

**USFWS Mission Critical First Appointment Leader Competencies**

**First Appointment Leader**

*Problem Solving   Flexibility   Accountability*

*Creativity/Innovation   Team Building*

*Customer Service   Technical Credibility*

## **ACCOUNTABILITY (ECQ - RESULTS DRIVEN)**

### **Definition**

Assures that effective controls are both developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the organization. Holds their self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities and can be relied upon to ensure that projects within their area of specific responsibility are completed in a timely manner and within budget. Monitors and evaluates plans while focusing on results and measuring attainment of outcomes.

### **Importance**

Accountability application ranges from individual responsibility for setting and meeting high standards for personal performance to the very definition of government workers as stewards of the commonwealth. It is the vehicle through which value is created for the public dollar, and public services are improved. The accountable individual remains in touch with the changing needs of those who are served, and earns their ongoing trust. Accountability is a mark of a mature worker and is dependent on each individual being held responsible for achieving agreed upon outcomes. It is essential to a well-functioning organization that each individual proactively take the responsibility to follow work through to completion, to provide both quality products/services and quality customer service, while meeting commitments in a timely manner and within budget. Government workers must also hold themselves accountable for protecting the privacy of employees, customers, and members of the public. The leader is also accountable for the results of their team.

### **How do First Appointment Leaders Demonstrate This Competency?**

First Appointment leaders must prioritize team/project/unit tasks and clearly communicate guidance about the task to include its importance and its elements. They establish deadlines while maintaining both short- and long-term focus on the completion of tasks. They use project management skills to set clear and consistent performance expectations for team managers, project managers, and unit groups. They review performance against standards and established benchmarks, provide feedback and coach subordinate leaders, and address performance problems in a specified timeframe. They build ongoing review into programs/projects to track progress towards stated goals, identify performance gaps enabling course corrections, and evaluate and measure the success of the programs/projects.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Makes efficient and effective use of resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledges strong performance and addresses poor performance among team and group members.</li> <li>• Maintains good overview and control of contract performance.</li> <li>• Maintains good overview and control of project/group budgets and costs.</li> </ul>
Takes responsibility for personal and team/group performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipates and takes action over impending problems.</li> <li>• Proactively solves problems without attributing blame.</li> <li>• Holds team and project members accountable for achieving results within assigned deadlines.</li> <li>• Communicates and counsels team/group members regarding poor performance</li> <li>• Recognizes and acknowledges good performance</li> <li>• Guides the development of the team/group.</li> </ul>
Meets or exceeds standards of excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a variety of techniques to help the team/group continually improve.</li> <li>• Works to build on experience and insights of others.</li> <li>• Prioritizes team/project tasks with respect to importance and time available while maintaining focus on end results</li> <li>• Develops others to strengthen their sense of pride in and commitment to their work and dedication to the mission of the Service.</li> </ul>
Ensures compliance with policies and laws while addressing stakeholder needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands organizational and customer expectations and needs.</li> <li>• Understands and values the role and input of internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>• Develops effective strategies and achievable programs of action that take into account stakeholder needs.</li> <li>• Seeks feedback from stakeholders to ensure our products/services are meeting their needs.</li> <li>• Works within the parameters of policies and laws.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Builds performance measures into programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines, communicates and measures progress for successful performance.</li> <li>• Applies project management skills.</li> <li>• Applies basic evaluation strategies and practices to measure performance.</li> <li>• Reviews performance against clear standards and expectations.</li> <li>• Provides regular feedback and coaches team/group members about their performance.</li> <li>• Addresses performance problems in a timely manner.</li> </ul>
Identifies and acts on lessons learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful performance.</li> <li>• Develops clear plans which include necessary adjustments to processes and strategies to improve organizational performance.</li> <li>• Disseminates knowledge and lessons learned using a variety of communications tools, group affiliations and networks.</li> <li>• Keeps managers informed of valuable lessons learned and project results.</li> <li>• Gathers feedback from various sources to improve products, processes, services and delivery.</li> </ul>
Assesses and manages risk when making legal and ethical decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the legal and ethical framework of the civil service.</li> <li>• Seeks the input of legal and ethical advisors and balances various assessments of risk before making decisions of critical importance.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

