



VA HR Competency Model Reference Guide



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

This page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Sample Proficiency Level Progression.....	1
Using this Document	2
VA HR Competencies by Profile.....	3
VA Core Competencies: Definitions and Examples Behaviors.....	5
Analytical Reasoning	5
Communications.....	6
Conflict Management	7
Customer Service	8
Flexibility	9
Information Assurance	10
Integrity/Honesty	11
Interpersonal Skills	12
Organizational Awareness	13
Problem Solving	14
Self-Management	15
Strategic Thinking.....	16
Teamwork	17
Veterans Service Motivation.....	18
VA Leadership Competencies: Definitions and Behavioral Examples	19
Accountability.....	19
Developing Others.....	20
Entrepreneurship.....	21
Financial Management	22
Human Capital Management.....	23
Leveraging Diversity	24
Partnering.....	25
Political Savvy	27
Technology Management	28
Technical Competencies: Definitions and Behavioral Examples.....	29
Budget Planning	29

Change Management	30
Employee Benefits	31
Employee Development.....	32
Employee Relations	34
Human Resources Information Systems.....	36
Labor Relations	37
Pay Administration.....	38
Performance Management.....	39
Position Classification and Management.....	40
Recruitment and Staffing.....	43
Strategic Planning.....	44
Work/Life Integration.....	45
Workforce and Succession Planning	46
Workforce Data Analysis	47
Workforce Risk Assessment	48

Introduction

VA Human Resources (HR) Competency Models support a streamlined, data-driven approach to professional development for HR staff across VA. The purpose of the HR Competency Models is to identify a common set of focus areas in the development of role-specific skills and abilities. Customized competency model profiles establish a baseline to assist HR employees in their continued professional development and career enhancement. The competency models also provide a valuable foundation for employee/supervisor discussions about training plans and drive electronic Individual Development Plan (eIDP) creation.

All competencies in the HR Competency Models include proficiency levels and descriptions. Proficiency levels are the levels of skill and expertise associated with a particular competency. These levels range from 1 (novice) to 5 (expert). Proficiency descriptions provide guidance for individuals to determine their proficiency levels when performing competency self assessments in VA's Talent Management System (TMS).

Sample Proficiency Level Progression

Proficiency Level	Description
<p>1 Novice</p>	<p>Knowledge of Subject Matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual knows the terminology associated with this competency and is capable of performing tasks applying this competency with guidance and supervision.
<p>2 Foundational</p>	<p>Understanding of Subject Matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual can perform basic or developmental level work in activities requiring this competency. Individual is capable of demonstrating this competency after being given specific instructions and guidance. Individual can engage in general conversation about this competency.
<p>3 Intermediate</p>	<p>Independent Application of Subject Matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual has the capability to fully perform work that requires application of this competency. Individual is capable of demonstrating this competency in increasingly complex situations and can contribute knowledge or new ideas in applying this competency.
<p>4 Advanced</p>	<p>Analysis of Subject Matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual can immediately contribute to the success of work requiring this competency. Individual is confident in serving as an advisor and is sought out to provide insight in the application of this competency.
<p>5 Expert</p>	<p>Synthesis and Evaluation of Subject Matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual is looked to as an expert in this competency. Others view this individual as a role model, who is capable of leading or teaching others in this area; they consult with him or her for assistance or guidance with work requiring this competency.

Using this Document

This document contains example behaviors (also known as Behavioral Indicators or BIs) to describe how HR employees might demonstrate their proficiency for each HR competency. This resource serves as a guide to be used along with the proficiency descriptions in the TMS.

These example behaviors are designed to help HR employees better assess their current responsibility, scope, or complexity within each competency to support the selection of a proficiency level. These examples also help supervisors validate proficiency levels as part of the competency assessment review process. **Employees are not required to perform all of the activities at a certain level in order to select that level of proficiency on the self assessment.** The examples should be used as a guide for employees to consider whether they have performed an activity similar to these examples. If the answer is yes, then they are likely meeting the proficiency for that competency.

VA HR Competencies by Profile

Competency	HR Competency Profiles			
	Foundational	Intermediate	Advanced	Leader
VA Core Competencies				
Analytical Reasoning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Communications	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conflict Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customer Service	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flexibility	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information Assurance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Integrity/Honesty	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interpersonal Skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organizational Awareness	✓	✓	✓	✓
Problem Solving	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Thinking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teamwork	✓	✓	✓	✓
Veterans Service Motivation	✓	✓	✓	✓
VA Leadership Competencies				
Accountability	Not Applicable	✓	✓	✓
Developing Others	Not Applicable	✓	✓	✓
Entrepreneurship	Not Applicable	✓	✓	✓
Financial Management	Not Applicable	✓	✓	✓
Human Capital Management	Not Applicable	✓	✓	✓
Leveraging Diversity	Not Applicable	✓	✓	✓
Partnering	Not Applicable	✓	✓	✓
Political Savvy	Not Applicable	✓	✓	✓
Technology Management	Not Applicable	✓	✓	✓
HR Technical Competencies				
Employee Benefits	✓	✓	✓	✓
Employee Development	✓	✓	✓	✓
Employee Relations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Labor Relations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pay Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performance Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Position Classification and Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruitment and Staffing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Workforce and Succession Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work/Life Integration	✓	✓	✓	✓

VA HR Competency Model Reference Guide



HR Competency Profiles				
Competency	Foundational	Intermediate	Advanced	Leader
Workforce Planning (WFP) Full Time and Collateral Technical Competencies				
Budget Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Change Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS)*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Position Classification and Management*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Process Design and Implementation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Project Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruitment and Staffing*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Workforce Data Analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓
Workforce Technology/Tools	✓	✓	✓	✓
Workforce Risk Assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Only for the Full Time WFP Foundational, Intermediate, Advanced and Leader profiles

VA Core Competencies: Definitions and Examples Behaviors

Analytical Reasoning	
Identifies issues and analyzes information to draw accurate conclusions, ensuring careful attention to detail. Dissects problems and information into their meaningful parts, and uses logic and judgment to evaluate alternatives and develop solutions.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates basic understanding of information sources and analytical concepts and methods, such as inductive and deductive reasoning. ▪ Interprets written and visual material (e.g., rules, regulations, policy, instructions, reports, charts, graphs, tables) and applies what is learned to specific situations. ▪ Interprets information from a variety of information sources to draw basic conclusions. ▪ Submits work assignments that demonstrate attention to detail and stated requirements.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies rules, principles, and relationships that explain facts, data, or other information. ▪ Identifies the data required to complete an assigned task and submits simple quantitative and qualitative analyses that comply with instructions/requirements. ▪ Utilizes inductive and deductive reasoning to interpret or analyze simple information to arrive at answers to questions or problems. ▪ Does a careful analysis of even simple information, paying attention to accurately represent facts and details.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses inductive and deductive reasoning to interpret or analyze moderately complex information and make correct inferences and conclusions. ▪ Uses data to justify courses of action in multiple situations, drawing out relevant facts and details to illustrate points. ▪ Analyzes and assesses HR procedures, processes, policy, and decisions to determine overall effectiveness and efficiency of agency systems, programs, or plans. ▪ Develops effective tools and techniques to process information, ensuring critical facts and details are captured and recorded.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fosters inductive and deductive reasoning feedback mechanisms to interpret and analyze highly complex information; helps others make correct inferences and draw accurate conclusions. ▪ Produces/performs thoughtful analyses that can serve as models or templates for similar work. ▪ Determines the impact of decisions made and outlines “lessons learned” based on reasoning skills. ▪ Conducts detailed research and analysis of HR issues/problems to improve organizational HR effectiveness and efficiency.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interprets and analyzes highly complex information to discern patterns, trends, and relationships and to draw conclusions. ▪ Applies quantitative and qualitative techniques to the analysis of complex HR issues; presents findings so others are able to understand them. ▪ Analyzes and interprets complex HR policy and procedure to determine impact on organizational operations.

Communications

Effectively expresses information to multiple audiences through clear, convincing oral and written communications; demonstrates logical thinking when describing facts and concepts, and shapes communications to meet the needs of a specific audience; actively listens to others and demonstrates understanding of their comments and/or questions.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling. ▪ Communicates basic ideas and information clearly and in a well-organized manner. ▪ Articulates thoughts and composes documents regarding routine matters effectively, with guidance. ▪ Actively listens to others and responds appropriately.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follows guidance to structure routine communications and technical documents. ▪ Reviews own work to ensure it is succinct, easy to understand, and appropriate for the intended audience. ▪ Speaks in a clear, concise, and logical manner. ▪ When listening to others, pays attention to verbal and nonverbal cues; listens for misunderstandings and misinterpretations. ▪ Proofreads own documents for English grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expresses facts and ideas in a clear, concise, convincing, and organized manner. ▪ Clearly conveys moderately complex ideas, concepts, and information to HR and non-HR professionals. ▪ Exhibits active listening by demonstrating understanding of audience comments and/or questions. ▪ Is adept at developing documents (e.g., correspondence, standard operating procedures, and HR guidelines), and proofreads the writing of others for quality of information and clarity of thought.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convincingly conveys benefits of complex HR changes to user groups; thoughtfully considers and responds to questions and concerns. ▪ Presents thoughts in written and oral communication that are well-organized and demonstrate confidence in the facts and ideas. ▪ Adjusts oral and written communication styles when working with individuals with different levels of HR understanding; uses various methods to explain and convey information. ▪ Proofreads or edits the complex or technical writing of others.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clearly explains and defends complex ideas in written and oral communications, appropriately adapting to each audience's level of knowledge. ▪ Actively listens and clarifies points when presenting highly complex and controversial findings. ▪ Uses well-constructed, fact-based arguments to persuade stakeholders/officials to take action on HR trends or costly, extensive suggestions for improvement. ▪ Writes and publishes articles in professional, industry, or scientific journals to communicate program direction and content.

