

NSDTA

National Staff Development and Training Association  
an affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association



# A New Key to Success

Guidelines for Effective Staff Development and Training Programs  
in Human Services Agencies

**OTHER PUBLICATIONS BY THE  
NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING ASSOCIATION**

Human Services Staff Development and Training Roles and Competencies  
Competency guides are available for personnel in the following roles:

- Administrative Support
- Communication Specialist
- Evaluator/Researcher
- Human Resource Planner
- Instructional Media Specialist
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- Manager
- Organizational Development Specialist
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The NSDTA Code of Ethics for Training and Development Professionals in Human Services: Case Scenarios and Training Implications

Training Evaluation

Training and Development in Human Services: The Journal of the National Staff Development and Training Association

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## CONTENTS

About the National Staff Development and Training Association	4
NSDTA Board of Directors	5
NSDTA Standards Committee	6
Acknowledgements	7
Introduction	8
Changes in the Human Services Training and Development Field	8
The Integral Relationships within an Agency's Training Program	10
Development of Human Services Training as a Profession	12
Updating A Key to Success	13
Essentials for a Sound Agency Training Program	13
Core Values	15
Components of the Training and Development Process	16
Training and Development Roles	17
Components and Roles	18
Components and Criteria—Outline	19
Components and Criteria—Comprehensive Listing	20
Appendix—Outputs of Training Roles	33
Sources and References	35

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING ASSOCIATION**

The National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) is the primary professional association for the human services training and development. An affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association, NSDTA was founded in 1985. It is a multidisciplinary organization comprised of training and development professionals who serve diverse populations in a variety of settings across the lifespan.

The mission of the NSDTA is to build professional and organizational capacity in human services through a national network of members who share ideas and resources on organizational development, staff development, and training. NSDTA accomplishes its mission by:

- Promoting a network of contacts to discuss and disseminate best practice methods and strategies
- Providing a national forum for discussion of staff development and training issues
- Providing leadership in the development of local, state, and federal programs and procedures that enhance the skills of staff, and the development standards and evaluation criteria for training programs nationwide
- Developing public policy recommendations and advocating for staff development and training issues
- Creating opportunities for continual learning and professional development for the organization and for its members

NSDTA has a vision of competent and caring people in effective organizations creatively working together to improve the well-being of children, adults, and families.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication is the result of a team effort spanning many miles and many months. The Standards Committee recognized the need to update the original Key to Success and began working on a revision in 2007.

We are grateful for the input of so many dedicated professionals in our field. Rose Wentz provided feedback at several points in the process. Dale Curry provided input on the transfer of learning. Cynthia Parry developed the section on evaluation and provided feedback based on the experience of applying a draft of the guidelines in evaluating the Wisconsin child welfare training program.

Several NSDTA members provided useful feedback and reality checks in the conference presentation in Atlanta in 2008.

We are particularly grateful to our editor, Jann Donnenwirth, for her patience, careful editing and input to the several drafts and formatting of the final version.

Our hope is that this publication will be a useful tool to the field of human services training and development as we work together to improve services to children and families.

Freda Bernotavicz  
Chair  
NSDTA Standards Committee  
April 2010

## INTRODUCTION

*Knowledgeable, skilled, and well-motivated staff are critical to the effective operation of human service programs. Staff need knowledge about program policy, professional and technical competence and the ability to work with a broad spectrum of people: clients, staff within the agency, other agencies, and the public at large.*

*The most effective way to ensure that staff acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to carry out their responsibilities to the optimum and are prepared to assume greater responsibility in the future is through an organized staff development and training program. Such a program needs not only top management commitment and support, but also a prominent place in the agency structure so that it can direct its activities to help the agency meet its programs goals, objectives, priorities, and the varying needs of agency staff in all classes (NSDTA, 1993, p.2).*

With these words, the NSDTA Standards Committee introduced the original *A Key to Success: Guidelines for Effective Staff Development and Training Programs in Human Service Agencies*. As stated in the foreword, the document was designed to provide “basic information about the essential components for effective staff development and training. Such areas as the organization of the staff development and training function, staffing, resources, processes, policies and procedures are examined. Therefore, it is a useful resource for agencies interested in assessing and strengthening their staff development and training function and contains valuable tips which can be readily adapted to meet individual agency needs” (NSDTA, 1993, p. 1).

In its original form *A Key to Success* served the human services field well for many years. To address changes and advances in the field, the NSDTA Standards Committee is pleased to present this revised edition.

This introduction provides a comprehensive overview of changes in the training and development field that have informed the revision. The introduction also puts the update of *A Key to Success* in the context of the development of NSDTA as an organization and as a central resource for human services training and development professionals.

### **Changes in the Human Services Training and Development Field**

In the last 25 years, there have been historical developments in the fields of both human services and in staff development and training. Increasingly complex social problems (e.g., poverty, homelessness, domestic violence, child maltreatment, unemployment, substance abuse) co-existing with increased funding challenges have elevated the need for a well-trained human services workforce. The field of staff development and training in general moved from a narrow perspective of training to broader concepts of human performance improvement and human resource development (Curry, Lawler, & Bernotavicz, 2006).



