

# CFOC/COFAR Financial Assistance Management Career Roadmap Report



## CFO Council Financial Assistance Management Career Roadmap

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**Developed for:**  
Chief Financial Officers Council (CFOC)  
Council on Financial Assistance Reform (COFAR)

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# 1 Executive Summary

The Financial Assistance Management Career Roadmap, described herein, was developed through a collaboration between The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Industrial/Organizational Psychologists, referred to as “the team” throughout the remainder of this report. The main purpose of this effort was to identify and document the competencies needed for successful job performance of Financial Assistance Management professionals across various organizations in the United States Federal Government.

The team is following a three-phased approach to create the Financial Assistance Management Career Roadmap:

**Phase I** involves collecting existing Financial Assistance Management competency-related research and documentation from OMB, the Council on Financial Assistance Reform (COFAR), and other grants making organizations. All documentation is reviewed by subject matter experts (SMEs) for information accuracy and detail. This phase is complete.

**Phase II** involves aggregating those competencies that are common across the existing Financial Assistance Management competency models to form the foundation of the draft Career Roadmap. The initial draft is then presented to OMB for input. Additionally, a series of facilitated discussions with Financial Assistance Management SMEs are conducted to review and refine the draft roadmap. This phase is completed.

**Phase III** involves incorporating all SME feedback into a final Financial Assistance Management career roadmap, which shall be published online for government-wide use. This phase is underway.

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to describe the development of the Financial Assistance Management Career Roadmap, which includes both the functional and leadership competencies that incumbents need in order to progress and excel in the Federal Financial Assistance Management workforce. This comprehensive career roadmap serves as an informational resource for Federal organizations to guide career progression of Financial Assistance Management professionals independent of job series. For example, this Career Roadmap may be used for grants management specialists, program and project managers, policy advisors, financial analysts, or any other job series with financial assistance management responsibilities since the need for different combinations of competencies, as well as experiential levels and required proficiency ratings, may vary. This approach is designed to deviate from previous one-size-fits-all competency models. It is possible and, in some cases, recommended that agencies use the complete Career Roadmap, but not all agencies will require the full roadmap in order to meet the needs of their workforce.

The online version of this Career Roadmap will be interactive and will allow agencies and individuals to use its different elements as building blocks to customize a version that best fits the needs of their Financial Assistance Management Workforce.

Additionally, the competencies and related elements outlined in this document can be used to identify and prioritize Financial Assistance Management workforce training needs.

For the purposes of this document, *Federal Financial Assistance Management Workforce* encompasses the Grants Management workforce, including those in the 1109 series, as well as those performing grants responsibilities as program, finance, and audit experts who are classified under other series.

*Please note: This document is an informational resource to be used in a supplementary manner with The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Position Classification standards. The OPM Position Classification standards should be the primary documentation referenced for intended organizational policy decisions (e.g., hiring, promotions, and pay determination).*

### 2.2 Background

During 2015-2016, the Chief Financial Officers Council (CFOC) launched an online tool that provides a resource for current and future Federal Financial Management professionals to chart their careers. In particular, the career roadmap specifies the critical competencies needed for successful performance in the Federal Financial Management workforce. It also provides information on the expected proficiency levels of the identified competencies at different experiential levels.

Maintaining a robust and expert-level financial assistance workforce remains a priority for the federal government as it awards hundreds of billions of dollars in grants each year and ensures that grant funds are efficiently used for their intended purpose by various recipients. During November 2016, the CFOC, in collaboration with the COFAR, undertook a similar initiative to provide a tool for the Federal Financial

Assistance Management workforce that will serve as a resource for workforce development and career progression.

The Career Roadmap identifies key functional and leadership competencies, along with expected behavioral indicators at different proficiency levels of those competencies. The resulting Financial Assistance Management Career Roadmap is a generalized model, which various organizations may customize to reflect the organization's unique requirements and specifications.

## 3 Approach

The team's approach to creating the Financial Assistance Management Career Roadmap includes three fundamental phases: 1) create a draft Career Roadmap based on existing Financial Assistance Management information, 2) incorporate SME input into the Career Roadmap, and 3) finalize the roadmap and publish online for government-wide use.

### Phase 1: Review Existing Career Roadmaps

The foundational list of functional and leadership competencies was created based on existing job data gathered from archival research. The team collected existing financial assistance professionalization research and documentation from OMB, Federal awarding agencies, and OPM. The following organizations provided financial assistance related background information and source documentation for this effort:

- *Corporation for National and Community Service*
- *Department of Agriculture*
- *Department of Commerce*
- *Department of Defense*
- *Department of Education*
- *Department of Health and Human Services*
- *Department of Homeland Security*
- *Department of Housing and Urban Development*
- *Department of Interior*
- *Department of Justice*
- *Department of Labor*
- *Department of State*
- *Department of Transportation*
- *Department of Veterans Affairs*
- *National Archives and Records Administration*
- *National Endowment for the Arts*
- *National Science Foundation*
- *Office of Personnel Management*

In addition, the team reviewed and leveraged content from the Financial Management Career Roadmap, delivered to the CFOC in 2016 as well as the 2012 Leading Executives Driving Government Excellence (EDGE) Grants Management Training Agency Guide.

### Phase 2: Develop Draft Career Roadmap and Obtain Feedback

The team reviewed the collected archival research and identified the foundational competencies for the draft model through frequency analysis of competencies from existing models. Aggregated lists of functional and leadership competencies were formed by identifying competencies that were common to most models. Definitions and behavioral indicators for competencies were gathered via both existing models and insights from SMEs. In cases where there were several versions of definitions and behavioral indicators (from different sources) for the same competency, the team used subject matter expertise to select the most comprehensive

definitions and behavioral indicators. After the draft model was developed, OMB conducted initial reviews in preparation for the SME feedback sessions.

