

## *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*

VA Foundational is the required Novice/Learner foundational knowledge for HR professionals within the VA. Individuals proficient in the VA Foundational function have the basic knowledge required to work in HR roles within the agency. Their competency profile consists only of core competencies as they will be relatively new to HR or the HR function; whereas, the HR technical competencies will become more relevant as they move into one of the 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 | None                   | None                   |
| 2. Attention to Detail          |                        |                        |
| 3. Consulting                   |                        |                        |
| 4. Customer Service*            |                        |                        |
| 5. Flexibility*                 |                        |                        |
| 6. Integrity/Honesty            |                        |                        |
| 7. Interpersonal Skills*        |                        |                        |
| 8. IT Application*              |                        |                        |
| 9. Leveraging Diversity         |                        |                        |
| 10. Oral Communication*         |                        |                        |
| 11. Planning/Time Management*   |                        |                        |
| 12. Reasoning                   |                        |                        |
| 13. Teamwork*                   |                        |                        |
| 14. 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*

| VA Foundational Training, Education, and Certifications                      | Competency               | Function Proficiency Level |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---|
|                                                                              |                          | N                          | L |
| 1. Administrative Professionals: Interacting with Others                     | Teamwork                 | ✓                          |   |
| 2. Being an Effective Team Member                                            | Teamwork                 | ✓                          |   |
| 3. Customer Service Fundamentals: Building Rapport in Customer Relationships | Customer Service         | ✓                          |   |
| 4. Effective Team Communication                                              | Teamwork                 | ✓                          |   |
| 5. Getting Results by Building Relationships                                 | Teamwork                 | ✓                          |   |
| 6. Interpersonal Communication: Listening Essentials                         | Customer Service         | ✓                          |   |
| 7. Interpersonal Communication: Targeting Your Message                       | Customer Service         | ✓                          |   |
| 8. Managing Self Through Change:                                             | Flexibility              | ✓                          |   |
| 9. Professionalism, Business Etiquette, and Personal Accountability          | Planning/Time Management | ✓                          |   |
| 10. Time Management Fundamentals                                             | Planning/Time Management | ✓                          |   |
| 11. Using Business Etiquette to Build Professional Relationships             | Interpersonal Skills     | ✓                          |   |
| 12. Advanced Document Navigation and Document Reviews in Word 2007           | IT Application           | ✓                          | ✓ |

| VA Foundational Training, Education, and Certifications   | Competency               | Function Proficiency Level |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---|
|                                                           |                          | N                          | L |
| 13. Communicating with Professionalism and Etiquette      | Oral Communication       | ✓                          | ✓ |
| 14. Managing Internal Dynamics in a Cross-functional Team | Oral Communication       | ✓                          | ✓ |
| 15. Business Grammar: Common Usage Errors                 | Written Communication    |                            | ✓ |
| 16. Business Grammar: Parts of Speech                     | Written Communication    |                            | ✓ |
| 17. Business Grammar: Punctuation                         | Written Communication    |                            | ✓ |
| 18. Business Grammar: Sentence Construction               | Written Communication    |                            | ✓ |
| 19. Business Grammar: The Mechanics of Writing            | Written Communication    |                            | ✓ |
| 20. Business Writing: Editing and Proofreading            | Written Communication    |                            | ✓ |
| 21. Communicating with Professionalism and Etiquette      | Written Communication    |                            | ✓ |
| 22. FOCUS: Achieving Your Highest Priorities (1-day)      | Planning/Time Management |                            | ✓ |
| 23. Managing Your Manager*                                | Interpersonal Skills     |                            | ✓ |
| 24. Using E-mail and Instant Messaging Effectively        | Written Communication    |                            | ✓ |

