlines and balancing the needs of varied stakeholders.</li> <li>• Identifies or establishes quality standards and holds employees accountable.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates formal systems for monitoring progress and holds teams/units accountable for meeting or exceeding goals.</li> <li>• Assumes ownership for own and organizational mistakes and takes steps to mitigate their impact.</li> <li>• Leverages lessons learned from mistakes and failures to improve the VA.</li> </ul>
5 - Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models behavior that instills public trust, balancing achieving results with the highest ethical standards.</li> <li>• Balances multiple competing demands to develop solutions that optimize outcomes for employees, Veterans, and other key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Designs enterprise-wide mechanisms for taking corrective actions when aspects of the VA mission are not being met.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Fosters accountability to Veterans**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

# Global Perspective

**Global Perspective.** Demonstrates a broad view of the VA’s mission, strategic priorities, and role within the Federal Government and broader community (e.g., healthcare community, public at large). Understands and integrates stakeholder perspectives and takes action to improve delivery of benefits and services to Veterans.

**Ensures strategic alignment.** Promotes an awareness of all factors that influence desired outcomes, including economic, political, technical, demographic, environmental, and social trends that affect the Veteran. Examines key national policies and VA strategic plans to develop and implement plans, objectives, and measures with a short and long-term perspective. Aligns organizational objectives and practices with public interests and needs.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes the major internal and external factors that affect the organization.</li> <li>Explains at a basic level how changing conditions, current events, and historical contexts influence own work and unit’s work.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeps abreast of current events and changes in policy and legislation; describes how these events and changes could potentially impact the VA.</li> <li>Ensures work group goals and priorities are consistent with the VA Strategic Plan, as well as public interests and needs.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educates others on how major internal and external factors affect the organization.</li> <li>Evaluates how changing conditions and current events will impact work group and incorporates this information when making plans and decisions.</li> <li>Responds to external changes that affect programs and policies (e.g., changes in administration or a new Veteran-related bill) by refocusing efforts, redistributing resources, or otherwise overcoming roadblocks. .</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducts environmental scanning to stay abreast of relevant, emerging trends and uses this information to adjust goals and priorities as needed.</li> <li>Contributes to the development of long-term goals by recommending effective strategies that take into account external factors that may impact the VA.</li> <li>Anticipates how work processes may be affected by changes in the external environment and develops alternatives.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates expertise in internal and external factors impacting the VA and shares this expertise broadly to enhance the understanding of others.</li> <li>Forecasts the probability of future trends and external factors relevant to the VA and Veterans, evaluates their impact, and takes proactive action.</li> <li>Creates and implements strategic programs or initiatives (e.g., Veteran Reintegration, Ending Veteran Homelessness) based on stakeholder needs and views, public interests, and organizational objectives.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Ensures strategic alignment**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Enhances outcomes for Veterans

**Enhances outcomes for Veterans.** Models commitment to public service and advocacy for Veterans. Uses multiple modalities to clearly and regularly communicate the VA's mission, vision, and values both internally and externally. Encourages and empowers employees to ensure their daily work is focused on supporting or providing better services to Veterans and other stakeholders.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates commitment to serving Veterans and other members of the public.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding of Veterans' needs and their impact on daily operations.</li> <li>• Explains the VA's role in advocating for Veterans both inside and outside the VA.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides coaching and guidance to employees to ensure their daily work is focused on supporting or providing better services to Veterans and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Reviews policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure they are consistent with public needs.</li> <li>• Encourages and supports employee participation in various public service programs targeted at awareness of Veterans and their needs.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses Veteran feedback to make improvements that better support the VA's mission.</li> <li>• Reinforces employee actions that are Veteran and customer focused through rewards, recognition, and feedback.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guides others in advocating for Veterans and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Creates a climate that is Veteran and customer-centric, empowering employees to continually improve the VA's services.</li> <li>• Strategizes with other leaders to develop action plans to meet public needs.</li> </ul>
5 - Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Champions the VA mission internally and externally to further the VA's strategic objectives.</li> <li>• Creates strategic direction that is customer and Veteran-centered; evaluates current outcomes and provides direction for continuous improvement.</li> <li>• Models dedication and passion for serving Veterans in daily actions and speech; inspires other leaders to follow suit.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Enhances outcomes for Veterans**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral Indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

# Business Acumen

**Business Acumen.** Demonstrates exceptional judgment and applies resource allocation and management skills to optimize business operations and quality of service.

