



# **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

February 13, 2008

## LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

I consider succession planning to be the most important duty I have as the Director of the NOAA Corps. As I look toward the future, I see the importance of preparing the next generation of NOAA Corps officers for leadership roles and challenges. I believe that levels of leadership maturity should parallel the evolving responsibilities officers are given throughout their careers.

Similarly, the most developed and trained leaders in the organization will fail if the environment does not foster this idea of leadership maturity. I do not want the NOAA Corps leadership development process established on a weak foundation. When the pressure is on and exceptional leadership is required, a weak foundation will crumble. Therefore, it is my responsibility to set forth a framework that provides opportunity for individual maturity and one that equips officers with the opportunities necessary to produce the results expected of them.

The NOAA Corps Leadership Development Framework sets forth a standard by which NOAA Corps officers can meet the same core qualifications as NOAA's Senior Executive Service (SES). Beginning with our Core Values as the foundation, thirty leadership competencies are established under this framework. The competencies were based on the SES core qualifications but arranged in levels of maturity so they can be developed from ensign to flag ranks.

I challenge each of you to plan for your future leadership development and encourage each of you to put together an Individual Development Plan (IDP) in order to meet these competencies. I encourage you to seek out the difficult assignments and duties in your career, be prepared to "get outside your comfort zone," and have high expectations for future assignments. In my experience, the more challenging assignments best prepared me to lead the NOAA Corps.

I expect you, the next generation of NOAA Corps officers, to meet this new standard of competency and set the bar higher for future generations of officers who move through the organization. My hope is that this new system of maturing leaders will establish a standard all will strive to achieve. I challenge each one of you to set your course for success and to develop the competencies throughout your career to ensure the NOAA Corps continues to lead into the future.

  
RADM Jonathan W. Bailey, NOAA  
Director, NOAA Corps



## CORE VALUES

Personal and organizational values are two critical factors that greatly influence leadership. To align these two set of values, the NOAA Corps developed an official set of Core Values that forms the basis for Corps officers to build trust and confidence in both the organization and each other.

***Honor*** - Abide by an uncompromising code of integrity. We will conduct ourselves in the highest ethical manner in all relationships. We will take responsibility for our actions and be accountable for our professional and personal behavior. We will do what is right at all times.

***Respect*** – Commit to treat each individual with human dignity. We value inclusiveness and tolerance, respecting diversity of expression while maintaining unity of purpose. We cultivate an environment where all can excel.

***Commitment*** - Commit and dedicate ourselves to the nation and NOAA. We will serve our nation effectively and efficiently with knowledge, skill, loyalty, and perseverance. We will be mindful of the resources entrusted to us and will ensure they are used in an honest, careful, and efficient way.

Core Values are more than just NOAA Corps rules of behavior. They communicate what the NOAA Corps stands for every minute of every day. Because NOAA Corps officers represent NOAA to the public, they embrace these values in their professional undertakings as well as in their personal lives.

Core Values provide a strong foundation for building leadership and professional competencies.



## LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Leadership competencies are the core knowledge, skills and expertise NOAA's leaders must have to meet their mission responsibilities. NOAA's civilian leaders (the top one percent of NOAA's civilian employees) are classified as Senior Executive Service (SES). The core qualifications (competencies) for the SES corps throughout the federal government are determined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM, <http://www.opm.gov/ses/>). Admirals are equivalent in grade to SES and are expected to meet these core competencies.

The NOAA Corps Leadership Competencies are based on OPM's SES core competencies; however, the competencies have been organized into levels of maturity similar to the U.S. Coast Guard's competency model. The four ascending levels of maturity are as follows: Leading Self, Leading Others, Leading Performance & Change, and Leading Organizations. Within each level of maturity are several interdependent competencies for effective leadership. The higher levels of leadership maturity are built on the bases of the lower or more fundamental competencies. When an officer meets all the NOAA Corps Leadership Competencies, they will have met the core competencies required of the SES corps. To this end, the NOAA Corps has developed thirty leadership competencies, which are shown on the next few pages and summarized in Figure 1.



## Leading Self

***Core Values & Conduct*** - NOAA Corps leaders understand the relevance of their Core Values of Honor, Respect and Commitment. They can communicate their meaning; hold peers and subordinates accountable to these organizational merits; and use them to guide performance, conduct and decisions—every day. Leaders show consistency in their words and actions.