Conflict Management

Helps to manage and resolve conflicts, grievances, confrontations, or disagreements in a constructive manner to minimize negative personal impact; collaborates with others to encourage cooperation and teaming.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognizes conflict and makes oneself available for conflict resolution. ▪ Communicates with other employees or customers to generate potential areas of agreement; notifies the supervisor of disagreements. ▪ Remains calm and objective during a conflict and through its resolution.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is open and professional when handling minor personal conflicts; seeks help in resolving issues and/or situations, as needed. ▪ Resolves simple customer complaints opportunities by referring to established guidelines and standard operating procedures. ▪ Notifies the supervisor of conflict; initiates established chain-of-command process to facilitate resolution. ▪ Demonstrates respect and openness for differences of opinion by allowing others a chance to be heard and listening to what is being said.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognizes conflict between employees, customers, and other stakeholders; volunteers to assist in resolving the conflict. ▪ Identifies and evaluates elements of conflict to build conflict resolution skills. ▪ Reacts calmly to diffuse emotions of involved parties during heated discussions. ▪ Facilitates communication among other employees and/or customers to generate areas of agreement around issues or conflicts. ▪ Listens and considers all sides when resolving conflicts and confrontations among work units when there are overlapping areas of responsibility.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates respect and openness for differences in opinions by allowing others to speak in turn and responding to what they've said with patience and understanding. ▪ Makes oneself approachable or available for helping others resolve conflicts; seeks to resolve issues immediately and avoid escalation. ▪ Applies a variety of mediation and resolution techniques to enable a group to come to a resolution and promote ownership of the solution.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Directs communication among other employees, internal or external stakeholders, and customers to reach agreement and joint action. ▪ Interprets and adapts general guidelines to resolve conflicts for which there are no precedents. ▪ Serves as a resource/mediator for conflicts that cannot be resolved immediately or that have escalated during previous attempts at resolution. ▪ Fosters a climate that minimizes potential for conflict; anticipates and proactively mitigates conflict before it escalates.

Customer Service

Anticipates, identifies, and manages the needs and expectations of internal and external customers; makes the effort to understand customer issues and priorities to deliver quality services and support; solicits regular formal and informal feedback and takes action to drive high levels of customer satisfaction.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resolves simple and routine problems, questions, or complaints; asks for additional information or support for nonroutine issues. ▪ Establishes and maintains strong working relationships with customers. ▪ Escalates complex HR questions or issues to the appropriate individual, team, or organizational group.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responds to inquiries in a timely manner; keeps customers informed of status and status changes. ▪ Follows up on customer inquiries to resolve problems; clarifies information about HR issues. ▪ Asks appropriate questions to identify a customer's HR issue, requesting assistance when necessary. ▪ Provides support and guidance to customers about routine HR inquiries or issues.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participates in meetings with customers (e.g., to solicit input concerning current HR processes or employee relations issues). ▪ Maintains high levels of customer satisfaction in one's own work. ▪ Advises customers in own area of expertise (e.g., recruitment, employee benefits, workforce planning, position classification). ▪ Serves as a primary resource for customers on certain HR issues (e.g., benefits, performance management, employee development, employee relations).
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops and maintains relationships with customers with diverse needs; builds strong, mutually supportive working relationships. ▪ Designs HR work processes that incorporate end-user feedback and are aligned to HR customer services goals. ▪ Conducts evaluations of HR support to determine quality of services and customer satisfaction and to determine future procedural changes. ▪ Anticipates changes to HR operations based on updated policy and regulation; engages actively with stakeholders to address complex and nonroutine questions and potential changes related to new policy.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluates HR performance and develops and deploys strategies to enhance customer service and customer satisfaction across team or larger organizational group. ▪ Anticipates customer needs and modifies the team's work activities, processes, and practices to meet these needs. ▪ Actively applies and shares diverse resources and expertise to address complex customer inquiries and customer service issues identified across the team or larger organizational group. ▪ Collaborates across team and outside of own HR team to organize planning sessions that elicit ideas for improving customer service and support. ▪ Uses expertise and experience to address and resolve high-risk, high-profile customer service issues; draws from broader HR team as necessary. ▪ Provides expert guidance to teams on managing difficult customers and resolving complex customer support issues.

Flexibility	
Is open to change and new ways of approaching, working, and solving problems; adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; deals effectively with ambiguity.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjusts work activities appropriately in situations where limited information is available; seeks guidance from supervisors and peers as appropriate. ▪ Remains focused and productive in facing challenging situations within daily work and routine assignments (e.g., meeting workload deadlines).
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports others in responding to situations where conditions change frequently or availability of information is limited or unpredictable. ▪ Remains focused and productive when facing stressful situations (e.g., work activity changes, project surges, customer complaints). ▪ Supports others in presenting an overview of HR team capabilities to various audiences on short notice.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adapts to significant, expected, or temporary changes affecting project work or deadlines by reviewing team and individual work strategies, processes, and approaches. ▪ Adjusts quickly to situations where conditions change, and makes the best decisions when only limited information may be available. ▪ Is flexible and sensitive to staff resource considerations during times of heightened workload (e.g., performance management cycle, benefits registration).
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Makes adaptations to HR processes to accommodate users' suggestions. ▪ Acts as a resource to recommend major changes to enterprise-wide HR systems, policies, processes, etc. ▪ Adapts to continuous, significant, sudden, or permanent changes or setbacks affecting numerous programs or priorities. ▪ Leads others, based on new and emerging priorities or needs.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anticipates changes or setbacks affecting numerous programs or priorities and adjusts work activities accordingly. ▪ Takes immediate action to modify or make major changes to HR systems or procedures when management makes change requests, or as dictated by political, environmental, or legal considerations. ▪ Interprets available facts and information to approve and finalize appropriate course of action where conditions change frequently or availability of information is limited or unpredictable.

Information Assurance	
Applies knowledge of methods and procedures to protect information systems and data by ensuring their availability, authentication, confidentiality, and integrity.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes basic information assurance concepts and routine information assurance activities related to one’s own work. ▪ Complies with VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior (ROB). ▪ Identifies basic ways to protect VA sensitive information.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explains the risks associated with failing to protect VA’s information systems and personally identifiable information (PII). ▪ Demonstrates compliance with information assurance standards, practices, and procedures to perform routine operations, seeking guidance as appropriate. ▪ Applies information assurance concepts and available technology to secure data, seeking guidance as appropriate.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independently complies with internal VA and external information assurance standards, practices, and procedures relevant to one’s role or project work, and helps teammates to do the same. ▪ Protects VA’s networks, systems, and/or sensitive data by using the appropriate information assurance tool or technique relevant to one’s role (e.g., firewalls, public key infrastructure [PKI], Secure Sockets Layer [SSL], virtual private network [VPN]). ▪ Verifies and validates that appropriate security measures are implemented and functioning as intended, related to own role.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oversees and drives team compliance with information assurance standards, practices, and procedures. ▪ Contributes to formulation and administration of information assurance policies, procedures, and standards based on federal and VA-wide guidelines. ▪ Navigates complex challenges related to ensuring information assurance across staff or larger HR team.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creates audit policy and reporting mechanisms for ensuring compliance with information assurance standards, and explains them to others. ▪ Collaborates with other organizational groups or teams to develop, integrate, and implement information assurance strategies. ▪ Serves as authority in one’s own organizational group or team for ensuring compliance with information assurance policies and procedures.

Integrity/Honesty

Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the Department of Veterans Affairs; displays high standards of ethical conduct at all times and understands the impact of violating these standards on the organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes the importance of honesty and integrity in the workplace; adheres to ethical guidelines and standards. ▪ Articulates the consequences of unethical behavior.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistently applies detailed knowledge of federal and industry ethical guidelines and standards to work products and behaviors. ▪ Honors commitments in the workplace.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistently performs in an ethical manner with internal and external customers. ▪ Demonstrates a sense of corporate responsibility and commitment to public service. ▪ Conducts self in a way that inspires a level of trust.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops and implements programs to foster honesty, integrity, and ethical practices and behaviors in the workplace. ▪ Coaches others on integrity and honesty by providing regular feedback to subordinates and identifying teachable moments, where appropriate. ▪ Creates a culture that fosters high standards of ethics by modeling the desired behavior with employees and identifying areas in work processes and approaches that may lead to ethical breaches.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validates and supports programs and policies to foster integrity, honesty, and ethical practices and behaviors in the workplace. ▪ Serves as a role model for integrity, honesty, and ethical behaviors; inspires trust in others.

Interpersonal Skills	
Develops and maintains effective relationships with others; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of subordinates, peers, and seniors. Gains cooperation to obtain information and accomplish goals, including managing disagreements in a constructive manner to minimize negative personal impact.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperates and works well with management, other employees, and customers in the course of daily activities. ▪ Displays professional courtesy, respect, and tact in all interactions. ▪ Asks for guidance in interpersonal situations where the solution or outcome is unclear.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Builds working relationships within own team and across the larger organization. ▪ Seeks to understand the unexpressed motivations and concerns of others; courteously and tactfully receives and delivers sensitive information, instruction, and feedback. ▪ Treats others with kindness, respect, and professionalism; delivers measured, thoughtful responses to questions, issues, and concerns.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperates and works well with management, other employees, and/or customers. ▪ Proactively recognizes the needs of others; appropriately responds to underlying, unexpressed motivations, values, and concerns. ▪ Courteously and tactfully delivers effective instruction to frustrated customers or when discussing situations where the solution or outcome is unclear. ▪ Fosters an environment of respect and facilitates communication among other employees or customers to generate areas of agreement. ▪ Listens carefully to customer needs when negotiating the addition of services; takes the time to show how it will add value to their work.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintains positive working relationships with employees at all organizational levels, as well as with management and internal and external customers and stakeholders. ▪ Exhibits high emotional intelligence; senses the needs of others and seeks out opportunities to understand and help them. ▪ Identifies and emphasizes common goals to promote cooperation between HR and customer organizations. ▪ Proactively recognizes and resolves potential interpersonal problems among subordinates and teams.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishes and maintains ongoing working relationships with management, employees, and internal and external customers and stakeholders. ▪ Demonstrates understanding of political and individual contexts when relating to others; interacts with stakeholders and subordinates with equal levels of diplomacy and professionalism. ▪ Fosters an environment of respect through words and actions. ▪ Directs communication among other employees, internal or external stakeholders, and customers to reach agreement and joint action.