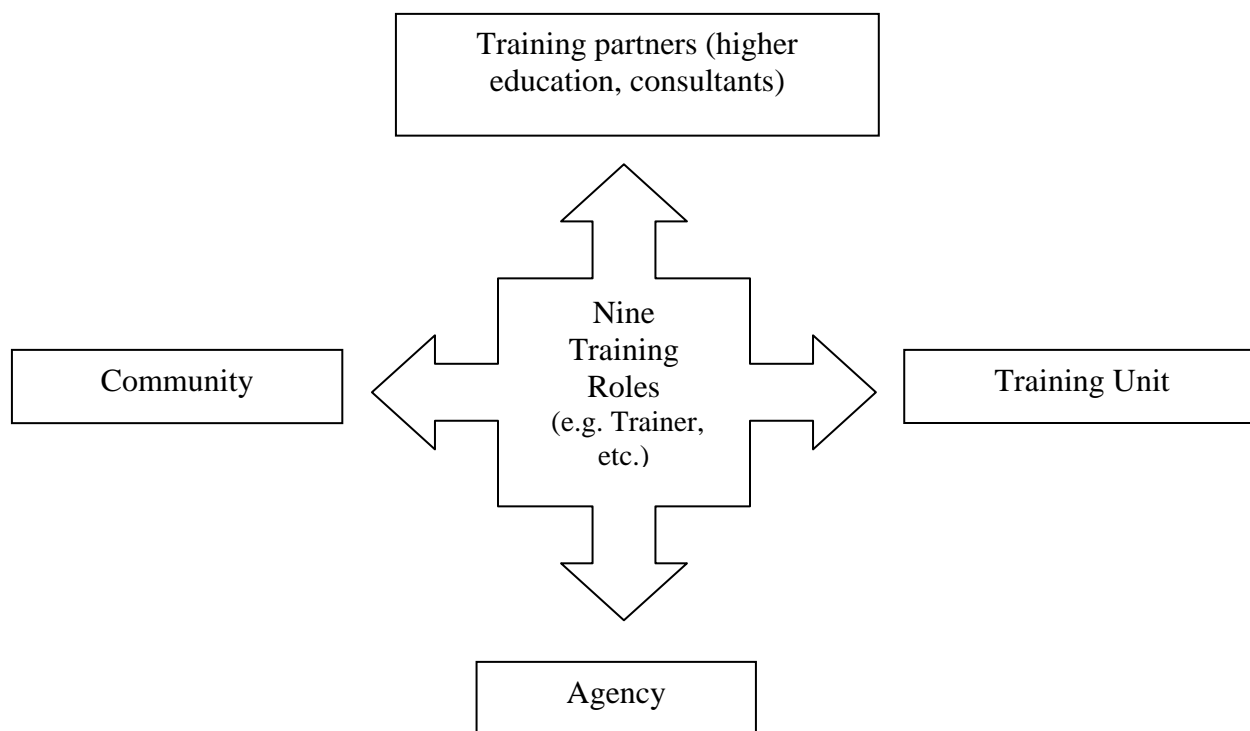
Brittain (2004) describes some changes in child welfare training during this period including “a calculated approach to training development focusing on competencies, multi-layered training evaluation, and the inclusion of transfer activities to enhance integration and skill development” (p.2). There has also been an increasing awareness of the influence of the external environment on training. Collins, Amodeo, and Clay (2007) note in a review of the literature on child welfare training: “training does not occur in isolation and... contextual factors greatly impact the delivery and outcomes of training.” Such contextual factors include the crisis in the human service workforce and increasing evidence that training and career development interventions promote staff retention (Curry, McCarragher, & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2005); an increased emphasis on outcomes (e.g. the Child and Family Services Reviews) and the role of training as a key strategy in program improvement (Martin, Barbee, & Antle, 2003); and performance improvement with its focus on enhancing human performance in support of the goals of the organization as a whole (Robinson & Robinson, 1998).

This period also brought changes in the key players in the training and development field. In the past, training was often seen as a function conducted by a few people that occurred after management had made decisions regarding systemic or program changes. It is now recognized that training programs are most successful when they are seen as having an integral role in the organizational structure, purpose and processes of the agency. This includes changing our understanding of the people involved in the agency’s training program. These key players include:

1. training unit staff
2. agency staff
3. community members
4. training partners

Each of these players influences the others and must be engaged in the development and implementation of the agency’s training program. Additionally all the people involved at each of these levels must also be recipients of training in order to enhance their own competencies.

## The Integral Relationships within an Agency's Training Program



There have also been changes in who provides training and who receives agency training. The training function can be provided by agency staff whose primary role is trainer, supervisor, manager or another position. Training units may be internal or external to the agency's organizational structure. Partnerships with universities, private contracted trainers and training organizations are commonly used to fill training roles or to be the unit that provides the agency with its training implementation or structure (Briar-Lawson & Zlotnick, 2003). Community members are frequently included in developing training plans, as trainers and as recipients of training. Examples include the use of clients (youth and adults) and community stakeholders as trainers, cross training for staff from different agencies and professions when they have mutual clients or joint training of staff, community service providers and clients. The broader community also includes state and federal staff who develop programs to implement laws related to agency outcomes and thereby also have a role in the agency's training program.

In the years since 1993 we have also come to understand the importance of a more macro perspective on the context of staff performance. New terminology such as strategic human capital management, workforce quality improvement and workforce development reflect a more strategic view of the role of training and development. "Organizational development" is a concept that is not addressed in the original *A Key to Success* document but we now recognize the importance of this function which goes outside the scope of traditional classroom training to focus on organizational performance improvement. We also now

recognize the importance of a comprehensive evaluation strategy to increase accountability and provide evidence of the effectiveness of specific approaches.

Kanak, Baker, Herz, and Maciolek (2008) have also identified the need to take into account the larger system issues that support or impede effective training and the need for managers to view the training system strategically as a key management tool for sustaining organizational change and improvement. They define a training system as the people (trainers, managers and universities), resources (financial, technical), policies and procedures combined into a coherent whole. The purpose of the training system is to plan, provide, support and evaluate formal and informal instruction, learning opportunities, and professional development aimed at improving agency outcomes. They also discuss the life cycle of a training system, strategies for building a mature system and provide a sample assessment tool as well as examples highlighting selected performance principles and the development strategies

Lawson (2008) further argues the need to move from concepts of training systems to learning systems. Such learning systems help generate new knowledge and new priorities that can be incorporated into the conventional training system and facilitate training readiness, receptivity and transfer (Lawson, Caringi, McCarthy, Briar-Lawson, & Strolin, 2006). Learning systems strategies include teams, search conferences, community of practice networks and peer problem-solving, mentoring and coaching (Lawson, 2008).

An increasing body of research is also helping clarify the relationships among training, organizational development, workforce issues and client outcomes. In a review of the research across the fields of child care, child welfare, education, employment and training, juvenile justice and youth services the authors conclude that we need an ecological perspective on workforce development (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007). They identify three important categories of workforce inputs:

- Education and professional staff development: pre- and in-service training, workshops and “in situ” coaching and mentoring.
- Organizational supports: an organizational mindset that values program improvement; administrators who support training and advocate for better compensation and conditions; adequate and supportive supervision; shared decision-making; and a strong performance management structure.
- Policy supports: quality ratings, accreditation standards, certification and career ladders.

In addition, the last 25 years have seen major changes in the training delivery system. In 1993, the use of technology in training was limited to classroom use of instructional media. In today’s world, effective training programs use e-learning extensively to overcome time, distance and other barriers to make training accessible to a much wider audience. Delivery methods include web-based learning, asynchronous learning, computer-assisted instruction, interactive TV, audio and videotape, and more.