***Health & Well Being*** - Leaders consider the environment in which they and their people work, attending to safety and well-being. They effectively identify and manage stress. They set a personal health example with emphasis on a program of physical fitness and emotional well being.

***Responsibility*** - NOAA Corps officers are accountable to effectively organize and prioritize tasks, and efficiently use resources. They work within the chain of command and comply with established regulations and guidelines.

***Followership*** - NOAA Corps officers are followers. Followers look to leaders for guidance and feedback, expecting challenging tasks to both learn and exercise competencies. They have the responsibility to work with leaders towards mission accomplishment.

***Adaptability*** - Leaders are open to change. They adapt their behavior and work methods in response to new information or unexpected obstacles. They remain optimistic and persistent, even under adversity, and recover quickly from setbacks.

***Interpersonal Skills*** - Leaders treat others with courtesy, sensitivity, and respect. They consider and respond appropriately to the needs and feelings of different people in different situations.

***Continuous Learning*** - Leaders understand professional development is a life-long journey and constantly work to improve knowledge, skills and expertise. They seek opportunities for self-learning and development, including asking for candid feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Leaders seek out mentors for themselves.

***Technical Proficiency*** - Leaders understand and appropriately apply principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies related to their expertise. They keep current on technological advances in their professional areas.



## **Leading Others**

***Listening*** - Leaders are active listeners, asking questions to clarify information. They are receptive to the messages conveyed through body language and tone of voice. Leaders respect speakers by being patient and nonjudgmental.

***Speaking*** - Leaders express facts and ideas succinctly and logically and facilitate an open exchange of ideas. They welcome robust dialogue, field questions, confidently communicate with the media and other external entities, and distinguish between personal communication situations and those as a NOAA representative.

***Writing*** - Leaders write in a clear, concise, organized, and convincing manner for the intended audience. They realize their writing represents themselves and the organization.

***Team Building*** - Leaders inspire, guide and create an environment that motivates others toward accomplishment of group goals. They recognize and contribute to group processes; encourage and facilitate cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; and build commitment, team spirit, and strong relationships.

***Leveraging Diversity*** - Leaders create an environment that supports diverse perspectives, approaches and thinking, fairness, dignity, compassion and creativity. They demonstrate sensitivity to cultural diversity, race, gender, background, experience, and other individual differences in the workplace. Leaders guide and persuade others to see the value of diversity, building and maintaining a healthy working environment.

***Influencing Others*** - Leaders possess the ability to persuade and motivate others to achieve a desired outcome. They persuade by communicating, directing, coaching, and delegating, as the situation requires. Successful leaders understand the importance and relevance of professional relationships; develop networks; gain cooperation and commitment from others; build consensus; empower others by sharing power and responsibility; and establish and maintain rapport with key players.

***Developing Others*** - Leaders advise and develop others in the competencies needed to accomplish current and future goals. They provide objective feedback about leadership and career development, and help identify professional potential, strengths and areas for improvement. They ensure fair, equitable treatment; project high expectations for subordinates and/or their teams; express confidence in abilities; and recognize efforts.



## Leading Performance & Change

**Execution** - Leaders get things done. They demonstrate the ability to plan, organize, and prioritize realistic tasks and responsibilities for themselves and their people. They use goals, milestones, and control mechanisms for projects. Leaders monitor and evaluate progress and outcomes produced by current processes; ensure continuous improvement through periodic assessment; and are committed to improving products, services, and overall customer satisfaction.

**Decisiveness** - Leaders make well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences. They involve others in decisions that affect them, generate promising solutions, and consistently render judgments with lasting, positive impact.

**Problem Solving** - Leaders identify and analyze problems; use facts, input from others, and sound reasoning to reach conclusions; explore various alternative solutions; distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information; and make recommendations or commit to actions.

**Conflict Management** - Leaders encourage creative tension and differences of opinions. They anticipate and take steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations. Leaders manage and resolve conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner.

**Customer Focus** - Leaders know who their customers are, and make every possible effort to find out their customers' needs. Leaders understand the importance of measuring and monitoring the degree to which their customers' needs are met or exceeded, and continually strive to improve. Leaders understand the distinction between "customer" and "boss" and act accordingly to balance competing demands.