**Applies forward-looking human capital management principles.** Identifies staffing needs and builds a diverse workforce based on organizational strategy, priorities, and budget considerations. Leads comprehensive succession management and workforce development efforts. Evaluates performance fairly and accurately and effectively rewards and recognizes employee performance.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies high potential employees and encourages their development.</li> <li>Provides fair and accurate input into performance appraisals for others.</li> <li>Acts consistently with HR policy.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritizes current human capital needs to meet organizational priorities within the constraints of budget allowances.</li> <li>Ensures that succession management activities initiated by HR are completed and that leaders within own organization have individual development plans.</li> <li>Evaluates performance fairly and differentiates rewards and recognition based on performance.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forecasts future human capital needs to meet future organizational priorities within the constraints of budget allowances and partners with HR to source, select, and develop necessary talent.</li> <li>Leads efforts to create succession management activities tied to strategic needs and reinforces the importance of manager support of employee development.</li> <li>Identifies poor performers and creates opportunities for them to improve performance; identifies opportunities for ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) when necessary.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leads efforts to create succession management activities that will develop the next generation of leaders and rewards managers who support employee development.</li> <li>Ensures that managers are fairly managing performance, providing feedback on an ongoing basis, and regularly rewarding/recognizing superior performance.</li> <li>Proactively partners with HR to generate a system of HR practices that will most effectively source, select, and develop talent to meet strategic needs.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Champions a culture where development of the next generation of leaders is a strategic priority and everyone embraces succession management and individual development.</li> <li>Champions a culture of high performance where everyone is committed to and accountable for ongoing performance management and feedback.</li> <li>Partners with HR to develop strategic programs designed to source, select, and develop talent to meet future needs.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Applies forward-looking human capital management principles**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Applies sound financial and material resource management principles

**Applies sound financial and material resource management principles.** Demonstrates understanding of the organization's financial processes. Applies sound resource management principles, best practices, and applicable policies, regulations and laws to support operations. Aligns resources with policy, strategic direction, and priorities.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocates resources efficiently (time, money, materials, people) in support of operations.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectively and efficiently manages the expenditure of resources (time, money, materials, people) in support of operations, providing justification in relation to program objectives.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works with others to generate and manage financial allocations in support of strategic priorities and consistent with appropriation laws</li> <li>Describes how the budget process works within the organization and/or contributes to budget discussions.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies a comprehensive knowledge of Department financial processes and appropriation law to establish cost-effective organization-level (e.g., VISN, VBA Region, MISN) budgets and/or financial processes that tap into financial resources from conventional and unconventional sources.</li> <li>Guides others in making decisions regarding the expenditure of resources that is consistent with strategic initiatives.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies financial resources available internal and external to the VA, and skillfully gains access to these resources.</li> <li>Establishes systems to monitor expenditures within the Department to ensure that financial resources are effectively allocated to achieve goals and objectives.</li> <li>Contributes to the enhancement and improvement of VA-wide financial management systems to meet organizational objectives.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Applies sound financial and material resource management principles**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.

## Employs Technology Effectively

**Employs Technology Effectively.** Makes effective use of technology to achieve results. Leverages technology to improve decision making and outcomes. Keeps up-to-date on technological developments and decides when technology changes are needed. Ensures access to and security of technology systems.

Proficiency Level	Behavioral Indicators
1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures that technology resources are up-to-date, secure, and accessible.</li> </ul>
2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures that technology resources are deployed efficiently.</li> </ul>
3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explores the adoption of alternative technological solutions to improve organizational performance, consistent with strategic priorities.</li> <li>Ensures technology resources are deployed in a manner consistent with strategic priorities.</li> </ul>
4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies innovative technological solutions to drive strategic priorities.</li> </ul>
5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Champions innovation of technological solutions to drive strategic priorities.</li> </ul>

The first row in the table above defines the competency, **Employs Technology Effectively**. The proficiency levels are in the right-hand side column of the table. The behavioral indicators are in the left-hand column of the table.



## VA LEARNING UNIVERSITY: YOUR PARTNER FOR CHANGE

Powered by ADVANCE, VALU works with VA employees and leaders like you to put effective change management in the forefront of our operations. As VA begins implementing steps to transform into a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization that is people-centric, results-driven, and forward-looking, engaging change leaders is critical.

VALU is your partner in driving this historic transformation and motivating your team to be unifying, innovative change agents that make a difference in the lives of our Veterans. VALU your potential. VALU our Veterans. Be a positive force for change.

For additional information about the VA Learning University's Leadership and Change Programs, please write to us at [VALU.Training@va.gov](mailto:VALU.Training@va.gov).