Organizational Awareness	
<p>Knows the organization's (e.g., VA, domain, work unit) mission and functions. Knows how its social, political, and technological systems work and operates effectively within them. Understands how programs, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations drive and impact the work and objectives of the organization.</p>	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follows the policies and procedure of own team (e.g., follows a standard operating procedure). ▪ Identifies and defines the major functions of multiple HR teams. ▪ Lists major processes and policy related to one's own work and functional area. ▪ Recognizes other key roles impacting one's own work within own team.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes common terminology, processes, and rules used by one's own team or functional area. ▪ Describes standards, policies, and procedures that affect one's own team. ▪ Describes the major functions and goals of one's own HR team and defines which other teams have an impact or interrelationship with this work. ▪ Reviews articles and conducts internet research to identify events or trends affecting HR.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes the mission, functions, policies, and procedures of one's own HR team and the interdependencies that exist across other teams. ▪ Contributes insights around internal and external factors (e.g., new policies and guidelines, workforce changes, budget shifts) impacting own team's goals, policies, and procedures. ▪ Takes the initiative to correctly apply standards and procedures relevant to one's own team or functional area. ▪ Stays informed on external HR trends that will impact the work of one's team; collaborates with the supervisor to discuss potential impact on team's work.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognizes how external factors and changing organizational goals affect HR projects; adjusts the team's work efforts in accordance with these changes. ▪ Provides guidance on team-specific terminology and processes to team members. ▪ Collaborates with other HR teams and functions on establishing and/or documenting consistent standards and processes. ▪ Interprets existing and evolving HR standards to improve the consistency of HR efforts across the team or larger organizational group. ▪ Anticipates external HR trends that will impact the work of the team or larger organizational group; supports the planning process to address these changes.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Directs the development of policies, standards, and procedures for team or larger organizational group or division. ▪ Helps team understand the relationships and interdependencies of functions across different HR teams. ▪ Collaborates closely with leadership across other HR teams to help establish consistency across processes, procedures, and/or standards. ▪ Directs and manages adherence to policies, rules, and standards as part of risk management and in support of organizational goals. ▪ Anticipates external policy changes or other industry or governmental shifts that will significantly impact the work of the team or larger organizational group; engages in strategic planning to address these changes accordingly.

Problem Solving	
Identifies problems, determines accuracy and relevance of information, and uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives; makes well-informed, objective decisions that take into account facts, goals, constraints, and risks while perceiving the impact and implications of decisions.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reacts to and solves simple problems by gathering and applying information from standard materials or sources and then applying logic to identify potential solutions. ▪ Investigates and gets assistance in resolving simple problems. ▪ Makes sound and timely decisions on routine issues impacting one’s own work; seeks supervisory guidance for more complex problems.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Makes routine decisions independently, where there is a standard process; recognizes limitations and situations when further guidance is needed from senior colleagues or supervisors. ▪ Identifies problems or inefficiencies in work processes and activities; recommends solutions to resolve problems or inefficiencies. ▪ Seeks guidance to understand root causes, influences, customers, and stakeholders when solving a problem.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies and solves problems by gathering and applying information from a variety of materials or sources that provide several alternatives. ▪ Uses logic to identify alternatives to solve problems, seeking supervisory review where appropriate. ▪ Recognizes and takes action to address nonroutine problems; overcomes obstacles by pursuing creative, feasible alternatives. ▪ Solicits the feedback from multiple stakeholders to understand an issue or problem and accurately assess its root causes and potential solutions. ▪ Uses data to justify decisions.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helps teams anticipate problems and identify and evaluate potential sources of information; provides feedback and coaching to others to help solve problems. ▪ Solves complex or sensitive problems by developing and proposing strategic alternate models to solve HR problems and identifying possible conflicts and shared benefits. ▪ Engages appropriate stakeholders when developing solutions in order to understand and incorporate multiple perspectives, needs, and insights. ▪ Evaluates the effectiveness of decisions made compared to objectives, identifies “lessons learned,” and adjusts future decisions as appropriate.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides precedent setting solutions to unique HR problems not previously encountered. ▪ Helps teams make decisions complicated by the number and nature of existing HR policy, federal guidelines, and organizational goals. ▪ Identifies the root causes of problems; develops systemic solutions to address them and prevent them from reoccurring.

Self-Management

Sets well-defined and realistic individual goals; displays a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment toward completing assignments in a timely manner; accepts feedback and works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve even under stressful conditions; demonstrates responsible behavior.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands how to monitor individual progress against goals and deadlines set by supervisor. ▪ With guidance, acts upon feedback and takes on new assignments to enhance skills. ▪ With guidance, identifies and/or seeks out learning events to grow professional skills and capabilities. ▪ Recognizes stressful situations and is able to deal with others in a courteous manner.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Works with supervisor to set priorities, goals, and deadlines for own work/projects; is committed to meeting those goals. ▪ Confidently accepts feedback and new assignments/responsibilities as opportunities to continue to grow professionally. ▪ Works with supervisor to identify individual learning gaps; demonstrates willingness to address/close gaps in support of professional growth. ▪ Uses clear judgment and maintains a positive outlook to others both in daily work and in high stress situations.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acts as a role model for others by establishing processes and habits to successfully manage individual workloads and multiple, conflicting priorities. ▪ Is committed to professional development and demonstrates autonomy in self-directed learning activities, such as participation in professional societies and staying up-to-date through review of professional and industry publications. ▪ Actively seeks feedback and willingly accepts new or additional responsibilities and challenges to enhance competence and value to the workplace. ▪ Plans ahead to mitigate the impact of stress on self and others.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Systematically sets and achieves individual and professional goals designed to meet project requirements and enhance value to the workplace. ▪ Coaches others on effective learning techniques and approaches job responsibilities from a perspective of continual learning. ▪ Establishes an after-action review process to solicit constructive feedback and identify areas for improvement. ▪ Develops strategies for identifying and addressing current and future potential stressors that may significantly impact the workforce.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishes programs and policies that foster an environment of continual learning focused on adding value to the workplace. ▪ Sees work efforts in larger organizational context; coordinates own work activities with other appropriate functions or parts of the organization. ▪ Accurately assesses and regularly takes proactive steps to enhance individual contribution to the workplace and mission accomplishment. ▪ Recognizes symptoms of stress in others, and provides tools and techniques to work effectively and remain productive in high stress situations.

Strategic Thinking

Formulates effective strategies consistent with the objective, vision, and competitive strategy of the organization (e.g., VA, domain, work unit). Applies knowledge of planning, coordination, and execution of HR services, business functions, and resource allocation when examining issues and determining priorities. Takes a long-term view to recognize opportunities. Determines objectives and sets priorities. Anticipates potential threats or opportunities.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands the organizational goals and objectives and performs work activities that serve these objectives. ▪ With guidance, understands the basic planning, coordination, and execution of HR services, business functions, and/or resource allocation. ▪ Identifies and works on manageable parts of a task or issue. ▪ Articulates an issue and outlines and performs its logical next steps with guidance.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Works with coworkers to develop plans for applying work unit's goals to project activities. ▪ Supports teams in the planning, coordination, and execution of HR services, business functions, and/or resource allocation. ▪ Discusses the consequences and implications of decisions or actions on mission, priorities, and values.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determines organizational direction and develops short-term strategies for HR programs or projects that are consistent with key organizational priorities and values. ▪ Responds to requests and provides operational support to project staff regarding logistical requirements and procedures, (e.g., deadlines, data inputs, equipment/resource availability) to accomplish project milestones. ▪ Applies prior knowledge, models, tools, and techniques to analyze and deeply understand issues and recognize connections, patterns, and trends.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides input to senior leadership to support organizational vision of a team-based culture by developing an enterprise program plan approach. ▪ Analyzes project inputs from various elements (e.g., budgetary, technical, compliance, policy) and correctly prioritizes issues and solutions in support of mission accomplishment. ▪ Integrates input from sophisticated models and tools to predict outcomes and identify issues that may not be obvious to others. ▪ Conceives likely scenarios and recommends effective courses of action to others.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops strategies consistent with organizational vision and objectives; understands VA's long-term goals, and anticipates potential threats or opportunities. ▪ Directs the review of a variety of HR policies, guidelines, reports, processes, and procedures. ▪ Evaluates the effectiveness of strategies and programs against organizational mission and goals; implements changes to improve performance, when required. ▪ Advises others on how to interpret the current environment and assess/plan for likely future scenarios. ▪ Redirects activities of the organization/work unit in the direction of new goals and/or priorities.

Teamwork	
Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; fosters commitment and team spirit; works with others to achieve goals.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperates with others to complete routine tasks. ▪ Attends team meetings and shares information when asked. ▪ Is an active listener in team discussions.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assists team in developing ideas by listening and asking pertinent questions. ▪ Works with team members to collect and organize background information materials.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperates with others to establish priorities and delegate work plans. ▪ Contributes to group discussions, and shares information freely and willingly. ▪ Collaborates with team members to summarize progress in preparation for stakeholder briefings.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guides team to consensus for plans of action by actively engaging in team discussions and encouraging multiple perspectives. ▪ Designs processes that encourage collaboration and information sharing. ▪ Solicits input from others and encourages the team to consider different perspectives and alternative solutions.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Directs group's work efforts and monitors progress toward attaining team goals. ▪ Facilitates or leads group discussions and information sharing around issues and initiatives; supports team decisions once they have been made. ▪ Listens to and values others' opinions; makes others feel that their contributions are important.

