

Leadership in the Public Sector:

Models and Assumptions for Leadership Development in the Federal Government

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To fill the need for leaders and change agents throughout all levels of federal agencies, public sector human resource managers are now called on to develop innovative leadership development programs. Developing leaders for the 21st century requires attention to workforce trends as well as flexibility and creativity. Federal government leadership development programs need to address special leadership concerns of public agency managers, including creative thinking, collaboration, cross-organizational team building, and leading for results. This research provides overviews of federal leadership development programs and includes average and exemplary models. Lessons learned from this research offer a new set of leadership development assumptions for the public sector. Data were gathered from document analysis, preliminary network interviews, and in-depth personal interviews with program designers and participants.

Keywords: *leadership development programs; strategic human resource management; training innovation*

Effective leadership is integral to organizational effectiveness. Effective leaders create positive organizational cultures, strengthen motivation, clarify mission and organizational objectives, and steer organizations to more productive and high performing outcomes. Recent evidence of the importance of leadership and its absence or limited presence in some public organizations is plentiful. A 2003 study conducted by the Partnership for Public Service, for example, analyzed the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's 2002 Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) to determine the "best places to work" in the federal government (Partnership for Public Service, 2003). Although the Partnership's *Best Places to Work* analysis of FHCS data indicated that leadership was a key driver in workplace satisfaction, the FHCS

overall did not indicate that satisfaction with leadership was high in the federal government. Rather, it indicated that more than half of the federal employees surveyed found leadership to be deficient. This finding is obviously alarming (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2002).

Because leadership plays a crucial role in the other two factors believed to drive employee satisfaction—utilizing employee skills and teamwork—developing and sustaining effective leaders for the government of the 21st century is clearly fundamental. As further evidence, a recent analysis of the organizational transformation at the Internal Revenue Service concluded that effective and committed leadership was a critical factor in the success of that organization's change (Thompson & Rainey, 2003). Finally, in an analysis of management capacity and the "potential for performance" in federal agencies and state and local governments, Ingraham, Joyce, and Donahue (2003) reported that, in each case where strong management capacity was developed, strong leadership was also present.

The concern for finding and keeping effective leaders is a priority not only for the public sector but for the private sector as well. In private sector organizations, the role and authority of leadership is clearly identified and often heralded; indeed, private sector nostrums such as Lee Iaccoca's "Lead, follow, or get out the way!" are often echoed in public leaders' charges. Comptroller General David Walker's 2003 address to the National Press Club included a call to action: Government leaders, he said "need to recognize the leadership and stewardship obligations that we have to our children, grandchildren, and future generations" (Walker, 2003, n.p.).

Exercising leadership in public sector organizations, however, is different from leading private organizations. One of the most significant is the bifurcated administrative model created by placing elected and appointed officials, as well as senior leaders from the career bureaucracy at the top of many public organizations. This pattern is most notable in the federal government (Ingraham, 1995) but has important parallels in state and local government as well. Split leadership, combined with democratic accountability, oversight procedures created by courts and legislatures, and intense media attention, creates an environment for public sector leaders that is constrained in many complex ways.

This is not to suggest that public organizations should not worry about leadership because it is so hard. Rather, the point is that leadership is critical to effective organizational adaptation to change as well as to more general organizational performance (Ingraham, Sowa, & Moynihan, 2004; Thompson & Rainey, 2003). For public organizations, the need to perform

well—probably with more limited resources—is heightened by state budgetary crises, immense new concerns such as those flowing from September 11, and the need to manage and lead public employees in more flexible and performance-oriented management systems. The Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense provide clear federal examples.

