**Earning Trust**

**Definition**
Gaining others’ confidence by acting with integrity and following through on commitments, while sharing own perspective. Treating others and their ideas with respect, and supporting them in the face of challenges.

**Importance**
Trust lies at the heart of service and team-based working relationships. Trust is the confidence that intentions are good, that there is no reason to be protective or careful, sheltered or filtered. It implies the ability to predict a person’s behavior, trust the quality of result or the appropriateness of service. In HR, trust requires that service providers be flexible, agile and have an understanding of perceptions of differences of fact and reality.

### How do Washington State Human Resource Professionals Demonstrate This Competency?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Distinguishing Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Acts with Integrity.**| • Demonstrates honesty  
• Keeps commitments made to others  
• Behaves in a consistent manner; actions are congruent with stated intent  
• Keeps sensitive information confidential  
• Adheres to moral, ethical, and professional standards, regulations, and organizational policies |
| **Shares Own Perspective.** | • Listens first  
• Works to increase personal credibility  
• Shares thoughts, feelings, experiences, and rationale so that others understand the sharer’s personal positions and feel comfortable sharing similar information; admits mistakes |
| **Remains Open to Ideas.** | • Listens to others and objectively considers their ideas and opinions, even when they conflict with own  
• Humility; behavior characterized by self-understanding and awareness; openness  
• Creates transparency |
| **Values Others.** | • Seeks to understand self and others; uses an active approach to remaining open; genuine curiosity about others’ position or interests.  
|                 | • Caring; motivation by the interests of others  
|                 | • Gives credit to others for their contributions; stands up for deserving others and their ideas even in the face of resistance or challenge; shows empathy and offers reassurance in response to others’ concerns; treats people with dignity, respect, and fairness  
|                 | • Understands how stereotypes and bias impacts interpersonal effectiveness; is aware of personal biases that could cloud relationships |
Personal Growth Activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, developmental assignments, shadowing, experiential learning, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. Remember that many developmental activities can and will occur outside of work as part of your personal life.

Specific EXAMPLES of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

EXAMPLES of Developmental Activities

- Interview coworkers, peers, and others whom you trust. Be sure to discuss their definitions of ‘trust’ as well as your own.
- Work on joint or collaborative work teams that are recognized as ‘high trust’ teams.
- Volunteer to lead a workgroup or committee where you will be required to influence participants towards a specific outcome.
- Participate in formal or informal groups of like-minded individuals where you can discuss, practice and learn about influencing others. These can include professional organizations, community based organizations, your PTA, sports organization or church, service clubs, and similar organizations.
- Mentor subordinate staff on influencing, or find a mentor for yourself.
- Watch a TED TALKs, such as “Building Trust” by James Davis (2014); use the included “reading list” provided with TED TALKs to further explore topics you find interesting.
- Pursue professional certification through IPMA-HR, SHRM, ATD, and/or HRCI.

EXAMPLES of Training

- Formal training on team/group dynamics.
- Attend Stephen M.R. Covey’s “Speed of Trust” training.
- ATD, SHRM, Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) or IPMA-HR local, regional or national organization-provided webinar, training or conference offering specific sessions or training on Trust or Trust-Building for Human Resources Professionals.
- Specialized focused meetings and trainings for Washington State human resource employees offered by State HR and the Office of the Attorney General Labor and Personnel section.
- Consider attending programs offered by the Cascade Executive Programs at the University of Washington’s Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs.
- Consider obtaining an advanced degree in your area of specialization.
**Recruiting** for candidates who have this competency may include, but is not limited to, providing clear statements about qualifications desired or required in the recruitment announcement, performing specific outreach activities to organizations or groups whose members often possess the desired competency, developing interview questions that assess the candidates competence, and asking reference questions that assess the candidates competence.

**Specific EXAMPLES of recruiting activities for this competency include:**

**Example of qualification statement:** A highly qualified candidate will demonstrate trustworthiness in actions, decisions and services; demonstrate and seek ‘reputational integrity’ in relationships and interactions; will make her/his positions known in a respectful manner, and will expect and receive others’ positions equally respectfully; listens deeply to understand, then acknowledges that understanding; actively seeks participation by diverse others and shares or gives credit for others’ contributions.

**Example of outreach activity:** Source the job announcement to the SHRM journal/online career center, or contact known individuals with this skillset asking for names of potential candidates who demonstrate this competency.

**Examples of interview questions:**
1. Describe a time when you felt there was a lack of trust between a peer and you. What was the situation?
2. Describe a time when you remained true to department or organizational policies when it wasn’t the easiest path to pursue. What did you do? What was the result?
3. Tell me about a time at work when you objectively considered others’ ideas, even when they conflicted with yours.
4. Tell me about a time when you disclosed your thoughts, feelings or rationale to build trust with someone.

**Examples of reference check questions:**
1. Do/Did you consider this person trustworthy? Why or why not?
2. Can you give me an example of how this person earned trust, or built trust in your organization?
3. Did this person ever give you reason not to trust her/him? How?
Identifying Required Proficiency Levels

While behavioral indicators are used to help in evaluating performance, proficiency levels describe the level of a competency required to perform a specific job successfully. These levels relate to the work required for a specific job. Different jobs require different levels of proficiency for successful performance. Not all jobs will require the highest level of proficiency and some may not require specific competencies at all. The proficiency levels outlined below apply to all of the HR Core Competencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Proficiency Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Entry**         | - Limited or no use of competency required for the job  
                      - Competency has been minimally demonstrated  
                      - May have had limited opportunity to apply the competency  
                      - May have limited understanding of the competency |
| **Developing**    | - Basic understanding or knowledge required for the job  
                      - Basic understanding and knowledge sufficient enough to handle routing tasks  
                      - Requires some guidance or supervision when applying the competency  
                      - Understands and can discuss terminology and concepts related to the competency |
| **Independent**   | - Detailed knowledge, understanding and application of the competency required to be successful in the job  
                      - Ability to handle non-routine problems and situations  
                      - Requires minimal guidance or supervision/works independently  
                      - Consistently demonstrates success in the competency  
                      - Capable of assisting others in the application of the competency |
| **Advanced**      | - Highly developed knowledge, understanding, and application of the competency required to be successful in the job and organization (total mastery)  
                      - Can apply knowledge outside the scope of one’s position  
                      - Is able to coach or teach others on the competency  
                      - Has a long-term perspective  
                      - Helps develop materials and resources in the competency |
| **Expert**        | - Specialist/Authority level knowledge, understanding, and application of the competency required to be successful in the job  
                      - Recognized by others as an expert in the competency and is sought out by others throughout the organization (expert in the area)  
                      - Works across team, department, and organizational functions  
                      - Applies skills across multiple projects or functions  
                      - Able to explain issues in relation to broader organizational issues  
                      - Creates new applications or processes  
                      - Has a strategic focus |