HUMAN SERVICES MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

A Guide for Non-Profit and For Profit Agencies, Foundations and Academic Institutions

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Note: Please see companion document on Guide for Public Managers
Network for Social Work Management
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Introduction:

The intent of this document is to specify and detail the competencies necessary to successfully manage human service organizations. It is intended to be a framework for describing the skills necessary for the successful management of both public and private nonprofit organizations. The competencies have many uses including setting forth the requirements for social work managers to receive the CSWM, a designation available to professionals with a high degree of management experience and competence. This certification is granted by the Network for Social Work Management. The competencies also serve as a guide for executive and organizational governance; criteria for selecting and developing managers; a reference for academic design for social work management programs and a resource for research and scholarship in this domain.

Included in the competencies necessary to manage human service organizations is the need for a robust array of intellectual, interpersonal and technical skills. For example, intellectual skills provide for a clear perspective on the organization in its environment and are essential to possessing the capacity to think and act strategically; interpersonal skills are necessary to motivate others to successfully communicate the organizational mission and vision; and, technical skills are essential to successfully managing organizational functions such as budget and finance, human resources and technology.

Although leadership is one of the competencies listed and defined below, the need for leadership in many ways transcends all other competencies. It is the most complex, critical and overarching competency and the one most directly associated with organizational success and sustainability in a rapidly changing and challenging environment. Given this environment and the growing complexity of both organizations and the functions necessary for their management, it becomes less likely that one individual possesses all of the required competencies in sufficient degree. Therefore, the competence most critical to organizational success is the ability of a manager to be self-aware of her/his own strengths and limitations and self-confident enough to build an organizational leadership team that has, in the aggregate, all of the management competencies listed below. This is a critical component of leadership and the key ingredient of management competency.
DOMAINS

• Leadership • Resource Management • Strategic Management •
  • Community Collaboration •

LEADERSHIP

1. Competency: Establish, promote, and anchor the vision, philosophy, goals, objectives, and values of the organization

Performance Indicators:
1.1 Creates, communicates, and anchors a vision for the organization
1.2 Works to ensure that all programs align with the overall organizational mission
1.3 Reviews the mission periodically to determine its relevance to client and community needs
1.4 Works closely with management staff to establish benchmarks to show alignment with vision, mission, philosophy, and goals
1.5 Identifies potential organizational drift from vision, mission, philosophy, and goals
1.6 Demonstrates the manner in which the vision, philosophy, and values are applied in making organizational decisions

2. Competency: Possess interpersonal skills that support the viability and positive functioning of the organization

Performance Indicators:
2.1 Establishes and maintains an organizational culture that recognizes and rewards professionalism, quality customer service, employee engagement and empowerment and programs and services that further social justice
2.2 Inspires the workforce to move beyond cynicism and complacency and perform and produce in a superior manner
2.3 Demonstrates the ability to assume different leadership styles as appropriate to the situation
2.4 Possesses strong skills in emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-mastery, etc.
2.5 Is able to find common ground with others and form positive relationships easily
2.6 Is able to inspire confidence in others, both internally and externally
2.7 Demonstrates commitment to the work of the agency
2.8 Demonstrates and communicates deep knowledge about the work of the agency, using current performance data to discuss successes and challenges
2.9 Recognizes the value of optimizing the human potential of staff and insures that the organization develops healthy and productive practices that develop staff in all ways
2.10 Demonstrates the ability to assemble a leadership team of individuals whose skills and abilities supplement one’s own and to be a “team player”

3. Competency: Possess analytical and critical thinking skills that promote organizational growth

Performance Indicators:
3.1 Demonstrates a working knowledge of budget and finance, human resources, communication and marketing, applications of information technology, fundraising, external relations and an understanding or “feel” for the core work of the organization
3.2 Demonstrates an entrepreneurial spirit and attitude
3.3 Makes creative use of agency resources to serve the needs of diverse clients
3.4 Understands and makes use of historical and current data to inform decision-making about the agency
3.5 Demonstrates strong skills in turning around dysfunctional organizations
3.6 Demonstrates strong critical thinking and problem solving skills
3.7 Manages ambiguous and complex organizational situations
3.8 Monitors economic and political trends, shifts in trends, values and mores
3.9 Displays keen skills in strategic thinking
3.10 Conceptualizes innovative partnerships to maximize agency resources