Although the need to develop public sector leaders is increasingly apparent, how this task is accomplished is not nearly so obvious. Virtually all major agencies in the federal government support leadership development programs at some level; most of these programs operate with a leadership template or model. That model is most often based on a set of commonly accepted competencies. Since 1978, for example, the Senior Executive Service (SES) has been a primary vehicle for leadership development in the federal government. SES candidate development programs are omnipresent in federal leadership development efforts. These programs educate candidates in five SES core competency areas: leading change, leading people, being results driven, employing business acumen, and building coalitions/communications. SES development programs are generally 18 to 24 months in duration and are open to employees who are level GS 14/15, as well as to some external hires. These SES candidate development programs have been frequently analyzed (National Academy of Public Administration [NAPA], 2003). Here, we focus our attention on several kinds of leadership programs throughout the federal government.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: MULTIPLE IDEAS, MULTIPLE MODELS

Leadership development activities in all three sectors demonstrate one fundamental point: There is not a “best way” to develop leaders that is applicable to all organizational settings. There are, of course, trends. Recent trends in the private sector include 360-degree feedback from supervisors, peers, and subordinates; distance learning programs, off-site training programs, and temporary rotational work assignments (London, 2002). Most of these are found in public sector activities as well, with no clear pattern of preference.

There are also common dilemmas. One of these is “growing” versus “buying” leaders. Organizations often look outside for the incorporation of new ideas, relevant leadership experience, and fresh approaches—they seek to “buy” leaders. In contrast, a growing leaders’ perspective involves devel-

oping the skills and range of experience of an organization's employees over time, promoting individuals to positions of ever-increasing responsibility and skills, and eventually to leadership positions. Byham, Paese, and Smith (2002) emphasized that this method of developing leaders is most effectively done in such a way as to develop groups or cohorts within an organization—through comprehensive and planned leadership programs.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: CHOOSING APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP

Leader attraction, development, and retention efforts are changing in public and private sectors. Heroic, charismatic, solitary leadership, although still important for some organizations and for some kinds of organizational action, is being replaced by a more team-oriented style and perspective. Although advocated for some time in theory and popular leadership literature, the reality of creating team-based leadership in a still hierarchical and rigid organization is a challenging one. The importance of creating the ability to cut across internal obstacles to create a broad-based view of organizational performance and effectiveness is again demonstrated by the organizational changes at the Internal Revenue Service since its restructuring act in 1998. A key part of the flexibilities granted Commissioner Rossoti was special pay authority to hire critical top members of the agency's leadership team (Rainey, 2002). This demonstrates the idea of integrative leadership, that is, of leadership that necessarily creates and utilizes an institutional base that is more encompassing and longer term than the single leader model can provide (Ingraham, Sowa, & Moynihan, 2004).

Entrepreneurial leadership models are also beginning to mark the public sector. Numerous scholars have noted that there is increasing evidence of innovative or entrepreneurial leadership behavior by employees located at all levels of public organizations—and this phenomenon has been linked to enhanced public sector effectiveness (Borins, 2000; Sanders, 1998; Thompson, 1998). Entrepreneurial leaders have a strong motivation to “make a difference” and work to do so with determination and optimism (Doig & Hargrove, 1990). These individuals look for opportunities to forge their own direction, despite strong central organizational control. Forging their own way, said Rainey (1997), impels these individuals to connect with broader political and social trends.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: FITTING IN WITH AGENCY DIRECTIVES?

Governmental leadership development programs also increasingly focus on the need to create the conditions necessary for entrepreneurial leadership to emerge or be brought into the organization. For example, in *Results-Based Leadership*, Ulrich, Zenger, and Smallwood (1999) argued that mobilizing human capital through leadership development will contribute to the development of organizational capital. These researchers believe that successful leadership development programs can identify star performers and invest in their future success as leaders; however, their training must be closely tied to organizational results. Projected outcomes for the organization must be balanced with outcomes for the individual, and there must be a feedback loop that tailors leadership development sessions to meet the needs of the organization and the individual as employees become increasingly empowered to initiate productive actions in their work. Although the pure private-sector entrepreneurial leader model requires some tailoring to fit with public sector risk and accountability expectations, the attractiveness of the ability to create new opportunities, to adapt to change, and to shape a more change oriented culture in public organizations is already reflected in basic core competencies for federal executives.

