



PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

FOR HIRING, DEVELOPING,
AND MANAGING

GREAT LEADERS

USING A MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY ADOPTED
BY
THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

“COMMITMENT AND RESULTS
THROUGH LEADERSHIP”

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The guidelines contained in this document reflect the intent of the City and County of Denver to ensure that all persons in supervisory and management positions are not only technically competent in their respective occupational areas but are also good managers of people. As an employer the City believes that certain “leadership” behaviors on the part of managers results in superior customer service, productivity, cost effectiveness, safety, and the retention of good employees. In order to continuously achieve a higher level of collective leadership ability, the City has created new ways to further develop its current management group, as well as additional criteria to use when selecting people for supervisory and management positions.

This document explains the City’s philosophy, defines the qualities of good leadership, and offers specific actions to take to ensure accountability when managers are hiring, on-boarding, training/developing, and managing the performance of other supervisors and managers. It is intended for regular use by all managers at all levels, as well as by HR Professionals when providing services to their client managers.

HOW THE CITY'S MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY WAS DEVELOPED

In 2010, Mayor John Hickenlooper, his Cabinet, and the Career Service Board agreed that the City needed a more consistent way to select, manage, develop, and retain high-quality leadership to meet the growing demands for effectiveness and efficiency in City government.

A core group of appointees and career managers participated in several forums to develop the values, beliefs, and resulting behavioral expectations to create a more consistent, effective management practice across the City. The involvement of these contributors and subsequent approval of these guidelines has created the groundwork for a progressive leadership culture and the City is grateful for their service.

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Key input was also given by the HR Professional staff of the Career Service Authority.

COMMITMENT AND RESULTS THROUGH LEADERSHIP

THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

Organizational Beliefs Regarding the Management of Employees

The City & County of Denver (the City) exists to provide municipal services to the citizens of Denver and to provide a safe and aesthetically pleasing community.

To accomplish that purpose, the City employs approximately 13,000 people in many types of jobs and occupational groups. Its official leadership includes supervisors and managers who are responsible for the work of its employees.

The City believes that:

- It is in the City's best interests to help its employees perform successfully and to retain those employees who perform well.
- Its employees will perform more successfully in their positions and nurture a longer-lasting relationship with the City if they receive high quality leadership.
- The type of leadership provided by supervisors and managers highly influences the quality of work that employees produce, the satisfaction they achieve from being City employees, their level of engagement, and therefore their decision to stay and grow with the City as their employer.

Why We Need Managers To Also Be Leaders

Management – the “What”: The City identifies “managers” as those people who have specific responsibilities and outcomes assigned to them, and who derive their authority from the position description. In employment matters, supervisors, managers, and directors are usually considered legal representatives of the organization and are expected to perform in its best interests.

Leadership – the “How”: The City identifies “leadership” as behavior that earns trust, loyalty, and respect and positively influences employee commitment to the organization. Leadership in the City typically comes from people in management level positions. The section below describes the expectations that the City has of every supervisor and manager to provide good leadership in order to ensure that employees are successful and satisfied, and subsequently that citizens feel that City services are worthy of their tax dollars. These expectations are based on the following principles:

- Good leadership positively influences the **commitment** of employees to perform well and/or to correct/improve their performance
- Good leadership positively influences the **ability** of employees to understand and meet clear expectations
- Good leadership positively influences the **willingness** of good employees to stay with the organization

Benefits of a Universal Management Practice to the City

Based on observations of best practices in the City as well as what is documented in management literature, practicing good leadership principles is known to:

- Improve performance management practices to avoid:
 - Monetary loss from legal settlements
 - Loss of productivity
 - Unnecessary delays and escalations of human resource issues
 - Decreases in employee and public safety (and subsequently increased risk management costs)
 - Reduced employee cooperation
 - Expensive, undesirable turnover
 - Low morale
 - Impaired response to progressive change
- Increase consistency of good management policies and practices throughout the City
- Meet the higher employment law standards expected of public sector employers

The Constants of Public Sector Management

Public sector organizational cultures present unique challenges to the practice of management. Because the mandates and agendas of elected officials and their appointees change with every election cycle, career employees who transcend multiple administrations must manage ever-changing goals with a sense of continuity. Additionally, public sector organizations and employees are under heightened scrutiny within their communities and in the media. For these reasons, performance objectives for managers need to be anchored to a set of public sector constants that will be relevant no matter how the specific goals of any particular administration may vary.