There are numerous activities an employee may engage in that provide the opportunity to develop this competency at the First Appointment Leader level. These activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, details, shadow assignments, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. These activities provide the *opportunity* to develop for those dedicated to their individual growth as a leader. Specific examples of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Take the time to learn applicable policies and procedures.
- Work on setting clear goals with yourself and others, and monitor progress.
- Follow through with positive and negative rewards and consequences.
- Consider whether you are successful at multitasking, and if not, focus on one project at a time.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Request permission to shadow an experienced leader you admire.
- Ask to fill in for your supervisor in an “acting” role when the opportunity exists.
- Take a 360-degree assessment tool as a way to receive feedback from others.
- Meet with HR and learn who’s who (roles and responsibilities) and who is responsible for what.
- Request a detail into a mid-level leadership position.
- Volunteer to work on a project team that involves multiple stakeholders.

#### *Training*

- Attend formal training on risk management.
- Attend formal training on the Service’s performance management system.
- Apply for the FWS [Stepping Up to Leadership Program](#).
- Consider any/all of the following NCTC courses for your development:
  - [Introduction to Management Skills](#)
  - Congressional Operations Seminar
  - [Applied Supervision](#)
- Attend formal training on ethics.
- Gain proficiency in time management by utilizing a process learned in a time management training course.

## **CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION (ECQ - LEADING CHANGE)**

### **Definition**

Develops new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to make organizational improvements; supports a work environment that encourages creative thinking and innovation; designs and implements new and innovative programs and/or processes.

### **Importance**

Creative and innovative thinking leads to new insights, novel approaches, fresh perspectives, new ways of understanding and conceiving of things, and leads one to see the world in imaginative and different ways. Creativity and innovation represent a core competency in successful organizations that are able to anticipate and meet strategic challenges including change, advancing technology, an increasingly diverse work force, and constant budget constraints. This is about exploring all options in a systematic way, one that also moves thinking past conventional mental and organizational boundaries. It is using one's full range of skills, knowledge, and experience to search for and address the complex causes, not just symptoms, of problems and to imagine and pose improvements to the organization. At the higher levels it means creating a culture and the organizational means that encourage, support and reward innovative thinking and continual improvement.

### **How do First Appointment Leaders Demonstrate This Competency?**

First Appointment leaders model the concepts of innovation and creativity. They encourage critical thinking, innovative problem solving, brainstorming and other techniques that support alternative approaches. They build teams that are diverse in thought, talent and perspective and invest in training that leads to better analysis, problem-solving, and creative solutions. They demonstrate and encourage the use of innovative thinking and problem-solving approaches and acknowledge and reward efforts to encourage a culture of innovation and creativity.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Commits to individual and organizational improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies issues and opportunities to improve team processes, products, services, and service delivery.</li> <li>• Models creative thinking and problem solving.</li> <li>• Recognizes when a situation calls for, or could benefit from, a different approach and explores options.</li> <li>• Sets high expectations for continuing improvements to processes, products and services.</li> </ul>
Creates an environment that fosters new ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values new ideas and perspectives.</li> <li>• Establishes team/unit processes and strategies that look beyond traditional boundaries, ideas and approaches.</li> <li>• Challenges others to see new possibilities and pursues different perspectives.</li> <li>• Encourages creative, innovative, and non-conventional contributions.</li> <li>• Understands the role of conflict in creative processes and manages conflict towards positive outcomes.</li> <li>• Adapts to meet changing circumstances, unexpected constraints, or challenges.</li> <li>• Leads team/unit to use brainstorming, systems thinking, and other techniques that offer new perspectives, ideas or solutions.</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for the exchange of ideas and best practices.</li> </ul>
Encourages and employs the creativity of internal and external stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides feedback on contributions, processes and services.</li> <li>• Develops staff to take advantage of creative talent, innovative thought, and personal growth and goals.</li> <li>• Rewards individuals and the team/unit for exceeding performance goals.</li> <li>• Employs a broad range of resources in seeking new perspectives, ideas and approaches.</li> <li>• Works closely with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that all perspectives and interests are understood, and to encourage stakeholders to make contributions.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Uses analytical tools to develop and weigh alternatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses modeling techniques, risk analysis and cost-benefit analysis to identify alternatives.</li> <li>• Weighs potential solutions and initiatives for appropriateness and feasibility.</li> <li>• Develops strategies for enhancing risk analysis and decision-making skills.</li> <li>• Understands the role of evaluation and testing in creative processes.</li> </ul>