CORE COMPETENCIES AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has identified five executive core qualifications (ECQ) for executives government-wide: leading change, leading people, results driven, business acumen, and building coalitions/communications. According to OPM, successful performance in the highest level of the civil service (SES) requires competence in each ECQ. These competencies are supplemented by a list of 27 specific skills and abilities intended for the executive feeder group, that is, managers and supervisors. To supplement core competencies for the Senior Executive Service and its feeder groups, most agencies have identified organization-specific core competencies.

Public sector definitions of competence are strongly influenced by private sector experience and theory. McClelland's (1982) work underpins much of this thought. McClelland maintained that it was possible to identify dimensions of personality that could predict effectiveness in job per-

formance and/or success in life in general. Companies such as General Electric, IBM, Microsoft, and Monster.com are frequent referents for public sector organizations pursuing competency-based leadership strategies. A 2002 report from Hewitt Associates (2002), for example, surveyed the top 20 companies for leadership models and concluded: "A significant correlation exists between a company's average return on sales and defined leadership competencies. That is, those companies with defined leadership competencies tend to have a higher return on sales than those companies without defined leadership competencies" (p. 1).

Current thinking about leadership competencies has moved away from broad competencies relevant across organizations to a focus on specific management and leadership contexts and environments. It is now well accepted that competencies are generally job or context based; incorporate motives, traits, skills, aspects of self-image or social roles; and focus on a specific body of knowledge (Robotham & Jubb, 1996). Vague, overarching, government-wide competencies are consistently supplemented with agency- and mission-specific characteristics in most successful leadership development programs in the private and public sector.

RESEARCH INTENT

The intent of this research was to begin to describe the scope of leadership development programs in federal agencies. All programs selected for study were located in the Washington, D.C. area. Agencies with recognized leadership development abilities were included, as were agencies about which little was known. An extensive Web search provided an overview of more than 30 agencies; 13 were selected for more intensive analysis and interviews. Funding for the research was provided by the Partnership for Public Service. Minicases based on this research are posted on the Partnership Solutions Center Web site at www.ourpublicservice.org/info-url3904/info-url.htm.

METHOD

The research reported here employed qualitative research techniques, including document review, phone interviews, and in-depth personal interviews with leadership development program designers and participants. When possible, key agency or department leaders were interviewed as well.

Findings were compiled and overviews drafted for 13 public sector leadership programs. The findings reported here are from a more limited set—eight of the agencies analyzed. The goal of providing these overviews is to help improve understanding of the range and scope of public-sector leadership development efforts that extend beyond well-known models such as the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program. From the data collected, general themes were extracted as “new assumptions” for leadership development in the federal government.

FEDERAL AGENCY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROFILES

Developing Up And Across

The Department of Agriculture, The Aspiring Leader. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) mission includes enhancing the quality of life for the American people by supporting production of agriculture, ensuring a safe/affordable/nutritious/accessible food supply, caring for agricultural/forest/range lands, supporting development of rural communities, providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents, expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products, and working to reduce hunger in America and throughout the world. To meet these diverse goals and agendas that span research areas as well as geographic expanses, the USDA’s leadership development program, The Aspiring Leader, is notable for its decidedly representative nature. Individuals from all USDA offices are included in the development program. As a result, the program is more inclusive than similar programs found in other agencies. The program includes employees at various levels of the organization as well—not just the top management employees. The Aspiring Leader program is housed in the USDA’s Graduate School, which was created in 1921 by the secretary of agriculture so that employees could continue their education while retaining their employment. Over the years, the school has evolved to meet the changing needs of the agency and its employees—including the development of the Aspiring Leader program.

The Aspiring Leader program is aimed at developing leaders in salary grades 5 to 7. Employees are nominated by their respective agency branches to participate in the three, 5-day residential training sessions (total of 15 days) that are conducted over a 6-month period. The cost of the program is \$2,495 per participant and focuses on all five SES ECQs. Successful

completion of the Aspiring Leader program generally results in promotion to positions of leadership within the USDA.