4. Competency: Models appropriate professional behavior and encourages other staff members to act in a professional manner

Performance Indicators:
4.1 Engages in and promotes ethical conduct
4.2 Protects the integrity and reputation of the organization
4.3 Creates and supports an organizational culture that values professionalism, service, and ethical conduct
4.4 Encourages staff to become involved in the identification and planning of their own professional development
4.5 Displays the ability to carry on effectively in the face of adversity, ambiguity, uncertainty and anxiety
4.6 Encourages staff to engage in a variety of activities including inquiry research, workshops, institutes, and observation/feedback (e.g. peer coaching and mentoring)
4.7 Demonstrates the ability not to be “consumed’ by executive responsibilities and helps others to achieve the balance and maintain as sense of humor and perspective
5. **Competency: Manages diversity and cross cultural understanding**

**Performance Indicators:**

5.1 Publicly acknowledges the diversity of the staff and clients and creates a climate that celebrates the differences

5.2 Provides opportunities for staff to learn about different groups to enhance their practice and encourages open discussion about issues to promote sensitivity

5.3 Seeks to employ a diverse workforce to align with clients served by the organization

5.4 Seeks input from all levels of staff, listens attentively, demonstrates fairness and consistency, and conveys information fully and clearly

5.5 Invites different perspectives to all client-related and management discussions within the organization

5.6 Encourages and allows opportunities for staff to confer and present issues and problems affecting program-related services

5.7 Takes steps necessary to assure that all services provided by the organization are culturally competent

6. **Competency: Develops and manages both internal and external stakeholder relationships**

**Performance Indicators:**

6.1 Consistently and effectively motivates governance body members, employees, volunteers, clients and other key constituencies to work toward achieving the organizational mission

6.2 Communicates effectively to multiple constituencies, through various means and media, the mission, vision, and values of the organization along with organizational programs, policies and performance so as to promote organizational transparency and enhance support and understanding from internal and external constituencies

6.3 Plans, thinks and acts strategically in concert with key stakeholders to position, evolve and change the organization to assure success in the current and future environments

6.4 Successfully advocates at the national, state and local levels for the organization, its clients and for issues promoting social justice for vulnerable populations

7. **Competency: Initiates and facilitates innovative change processes**

**Performance Indicators:**

7.1 Remains current on trends and identifies shifts that require an innovative response

7.2 Presents innovations to appropriate decision-makers and stakeholders and makes decisions that are aligned with their feedback

7.3 Assists staff with implementing positive change and supports risk taking

7.4 Supports innovative practices to improve program related issues and services
8. Competency: Advocates for public policy change and social justice at national, state, and local levels

Performance Indicators:
8.1 Strategically disseminates information about unmet needs and program accomplishments
8.2 Participates in professional organizations and industry groups that advocate for client social justice, equity, and fairness
8.3 Engages and encourages staff and client/customers to be active advocates for social justice issues
8.4 When appropriate and in line with organizational mission, promotes their organization as a well-recognized advocate on public policy topics
8.5 Challenges broad regulatory expectations and advocates for efficient and well-tailored policies with potential to impact clients’ welfare
8.6 Advocates for an organizational culture that recognizes and rewards professionalism, quality customer service, employee engagement and empowerment, programs and policies that further social justice, and efforts to achieve diversity in customers, employees and ideas

9. Competency: Demonstrates effective interpersonal and communication skills

Performance Indicators:
9.1 Is able to articulate the mission and vision of the organization both orally and in writing to staff of the agency
9.2 Is able to articulate the mission and vision of the agency to those outside the agency to ensure understanding of the work of the organization
9.3 Insures that all written and oral communication in the agency is carefully planned and articulated so that it is clear in its message and sensitive to the various audiences that receive it
9.4 Manages communication in conflict and crisis situations in a competent and sensitive manner
9.5 Engages in emotionally intelligent communications with all stakeholders
10. Competency: **Encourages active involvement of all staff and stakeholders in decision-making processes**