**Entrepreneurship** - Leaders seek and identify opportunities to develop and market new products and services within or outside of NOAA. Leaders take reasonable risks, and learn from the inevitable mistakes that accompany prudent risk-taking—and they apply this same thinking to those who work for them.

**Vision** - Leaders see a preferred future for their units and functions, setting this picture in the context of NOAA's overall vision, missions, strategy and driving forces. They establish and communicate organizational objectives; promote wide ownership; initiate action; and provide structure and systems to achieve long-term goals.

**Creativity & Innovation** - Leaders develop new insights into situations and apply innovative solutions to make unit and functional improvements. They question conventional approaches and encourage new ideas.



## Leading Organizations

***Human Capital Management*** - Leaders understand and support the civilian and uniformed service staffing systems, and assess current and future staffing needs based on organizational goals and budget realities. They ensure employees are appropriately recruited, selected, developed, assigned, evaluated, and rewarded. They take corrective action when needed. Leaders serve as mentors.

***Financial Management*** - Leaders must demonstrate broad understanding of the principles of financial management and marketing expertise necessary to ensure appropriate funding levels for their areas of responsibility. They prepare, justify, and/or administer the budget for the unit or program; use cost-benefit thinking to set priorities; and monitor expenditures in support of programs and policies. Leaders seek and identify cost-effective approaches, and manage procurement and contracting appropriately.

***Technology Management*** - Leaders fully appreciate the impact of technological changes on the organization. They use efficient and cost-effective approaches to integrate technology into the workplace and improve program effectiveness. Leaders develop strategies using new technology to enhance decision-making.

***External Awareness*** - Leaders identify and keep up to date on key national and international policies and economic, political, and social trends that affect the organization. Leaders understand near-term and long-range plans and can determine how best to position the organization for scarce federal resources.

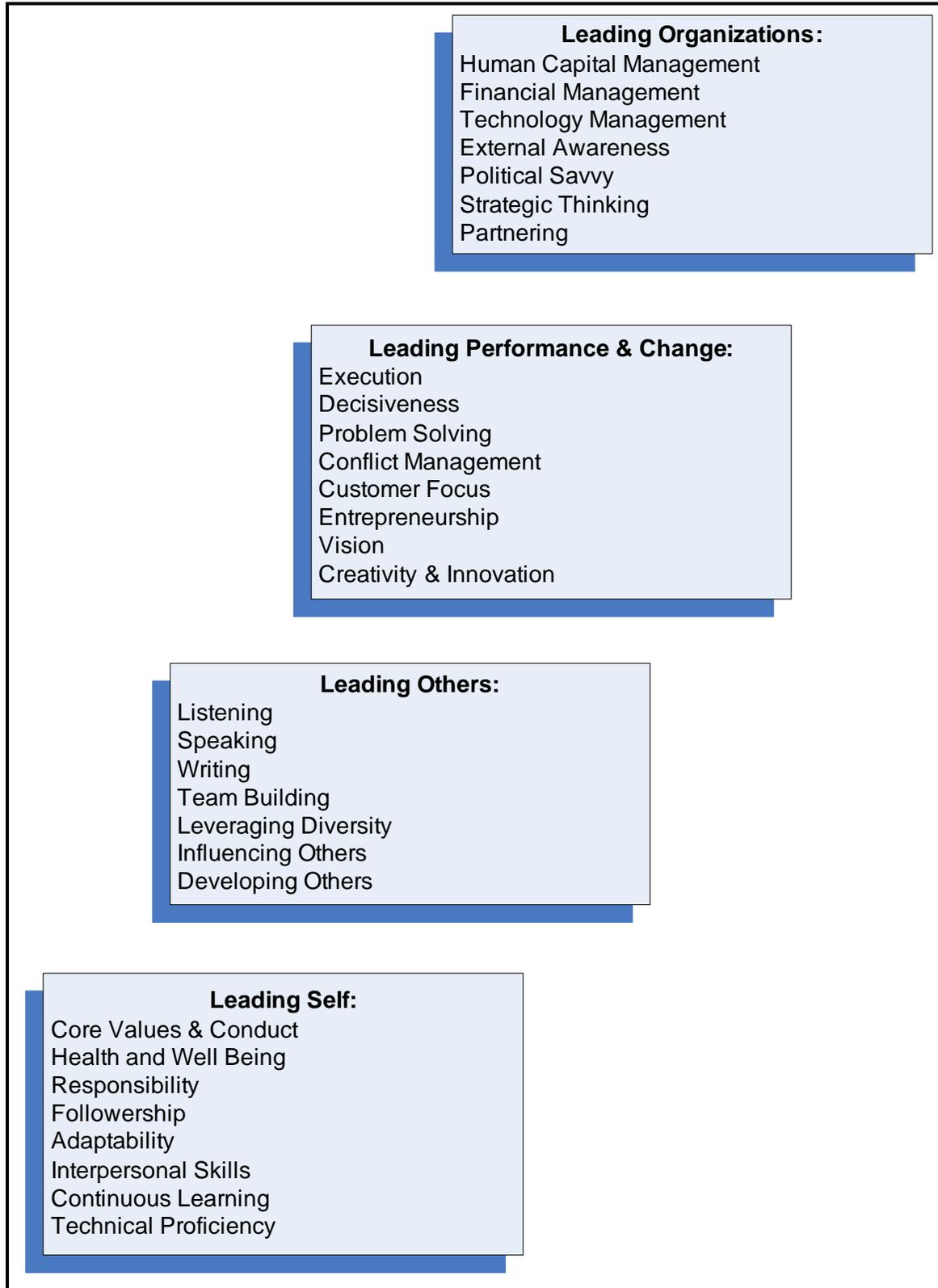
***Political Savvy*** - Leaders identify the internal and external politics that influence the work of NOAA and the Department of Commerce. Leaders approach issues with a clear perception of organizational and political reality, and recognize the impact of alternative courses of action.