### Developmental Activities

There are numerous activities an employee may engage in that provide the opportunity to develop this competency at the First Appointment Leadership level. These activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, details, shadow assignments, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. These activities provide the *opportunity* to develop for those dedicated to their individual growth as a leader. Specific examples of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

#### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Ask more questions, and be sure you are defining the problem correctly.
- Remove unnecessary constraints, and break out of your comfort zone.
- Generate ideas without passing judgment first.
- Be open to the creative suggestions of others.
- Practice thinking out loud with others.
- Attend meetings where various stakeholders are present such as:
  - Project leaders meetings
  - County and community meetings
  - Project meetings
  - Public meetings
- Work on a community or professional committee.
- Volunteer to take the lead on a challenging project.

#### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

##### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Conduct brainstorming meetings and sessions to encourage ideas from others.
- Attend and join your local [Toastmasters](#) club.
- Get involved in a mentoring program; as both a mentor and a mentee.

- Volunteer to facilitate meetings.
- Volunteer to teach a course or lead a brown bag seminar.

### *Training*

- Seek out training on cost-benefit analysis, modeling, decision making, risk analysis, project management, etc.
- Seek out formal training on creativity and innovation and/or read a book on the subject.
- Apply for the FWS [Stepping Up to Leadership Program](#).
- Consider any/all of the following NCTC courses for your development:
  - [Introduction to Management Skills](#)
  - [Applied Supervision](#)

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE (ECQ - RESULTS DRIVEN)**

### **Definition**

Balances the interests of a variety of clients and readily readjusts priorities to respond to pressing and changing client demands. Anticipates and meets the needs of clients, achieves quality end-products, and is committed to continuous improvement of services.

### **Importance**

Customer Service is based on a deep commitment to serving your stakeholders. Good Customer Service recognizes that there are multiple stakeholders who are both internal and external customers, identifies and meets their needs, and strives for continuous improvement. Exemplary Customer Service and stakeholder support is critical to an effective and efficient government and to successful accomplishment of the Service mission.

### **How do First Appointment Leaders Demonstrate This Competency?**

First Appointment Leaders must clearly communicate high expectations for good customer service, develop effective ways of consulting with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that service meets current and changing needs, and apply emerging ideas and technologies to serving the customer.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Demonstrates personal commitment to customer service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies and acts on opportunities to enhance customer service delivery system.</li> <li>• Regularly, clearly and enthusiastically communicates personal high expectations for good customer service to the team/unit.</li> </ul>
Identifies and anticipates customer needs to provide exemplary service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses input and feedback from customers and team members to anticipate and make improvements in customer service.</li> <li>• Gives clear explanations to stakeholders about why action has, or has not, been proposed or taken regarding their desires.</li> <li>• Builds information-gathering tools and uses them in decision making and planning.</li> </ul>
Understands the diverse perspectives, issues and needs of stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates with stakeholders determine their needs.</li> <li>• Provides service that best attempts to address underlying sources and issues behind stakeholder needs.</li> <li>• Considers stakeholder needs and makes service delivery decisions based on those needs balanced with Service requirements and parameters.</li> </ul>
Understands the Service mission within its ethical and legal parameters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses legal and ethical standards to resolve issues of fairness, equality, and appropriate scope of services.</li> <li>• Stresses the need for flexibility and responsiveness.</li> <li>• Ensures equal access to services for everyone.</li> </ul>
Continuously improves products and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works creatively towards achieving customer goals.</li> <li>• Looks for alternate approaches and adapts new concepts when appropriate.</li> <li>• Applies emerging ideas, innovations, and new technologies to serving the customer.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

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### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Research and address your customers' needs.
- Volunteer for a detail to a customer service position within your organization or to an outside organization that excels in customer service.
- Consider how you would design systems so that they are more effective and efficient?

