October 1, 2009

Building Human Resource Capacity:
Core Competencies for Ontario Developmental Services Sector

HayGroup®

*A Collaborative Initiative Between the
Provincial Network on Developmental Services
and the
Ministry of Community and Social Services*

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Executive Summary

Introduction, Background and Context

The Developmental Services sector in Ontario seeks to provide a very high quality of service and support to those with developmental disabilities in a rapidly changing and complex environment.

The sector today is faced with several critical human resource challenges. These challenges include:

- Recent history of high turnover,

- Challenges recruiting and retaining qualified employees,

- Entry level employees who are inexperienced and inconsistently trained,

- Decreasing availability of Developmental Service Worker (DSW) graduates,

- Not being recognized as a valuable career choice for people entering (or re-entering) the labour market,

- Lack of a commonly accepted standard set of skills, values, and/or traits for the various job positions within the sector, and

- Tight labour market conditions (i.e., an aging labour force, significant rates of retirement, and changing demographic characteristics among potential entrants), as do other sectors in the province.[1]

As a result, in 2007, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) convened an Expert Panel on Training, which made several key recommendations with the goal of improving and sustaining a quality workforce:

- Establish core competencies for six key positions in the Developmental Services sector,

- Review current education, training and development practices that support recruitment and retention, career progression, professional recognition and service quality,

- Improve/enhance recruitment and retention practices,

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[1]Expert Panel on Training for Developmental Services: Final Report, 2007 and Ministry of Community and Social Services: Improving Training, Recruitment, and Retention in Ontario's Developmental Services Sector: May 2007)

- Establish inter-ministerial and cross-sector collaboration

These recommendations form the basis of a province-wide human resource strategy, a partnership initiative between the Provincial Network Human Resources Sub-Committee (PNHRSC) and MCSS, that resulted from the work and recommendations of the Expert Panel and PNHRSC, and will serve as a foundation for this initiative. This initiative reflects a broad-based collaboration and cooperation between agencies and MCSS – this is the first time there has been such a concerted, cooperative effort within the sector to address an issue that challenges every agency in the transfer payment system. Guided by a Steering Committee co-chaired by both a Ministry and Sector representative, the Human Resource Strategy is comprised of the following six (6) sub-committees:

- Agency-Based Training,

- Best Human Resource Practices,

- Marketing and Awareness,

- Program Standards,

- Human Resources Shared Interests, and

- Core Competencies.

This report focuses specifically on the work of the Core Competencies Committee, particularly its role in developing the core competencies for the sector in collaboration with Hay Group. (See Appendix 2 for a list of Core Competencies Committee members.)

Commencing in May 2008, Hay Group's mandate was to develop core competencies for the following Developmental Services positions:

- Direct Support Professionals,

- Direct Support Supervisors,

- Specialized Support Staff,

- Clinical Specialists,

- Managers,

- Directors, and

- Executive Directors.

These job roles are undergoing a significant transition from supporting people with a developmental disability primarily through "traditional services" to promoting and facilitating community inclusion, meaningful participation and full citizenship. Core competencies will support a successful transformation of these job roles.

Competencies are defined as the skills, knowledge, abilities or personal characteristics that drive superior performance in a job role. There are two types of competencies – *technical* and *behavioural*:

- *Technical* competencies are the knowledge and skills required to do the job – they are WHAT a person needs to know or know how to do. Examples of technical competencies include knowledge of policies and procedures, applicable legislation, computer skills, how to administer first aid, etc. These competencies are often easier to see, train for and develop.

- *Behavioural* competencies – *Core* Competencies – on the other hand, are the behaviours a person demonstrates in performing the job – they are HOW an individual approaches his or her work. Examples of behavioural competencies include acting with integrity, influencing others, being resilient, working collaboratively, etc. These competencies can be harder to see, yet are what make the biggest difference in performance.

While technical competencies are necessary to perform the job role, they are not the differentiating factors of superior performance. Hay Group's approach, therefore, focused on determining the behaviours that drive superior job performance – the *core competencies* – of highly effective people in these job roles.

Core Competencies Project Methodology – The Work Performed

To identify core competencies for the seven (7) positions, focus groups were conducted across the province with individuals from all job roles, as well as behavioural event interviews with Executive Directors. The purpose of the focus groups and interviews was to identify both the core competencies for the job roles as well the strategic challenges facing the sector. The Core Competencies Committee played a significant role in the oversight of the methodology and ensuring that the diversity within the sector was represented.

In total, 188 employees, families and members of self-advocate groups from all regions within the sector provided input to the development of the core competency models. Seventeen focus groups were held in total.

Project Outcomes

Section 4 of the report presents the proposed core competencies for each of the following six positions: Direct Support Professionals, Direct Support Supervisors, Specialized Support Workers, Clinical Specialists, Managers, and Directors, and Section 6 presents the proposed core competencies for Executive Directors. In addition to the core competencies identified, several "threshold" competencies were identified – these are baseline competencies that should be utilized for recruitment purposes. They reflect the essential competencies to perform the job at a minimally effective level; however, they do not distinguish superior from average performance. Threshold competencies are based on organizational values and represent a minimum requirement to be considered for a job role in the sector.

Project Outcomes – Direct Support Professionals, Direct Support Supervisors, Specialized Support Workers, Clinical Specialists, Managers and Directors)

The following core competencies were identified for the six positions – Direct Support Professionals, Direct Support Supervisors, Specialized Support Workers, Clinical Specialists, Managers and Directors (note that not every competency applies to each of the six positions):

Core Competencies	
▪ Advocating for Others	▪ Leading Others
▪ Collaboration	▪ Managing Change
▪ Creative Problem Solving and Decision-Making	▪ Relationship/Network Building
▪ Developing Others	▪ Resilience
▪ Fostering Independence in Others	▪ Resource Management
▪ Holding People Accountable	▪ Self-Development
▪ Initiative	▪ Strategic Thinking
▪ Interpersonal Relations and Respect	

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The threshold competencies identified for recruitment purposes are:

Threshold Competencies
▪ Flexibility
▪ Self-Control
▪ Service Orientation
▪ Values and Ethics

Future Activities and Final Outcomes

Integrating competencies into the human resources framework will provide people with a common language with which to discuss performance expectations and accomplishments. It also encourages and supports an environment where ongoing behavioural-based coaching and feedback occurs. In addition, competencies guide the selection process by identifying those key behaviours that are essential for successful performance in a given job role. Once in a role, competencies can lay the foundation for learning and development as individuals work to improve their skills for their own job role or for succession planning purposes.

Section 7 of the report focuses on embedding and integrating the competencies across key human resource processes, and identifies best practices and key steps to integrate competencies into these processes:

▪ Recruitment, selection and staffing,

▪ Performance management,

▪ Training and development,

▪ Career planning, talent management and succession planning, and

▪ Rewards and recognition.

Each competency-based human resource process is described in more detail in the body of this report.

Section 8 of the report identifies the practical considerations for the sustainable implementation of comptencies. A separate reports has been prepared that addresses specific concerns pertaining to implementation within the sector, and presents suggested resolutions to those concerns based on input received at a creativity session, held on February 20th, 2009, attended by a diverse cross-section of HR practitioners from across the

sector. Suggestions from participants were built upon by Hay Group based on their extensive experience in this area, and captured in a separate report.

Final Conclusions

The implementation of workplace competencies in the Developmental Services sector is intended to improve and sustain a quality workforce, one that delivers a very high standard of service and support to those with developmental disabilities, despite the rapidly changing and complex nature of their environment.

The learning and development in terms of competencies will be the implementation of the behaviours required for success. Adopting and developing these new competencies must make sense to the people asked to adopt them.

For this reason, a highly collaborative approach is required. This was commenced with the manner in which the competencies were developed, and should continue in all aspects of the rollout.

For competencies to be most useful, however, they should ultimately be integrated into the various human resource processes, including recruitment, performance management, career planning, talent management and succession planning. It is recommended that competencies not be linked to compensation, but should certainly be linked to recognition. In implementing competencies, it is recommended that they be used initially for:

- *Recruiting new employees* – the better the fit between the requirements of a job and the competencies of an individual, the higher the person's job performance and job satisfaction will be

- *Developing and training existing employees* – competencies can serve as the foundation for learning and development as individuals work to improve their skills for their own role and/or future roles

The core competencies identified as a result of the work completed have been reviewed with accreditating bodies and deemed to be congruent. These competencies and the recommendations for their sustainable implementation are grounded in the values and ethics of the Developmental Services sector and the day-to-day realities of what it takes to deliver high quality service to people with developmental disabilities. Once implemented, competency development will foster the inspired leadership required to engage the community support essential for the important evolution of this sector.

1. Introduction and Background

As part of a HR Strategy and in an effort to meet the challenges facing the Developmental Services sector, in May 2008, the Provincial Network on Developmental Services Human Resources Sub-Committee (PNHRSC) contracted the services of Hay Group to establish core competencies for the following Developmental Services positions:

- Direct Support Professionals,

- Direct Support Supervisors,

- Specialized Support Staff,

- Clinical Specialists (added as the project proceeded),

- Managers,

- Directors, and

- Executive Directors.

A Collaborative Strategy

The core competencies represent one component of the province-wide Human Resource Strategy for the Developmental Services sector, a partnership initiative between the PNHRSC and the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). This strategy, which was launched at the Provincial HR Forum in March 2008, will provide a sector-wide foundation for recruitment, training, succession planning, and performance management, and will position Developmental Services as a preferred career choice across the province. The recommendation to establish core competencies was one of several that resulted from the work of an Expert Panel on Training, convened by MCSS in 2007, and will serve as a foundation for this initiative. This initiative reflects a broad-based collaboration and cooperation between agencies and MCSS – this is the first time there has been such a concerted, co-operative effort within the sector to address an issue faced by every agency in the transfer payment (TP) system. Guided by a Steering Committee co-chaired by both a Ministry and Sector representative, the Human Resource Strategy is comprised of the following six (6) sub-committees:

- Agency-Based Training,

- Best Human Resource Practices,

- Marketing and Awareness,

- Program Standards,

- Human Resources Shared Interests, and

- Core Competencies.