***Strategic Thinking*** - Leaders must formulate objectives and priorities, and implement plans consistent with the long-term interests of the organization. They must consider multiple time horizons and very complex interactions- a systems view of the global environment. They capitalize on opportunities and manage long-term risk to the organization.

***Partnering*** - Leaders must develop networks and build alliances, engaging in cross-functional activities where it makes sense. Leaders collaborate across boundaries, find common ground with a widening range of stakeholders at the local and national level, and use their contacts to build and strengthen internal bases of support.



Figure 1. NOAA Corps Leadership Competencies



## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

The NOAA Corps Leadership Development Model is based on the philosophy that levels of leadership maturity will parallel the evolving responsibilities of officers. Put another way, officers will have a solid foundation of developing competencies to meet the demands of their assignments as they rise through the ranks.

### **Evolution of Officer Responsibilities**

As an officer progresses through his/her career, the nature of their responsibility changes. A new officer's responsibilities are primarily operational and technical. As the officer ascends the ranks through O-5, operational and technical responsibilities give way to leading and managing. At O-6 and above, officers have relinquished any operational and technical responsibility and should focus entirely on executive leadership for the organization. See Figure 2 for an illustration of the evolution of officer responsibilities.

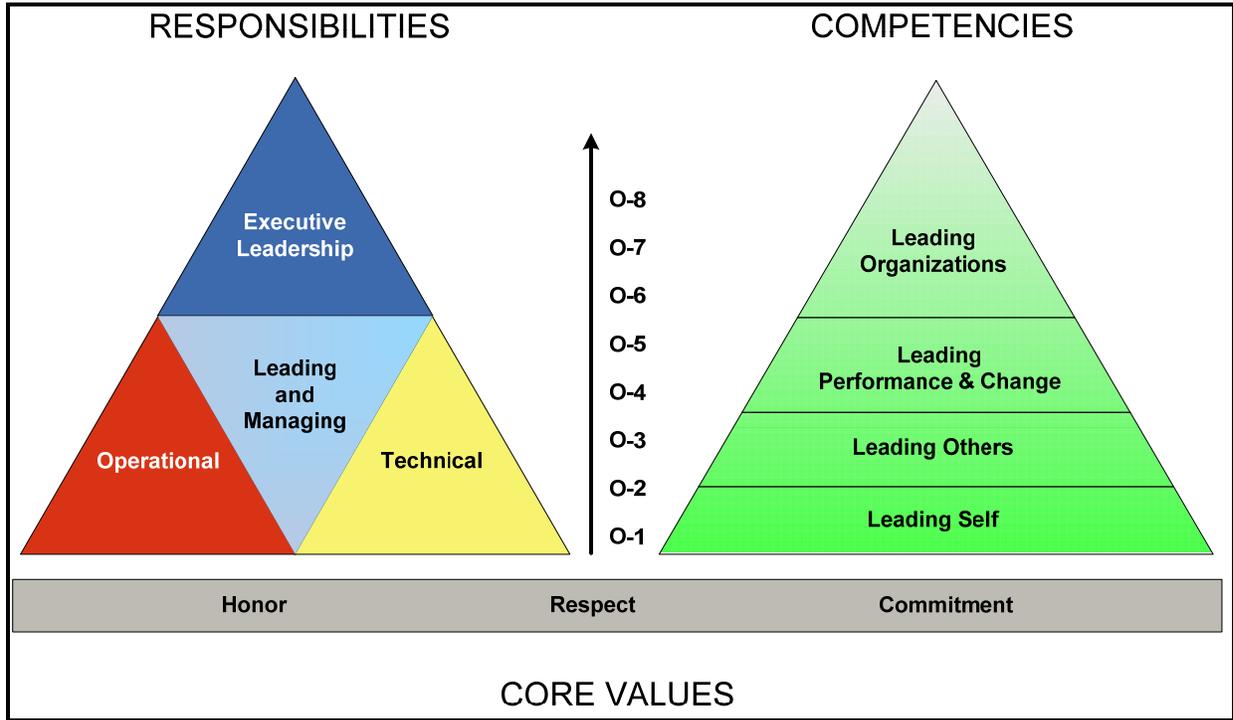
### **Growth/Maturity Model for Leadership Competencies**

Parallel to the change in the nature of responsibilities, NOAA Corps officers should develop competencies that will better prepare them for future leadership responsibilities. A new officer should focus on exercising the competencies of Leading Self, while mid-grade officers should have mastered those competencies and work towards Leading Others and Leading Performance & Change. Senior officers should work to fill any remaining gaps in the lower three levels and strive to attain the competencies for Leading Organizations. See Figure 2 for an illustration of how competency development parallels the responsibility of officers as they increase in rank.

Due to the variations in assignments, training, and experiences over a career, officers will develop competencies at different points in their career. The path for each officer will be his/her own, but the destination is the same—at the grade of O-6, the officer has the core competencies for any SES corps position in the government.