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

### *Recommended VA-Specific Experience*

| VA Foundational Experience                                                                                                                                                         | Function Proficiency Level |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | N                          | L |
| 1. Attend a diversity program to learn about other cultures and perspectives*                                                                                                      | ✓                          |   |
| 2. Partner with your mentor/coach to develop the skill of dialogue*                                                                                                                | ✓                          |   |
| 3. Serve on a problem resolution or process action team*                                                                                                                           | ✓                          |   |
| 4. Actively participate on a team developing Service or Departmental policy and articulate individual contributions to the team                                                    | ✓                          |   |
| 5. Draft a document and ensure compliance with VA regulations and the particulars of the document (e.g., vacancy announcement, disciplinary actions, positions descriptions, etc.) | ✓                          |   |
| 6. Identify discrepancies and/or changes in a newly submitted document compared with existing documents (e.g., position descriptions, vacancy announcements)*                      | ✓                          |   |
| 7. Verify and identify if a submitted package is complete (e.g., checklist)                                                                                                        | ✓                          |   |
| 8. Complete a time sensitive assignment with limited notice                                                                                                                        | ✓                          |   |
| 9. Complete multiple assignments to meet deadlines while accommodating competing priorities                                                                                        | ✓                          |   |
| 10. Use Outlook or other software/systems to prioritize emails, tasks, and calendar*                                                                                               | ✓                          |   |
| 11. Identify and recommend more than one course of action to resolve three unique issues (e.g., recruitment strategies, disciplinary actions, leave options)                       | ✓                          |   |
| 12. Read the Standards of Ethical Conduct and Merit Systems Principles                                                                                                             | ✓                          |   |
| 13. Brief supervisor on the Standards of Ethical Conduct and Merit Systems Principles (can include role playing, examples)*                                                        | ✓                          |   |
| 14. Listen to and provide emotional support to a disgruntled customer                                                                                                              | ✓                          |   |
| 15. Present factual material to a group (e.g., new employee orientation, lunch and learn, etc.)*                                                                                   | ✓                          | ✓ |
| 16. Review and correct a Personnel Action data element (e.g., BUS code, FLSA, promotion eligibility, etc.)                                                                         |                            | ✓ |
| 17. Research regulation or policy standards and apply to three unique situations (e.g., qualification determinations, position evaluations, appointment eligibility)               |                            | ✓ |
| 18. Attend departmental meetings to provide explanations of HR services and solutions to stakeholders needs and address issues                                                     |                            | ✓ |
| 19. Initiate contact with assigned service lines to offer services and provide training                                                                                            |                            | ✓ |
| 20. Participate in a systems redesign or a process action team to improve work processes and articulate individual contributions to the team*                                      |                            | ✓ |
| 21. Negotiate objectives and time frames with a customer                                                                                                                           |                            | ✓ |
| 22. Communicate with customers to inform on progress/status changes                                                                                                                |                            | ✓ |
| 23. Brief supervisor on your communication plan for service recovery options/rectifying mistakes (can include role playing, examples)*                                             |                            | ✓ |
| 24. Propose multiple solutions to a disgruntled customer's issue or situation                                                                                                      |                            | ✓ |

| VA Foundational Experience                                                                                                                                                           | Function Proficiency Level |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
|                                                                                                                                                                                      | N                          | L |
| 25. Follow up with a customer to ensure needs were met, to include peers or coworkers*                                                                                               |                            | ✓ |
| 26. Discuss with supervisor/senior Specialist work priorities based on potential outcomes                                                                                            |                            | ✓ |
| 27. Volunteer to assist other team members by taking on specific role assignments (e.g., preparing a presentation, preparing or reviewing data)*                                     |                            | ✓ |
| 28. Write a document and ensure compliance with VA regulations and the particulars of the document (e.g., vacancy announcement, disciplinary actions, positions descriptions, etc.)* |                            | ✓ |
| 29. Write a document to justify and defend HR decisions or explain policy in plain language*                                                                                         |                            | ✓ |

\*Note: Indicates a social learning activity

### Recommended VA-Specific Other

| VA Foundational Other                                                                                         | Function Proficiency Level |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
|                                                                                                               | N                          | L |
| 1. Shadow an experienced HR Assistant in how they respond to customer inquiries (e.g., walk-ins, phone calls) | ✓                          |   |
| 2. Review script for courteous responses to common questions*                                                 | ✓                          |   |
| 3. Review a Job Aid that addresses courtesy in customer service (e.g., phone, email, in-person)*              | ✓                          |   |
| 4. Review checklists, job aids, and tool kits for technical area*                                             |                            | ✓ |
| 5. Shadow an experienced HR Specialist in how they consult with new employees, customers, and stakeholders    |                            | ✓ |
| 6. Orientation to VA and HR Core Competency Model*                                                            |                            | ✓ |
| 7. Orientation to Mission, Vision, and Values*                                                                |                            | ✓ |
| 8. Review learning resources (e.g., VALU, LMS, HRD)*                                                          |                            | ✓ |

\*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.