The Core Competencies Committee was formed to provide leadership and guidance to Hay Group in developing the core competencies for the sector.

The report is intended to provide a pathway towards a competency-based sector, which, in turn, will enhance services and raise the profile of the sector.

Transforming the Sector Through Competencies

Hay Group's approach to determining the characteristics of superior job performance goes beyond traditional task and skill analysis to identify the specific competencies of highly effective people in specific roles. Several assumptions underlie Hay Group's methodology for identifying the characteristics that distinguish the top performers in a particular job from average performers:
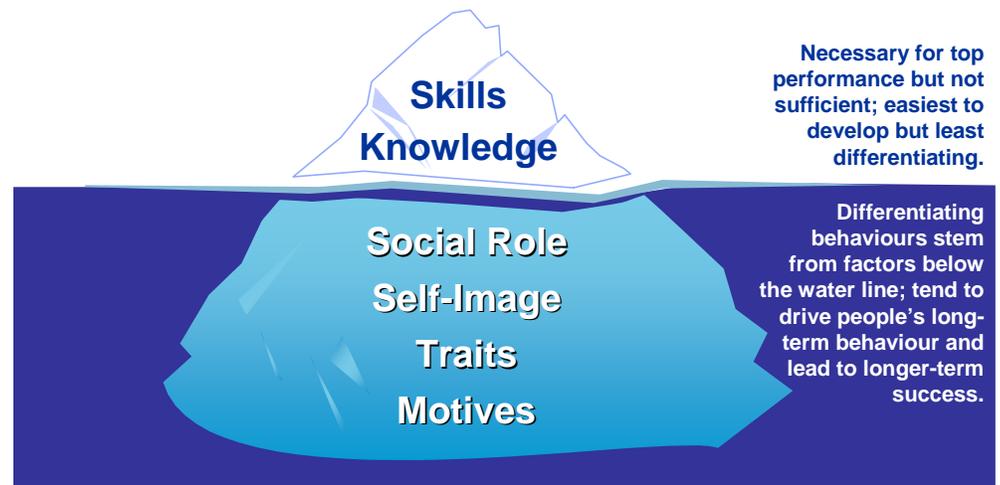
- In every job or role, some people perform more effectively than others

- Outstanding performers approach their jobs differently and possess different competencies than average performers

- The best way to discover the competencies relating to effective performance is to study the top performers

Competencies are defined as the skills, knowledge, abilities or personal characteristics that drive superior performance in a job role. There are two types of competencies – *technical* and *behavioural*:

- *Technical* competencies are the knowledge and skills required to do the job – they are WHAT a person needs to know or know how to do. Examples of technical competencies include knowledge of policies and procedures, applicable legislation, computer skills, how to administer first aid, etc. These competencies are often easier to see, train for and develop.

- *Behavioural* – or *core* – competencies, on the other hand, are the behaviours a person demonstrates in performing the job – they are HOW an individual approaches his or her work. Examples of core competencies include acting with integrity, influencing others, being resilient, working collaboratively, etc. These competencies can be harder to see, yet they are what make the biggest difference in performance.

While technical competencies are necessary to perform the job role, they are not the differentiating factors of superior performance. Hay Group's approach, therefore, focused on determining the behaviours that drive superior job performance – the *core competencies* – of highly effective people in these job roles, those behaviours that top performers employ more often, in more situations and with better results than average performers.

Performance is driven by a number of factors in people. One of the easiest ways to describe these factors is by using the analogy of an iceberg, as depicted below:

Skills
Knowledge

Necessary for top performance but not sufficient; easiest to develop but least differentiating.

Social Role
Self-Image
Traits
Motives

Differentiating behaviours stem from factors below the water line; tend to drive people's long-term behaviour and lead to longer-term success.

Above the water line are skills and knowledge. *Skills* are the things a person knows how to do well, for example, medication administration. *Knowledge* is what a person knows about a particular substantive area, e.g., basic principles related to the safe management and prevention of aggressive behaviours. Skills and knowledge are easy to see/identify, easier to develop, and essential to perform the job, but they rarely predict or determine outstanding performance. They are often what one can see on a resumé.

Below the water line are the other factors related to performance – the key drivers of core (behavioural) competencies. They are not readily apparent and harder to see in someone; however, they are critically important as they tend to drive people's long-term behaviour and, thus, their long-term performance. They help determine whether someone is well matched with his or her job or role; the better the match, the more effective and satisfied a person will be in carrying out what the job or role requires. In addition, core competencies can be developed. Following is a description of these factors:

- *Social Role* – the image a person projects to others, the "outer self," e.g., being a leader or a follower. It reflects a person's values – what he or she

believes is important. For example, if a person has an attitude or value that supporting people is important, that person may be driven to provide better support more often than someone else who doesn't feel the same way.

- *Self-Image* – the way a person sees himself or herself, "the inner self," e.g., seeing oneself as a teacher or a leader. For example, some doctors may see themselves as *experts*, and focus on how much they know about a particular specialty or how much skill they have in a particular area. Others may see themselves as *helpers*, focusing on what they can do for others.

- *Traits* – relatively enduring characteristics of a person's behaviour, e.g., caring, being a good listener, resilient. For example, someone may demonstrate the trait of self-control consistently when confronted. Someone else may show a consistent concern for detail. A person's traits may be very helpful in a job, especially when the job calls for the kind of traits a person has.

- *Motives* – the non-conscious things a person consistently thinks about or wants that causes them to take action – they are what naturally energizes a person and are formed early in life. For example, a person may be highly achievement-oriented and this may drive their performance on the job – always striving to improve performance and achieve results. Or a person may be motivated by affiliation or friendship and this may drive their performance because the job involves dealing collaboratively with many people.

Core competencies, in summary, are the underlying personal characteristics and behaviours of an individual that are required for outstanding performance in a job role. In addition, because different jobs have widely differing demands, the competencies that contribute to outstanding performance will differ from job to job. For example, the job of a Direct Support Professional in the Developmental Services sector will require a different set of core competencies from the job of a Manager or that of a Director.

This report describes the work completed by Hay Group in the identification of the core competencies that will lead to outstanding performance in each of the seven job roles.

The report includes:

- An executive summary of the project,

- Our understanding of the organizational context,

- The key steps in the project – the methodology used for developing the core competencies for all roles, including Executive Director – and the outcomes,

- Recommendations for future activities related to integrating competencies into HR processes within the sector,

- Our high level recommendations regarding a plan for a province-wide implementation of the core competencies, and

- Our final conclusions.

2. The Context – Understanding the Environment in Which the Sector Operates and the Population Served

A core competency is a function of both the *person* and the *situation*. Therefore, the appropriateness of a competency model – the set of core competencies identified for a particular job role – is dependent not just on an understanding of what drives superior performance in individual roles, but also on an understanding of both the context in which an individual performs and how that may change in the future. To identify the core competencies that will lead to superior performance, Hay Group started by gaining an understanding of the Developmental Services sector – the environment in which the sector operates and the population served – and how that may change in the future. The approach taken by Hay Group to gain an understanding of the context is described in Sections 3 and 5 of this report.

Understanding the Environment in Which the Sector Operates

Critical Human Resources Issues Faced by the Sector

The Developmental Services sector in Ontario is faced with critical human resource issues, including:

- Recent history of high turnover,

- Challenges recruiting and retaining qualified employees,

  Note: Labour force data combined with research conducted by Deloitte and Touche (2007) across the sector suggest that significant demographic trends will have an impact on Developmental Services agencies and their ability to meet current and future talent shortages. Most Developmental Services agencies are in a permanent hiring mode, and typically have numerous vacant positions. A Deloitte survey indicated that only one quarter of respondents believe their agencies are attracting the right people.

- Entry level employees who are inexperienced and inconsistently trained,

- Decreasing availability of Developmental Service Worker (DSW) graduates,

- Not being recognized as a valuable career choice for people entering (or re-entering) the labour market,

- Lack of a commonly accepted standard set of skills, values, and/or traits for entry level positions in the sector, and

- Tight labour market conditions (i.e., an aging labour force, significant rates of retirement, and changing demographic characteristics among potential entrants) as do other similar sectors in the province.[2]

These issues were the impetus for MCSS to convene the Expert Panel on Training, which made the following key recommendations:

1. Establish core competencies for 6 key positions in the Developmental Services sector.

2. Review current education, training and development practices that support recruitment and retention, career progression, professional recognition and service quality.

3. Improve/enhance recruitment and retention practices.

4. Establish inter-ministerial and cross-sector collaboration,

A Transformation of Developmental Services

Concurrently, the Ontario Government initiated a *transformation* of Developmental Services. The six key principles of transformation are:

1. **Citizenship** – supports for people who have a developmental disability promote self-determination and participation in all aspects of community life.

2. **Fairness and Equity** – supports are equitable and people with similar situations receive similar supports across the province.

3. **Accessibility and Portability** – funding and supports are flexible and go with the person if he or she moves to another community.

4. **Safety and Security** – supports are designed to balance appropriate supervision, especially for those who are most at risk, with the right to self-determination, privacy and confidentiality.

5. **Accountability** – service delivery will include mechanisms to hold service providers accountable to the people using their services and the Ministry for the quality and outcome of the supports they offer.

6. **Sustainability** – funding and supports are based on assessed needs and available resources in the context of a long range plan for the Developmental Services system.