The following five constants are not just “behind the scenes realities” that only a few need to know. The extent to which employees across all organizational levels understand these foundational concepts affects the degree to which the organization is successful in its mission.

1. The City’s mission has always been, and will always be about serving its citizens.

Some employees serve citizens more directly than others. Many employees support “internal customers” which ultimately benefits citizens. When any employee begins to think that the City’s mission is only to employ people, we all can lose focus of who we really serve. When too many employees think this way, it reflects badly on the City through the eyes of its primary constituents (citizens). And when our constituents view City employees as self-serving, we can lose the public’s trust, making it more difficult to accomplish our work on the citizens’ behalf.

2. We will always work in a climate of continuous change.

Elected officials will change, the needs of the community will change, technology will change, and priorities will change. The way we serve the public must evolve to meet these ongoing changes. The employee population will always need to know how to initiate change, accept change, manage change, and respond to change in a positive, productive way. Principles of change management must be considered and embedded in all new initiatives.

3. The City will always be affected by economic conditions.

An unhealthy economy adversely affects the resources that the City has available to provide the community with necessary and desirable services. An engaged workforce will always need to understand the basics of how our work relates to those economic realities. This is especially true because much of the City's work has its own impact on the economy (which is often subtle). Employees are often unaware of how important an efficient and effective municipality is to the fabric of the community, in a multitude of ways.

4. The organization will always be working with limited resources.

Because City services are primarily paid for with taxpayer revenue, and because revenue sources experience significant fluctuations, the employee population must continuously identify cost-saving measures, revenue-generating opportunities, and ways to improve operational efficiencies. Additionally, it is important that employees at all levels understand how compensation plans are developed and that recognition for good work cannot be limited only to monetary rewards.

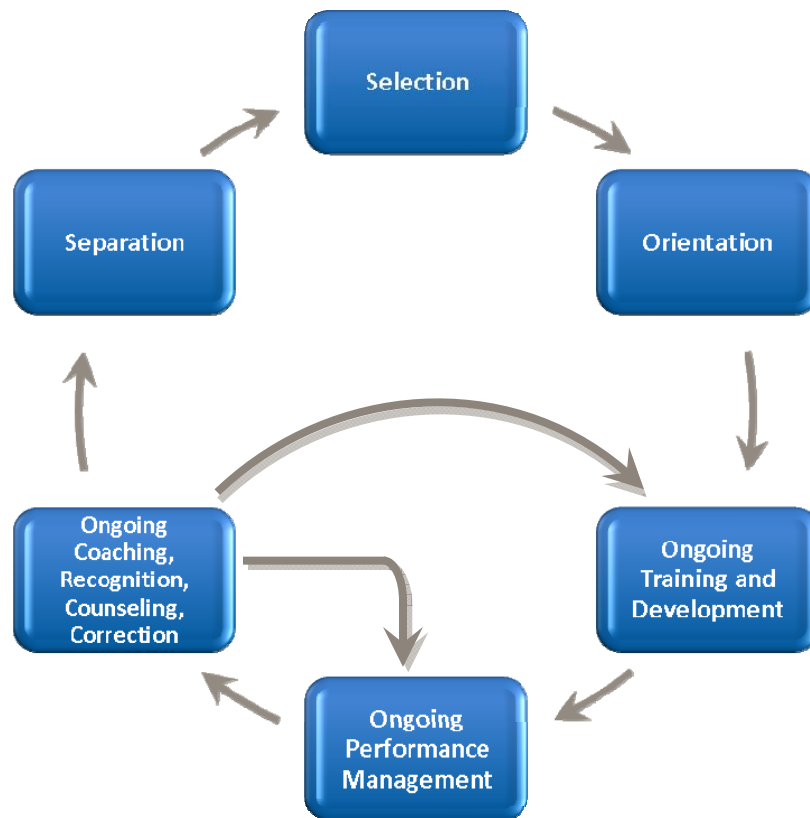
5. There will always be an employee population, it will always be diverse and evolving, and it will always need to continually learn new things.