Veterans Service Motivation

Shows a commitment to serve Veterans, and works to ensure all actions are focused on meeting and supporting Veterans' needs; aligns organizational objectives, processes, and practices with Veterans' and the public's interests.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promptly identifies inquiries about Veterans' and the public's interests and agency policies. ▪ With guidance, examines feedback from Veterans and the public regarding new policies.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interprets work unit's policies and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the needs of Veterans and the public interest. ▪ Assists in collecting quantitative and qualitative survey data to direct the alignment of organizational objectives to Veterans' needs and the public interest.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintains and enforces unit policies and procedures to ensure consistency with the needs of Veterans and the public interest. ▪ Participates in discussions regarding documentation in accordance with procedures to ensure resources are utilized appropriately to serve Veterans and the public interest. ▪ Routinely examines processes used to monitor contractors and vendors for supplies, services, and/or equipment to ensure funds and assets are allocated appropriately.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partners with leaders to develop recommendations and action plans to meet Veterans' needs. ▪ Cultivates relationships with stakeholders to validate the usefulness of proposed processes and services to Veterans' and the public's interests.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serves as a key resource to design and develop programs to address critical organizational requirements for Veterans' and the public's interests. ▪ Elicits employees' commitment to serve Veterans and the public good in responding to difficult situations.

VA Leadership Competencies: Definitions and Behavioral Examples

Accountability	
<p>Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with guidelines and rules.</p>	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintains confidentiality of sensitive information by establishing new policies and procedures for handling such information. ▪ Delegates work to staff to ensure responsibilities are completed. ▪ Meets weekly with team to monitor progress of work plans. ▪ Outlines written policies and procedures to ensure consistent adherence by staff.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports the investigation of claims of employee violations and encourages staff to take responsibility for actions. ▪ Outlines goals and assesses work group progress toward goal achievement. ▪ Plans and researches safety issues and contacts agency to ensure safety standards are fully utilized. ▪ Distributes workload among staff to ensure staff meets key deliverables.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implements new guidelines and procedures as directed by the chain of command. ▪ Accepts responsibility when missed deadlines affect major project outcome. ▪ Develops and implements internal controls for pilot program to manage potential barriers to implementation. ▪ Holds staff accountable for new performance standards and expectations by taking action with employees not meeting standards. ▪ Ensures that directives, policies, and protocols are supported and enforced. ▪ Assists others with implementing guidance from chain of command. ▪ Monitors compliance and provides leadership with data on implementation effectiveness. ▪ Establishes new processes and procedures and reviews existing processes and procedures for needed improvements. ▪ Takes responsibility and develops solutions.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides and promotes position information across divisions to educate staff on respective duties, performance expectations, and consequent impact on accomplishment of agency goals. ▪ Holds staff accountable for new performance standards and expectations by taking action with employees not meeting standards. ▪ Empowers others to take accountability for own work streams. ▪ Holds staff in their area of responsibility accountable for performance and expectations.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revises and communicates to employees the expectations and methods for achieving results in light of failed or delayed agency-level project. ▪ Administers and provides oversight of a new complex procedure, which delegates responsibility for compliance to various agencies or parties. ▪ Accomplishes cultural change of accountability among staff by defining roles and responsibilities to ensure agency goals are met.

Developing Others	
Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization by providing ongoing feedback and by providing opportunities to learn through formal and informal methods.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides developmental feedback to staff on job performance. ▪ Involves staff in developing project goals and timelines.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourages employees to participate in mentoring programs and other learning opportunities. ▪ Pairs new staff with seasoned employees to facilitate understanding of the position and organization. ▪ Provides orientation to new employee.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assesses staff and provides timely and consistent feedback regarding proficiency and effectiveness. ▪ Provides constructive feedback, guidance, and reinforcement to employees regarding job performance. ▪ Works with staff to identify work goals and create individual development plans. ▪ Evaluates training programs to ensure content meets staff needs.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommends details and developmental assignments to staff based on career interests and work unit needs. ▪ Recognizes staff potential and guides employees in developing skills by recommending appropriate training and sources of information. ▪ Works with staff to develop individual development plans addressing employee needs and meeting organizational goals. ▪ Counsels and helps employees to complete eIDPs, competency assessments, and performance appraisals.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designs and implements opportunities for career development in anticipation of agency restructuring, including mentoring staff and providing training. ▪ Directs working group to design training programs focused on skills necessary for meeting strategic goals. ▪ Designs, implements, and communicates leadership development opportunities for staff at all levels in the organization. ▪ Collaborates with business partners to develop training programs for employees in area of responsibility.

Entrepreneurship	
Positions the organization for future success by identifying new opportunities; builds the organization by developing or improving products or services. Takes calculated risks to accomplish organizational objectives.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considers current guidelines when developing a new HR process or enhancement of an existing product. ▪ Considers feedback when developing a new service. ▪ Makes incremental improvements by adapting solutions from similar settings. ▪ Recognizes and supports creative ideas proposed by others.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies concepts for new programs, products, or services. ▪ Seeks feedback for new products or services based on customer needs. ▪ Supports others in challenging the status quo.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creates a new product, process, service, or policy based on requirements submitted by users. ▪ Makes recommendation to invest in emerging technologies to produce new products. ▪ Makes well-reasoned recommendations for taking calculated risks based on a cost-benefit analysis. ▪ Looks beyond organizational boundaries to identify opportunities for improvement. ▪ Makes small, but meaningful shifts in programs or processes by helping to develop and implement novel ideas.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Takes calculated risks by creating new and innovative business lines. ▪ Identifies potential risks and barriers; removes barriers and takes calculated risks to achieve results. ▪ Conducts research and develops business proposals resulting in a high return on investment. ▪ Looks inside and outside of the government to identify opportunities for improvement or anticipated demands for improvement.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assesses customer needs and develops innovative products, processes, and services to address recommendations. ▪ Implements an innovative strategic campaign to accomplish organization goals. ▪ Establishes a climate of reasonable risk taking, empowering, and rewarding employees who demonstrate entrepreneurial behavior and the ability to take calculated risks. ▪ Continually scans the broad environment, looking for strategic opportunities or demands for strategic change. ▪ Transforms organizational processes, programs, and overall strategies by generating groundbreaking ideas and creating movement in an unprecedented direction.

Financial Management	
<p>Understands the organization's financial processes. Prepares, justifies, and administers the program budget. Oversees procurement and contracting to achieve desired results. Monitors expenditures and uses cost-benefit thinking to set priorities.</p>	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Studies and articulates basic principles and concepts governing organization's financial management process. ▪ Adheres to approved methods used by organization for financial management. ▪ Identifies income and/or expenditures for projects, with guidance and supervision.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executes basic tasks in support of the financial management process, with guidance. ▪ Justifies budget requests in relation to program objectives. ▪ Differentiates budget allocations across projects and/or their discrete activities.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Researches resource needs and leads the process to acquire or streamline resources, in accordance with established priorities. ▪ Conducts cost-benefit analysis, as needed, to develop sound financial plans with programmatic impact. ▪ Monitors purchases, expenditures, and inventory against established objectives, and determines corrective action for consideration.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops and implements procurement system within time and budgetary constraints to support agency programs. ▪ Establishes or shares financial goals and priorities for program, team, or unit. ▪ Compares potential outcomes and/or implications of financial decisions, and advises on most advantageous course of action. ▪ Develops, justifies, and manages budgets for annual projects and programs.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designs and implements financial management systems to meet organizational objectives. ▪ Develops procurement procedures and policies. ▪ Audits major acquisitions with organizational impact, presents findings, and recommends corrective action, as appropriate.

Human Capital Management	
Builds and manages workforce based on organizational goals, budget considerations, and staffing needs. Ensures that employees are appropriately recruited, selected, appraised, and rewarded; takes action to address performance problems. Manages a multisector workforce and a variety of work situations.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Makes personnel decisions based upon promotion criteria and position requirements. ▪ Utilizes peer recognition process to recognize employees. ▪ Meets with employees to set performance goals.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognizes and addresses deficiencies of human resources processes or tools. ▪ Provides positive feedback to high-performing staff and rewards exceptional performance. ▪ Considers impact of personnel decisions on current staff.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviews and recommends updates to position descriptions and performance plans. ▪ Explains restructuring plan to staff and addresses concerns. ▪ Recognizes employee contributions by rewarding employees. ▪ Participates in interview panels and makes candidate selections. ▪ Conducts mid-year and end-of-year performance evaluations.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops rewards system to recognize the impact of employee contributions to the organization. ▪ Identifies creative strategies to recruit employees with the required skills and qualifications, despite having limited resources. ▪ Identifies mission critical occupations and associated competencies needed to perform organizational functions. ▪ Analyzes workforce and current field expertise to determine where recruiting is needed. ▪ Implements incentive programs for workforce. ▪ Ensures employee training is complete. ▪ Implements personnel actions. ▪ Manages virtual workforce in a variety of situations and working environments.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redesigns organizational structure to provide improved service to customers by considering organizational goals, timeframes for achieving goals, and staff responsibilities. ▪ Creates new agency-wide human capital programs and activities to meet strategic objectives. ▪ Leads task force to analyze agency-wide staffing needs and develops strategy to address recruitment needs. ▪ Develops new agency-wide incentive program to retain employees with HR expertise.

Leveraging Diversity

Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attends diversity programs to increase staff awareness. ▪ Meets with staff to obtain input on diversity issues within work group.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adheres to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies, goals, objectives, and philosophies of valuing diversity in performing everyday duties and responsibilities. ▪ Builds teams leveraging diverse capabilities of staff.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognizes and utilizes skills of staff with diverse backgrounds to benefit the organization, clients, and coworkers. ▪ Addresses and corrects the use of inappropriate language or actions that deride diversity.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Builds a diverse staff, with a variety of skills, that functions effectively to accomplish the mission of the organization. ▪ Develops a creative initiative focused on recognizing the various dimensions of diversity to encourage inclusiveness in the workplace. ▪ Builds a unified work team including individuals with different personalities and backgrounds.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creates a diverse and inclusive environment after a major reorganization, which brings together different cultures, ideas, and experiences. ▪ Identifies creative approaches for targeted recruiting to develop a representative workforce that benefits from diverse strengths.