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Read a book on extraordinary customer service with case studies.
- Shadow someone who is a customer service "superstar".
- Develop a survey or tool to get feedback from your customers.
- Attend a diversity program to learn about other cultures and perspectives.
- Work on improving listening skills and not becoming defensive when customers complain, criticize or make special requests.
- Maintain a positive attitude, and visualize yourself as a dissatisfied customer. What would you correct in your workplace?

### *Training*

- Take training on good customer service, interpersonal skills, and consultation and communication techniques.
- Refer to DOI Learn on-line training for applicable topics.
- Take training in dealing with difficult customers and in conflict resolution skills.

## **FLEXIBILITY (ECQ - LEADING CHANGE)**

### **Definition**

Is open to change and new information and adapts behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles. Rapidly adjusts priorities to new situations which warrant attention and resolution.

### **Importance**

Flexibility is an essential competency for individuals in organizations functioning in a rapidly changing environment. Flexibility is the ability to adapt to and work effectively within dynamic change and flexible leaders see change as an opportunity. It entails understanding and appreciating different and sometimes opposing perspectives on an issue. It requires being open to new information and being able to let go of old assumptions which then allows one to adapt how one operates. It entails keeping alert to changing requirements and being prepared strategically and psychologically to modify one's own, and the organization's, approach as the requirements of the situation changes. Flexibility allows an individual to recognize the anxiety that often accompanies uncertainty, and to react to changing circumstances with creativity by applying new ideas to achieve results.

### **How do First Appointment Leaders Demonstrate This Competency?**

A First Appointment leader must understand how change in internal and external circumstances might affect the group and its work. They modify plans or processes to accommodate new circumstances and clearly communicate the changing organizational context and its implications. They must treat each person according to their unique needs instilling a sense of opportunity and possibility in the group's view of change. First Appointment Leaders understand and coach others in stress reduction techniques.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Demonstrates flexibility and openness to change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes team processes and strategies that look beyond traditional boundaries, ideas and approaches.</li> <li>• Challenges team members to take a different perspective and see new possibilities.</li> <li>• Employs a variety of techniques for exploring different options.</li> <li>• Takes responsible and reasonable risks when trying new approaches.</li> </ul>
Adapts behavior based on changing priorities and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifies team plans or processes to accommodate new and changing circumstances.</li> <li>• Adjusts priorities, as appropriate, based on the understanding of stakeholder desires.</li> <li>• Explores new tactics and does not always use conventional methodology or traditional approaches.</li> <li>• Identifies and uses new tools, processes and technologies to enhance service.</li> <li>• Enables team/group members to identify potential solutions and initiatives for appropriateness and feasibility.</li> </ul>
Seeks new ideas and opinions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a team atmosphere that welcomes and employs new perspectives and ideas.</li> <li>• Seeks input from team members.</li> <li>• Facilitates creative solutions to team conflict.</li> <li>• Seeks out diversity of thought, talent and perspective among team members.</li> <li>• Fosters creative, innovative and non-conventional contributions.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Demonstrates flexibility and openness to change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes team processes and strategies that look beyond traditional boundaries, ideas and approaches.</li> <li>• Challenges team members to take a different perspective and see new possibilities.</li> <li>• Employs a variety of techniques for exploring different options.</li> <li>• Takes responsible and reasonable risks when trying new approaches.</li> </ul>
<p>Maintains productivity, quality of work, and morale of group in times of change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates organizational and environmental changes.</li> <li>• Coaches individual team members to find their niche in new, ambiguous and changing circumstances.</li> <li>• Recognizes the impact of stress on individual performance and provides resources to help cope.</li> <li>• Clarifies ambiguous information to reduce uncertainty.</li> <li>• Provides the team feedback on their contributions to organizational objectives.</li> <li>• Encourages the team to be open to opportunities and possibilities regarding change(s).</li> <li>• Accepts responsibility for the results of taking risks.</li> </ul>
<p>Works effectively within a variety of situations and with diverse individuals and groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treats each person fairly, instilling mutual understanding, trust and confidence.</li> <li>• Makes accommodations to meet diverse customer needs.</li> <li>• Ensures that the perspectives and interests of internal and external stakeholders are heard and understood.</li> <li>• Makes and modifies team assignments to take advantage of individual strengths.</li> <li>• Gains a broader perspective on issues by working with others.</li> <li>• Learns from the accomplishments and best practices of others.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

