

The following provides a general framework for understanding the tiers in an attorney's career path and development. Staff are not expected to perform each core competency at the highest level of proficiency or possess all of the core competencies described in order to be promoted to a higher tier.

Law Fellow/Staff Attorney Core Competencies

Judgment

- Consistently exercises professional judgment
- Demonstrates a willingness to learn from mistakes
- Generates and thinks through pros/cons of various alternatives
- Clarifies and confirms with supervisors decisions to be made or problems to be addressed

Legal/Policy Knowledge

- Identifies and communicates issues to supervisor in a manner that demonstrates understanding of law/policy
- Displays intellectual curiosity regarding the law/policy
- Supervisors feel comfortable delegating matters to this person
- Contributes to strategic decisions
- As attorney gains more experience, will take on greater litigation and policy responsibilities

Community Partnerships

- Exhibits mature understanding of how to interact with partner organizations to develop long term social change processes in community
- Adjusts own communication style to meet needs of partners
- Takes initiative to build and maintain positive relationships with partners

Research & Analysis Skills

- Efficiently identifies controlling and supporting case law/statutes/regulations/policies
- Applies the legal/policy research process in a thorough manner
- Completes fact based analyses, develops findings and frames issues and recommendations clearly
- Notices discrepancies, inconsistencies and gaps in information



Writing Skills

- Expresses ideas clearly, logically and concisely in writing and avoids using “legalese” or technical jargon
- Careful to avoid errors and pays close attention to spelling, grammar, visual presentation, etc.
- Tailors writing style to accommodate supervisor’s and/or other needs, as directed
- Quality of written work product meets legal and professional standards

Communication

- Expresses ideas concisely and clearly
- Tailors the content of communications to the audience, avoiding the use of “legalese” or technical jargon
- Demonstrates good listening
- Speaks with confidence
- Presents material effectively in variety of settings
- Frames cases/projects compellingly
- Incorporates media into cases/projects

Case and Project Management

- Uses time effectively and efficiently and completes quality work on a timely basis
- Keeps others informed of progress, potential time conflicts and issues
- Successfully manages multiple projects simultaneously
- Maintains effective performance under unstructured conditions or stress
- Initiates and completes matters

Professional Relationships

- Always conducts him/herself as a professional in appearance and actions
- Effectively networks with others internal/external to PA
- Builds and maintains rapport with others
- Maintains appropriate and timely contact with clients and partner organizations
- Establishes confidence and trust in PA’s work
- Mentors student interns and seeks to improve supervisory skills

Leadership

- Exhibits initiative and is a self-starter/independent worker
- Honors commitments and takes responsibility for own actions
- Anticipates needs; is proactive
- Widely trusted and is viewed as a direct, truthful individual



Professional Development

- Has a solid understanding of own strengths and development needs
- Seeks performance feedback for self and acts upon advice
- Accepts feedback openly and non-defensively and is willing to act on that feedback
- Demonstrates sincere desire to learn, develop and refine own skills
- Provides appropriate feedback to colleagues and interns
- Participates in recruiting student interns
- As attorney gains more experience, undertakes limited supervisory responsibilities for more junior attorneys and other staff

Funder Development

- Learns about foundation, individual and firm fundraising concepts
- Participates in identifying funding sources, drafting proposals and requests, and reporting on projects
- Is familiar with PA's work outside of own focus areas
- Seeks opportunities for developing new relationships and sources of funding

Administration

- Maintains accurate and simultaneous time records
- Completes administrative tasks accurately and on a timely basis
- Meets agreed to deadlines
- Participates in organizational meetings and initiatives



Senior Attorney/Senior Staff Attorney Core Competencies
(builds on Law Fellow/Staff Attorney core competencies)

Judgment

- Identifies and understands legal/policy/political/interpersonal issues
- Displays broad perspective and consistently makes sound decisions and recommendations
- Demonstrates effective and timely problem solving and decision making ability based on analysis, experience and wisdom
- Demonstrates good judgment concerning ethical matters

Legal/Policy Knowledge

- Accurately assesses a problem or technical assistance need and its associated issues
- Applies acquired legal/policy knowledge and understanding to new challenges
- Inspires internal and external confidence in legal/policy knowledge
- As senior attorney gains more experience, will take on more complex litigation and policy responsibilities

Community Partnerships

- Understands community partners' perspective
- Develops strong and long-lasting partnerships
- Cultivates new partnerships

Research & Analysis Skills

- Quickly identifies the central or underlying issues in a complex situation
- Completes sound, thorough analyses
- Develops an articulate, credible and compelling position
- Directs the research efforts of others

Writing Skills

- Writes products that require little revision or redrafting
- Explains complex concepts clearly using terms appropriate for the audience
- Properly reviews/edits documents created by others
- Tailors writing style to accommodate needs

Communication

- Appropriately prioritizes and selects salient points when making presentations
- Can deliver an effective presentation to wide range of audiences
- Communicates comfortably with people at various levels and backgrounds
- Responds to questions with accurate and complete answers
- Integrates a communication/media plan in case and project development



Case and Project Management

- Drives and manages a project or case from start to finish
- Plans work and defines priorities for self and for others
- Delegates work to others and manages progress
- Communicates status of projects and unresolved issues to teams
- Anticipates potential issues and identifies contingency plans
- Effectively and efficiently manages workload and solicits information to assist supervisees' in managing their workloads

Professional Relationships

- Adapts and works effectively in a variety of situations and with a variety of individuals and groups
- Listens to and actively solicits the opinions of others
- Resolves conflict in an appropriate manner

Leadership

- Inspires confidence and trust
- Leads teams directly and through coaching/mentoring
- Demonstrates an entrepreneurial orientation
- Leader outside of PA

Professional Development

- Clearly assigns responsibility, performance expectations and roles for tasks/projects
- Delivers direct, helpful, and specific performance feedback to others (both positive and developmental)
- Provides ongoing, effective supervision, coaching and mentoring
- Values people's differences in background, culture, pursuit or work/personal life balance and perspective
- Evaluates own mentorship and supervisory skills and seeks to improve

Administration and Organizational Strategy

- Comprehends how PA generates revenue, operates, and manages financial sustainability
- Plays a thoughtful role in PA's organizational decisions
- Uses own time and that of others to maximize efficiency and resources

Funder Development

- Able to identify needs through relationship building and, utilizing PA's capabilities, determine best way to address those needs
- Develops relationships with potential funders
- Follows up with networking leads