The perspectives of elected, appointed, and career employees are often unique and distinct. Given this reality, it is especially important to emphasize inclusion and collaboration, interpersonal skills, customer service, public stewardship, team development, performance management, and transparency. The trust that develops from thorough, candid organizational communication shapes employee levels of commitment to the organization. Learning about these public sector constants is itself an ongoing need.

These five constants are interdependent; the status of any one of them also affects the others. When employees possess a greater understanding of these facts, they in turn gain a deeper sense of purpose. By using these constants as a guide, all desired learning objectives for any training effort can be aligned with the organization's larger purpose, and necessary behavioral changes can be made more actionable.

THE EMPLOYEE CYCLE AND LEADERSHIP

The phases of employment at any level in an organization (both management and non-management) can be illustrated in terms of a cycle.



Each phase offers unique opportunities for how managers, can apply **leadership** principles to attain the **commitment** of their employees and thereby best achieve the **City's goals**. Each phase also identifies opportunities for the City to select, train, develop, and evaluate employees in management positions.

The Qualities of Leadership

The many abilities the City seeks in order to find, develop, and retain effective leaders can be categorized into five distinct “Qualities of Leadership” that go beyond the necessary technical expertise and experience required for any particular position. Each of these points to numerous behavioral indicators and are interrelated. Our leaders must be aware and accountable for the following:

- **Self Awareness**– Qualities related to a person’s ability and willingness to self-evaluate and self-direct. Combined with skills in interacting with others, this includes the development of Emotional Intelligence (awareness of self and others.) Leaders must also continually aspire to be persons of high integrity.
- **Strategic Orientation** – Qualities related to a person’s ability to think logically, define and address problems, and focus on outcomes. This includes visionary and systems thinking.
- **Staff Engagement** – Qualities related to a person’s ability and willingness to generate and earn commitment from staff to accomplish business outcomes. This requires advocacy for employee (and therefore organizational) success, and also a willingness to hold all reports accountable. It includes a commitment to inclusion, and the appropriate use of authority.
- **Service to City and Citizens** – Qualities related to a person’s understanding of and belief in management responsibilities to the organization, including its ethical and legal responsibilities to its constituents and its employees. These qualities include an awareness of and sensitivity to the organization’s diverse constituencies and work cultures, a belief in public service and stewardship, and a commitment to the best interests of the organization, its employees, and its future.
- **Interactions with Others** – Qualities related to a person’s ability and willingness to interact with clients, peers, staff, higher organizational levels, and all others to develop trust, manage conflict, confront issues, and support mutual purpose.

These qualities can also be represented as functions of accountability as illustrated on the following page:

THE QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

How we expect managers to achieve outcomes
beyond technical skill



These five qualities add another dimension to all stages in the *Employee Cycle* as depicted on page 6: Selection, orientation, ongoing performance management and development. The following two sections explore qualities further, providing guidelines (beyond the required and technical qualifications) for: Selecting and on-boarding supervisors and managers; and managing, recognizing and developing performance of supervisors and managers. This document incorporates the leadership values expressed above, plus actionable procedures and indicators of progress to embed this Citywide Management Philosophy into the City's culture.

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APPROVED GUIDELINES
FOR
SELECTION AND
ON-BOARDING

Selecting Great Leaders

Besides the necessary technical or subject matter expertise required to perform in a particular position as a supervisor or manager, additional qualities are required for a candidate to fulfill the expectations of leadership in the City and County of Denver. The focus is to find and develop these additional abilities that lead to enhanced employee commitment, ability, and willingness. Therefore, those abilities must be assessed during the selection process when reviewing applications, testing, and interviewing using the Qualities of Leadership as criteria (defined on page 7):

- **Self Awareness**
- **Strategic Orientation**
- **Staff Engagement**
- **Service to City and Citizens**
- **Interactions with Others**

The Career Service Authority Recruiting and HR Services divisions stand ready to assist in screening applicants. But determining indicators will likely only appear in an effective interviewing process led by the hiring manager. Here are some sample interview questions that can be asked of any candidate being considered for a leadership position. These examples cover all five of the Qualities of Leadership:

- Describe a situation when you were under public political scrutiny and you had to defend the organization's position. How did you handle the political fallout? What preventive measures did you take? What did you do to heal any "wounds"?
- What innovative strategies or systems have you designed or implemented? Describe the strategy or system involved, the type of innovation, your role, and the outcome. What is the status now?
- Describe a time when you were frustrated and discouraged because of unsatisfactory progress toward goal accomplishment. How did you assess your own role in the situation, what did you do to correct it, and what was the outcome?
- Describe a time when you had to deal with two or more employees who were not working well together. What did you do to resolve the situation and what was the long term outcome?
- Give an example of a project or situation that required you to deal with a diverse group of people and establish cooperative relationships to accomplish a specific goal. Describe the people involved, the desired objective, what you did, and the outcome.
- You are charged with communicating a decision that will be in the best interests of the organization and its customers, but will be unpopular among employees and perhaps detrimental to some. Describe how you would handle this task.

- Describe your thought process from a time when you had to find a logical outcome in an emotionally charged situation.
- How do you distinguish leadership from management?

There are many other possible questions that can be tailored to individual situations. The main point is to assess each candidate's abilities related to the Qualities of Leadership, then consider those qualities along with subject matter/technical expertise when making a selection.

Indicators of success

- The extent to which these or similar questions are universally used in the selection process of supervisors and managers
- The extent to which the collective profile of the City's management changes over time as indicated by:
 - Recruiter observations
 - Post leadership assessments related to recruitment testing
 - Subsequent analysis of the Denver Employee Survey data
 - Subsequent analysis of select Hearings Office cases

On-boarding and Probation

Our ability to discover what we need to know about a candidate prior to a job offer is necessarily limited by time. The probationary period is designed to be the "last step in the selection process" and must be carefully planned to provide ample opportunity to assess the selected candidate's subject matter/technical expertise as well as their proficiency regarding the Qualities of Leadership. This includes closely observing the leader's work, assisting the leader in adjusting to the duties and responsibilities of the position, and to separate (or return from promotional probation or demote) a leader whose performance does not meet required standards. Here are the key steps involved **during probation** to help ensure that a selected candidate meets the City's leadership standards:

- Create a PEP (Performance Enhancement Plan) that includes behavioral outcomes related to the Qualities of Leadership. Identify which STARS values are related to each outcome. (See the following section on establishing expectations.)
- Introduce the PEP and the Qualities of Leadership to the new supervisor or manager to ensure a mutual understanding of the City's leadership standards.
- Have regular, on-going discussions about expectations throughout the probationary period to confirm the behaviors that are being demonstrated and address those that are not, so that they can be corrected; document both the behaviors that are successful as well as the behaviors that need improvement.
- Model your commitment to the Qualities of Leadership by practicing them as you manage the new supervisor or manager.

- Ensure that you facilitate the development of key relationships that the new supervisor or manager will need in order to succeed.
- As the end of probation nears, determine if this supervisor or manager has sufficiently demonstrated leadership behaviors that will positively influence employee commitment, ability, and willingness to support the goals of the organization, *beyond the technical or subject matter expertise s/he may contribute*. Consider both the tangible and intangible costs to the organization if the supervisor or manager cannot perform as the leader the organization needs.
- If the supervisor or manager has not sufficiently demonstrated mastery of the Qualities of Leadership, work with senior management and CSA to create a plan that could either lead to success if probation is extended, a more suitable position, or termination.

