

National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) Leadership Academy Competencies

NAWDP Leadership Academy will focus on 3 areas of leadership competencies that are essential in the workforce development sector: self-understanding; relationship building; and “getting the job done.” Across five sessions and a capstone project, we will deepen our understanding of the following:

1. Self-Understanding and Awareness

Self-understanding is foundational to effective leadership. It involves recognizing your strengths, weaknesses, values, emotions, and how these influence your decisions and interactions with others. Mastering self-awareness allows leaders to:

- Improve Emotional Intelligence: Leaders who understand their emotions can manage them better, leading to more composed responses under pressure and fostering trust with their team.
- Enhance Decision-Making: Self-aware leaders can recognize personal biases and avoid letting them cloud judgment. They can also leverage their strengths more effectively while compensating for areas of weakness.
- Increase Authenticity: When leaders know themselves, they are more likely to lead authentically, which creates a sense of trust and loyalty among their teams.
- Promote Growth Mindset: Self-aware leaders are better positioned to recognize where they need to grow and can model this continuous improvement mindset for their teams.

2. Building Positive and Effective Relationships

Building strong relationships is key to influencing others, collaborating effectively, and fostering a positive workplace culture. Leadership is not just about directing people but about cultivating meaningful connections. Effective relationship-building leads to:

- Trust and Respect: When leaders invest in relationships, they create a foundation of trust, making it easier to lead and influence others. Trust is essential for high-performing teams and effective collaboration.

- Improved Communication: Leaders who are skilled in building relationships are better communicators. They can understand others' perspectives, foster open dialogue, and ensure information flows freely, which reduces misunderstandings.
- Conflict Resolution: Healthy relationships enable leaders to address and resolve conflicts more constructively. They can navigate difficult conversations with empathy, focusing on solutions rather than blame.
- Collaborative Culture: When leaders prioritize relationships, they foster collaboration and teamwork across departments, helping break down silos and encouraging shared goals and mutual support.

3. Transforming Thoughts and Vision into Action

Leadership is ultimately about driving results through action. Leaders must be decisive, proactive, and willing to take calculated risks. Action-oriented leaders:

- Turn Vision into Reality: A leader's vision is only as powerful as their ability to turn it into action. By taking the lead on initiatives, they inspire others to follow through and achieve goals.
- Foster Accountability: Leaders who take action model accountability, encouraging their team to take ownership of their responsibilities. This creates a culture where results matter, and people follow through on their commitments.
- Drive Innovation and Change: Leaders who are proactive and willing to take action create momentum for innovation and organizational change. They are not afraid to challenge the status quo or experiment with new ideas, driving progress in their teams and organizations.
- Adapt and Respond to Challenges: Taking action doesn't always mean being quick to move, but rather knowing when to act decisively. Leaders who can do this will be better equipped to guide their teams through uncertainty and crises with confidence.

In summary, self-understanding grounds leaders in authenticity and emotional intelligence, relationships enable them to influence and inspire others effectively, and taking action ensures they can lead teams toward achieving meaningful goals.