Partnering Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meets regularly with peers and supervisors to identify recurring issues. ▪ Develops and maintains network of stakeholders for collection and sharing of information. ▪ Meets with varying levels of staff to discuss plans to implement strategic goals. ▪ Explains how organizational units and external stakeholders work together to fulfill VA's mission. ▪ Identifies networking opportunities inside and outside of the organization. ▪ Establishes relationships with internal and external colleagues.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considers stakeholder input when developing strategies to ensure mutually agreeable initiatives. ▪ Coordinates with various agencies to plan and conduct annual events. ▪ Coordinates across and within organizations to determine required resources to support goals. ▪ Works with a team of managers or employees across agencies to address mutual issues and concerns. ▪ Encourages others to make decisions with all key stakeholders in mind. ▪ Keeps work unit's stakeholders updated on changes that may affect them. ▪ Builds upon existing and new relationships to achieve organizational goals. ▪ Uses internal projects as opportunities to collaborate and establish strategic relationships.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Builds consensus with partners by considering input and promoting trust between various parties. ▪ Gains support from key leaders and staff within the organization to ensure support for work objectives and team initiatives. ▪ Coordinates with partners regarding new strategies to ensure consistent communication with agencies. ▪ Ensures future partnerships by developing strong relationships and resolving issues with partners. ▪ Ensures HR programs and policies are integrated with needs and/or resources of key stakeholders within and outside of own department. ▪ Champions a stakeholder perspective to decision making at all levels. ▪ Maintains strategic relationships and collaborates with internal and external colleagues to fulfill the organization's mission. ▪ Identifies and works to eliminate conditions that impede within-department and cross-department collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Partnering Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.	
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborates with headquarters, regional offices, and key stakeholders to implement new initiatives. ▪ Partners with various parties by sharing information and resources across multiple levels to establish new programs. ▪ Clearly conveys information to multiple stakeholders so that initiatives are integrated across the entire organization. ▪ Implements processes that foster a cross-organizational approach to achieving VA's mission and strategic goals. ▪ Contributes to collaborative work by proactively sharing information and providing input and support to strategic partners. ▪ Provides guidance to others that fosters the development of cross-department and organization partnerships.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops, publicizes, and garners support for programs and policies by meeting with key officials, executives, unions, employees, and other interested parties. ▪ Partners with key officials from various offices and agencies to develop strategic goals. ▪ Creates systems and processes for sharing information to facilitate the integration of initiatives across VA. ▪ Considers and aligns the various perspectives and needs of VA when planning, coordinating, and communicating organization's policies and processes. ▪ Creates a process and develops criteria for evaluating the success of internal and external collaborative efforts. ▪ Possesses an extensive professional network across and outside VA and leverages this network to contribute to the mission.

Political Savvy	
Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization. Perceives organizational and political reality and acts accordingly.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considers impact of union when addressing employee performance expectations. ▪ Considers staff concerns regarding organizational changes.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reacts appropriately to political issues that may impact internal and external stakeholders. ▪ Develops relationships with political leaders across the organization.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluates political implications by considering different courses of action on key issues. ▪ Meets with key decision makers to ensure approval of required resources to achieve goals. ▪ Demonstrates understanding of the ramifications that decisions can have on an organization. ▪ Discusses changes that impact work units, addresses issues or concerns, and provides feedback to planners. ▪ Considers political implications when communicating with leadership (both internal and external) and providing guidance to management (e.g., understanding unions). ▪ Demonstrates understanding of both internal (e.g., HR) and external (e.g., VA facility/office staff, non-VA university affiliates and vendors) customers.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensures staff understands documentation and required metrics to analyze political issues. ▪ Meets with community leaders to discuss political issues and address concerns. ▪ Establishes a clear vision for the organization by meeting with managers agency-wide to ensure initiatives are understood. ▪ Addresses controversial political issues by conducting research and considering best practices. ▪ Meets with and interacts with all levels of the agency to understand the political climate. ▪ Monitors and knows what is going on in the political climate (e.g., congressional budgets, news media) and how it affects staff and how the organization is run.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands political issues and effectively works with Congress to receive legislative approval. ▪ Leads reorganization of an agency by meeting with stakeholders to understand perspectives and reach consensus on organization-wide plan. ▪ Responds to allegations during Congressional hearing.

Technology Management Keeps up-to-date on technological developments. Makes effective use of technology to achieve results. Ensures access to and security of technology systems.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knows how to use machines, tools, and equipment required for daily office work (e.g., fax, scanner, Microsoft Office Suite). ▪ Uses computers and computer applications required for HR professionals (e.g., COGNOS, PeopleSoft). ▪ Understands and utilizes available technology to improve processes. ▪ Embraces and uses new technology to improve customer service.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Works with contractors to implement a HR information system (HRIS) change to meet requirements of a new legislative mandate. ▪ Researches technologies and tools available to meet specific program needs (e.g., survey COTS tools). ▪ Adapts processes to keep pace with new technological developments.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies knowledge of technology to ensure access to and security of HR information systems and PII. ▪ Uses IT knowledge to streamline nationwide data collection processes and increase output. ▪ Develops automated system formulas to calculate costs. ▪ Manages the implementation of a new electronic processing system in the agency. ▪ Applies policies, waivers, and risk-based decisions to ensure security of HRIS and PII.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentors others in using computers and computer applications required for HR professionals (e.g., COGNOS, PeopleSoft) ▪ Improves ability of agency to gather and act on data from stakeholders by using online surveys and related IT tools. ▪ Improves productivity by ensuring that the staff has the appropriate functional expertise in using HRIS and related systems.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritizes and approves agency investment in IT applications and systems for use by HR. ▪ Identifies HRIS shortcomings, researches options, and advocates a redesign and restructure of the process to implement new system. ▪ Reforms infrastructure and develops innovative HRIS business systems by leveraging expert IT knowledge and sharing information with staff.

Technical Competencies: Definitions and Behavioral Examples

Budget Planning	
<p>Understands and leverages the VA budget process, historical performance data, key drivers, and desired future performance goals to help program and administrative offices establish viable workforce plans. Manages against appropriations and FTE ceilings, as applicable and understands the connections between the budget process and strategic workforce planning.</p>	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes the key elements of a budget, the budget planning process, and how it relates to the workforce planning process. ▪ Understands and describes agency component responsibilities with regards to budget and workforce planning integration. ▪ Describes appropriate performance measures for workforce planning efforts.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands the format and uses of budget planning deliverables as they relate to workforce planning efforts. ▪ Understands the VA organization's budget planning process and how it integrates with the workforce planning process.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies knowledge of the budget planning process in monitoring workforce planning goals. ▪ Collaborates with budget planning staff to provide workforce planning services.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyzes budgetary decisions in light of the organization's workforce planning vision and strategies. ▪ Organizes workforce planning information to help customers successfully defend budget requests and/or obtain additional funds. ▪ Analyzes strategic workforce plans and objectives and helps determine the resources required to achieve the objectives.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrates workforce planning and budgeting processes to ensure thoroughness, accuracy, and coordination among Administration and Staff Office budgets and workforce plans. ▪ Establishes partnerships with budget planning staff across VA to maximize workforce planning support to internal VA customers. ▪ Initiates integration of workforce planning systems, operations, and processes with other VA-wide budget planning processes to maximize resources, effectiveness, and achievement of organizational strategic goals.

Change Management	
Knowledge of change management principles, strategies, and techniques required for effectively planning, implementing, and evaluating change in the organization.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes the steps in the change management process. ▪ Recognizes typical resistance to change.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands the impact of specific changes related to the workforce. ▪ Analyzes and/or evaluates information and determines organizational impact of varying workforce planning strategies. ▪ Explains and discusses the benefits of proposed changes to others. ▪ Recognizes when change is required and proposes necessary steps in processes and practices.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assesses change readiness among stakeholder groups and identifies potential barriers and risks. ▪ Articulates probable outcomes of change strategies and interventions. ▪ Assists organizational leaders in reacting to change in workforce strategies and developing strategies for implementing change. ▪ Monitors and remains aware of changes and keeps up-to-date on most recent project developments.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies the need for change in workforce planning projects or processes. ▪ Communicates the vision, objectives, responsibilities, and probable impacts of the change to others in relation to workforce planning efforts. ▪ Develops and implements change strategies as appropriate to VA's environment.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aligns leaders to enable them to become "change champions" with specific roles and action plans for making trade-offs to optimize the balance between Administration/Staff Office work requirements and the workforce. ▪ Evaluates the alignment and impact of change management activities on workforce planning projects. ▪ Demonstrates behaviors of a change agent and models appropriate and efficient team member behaviors.

Employee Benefits	
Applying HR concepts, principles, and practices relating to retirements, insurances, and other employee benefit programs.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides basic information and answers general questions regarding employee benefits programs and forms. ▪ Processes benefits requests applying local requirements; obtains required information and/or supporting documentation. ▪ Locates information regarding employee benefits.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Researches and identify sources and available benefit options. ▪ Assists employees with preparation and submission of benefits. ▪ Provides a wide range of information concerning all aspects of employee benefits.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides information concerning complex benefits options and programs (e.g., retirement, worker's compensation). ▪ Determines the appropriate course of action for complex employee benefit and retirement issues. ▪ Provides detailed advice, guidance, and counseling to customers on benefit program options. ▪ Provides basic training on employee benefits.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyzes the impact of proposed compensation legislation and regulations on the organization's compensation policies and programs.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serves as an authoritative resource for agency on the retirement and employee benefit programs. ▪ Prepares sensitive correspondence on complex, delicate, or highly contested case matters and retirement determinations and responds to congressional inquiries. ▪ Partners with management to provide guidance and counseling on benefit program areas.