## Development of Human Services Training as a Profession

In the same period, NSDTA has been instrumental in laying the foundation for a professional identity for the field of human services training and development. The publication of the original *A Key to Success* played a central role in setting standards for the field. Over the years this document proved to be a very useful resource and several training programs (including Pennsylvania and Maine) followed the guidelines to design their own staff development and training system.

In 1997, the NSDTA Standards Committee expanded on one of the guidelines in *A Key to Success* (“the function is staffed by competent, qualified professional and clerical personnel”) to develop guidelines for staffing a training program. This resulted in a series of competency models that define nine roles and functions including: administrative support, communications specialist, evaluator/researcher, human resource planner, instructional media specialist, manager, instructor/trainer, organizational development specialist and training program and curriculum designer. Roles are not synonymous with jobs or people. In a large organization, a higher degree of specialization exists and it is possible that individuals may have only one key role. In a smaller organization, however, staff often wear many hats and may perform multiple roles. NSDTA has defined nine major roles with their related competency models and outputs or the tangible results or products of each role. A listing of outputs is provided as Appendix A. The full description of the roles, outputs and competency models is available on (citation). These models provide the basis for developing staffing patterns, hiring and selection, competency-based certification and performance management within the staff development and training program (Bernotavicz, 2004).

NSDTA has also advanced the concept of human services training and development as a profession by developing a code of ethics (Curry, Brittain, Wentz & McCarragher, 2004). Beginning at the 2000 national conference in New York, NSDTA Ethics Committee members examined ethical principles in both human services and training and development fields, solicited feedback from the membership regarding core values and ethical principles, and completed a draft code which was adopted at the 2003 national conference in Anaheim. A supplementary publication (*The NSDTA Code of Ethics for Training and Development Professionals in Human Services: Case Scenarios and Training Implications*) to help “teach” the Code was developed and distributed to the membership at the Chicago, 2004 Institute.

Recognizing the important role of evaluation in a staff development and training function, NSDTA also sponsored the development of an evaluation handbook intended to demystify the process of planning and conducting a training evaluation and to provide practical information for training managers, agency administrators and others who need to evaluate training programs (Parry & Berdie, 1999). The National Human Service Training Evaluation Symposium held annually at the University of California at Berkeley and jointly sponsored by NSDTA and Cal-SWEC provides a forum for evaluators to get input from their peers and share findings and results in the publication of proceedings that contribute to the body of knowledge.

NSDTA provides a variety of mechanisms to disseminate knowledge about the field. Since 1993 the association has organized a national conference attended by 300-600 human services training professionals from across the country. As a result of attending the annual conference, participants become members of both NSDTA and APHSA. *Training and Development in Human Services*, the NSDTA journal, is published bi-annually and structured in a way that encourages conceptual articles that contribute to the advancement of the field, practical information about training activities as well as information concerning instrumentation and methodology. The NSDTA website provides a link to publications and a way to post questions to garner information. As noted in an editorial in the NSDTA journal, we have laid the foundation of a professional identity and are emerging as a distinct profession (Curry, Lawler, & Bernotavicz, 2006).

### **Updating A Key to Success**

In light of these changes in the field and advances in the profession, the Standards Committee felt that it was timely to update *A Key to Success* to provide *A New Key to Success* for the twenty-first century. Like the original document, this is intended to be a resource useful to the field.

When the Standards Committee reviewed the original document, we were gratified to find that it was basically sound and relevant to the changing field. Most important was the concept of the strategic position of training within an organization. As noted earlier, research and practice are coming together to emphasize the link between training, worker performance and outcomes. Supervisors and managers have a key role to play in creating this link, in preparing workers for training and reinforcing learning on the job. Such a transition requires a closer partnership between the training program and the agency, a partnership envisioned in the original *A Key to Success* document where it was made clear that to be effective the training program needs not only top-level management commitment and support, but also a prominent place in the agency structure.

#### **Essentials for a Sound Agency Training Program**

*To be effective, training must be a clearly identifiable function within the agency structure. It must be closely related to other agency management processes and must support program goals, objectives, and priorities.*

*Essentials for a sound training program are:*

- 1. Administrative support*
- 2. An organizational climate that permits looking at problems and the means to resolve them*
- 3. Top staff commitment to the value of cooperative planning and the development of ways to work together to meet program and staff needs*
- 4. A realistic understanding by management of what one can expect from a sound staff development and training program, namely that it is not a substitute for good management or a cure-all for every organizational problem*
- 5. Reinforcement and follow-up of training programs by the supervisory and managerial staff.*

*NSDTA, A Key to Success, 1993*

Using this concept as a foundation, we have developed a document that includes the following:

- Core values or characteristics that cut across all components of a training program (strategic alignment, leadership commitment and communication, stakeholder involvement, accountability and recognition, ethical practice);
- Major components of a training and development process (planning, design/development, implementation, research and evaluation, operations);
- Relationship of components to the nine training and development roles; and
- Criteria for effectiveness organized according to the components.

While we have made every effort to be evidence-based and have conducted a review of the available literature, this document is designed as a tool, a simple checklist of the most salient factors in assessing the effectiveness of a staff development and training program in the human services. We have built on the original *A Key to Success* and also drawn from publications such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) guide for training and development programs in federal agencies (GAO, 2003). However, to promote ease of use we have not provided in-text citations within the new guidelines. A list of source material as well as references are included. Because the field covers many service areas (child welfare, public welfare, adult protective, mental health and retardation and juvenile services to name a few), we have created a generic document that can be applied to training programs in any of the service areas.

Our hope is that this revised document will be as useful a resource to the field as the original edition of *A Key to Success*.

## CORE VALUES

Several core values or characteristics cut across all components of training programs<sup>1</sup>:

- **Strategic alignment:** Clear linkages exist between the agency's mission, goals and culture and its training and development efforts. The agency's mission and goals drive a strategic training and development approach. This helps ensure that the agency takes full advantage of an optimal mix of strategies to improve performance and enhance capacity to meet emerging challenges.
- **Leadership commitment and communication:** Agency leaders and managers consistently demonstrate that they support and value continuous learning. They are receptive to and use feedback from employees on developmental needs and training results. Leaders set the expectation that fair and effective training and development practices will improve individual and organizational performance.
- **Stakeholder involvement:** Agency stakeholders are involved throughout the training and development process to help ensure that different perspectives are taken into account. Stakeholders' views are incorporated in identifying performance enhancements, developing and implementing strategies, and conceptualizing and using measures that accurately reflect the contribution of training and development toward achieving results.
- **Accountability and recognition:** Appropriate accountability mechanisms, such as performance management systems, are in place to hold managers and employees responsible for learning and working in new ways. Appropriate rewards and incentives exist and are used fairly and equitably to encourage innovation, reinforce change behaviors and enhance performance.
- **Ethical practice:** Activities of training and development professionals are conducted in adherence with professional ethics. Values and standards from the NSDTA Code of Ethics are integrated into training and development activities.