*Performance Indicators:*

10.1 Provides opportunities for internal and external stakeholders to give feedback before significant program changes are implemented
10.2 Shows evidence of stakeholder buy-in through such means as meetings of representative groups, and program surveys to the community
10.3 Delegates authority and decision-making to appropriate entities and supports their decisions
10.4 Uses collaborative teams and other strategies to identify outcomes, design programs, share intervention strategies, conduct assessments, analyze results, and adjust intervention processes
10.5 Encourages consumers and under-represented stakeholders to actively participate in decision-making processes
10.6 Displays the ability to work with people and institutions to achieve creative compromises and “win-win” solutions

11. Competency: **Plans, promotes, and models life-long learning practices**

*Performance Indicators:*

11.1 Positions the organization as a “learning organization,” providing ongoing opportunities for all staff to receive professional development to assure quality service delivery
11.2 Insures that the organization offers competent and regular supervision to staff at all levels of the organization
11.3 Assumes a mentorship role for less experienced managers
11.4 Keeps up-to-date with research on instructional practices, management, and leadership, as well as on effective practices in professional development, and shares those practices with staff
11.5 Engages in a variety of activities to foster the manager's own learning such as participating in collegial networking and subscribing to journals and listservs
11.6 Whenever possible, offers staff an opportunity to learn from experts, as well as make presentations themselves, at outside conferences and meetings
11.7 Whenever possible, allow staff to take classes or work on advanced degrees, with the support of the agency. If agency funds are not available, flexibility in scheduling or other nonmonetary support should be offered to support learning
12. Competency: Human resource management

Performance Indicators:
12.1 Designs and manages the workplace to insure a positive and supportive culture and climate for staff and clients
12.2 Designs and manages employee relations policies and practices that are fair, adhere to law, and are implemented in a consistent manner
12.3 Supervises the recruitment, hiring, training, assessing performance and promotion/termination based on established criteria
12.4 Creates, maintains and fosters a discrimination and harassment free work environment for employees, clients and the general public
12.5 Successfully recruits and retains a diversity of employees to reflect the communities and constituencies served by the organization
12.6 In settings with Civil Service and Unions, work within existing systems to insure that the most qualified employees are selected to carry out agency responsibilities

13. Competency: Effectively manages and oversees the budget and other financial resources to support the organization/program’s mission and goals and to foster continuous program improvement and accountability

Performance Indicators:
13.1 Manages utilization of resources to ensure that they are in line with the organization’s mission and goals
13.2 Ensures that expenditures are allowable and appropriate and that allocated funds are available throughout the fiscal year
13.3 Monitors revenue and expenditures at regular intervals to ensure that budget assumptions are consistent with anticipated income and expenses
13.4 Ensures that financial activities are consistent with organizational policies and are sufficiently documented for audit
13.5 Oversees equitable allocation of funds based on such indicators as visits, outcomes, benchmarks and historical precedent
13.6 Monitors expenditures to insure that operating units have sufficient resources to offer quality services, using dashboards and other visual tools to link expenditures to outcomes
14. Competency: Establishes and maintains a system of internal controls to ensure transparency, protection, and accountability for the use of organizational resources

Performance Indicators:
14.1 Prepares and manages organizational budgets in a manner that maximizes utilization of available funds for client service and complies with requirements of funders
14.2 Develops and implements a system of internal controls that adequately safeguards the resources of the organization
14.3 Demonstrates effective actions to protect the organization and its employees from liability by both managing and insuring risks incurred within the scope of discharging established responsibilities
14.4 Assures the maintenance of financial records that comply with generally accepted accounting standards
14.5 Assures the appropriate safety, maintenance, protection and utilization of other organizational resources such as facilities and equipment
14.6 Helps design and manage a process of succession planning to assure the organizational continuity of executive, professional and service leadership
14.7 Establishes strong systems of accountability for revenues received from various sources