**The CFOC/COFAR Financial Assistance Management Career Roadmap contains a total of 14 competencies divided into two tracks: 9 functional competencies and 5 leadership competencies.**

On March 1, 2017 the team facilitated a workshop with Financial Assistance Management SMEs identified by Federal awarding agencies. The workshop was divided into two groups: one group of SMEs reviewed the functional competencies and the other reviewed the leadership competencies. A second workshop was held on April 5, 2017 to further refine the leadership competencies and align them with the five competencies under OPM's Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). For more information on ECQs, please visit <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/executive-core-qualifications/>.

*Please note: During the volunteer recruitment process, SMEs were gathered representing most Federal awarding agencies and spanned expertise in the following areas: grants program technical expertise, grants administrative, program and project management, fiscal and audit expertise, supervision of grants professionals, grants policy expertise, and training of grants professionals (programmatic/administrative/fiscal/audit). The two review groups were also formed specifically ensuring representation from different experiential levels and Federal awarding agencies.*

The team recorded all feedback gathered during the workshops and incorporated suggestions into the roadmap.

### **Phase 3: Finalize Career Roadmap and Publish Online for Government-wide Use**

The roadmap will be available as a government-wide informational resource for the Federal Financial Assistance Management community and is intended to encourage and support the continual professional development and career progression for incumbents. The listed competencies may be used to identify and prioritize the development needs of the Financial Assistance Management workforce.

## Experiential Levels

The following table displays experiential levels and associated descriptions to identify career progression.

**Please note:** Foundational level only denotes the basic job functions in relation to Financial Assistance Management. For the purposes of this roadmap, the approximate GS range corresponding to Foundational Level is 7-9, however, this could differ among organizations. Similarly, the corresponding GS ranges for Practitioner and Expert Levels are 11-13 and 14-15, respectively. However, **please use your discretion in interpreting experiential levels at your specific agency, and only apply agency specific ratings on what constitutes foundational, practitioner, and expert levels.** This will be based on the specific job functions of Financial Assistance Management professionals at your particular agency.

Table 1: Financial Assistance Management Experiential Levels

Experiential Level	Description
Foundational	Individual is at the <b>starting level of a job</b>
Practitioner	Individual is at the <b>full performance level of a job</b>
Expert	Individual is a <b>supervisor, manager, or serves as a subject matter expert within the job</b>

## Proficiency Levels

The following table displays proficiency levels and associated descriptions to denote the types of activities performed and level of supervision required. These are used to denote the required level of proficiency for each functional competency at each experiential level.

Table 2: Financial Assistance Management Proficiency Ratings

Proficiency Rating	Description
Basic	Individual possesses the competence to perform <b>basic job functions</b> ; performs standard duties <b>under direct supervision</b>
Intermediate	Individual possesses a <b>solid understanding</b> of the subject area; performs standard duties <b>with minimal to no supervision</b>
Advanced	Individual possesses an <b>advanced understanding</b> of the subject; <b>performs standard duties with no supervision</b> and <b>complex duties with limited to no supervision</b> , and may be asked to train others on how to complete their standard duties

## 4 Financial Assistance Management Career Roadmap

The following functional competencies were identified as the standard performance requirements for all incumbents in the Federal Financial Assistance Management workforce.

**Table 3: Functional Competencies and Definitions**

<b>Functional Competency</b>	<b>Competency Definition</b>
Accountability	Ensures that effective controls are developed and maintained to assure the integrity of the organization. Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities. Can be relied upon to ensure that projects within areas of specific responsibility are completed in a timely manner and within budget. Monitors and evaluates plans, focuses on results and measuring attainment of outcomes
Compliance	Knowledge of procedures for assessing, evaluating, managing, and monitoring financial assistance programs or projects for compliance with statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures
Creative Thinking	Develops innovative ideas and solutions; designs new methods where established policies or procedures are inapplicable, unavailable, or could be improved to promote efficiency and effectiveness
Financial Analysis	Knowledge of financial management and budgeting methods, policies, procedures, systems, and practices to assess the financial capability of non-Federal entities applying for or receiving Federal financial assistance
Financial Assistance Management	Knowledge of statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures of financial assistance programs, including their order of precedence and their application in the financial assistance lifecycle (e.g., soliciting, receiving, reviewing, and processing proposals, and awarding and administering grants closeouts and audits)
Organizational Awareness	Knows the agency's and organization's mission and functions, including the strategic plan, structure, technological systems, and leadership; understands external economic, political, and social trends that affect the organization
Planning and Evaluation	Aligns planning activities to support objectives and/or performance goals of the agency and program mission, as appropriate; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes to inform decisions and accomplish goals
Project and Program Management	Knowledge of the principles, methods, and tools for developing, scheduling, coordinating, and managing projects or programs and resources; including monitoring and inspecting costs, work, and recipient performance
Relationship Management	Builds relationships that promote effective implementation of financial assistance activities; works with stakeholders to assess their needs, to provide information or technical assistance, and to address their issues; is committed to providing high-quality customer service



## 4.1 Definitions and Behavioral Indicators for Financial Assistance Management Functional Competencies

The following tables list the definitions and behavioral indicators for each of the Financial Assistance Management functional competencies. The competency definitions describe the standard performance requirements. The behavioral indicators further define the level of complexity an individual should demonstrate in a particular competency in each of the three proficiency levels (basic, intermediate, and advanced).

**Table 4: Accountability Competency Definition and Behavioral Indicators**

### **Accountability**

Ensures that effective controls are developed and maintained to assure the integrity of the organization. Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities. Can be relied upon to ensure that projects within areas of specific responsibility are completed in a timely manner and within budget. