

## *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*

In the Advanced Leader function, individuals are sought after as highly skilled Human Resources professionals and leaders who provide substantive input into HR projects and problems that may cross Administrations within the VA. They typically possess Solid Practitioner, Role Model/Coach, and/or Expert knowledge in at least two VA HR Specialist functions.

## *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*	25. Change Management
2. Attention to Detail	18. Employee Development*	26. Guiding/Influencing
3. Coaching/Mentoring*	19. Employee Relations*	27. Project & Program Management
4. Consulting	20. Labor Relations*	28. Strategic Thinking*
5. Creative Thinking*	21. Pay Administration	
6. Customer Service	22. Performance Management	
7. Flexibility	23. Position Classification & Management*	
8. Integrity/Honesty	24. Recruitment & Staffing*	
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, the subject matter experts chose the 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 Specialist Advanced Leader Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level		
		SP	RM/C	E
1. Creativity in Teams and Organizations	Creative Thinking	✓		
2. Generating Creative and Innovative Ideas: Verifying and Building on Ideas	Creative Thinking	✓		
3. Microsoft Office Excel 2007 Level 2	IT Application	✓		
4. Microsoft Office Access 2007 Level 2	IT Application	✓		
5. PMP 4: Project Time Management	Planning/Time Management	✓		
6. An Essential Guide to Giving Feedback - COMM0521	Oral Communication	✓	✓	
7. Decision Making: Making Tough Decisions	Analysis and Problem Solving	✓	✓	
8. Decision Making: Tools and Techniques	Analysis and Problem Solving	✓	✓	
9. Effective Feedback for Employees and Colleagues Simulation - COMM0520	Oral Communication	✓	✓	
10. Human Resources Fundamentals (HRCI/PHR - 2007 - aligned)	Analysis and Problem Solving	✓	✓	
11. Problem Solving: Determining and Building Your Strengths	Analysis and Problem Solving	✓	✓	
12. Strategic Human Capital Management	Strategic Thinking	✓	✓	
13. Antitrust – Overview	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓

HR Specialist Advanced Leader Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level		
		SP	RM/C	E
14. Code of Conduct (Customizable)	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
15. Conflict of Interest Simulation	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
16. Conflicts of Interest in the Workplace	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
17. Customer Service in Government	Recruitment & Placement	✓	✓	✓
18. Doing Business on the Internet	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
19. EEO - Its Place in the Federal Government (GS Classic)	Employee Relations	✓	✓	✓
20. EEO in the Federal Sector	Employee Relations	✓	✓	✓
21. Equal Employment Opportunity and Discriminatory Practices in Hiring	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
22. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
23. Federal Employee Relations	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
24. Federal Employee Relations	Employee Relations	✓	✓	✓
25. Federal Human Resources Management	Position Classification & Management	✓	✓	✓
26. Federal Human Resources Management	Recruitment & Staffing	✓	✓	✓
27. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
28. I-9 Compliance: Verifying Employment Eligibility of US and Non-US Citizens	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
29. Illegal Insider Trading Simulation	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
30. Independent Contractors and Temporary Employees	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
31. Integrity in the Workplace	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
32. Intellectual Property Overview	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
33. Interviewing and Hiring Practices	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
34. Interviewing and Hiring Practices Simulation	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
35. Introduction to Federal EEO (GS Classic)	Employee Relations	✓	✓	✓
36. Mediating Employee Disputes	Employee Relations	✓	✓	✓

HR Specialist Advanced Leader Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level		
		SP	RM/C	E
37. Military Spouse Employment*	Recruitment and Staffing	✓	✓	✓
38. Preventing Fraud and Abuse	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
39. Privacy and Information Security	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
40. Problem Performance Prevention	Recruitment & Staffing	✓	✓	✓
41. Procurement Integrity	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
42. Promoting a Substance-free Workplace	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
43. Record Retention	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
44. Rightful Employment Termination	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
45. Sarbanes-Oxley: What You Need to Know	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
46. Strategies for Developing Employees	Employee Development	✓	✓	✓
47. Telework 101 for Employees*	Employee Benefits	✓	✓	✓
48. Telework 101 for Managers*	Employee Benefits	✓	✓	✓
49. Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
50. Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)*	Recruitment and Staffing	✓	✓	✓
51. Veteran Employment Training for Federal Human Resource Professionals *	Recruitment and Staffing	✓	✓	✓
52. Veterans Appointing Authorities*	Recruitment and Staffing	✓	✓	✓
53. Veterans' Preference	Recruitment & Staffing	✓	✓	✓
54. Workplace Diversity Awareness	Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓
55. Essential Mentoring Techniques: Building and Maintaining Mentoring Relationships	Coaching/Mentoring		✓	✓
56. Essential Mentoring Techniques: Designing and Initiating Mentoring Programs	Coaching/Mentoring		✓	✓
57. Essential Mentoring Techniques: Mentoring Fundamentals	Coaching/Mentoring		✓	✓

HR Specialist Advanced Leader Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level		
		SP	RM/C	E
58. Generating Creative and Innovative Ideas: Maximizing Team Creativity	Creative Thinking		✓	✓
59. Analytic Trouble Shooting	Analysis and Problem Solving			✓
60. Communicating to Get Results	Written Communication			✓
61. Writing a Business Case	Written Communication			✓

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

### Recommended VA-Specific Experience

HR Specialist Advanced Leader Experience	Function Proficiency Level		
	SP	RM/C	E
1. Develop a business case that supports a significant change in the way your work unit or department does business. Present the costs/benefits associated with the change*	✓		
2. Serve on a conflict resolution team	✓		
3. Participate on a team developing Service or Departmental policy*	✓		
4. Analyze the results of a survey and develop and implement a plan of action	✓		
5. Present training regularly incorporating adult learning principles on a variety of complex HR topics and/or join Toastmasters*	✓		
6. Research and review information on performance management in the Performance Management Reference Room*	✓		
7. Discuss the VA's Performance Management program with a senior Specialist*	✓		
8. Volunteer to work on a service or facility programmatic plan (e.g., workforce plan, succession plan, strategic plan)*	✓		
9. Review and provide guidance and feedback on coworker products to ensure compliance with applicable requirements*	✓		
10. Present on employee benefits at new employee orientation*	✓		
11. Review ER case files selected by senior Specialist or supervisor	✓		

HR Specialist Advanced Leader Experience	Function Proficiency Level		
	SP	RM/C	E
12. Review VA Handbook 5021 and discuss with senior ER specialist or supervisor	✓		
13. Read the Standards of Ethical Conduct and Merit Systems Principles	✓		
14. Brief supervisor on the Standards of Ethical Conduct and Merit Systems Principles (can include role playing, examples)*	✓		
15. Participate in an ethical discussion regarding work practices*	✓		
16. Utilize HR dashboard to extract data, trend, find systemic issues, analyze and drill down and develop action plans to improve on HR metrics	✓		
17. Review national and local bargaining unit contracts, supplementals, and memoranda of understanding*	✓		
18. Meet with senior LR Specialist or supervisor to understand local conditions and concerns*	✓		
19. Participate in local community activities to attract diverse people to VA (e.g., job fairs, professional conferences)*	✓		
20. Present or provide training on managing cultural change within the organization	✓		
21. Develop a forecasting model or use forecasting software to determine future staffing, budget, and/or technology needs		✓	
22. Create project (and resource) plans: 1) For complex projects with many interrelated paths, involving multiple organizational units and especially challenging deadlines. 2) For projects that are complex or highly interrelated with other work		✓	
23. Lead facilitation or conflict resolution efforts (e.g., mediator, facilitator, ADR)		✓	
24. Work with a supervisor, coworker, or peer on developing an IDP or other development activities (e.g., provide shadowing experience, provide substantive input to workforce and succession planning)*		✓	
25. Participate in a roundtable or panel discussion in your field. Debate ideas regarding recent developments and/or emerging trends*			✓
26. Present a formal plan for solving an important problem within your organization to multiple stakeholders			✓
27. Write an article or technical report in your field and submit it for internal or external VA publication*			✓

\*Note: Indicates a social learning activity

***Recommended VA-Specific Other***

HR Specialist Advanced Leader Other	Function Proficiency Level		
	SP	RM/C	E
1. Review OPM and OHRM websites on Pay Administration*	✓		
2. Review job aid from OHRM's Performance Management Website*	✓		
3. Review checklists, job aids, and tool kits for technical area*	✓		
4. Participate in a Root Cause Analysis	✓		
5. Read "Our Iceberg Is Melting" by John Kotter and "Best Care Anywhere" by Phillip Longman*	✓		
6. Shadow an experienced HR Specialist consulting with customers in confrontational situations	✓		
7. 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.