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<sup>1</sup> The first four values are taken from GAO (2003)

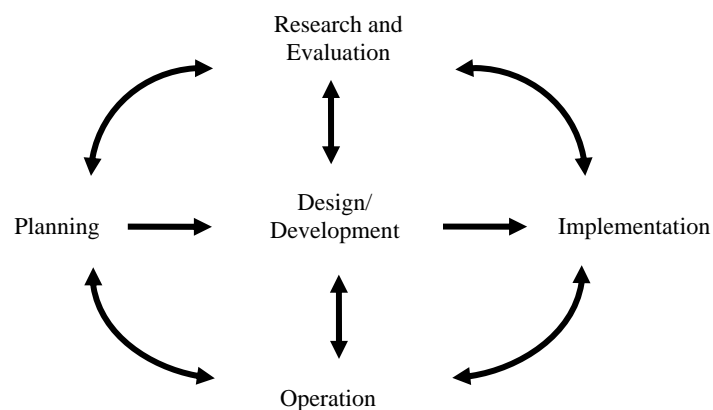
## COMPONENTS OF THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

*The essential aim of training and development programs is to assist the agency in achieving its mission and goals by improving individual and, ultimately, organizational performance (GAO, 2003, p. 1-2).*

The training and development process can be loosely segmented into five interrelated components<sup>2</sup>:

- 1. Planning:** Developing a strategic approach that establishes priorities and leverages investments in training and development to achieve agency outcomes
- 2. Design/Development:** Identifying specific training and development initiatives that the agency will use, along with other strategies, to improve individual and agency performance
- 3. Implementation:** Ensuring effective and efficient delivery of training and development activities in an environment that supports learning and change
- 4. Research and Evaluation:** Assessing the extent to which training and development efforts contribute to improved performance and results and research
- 5. Operations:** Ensuring that internal and external operations are structured and managed to provide quality service, expand the resource base and improve performance.

Figure 1 shows the general relationship among these components. Training and development is not a linear process; all components interact with one another.



**Figure 1. Components of the Training and Staff Development System**

<sup>2</sup> The concept of the components and the definitions of the first four are taken from GAO. NSDTA added the fifth component.



## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ROLES

The following chart shows the nine training and development roles described by NSDTA in comprehensive competency models.

Role	Definition
Administrative Support	Providing the administrative support to ensure that the facilities, equipment, materials, participants and other components of a learning event are present and that program and organizational logistics run smoothly.
Communications Specialist	Analyzing customer needs and using multiple communication strategies to convey coordinated messages and materials related to products, services, and programs to targeted internal and external audiences.
Evaluator/Researcher	Identifying the impact of an intervention and of developing and testing theories of learning, training, development and transfer of learning.
Human Resource Planner	Planning for the utilization and development of human resources.
Instructional Media Specialist	Designing systems for and producing written or electronically-mediated instruction.
Instructor/Trainer	Facilitating individual performance improvement including delivering training, directing structured learning and facilitating groups.
Manager	Facilitating and leading a group's work including linking training and development with other organizational units and monitoring contract activities.
Organizational Development Specialist	Facilitating organizational improvement, including assessing training needs, diagnosing organizational problem areas, consulting on OD strategies, and conducting team building sessions.
Training Program and Curriculum Designer	Developing programs and curriculum including defining the content and outcomes, selecting and sequencing appropriate learning activities, writing modules and developing case studies.

## COMPONENTS AND ROLES

Effective training programs need competent people staffing all components of the process. The following chart relates the five process components to the nine training and development roles NSDTA has identified and described in comprehensive competency models. This chart shows which roles would most commonly be involved in each training component.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Role</b>
Planning	Manager, Evaluator/Researcher, Human Resource Planner, Organizational Development Specialist
Design/Development	Training Program and Curriculum Designer, Instructional Media Specialist, Communications Specialist
Implementation	Instructor /Trainer, Manager, Organizational Development Specialist, Administrative Support
Research and Evaluation	Evaluator/Researcher
Operations	Manager, Communications Specialist, Administrative Support

## COMPONENTS AND CRITERIA—OUTLINE

The following material describes criteria for the major components of an effective staff development and training program. Criteria are intended as a guide to help in development and assessment of programs to serve the goals of human service agencies and meet the needs of staff.

### **1.0 Planning**

- 1.1 Strategic Alignment
- 1.2 Workforce Development
- 1.3 Training Needs Assessment
- 1.4 Training Plan Development
- 1.5 Content of the Training Plan

### **2.0 Design/Development**

- 2.1 Training Program Design
- 2.2 Curriculum Design
- 2.3 Cultural Responsiveness

### **3.0 Implementation**

- 3.1 Range of Training Delivery
- 3.2 Orientation and Pre-service Training
- 3.3 In-service Training
- 3.4 Professional Development
- 3.5 Organizational Development
- 3.6 Learning Environment
- 3.7 Transfer of Learning

### **4.0 Research and Evaluation**

- 4.1 Strategic Alignment
- 4.2 Stakeholder Involvement
- 4.3 Respect for Individuals
- 4.4 Correct Level of Evaluation
- 4.5 Competence, Rigor and Relevance
- 4.6 Evaluation Feasibility and Efficiency
- 4.7 Honesty and Ethical Conduct

### **5.0 Operations**

- 5.1 Organization and Structure
- 5.2 Resources and Funding
- 5.3 Information Management and Logistical Systems
- 5.4 Staffing
- 5.5 External Relationships
- 5.6 Communication

## COMPONENTS AND CRITERIA--COMPREHENSIVE LISTING

### **1.0 PLANNING: Developing a strategic approach that establishes priorities and leverages investments in training and development to achieve agency outcomes**

**1.1 Strategic Alignment:** *Staff development and training staff are involved in the agency management process, and programs are related to agency program objectives, priorities and staff needs.*

- The training program is part of the formal policy development and senior management processes of the agency.
- The program addresses employee performance improvement and training needs to meet agency program objectives.
- The agency has a policy on the place of training and learning in the organization including a lifelong learning expectation.
- There are mechanisms in place to address changes in the work environment, technology and innovation.
- Staff development and training staff work closely with Personnel (Human Resources) in the development of job descriptions and performance standards, as well as in the recruitment and selection process.

