

## *General Information*

This document provides the recommendations within each of the career models for each of the identified HR functions. This includes training, education, and certification recommendations; VA-specific experience recommendations; and other VA-specific recommendations (e.g., conferences, job aids) needed to attain the stated level of proficiency within that function. The core, technical, and strategic competencies associated with each function are also provided in this document. The career model will be used to guide the professional development of VA HR professionals in aligning their skill set with the VA HR competencies.

## *Function Summary*

HR Foundational is the required foundational knowledge of Human Resources for non-ER/LR HR professionals within the VA. Individuals proficient in the HR Foundational function have Solid Practitioner proficiency at a foundational (Assistant or above) level.

## *What is a Competency?*

A competency is a standardized job requirement for an individual to properly perform a specific job or role. It is observable and measurable. Competencies are a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs), attitudes, and behaviors used to improve performance.

Competencies serve as the foundation for all Human Capital practices. They are becoming increasingly important to the Federal government as a way to show accountability.

## *What are the differences between core, strategic and technical competencies?*

- **Core:** Foundational competencies that apply to all functions regardless of job specialty.
- **Technical:** Competencies specific to job specialties.
- **Strategic:** Planning competencies recommended of HR Specialists at any level.

***Required Competencies (See competencies defined in Appendix)***

Core Competencies	Technical Competencies	Strategic Competencies
1. Analysis and Problem Solving	17. Employee Benefits*	None
2. Attention to Detail	18. Pay Administration*	
3. Coaching/Mentoring	19. Performance Management	
4. Consulting	20. Work/Life Integration	
5. Creative Thinking		
6. Customer Service*		
7. Flexibility		
8. Integrity/Honesty		
9. Interpersonal Skills		
10. IT Application*		
11. Leveraging Diversity		
12. Oral Communication		
13. Planning/Time Management*		
14. Reasoning		
15. Teamwork		
16. Written Communication*		

*\*Note: Indicates competencies represented by courses in the career map.*

## *How to Acquire Competencies*

During an exercise at the VA HR Academy Curriculum and Career Mapping workshop in September 2010, a group of subject matter experts chose a preferred “acquisition method” that would allow an individual to obtain the desired proficiency standard and level for each competency. The acquisition method options selected were:

- **Training:** VA or vendor provided courses that have learning objectives (i.e., Time Management Fundamentals).
- **Experience:** Activities the incumbent can engage in to enhance their recommended competencies (i.e., complete a time sensitive assignment with limited notice).
- **Other:** Another method of obtaining the necessary competencies without completing an action with a defined end result (i.e., referencing a job aid or shadowing an experienced professional).

The information contained within the Training, Education, and Certification table lists out the educational information that was identified during the September VA HR Academy Curriculum and Career Mapping workshop. The “✓” in each table indicates that the training, education, or certification is needed to demonstrate proficiency at the functional proficiency level (i.e., Novice (N), Learner (L), Solid Practitioner (SP), Role Model/Coach (RM/C), Expert (E)). Similarly, a “✓” in the Experience or Other Requirements tables indicates that the element is also needed to demonstrate proficiency at the functional proficiency level. All of the information taken together provides the overarching framework of what is recommended in order to demonstrate the desired proficiency level within each function across the identified competencies. Activities in the following sections marked with an asterisk (\*) indicate those which may be effectively delivered or supported through social learning.

## *Function Proficiency Levels*

Each VA HR function has proficiency levels associated with it to denote the types of activities performed and level of supervision required. Not every function proficiency level is applicable to every function. The function proficiency levels are:

- **Novice (N)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Novice Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess the basic competence to perform HR functions; and
- Perform standard duties under direct supervision

- **Learner (L)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Learner Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess the basic competence to perform VA HR functions; and
- Perform standard duties with supervision

- **Solid Practitioner (SP)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Solid Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess a solid understanding of the subject area; and
- Perform standard duties with limited supervision

- **Role Model/Coach (RM/C)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Role Model/Coach Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess an advanced understanding of the subject area;
- Perform standard duties with no supervision and complex duties with limited supervision; and
- May be asked to train others on how to complete their standard duties

- **Expert (E)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Expert Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess a superior understanding of the subject area; and
- Perform complex duties with no supervision and is consulted as an expert