The Environmental Protection Agency, Candidate Development Program. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was established in 1970 in response to the growing public demand for cleaner water, air, and land. The EPA provides leadership in the nation's environmental science, research, education, and assessment efforts and works closely with other federal agencies, state and local governments, industries, and Indian tribes to develop and enforce regulations under existing environmental laws. The EPA's flagship leadership development program is designed to develop candidates for positions in the SES. Although other agencies offer similar candidate development programs, the EPA's program is unique in its strong emphasis on mentoring and coaching for employees at the GS 14/15 level. This program is a phoenix of sorts, rising from the ashes after over a 10-year absence. The EPA reinvented its leadership development program after discontinuing it in 1989. The agency's commitment to growing leaders within the organization is evident in their effort to revive this program at the annual cost of \$300,000. The program is monitored and managed by the EPA's Office of Administration and Resources Management. Interested employees must apply through this office for selection in the program. The time needed to complete this leadership program is 15 to 18 months. Participants engage in activities to develop all five OPM core competency areas. This program is especially concerned with developing evaluation methods and gathering feedback from participants. There has recently been a restructuring in the program content in response to feedback gathered from participants. As a result, special focus has been given to developing skills in the area of business acumen. Although participants hope to be selected for inclusion in the SES, there is no guarantee of placement following completion of the program. Rather, participants are guaranteed an experience that will enhance existing leadership skills and develop new ones.

Linking Up Leaders

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, Public and Indian Housing, Leadership Development Program. The Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH), a unit of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, exists to ensure safe, decent, and affordable housing for Native Americans; create opportunities for residents' self-sufficiency and economic independence; and ensure fiscal integrity by all program participants. Under

the jurisdiction of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, PIH provides affordable housing to more than 1.3 million households nationwide. Because the housing needs are geographically dispersed, so are the employees of PIH. The leadership development program offered by PIH emphasizes core competency development for employees who are assigned to field offices. Reinforcement and evaluation are offered throughout the course by mentors and program directors. This program is unique in that along with developing core competencies, it also encourages participants to be lifelong learners and develop relationships with other employees in PIH field offices. This supportive and networking-oriented atmosphere includes mentoring opportunities, scheduled conference calls, "leadership buddies," a learning journal, and a class listserv to keep participants connected to one another despite the geographical distances between them. The 6-month program includes group activities, assigned readings, and a group leadership project that applies to participants' current work goals. Over the 6 months, participants are expected to devote 16 hours per month to leadership development activities by following the monthly flow chart of structure, support, and activities. The supportive, and very structured, format of this program qualifies it as one of the most ambitious leadership development programs in the federal government.

The Department of Defense, Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP). The Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP) is a department-wide program for growing future Department of Defense (DOD) civilian leaders through a program of training, education, and development. DLAMP serves as the framework for achieving the objective of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces to ensure a DOD civilian leadership community capable of leading in a joint environment. This program meets an important public sector goal: nurturing a shared understanding and sense of mission between civilian and military leaders. Participants in the DLAMP program are typically GS grades 13, 14, or 15. Participation in the DLAMP program prepares civilian leaders to assume broader responsibility, expand their knowledge of the national security mission, and strengthen their understanding of complex policy and operational challenges. The DOD hopes that this program will equip their civilian leaders with a solid grasp of national security issues and prepare them to meet difficult challenges. Employees are nominated for participation in the DLAMP program. Participants and their DLAMP mentors complete an extensive assessment tool that identifies the educational and developmental needs of the participant—and this assessment is mapped

alongside the OPM ECQ. DLAMP requires five core courses that are each 2 weeks in length and are offered year-round. Class sizes are kept small at 25 participants per class. This small class size allows for more individualized attention and a higher level of participation. At the end of the course, program participants receive extensive feedback on their performance. This feedback loop helps fill out the participant's individual development plan, which is intended to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Linking Individual and Organizational Change

The Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service, Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP). The Indian Health Service (IHS) was established in 1955 as a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its mission is to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indian and Alaska Natives as well as ensure that they have access to comprehensive and culturally acceptable public health services. Members of the more than 560 federally recognized Indian tribes and their descendants are eligible for services provided by the IHS. The IHS leadership development program is designed for current and future leaders in the IHS and is administered by the Clinical Support Center of IHS. The program grows leaders by offering interactive curriculum that is transmitted to participants via exercises, case studies, and team projects. Participants in the program are identified through competitive selection. The program is presented in three, 4-day sessions over the course of 1 year. The goal of the program is to reduce barriers, increase innovation, ensure a better flow of information and ideas, and lead change within the IHS. Participants not only develop their leadership skills but network with other IHS directors and can earn education credits. The course costs \$1,100 per session, however scholarships are available. Successful completion results in a certificate of completion from the IHS. Although this program emphasizes traditional leadership skills such as problem solving, conflict resolution, and ethics, it balances this content with some non-traditional leadership skills such as stress management, self-awareness, and developing a personal vision. This holistic approach to leadership development is comprehensive and consistent with the department's focus on raising the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of its target constituents.

Linking the Present to the Future

The Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Leadership Development Program. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS), a branch of the Department of Treasury, deals directly with more Americans than any other federal institution. The IRS is undergoing changes in the biggest reorganization and modernization efforts undertaken in almost 50 years, following the passage of the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998. In the wake of that law, the IRS developed a leadership framework that promotes continuous learning at all levels of the organization. This framework gives special attention to the IRS's new value-based leadership philosophy and competency framework for all managers: front-line, senior, and executive. By developing leaders throughout the organization, the IRS will be better able to promote the goals of the Reform Act—namely, improved customer and employee satisfaction as well as business results. The IRS believes that leadership development is the critical component of modernization and has developed an explicit leadership theory and leadership values to guide the modernization efforts. The IRS crafted its leadership framework and leadership competencies from interviews conducted with IRS executives. The framework and the target competencies are now linked to managers' annual performance agreement. In this way, the framework not only guides leadership development in the organization but also serves as a means of charting individual employee progress. This helps link results-based performance commitments with competency-based behaviors among agency managers. Managers at all levels receive instruction on leadership theory, practice, application, and reflection. New and seasoned managers at each level receive specialized development instruction in the form of classroom and electronic education, planned developmental assignments, coaching and mentoring, business-related challenges, and leadership simulations. This tiered approach to leadership development indicates a commitment to growing leaders from within the organization: Career paths and avenues for advancement are clearly established. In addition, this tiered approach serves as a means for effective succession planning.

Making Mentors Matter

Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, Leadership Enhancement and Development Program (LEAD). The Veterans Benefits Administration's Leadership Enhancement and Development Program

(LEAD) emphasizes relationship building between those who are already in leadership positions with those who aspire to be. Those who are selected participate in the program free of charge. Class sizes are kept small to allow for maximum attention and participation. Each participant develops his or her leadership skills through a mix of classroom training, individual and group projects, and shadowing assignments. Assessment tools and mentoring are fundamental aspects of the program and are used to monitor participant progress. The LEAD program includes 11 mandatory activities and assignments, including 3 weeks of training, touring different areas of the VA, developing a mentoring relationship, developing an individual development plan, developing team-building skills, completing two shadowing assignments, participating in individual leadership assignments, conducting presentations, conducting interviews, undergoing assessment, and engaging in self-study projects. LEAD program participants make special note of the fact that following their participation in the program, they feel more connected to the organization and committed to Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) goals. The mentoring relationships often continue long after the program is completed, as do informal relationships with peers who were fellow classmates in the program. These networks also help foster a sense of community and agency commitment. By developing these ties early, the VBA is countering an upcoming need for large-scale succession planning. Most of these young leaders express a desire to stay with the VBA for the duration of their careers. Prior to participating in the leadership development program, many were uncertain of their “place” in the organization.

