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| **Professional Core Competencies** | |
| **Decision Making** | |
| **Definition** | Identifying and understanding problems and opportunities by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative information. Choosing the best course of action by establishing clear decision criteria, generating and evaluating alternatives, and making timely decisions. Taking action that is consistent with available facts and constraints, and optimizes probable consequences. |
| **Importance** | The ability to identify problems and make decisions in a fair, consistent, and defensible manner is critical in HR roles. As the pace, degree, and “unpredictability” of change escalates, sound, well-informed decisions that are made in a timely manner with the information available and with a commitment to action are essential for satisfactory job performance at every level of the organization. Establishing a reputation as a good decision-maker builds trust with customers, peers, and leadership. |
| **How do Washington State Human Resource Professionals Demonstrate This Competency?** | |
| **Key Elements** | **Distinguishing Behaviors** |
| **Identifies problems and opportunities.** | * Proactively looks for improvement opportunities * Uses the scientific problem-solving method * Includes those who are responsible for the work when determining the problem. * Focuses on the process (e.g., what in the process caused the problem.) * Asks the difficult questions to identify the root cause (uses the 5 Whys or other technique). * Recognizes problems and opportunities and determines whether action is needed. |
| **Gathers information.** | * Gathers all relevant information * Ensures information is provided to all involved in decision-making. * Collects and reviews all laws, rules, CBA and agency polices relevant to the issue. * Analyzes risk * Distinguishes symptoms from root causes and relevant from irrelevant information * Interprets and integrates information from a variety of sources to detect trends, associations, and cause-effect relationships. * Judges when sufficient information has been gathered for decision-making – avoids “analysis paralysis” |
| **Considers others’ perspectives.** | * Considers others’ perspectives and uses appropriate internal and external resources in gathering information * Involves others (process operators, customers, etc.) throughout the decision-making process to obtain better information, generate alternatives, and ensure buy-in to the resulting decisions; builds consensus when appropriate. * Use Scientific problem-solving method to ensure the problem is understood and perspectives of others are used in developing solutions. * Closes the loop with those who have offered input, especially those who, when viewing the adopted solution, may perceive that their input was ignored or not valued. |
| **Generates alternatives.** | * Suggests or identifies options relevant options for addressing problems and opportunities. * Helps provide HR alternatives to organizational problems. * Looks to HR literature and other resources for alternatives to HR problems. * Identify risks (or threats) to options and identify potential strategies to mitigate risks/threats. * Probes for additional options to expand solution thinking. * Ensures alternatives meet customer business needs rather than focusing solely on legalistic HR processes. |
| **Evaluates alternatives and risks.** | * Helps customer evaluate impact of specific options against customers’ programmatic needs * Ensures resources are available or accessible to implement alternatives * Reviews laws, rules and policies to ensure potential solutions can be implemented * Anticipates consequences of specific options available * Assesses options against clear decision criteria while considering implications and consequences |
| **Chooses an effective option.** | * Works with all appropriate parties to choose an option that best addresses the problem * Tests the potential solution (fail fast, fail cheap) |
| **Commits to action.** | * Ensures all elements of solution are implemented and exercises personal responsibility for all elements in wheelhouse * Implements decisions or initiates action with appropriate urgency * Ensures all parties are aware of the elements for which they are responsible and that others are aware of personal progress towards achieving the planned end result * Regroups if necessary to address any unsolved pieces of the problem and ensure no new problems arise resulting from the implementation. * Follows up with all to ensures the implemented solution resolves the problem |
| **Personal Growth Activities** may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, developmental assignments, shadowing, experiential learning, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. Remember that many developmental activities can and will occur outside of work as part of your personal life.  **Specific EXAMPLES of developmental opportunities for this competency include:** | |
| **EXAMPLES of Developmental Activities**   * Engage in an action learning project that focuses on solving multiple problems within a constrained time period. This will serve to foster decision-making under time pressure, and enhance comfort with decision-making in situations where information is limited and a comprehensive evaluation of the problem scenario is not feasible. These projects can be paired with coaching and job assignments to reinforce learning gains. * Study other decision makers such as Bill Gates and Winston Churchill. Pay attention to how they made decisions in their life and careers. * Seek out leadership roles in community organizations (i.e., city council member, association board member, coach, referee, etc.). * Volunteer for an assignment outside of your professional expertise (outside your comfort zone). * Ask others for feedback using a 360-degree assessment tool or obtain feedback informally from individuals you trust. | |