There are numerous activities an employee may engage in that provide the opportunity to develop this competency at the First Appointment Leader level. These activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, details, shadow assignments, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. These activities provide the *opportunity* to develop for those dedicated to their individual growth as a leader. Specific examples of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Volunteer or participate in a diverse project team.
- Serve on a social activities committee.
- Conduct brainstorming, systems thinking, and other techniques that might offer new perspectives, ideas or solutions.
- Invest in team training that enables members better to weigh potential solutions and initiatives for appropriateness and feasibility.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Use a personality/behavioral assessment to understand the diversity of the team members.
- Get a coach/mentor for communications help.
- Practice more one-on-one interactions with your staff.
- Learn about different resources on stress management, career development, personal growth, etc.
- Reflect on whether you are resilient and can bounce back from setbacks. If not, then what is holding you back?

#### *Training*

- Consider taking a course on dealing with and leading change.
- Bring in a creative thinking workshop for your team.
- Learn about new tools, processes and technologies that can enhance service.
- Consider whether diversity training would be relevant.
- Take training related to interpersonal skills, being open and receptive to others, and dealing with changing situations.

## **PROBLEM SOLVING (ECQ - RESULTS DRIVEN)**

### **Definition**

Identifies and analyzes problems, distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions, and provides solutions to individual and organization problems.

### **Importance**

Problems are often ill-structured situations and may not be recognized as problems until they loom large. Leaders identify emerging problems so that they may be addressed before they become critical and cause damage to the organization or its objectives. Successful problem solving must include the application of critical thinking so as to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant factors, identify the dimensions of the problem, and explore multiple options. Leaders use collaborative problem solving processes to yield a fuller, deeper understanding of the problem, expand the ownership of the situation, focus multiple and diverse resources on the issue, and enhance the likelihood of a successful solution.

### **How do First Appointment Leaders Demonstrate This Competency?**

First appointment leaders should be results driven and open to alternatives. They establish team processes and strategies that look beyond traditional boundaries, ideas and approaches. They communicate organizational changes and help the team plan new processes, actions, and short term goals to meet those changes. They apply problem solving techniques to issues of change. Leaders assess the underlying causes and forces behind behavior patterns and organize their resources and activities to deal with longer-term problems and opportunities.

**Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors**

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Anticipates problems and identifies steps to prevent their occurrence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the organization’s strategic plan and makes course corrections or modifies unit goals and processes in order to accommodate new and changing circumstances.</li> <li>• Identifies the need for modifications or reengineering by reviewing programs, processes and progress.</li> <li>• Recognizes the interdependencies of all organizational units and collaborates to address problems, maximize resources, share information, and achieve outcomes.</li> <li>• Responds to threats or problems.</li> <li>• Manages personal and organizational sources of conflict to realize long-term improvements.</li> <li>• Recognizes team and team member performance and plans strategically to optimize strengths while minimizing the impact of weaknesses.</li> <li>• Works closely with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that all perspectives and interests are understood.</li> <li>• Seeks legal and ethical advice when necessary.</li> <li>• Does not allow the policy or resource challenges to slow the progress/productivity of the team.</li> </ul>
<p>Solves problems affecting the work of the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learns from past actions and shares lessons learned with others.</li> <li>• Facilitates critical thinking throughout the group.</li> <li>• Owns up to mistakes to self and others.</li> <li>• Enables team members to weigh potential solutions and initiatives for appropriateness and feasibility.</li> <li>• Accurately assesses the root causes and forces behind individual or group behavior patterns.</li> <li>• Makes necessary on-the-spot corrections to actions.</li> <li>• Enlists help from appropriate people in problem-solving.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Identifies and evaluates alternative courses of action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumes responsibilities for risks taken and actions embarked upon.</li> <li>• Establishes team processes and strategies that look beyond traditional boundaries, ideas and approaches.</li> <li>• Creates and maintains a diverse collaborative team environment that promotes creativity and open discussion.</li> <li>• Generates multiple solutions to problems and routinely develops and weighs alternatives before settling on a solution.</li> <li>• Learns from past actions and shares lessons learned with others.</li> <li>• Delegates problem-solving to empower others to take the initiative, developing individual team members.</li> <li>• Challenges team members to take a different perspective.</li> <li>• Leads the team in techniques that might offer new perspectives, ideas or solutions.</li> </ul>
<p>Implements the changes necessary to make solutions work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps the team plan new processes, actions and short term goals.</li> <li>• Communicates the need for change to meet critical organizational objectives and new realities.</li> <li>• Understands the drivers of people’s behavior and the impact of emotions and feelings on a situation.</li> <li>• Ensures employees understand expectations, objectives and processes.</li> <li>• Breaks down complex problems and situations into discrete parts that are easier to understand and to manage.</li> <li>• Facilitates stakeholder understanding of our goals, processes, timelines, roles, and resources.</li> <li>• Measures the success of chosen approaches.</li> <li>• Recognizes when a solution is sufficient enough to achieve results, while tackling underlying causes.</li> <li>• Provides feedback on the team’s contribution to organizational objectives and gives credit to those who contributed to the solution.</li> <li>• Identifies and resolves team/unit breakdowns resulting from change.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

There are numerous activities an employee may engage in that provide the opportunity to develop this competency at the First Appointment leader level. These activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, details, shadow assignments, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. These activities provide the *opportunity* to develop for those dedicated to their individual growth as a leader. Specific examples of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Become an officer on a community board.
- Volunteer to be on a team/project that is trying to solve an important issue.
- Shadow a higher-level leader who is working on a complex project.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Develop, discuss and review performance measures with your employees.
- Read a book on an applicable topic.
- Interview a good problem solver to learn how he/she does it.
- Join the safety committee of your organization.
- Take up a hobby that requires complex problem solving skills; i.e., chess, Sudoku puzzles, crossword puzzles, etc.

#### *Training*

- Learn a variety of modeling techniques, risk analysis and cost benefit analysis techniques.
- Learn how to develop performance plans and use an [Individual Development Plan](#) (IDP).
- Invest in team training for your unit.
- Invest in training that enables members to better weigh potential solutions and initiatives for appropriateness and feasibility.
- Learn about ethical decision-making tools as well as Federal ethics regulations and other laws which might pertain to problems.
- Attend a course on effective communication, change management, problem solving, decision making, conflict management, dealing with difficult people, etc.
- Take an assessment that teaches “how and why people are different” – i.e., Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), or looks at behavioral styles and preferences (i.e. DISC).
- Learn about how groups function and how group dynamics evolve.

## **TEAM BUILDING (ECQ - LEADING PEOPLE)**

### **Definition**

Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward goal accomplishments. Consistently develops and sustains cooperative working relationships. Encourages and facilitates cooperation within the organization and with stakeholders, fostering commitment, team spirit, pride, trust. Develops leadership capabilities in others by coaching, mentoring, rewarding, and guiding employees.

### **Importance**

Team-based approaches to work (formal and informal groups, work groups, committees, etc.) can be an effective way to increase organizational performance. Collaborative work, group work, and team work are forces for productivity, quality, synergy and cost reduction. Teams have a greater diversity of resources which contributes to improved problem solving and to higher productivity. Teams help “socialize” new members, facilitate organizational performance, build leadership skills, and inspire innovation. Teams provide benefits for their members as they learn about the organization(s) and acquire new skills. For some team members, they also serve important personal needs for affiliation and esteem.