Building Core Values

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Agency-wide Leadership and Management Development Program. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was established in 1958 to begin working on options for human space flight. NASA’s mission is to understand and protect our home planet, to explore the universe and search for life, and to inspire the next generation of explorers. NASA’s headquarters are located in Washington, D.C., and extend to 15 field facilities. As a result of this decentralized organizational structure, NASA’s leadership development programs are quite extensive. In addition to a well-developed SES candidate development program, NASA offers agency-wide leadership and management development programs through its headquarters. Agency-wide lead-

ership development programs include Management Education Program, Global Leadership Program, Development Program for Deputies, Managing the Influence Process, The Human Element, Business Education Program, and the Strategic Business Management Program. According to NASA, these programs seek to train managers to motivate their employees, manage change, and develop as the future leaders of the organization. The 2- to 10-day residential programs are conducted at NASA's Management Education Center in Virginia and offer a variety of instructional activities such as small group exercises, taped discussions, and lectures. Each leadership development program is unique in its audience and topics covered, although all are part of the leadership model developed by NASA that emphasizes civil-service core competency development. Employees are matched with a leadership development program that addresses different topical areas such as NASA history, leadership presentations, personality assessment, teamwork, decision making, and communication. Some NASA employees participate in the leadership program referred to as "The Human Element". This nontraditional course emphasizes such concepts as truth, choice, inclusion, control, openness, significance, likeability, self-esteem, and the mind-body connection for health and illness. NASA's commitment to providing a variety of traditional and experimental leadership development programs for employees at all levels of the organization sets it apart as a comprehensive program that is committed to growing leaders through the ranks of the organization as well as addressing holistic life issues that relate to effective leadership.

Individual Growth and Development

National Aeronautics and Space Administration-Goddard Space Flight Center, Leadership Alchemy. The Goddard Space Flight Center implemented a very contemporary approach to leadership development with the Leadership Alchemy program. This program requires each participant to create a personal leadership vision and identify ways to achieve that vision. The program uses a visual logo that is imaginative and representative of the program goals. The program emphasizes leadership as a capacity that can be learned and developed in every employee. This sense of inclusiveness adds to the program's appeal. The program is 9 months long and does not come with a guarantee for promotion or other reward following completion. However, there is evidence that many program participants are promoted on completion. During Phase 1, participants gain personal insight and

leadership mastery. During the second phase, participants create a desired organizational future. Last, participants transform knowledge and skill into “wisdom and action.” Following completion, participants are granted “Master Wizard” status and are encouraged to share what they have learned with other Goddard employees. This program signals a truly new approach to leadership development that demonstrates that leadership development can be productive and entertaining at the same time.

Buying Leaders

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HHS Emerging Leaders Program. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) offers a unique leadership development program unlike any of the other programs previously profiled. The Emerging Leaders Program is designed to attract or buy college graduates from outside the organization. Individuals who were exceptional college students (3.0 GPA or higher) or graduate students (must have a master’s level degree from an accredited university) are eligible to apply for this 2-year leadership program. Candidates are selected via a competitive application and interview process. After acceptance into the program, the candidates receive exposure to various aspects of the agency through three to five rotational assignments that range in length from 2 to 3 months each. Assessment and evaluation is ongoing throughout the 2-year period, and mentoring is a prime component of the leadership development program. In addition to developing skills that focus on the OPM core competencies, program participants receive developmental instruction on work-life issues, interpersonal issues, and visionary/entrepreneurial issues. Following the completion of the rotations, participants are funneled into one of five distinct career paths, depending on their background and experience. This program hires all majors, and selection is based on need per career path: administrative, information technology, social science, scientific and public health. After successful completion of the program, graduates advance to a GS-11 or GS-12 position within their assigned division of HHS.

Lessons Learned—New Assumptions for Leadership Development

Personal initiative and top-level support are necessary. Most often, potential participants have expressed desire to participate in the leadership devel-

opment program. Their personal initiative, in addition to their leadership potential, is often noted by supervisors, who then recommend them for participation. The support of the participant's supervisor is crucial for the participant to succeed in terms of completing their leadership tasks and maintaining their regular work-related responsibilities.

Ongoing monitoring and continued mentoring are important. Successful leadership development programs include a strong component of monitoring. Participants are asked to maintain an individual development plan, which they update regularly to indicate goals accomplished and changing future goals. The mentor relationship continues for many of the participants after the end of the program, and it is a relationship that is highly valued. In addition to a continued mentoring relationship, the program designers often keep in touch with participants, and participants tend to keep in touch with each other through informal networks.