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[2] Ibid

To further support transformation, the Government passed new legislation to govern the sector. The *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act* received Royal Assent on October 8, 2008. The Act will come into full effect once the regulations have been finalized. Key elements of the Act include:

1. Significant language changes (for example, the new Act eliminates the words "facility" and "institution," and highlights "supports" – flexible assistance that gives people more choice and independence).

2. A standard definition of eligibility that will be applied consistently and fairly across the province.

3. A new application and assessment process for accessing developmental services that will be standardized across the province.

4. A process by which people supported will be involved in determining the amount of support they require and the way that supports are delivered and designed.

5. More readily available direct funding to individuals and their families, providing more choice and flexibility.

Understanding the Population Served

The people served by this sector include those with developmental disabilities and their families.

The *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008*, provides a new definition of the term "developmental disability" and references that term throughout the Act. It is noted that this sector serves a very diverse population of people with a developmental disability, as defined by the legislation. This includes people with specific cultural and philosophical affiliations. In an effort to reflect the language of the Act, this paper will use the term "developmental disability" to be inclusive of all adults receiving support from the Developmental Services sector of Ontario.

The Changing Focus of Agencies

The changing needs of families are being addressed by both government and the supporting agencies. For example, families of those with developmental disabilities, always strong advocates, are placing new expectations on government and agencies that provide services. There is an increased demand for direct funding and individualized supports. There is a greater expectation that their sons and daughters will be full participants in their

communities and have services that are designed to respond to their individual goals and support needs, outside of a traditional support system.

Historically, the focus of agencies was on providing supports and life skills within categorical services. This is now changing to a focus on providing people with the support needed to enable them to lead their own lives within their communities. The move in this direction is now considered to be the accepted best practice. With the transition from "supporting" people to "facilitating community inclusion" and "meaningful participation/ citizenship," more and more people are living in their own home or with their families.

With the transition to promoting and facilitating inclusive communities, meaningful participation and full citizenship, agency employees become advocates, facilitating the discussions that will promote access to community resources.

Government, which previously mandated the closing of the institutions, passed the *Services for Persons to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008*. As a result, more emphasis will be put on direct funding and individual choice and, therefore, more competition will be created between TP agencies and other services providers. The sector must adapt to the the changing roles and expectations of the families, who will have greater control, as well as to the increasing, complex needs of people with a developmental disability.

In addition, the government is moving towards a more standardized quality management framework. Accreditation models are being considered as one method of quality assurance.

Impact of the Context on the Project

Hay Group's research into the context of the Developmental Services sector confirmed that this is a sector in the midst of significant change. What emerged was a picture of highly dedicated and caring employees providing supports to people with a wide range of needs in a rapidly changing environment. The needs of people with a developmental disability are rapidly changing as we learn about specific needs groups (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder) and about the needs of aging persons with a developmental disability.

The current environment of the Developmental Services sector is triggering a shift in the skills and behaviours required by support workers. While the DSW designation addresses technical skills, an alignment of program standards and curriculum with the core competencies would promote the behaviours required to work effectively in a transformed sector. In addition,

with the increase of opportunities for developmental service workers in the community, for example, educational assistants in schools, it has become increasingly difficult for agencies to hire the quality of employees they need. Agencies are hiring many people without any traditional or sector specific education, and then creating their own in-house training programs to address the behavioural components. This makes a "universal" competency model critical to maintain integrity across agencies.

Not only are these changes having an impact on the Direct Support Professionals, but also on Directors and Executive Directors. Roles are increasingly demanding a stronger focus, an increased ability to build networks and advocate both with the Ministry as well as in the community. The roles, particularly at the Executive Director level, require more complex skills to respond to the evolving sector.

The increased expectations of families and government, new legislation, and the changing demographics of prospective employees will require this service sector to strategically position itself for the future. It will be essential to recruit, retain and train employees who possess and/or have the potential to develop the core competencies identified in this report. In addition, not only will these core competencies provide employees with a clear picture of the behaviours required for success in their current role, but will be valuable for career planning, enabling employees to identify the behaviours required for success in future roles, whether in their own agency or across agencies in the sector. Hence, the PNHRSC and MCSS view this as an opportunity to identify the competencies that would enhance the quality of supports, enhance the value and profiles of those delivering these supports, and, thus, enable agencies to operate effectively in this transforming sector.

3. Project Methodology – The Work Performed – Direct Support Professional through Director Roles

Hay Group applied a comprehensive methodology/approach to the development of the core competency models for the identified Developmental Services sector positions. This section describes Hay Group's approach to identifying the core competencies for Direct Support Professional through Director roles. (Note: While the methodology used to identify the core competencies for Executive Directors is similar, some steps and details pertaining to the steps vary from the methodology outlined in this section. Refer to Section 5 for a description of the methodology for Executive Directors.)

The Core Competencies Committee played a significant role in the oversight of the methodology to ensure the adequate representation of various perspectives. (See Appendix 2 for a list of the Core Competency Committee members.)

The following graphic illustrates the key phases in Hay Group's approach and the steps within each phase:

① **Understand the Organizational/ Strategic Context and Documentation Review**

② **Conduct Focus Groups**

③ **Analyze the Data and Finalize the Core Competency Models and Competency Dictionary**

1. Gather data to understand the organizational/strategic context
2. Review documentation – job descriptions
3. Prepare preliminary Competency Dictionary

1. Prepare plan for conducting focus groups
2. Establish nomination process
3. Prepare protocol and conduct data gathering focus groups
4. Prepare protocol and conduct validation focus groups

1. Finalize core competency models for all roles
2. Revise/customize the Competency Dictionary

Following is a detailed description/breakdown of the work completed in each phase.

Phase 1: Understand the Organizational/Strategic Context and Documentation Review
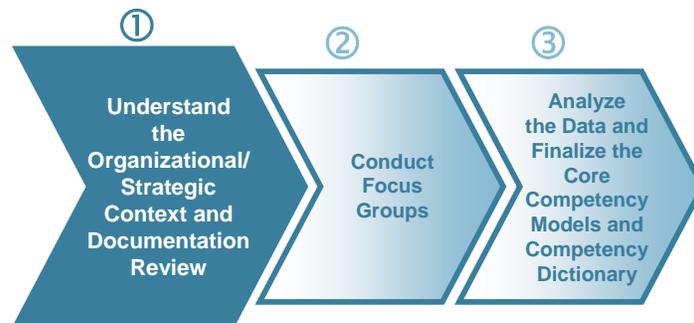
Step 1: Gather Data to Understand the Organizational/Strategic Context

A critical first step in the development of competency models is to gain an understanding of the organizational and strategic context to ensure alignment of the models to this context.

In this step, Hay Group took a four-pronged approach:

- Strategic interviews were conducted with a panel of senior leaders within the sector to better understand both the current and anticipated future environment.

- The focus groups included a discussion on current and future challenges.

- A Policy Manager with MCSS was interviewed to better understand the implications of the pending legislative changes.

- A strategic component focusing upon sector challenges and context was included in each of the 10 behavioural event interviews conducted with a diverse group of Executive Directors from across the province.

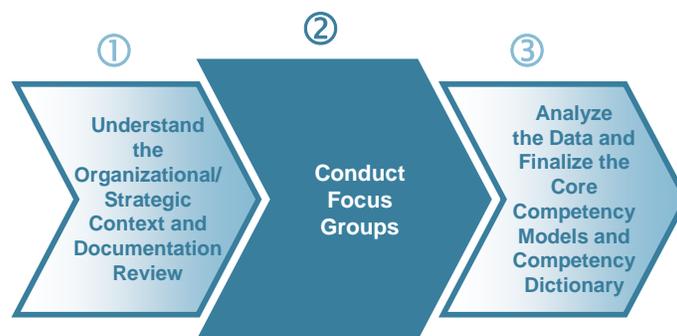### Step 2: Review Documentation – Job Descriptions

Hay Group reviewed job descriptions for all positions within the sector. The purpose of reviewing these job descriptions was to gain insights about the roles to inform the identification of competencies to be included in the preliminary Competency Dictionary for use in the focus groups. The job descriptions were provided by members of the Core Competencies Committee, and reflected the variations of roles from the different agencies within the sector.

Step 3: Prepare Preliminary Competency Dictionary

With an understanding of the organizational and strategic context, as well as the roles in the sector for which competency models are to be developed, Hay Group prepared a preliminary Competency Dictionary – a compendium/ compilation of competencies considered to be relevant to the roles and sector. Hay Group used the Ontario Public Services (OPS) Dictionary, the Hay Group Millennium Dictionary, as well as dictionaries for similar types of organizations as source documents in the preparation of the preliminary Competency Dictionary.

The preliminary Competency Dictionary consisted of 30 competencies, and included competencies relevant to both direct support and management positions.

Phase 2: Conduct Focus Groups

①
Understand the Organizational/ Strategic Context and Documentation Review

②
Conduct Focus Groups

③
Analyze the Data and Finalize the Core Competency Models and Competency Dictionary

Step 1: Prepare Plan for Conducting Focus Groups

A series of one-day focus groups were conducted to gather data to build the core competency models for each position. It was agreed that some of the roles would be grouped together for the focus groups as follows:

- Direct Support Professionals grouped with Direct Support Supervisors

- Managers and Directors grouped with Executive Directors

The rationale for grouping the roles was to include the richness of information and experience that would naturally come from their interactions. For example, in the case of Direct Support Supervisors, most have been promoted from Direct Support Professional roles, and would, therefore, be able to bring that experience to the group. In addition, each role would be able to provide greater insight into what would constitute superior performance in the other role. We believe that this rationale was very advantageous in gathering robust data for building the competency models.

To build commitment and acceptance of the core competency process across the sector, it was agreed that focus groups would be held in each of the province's nine regions.