**1.2 Workforce Development:** *The agency reassesses its workforce as part of annual planning and prepares for future needs.*

- The agency has current information on the composition, qualifications, training and skills of the workforce and a system for analyzing and updating this information.
- There is a process for conducting gap analysis between the current workforce composition and project workforce needs.
- There is a process for closing gaps when possible through recruiting, training or outsourcing.
- There are policies and mechanisms in place to address succession planning.
- There are planning approaches and a process for recruitment and selection to ensure that enough qualified staff are hired to meet the demand for services.

**1.3 Training Needs Assessment:** *The agency conducts regular and systematic needs assessments for all classes of staff, clients and other stakeholders.*

- A variety of methodologies are used including questionnaires, review of performance appraisals, interviews with line staff, supervisors and management and/or direct observation.
- The results of the needs assessment are confirmed with supervisory and management staff to ensure that the training program supports program goals and objectives, agency priorities and the needs of staff.
- The needs assessment distinguishes between training and non-training issues.

**1.4 Training Plan Development:** *The program is reviewed annually and revised in accord with an assessment of the agency's training needs.*

- The development of the training plan links to training policy and strategy and agency service goals.
- Specific levels of mandatory and optional training are established for the various classes of staff within the agency.
- The plan derives from the agency's workforce strategy, training needs analysis and review of the previous plan.
- There is a process and protocol to obtain input from key stakeholders.
- There is a decision-making protocol to determine priorities and allocate resources.
- Mechanisms are in place to make decisions and act on them in a timely way.

**1.5 Content of the Training Plan:** *The agency has a written annual training plan.*

- The plan contains a summary of the training policy and strategies from which it derives and is clearly linked to service goals.
- The plan identifies the location of the training function in the organization of the agency and describes the policies and procedures for establishing training needs.
- The training plan outlines specific expectations regarding training required of personnel in different positions and categories.
- The plan provides the opportunity for personnel to fulfill the continuing education requirements of their respective professions.
- The plan provides opportunities to support advancement within the agency and profession.
- The plan describes the process of ongoing monitoring of achievement and the framework for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of training.
- The plan is realistic in terms of scope and agency resources and includes the training budget.
- The plan specifies what training will be provided, the purpose of the training and who should attend or who is eligible to attend. It considers the use of both in-house and contracted training.

**2.0 DESIGN/ DEVELOPMENT:** *Identifying specific training and development initiatives that the agency will use, along with other strategies, to improve individual and agency performance*

**2.1 Training Program Design:** *The design is based on a comprehensive needs assessment and reflects best practice in adult learning and human services delivery.*

- The training program reflects agency practice and evidence-based practice for the profession.
- The most recent literature, research and national expertise are used to develop the program.

- Training promotes professional growth and development for agency staff and encourages life-long learning.
- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and representatives from the audience to be trained participate in the training design process.
- The training program addresses realities of the environment of the agency and community in which the staff must practice
- The program provides training to all levels of staff in the agency and for all levels of competency.
- The training program is reviewed at least biennially to ensure that all parts of the program are appropriate and current.

**2.2 Curriculum Design:** *Pre-service and in-service training are organized on a formal structure.*

- Training objectives and activities are standardized and uniform in order to maintain the integrity of the curriculum.
- There is one or more approved formats in which curriculum is written and all curricula conform.
- Criteria exist for making decisions about standardization/customization, curriculum format(s), and how and at what point formative evaluation activities will be undertaken.
- Training objectives and activities are 1) appropriate for the tasks that staff perform and 2) meet the learning styles of the learners.
- Full written curriculum is available, whenever possible, to document what is presented and ensure that trainers have the resources needed to present training as intended. Full curriculum means that it contains both instructions to the trainer and content to be trained.
- Competencies are aligned with practice models or principles that the agency has adopted
- The content reflects evidence informed practice whenever possible.
- Cultural and other diversity issues are woven throughout the curriculum
- The content is consistent and congruent within the curriculum (i.e. there are no conflicting points of information except to purposefully illustrate dilemmas or controversies in the field).  
Information presented in different sections/steps is complementary.)
- The scope (breadth of coverage) and depth (detail) of content provide enough information to meet learning objectives of the curriculum
- The content is sequenced well, e.g., from simple to complex, universal to exception, and by logical steps suggested by the content
- Handouts, are clear, visually appealing, and varied in format and reinforce training content.
- Flipcharts/Power Point slides contain only key points or simple visual models.

- Audio visual materials are carefully chosen for appropriate length, content, and quality, e.g., videos are relevant and can be clearly seen and heard.
- Props (e.g., toys, puzzles), if used, are integrated into the content and designed for ease of use.
- Learning methods match competencies to be developed and reflect a broad spectrum of activities.
- Curriculum is piloted, tested and evaluated prior to full roll-out to all learners.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the training is incorporated into the design and completed following the implementation.
- Trainers have the expertise and competencies to conduct the training as designed.
- Activities include reinforcement of learning/application to on-the-job performance.
- Mechanisms are in place to ensure trainer fidelity to the curriculum.
- Training activities include both before and after workshop interventions.
- Research and resources used are cited as appropriate.
- A group/committee of key stakeholders is charged with the responsibility of working the process of either development or selection through to the final curriculum product. This group is clear about its responsibility (e.g., what resources it has at its disposal; what the criteria for making decisions about issues such as content, methods, and standardization/customization are; and whether its authority about the final product is making decisions or recommendations, and if the latter, to whom).

**2.3 Cultural Responsiveness:** *Training program initiatives are designed to ensure accessibility and to be culturally responsive to staff and the client population.*

- Training policy and strategy include approaches to ensure staff have fair and equal access to training.
- Announcements are widely distributed to staff and other agencies in appropriate formats to facilitate access to training.
- Training programs address differences within the agency's service population.
- The programs are readily available to all staff, are provided at sites accessible to participants and offered on a regularly scheduled basis
- Curriculum is designed to address fairness and equity issues that can occur to clients of the agency and reflects the cultural continuum of the clients served by the agency
- Curriculum takes into account the environment in which learning takes place and the factors that hinder or promote learning
- Cultural issues are woven throughout the curriculum.

### **3.0 IMPLEMENTATION: Ensuring effective and efficient delivery of training and development activities in an environment that supports learning and change**

**3.1 Range of Training Delivery:** *There is a range of training delivery modalities: classroom, distance and self-directed; individualized and team-based.*

- There is a comprehensive mix of formal and on-the-job training opportunities.
- Policies and procedures are in place to identify and determine the most effective and efficient training delivery mechanism to meet learning objectives and make training accessible
- There is evidence that the agency is investing in updated technologies and open to new approaches.