There should be a mix of developmental activities. Nearly every leadership program profiled incorporated multiple forms of activity in their leadership development programs. In addition to providing classroom-type training and lectures, there was often a component of team activities, individual projects, and mentor correspondence. This mix of activities helps participants develop interpersonal and networking skills as well as an ability to work independently.

Teaching leadership skills includes teaching life skills. The majority of the leadership development programs profiled demonstrated some aspect of life management in addition to the traditional leadership development skills that are set forth by the OPM. Be it managing stress or assessing personality, these programs made an effort to connect leadership skills and life skills. The assertion can be made that program designers want leaders who are able to balance successful work lives with healthy personal lives.

Leadership development includes individual long-term career planning and organizational succession planning. Our findings indicate that participants in leadership development programs feel a stronger connection with the organization after completing the program. They noted that the leadership development program helped them feel like they "belonged" to the organization and that they were excited to be helping the organization meet its goals in the long term. These program participants expressed the view that they would be more likely to stay with the organization for the duration of their professional careers after completing the programs.

Growing leaders is the rule, buying is the exception. All profiled programs—except one—place an emphasis on growing leaders from within the organization rather than bringing them in from outside. For the most part, individuals who are selected to participate in leadership programs that grow leaders are those who have already demonstrated commitment to the organization's goals. In addition, they have already proven to have leadership potential before even beginning the leadership development program.

Leadership development = attention to core competencies. Each leadership development program paid attention to core competencies in one form or another. Although some of the programs did not exactly copy the OPM's ECQ, they did adapt the five core areas (leading change, leading people, results driven, business acumen, and building coalitions/communications) to meet their own organizational needs. Core competencies served as a guide for program design as well as a tool to evaluate progress in the program.

Leadership development is needed at all levels. It is clear that leadership development is necessary throughout public organizations. Leaders are needed at all levels to champion change and serve as tomorrow's top executives. Not only does tiered leadership development help with succession planning, it also solidifies an organization's commitment to developing individuals who can think and act independently and responsibly at all levels of the organization.

It depends on the organization. Leadership is not "one size fits all." The program's design and goals will depend on the organization's goals. The organization must determine its own needs to custom fit a leadership development program that will be successful—for participants and for the organization at large. One interesting finding in terms of organizational differences is that private and public sector approaches to leadership development are more similar than different. Program designers often utilized private sector applications and were hopeful that their public sector approaches would be utilized by the private sector as well.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from even this limited review that many leadership development programs in the federal government have made a serious effort to incorporate leading ideas and concepts about leadership development—as well as about agency specific needs and demands—into their leadership development programs. They are expending financial and human capital

resources to address current and future leadership needs. This is an encouraging conclusion. Top-notch leadership and expertise are needed to confront the challenges ahead in health, space, defense, homeland security, and many other public policy areas. Although many policy area experts and leaders are already resident in government, ready to confront these challenges, many others still need to be found. People are a major government resource—one that must be carefully developed and sustained. Downsizing efforts and the aging of the workforce are significant threats to the government workforce that are looming near. Counteractive measures must be developed to fill a large leadership gap coming in the very near future.

If they have not done so already, organizations must begin to think about succession planning by grooming leaders who can continue the organization's mission—especially in times of uncertainty. The new and unpredictable tasks facing public sector organizations in the 21st century require leaders who can plan effectively, think creatively, and act quickly. The research reported here serves as a guide, not only for understanding the state of existing leadership development programs in the public sector but also for framing important perspectives on how to develop and keep excellent leaders. Such information must be shared for real progress to take place. The public sector needs to get serious about leadership. Leadership acquisition and development requires a thoughtful strategy, careful candidate selection, appropriate reward, attentive mentoring, and an ongoing and sustained commitment from potential leaders and their respective organizations. The programs reviewed here indicate that work is under way to meet the leadership challenges facing many federal agencies. Sadly, the OPM survey demonstrates that the full challenge has not yet been met.

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