In total, 15 focus groups were held as follows:

- 9 focus groups for Direct Support Professionals and Direct Support Supervisors:

  - Hamilton/Niagara – July 8, 2008

  - Central West – August 12, 2008

  - South West – August 13, 2008

  - North East – August 25, 2008

  - Central East – August 28, 2008

  - South East – September 9, 2008

  - Eastern – September 10, 2008

  - Toronto – September 23, 2008

  - North – October 7, 2008

  108 employees participated in these focus groups (58 Direct Support Professionals, and 50 Direct Support Supervisors).

- 3 focus groups for Managers, Directors and Executive Directors:

  - Hamilton/Niagara – July 10, 2008

  - North East – August 26, 2008

  - Toronto – October 28, 2008

  36 employees participated in these focus groups.

- 2 focus groups with Specialized Workers:

  - Toronto – September 24, 2008

  - Toronto – October 30, 2008 (included provincial representation)

  24 employees participated in these focus groups.

- 1 focus group with Clinical Specialists:

  - Toronto – November 4, 2008 (included provincial representation)

  12 employees participated in this focus group.

- 1 focus group with people who receive support:

  ➢ Toronto (included provincial representation)

- 1 focus group with families:

  ➢ Toronto (included provincial representation)

The intent of the focus groups with people who receive support and families was to validate and supplement the data gathered to date.

In total across all focus groups, 188 employees, families and people who receive support, from all regions within the sector, provided input to the development of the competency models.

Step 2: Establish Nomination Process

Employees were nominated to participate in the focus groups based on the following criteria:

- The employee should be successful in his/her role (i.e., has consistently received high/above average ratings in performance reviews; has received positive feedback from a variety of sources such as colleagues, former managers, peers, families; are seen as effective by others, are respected by others),

- The employee should be able to clearly describe the accountabilities for his/her role,

- The employee should be in the role for a minimum of a year as it is critical to be able to clearly understand and articulate the role accountabilities, and

- The employee should be someone who is committed to ensuring the best interests of people with developmental disabilities.

Hay Group prepared two communications for the PNHRSC to send out: one to explain the initiative, and a second one to outline and bring clarification to the nomination criteria.

Members of the Core Competencies Committee and other representatives of the sector assisted in organizing the focus groups and ensuring that selected nominees reflected the diversity of their region.

Step 3: Prepare Protocol and Conduct Data Gathering Focus Groups

With a plan for focus groups in place, the next step was to design the focus group "protocol" and conduct the focus groups.

The focus group protocol consisted of the following:

1. **Welcome, introductions and overview:** Each session began with brief introductions to "break the ice" (each participant shared their name, role and length of time with the agency/within the sector), the objectives of the session, and the agenda.

2. **Introduction to Competencies:** Participants were given an introduction to competencies to provide them with a general understanding of what they are, why they are important, their benefits, and how they can be integrated into various human resource processes.

3. **Organizational Analysis:** Participants were asked to share their view of the current and future challenges for the sector, as well as the implications. In addition, they were asked about the critical success factors – what must be in place in order to be successful (e.g., infrastructure, collaborative work environment).

4. **Role Analysis:** A considerable amount of time was spent exploring each role. Key aspects covered included the following:

    -   Purpose of the role – participants were asked to provide a succinct one sentence summary of why the role exists,

    -   Key clients/contacts – who are the people with whom the role interfaces on a day-to-day basis (internal and/or external),

    -   Key accountabilities of the role, and

    -   Measures of success – how success is measured in the role.

The goal of the Role Analysis was to be able to anchor the competencies to the job roles.

1. **Behavioural Examples:** Through a group "behavioural event" process, participants were asked to share success stories in their particular role – experiences in their role that made them feel successful. These stories were collected verbatim and "coded" to identify the behavioural competencies demonstrated. The premise for gathering these examples is that *past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour*; therefore, collecting these stories informs the selection of competencies for superior performance in a given role.

2. **Competency Sort/Selection:** Participants were divided into small working groups, by role, for the competency sort/selection. Each group was given a set of cards (a subset of the initial 30 competencies in the Competency Dictionary) that included each competency and its

definition on one side, and the scale on the other side. Participants were tasked with sorting the cards into three categories – Critical, Very Important and Less Important – and asked to identify 6 as Critical and 6 as Very Important (with the remainder falling in the Less Important category). The exercise was completed once each group came to consensus on the 6 Critical and 6 Very Important competencies.

3. **Coming to Consensus on Competency Selections:** The final component of the focus groups involved coming to consensus between sub-groups on the 6 Critical and 6 Very Important competencies. The goal was to come to agreement on the 8 most critical competencies.

Following a series of focus groups (5 for Direct Support Professionals and Direct Support Supervisors, 2 for Managers, Directors and Executive Directors, and 2 for Specialized Support Staff and Clinical Specialists), it was evident that there was a high level of agreement in terms of the most critical competencies selected. At this point, it was agreed that Hay Group would use the remaining focus groups to validate the data gathered to date.

Step 3: Prepare Protocol and Conduct Validation Focus Groups

A protocol was prepared for conducting the validation focus groups, which consisted of the following:

1. **Welcome, introductions and overview:** Each session once again began with brief introductions to "break the ice", the objectives of the session, and the agenda.

2. **Best/Worst Exercise:** Participants were then tasked to complete an exercise in which they identified the characteristics of the *best* performer for a given role, and then a sub-par performer in that same role. This exercise was completed in sub-groups, with participants divided into groups based on their role. The exercise was debriefed in the large group, and input was provided, as appropriate, from the other groups.

3. **Introduction to Competencies:** Participants were given an introduction to competencies to provide them with a general understanding of what they are, why they are important, their benefits, and how they can be integrated into various human resources processes. Links were made to the Best/Worst exercise.

4. **Process to Date:** The facilitator shared the process to date, explaining where we are at in the process, how the focus groups were conducted, and the goal of the validation sessions.

5. **Organizational Analysis:** Participants were presented with a summary

list of the challenges, current and future, provided by participants of previous focus groups. Participants were then asked if they felt the list was inclusive, and whether they had other challenges/issues to add that did not appear on the list.

6. **Competency Sort/Selection:** Participants were divided into small working groups, by role, for the competency sort/selection. Each group was given a set of cards (a smaller subset of the initial 30 competencies in the Competency Dictionary than was used in the original set of focus groups) that included each competency and its definition on one side, and the scale on the other side. Participants were tasked with the following:

   ▪ Sort the cards to identify the 8 most critical competencies for the respective roles

   ▪ Identify any language/wording issues in the competencies, and to provide alternatives to ensure the language resonates within the sector

   ▪ Identify, for each competency, the target level for superior performance

7. **Coming to Consensus on Competency Selections:** The final component of the focus groups involved coming to consensus between sub-groups on the 8 most critical competencies for each role, as well as the target level for each competency.

Phase 3: Analyze the Data and Finalize the Core Competency Models and Competency Dictionary

① Understand the Organizational/ Strategic Context and Documentation Review

② Conduct Focus Groups

③ Analyze the Data and Finalize the Core Competency Models and Competency Dictionary

Step 1: Finalize Core Competency Models for All Roles (Excluding Executive Director)

Based on the input from all of the focus groups, as well as the documentation review and our understanding of the strategic context, the draft core competency models were finalized. These are captured in Section 4.

Note: While Executive Directors participated in the focus groups, due to the critical nature of this role (requiring different competencies), additional data gathering beyond the focus groups was required. For this reason, behavioural event interviews were subsequently conducted with 10 Executive Directors from agencies of different sizes, different regions and serving demographically different catchment areas.

Step 2: Revise/Customize the Competency Dictionary

The competencies in the Competency Dictionary were then revised/customized to reflect the language of, and roles in, the sector, including titles of the competencies, definitions and behavioural indicators for each level of a competency. The goal of this step was to ensure the language/wording of the competencies resonates within the sector. Note that the level required for each competency was carefully considered by drawing on job descriptions, input from the direct experience of individuals in the focus groups, and input from the Core Competencies Committee.

4. Core Competencies – Project Outcomes

This section of the report presents the core competencies for each of the six positions based on the input of the focus groups and validation focus group participants. Note that in addition to the core competencies identified, several competencies were identified as "threshold" – these are baseline competencies that would be included for recruitment purposes as a way to identify "fit" since threshold competencies generally reflect the values in an organization. They, therefore, represent a minimum requirement to be considered for a job role in the sector, but do not distinguish superior from average performance. By comparison, the core competencies identify what is required for superior performance in a job role, and are essential in recruitment for determining one's natural predisposition to develop strengths in the respective competencies. Once an individual is hired, the core competencies become a personal development and coaching focal point for developing the competencies identified for success in the job role.

The table on the following page lists the core competencies for each role, including the target level, as well as the threshold competencies.

Core Competency Models

	Competencies															Threshold Competencies			
	Advocating for Others	Collaboration	Creative Problem Solving & Decision Making	Developing Others	Fostering Independence in Others	Holding People Accountable	Initiative	Interpersonal Relations & Respect	Leading Others	Managing Change	Relationship/Network Building	Resilience	Resource Management	Self-Development	Strategic Thinking	Flexibility	Self-Control	Service Orientation	Values & Ethics
Direct Support Professionals	3	3	3		3		3	3				4							
Direct Support Supervisors	3	4	4	4		4			3										
Specialized Support Workers	4	4	4		4		3	4				4							
Clinical Specialists	4				4		3	4				4		4					
Managers	3		4	4	4	4			5	4	3		4		3				
Directors	4		5	5	5	5			5	5	4		4		4				

Competencies – Description and Rationale

Following is the definition (in italics) and rationale for selecting each of the competencies that are found in the core competency models.