Employee Development	
Applying employee development concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, evaluating, and administering training, organizational development, and career development initiatives.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes basic adult learning principles and instructional design practices that can be incorporated into employee training and development programs. ▪ Defines laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and guidelines related to VA and federal employee development and training practices. ▪ Explains the impact of career development initiatives on larger organizational development goals.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With guidance from a peer or supervisor, applies adult learning principles to design, evaluate, and develop employee development programs, training plans, course methods, course materials, and job aids. ▪ Incorporates instructional design best practice elements into portions of training material. ▪ Answers routine career development questions from staff and managers (e.g., training program policies, training opportunities, course availability, course eligibility requirements, electronic Individual Development Plans).
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies adult learning principles to lead design, evaluation, and development of employee development programs, training plans, course methods, course materials, and job aids. ▪ Conducts analyses related to learning needs assessments. ▪ Assists employees and supervisors in developing Individual Development Plans. ▪ Formulates questions to determine training program effectiveness and/or evaluate learning and performance improvement as a result of training. ▪ Plans and coordinates logistics for training delivery.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducts needs assessments, sets performance objectives, and designs evaluation measures for training and development programs. ▪ Reviews organizational workforce plans and provides input into identifying learning and development programs in support of these plans. ▪ Advises others on laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and guidelines related to VA and federal employee development and training practices. ▪ Provides guidance to team on integrating adult learning principles and employee development techniques throughout training development. ▪ Identifies barriers to effective professional development and devises organization-level recommendations to overcome obstacles.

Employee Development

Applying employee development concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, evaluating, and administering training, organizational development, and career development initiatives.

**Level 5 –
Expert**

- Applies Human Resources Development (HRD) learning theories, principles, and methods sufficient to undertake planned systematic studies to determine the immediate and long-range training needs of employees engaged in complex work.
- Aligns training and development programs with the organization's strategic plan, mission, goals, and objectives.
- Leads the development of guidelines, policies, methods, training materials, and aids for use in implementing and promoting employee development programs and services.
- Partners across HR leadership to address barriers to effective professional development and shares best practices to enhance training programs.
- Advises management on the implementation of standardized practices and principles for incorporating career development strategies into the workplace to promote employee career development.

Employee Relations	
Applying laws, rules, regulations, case law, principles, and practices related to employee conduct, performance, and dispute resolution.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes basic employee relations (ER) policy, including laws, policies, practices and procedures related to federal HR programs. ▪ Performs assigned research and analysis of ER policies, procedures, and case law. ▪ Drafts disciplinary and nondisciplinary documents for review, such as an administrative grievance response. ▪ Responds to basic ER questions.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses knowledge of federal labor laws, Executive Orders, policies, regulations, precedents, and negotiated labor agreements (e.g., Title 5 and/or Title 38) to provide managers and employees with routine/basic information about the organization's employee-management policies, procedures, and guidelines. ▪ Applies research and analysis of ER policies, procedures, and case law to draft an advisory opinion for supervisor and/or work leader. ▪ Participates in fact-finding to investigate basic alleged misconduct and/or performance related situations, such as collecting and verifying information and evidence from identified sources. ▪ Provides supporting material in preparation for a third-party proceeding.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides advice, counsel, or instruction to management and employees on following VA's ER policies and regulations, federal labor laws, and negotiated labor agreements. ▪ Leads fact-finding to investigate complex alleged misconduct and/or performance-related situations. ▪ Presents ER training to stakeholders. ▪ Researches case law and prepares management's position for a third-party proceeding; may serve as a technical representative in a third-party proceeding. ▪ Serves as a consultant to an organization for well-defined ER issues. ▪ Prepares administrative grievance responses for signature.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plans and administers ER program activities. ▪ Provides advisory assistance to management on complex or high-profile employee management concerns and the interpretation and application of relevant laws and regulations. ▪ Serves as a mentor for less experienced specialists in adhering to VA's Employee Relations policies, federal labor laws, Executive Orders, regulations, precedents, and negotiated labor agreements (e.g., Title 5 and/or Title 38).
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stays abreast of ER case law and its impacts to provide best-in-class solutions and strategies to management (e.g., decisions of the Merit Systems Protection Board, EEOC, Comptroller General, Federal Circuit Court, Office of Special Counsel, and other precedent setting decisions). ▪ Represents management in third-party proceedings. ▪ Analyzes the effectiveness of ER programs or related initiatives in accomplishing established goals and objectives. ▪ Leads ad hoc teams to publish policy/guidance concerning significant ER issues. ▪ Provides technical ER information and advice to agency or high-ranking stakeholders. ▪ Serves as organizational representative on program, policy, or practices at a national level.

Employee Relations

Applying laws, rules, regulations, case law, principles, and practices related to employee conduct, performance, and dispute resolution.

**Level 5 –
Expert**

- Stays abreast of ER case law and its impacts to provide best-in-class solutions and strategies to management (e.g., decisions of the Merit Systems Protection Board, EEOC, Comptroller General, Federal Circuit Court, Office of Special Counsel, and other precedent setting decisions).
- Represents management in third-party proceedings.
- Analyzes the effectiveness of ER programs or related initiatives in accomplishing established goals and objectives.
- Leads ad hoc teams to publish policy/guidance concerning significant ER issues.
- Provides technical ER information and advice to agency or high-ranking stakeholders.
- Serves as organizational representative on program, policy, or practices at a national level.
- Reviews and develops new or proposed personnel policies, procedures, and guidelines, makes recommendations to management on the need for changes in existing policies, and assesses impact on administration-wide personnel policies.

Human Resources Information Systems

Knowledge of HR management concepts, principles, and practices related to identifying and analyzing HR processes, translating functional requirements into technical requirements, and delivering and maintaining HR information systems.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Details major HRIS contents, functions, and capabilities (e.g., COGNOS, PAID). ▪ Accurately enters and pulls basic data from primary systems used for one’s role.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responds to routine manager and employee questions regarding HR and employee data. ▪ Uses HR information systems to run basic analyses and pull routine management reports. ▪ Describes how new HR technologies were used to enable improvements to HR functions and processes. ▪ Recognizes system limitations and escalates to manager or supervisor.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independently uses HR information systems to provide timely responses to a variety of manager and employee inquiries and report requests (e.g., retirement eligibility, compensation and awards, benefits, recruitment metrics). ▪ Participates in functional requirements gathering sessions and supports efforts to translate functional requirements into technical system requirements. ▪ Troubleshoots basic system issues working in collaboration with information technology staff to analyze and remediate problems. ▪ Develops user materials and guides to help others navigate functionality of different HR systems (e.g., data gathering, data analysis, report development).
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manages and runs complex and in-depth analyses on HR programs and services in response to leadership requests and to provide quantitative justification for HR-related decision making. ▪ Analyzes HR information system functionality and develops recommendations to improve system performance and efficiency in support of organizational goals. ▪ Provides guidance to development teams throughout the requirements gathering and system upgrade/development process. ▪ Identifies and documents changes needed in HR information systems and related business processes to support changing laws, regulations, reporting standards, and policies. ▪ Stays abreast of HRIS technologies used in the industry, describes in detail the application of software vendors to HR capabilities, and maintains relationships with specialty vendors.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resolves issues in integrating HRIS tools within an overall HR technology strategy. ▪ Develops the implementation strategy for phasing the deployment of HR technologies. ▪ Serves as an organizational expert on the functionality and specifications of HR information systems. ▪ Collaborates with leadership to determine how HR metrics and data reporting can support organizational decision making and HR initiatives. ▪ Serves as a subject matter expert (SME) on the integration of HR systems with other corporate systems. ▪ Reports on IT systems and their interactions, limitations, and capabilities as it pertains to organizational business needs.

Labor Relations
Applying laws, rules, regulations, case law, principles, and practices related to negotiating and administering labor agreements.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes basic Labor Relations (LR) policy and regulation concepts. ▪ Performs assigned research and analysis of LR policies, procedures, and case law. ▪ Drafts grievance responses for review. ▪ Drafts position paper for negotiations.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies research and analysis of LR policies, procedures, and case law to draft an advisory opinion for supervisor and/or work leader. ▪ Provides managers and employees with routine/basic information about the organization's labor-management policies, procedures, and guidelines. ▪ Supports negotiators by researching and analyzing proposals. ▪ Participates in a third-party proceeding in a support capacity. ▪ Assists in developing management strategy for negotiations.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presents LR training to stakeholders. ▪ Researches case law and prepare tentative negotiability assessments for review. ▪ Assists in the delivery of advisory opinions to customers. ▪ Serves as a consultant to an organization for well-defined LR issues. ▪ Analyzes changes to regulations, policies, etc., for impact on LR and other programs. ▪ Prepares third-step grievance responses for signature. ▪ Serves as a technical representative in third-party hearings.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serves as a mentor for less-experienced specialists. ▪ Plans and administers LR program activities. ▪ Provides advisory assistance to management on specific labor management concerns and the interpretation and application of relevant laws and regulations. ▪ Serves as a member of a negotiations team. ▪ Adapts negotiation style to situation.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leads a negotiations team. ▪ Represents management in third-party hearings. ▪ Analyzes the effectiveness of LR programs or related initiatives in accomplishing established goals and objectives. ▪ Leads ad hoc teams to publish policy/guidance concerning significant LR issues. ▪ Provides technical LR information and advice to agency or high-ranking stakeholders and national or regional union officials. ▪ Serves as organizational representative on program, policy, or practices at a national level. ▪ Reviews and develops new or proposed personnel policies, procedures, and guidelines, makes recommendations to management on the need for changes in existing policies, and assesses impact on administration-wide personnel policies.