### **How do First Appointment Leaders Demonstrate This Competency?**

The First Appointment Leader must foster commitment, team spirit, pride, esprit de corps and trust. They facilitate internal group dynamics to optimize performance, build skills through coaching and training, and manage interpersonal (and systemic) conflict. They collaborate within the group to develop and clarify member roles, responsibilities, and norms while clarifying the parameters of authority and available resources. They build the problem solving ability of the group members and the group itself. They communicate the organization’s mission and goals with insight, and enthusiasm, help establish appropriate metrics and objective criteria, and ensure that work is accomplished within established timetables. They instill a sense of opportunity and possibility in the group’s view of change, collaborate with relevant groups to gain information about external conditions that might impact the work of the group, and change course when needed.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Establishes teams to accomplish goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brings the right people together and sustains group processes that help lead to success.</li> <li>• Capitalizes on all aspects of diversity to improve projects.</li> <li>• Recognizes strengths and maximizes the resources of the team.</li> <li>• Collaborates with stakeholders to stay informed of external conditions which might impact the work of the team.</li> <li>• Establishes a team environment of openness.</li> <li>• Negotiates the objectives of the project among team members, clarifies respective contributions and expectations, and enables clear definition of roles within the team.</li> <li>• Establishes appropriate team performance norms.</li> </ul>
Establishes and maintains collaborative team processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads group planning processes.</li> <li>• Helps team establish appropriate metrics and objective criteria for success.</li> <li>• Resolves conflict to build group cohesion.</li> <li>• Builds a performance driven team with positive working relationships.</li> <li>• Involves all team members and ensures that all voices are heard and respected.</li> <li>• Facilitates finding common ground.</li> <li>• Helps teams understand and overcome barriers to effective performance.</li> <li>• Uses collaborative decision-making processes to build trust and ownership.</li> <li>• Helps the team generate multiple solutions to problems and approaches to improvement.</li> <li>• Encourages creative, innovative and non-conventional contributions.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Assigns task(s) to the team and delegates responsibilities within the team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets and communicates clear goals</li> <li>• Builds team skills through coaching and training to accomplish tasks, build relationships, and/or improve processes.</li> <li>• Distributes opportunities and benefits equitably across the entire team.</li> <li>• Coaches team members to work together.</li> <li>• Builds the problem solving ability of the team.</li> <li>• Manages creative talent.</li> <li>• Encourages team members to assume leadership of different functions appropriate to their knowledge and skills.</li> </ul>
Manages team performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitors the direction of individual and team performance and makes necessary course corrections.</li> <li>• Ensures work is accomplished within established timetables.</li> <li>• Changes course when needed; letting go of what's not working.</li> <li>• Protects the integrity of open, collaborative processes.</li> <li>• Keeps focus on the big picture.</li> <li>• Holds people accountable for responsibilities and good teamwork.</li> </ul>
Inspires pride and team spirit among team members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates a clear picture of the direction the organization is going with insight, energy and enthusiasm.</li> <li>• Creates a team culture that fosters performance, pride and purpose.</li> <li>• Provides feedback on the team's contribution to organizational objectives.</li> <li>• Recommends awards and recognition to celebrate individual and team performance when work supports organizational goals and achieves results.</li> <li>• Coaches, mentors and guides teams and team members in such a way as to foster commitment, team spirit, pride and trust.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

There are numerous activities an employee may engage in that provide the opportunity to develop this competency at the First Appointment Leader level. These activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, details, shadow assignments, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. These activities provide the *opportunity* to develop for those dedicated to their individual growth as a leader. Specific examples of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Volunteer to be a coach in a youth sports league, scout leader, etc.
- Volunteer to lead a team.
- Volunteer for a committee in a community organization.
- Function as team member on a team and observe the leader to learn things to do and not do.
- Read a book on team building and team leadership.
- Spend time developing your interpersonal skills through self-awareness.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Create a climate of innovation and experimentation.
- Use your behavior to model the way for others and set the standard.
- Reflect on whether you are comfortable delegating important work to others.

#### *Training*

- Take NCTC's course "[Introduction to Management Skills](#)" LED6176.
- Take NCTC's course "[Team Start-Up](#)" LED5118.
- Take NCTC's course "[Team Effectiveness Training](#)" LED5021.
- Take NCTC's "[The Leadership Challenge Workshop](#)" LED6109.
- Take taking a course on team leadership from an outside vendor.
- Take taking a meeting facilitation or meeting management course.
- Take taking a course on project management, task prioritization and/or delegation.