Advocating for Others: *Individuals demonstrating the competency "Advocating for Others" show through their behaviours and inclination to champion a cause or issue and try to get others to support it (i.e., trying to win the support of others).* A core aspect of all roles is the demonstration of behaviours associated with advocating with impact – to champion a cause or issue, to speak up and draw the attention of others, and to direct decision makers towards a solution. Whether advocating in a direct support role, which is focused on "giving voice to others," to individuals who cannot speak for themselves, or in a more senior leadership role, which is focused on advocating for the agency or the sector itself, demonstrating behaviours associated with advocating is critical.

Collaboration: *Collaboration is about communicating with others both within one's team as well as with individuals, agencies and organizations outside one's immediate work area or span of control (e.g., with community partners and stakeholders) to create alignment within and across groups. It is not only encouraging but expecting collaborative efforts and information sharing across agency/organizational lines toward shared outcomes.* This competency is about teamwork. Whether working with others within one's own team, cross-functionally, or in the community with community partners, the demonstrated willingness to collaborate effectively with others is critical to creating alignment within and across groups, and to providing high levels of service to those who are supported. Collaboration was found to be a differentiator of performance in direct support roles, and is essential for creating alignment within and across groups.

Creative Problem-Solving and Decision-Making: *Creative problem solving and decision making is the demonstration of behaviours that enable one to identify and solve problems by understanding the situation, seeking additional information, developing and weighing alternatives, and choosing the most appropriate course of action given the circumstances. Problems can be solved by breaking the issue into smaller pieces or by identifying patterns or connections between situations that are not obviously related. It involves the inclination to demonstrate behaviours associated with taking a creative approach to problems or issues. It includes "thinking outside of the box", to go beyond the conventional, and to explore creative uses of resources.* In this complex and rapidly transforming service environment, there is a need to be creative and innovative in solving problems and making decisions, for example, applying creative approaches to old problems,

thinking about new and creative ways to deliver service as cost effectively as possible, etc. As the sector undergoes transformational change, it is increasingly important to be open to new approaches and ideas.

Developing Others: *Developing Others involves a genuine intent and passion to foster the long-term learning or development of others through encouraging, managing performance and coaching, in order to fulfill the current and future skill requirements of both individuals within the profession and the organization. Developing Others is not limited to formal positions of authority.* The Developmental Services sector faces significant human resource challenges affecting agencies' ability to attract, train and retain qualified employees. Effective people development is essential for developing a qualified workforce in the sector. This competency, which is focused on both the short- and long-term learning and development of others, is critical to all manager/leadership roles within the sector.

Fostering Independence in Others: *Fostering Independence in Others is about enabling others to be self-sufficient and to nurture self-determination. It is also the sharing of responsibility with individuals and groups so that they have a deep sense of commitment and ownership.* ***People who foster independence in others are creative and innovative, take sound risks, are willing to be held accountable and demonstrate leadership.*** This competency is focused on empowering others – both employees and individuals whom we support – enabling them to be self-sufficient and nurturing self-determination. It is a critical competency both at the direct support level, in empowering individuals with developmental disabilities, and at the management level, in empowering employees to reach their potential.

Holding People Accountable: *Holding People Accountable is about communicating in a direct way what one wants or requires of others. It includes giving directions, setting limits, and holding people accountable for performance, insisting on high performance, confronting problem employees, and using appropriate positional authority to ensure performance with the long-term good of the organization in mind. It involves being firm and assertive, and stepping up to difficult decisions.* To raise the bar on performance requires not only setting and communicating performance expectations, but also holding people accountable to high levels of performance, and confronting performance problems promptly. It is a critical competency for all managers/ leaders.

Initiative: *Initiative is about taking action, proactively doing things and not simply thinking about future actions. The time frame of this scale moves from addressing current opportunities or problems (being reactive) to acting on*

future opportunities or problems (being proactive). People with this competency are action-oriented – they act in the present to create value in the future. This competency is about having a bias for action. Effective performance in direct support roles requires the ability to think and plan ahead, anticipate and prepare for problems versus reacting to them (i.e., "putting out fires"). At more senior levels, this is captured in the Strategic Thinking competency.

Interpersonal Relations and Respect: *Interpersonal Relations and Respect involves dealing with people in a respectful and sensitive manner. It implies truly listening, understanding, accepting and respecting the opinions, feelings, perspectives and motivations of others. It is also the demonstrated willingness to use this knowledge to shape one's own responses and to show a concern for the welfare, dignity and feelings of others.* This competency is focused on interpersonal understanding – communicating effectively, demonstrating empathy, and gaining a deeper understanding of others and their behaviour. Whether interacting with colleagues or people with developmental disabilities and their families, demonstrating high levels of interpersonal understanding is critical to effective relationship building and collaboration, and providing high quality service and support.

Leading Others: *Leading Others is about taking on the role of leader of a team or other group. It involves providing inspiration, clarity and direction through a compelling vision of the future. This includes ensuring that those who are led work together and are provided with the required resources and motivational support. Leaders measure their success through the success of others.* Leading Others is an essential competency for all manager/leadership roles. The primary responsibility of managers/leaders is to lead their people in a manner that enables them to understand and buy into the agency's and sector's vision and agenda, and to move forward in accordance with established goals.

Managing Change: *Managing Change is about supporting a change initiative that has been mandated within the agency and/or sector. It involves helping employees and individuals and their families understand what the change means to them. People with this competency willingly embrace and champion change.* The significant transformation that the sector is undergoing will require individuals in manager/leadership roles to effectively manage change in order for those they lead to accept the changes and align behind the vision.

Relationship/Network Building: *Relationship/Network Building is about building and maintaining effective and constructive working relationships, partnerships or networks of contacts with people who are, or might someday*

be, instrumental in achieving work-related goals. It is the desire to work co-operatively with all stakeholders to meet mutual goals. It includes demonstrating strong interpersonal relations where one interacts with others in ways that advance the work of the agency/sector by developing respect, trust and mutual understanding, and productive working relationships. It involves awareness that a relationship based on trust is the foundation for success in delivering results. The nature of the work done by this sector can only be achieved with a strong network of stakeholders both within and outside of the organization. Building this network is a responsibility for those in manager/leadership roles.

Resilience: *Resilience involves maintaining stamina and performance under continuing stress, and acting effectively under pressure. It includes bouncing back from disappointments or confrontations, not letting them negatively influence ongoing performance. Resilient people consistently display determination, self-discipline and commitment in spite of setbacks or lack of support, and a willingness to take a stand when appropriate.* Those roles that provide service and support to people with developmental disabilities (i.e., Direct Support roles, Specialized Support Workers and Clinical Specialists) may experience significant work-related stress. For this reason, it is critical to be able to continue to consistently demonstrate high levels of performance – providing high quality service and support – to the people supported and their families.

Resource Management: *Resource Management is understanding and effectively managing resources (e.g., people, materials, funds). This is demonstrated through measurement, planning and control of resources to maximize results. People who demonstrate this competency treat the agency's/sector's financial resources as if they were their own. It requires a balance of qualitative (e.g., human resources) and quantitative (e.g., financial resources) measures.* Given the ongoing need to improve efficiency, effectively management of resources is key in the Developmental Services sector. This competency is critical for those at the Manager and Director levels.

Self-Development: *Self-Development involves proactively taking actions to improve personal capability. It also involves being willing to assess one's own level of development or expertise relative to one's current job, or as part of focused career planning.* Success requires that everyone is able to stretch within and beyond the boundaries of their job, taking on challenges, updating skills, and learning new approaches. Particularly in the Clinical Specialist role, superior performers are those who take responsibility for their learning, and strive to update their skills and abilities to sustain high levels of performance.

Strategic Thinking: *Strategic Thinking is linking long-range visions and concepts to daily work, ranging from a simple understanding to a sophisticated awareness of the impact of the world at large on strategies and on choices.* In a rapidly changing environment, managers/leaders must be proactive about anticipating future changes, opportunities and problems and taking current action that will provide longer term benefits.

Threshold Competencies – Description and Rationale

As noted earlier, threshold (baseline) competencies are those competencies that are required to be considered for a particular role in the sector to ensure "fit." They represent a minimum requirement to be considered for a job role in the sector, but do not distinguish superior from average performance (the core competencies distinguish superior from average performance). The following competencies were identified by the focus groups as threshold competencies in order to perform effectively in the sector. These are important competencies to consider in recruitment and retention as they influence climate and culture.

Flexibility: *Flexibility is adapting to and working effectively within a variety of situations, and with various individuals or groups. Flexibility entails understanding and appreciating different and opposing perspectives on an issue or situation, adapting one's approach as the requirements of a situation change, and changing or easily accepting changes in one's own organization or job requirements.* Given the rapidly changing environment in which the sector finds itself, as well as the day-to-day challenges faced by employees, the ability to be adaptable, to be open to others' points of view, to juggle tasks and priorities, and shift gears in response to changing needs is a baseline competency.

Self-Control: *Self-Control involves keeping one's emotions under control and restraining negative responses when provoked or when faced with opposition or hostility from others, or when working under conditions of stress. While anger and frustration may, at times, be justified, this competency is concerned with expressing or resolving it in an appropriate way that doesn't harm self or others, emotionally or physically.* This competency is a critical requirement given the nature of the work done by employees of this sector – dealing regularly with challenging situations – and is, therefore, a baseline competency, particularly in direct support roles.

Service Orientation: *Service Orientation is about identifying and serving clients, the public, colleagues, partners, co-workers and peers to best meet their needs. It is the ability to understand those underlying needs of others and to use this information to benefit those they serve/support - both clients*

and others within the developmental services sector. Individuals demonstrating this competency are able to put himself/herself into the mind of the client and understand needs from the client's/individual's point of view. It includes focusing one's efforts on discovering and meeting the needs of the client, including unexpressed and/or future needs, in order to develop a broad understanding of those they support. Success requires a consistent focus on providing service to high standards. To provide quality service and support requires an ability to go the extra mile, to take accountability to help resolve issues, to seek to understand underlying client needs and provide the appropriate support and service, now and for the future.