### *Recommended Training, Education, and Certifications*

HR Foundational Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level
		SP
1. Analytics Boot Camp	IT Application	✓
2. Business Writing: How to Write Clearly and Concisely	Written Communication	✓
3. Business Writing: Know Your Readers and Your Purpose	Written Communication	✓
4. Communicating Effectively	Written Communication	✓
5. Compensating Employees (HRCI/PHR - 2007-aligned)	Pay Administration	✓
6. Customer Service Confrontation and Conflict	Customer Service	✓
7. Customer Service in the Field	Customer Service	✓
8. Customer Service over the Phone	Customer Service	✓
9. Dealing with Irrational Customers and Escalating Complaints	Customer Service	✓
10. Internal Customer Service	Customer Service	✓

HR Foundational Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level
		SP
11. Managing and Retrieving Content in SharePoint 2003	IT Application	✓
12. Pay Setting for FWS Positions (GS Classic)	Pay Administration	✓
13. Shaping the Direction of Customer Service in Your Organization	Customer Service	✓
14. Team and Customer Relationships	Customer Service	✓
15. Telework 101 for Employees*	Employee Benefits	✓
16. Telework 101 for Managers*	Employee Benefits	✓
17. Time Management: Analyzing Your Use of Time	Planning/Time Management	✓
18. Time Management: Avoiding Time Stealers	Planning/Time Management	✓
19. Time Management: Planning and Prioritizing Your Time	Planning/Time Management	✓

\*Note: Indicates courses do not map to the competency (ratio = 0)

### Recommended VA-Specific Experience

HR Foundational Experience	Function Proficiency Level
	SP
1. Attend a diversity program to learn about other cultures and perspectives*	✓
2. Make a presentation to customers regarding situations that require judgment (e.g., locating sources of recruitment, position management)	✓
3. Lead a team meeting	✓
4. Volunteer to write monthly or quarterly reports for your work unit	✓
5. Volunteer to summarize notes from meetings. Distribute the summaries to others and ask for feedback*	✓
6. Contribute strong practices within the organization in SharePoint or a learning session*	✓

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HR Foundational Experience	Function Proficiency Level
	SP
7. Develop a standard operating procedure, job aid, or checklist for an HR process*	✓
8. Produce a completed HR product tailored to the unique situation focusing on positive outcome (e.g., reduced or limited grievances/complaints)*	✓
9. Listen to and provide emotional support to a disgruntled coworker or peer	✓
10. Orient a coworker or peer to a project or program new to them*	✓
11. Lead a system redesign or process action team to address a particular work process*	✓
12. Develop training to implement new technology and/or processes*	✓
13. Attend departmental meetings to provide explanations of HR services and solutions to stakeholders needs and address issues	✓
14. Identify service line needs and solutions based on regular interaction at staff meetings and review of outcomes (e.g., all employee survey)	✓
15. Present on employee benefits at new employee orientation*	✓
16. Act as a role model to implement changes in policy, programs, or procedures in a stressful environment	✓
17. Read the Standards of Ethical Conduct and Merit Systems Principles	✓
18. Brief supervisor on the Standards of Ethical Conduct and Merit Systems Principles (can include role playing, examples)*	✓
19. Participate in an ethical discussion regarding work practices*	✓
20. Use ProClarity or other automated systems to extract data and analyze data in order to prepare a variety of HR reports	✓
21. Read the EEO and ADR policies and discuss with supervisor	✓
22. Discuss the VA's Performance Management program with a senior Specialist*	✓
23. Write a summary of the facts and applicable regulation for submission to senior Specialist (e.g., Congressional response)*	✓
24. Research and review information on performance management in the Performance Management Reference Room*	✓

\*Note: Indicates a social learning activity

***Recommended VA-Specific Other***

HR Foundational Other	Function Proficiency Level
	SP
1. Shadow an experienced HR Assistant during in-processing or explanation of benefits at new employee orientation	✓
2. Review OHRM website and VA HR Resource Center*	✓
3. Review checklists, job aids, and tool kits for technical area*	✓