**3.2 Orientation and Pre-service Training:** *There is an integrated program of orientation and pre-service training for new employees in all classes of positions which provides intensive skill-oriented training to prepare and enable employees to assume job responsibilities.*

- The orientation and pre-service training covers all levels of staff (administrative support, direct service, program specialists, supervisors and managers).
- The orientation and pre-service training components are clearly defined in terms of desired outcomes, intended audience, objectives, curriculum, training methodology and evaluation of outcomes.
- The components build in direct supervisory responsibility to supplement and reinforce retention and utilization of new skills.
- Training is conducted by skilled trainers using professional training methods and current research literature.

**3.3 In-service Training:** *There is an integrated program of in-service training for employees in all classes of positions which provides intensive skill-oriented training to enable employees to carry out job responsibilities.*

- In-service training covers all levels of staff (administrative support, direct service, program specialists, supervisors and managers).
- Training is provided when job duties change; new policies, procedures and systems are implemented; and new technology introduced.
- Opportunities reinforce essential knowledge and required skills for performance of specific job functions.
- Opportunities promote the acquisition and development of new knowledge and skills

**3.4 Professional Development:** *Continuing staff development and training opportunities for staff in all classes of positions are provided.*

- Professional development covers all levels of staff (administrative support, direct service, program specialists, supervisors and managers).
- Professional development opportunities are based on agency needs and findings from employees' individual development plans.
- Professional development is used to retain staff by providing opportunities for job enrichment, personal growth and career development and as a vehicle to upgrade and enhance managerial and supervisory skills.
- Resources are available for agency staff to have access to professional literature and participate in professional conferences and meetings.



**3.5 Organizational Development:** *There exists organizational development in addition to individual professional development.*

- Organizational development covers all program areas (public welfare, child welfare, adult services, child support, etc.).
- Organizational development initiatives are based on agency needs and on findings from organizational assessments.
- Organizational development addresses organizational issues such as culture, climate, team building, communication and other organizational factors not appropriate for classroom training.
- Human resource management theory and concepts are considered in organizational development and individual professional development plans.
- Agencies provide access to organizational development literature and integrate this literature into continuous learning and improvement.

**3.6 Learning Environment:** *There exists a physical environment conducive to learning including space, equipment and training materials.*

- There is appropriate training space (lighting, layout, furniture).
- The agency supports efforts to keep pace with state-of-the-art instructional support technology and to model its effective use.
- The agency has adequate and up-to-date training equipment and training materials<sup>3</sup> which are appropriately utilized to meet training objectives.
- Training materials are available for statewide use and a resource center is maintained.
- Training is offered in locations that are convenient and cost effective for staff to access.

**3.7 Transfer of Learning:** *The agency promotes and supports transfer of learning principles and activities.*

- Evidence-based transfer of learning principles and strategies are integrated into the design of training and development activities (e.g., identical elements, general principles, stimulus variability, response availability and ecological interventions before, during and after formal training).
- Activities to promote transfer of learning are employed before, during and after formal training (e.g., pre-training meeting between supervisor and trainee to discuss learning needs and potential applications; use of planning at the end of training; and “booster shot” follow-up review and application session).
- Agency policies exist to clarify goals, roles, procedures and interpersonal expectations regarding application of learning (e.g., expectations for participants to review learning with other team members after training, expectations for supervisors to provide uninterrupted time for training, expectations for trainers to be available for consultation after training) and how training and development activities are integrally related to the

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<sup>3</sup> Examples of equipment include overhead projector, video recorder with monitor, video camera, film projector, slide projector, audio recorder, flip charts and stands. Examples of materials and supplies include teaching materials (e.g., appropriate books and periodicals) and supplies such as newsprint, transparencies, marking pens.

accomplishment of the agency's mission (e.g., promoting safety, permanence and well-being).

- Administrators and supervisors communicate the importance of training and development activities and support application of learning before, during and after formal training.
- Individual learners are supported in their learning and application efforts by other team members.
- Strategies to evaluate transfer of learning (both the process and the extent) and communicate evaluation results to key personnel are routinely implemented.

#### **4.0 RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:<sup>4</sup>Assessing the extent to which training and development efforts contribute to improved performance and results and research**

**4.1 Strategic Alignment:** *The evaluation provides information directly relevant to the mission, goals and objectives of the training program and of the agency as a whole and promotes agency use of findings.*

- Evaluation activities are carried out in response to the needs of the agency, as part of a larger strategic plan for training evaluation or in response to emerging priorities.
- Staff at various levels within the training program or agency are involved in framing the questions to be answered by evaluation activities.
- Structures are in place to link data on individual and organizational effectiveness.
- Provisions are in place for training program and other agency personnel to receive regular reports on the evaluation's progress in relation to identified goals and objectives.
- Staff have the opportunity to review evaluation reports and provide clarification or interpretation of findings.
- Findings are used by the agency in a variety of ways (e.g., to determine future training needs, to improve future curriculum development and delivery, to document individual performance or to measure program effectiveness).

**4.2 Stakeholder Involvement:** *The evaluation seeks the input of all individuals or groups who have an interest in its design, procedure and outcomes in order to enhance its relevance and effectiveness.*

- Persons involved in the evaluation as participants or consumers of information are identified so their needs may be met.
- Stakeholders have opportunities for meaningful input into evaluation activities (e.g., through participation on advisory groups, collaboration on aspects of the evaluation design or instrumentation, or review of reports and other documents).
- The evaluation actively seeks support from key individuals and groups.

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<sup>4</sup> These standards are adapted from the American Evaluation Association *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (2004); the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation *Program Evaluation Standards* (1994) and *Student Evaluation Standards* (2003); and the National Association for Gifted Children *Program Evaluation Standards* (2000).

**4.3 Respect for Individuals:** *The evaluation is conducted with due regard for the rights and welfare of those involved in the evaluation as well as those affected by its results. Evaluators respect human dignity in their interactions with others associated with an evaluation.*

- Evaluation procedures follow applicable law and policy (including any Institutional Review Board requirements) to protect the rights and welfare of participants.
- Evaluation procedures are consistent, equitable and fair.
- Evaluators take into account potential implications of individual differences in culture, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and ethnicity when planning, conducting, analyzing and reporting evaluations
- Evaluations are constructive and strive to contribute to participants' learning and development while meeting agency needs.
- Evaluations result in decisions that are in the best interests of participants.
- Expectations of participants are clearly defined.
- Access to evaluation information is limited to those with a legitimate need to view the information. Policies are developed to guide access and maintain participant privacy and the users and uses of evaluation data are specified.
- Participants are made aware of confidentiality policies and how information will be used and by whom.