Values and Ethics: *Values and Ethics refers to depicting conduct, dispositions and viewpoints consistent with personal integrity, as well as concern for, and sensitivity to, the fundamental values and ethics of the agency/organization/sector and the profession. It includes the capacity for sound ethical judgment in an ethically complex work environment and in the face of pressures and constraints.* Those working within this sector are ambassadors for the sector as a whole. As such, their values and ethics can be construed as the values and ethics of the agency they represent. To maintain the respect accorded the sector, it is essential that those working within it demonstrate high levels of integrity, and align one's behaviour to support the agency's and sector's values and ethics. This is essential to all roles, and is, therefore, a critical baseline competency.

## 5. Project Methodology – The Work Performed – Executive Director

Hay Group applied a comprehensive methodology/approach to the development of the competency model for Executive Directors. As noted in Section 3, while the methodology used to identify the competencies for Executive Directors is similar to that used for the other roles (i.e., Direct Support Professional through Director), some of the steps and the details pertaining to the steps are different.)

The following graphic illustrates the key phases in Hay Group's approach to identifying the competencies for Executive Directors, and the steps within each phase:

① Understand the Organizational/ Strategic Context

② Conduct Behavioural Event Interviews

③ Analyze the Data and Finalize the ED Competency Model and Competency Dictionary

1. Gather data to understand the organizational/ strategic context

1. Prepare for one-on-one interviews
2. Conduct one-on-one interviews

1. Code the interviews
2. Develop the Executive Director competency model
3. Customize the Executive Director Competency Dictionary

Following is a detailed description/breakdown of the work completed in each phase.

Phase 1: Understand the Organizational/Strategic Context
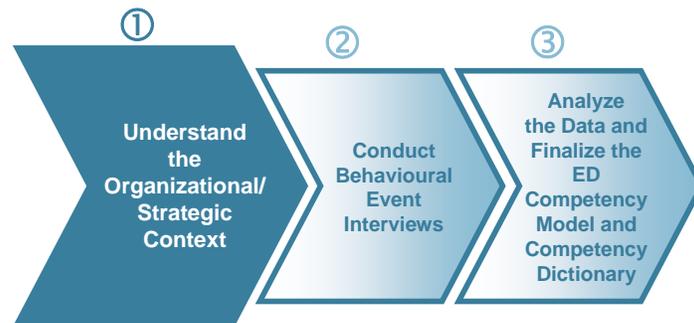
Step 1: Gather Data to Understand the Organizational/Strategic Context

A critical first step in the development of the Executive Director competency model was to gain an understanding of the organizational and strategic context to ensure alignment of the models to this context.

As described in Section 3, Hay Group used the following four-pronged approach to understanding the organizational context:

- Strategic interviews were conducted with a panel of senior leaders within the sector to better understand both the current and anticipated future environment.

- The focus groups included a discussion on current and future challenges.

- A Policy Manager with MCSS was interviewed to better understand the implications of the pending legislative changes.

- A strategic component focusing upon sector challenges and context was included in each of the 10 behavioural event interviews conducted with a diverse group of Executive Directors from across the province.

Section 2 of this report presents the data gathered with respect to the organizational and strategic context – the environment in which the sector operates, the transformation that is occurring, and the population served.

Phase 2: Conduct Behavioural Event Interviews

Step 1: Prepare for One-On-One Interviews

A plan was prepared for conducting the interviews, along with selection criteria for Executive Directors to be interviewed. (Note: As mentioned earlier, while Executive Directors participated in the focus groups, due to the critical nature of this role [requiring different competencies], additional data gathering beyond the focus groups was required.) An Interview Guide was also developed for conducting the interviews.

The interviews were structured as follows:

- The first segment of each one-on-one interview consisted of a strategic interview to gain insight around the current and changing environment in which they operate and in which these competencies would be introduced. The Interview Guide contained a series of questions to explore the organizational, political and strategic context. This segment of the interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes.

- The second segment, which lasted up to two hours, consisted of a "behavioural event interview" or "story telling" component in which Executive Directors were asked to share situations in which they felt successful and situations in which they felt less successful.

Hay Group identified the selection criteria for Executive Directors to be interviewed. The objective was to interview Executive Directors:
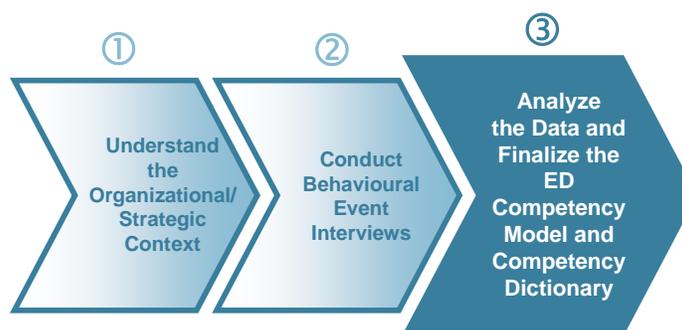
- From agencies of different sizes, different regions and serving demographically different catchment areas, and

- Who were considered to be highly capable, knowledgeable, and with several years of experience in the role.

The Core Competencies Committee identified the 10 Executive Directors based on these criteria.

Step 2: Conduct One-On-One Interviews

The interviews with the 10 Executive Directors were conducted either in person, by videoconference or teleconference. Typically, interviews lasted between 2-3 hours, and all were recorded and transcribed.

Phase 3: Analyze the Data and Finalize the Executive Director Competency Model and Competency Dictionary

① Understand the Organizational/ Strategic Context

② Conduct Behavioural Event Interviews

③ Analyze the Data and Finalize the ED Competency Model and Competency Dictionary

Step 1: Code the Interviews

Interview transcripts were reviewed and "coded" for competencies (behaviours likely to result in superior performance). The coded competency data was then analyzed to identify the critical competencies that drive success in the role, both now and into the future. The average transcript for a two and a half hour interview was approximately 35-50 pages in length.

Step 2: Develop the Executive Director Competency Model

Based on an analysis of the codable data from all the interviews, combined with our understanding of the strategic context and likely impact of the new legislation, the Executive Director competency model was developed. During development, particular attention was paid to differences in agencies to determine if that resulted in significant differences in the competencies demonstrated by the different Executive Directors interviewed. No significant differences were identified.

Step 3: Customize the Executive Director Competency Dictionary

The Executive Director competencies were then developed. Several competencies were consistent with those in the Core Competency Dictionary; others were created/customized for the Executive Director role. This customization included the competencies, definitions and behavioural indicators for each level of a competency. The goal of this step was to ensure the language/wording of the competencies would resonate for the role and within the sector.

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6. Executive Director – Project Outcomes

This section of the report presents the proposed competencies for the Executive Director role. Note that in addition to the competencies identified, several competencies were identified as "threshold" – these are baseline competencies that are included for recruitment purposes.

Executive Director Competency Model	
Competencies	**Target Level for Executive Director**
Building and Leveraging Collaborative Networks	4
Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making	5
Developing Others	5
Integrity	5
Leading Change	5
Leading Others	5
Organizational Awareness/Political Acuity	5
Organizational Sensitivity	5
Planning, Coordination and Execution	5
Strategic Thinking	5
Threshold Competencies:	
Advocating for Others	5
Flexibility	4
Holding People Accountable	5
Initiative	5
Interpersonal Relations and Respect	4
Resilience	4
Values and Ethics	5

Competencies – Description and Rationale

Following is a description and rationale for selecting each of the competencies that are found in the core competency models.

Building and Leveraging Collaborative Networks: *Building and Leveraging Collaborative Networks is about making connections and maintaining, nurturing and utilizing the relationships for the present and future benefit of the agency, e.g., politicians, other agency executive directors, lobbyists, educators, business enterprises, etc.* These networks will primarily extend beyond the agency to encompass potential community partners, politicians, individuals within other agencies, etc. It can however, also include building a supportive relationship with members of the agency's own Board. This is a critical competency for an Executive Director who is charged with the responsibility of building support for agency initiatives both politically and financially.

Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making: *Creative problem solving and decision making is the demonstration of behaviours that enable one to identify and solve problems by understanding the situation, seeking additional information, developing and weighing alternatives, and choosing the most appropriate course of action given the circumstances. Problems can be solved by breaking the issue into smaller pieces or by identifying patterns or connections between situations that are not obviously related. It involves the inclination to demonstrate behaviours associated with taking a creative approach to problems or issues. It includes "thinking outside of the box," to go beyond the conventional, and to explore creative uses of resources.* In this complex and rapidly transforming service environment, there is a need to be creative and innovative in solving problems and making decisions, for example, applying creative approaches to old problems, thinking about new and creative ways to deliver service as cost effectively as possible, etc. As the sector undergoes transformational change, it is increasingly important to be open to new approaches and ideas.

Developing Others: *Developing Others involves a genuine intent and passion to foster the long-term learning or development of others through encouraging, managing performance and coaching, in order to fulfill the current and future skill requirements of both individuals within the profession and the organization. Developing Others is not limited to formal positions of authority.* The Developmental Services sector faces significant human resource challenges affecting agencies' ability to attract, train and retain qualified employees. Effective people development is essential for developing a qualified workforce in the sector. This competency, which is

focused on both the short- and long-term learning and development of others, is critical to all manager/leadership roles within the sector.

Integrity: *This competency is about acting with integrity, ensuring one's actions are consistent with what one says is important (i.e., walking the talk). It is also about sharing information candidly, accurately and openly with employees, peers and managers.* This competency is critical at the Executive Director level because it is important that the Executive Director and the Board have an open and honest relationship. The ability to influence is foundationally based on trust, honesty and reliability.