*\*Note: Indicates a social learning activity*

## APPENDIX

### *CORE Competencies Defined:*

- **Analysis and Problem Solving:** Making sound, well-informed, and objective decisions. Identifying problems, determining the accuracy and relevance of information, and using sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives. Perceiving the impact and implications of decisions.
- **Attention to Detail:** Performing work in a thorough and conscientious manner while attending to detail.
- **Coaching/Mentoring:** Working to improve and reinforce performance of others. Facilitating their skill development by providing clear, behaviorally specific performance feedback, and making or eliciting specific suggestions for improvement in a manner that builds confidence and maintains self-esteem.
- **Consulting:** Providing advice, expertise, methodologies, and problem-solving assistance to clients/customers within and outside the agency.
- **Creative Thinking:** Using imagination to develop new insights into situations and applying innovative solutions to problems. Designing new methods where established methods and procedures are inapplicable or are unavailable.
- **Customer Service:** Working with clients and customers to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations.
- **Flexibility:** Adapting behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles. Open to change and new information.
- **Integrity/Honesty**
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Establishing rapport with people easily, developing and maintaining a network of contacts that can provide information, help, and access to others.
- **IT Application:** Using job-relevant information systems and/or software applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, automated research tools, database applications, and the Internet.
- **Leveraging Diversity:** Supporting and promoting an environment that holds opportunities for all, regardless of race, gender, culture, and age.
- **Oral Communication:** Expressing information to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of information. Making clear and convincing oral presentations. Listening to others, attending to nonverbal cues, and responding appropriately.
- **Planning/Time Management:** Organizing work, setting priorities, and determining resource requirements. Determining short- and long-term goals and strategies to achieve them.

- **Reasoning:** Identifying rules, principles, or relationships that explain facts, data, or other information. Analyzing information and making correct inferences or drawing accurate conclusions.
- **Teamwork:** Encouraging and facilitating cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity. Fostering commitment and team spirit. Working with others to receive goals.
- **Written Communication:** Recognizing or using correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Communicating information in a succinct and organized manner. Producing written information, which may include technical material that is appropriate for the intended audience.

### *TECHNICAL Competencies Defined:*

- **Employee Benefits:** Applying HR concepts, principles, and practices relating to retirements, insurances and other employee benefit programs.
- **Employee Development:** Applying employee development concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, evaluating, and administering training, organizational development, and career development initiatives.
- **Employee Relations:** Applying laws, rules, regulations, case law, principles, and practices related to employee conduct, performance, and dispute resolution.
- **Labor Relations:** Applying laws, rules, regulations, case law, principles, and practices related to negotiating and administering labor agreements.
- **Pay Administration:** Applying pay administration concepts, principles, and practices relating to pay setting, pay schedules, pay determinations, and other pay administration regulations.
- **Performance Management:** Applying performance management concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, monitoring, rating, and rewarding employee performance.
- **Position Classification & Management:** Determining the correct title, series, and grade of a position. Ensuring the accuracy of a position description, and advising management on organization and position management issues.
- **Recruitment & Staffing:** Applying HR concepts, principles, and practices related to identifying, altering, and selecting individuals and placing them into positions to address changing organizational needs.
- **Work/Life Integration:** Helping others meet the needs of their lives in a way that helps them be most productive, effective, and healthy, both at work and outside of work.
- **Workforce & Succession Planning:** Applying HR concepts, principles, and practices in order to determine the composition of the workforce, projecting the composition of the future workforce, and identifying current and future competency gaps to align human capital with organization goals. Consulting

with organizations to produce action plans to bridge both workforce and competency gaps and ensuring an adequate and well qualified workforce to fulfill the mission.

***STRATEGIC Competencies Defined:***

- **Change Management:** Maintaining balance in the face of ambiguity, rapid pace, and changing business conditions and to deal with the concerns of the organization and the people in it, including oneself.
- **Guiding/Influencing:** Guiding others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior. Working with others towards an agreement. Working to find mutually acceptable solutions.
- **Project & Program Management:** Planning, monitoring, and controlling projects/programs. Ensuring optimum use of talent, budget, time, and materials.
- **Strategic Thinking:** Maintaining a current knowledge and understanding of global, industry, market, and societal trends and applying them to create long-range options, scenarios, and plans to successfully advance the organization's mission.