Senior Program Officer Core Competencies

Core competencies at the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF) describe the capabilities that are important across all jobs and that we believe collectively contribute to CHCF's overall success in achieving our mission. At the same time, the importance of core competencies may vary according to the specific job duties and requirements.

Key indicators highlight how a person can demonstrate that competency, and are designed to show the requirements for successful performance.

The core competencies critical to the success of a senior program officer include these:

- **Achievement focus.** The ability to generate results by assuming responsibility for one's performance and the correctness of one's interventions, and recognizing opportunities and acting efficiently at the appropriate moment and within the given deadlines.
    - o Generates results by acting in a focused way and within deadlines, and finds ways to get around obstacles with minimal guidance.
    - o Identifies needed adjustments in own area of responsibility and sets priorities accordingly.
    - o Considers the implications of proposed courses of action.
    - o Sets challenging goals for own area of responsibility in relation to program impact opportunities.

- **Analytical thinking.** The ability to tackle a problem by using a logical, systematic, sequential approach. Ability to identify patterns across situations that are not obviously related, and to identify key or underlying issues in complex situations.
    - o Gathers information from a variety of sources to reach a conclusion.
    - o Recognizes causes and consequences of actions and events that are not readily apparent.
    - o Identifies gaps in information and makes informed assumptions in order to continue analysis and/or to take action.
    - o Discerns the level of pressure or influence to apply in each aspect of the analysis in relation to the broader context.

- **Developing talent.** The ability to foster an environment that will encourage professional and personal growth and the transfer of knowledge to future talent.
    - o Takes advantage of learning opportunities provided (e.g., courses, feedback from supervisor or peers) to meet requirements of current role.

- o Helps others learn from experience and development initiatives (e.g., recommends readings, trainings, and other resources).
- o Continually acquires and applies new knowledge and learning to improve job performance.
- o Identifies and plans learning, targeted to specific developmental needs in current position.
- o Promotes sharing of expertise and supports learning opportunities across the foundation.

- **Flexible thinking.** The ability to effectively adapt to a variety of situations, individuals, or groups. It is based on the ability to understand and appreciate different and opposing perspectives on an issue, to adapt an approach as the requirements of a situation change, and to change or easily accept changes in one's own organizational or job requirements.
  - o Understands and recognizes the value of other points of view and ways of doing things.
  - o Considers problems from all new perspectives and can expand on the thinking or solutions proposed by others.
  - o Shares new ideas and perspectives to adjust business strategies.
  - o Solicits ideas and is receptive to the ideas and perspectives of staff, partners, and the board.

- **Influencing.** The ability to convince others in an honest, respectful, and sensitive manner to get them to go along with one's objectives. It can also be the desire to have a specific impact or effect on others.
  - o Checks own understanding of others' communication (e.g., paraphrases, asks questions).
  - o Reads cues from various listeners to assess when and how to change the planned communication approach to effectively deliver messages.
  - o Communicates complex issues clearly and credibly with widely varied audiences.
  - o Uses experts or other third parties to influence (e.g., takes multiple actions to make staged arguments, assembles political coalitions, builds behind-the-scenes support for ideas.)

- **Interpersonal awareness and communication.** The ability to understand other people and to accurately hear and understand unspoken, partly expressed thoughts, feelings, and concerns of others.
  - o Is attentive, soliciting input from all members of a team when doing projects and assignments, or when interacting with people from different backgrounds.
  - o Identifies and responds to underlying attitudes or behavior patterns such as cultural norms and personality differences.

o   Knows when to stand firm and when to accommodate.

- **Managing resources.** The ability to understand human, financial, and operational resource capabilities and limitations to make decisions aimed at building and planning efficient project workflows and at improving overall organizational performance.
    - o   Creates and manages the work plan, sets timelines and milestones, and involves stakeholders to set clear expectations on roles and responsibilities.
    - o   Coordinates and manages internal and external resources to accomplish assignments within the given deadlines.
    - o   Identifies needs for resources to effectively support current initiatives, services, and offerings.
    - o   Organizes people and activities, separates and combines tasks into an efficient workflow to deliver projects

- **Organizational alignment.** The ability and willingness to align one's own behavior with the needs, priorities, and goals of the foundation, and to act in ways that promote the foundation's goals and meet organizational needs.
    - o   Is able to explain how own work relates to the work of the organization.
    - o   Is able to present the foundation's priorities as they relate to own area of work.
    - o   Develops and implements projects, programs, and processes aligned with the foundation's strategic direction and needs.
    - o   Ensures that the programs in one's area are integrated with one another and aligned with the strategic priorities of the foundation.

- **Organizational knowledge.** The ability to understand the relationships within the foundation and with other organizations. It includes the ability to understand the formal rules and structures and to identify who the real decisionmakers are as well as the people who can influence them.
    - o   Demonstrates understanding of the general environment in which the foundation operates.
    - o   Recognizes what is and is not acceptable or possible given the organizational rules, structures, decisionmaking bodies, code of conduct, and values.
    - o   Based on knowledge of the foundation's governance, rules, structures, and people, recognizes the opportune time for action, having positioned all key elements to maximize the probability of success.
    - o   Understands the nature and limits of partner organizations and uses that knowledge to influence and lead.

- **Strategic networking.** The ability to build and maintain friendly, trustworthy, and open internal and external relationships and networks with people who are, or might become, important partners in achieving strategic-related goals.
  - Actively nurtures both formal and informal contacts to facilitate the progress of work by proactively soliciting and sharing information, best practices, respective interests, and areas of expertise.
  - Identifies and creates opportunities to initiate new partnerships that will facilitate the achievement of strategic goals.
  - Manages relationships among key partners to create long-range opportunities.

- **Strategic thinking.** The ability to develop a broad, big-picture view of the foundation and its mission. Keeps individuals and teams focused and helps decide where to invest critical resources. Includes the ability to link long-range visions and concepts to daily work.
  - Identifies and communicates new information or data to key decisionmakers or stakeholders to support their understanding and decisions.
  - Demonstrates awareness of the impact of own work on aspects of the foundation's strategy, and the impact of said strategy on own work.
  - Maintains a broad, strategic perspective while identifying and focusing on crucial details.
  - Understands the position of the foundation in the larger context; conveys a thorough understanding of the foundation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; identifies competitive differentiators.

- **Teamwork and team leadership.** Ability to work cooperatively with others, being part of a team, and assuming the role of leader of a team. At CHCF, staff work not only with their own teams but also with teams and groups across and outside the foundation. Therefore they need to work together effectively with interdependent goals and common values and norms to foster a collaborative environment and to drive teams in the same direction.
  - Initiates collaboration with others and spontaneously assists others in the delivery of their work.
  - Seeks to work with teams with complementary skills and expertise.
  - Delegates responsibility and provides necessary support to individuals to make them accountable and ready for successful execution.