Leading Change: *Leading Change involves initiating, implementing, and managing the implementation of new approaches, practices and processes, energizing and alerting relevant groups, stakeholders and professionals to the need for specific changes in the way things are done. At higher levels, it involves not only understanding the concept of change management (a structured approach to transitions in individuals, teams, organizations and societies that moves the target from a current state to a desired state), but also involves managing change, from communicating and implementing the change to taking action to reinforce new ways of thinking.* This competency is about identifying when significant change is required, what that change should be and how to both plan for and gain support for the change. Given the significant change the sector is undergoing, this competency is critical for Executive Directors to ensure their agencies recognize and effectively adapt to the changing environment. It is also critical that Executive Directors are able to build commitment within the Board for significant change initiatives.

Leading Others: *Leading Others is about taking on the role of leader of a team or other group. It involves providing inspiration, clarity and direction through a compelling vision of the future. This includes ensuring that those who are led work together and are provided with the required resources and motivational support. Leaders measure their success through the success of others.* It is essential that Executive Directors provide a strong leadership presence and present a compelling vision to gain the support of their Board, community and agency workers particularly during times of significant change.

Organizational Awareness/Political Acuity: *This competency is about understanding and learning the power relationships in the government. This includes identifying those who are the real decision makers and the individuals who influence them, and predicting how new events or situations at the Ministry of Community and Social Services will affect the agency.* This

competency is essential Executive Directors to effectively lobby for support, e.g., securing appropriate funding from the Ministry.

Organizational Sensitivity: *Organizational Sensitivity involves focusing on the public face of the agency and the need to maintain support for the agency by ensuring that it is represented in a manner that is above reproach and supportive of its purpose and values at all times.* This competency was found to be critical as it establishes the Executive Director as the ultimate role model for everyone representing the agency to the public.

Planning, Coordination and Execution: *This competency is about planning and coordinating work and executing individual and team activities in a way that ensures the achievement of a set of objectives. At the highest levels, individuals are able to achieve desired results on a consistent basis despite having to deal with unpredictable or unexpected circumstances.* The tumultuous nature of the environment in which an agency operates requires that an Executive Director be able to plan for unseen circumstances and continue to achieve goals despite constant flux.

Strategic Thinking: *Strategic Thinking is linking long-range visions and concepts to daily work, ranging from a simple understanding to a sophisticated awareness of the impact of the world at large on strategies and on choices.* In a rapidly changing environment, managers/leaders must be proactive about anticipating future changes, opportunities and problems and taking current action that will provide longer term benefits.

Threshold Competencies – Description and Rationale

The following competencies were identified as threshold – baseline competencies that are included for recruitment purposes.

Advocating for Others: *Individuals demonstrating the competency "Advocating for Others" show through their behaviours an inclination to champion a cause or issue and try to get others to support it (i.e., trying to win the support of others).* A core aspect of all roles is the demonstration of behaviours associated with advocating with impact – to champion a cause or issue, to speak up and draw the attention of others, and to direct decision makers towards a solution. Whether advocating in a direct support role, which is focused on "giving voice to others" to individuals who cannot speak for themselves, or in a more senior leadership role, which is focused on advocating for the agency or the sector itself, demonstrating behaviours associated with advocating is critical.

Flexibility: *Flexibility is adapting to and working effectively within a variety of situations, and with various individuals or groups. Flexibility entails understanding and appreciating different and opposing perspectives on an issue or situation, adapting one's approach as the requirements of a situation change, and changing or easily accepting changes in one's own organization or job requirements.* Given the rapidly changing environment in which the sector finds itself, as well as the day-to-day challenges faced by employees, the ability to be adaptable, to be open to others' points of view, to juggle tasks and priorities, and shift gears in response to changing needs is a baseline competency.

Holding People Accountable: *Holding People Accountable is about communicating in a direct way what one wants or requires of others. It includes giving directions, setting limits, and holding people accountable for performance, insisting on high performance, confronting problem employees, and using appropriate positional authority to ensure performance with the long-term good of the organization in mind. It involves being firm and assertive, and stepping up to difficult decisions.* This competency is a critical competency for Supervisors, Managers and Directors; however, at the Executive Director level, while it is important to hold people accountable, it was not found to be a differentiating competency.

Initiative: *Initiative is about taking action, proactively doing things and not simply thinking about future actions. The time frame of this scale moves from addressing current opportunities or problems (being reactive) to acting on future opportunities or problems (being proactive). People with this competency are action-oriented – they act in the present to create value in*

the future. At more senior levels, this is captured in the Strategic Thinking competency.

Interpersonal Relations and Respect: *Interpersonal Relations and Respect involves dealing with people in a respectful and sensitive manner. It implies truly listening, understanding, accepting and respecting the opinions, feelings, perspectives and motivations of others. It is also the demonstrated willingness to use this knowledge to shape one's own responses and to show a concern for the welfare, dignity and feelings of others.* This competency is a differentiating competency in direct support roles, but at higher levels, becomes a threshold competency.

Resilience: *Resilience involves maintaining stamina and performance under continuing stress, and to act effectively under pressure. It includes bouncing back from disappointments or confrontations, not letting them negatively influence ongoing performance. Resilient people consistently display determination, self-discipline and commitment in spite of setbacks or lack of support, and a willingness to take a stand when appropriate.* This competency is viewed as critical to direct support roles, but at higher levels, becomes a threshold competency.

Values and Ethics: *Values and Ethics refers to depicting conduct, dispositions and viewpoints consistent with personal integrity, as well as concern for, and sensitivity to, fundamental values and ethics of the agency/organization/sector and the profession. It includes the capacity for sound ethical judgment in an ethically complex work environment and in the face of pressures and constraints.* Those working within this sector are ambassadors for the sector as a whole. As such, their values and ethics can be construed as the values and ethics of the agency they represent. To maintain the respect accorded the sector, it is essential that those working within it demonstrate high levels of integrity, and align one's behaviour to support the agency's and sector's values and ethics. This is essential to all roles, and is, therefore, a critical baseline competency.

7. Recommendations for Future Activities

In an effort to enhance and sustain a quality workforce, the Developmental Services sector's Human Resources Strategy includes introducing core competency models for all job roles within the sector. For competencies to provide the greatest value, they should also be integrated into other human resource applications.

Integrating competencies into the human resources framework will provide people with a common language with which to discuss performance expectations and accomplishments. It also encourages and supports an environment where ongoing coaching and feedback occur, resulting in individuals feeling they have a part in determining their own development. In addition, competencies guide the selection process by identifying those key behaviours that are essential for successful performance in a given role. Once in a role, competencies can lay the foundation for learning and development as individuals work to improve their skills for their own role or for succession planning purposes.

Competency-based human resource processes provide:

- A proactive approach to management and a way to translate vision and strategies into action,
- Valuable tools to assist leaders in talent management, and to identify development and career opportunities,
- A foundation for a continuous learning environment,
- Selection, development and support processes to facilitate retention, and
- A means to raise the performance bar.

This section outlines best practices and key steps to integrate competencies into the following human resource processes:

- Recruitment, selection and staffing,
- Performance management, rewards and recognition,
- Training and development, and
- Career planning, talent management and succession planning.

Each competency-based human resource process is described in more detail on the following pages.

Recruitment, Selection and Staffing

Competencies have a key role to play in recruitment, selection and staffing. They provide a "template" of the behaviours required for success in a particular role, and help ensure a better initial job/person fit. If a candidate has been selected for a role based on the fit between the requirements of the job and the individual's competencies, it is more likely that the individual will not only perform better, but will experience a higher level of job satisfaction.

Recruitment

Competencies can be used to ensure individuals applying for a position fully understand the requirements of the position and the competencies required for success. Based on this information, candidates can then effectively determine if they would like to apply for the position and prepare for the interview.

For example, when recruiting for direct support positions, it is important to let potential candidates know that "Resilience" is a critical part of the job and why.

Selection and Staffing

Competencies are a powerful tool for selection and staffing. Research indicates that those candidates who demonstrate the competencies required for success in the role will meet performance expectations more quickly (i.e., a faster ramp-up time), will require fewer training resources, and are more likely to not leave the agency. In addition, less time is likely to be spent on coaching and addressing performance issues. It is therefore important to ensure that candidates meet not only the technical requirements of the role, but the behavioural requirements as well. In addition to the competencies provided for superior performance, the developmental competencies, particular attention should be given to those competencies identified as threshold or base requirements for the role.

Key Steps:

1. Identify, in job postings, the competencies required for success in the role (including a brief description of each competency) to help job candidates determine if they might be a good fit for the job.

2. Prepare candidates for the interview by explaining the process of a behaviour-based interview to ensure the best quality data is collected during the interview.

3. Use an interviewing technique that focuses on the behaviours/ competencies required for success in the role – behaviour-based interviewing. (Hiring managers will need to develop their skill in this area.)

4. Using the data collected through the behaviour-based interview, assess candidates based on evidence of them having demonstrated the competencies in the past (based on the premise that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour).

Performance Management and Rewards and Recognition

Performance management is defined as a process for establishing a shared understanding about *what* is to be achieved, *how* it is to be achieved, and an approach to managing people that increases the probability of achieving success. It not only includes performance appraisal, but other means of communicating expected behaviours and preparing development plans with employees.

Because the competencies identified for each role are the critical behaviours that drive success in the role, integrating them into the performance management process will help to ensure the focus is not just on *what* needs to be achieved (i.e., accountabilities and/or goals), but *how* (i.e., the behaviours one uses in carrying out the accountabilities). Assessing competencies as a part of performance management is an important means of helping employees understand performance expectations, their areas of strength and development opportunities. Competencies also lead to more meaningful, objective feedback as they enable managers to focus their feedback on specific behaviours/competencies, and remove personal bias as much as possible from the process.

An additional consideration in integrating competencies into the performance management process is determining how employees will be rewarded and/or recognized based on their performance. To be effective, rewards and recognition need to be consistent with organizational expectations and linked to organizational goals. Competencies are one way of conveying the organization's expectations with respect to behaviours.