**4.4 Correct Level of Evaluation:** *A system for categorizing and describing level of evaluation (e.g. Kirkpatrick, 1959; Parry & Berdie, 1999; Kraiger, 2002) is used to ensure that the evaluation design will yield the desired level of information.*

- Evaluation tools and procedures yield data at the desired level of evaluation (e.g., information about a participant skill such as interviewing is evaluated through demonstration of the skill rather than by a written test of knowledge).
- There is a match between the level of evaluation and the levels of learning specified in curriculum competency statements or learning objectives and supported by the curriculum content.

**4.5 Competence, Rigor and Relevance:** *The evaluation is carried out using the most rigorous designs, procedures, instruments and analyses that are feasible in the context of the agency's needs and legal, ethical and practical constraints.*

- Evaluators have the necessary education, skill and experience to conduct the evaluation.
- Evaluation designs are appropriate to answer the evaluation questions, and provide data at the correct levels.
- Measures chosen or developed provide reliable information. This allows consistent interpretation of performance over time and for different trainee groups.
- Measures chosen or developed are clearly related to training content and the evaluation questions and are valid for the intended uses of the data.
- Data collection procedures and tools are piloted, and modifications are made to ensure that procedures and tools perform as expected.

- Analytic procedures are correctly used and appropriate to the evaluation questions to be answered.
- All evaluation data is reported completely and impartially to guard against distortion of the conclusions or introduction of subtle or unintended biases.
- Data is systematically reviewed for errors, corrected as appropriate, and kept secure, so that accurate judgments of individual or program performance can be made.
- Procedures are in place for monitoring progress of the evaluation against the design and data collection plans, and modifications are made as needed to ensure that evaluation questions are answered.
- Conclusions reached are justified by the data, and findings are reported clearly and completely.
- Reporting allows stakeholders to understand the bases for the evaluation findings and provides them the opportunity to comment on the data and the resulting interpretations.

**4.6 Evaluation Feasibility and Efficiency:** *The evaluation is designed and conducted to provide needed information in a practical and cost effective manner.*

- The agency or program allocates sufficient funds, time and personnel to conduct an effective evaluation.
- Evaluation procedures are practical, efficient and produce information of sufficient value to justify expenditures.
- Evaluation procedures collect needed information with as little disruption of training or agency activities as possible.
- The evaluation has a plan to obtain the input and support of individuals who play key roles in its implementation.

**4.7 Honesty and Ethical Conduct:** *All individuals involved in the evaluation conduct themselves in a manner that conforms to the ethics of their profession, the human services field and the NSDTA Code of Ethics for Training and Development Professionals in Human Services.*

- Evaluators respect the rights of all individuals participating in the evaluation.
- Evaluators respect agreed-upon confidentiality procedures and maintain the security of evaluation data.
- Evaluators clearly and honestly discuss with the agency and stakeholders the costs, scope and limitations of evaluation activities; results likely to be obtained; and appropriate uses of data.
- When changes to agreed-upon evaluation plans are necessary, the evaluator informs the agency and stakeholders in a timely manner of the change and likely impacts.
- Evaluators disclose potential conflicts of interest before accepting an evaluation assignment.
- Evaluators do not misrepresent their procedures or findings and, to the extent possible, try to prevent misrepresentation or misuse of evaluation results by others.
- Interests and values of the evaluator, agency or stakeholders that may influence the findings are made explicit in documents related to the evaluation and its outcomes.

- If the evaluator determines that conditions during planning and implementation of the evaluation are likely to produce misleading information or misuse of results, he or she works with the client and stakeholders to resolve the concern or determine whether continued work on the evaluation is advisable. The evaluator makes clear any significant limitations on the evaluation that might result if the conflict is not resolved.

**4.8 Research to practice partnerships:** *A research component, while not required for a well functioning training system, may serve to enhance the training system through such activities as: Seeking out the evidence-informed practice literature to help guide decision-making about new curricula, content of curricula, learning theory, and promising practices in training methods and evaluation of learning; conducting research on training-related activities; and connecting and integrating the training system with professional education, recruitment, selection, training, targeted transfer of learning through coaching, mentoring and peer networking, and performance and outcomes evaluation. Such a research component should:*

- Have a process in place for determining a specific research agenda to enable the research partner to design projects that meet the needs of the child welfare state and/or county agencies.
- Use collaborative methods between partners to review research, make decisions, plan, implement, and evaluate initiatives.
- Use researchers/university staff/faculty who have the knowledge, skills, and resources to access and evaluate the literature and implement projects.
- Identify adequate funding for the planned projects.

**5.0 OPERATIONS: Ensuring that internal and external operations are structured and managed to provide quality service, expand the resource base and improve performance**

**5.1 Organization and Structure:** *The agency has assigned responsibility for the management of the staff development and training functions to a specific entity.*

- There is a clear reporting structure from the training program to the agency.
- The training program has articulated a vision and mission statement that is supported by the agency.
- The training program has articulated strategic goals that are aligned with agency goals and revised annually to support the strategic direction of the agency.
- The training program has defined core values and core competencies that are embraced by training staff and the agency.
- The training program has clarified policy and procedures for work processes.
- The training program promotes a positive organizational culture/climate and models effective organizational behavior.
- There is a statewide management and operations structure for the training program that has the resources and authority to conduct the activities associated with statewide planning, decision-making, implementation of tasks, evaluation and assuring accountability throughout the system. Positions within this structure have clear reporting lines and responsibilities.

- The various components/entities of the training system (at both statewide and regional levels, if applicable) are defined and the roles of each are clear in terms of the major functions: planning, decision making, implementation of the many tasks, evaluation and ensuring accountability. There is a viable system for coordination and communication among the entities.
- There is a decision-making structure for the training system that balances the need for broad input into decision-making and when there is not a consensus, is able to make decisions that will be implemented across the system in a timely and verifiable way.
- The statewide training system has a set of criteria for decision-making that is responsive to various (and sometimes competing) mandates and interests.