| **EXAMPLES of Training**  DES Course Offerings:   * Emotional Intelligence (1 Day) 01-03-EC24 * Problem Solving the Washington Way (1/2 Day) - 01-14-GE25 * Managing Change & Making Great Decisions (3 Days) - 01-09-M577 * Myers-Briggs Assessment (1/2 Day) - 01-09-M601 * Solving Issues and Making Decisions (1/2 Day) - 01-09-M593   UW Executive Seminar Courses:   * Leadership that Shapes the Future * Effective Decision-Making through Collaboration | |
| **Recruiting** for candidates who have this competency may include, but is not limited to, providing clear statements about qualifications desired or required in the recruitment announcement, performing specific outreach activities to organizations or groups whose members often possess the desired competency, developing interview questions that assess the candidates competence, and asking reference questions that assess the candidates competence.  **Specific EXAMPLES of recruiting activities for this competency include:** | |
| **Example of qualification statement:** A highly qualified candidate will demonstrate the ability to identify and understand problems and opportunities by successfully gathering, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative information for use in making decisions. Makes timely decisions, choosing the best course of action after considering input of all relevant stakeholders.  **Example of outreach activity:** Source the job announcement to the SHRM journal/online career center, or contact known individuals with this skillset asking for names of potential candidates who demonstrate this competency.  **Examples of interview questions:**   1. Tell us about a time where, after consultation from you, a customer planned to take an action that you had advised against, and which you believe will create significant risk to the agency? 2. Describe the process you personally use for making a decision when presented with a problem. 3. Describe how you balance timeliness, thoroughness, and responsiveness in your approach to making a decision. 4. Describe a time when you made a decision aligned with department or organizational policies when it wasn’t aligned with your personal preferences. What did you do? What was the result? 5. Tell me about a specific situation at work where you incorporated others’ ideas into a major decision, even when they conflicted with yours. From your perspective, did incorporating those ideas make for a better or worse outcome? Why?   **Examples of reference check questions:**   1. Does this person make timely decisions that incorporate the opinions of others? Is this person able to made decisions that fit within your policies or rules? 2. Did this person’s decisions tend to contribute to your organizational success, or cause problems? Can you give me an example or two? 3. Can you give me an example of how this person approached decision making while working in your organization? How do others react to this persons approach, and to the actual decisions made by this person? 4. Did you ever have to override or change a decision made by this person. If so, how did this person react? | |

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| **Identifying Required Proficiency Levels**  While behavioral indicators are used to help in evaluating performance, proficiency levels describe the level of a competency required to perform a specific job successfully. These levels relate to the work required for **a specific job**. Different jobs require different levels of proficiency for successful performance. Not all jobs will require the highest level of proficiency and some may not require specific competencies at all. The proficiency levels outlined below apply to all of the HR Core Competencies. | |
| **Proficiency Level** | **Proficiency Description** |
| **Entry** | * Limited or no use of competency required for the job * Competency has been minimally demonstrated * May have had limited opportunity to apply the competency * May have limited understanding of the competency |
| **Developing** | * Basic understanding or knowledge required for the job * Basic understanding and knowledge sufficient enough to handle routing tasks * Requires some guidance or supervision when applying the competency * Understands and can discuss terminology and concepts related to the competency |
| **Independent** | * Detailed knowledge, understanding and application of the competency required to be successful in the job * Ability to handle non-routine problems and situations * Requires minimal guidance or supervision/works independently * Consistently demonstrates success in the competency * Capable of assisting others in the application of the competency |
| **Advanced** | * Highly developed knowledge, understanding, and application of the competency required to be successful in the job and organization (total mastery) * Can apply knowledge outside the scope of one’s position * Is able to coach or teach others on the competency * Has a long-term perspective * Helps develop materials and resources in the competency |
| **Expert** | * Specialist/Authority level knowledge, understanding, and application of the competency required to be successful in the job * Recognized by others as an expert in the competency and is sought out by others throughout the organization (expert in the area) * Works across team, department, and organizational functions * Applies skills across multiple projects or functions * Able to explain issues in relation to broader organizational issues * Creates new applications or processes * Has a strategic focus |