Key Steps:

1. Consider which competencies are most closely tied to the achievement of personal/individual accountabilities/goals.

2. Include a competency assessment in your performance management process (for purposes of development).

3. Equip managers with the skills to provide feedback on competencies and development advice.

Training and Development

Competencies are particularly effective for training and development to enhance performance. They enable the agency/organization to provide employees with more focused training and development, and the basis for better development planning. In addition, they provide managers with more focus for coaching and lead to collaborative partnerships with employees. They support the achievement of more readily measurable criteria, such as meeting budgets or achieving departmental goals.

The competencies observed during a selection interview or assessed as part of performance management can be used as a starting point for development planning. Individuals can compare the competency level they are currently demonstrating with the level they need to be demonstrating for successful performance.

Research indicates that competency development takes place through a combination of:

- On the job experience, development in role and challenging job assignments (70-85% of learning occurs by this method).

- Relationships and feedback from co-workers. This includes managers, peers, subordinates, mentors, multi-rater and individual assessments (15-20% of learning occurs by this method).

- Role modeling and off-the-job learning. This includes community involvement, industry associations, etc. (10-15% of learning occurs by this method).

- Training, workshops and formal education (10% of learning occurs by this method).

It is important to note that each person learns in their own way. Therefore, a variety of programs and tools will provide a broad resource upon which individuals can draw on for their personal learning and development.

Key Steps:

1. Have individuals assess where their strengths and development opportunities are relative to the competency model.

2. Have them identify 1-3 competencies to focus on for their development.

3. Have them identify ideas for practical steps they can take to develop those competencies.

Career Planning, Talent Management and Succession Planning

To achieve the goal of "professionalizing" the sector, and having current and future employees view opportunities in the sector as *career* opportunities as opposed to just a job, competencies should be integrated into career planning. They enable employees to better understand the requirements of future roles in the agency, and how they need to develop to prepare themselves for these roles. For example, if a Direct Support Supervisor aspires to a Manager role, he or she can look at the competency requirements for the Manager role, assess his or her competencies against the competency expectations of the role, and not only determine if there is likely to be a good fit, but prepare a plan to develop the competencies for success in that role.

In addition, it is recommended that competencies be integrated into talent management and succession planning processes. Both talent management and succession planning are focused on building the talent the agency/sector requires now and into the future, and are critical to the long-term success of individual agencies and the sector.

Talent management is the process of defining future talent requirements in terms of critical roles for the future success of the agency, and identifying, attracting, developing and retaining a pool of talent that meets these requirements. It involves assessing, developing and retaining the agency's current talent, and recruiting additional talent, as necessary, to meet the talent needs of the organization. Talent management is about identifying a steady flow of qualified talent.

Succession planning plays a key role in talent management. It is the process of identifying and developing high potential successors to fill key positions within an agency. The key objective is to minimize interruptions and negative business impact in the event a leader in one of these key positions leaves the agency. A robust succession plan will enable an agency to readily fill key positions in the event that they become vacant.

Competencies are a valuable tool for assessing individuals' potential for future job roles, including "mission critical" roles, and preparing appropriate development plans to prepare them for these future job roles.

Key Steps:

1. Ensure managers discuss career aspirations with employees, as appropriate, so that they can better support their employees in their career planning and development.

2. Assess potential successors for leadership roles against the competencies for these roles.

3. Build customized learning and development plans for potential leaders.

8. The Sustainable Implementation of Competencies

As important as the actual development of the competencies, an effective implementation plan will make the difference between acceptance of the competencies and indifference or outright dismissal of the competencies. Successful implementation of competencies is based on four key areas:

1. Continuous communication around the importance of competencies and the impact on individual stakeholder groups.

2. Structuring of an inclusive implementation team representing the interests of all stakeholder groups.

3. Training of all personnel on competencies – what they are, why they are important, how they were developed, and how to learn and apply them. For managers/leaders, the training should include how to coach to competencies.

4. Roll-out of competencies into all other HR processes, e.g., recruitment, performance management, etc., as described in Section 7 – this will require that the Human Resource Strategy Steering Committee develop a formal implementation plan.

9. Final Conclusions

The Developmental Services sector is in the midst of signicant transformation. Impacting the sector are:

- **Human resource issues**, including: high turnover, challenges recruiting and retaining qualified employees, inconsistently trained and inexperienced entry-level employees, decreased availability of DSW graduates, not being seen as a valuable career choice, lack of a commonly accepted standard set of skills and behaviours, and tight labour market conditions.

- **New legislation** (i.e., *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008*) that creates more opportunity for people to use direct funding and choose their providers. This may lead to competition between TP agencies and other service providers. The sector must adapt to the changing roles and expectations of the families, who will have greater control, as well as to the increasing, complex needs of people with a developmental disability. In addition, the government is moving towards a more standardized quality management framework. Accreditation models are being considered as one method of quality assurance.

- **Growth of the population served**, which has exceeded expectations due to increased longevity following from the improved system of support. This corresponds to an increased need for services.

- **Increased needs of families**, who are placing new expectations on government and agencies that provide services; there is increased demand for direct funding and individualized supports. There is also a greater expectation that their sons and daughters will be full participants in their communities, and have services that are tailored to their individual goals and support needs, outside of a traditional support system.

These issues are triggering a shift in the skills and behaviours required by those working in Developmental Services. These job roles are undergoing a significant transition from supporting people with a developmental disability – primarily "traditional services" – to promoting and facilitating community inclusion, meaningful participation and full citizenship. The implementation of core competencies for job roles in the sector is intended to improve and sustain a quality workforce at all levels, enabling them to successfully meet the demands of this rapidly transforming sector and continue to serve those with developmental disabilities to a very high standard.

As a result of the work completed, two sets of core competencies emerged:

▪ One for all staff roles (outlined in Section 4), including Direct Support Professionals, Direct Support Supervisors, Specialized Support Staff, Clinical Specialists, Managers and Directors, and

▪ One for Executive Directors (outlined in Section 6), given the unique and critical nature of this role.

For these competencies to be most useful, they should ultimately be integrated into the various human resource processes, including performance management, career planning, talent management and succession planning. Competencies should not be linked to compensation, but should certainly be linked to recognition.

In implementing competencies, our recommendation is that they be used initially for:

▪ Developing and training existing employees – competencies can serve as the foundation for learning and development as individuals work to improve their skills for their own role and/or for future roles, and

▪ Recruiting new employees – the better the fit between the requirements of a the job and the competencies, including threshold competencies, demonstrated by an individual, the higher the person's job performance and job satisfaction will be.

The learning and development in terms of competencies will be the implementation of the behaviours required for success. Adopting and developing these new competencies must make sense to the people asked to adopt them.

For this reason a highly collaborative approach was used in all aspects of developing the core competencies and recommending their sustainable implementation.

We believe that the core competencies identified in this report and the recommendations for their sustainable implementation are grounded in the values and ethics of the Developmental Services sector, and the day-to-day realities of what it takes to deliver a high level of service to people with developmental disabilities. We also believe that competency development will foster the inspired leadership essential to engage the community in supporting this important transformation of the Developmental Services sector.

Appendix 1 – Glossary of Key Terms

The following table lists the key terms used throughout this document and the definition of each:

Term	Definition
Competencies	The skills, knowledge, abilities or behavioural characteristics that drive superior performance in a job role.
Competency model	The set of core competencies, including target levels, identified for superior performance in a job role.
Technical competencies	The knowledge and skills required to do the job – they are WHAT a person needs to know or know how to do. Examples of technical competencies include knowledge of policies and procedures, applicable legislation, computer skills, how to administer first aid, etc. These competencies are often easier to see, train for and develop.
Core (behavioural) competencies	The behaviours a person demonstrates in performing the job – they are HOW an individual approaches his or her work. Examples of behavioural competencies include acting with integrity, influencing others, being resilient, working collaboratively, etc. These competencies can be harder to see, yet are what make the biggest difference in performance.
Threshold competencies	In addition to the core competencies identified, several "threshold"competencies were identified – these are baseline competencies that should be utilized for recruitment and selection purposes. They reflect the essential competencies to perform the job at a minimally effective level; however, they do not distinguish superior from average performance. Threshold competencies are based on organizational values and represent a minimum requirement to be considered for a job role in the sector.

Term	Definition
Motives	The non-conscious things a person consistently thinks about or wants that causes them to take action – they are what naturally energizes a person and formed early in life, e.g., a person may be highly achievement-oriented, always striving to improve performance and achieve results.
Traits	Relatively enduring characteristics of a person's behaviour, e.g., caring, being a good listener, resilient.
Self-image	The way a person sees himself or herself, "the inner self," e.g., seeing oneself as a teacher or a leader.
Social role	The image a person projects to others, the "outer self," e.g., being a leader or a follower. It reflects a person's values – what he or she believes is important.

Appendix 2 – Membership of Core Competencies Committee

Following are the members of the Core Competencies Committee:

Bob Butella (Chair): CL Guelph Wellington

Lorry Cumming: OADD, CL Toronto

Pam DeRaaf: Personal Attendant Care

Holly Duff: Project Coordinator

Brian Dunne: Participation House (London)

Carmen Essiembre: Community Services, Kapuskasing & District

Steve Finlay: Chair – Steering Committee/CL Oshawa Clarington

Denise House: CL Elgin

Sarina Labonte: CL Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln

Donna Marcaccio: Rygiel Supports for Community Living

Susan Morris: CAMH

Monica Neitzert: Policy Manager, MCSS

Michelle Palmer: CL London

Laura Pierce: CL Mattawa

Josie Quinn: Deafblind Ontario Services

Bill Silk: Simcoe Community Services

Sandy Stemp: Reena

Peter Wyngaarden: Christian Horizons