Figure 2. NOAA Corps Leadership Development Model



## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Officers are strongly encouraged to put together an Individual Development Plan (IDP) as an aid for developing your leadership competencies. Please refer to the IDP User Guide and IDP Located at the Commissioned Personnel Center at <http://www.noaacorpsleadership.noaa.gov>).

Organizations such as the **Center for Creative Leadership** have been conducting studies of effective leaders and how they got that way for over three decades—research that encompasses the public and private sectors, men and women, minorities, and global leaders. The research indicates the most successful organizations prepare their leaders with the following activities and corresponding importance: assignments - 42%; interaction with senior leaders – 22%; self-analysis – 20%; and training – 16%. While each individual learns to lead in different ways, the average proportions for successful organizations were similar. See Figure 3 for this summary of the relative importance of leadership developmental activities, a guide for planning your developmental activities.

Figure 3. Relative Importance of Developmental Activities for Successful Leaders

#1	– <b>Assignments</b> (challenging and competency-based)	<b>42%</b>
#2	– <b>Interaction with Senior Leaders</b> (staff assignments and shadowing)	<b>22%</b>
#3	– <b>Self-Analysis</b> (IDP, Officer Evaluation Report, Mentoring, etc.)	<b>20%</b>
#4	– <b>Training</b> (formal and informal)	<b>16%</b>



## SUMMARY

The NOAA Corps Leadership Development Framework provides a guide for the development of officers. Beginning with a foundation of Core Values, thirty leadership competencies are established and arranged in levels of maturity under this framework. These competencies parallel the increasing responsibilities of officers as they rise from ensign to the flag ranks. Officers are strongly encouraged to create an IDP to assist them in pursuing activities aimed at building these competencies. While officers pursue their own career path and develop competencies at different points in their career, this framework sets forth a common qualification standard at the grade of captain. It establishes a standard by which NOAA Corps officers can meet the same core qualifications as NOAA's Senior Executive Service (SES). Overall, the NOAA Corps Leadership Development Framework is established to enable officer growth and to best prepare officers to meet future responsibilities.