## **TECHNICAL CREDIBILITY (ECQ - RESULTS DRIVEN)**

### **Definition**

Appropriately applies procedures, regulations, standards and policies related to specialized expertise. Combines expertise, administrative processes, and organizational knowledge to make sound, ethical resource recommendations and/or decisions in support of the mission.

### **Importance**

Accomplishing the Service's mission is contingent upon its leaders having expertise across a diverse array of disciplines. The reputation of the FWS is based upon technical credibility in science and in business practices. The Service is a science based organization, using a high level of technical expertise to make decisions and take actions. Leaders with specialized knowledge and technical abilities improve the Service's operations. They inspire confidence among employees, the American public, customers, Congress, stakeholders, and partners. A leader with technical knowledge and integrity helps the Service avoid risk from legal and ethical challenges.

### **How do First Appointment Leaders Demonstrate This Competency?**

First Appointment leaders keep up with advances in their discipline. They ensure that they are operating within the legal, regulatory and policy framework. They accurately identify problems, evaluate alternatives, and recommend appropriate actions.

They recognize their own limitations and consult with others who have the specific, technical expertise required. They are proactive in working with their teams members to identify developmental opportunities to improve all of their technical skills. They are recognized as professionals in their field and work to continue to increase their competence and skills. They are involved in establishing policies and procedures, may present at professional meetings, and are involved in sharing their knowledge by training others, both in training courses and on-the-job.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Demonstrates expertise in their field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works on research projects in their area of expertise.</li> <li>• Teaches others.</li> <li>• Participates in professional associations, conferences and meetings.</li> <li>• Sets challenging goals for self and group and achieves them.</li> <li>• Participates in a community of practice.</li> <li>• Actively participates and refreshes fundamentals.</li> <li>• Knows where to go for answers to technical questions.</li> <li>• Manages assigned projects and ensures completion.</li> </ul>
Has a thorough knowledge of their organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a network of other subject matter experts, both internally and externally.</li> <li>• Actively maintains/uses the collective knowledge in their network.</li> <li>• Makes administrative decisions that follow current Service/organization policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Assigns team responsibilities that distribute team work according to the knowledge, skills, and abilities of team members.</li> <li>• Works to grow their capacity and capability.</li> <li>• Evaluates assignments and determines whether they can be accomplished with their allocated resources.</li> </ul>
Understands legal and regulatory policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows where to go for advice when a legal or ethical dilemma is present.</li> <li>• Understands the policies and laws that guide their field of expertise and can find answers to questions related to that field.</li> <li>• Advises others on legal and regulatory guidelines and helps them maintain compliance with standards.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

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### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Volunteer to work on a cross-program team.
- Represent your discipline on a Regional team.
- Volunteer for a detail to the Regional Office.
- Detail to a sister agency with a greater scientific technical focus.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Consider a job swap in or outside your field of expertise.
- Work with NCTC on a course design team, as a peer reviewer, or as an instructor for a course.
- Write white papers for a Regional Director in your area(s) of expertise.
- Answer public questions in an open forum as a Service representative.
- Present Service work to an NGO, and participate in high school job fairs.
- Maintain a personal library on your discipline, subscribe to professional journals, and ensure your team has the “latest and greatest” publications, and circulate materials.
- Publish your research/Service work in governmental and intergovernmental publications.
- Be a mentor to someone junior to you or find a mentor and be a mentee.
- Look “in your own back yard” for learning opportunities.
- Be a member of professional association dealing with specific discipline.
- Consider community involvement within your realm of expertise (science fair judge, volunteer expertise to non-profits, etc).
- Take advantage of public speaking opportunities and consider becoming a member of your local [Toastmasters](#) club.
- Give presentations at lunch meetings (“brown bag” gatherings).
- Network and share your experience with others.

### *Training*

- Do not discount the value of continuing education in your profession.
- Continue to keep up-to-date on your computer skills and technological knowledge.
- Consider hiring a consultant in the technology field of interest to tutor you to accelerate your learning.
- Whenever new technology surfaces, volunteer to learn and try it first.
- Apply to attend conferences or workshops for a national perspective.