Indicators of success:

- The extent to which these or similar steps are universally used in the on-boarding process for supervisors and managers
- The extent to which the collective profile of the City's management changes over time as indicated by:
 - Manager observations of performance related to quality of on-boarding
 - Analysis of probation period data
 - Citywide leadership assessments
 - Analysis of the Denver Employee Survey data
 - Analysis of select Hearings Office cases

APPROVED GUIDELINES
FOR
PERFORMANCE
MANAGEMENT,
RECOGNITION, AND
DEVELOPMENT

Performance Management and Recognition

Once a new supervisor or manager has successfully passed probation, his/her leadership performance must be continually monitored, recognized, and aligned with the Qualities of Leadership (as defined on page 7):

- **Self Awareness**
- **Strategic Orientation**
- **Staff Engagement**
- **Service to City and Citizens**
- **Interactions with Others**

Below are examples of leadership behaviors that can be included in a PEP to achieve desired outcomes. These behaviors can be observed, documented, acknowledged, and in most cases, further developed, depending on individual abilities. They need to be tied to the City's values of Service, Teamwork, Accountability and ethics, Respect for self and others, and Safety (STARS). In order to successfully carry out the leadership aspects of their responsibilities, all supervisors and managers are expected to (referenced Qualities of Leadership in parentheses):

- a. Continually demonstrate an understanding that they are legal representatives of the City regardless of their identity as employees (Service to City/Citizens and Strategic Orientation)
- b. Continually demonstrate their understanding that the organization's successes are directly related to the performance and behavior of its employees (Service to City/Citizens and Staff Engagement)
- c. Continually demonstrate leadership behavior that advocates for the success of employees and a willingness to hold them accountable to meet clearly communicated expectations (Interactions with Others and Staff Engagement)
- d. Continually demonstrate leadership behavior that encourages the commitment and cooperation of employees prior to mandating their compliance (Interactions with Others, Service to City/Citizens, Staff Engagement)
- e. Develop and demonstrate forms of employee recognition beyond what is possible through compensation (Interactions with Others, Service to City/Citizens, Strategic Orientation, and Staff Engagement)
- f. Model the behaviors expected from employees (Self Awareness)
- g. Strive to maintain healthy dialogue with each employee that includes respectful listening and that honors the mutual humanness of the adult-adult relationship (Interactions with Others and Staff Engagement)
- h. Communicate with staff to ensure an on-going, collective understanding of priorities, changes, and expectations that affect employees' ability to perform and behave successfully (Interactions with Others, Service to City/Citizens, Strategic Orientation, and Staff Engagement)
- i. Achieve the metrics (mention specifically) necessary to achieve desired strategic outcomes through effective leadership (Strategic Orientation)
- j. Maintain on-going, face-to-face interactions with employees to acknowledge good outcomes/efforts and discuss poor outcomes/concerns (Interactions with Others, Service to City/Citizens, Strategic Orientation, and Staff Engagement)

- k. Maintain on-going notes of employee behavior that capture examples of good outcomes/efforts, poor outcomes/concerns, and all relevant discussions (Service to City/Citizens, Strategic Orientation, and Staff Engagement)
- l. Create and maintain accurate performance expectation documents (Service to City/Citizens, Strategic Orientation, and Staff Engagement)
- m. Conduct on-time performance evaluations (Service to City/Citizens, Strategic Orientation, and Staff Engagement)
- n. Explore developmental opportunities to encourage employee growth, achievement, and any necessary remediation (Service to City/Citizens, Strategic Orientation, and Staff Engagement)
- o. Pursue self-development in leadership practice to remain informed of current trends/issues and nurture mastery of skill (Self Awareness)

Managers of other supervisors and managers must model these expectations themselves and be evaluated accordingly in their own PEP plans.

Development

Managers must focus on ongoing professional development of those supervisors and managers that they manage via:

- Individual Development Plans
- Classroom learning opportunities
- On-line learning opportunities
- Continuing education through professional organizations

CSA supports such efforts with guidelines for continuing education, external resources, and in-house curricula that support the Guiding Principles for Great Leaders.

Indicators of success:

- The extent to which these or similar expectations are universally used in evaluating the performance of supervisors and managers
- The extent to which the collective profile of the City's management changes over time as indicated by:
 - PEP/R scores related to leadership expectations
 - Work unit outcomes that can reasonably be related to high quality leadership (and therefore the commitment, ability, and willingness of employees)
 - Subsequent Citywide leadership assessments
 - Analysis of the Denver Employee Survey data
 - Analysis of select Hearings Office cases
- The extent to which supervisors and managers actively participate in management development opportunities

Further assistance in selecting, on-boarding, managing, and developing supervisors and managers is available from Career Service Authority.



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