Pay Administration	
Applying pay administration concepts, principles, and practices relating to pay setting, pay schedules, pay determinations, and other pay administration regulations.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defines basic pay administration principles, policy, and guidelines (e.g., Title 5, Title 38). ▪ Enters and updates pay data for new and current employees.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides basic information to managers, HR colleagues, and employees on routine pay, pay schedules, and pay determinations questions. ▪ Develops pay administration guidance materials for managers or other employees, with guidance. ▪ Applies routine pay administration concepts, principles, and practices regarding attendance and leave policies.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Answers inquiries about pay administration principles, compensation, leave, severance, and related guidelines. ▪ Advises employees and managers on changes related to pay administration (e.g., new guidelines, program changes, work schedules, pay and leave impacted by emergency situations). ▪ Ensures consistent application of pay administration principles, federal regulations, policies, and procedures as part of own work. ▪ Reviews or determines pay levels for employees or applicants, taking into consideration current guidelines and regulation.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides guidance to staff on interpreting pay administration rules and regulations to resolve complex and nonroutine pay setting issues, discrepancies, or errors. ▪ Participates in the development of assessment criteria for the organization's pay administration policies and programs. ▪ Manages development of pay administration training and guidance materials for managers and employees.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serves as an HR expert on pay administration issues and inquiries. ▪ Provides expert technical advice on proposed pay administration policies and their impact on other HR programs. ▪ Develops solutions for complex and controversial pay administration issues, balancing the needs and interests of affected parties.

Performance Management	
Applying performance management concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, monitoring, rating, and rewarding employee performance.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies the laws, federal regulations, and VA policies on performance management and awards. ▪ Ensures all documentation required for completion of performance appraisals are submitted and completed in a timely manner. ▪ Maintains performance-related documents and records systems in a secured area.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explains available award options to customers and managers. ▪ Interprets policy on performance appraisal and incentive awards programs.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Researches and reviews to provide advice on employee performance improvement plans. ▪ Provides briefings and training on basic performance management issues. ▪ Provides guidance to management when defending performance ratings, application informing, and justifying award nominations.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tracks problems to identify trends.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops and administers ongoing evaluation of performance management policies and programs. ▪ Develops agency performance programs, policies, and standards. ▪ Partners with management to provide guidance and counseling on performance management and awards options.

Position Classification and 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.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies rules, regulations, and classification standards. ▪ Describes organizational structure and how it relates to classification.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Researches the various Office of Personnel Management (OPM) classification standards to well-established positions. ▪ Creates organizational charts as it relates to position management, verifying their completeness and accuracy for each administration. ▪ Identifies Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) bargaining unit coverage and competitive level code and whether a position is a single or multiple incumbency. ▪ Analyzes the structure of the organization and provide guidance to first line supervisor on classification issues.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determines FLSA and bargaining unit coverage and competitive level code and whether a position is a single or multiple incumbency. ▪ Drafts and classifies position descriptions. ▪ Responds to inquiries from employees, managers, and HR staff researching, citing, and providing limited interpretation of laws, regulations, and agency policies. ▪ Defines differences in the occupational series. ▪ Reviews and updates position descriptions that have expired at the five-year level.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drafts the correct pay plan, series, title, and grade for established occupations with directly applicable standards in the general schedule and federal wage system. ▪ Reviews and recommends revisions to position descriptions for established occupations with directly applicable standards in the general schedule and federal wage system. ▪ Analyzes and recommends classifications focusing on position management changes. ▪ Consults with leaders and managers to redesign/reorganize structured changes in the administration as necessary.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviews and advises management on major potential and projected organizational changes. ▪ Implements new positions to support changes in structure and ensure positions descriptions reflect these changes.

Process Design and Implementation	
<p>Designs and/or applies practices, processes, and procedures to support workforce planning efforts throughout VA. Develops and reengineers processes to improve workflow efficiency and effectiveness. Implements process improvements to enhance workforce planning outcomes.</p>	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explains the need for constant evolution of workforce planning processes and practices. ▪ Works within established workforce planning processes, identifying and communicating potential barriers to the process. ▪ Demonstrates awareness of established methods to measure both the success of workforce planning processes and process improvements and seeks guidance when using these methods.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contributes to the tracking and monitoring of organizational impacts of workforce planning process initiatives. ▪ Determines appropriate procedures and actions to resolve routine workforce planning process issues within established guidelines.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies analytical and problem-solving techniques to assess workforce planning processes. ▪ Establishes process improvement framework to measure the value and efficiency of the workforce planning process.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritizes responses to various challenges identified to improving workforce planning processes. ▪ Leads process analysis and evaluation when identifying resolutions to workforce planning process challenges. ▪ Supports the integration of workforce planning systems, operations, and processes with other VA-wide processes. ▪ Tracks and monitors the impact of workforce planning initiatives on other business planning processes.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leads the continuous workforce planning process improvement environment through use of valid analytical and problem-solving techniques, combined with critical thinking skills and analysis. ▪ Defines desired results of workforce planning process improvement for increased efficiency and effectiveness. ▪ Leads the integration of workforce planning systems, operations, and processes with other VA-wide human capital management and business planning processes. ▪ Communicates the overall organizational impact of workforce planning initiatives.

Project Management	
Knowledge of the principles, methods, or tools for developing, scheduling, coordinating, and managing projects and resources, including monitoring and inspecting costs, work, and contractor performance.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies project management concepts, components, and tools for conducting workforce planning projects. ▪ Participates in the creation of basic project task lists. ▪ Reports on project status. ▪ Describes the purpose and benefits of project management.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creates basic project and program task lists and determine schedules, milestones, and deliverables. ▪ Employs project management automated technology for planning, administration, and reporting. ▪ Recommends and documents workforce planning project changes and impacts. ▪ Identifies project-related issues and concerns; either resolves issues or elevates concerns as appropriate. ▪ Assesses and documents own organization’s workforce planning project needs.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies and chooses necessary project and workforce planning program resources. ▪ Clarifies roles, goals, and expectations of workforce planning project participants. ▪ Establishes and maintains team and workforce planning customer expectations. ▪ Coordinates the project with the appropriate key players. ▪ Changes plans as appropriate to adjust to new information.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manages multiple long-term, large workforce planning projects that have an impact across several work groups. ▪ Allocates and balances resources and budgets across several concurrent workforce planning projects. ▪ Evaluates workforce planning project success and status. ▪ Establishes and implements recommendations for improvements, adjustments, or workforce planning project termination. ▪ Supervises or mentors project managers and delegates project assignments appropriately.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops and presents workforce planning project status reports and briefings to executive audiences. ▪ Evaluates the activities of multiple workforce planning project managers to ensure success. ▪ Develops project management processes and standards. ▪ Defines how to conduct risk management activities for workforce planning projects.

Recruitment and Staffing	
Applying HR concepts, principles, and practices related to identifying, altering, and selecting individuals and placing them into positions to address changing organizational needs.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defines and describes basic stages of the federal recruiting and staffing life cycle. ▪ Defines basic recruitment, selection, and placement laws, regulations, and policy (e.g., qualifications standards). ▪ Uses recruitment and staffing information systems to answer routine inquiries (e.g., status of an individual's job application).
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gathers and reviews candidate files; assesses candidate applications with guidance or supervision. ▪ Communicates application status and basic organizational information to candidates. ▪ Provides routine administrative support to hiring managers throughout the recruitment and selection life cycle.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independently applies qualification standards and related guidelines to assess candidate applications. ▪ Develops rating factors used to identify the best qualified candidates. ▪ Uses incentive programs appropriately and obtains required approvals as part of program implementation. ▪ Recognizes new trends in recruiting and sourcing; makes recommendations to consider new strategies in order to enhance recruitment and selection initiatives. ▪ Advises hiring managers and applicants based on defined examining and recruitment procedures and processes.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides guidance to HR team, offering expertise in resolving complex or controversial recruitment, staffing, and placement actions and related issues. ▪ Identifies barriers to recruitment and staffing program effectiveness; recommends and designs methods to improve the quality of candidates. ▪ Establishes partnerships with other organizations (e.g., colleges/universities, technical communities, practitioner forums) to gain access to qualified applicant pools. ▪ Develops targeted recruitment strategies based on organizational needs (e.g., career management, affirmative staffing, upward mobility). ▪ Establishes metrics to measure recruitment and staffing effectiveness.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serves as a SME in the management and oversight of the recruitment and staffing program. ▪ Partners with organizational senior leaders to develop recruitment, staffing, and placement plans aligned to organizational needs and conditions (e.g., workforce planning, downsizing, reinvention). ▪ Evaluates the effectiveness of recruitment and staffing programs; adjusts strategies to meet organizational goals and objectives. ▪ Integrates recruitment strategies with other HR programs (e.g., classification, benefits).

Strategic Planning	
Aligns workforce planning goals and objectives in accordance with VA strategic priorities and operations plans. Defines strategic workforce planning guidance that integrates and aligns workforce requirements with work demands to inform management practice, investment recommendations, and human capital decision making.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is familiar with workforce and strategic planning processes and is a contributing member to both. ▪ Is familiar with VA's core mission and functions (core lines of business).
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates familiarity with strategies for leveraging workforce flexibility (e.g., different resources to identify workforce) and improving workforce efficiency within the context of VA's strategic goals. ▪ Collaborates with team members to complete workforce planning goals. ▪ Explains workforce planning evidence based practices and strategic planning issues and stays abreast of current research in respective disciplines. ▪ Finds information on VA mission, vision, values, and culture that impacts work unit or personal work and describes how this information relates to accomplishing work unit and personal goals and objectives.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates understanding of workforce management, strategy, workforce planning metrics, and the necessity for transparency between business planning functions. ▪ Proposes and develops workforce strategies to align with VA's strategic plan and future needs and identifies the appropriate skill mix and knowledge base needed for workforce success. ▪ Effectively informs and advises management of the VA-wide perspective of workforce planning analysis as it relates to VA's workforce strategic plans. ▪ Identifies costs, risks, and benefits associated with workforce planning strategies. ▪ Proposes and develops workforce planning accountability measures to assess progress and success of workforce planning strategies, systems, policies, programs, and practices.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Articulates to VA leaders and decision makers a vision for workforce planning and its potential opportunities and risks, and develops an effective strategy in line with the business needs with milestones to meet VA-wide strategic goals. ▪ Leads processes to identify critical issues and develop workforce planning strategies that integrate with strategic planning processes. ▪ Monitors direct reports' progress and success as they accomplish key goals and objectives and teaches others how to develop and implement workforce planning strategies.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creates strategy development approaches to align the organization, people, capital, and skill sets with VA's workforce strategy and agency strategic plans. ▪ Guides executive- and director-level staff through the integration of workforce planning and strategic planning processes that include human capital-focused strategy. ▪ Oversees implementation of strategic plans and the integration with workforce planning and human capital management strategies. ▪ Develops and communicates changes to strategic direction in order to accommodate workload and workforce realities. ▪ Directs staff on how to achieve workforce planning goals in alignment with the Secretary's VA-wide strategic plan.