**5.2 Resources and Funding:** *The agency has clearly identified resources for training and ensures that arrangements are in place to manage and monitor their use.*

- Sufficient funds are allocated for the agency's training program to include funds for staff development and training personnel (professional and clerical), contractual services, grants, space, training materials and equipment.
- Budget requests are developed on an annual basis by staff development and training personnel and are a separate, identifiable item in the budget.
- The source of the state share is identified in relationship to legislative appropriation, matching share from public institutions and private, donated funds.
- Funds for the operation of the training program are under control of the training program, and expenditures reported on a regular basis to the agency.
- Agency managers plan for the release of their staff for training and consider the resource implications.
- Sufficient options are provided to enable staff to complete training and staff development requirements in a timely manner.

**5.3 Information Management and Logistical Systems:** *There is a system for recording information about all staff development and training programs conducted directly by or held under the auspices of the agency as well as information about individual staff participation.*

- Written policies and procedures are contained in a single resource manual that is periodically updated and made available to all agency staff.<sup>5</sup>
- There is a record (preferably automated) of training program information including the title of each program offered; number of participants registered; number of participants who successfully completed the training; dates and length of training; costs; and CEUs and certification data.
- The training program/agency has administrative systems and databases that enable the proper scheduling and support of training and development programs.

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<sup>5</sup> The manual contains information about the mission and philosophy of the training program; objectives and goals of the training program; purpose of and eligibility for participation in staff development and training activities; minimum number of hours of training required annually; certification system for attendance and successful completion of staff development and training activities; procedures for employees to request specific training; mechanism and procedures for approving staff attendance at training events and paying training related costs; educational leave; conference attendance; guidelines for awarding and monitoring grants or contracts to outside resources; procedures for contracting with outside trainers and consultants.

- There is a record of participant information (job title, course title, dates and length of training, completion status, costs of training).
- A learning management system is in place to enable tracking of progress on individual training plans and completion of training requirements.
- There is a record of each grant or contract awarded (time period, subject area, project director, costs and expenditures).
- There is a record of budget information.

**5.4 Staffing:** *The function is staffed by competent, qualified professional and clerical personnel.*

- The training program is staffed primarily with people with fulltime training responsibility. When agency staff are assigned on a part-time basis, their training responsibilities are separate from other assigned duties.
- Roles, functions and competencies of training staff are clearly defined.
- There are standards and methods to promote selection of high quality trainers using competency-based approaches and job sample tests.
- There are processes in place to evaluate the effectiveness of trainers, provide support and ensure quality performance.
- Opportunities and resources are provided for refresher training, professional growth and development of training staff.
- There is a process for training new trainers in pedagogy skills and requirements in place for its completion.
- There is a process for use of consultants and contract trainers.

**5.5 External Relationships:** *External training and educational resources are utilized to supplement and enhance internal agency-based staff development and training activities.*

- There is a partnership between the agency training program and higher education to promote a mutually beneficial system of learning and development.
- The program promotes active involvement of staff in professional organizations to advance the field of human service training and development.
- There are mechanisms in place to ensure that the program maximizes and diversifies funding.
- There are mechanisms in place to ensure participation of representatives of primary stakeholder groups in governing the program.
- The program accesses and shares resources of regional and national organizations to promote professional exchange.

**5.6 Communication:** *The agency communicates with staff and has a system in place to communicate broad messages to the community.*

- Professional development staff help market the skills of staff to internal and external constituents.
- The training program has mechanisms in place for communicating training options, requirements, registration procedures, locations, dates and times to all people who would be expected to use and/or interact with the training.

- Administrators and supervisors communicate the importance of and ensure participation in training and development activities.
- Professional development involves communicating critical agency values and culture to staff.
- The agency communicates its mission and values to various community members.
- The agency communicates its strengths in order to become an employer of choice for professionals in the human services.
- The agency communicates its value as a developer of people and as a community resource.



## Appendix A

### OUTPUTS OF TRAINING ROLES

Outputs are the tangible results or products of the roles. The following list is intended to be illustrative and can act as a guide to clarifying roles and responsibilities within a specific program or agency.

**Administrative Support:** Facility and equipment selections and schedules; inventory and projections of future equipment needs; records of programs and clients (training transcripts, Continuing Education Credits (CEUs), attendance and evaluation documents); logistical support and service to participants; on-site program support and staff management; functioning equipment; contracts and agreements to provide services.

**Communications Specialist:** Positive image for products, services and programs; plans to disseminate products, services and programs; promotional and information material; articles, presentations, catalogs of training materials and curriculum, reports, articles, websites, resource libraries, public service announcements.

**Evaluator/Researcher:** Evaluation and research designs and plans; instruments; evaluation processes; evaluation feedback; concepts, theories or models of development or change; data analysis and interpretation; current evaluation and research findings, conclusions and recommendations; best practices; information on future forces and trends.

**Human Resource Planner:** Predictions of future staffing needs; analysis of retention issues; recruitment strategies; plans for program staffing requirements; skill surveys; data on staff; analysis of legislation and regulations to determine agency staff needs; competency models; task analysis; job descriptions; employee development plans, tools for performance management.

**Instructional Media Specialist:** Graphic, video-based material or live broadcasts; audio or computer-based material; print-based learner material; job aids; instructor and facilitator guides; hardware and software purchasing specifications; advice on media use; recommendations on appropriateness of media-based training.

**Instructor/Trainer:** Learning environment; presentation of materials; facilitation of structured learning events (such as case studies, role plays, games, simulations and tests); facilitation of group discussions; facilitation of media-based learning events (such as videotapes, films, audiotapes, teleconferences, and computer-assisted instruction); test delivery and feedback; group members' awareness of their own group process; feedback to learners; individual action plans for learning transfer; individuals with new knowledge, skills and attitudes.

**Manager:** Staff work direction, plans and performance management; resource acquisition and allocation; linkage to other groups or organizations; budgets and financial management; work environment, strategy, structure and long range plans; policy; negotiating and monitoring of

agency and contract training and consultation; project plans and progress reports; training program priorities; evaluation of process (goals, outcomes and activities); management of training tracking system.

**Organizational Development Specialist:** Teams; resolved conflicts for an organization or groups; diagnosis of organizational problem areas; performance analysis; assessment of training needs; consultation on O.D. strategies: changes in group norms, values or culture; designs for change; client awareness of relationships within and around the organization; plans to implement organization change; implementation of change strategies; recommendations to management regarding training and development.

**Training Program and Curriculum Designer:** Program or intervention objectives and designs; learning activities; role plays; case studies; training and curriculum modules; learning objectives; competency-based approaches; transfer of learning techniques; adult learning principles.

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