15. Competency: Manages all aspects of information technology

Performance Indicators:
15.1 Identifies and utilizes technology resources to enhance the organization’s processes
15.2 Uses resources to promote the effective use of technology for clients and staff
15.3 Remains current with developments in technology and upgrades the organization accordingly
15.4 Encourages adaptation of technology for service tracking and for other purposes that enhance efficiency and quality
16. Fundraising Competency: Identifies and applies for new and recurring funding while ensuring accountability with existing funding systems

Performance Indicators:
16.1 Creates a culture of philanthropy that engages the organization’s governing body, employees, volunteers and actual and potential donors
16.2 Works closely with public and private funding sources to ensure positive relations and confidence in the organization
16.3 Develops and implements a successful fundraising plan which includes a diverse funding mix and utilizes a strong marketing focus
16.4 Establishes strong systems of stewardship with donors/funders
16.5 Seeks partnerships with other programs funded under federal/state/local authorities and other consortia and other interest groups
16.6 Maintains active awareness of and pursues potential grant and funding sources in local, regional, or national community
16.7 Demonstrates innovative approaches to resource development at all levels of the organization

17. Marketing and Public Relations: Engages in proactive communication about the agencies products and services

Performance Indicators:
17.1 Consistently establishes and maintains positive external relationships with key organizational constituencies such as the media, public governance bodies, actual and potential donors, the business community, professional and service organizations and the public at large
17.2 Builds and conveys to multiple constituencies an organizational brand that reflects competence, integrity and superior client/customer and community service
17.3 Develops and implements a successful marketing plan that dovetails with the fundraising activities of the organization
17.4 Insures that the work of the agency is featured in various public relations venues to build and maintain visibility, access and credibility and to insure maximum usage of program resources
17.5 Develops clear guidelines for managing interactions with the press to insure client confidentiality and accurate representation of agency performance
17.6 Maximizes the use of electronic media to communicate the work of the organization and deepens the public’s understanding of the mission
18. Competency: Program design and development

Performance Indicators:
18.1 Guides program staff in designing and implementing interventions consistent with the mission of the organization that respect all types of clients from diverse circumstances
18.2 Supports and assists staff in planning evidence-based programs, based on performance standards, assessments, client data, research on effective practice, community and user needs, demographics, resources, and economic and technological trends
18.3 Develops and enforces procedures for collecting, reporting and analyzing data to measure program quality and achievement of defined outcomes

19. Competency: Risk management and legal affairs

Performance Indicators:
19.1 Protects the agency from undue risk by ensuring that appropriate policies and procures exist in all areas of operation
19.2 Establishes systems for monitoring all areas of the organization where there may be potential risk (e.g. client services, record keeping, accounting, purchasing)
19.3 Ensures adherence to all laws, regulations, contracts and legal agreements

20. Competency: Strategic planning

Performance Indicators:
20.1 Understands the organization’s relationship to its environment, the emerging internal and external forces affecting the organization, and the ability to position the organization within that environment for future and current success
20.2 Directs staff effectively in identifying areas of future growth and development in all areas of agency operations to be used in a strategic planning process
20.3 Demonstrates competence in the ability to orchestrate and support an inclusive and organization-wide strategic planning process designed to position the organization for success in achieving its mission in the mid and long term future
20.4 Constructs or directs the construction of an adequate business plan that details the pathway, timelines and accountability for the accomplishment of identified strategic objectives
21. Competency: Builds relationships with complementary agencies, institutions, and community groups to enhance the delivery of services

Performance Indicators:

21.1 Establishes partnerships and alliances with businesses, institutions of higher learning, local educational agencies, child care centers, health and human services, employment and job training centers, boards, and other agencies to assess needs, enhance program resources, and improve services to service users

21.2 Collaborates with other health and human services organizations to better serve clients in ways that work toward the enhancement of client well-being and the achievement of the organizational mission

21.3 Identifies opportunities for partnerships, acquisitions and mergers, where applicable, that promote the achievement of the organizational mission and the well-being of clients served

21.4 Effectively manage policy advocacy coalitions dedicated to issues of social justice and client well-being