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.	
Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defines organizational work/life policies and benefits (e.g., telework policy, employee assistance program). ▪ Updates HR databases with staff information and status related to work/life benefits.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responds to routine or basic inquiries regarding work/life benefits and policy. ▪ Describes how organizational work/life benefits are aligned with OPM and other federal policies. ▪ Drafts routine resources, informational materials, and guides on work/life integration based on current documents. ▪ Develops marketing materials for work/life integration, benefits, and policy, with guidance.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advises employees on various work/life options that meet their specific needs. ▪ Drafts and updates work/life integration policies and guidelines, in line with larger VA and HR organization policy. ▪ Develops and facilitates presentations to new or current employees on work/life integration programs and benefits. ▪ Provides recommendations on enhancing work/life integration initiatives and benefits based on public and private sector best practices.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advises leadership on implementing work/life programs to meet the needs of the diverse organizational workforce. ▪ Serves as a representative on work/life programs and initiatives during conferences, fairs, and other events. ▪ Analyzes problems and develops solutions to complex work/life integration issues (e.g., assessing management needs associated with an office closing) and presents alternative courses of action. ▪ Manages current programs as well as the implementation of new work/life integration programs or benefits. ▪ Provides guidance to team in responding to complex work/life integration inquiries related to eligibility, compliance with policy, etc.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops work/life policies and researches issues related to work and family/personal needs. ▪ Leads benchmarking and analysis activities to assess organizational readiness for various work/life programs or performance metrics of existing work/life programs. ▪ Prepares reports, recommendations, and/or best practices documents based on analysis of work/life integration data. ▪ Interprets new legislation on work/life issues and provides guidance to staff and managers for the purpose of program renegotiation. ▪ Leads the development and implementation of work/life integration programs policies or benefits to meet staff needs.

Workforce and 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.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compiles workforce data from internal and external sources.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participates in planning activities focused on workforce and succession planning initiatives. ▪ Identifies existing workforce and success planning initiatives. ▪ Participates in benchmarking and analysis activities to determine best practices and innovative strategies in workforce and succession planning. ▪ Creates briefings containing workforce data to demonstrate workforce trends.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducts workforce studies to identify critical competencies and the availability of these within the organization. ▪ Estimates attrition rates, based on workforce data, and determines impact to assist management with planning.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyzes impact of external job market on VA. ▪ Develops and recommends workforce or succession planning initiatives or changes to address competency and resource gaps. ▪ Develops innovative strategies to recruit and retain employees in critical occupations and leadership positions. ▪ Develops workforce and succession planning processes and templates to be implemented organization-wide.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluates effectiveness of existing workforce and succession planning efforts. ▪ Advises management on developing a multiyear strategic workforce plan. ▪ Identifies workforce and succession planning needs. ▪ Partners with management to develop end-to-end strategy. ▪ Identifies and implements legislation to address new workforce competency requirements.

Workforce Data Analysis

Identifies, systematically collects, and organizes information for use by self or others in the organization. Applies quantitative and qualitative data analysis tools, techniques, and technologies to analyze various types of workforce-related data. Identifies trends and makes logical interpretations, conclusions, and inferences from the data. Produces or synthesizes data analysis findings that are aligned to objectives and consistent with the target audience's expectations.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeks guidance when collecting workforce information from easily accessed sources; uses information from common sources to accomplish work assignments, with guidance as needed. ▪ Seeks guidance when developing workforce planning data collection plans. ▪ Draws logical conclusions, identifies important facts in the collection of data, and explains the benefits of effective workforce planning analysis. ▪ Describes the steps in the WFP analytical process.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gathers relevant workforce planning information systematically. ▪ Uses quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques to interpret data findings in the development of reports and distinguishes information that is not relevant. ▪ Performs analysis using established methods. ▪ Interfaces with other functional areas concerning workforce planning data collection requirements (e.g., human capital planning, strategic planning).
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collects and uses workforce planning information from multiple sources and collaborates across teams to produce analysis. ▪ Applies various innovative tools and techniques to satisfy strategic workforce planning data collection and forecasting requirements. ▪ Uses systematic procedures to collect and maintain information. ▪ Identifies trends and synthesizes workforce supply and workload demand information to create gap and risk analysis reports with recommendations. ▪ Explains workforce planning analytical process used to analyze data and draw conclusions and articulates any potential limitations.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluates the effectiveness of workforce planning data structures to determine how multiple data sources correlate and whether alternative sources, tools, techniques, or technologies should be used or developed by VA. ▪ Reviews workforce planning data analysis performed by others and provides constructive feedback. ▪ Communicates workforce planning data analysis findings to multiple stakeholder audiences that are familiar with the topic/subject. ▪ Uses forecasting reports and statistical methods to identify trends and recognize workforce optimization opportunities across large datasets (for example, can identify more complex trends or implications of data).
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops new workforce planning data collection strategies and identifies new sources to meet emerging data needs. ▪ Mentors others on workforce planning data analysis tools, techniques, and methodologies and guides the formulation of logical data interpretation. ▪ Formulates new analytical frameworks relying on operational research and mathematical methods. ▪ Conducts robust analysis that drives solutions based on workforce optimization analysis, ission, short- and long-term needs, and perspectives of all stakeholders.

Workforce Risk Assessment

Applies knowledge of the principles, methods, and tools used for workforce risk assessment and mitigation, including assessment of gaps and their consequences. Ability to evaluate workforce trends and to identify and prioritize areas of risk according to defined workforce variables and articulated needs.

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeks guidance in drawing logical conclusions and identifying important risks that show up in workforce planning data. ▪ Identifies and performs workforce risk assessment within established methods. ▪ Demonstrates critical thinking skills when analyzing or evaluating workforce data for risks. ▪ Breaks down risks into basic components.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applies established techniques with guidance to help assess the balance or imbalance between VA work requirements and the available workforce and associated risks. ▪ Contributes to the tracking and monitoring of workforce planning information to mitigate risks of work/workforce imbalance.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Works independently to interpret short-and long-term workforce trends and identify workload/workforce imbalances. ▪ Assists more senior workforce planning staff members in determining possible risk management solutions to workload/workforce imbalances.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advises management on areas of potential risk based on changes to mission priorities, budget realities, the customer base, regulatory changes, business processes, organizational structure, or technology that threaten the balance between workload and workforce supply. ▪ Prioritizes areas of risk based on assessing the misalignment between the workload and workforce. ▪ Aligns risk solutions to the strategic goals and mission established by the VA Secretary and helps communicate and manage workforce trade-offs.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops a framework and baseline for action planning to mitigate risks identified by workforce planning analysis. ▪ Provides leadership and management teams with consensus-building information on key workforce risk issues. ▪ Educates and mentors stakeholder groups on workforce risk assessment methodologies and tools in order to establish consistent practices across VA. ▪ Helps lead VA-wide workforce optimization efforts tailored to the need of the specific risks identified.

Workforce Technology/Tools

Understands and utilizes available systems, tools, and technologies to support workforce planning goals, objectives, and efforts. Leverages automation and technology tools to achieve economies and efficiencies of scale. Informs development of business and technical requirements for workforce planning-related tools..

Proficiency Level	Example Behaviors
Level 1 – Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operates within defined strategy for management and flow of workforce planning information. ▪ Demonstrates familiarity with appropriate automated systems used to retrieve workforce planning information. ▪ Complies with workforce planning system security requirements. ▪ Uses an automated system to retrieve workforce planning information. ▪ Assists employees with accessing online workforce planning systems.
Level 2 – Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participates in the evaluation of workforce planning software to determine effectiveness in meeting workforce planning needs. ▪ Oversees the implementation and ongoing usage of automated workforce planning systems. ▪ Specifies requirements for automated reports to retrieve workforce planning information requested by staff and confirms the integrity of the data. ▪ Identifies and applies appropriate technology solutions (e.g., SharePoint) to support learning and knowledge transfer.
Level 3 – Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participates in defining the strategy for the management and flow of workforce planning information based on customer need, infrastructure, and technology. ▪ Evaluates workforce planning software to determine effectiveness in meeting workforce planning needs. ▪ Updates organization's automated workforce planning forms and inputs based on new data collection requirements. ▪ Evaluates and recommends to management recent workforce planning technological innovations to modify systems.
Level 4 – Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluates workforce planning software to determine effectiveness in meeting workforce planning and VA-wide business planning needs. ▪ Defines a systems strategy for the management and flow of workforce planning information based on customer need, infrastructure, and technology. ▪ Implements a VA-wide system to secure workforce planning information flow and defines and communicates outcomes to stakeholders. ▪ Applies critical thinking and understanding of VA's technology and software development policies in resolving large or complex issues related to automated workforce planning systems.
Level 5 – Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Makes recommendations on new workforce planning software and enterprise architecture, as needed, to increase effectiveness in meeting Administration/Staff Office and VA-wide workforce planning needs. ▪ Designs, develops, and implements VA-wide system to secure workforce planning information flow and access and to define and communicate outcomes to stakeholders. ▪ Promotes, on a broad level, the meaning and purpose of workforce planning information and knowledge resources within VA. ▪ Develops long-range strategic plans to design flexible automated workforce planning forecasting systems that can accommodate changes.