2026 PSRW Leadership Award — Core Competencies

1. Models Values, Culture & Trust

Purpose & Intent

This competency recognizes leaders who consistently demonstrate integrity, accountability, humility, and respect, and who actively shape a culture of trust. Leadership is assessed not by title, but by daily behavior and the influence it has on people and systems.

What This Looks Like in Practice

- Leads ethically and transparently, even when decisions are difficult
- Demonstrates self-awareness and accountability
- Treats others with dignity, fairness, and respect
- Builds trust with employees, partners, and customers through actions—not just words

What Judges Should Listen For

- Examples where the nominee modeled values under pressure
- Actions that strengthened trust, morale, or credibility
- Evidence of ethical decision-making or accountability
- Influence on organizational culture or team behavior

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2. Cultivates Shared Strategic Vision & Direction

Purpose & Intent

This competency recognizes leaders who create clarity and purpose by aligning people, priorities, and long-term outcomes. They help others understand why the work goals are essential and how they relate to broader objectives.

What This Looks Like in Practice

- Clearly articulates a compelling and inclusive vision
- Connects daily work to strategic goals
- Helps colleagues or teams navigate ambiguity and change
- Aligns decisions with impact rather than convenience

What Judges Should Listen For

- How the nominee communicated vision or direction
- Evidence of alignment within or across teams or initiatives
- Leadership during change or uncertainty
- Impact on motivation, focus, or strategic outcomes

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3. Delivers Results as a Public Servant

Purpose & Intent

This competency recognizes leaders who translate vision into action, deliver meaningful outcomes, and steward public resources responsibly. Results must reflect the public good—not personal or political gain.

What This Looks Like in Practice

- Turns ideas into outcomes aligning with responsible use of public resources
- Works effectively across team, program, or agencies and with partners
- Balances urgency with accountability
- Delivers results that benefit customers, communities, or the public at large

What Judges Should Listen For

- Tangible outcomes or improvements
- Cross-boundary collaboration
- Problem-solving in complex environments
- Evidence of public impact or stewardship

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4. Embeds Inclusion, Equity & Fairness in Decision-Making

Purpose & Intent

This competency recognizes leaders who intentionally incorporate inclusion, equity, and fairness into decisions, policies, and leadership practices—ensuring outcomes do not unintentionally disadvantage individuals or communities.

What This Looks Like in Practice

- Seeks and values diverse perspectives
- Recognizes bias and power dynamics
- Adapts communication and decision-making approaches

- Ensures fairness in access, opportunity, and outcomes

What Judges Should Listen For

- Examples of inclusive decision-making
- Actions taken to address inequities or barriers
- Demonstrated cultural competence or humility
- Evidence of trust-building across diverse groups

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5. Fosters Collaboration, Teamwork & Learning

Purpose & Intent

This competency recognizes leaders who build strong, collaborative teams and create environments where people feel safe to learn, contribute, and innovate. These leaders break down silos and empower others to do the same.

What This Looks Like in Practice

- Encourages cross-team or cross-agency collaboration
- Creates psychological safety and trust
- Supports learning from mistakes and continuous improvement
- Shares power, credit, and decision-making

What Judges Should Listen For

- Evidence of collaboration across boundaries
- Examples of empowering others or developing talent
- Learning-oriented leadership behaviors
- Cultural or performance improvements over time

Judging Tip:

Score based on **impact, consistency, and leadership influence** — not job title or tenure. Strong nominations demonstrate clear outcomes and sustained leadership behaviors that align with PSRW values.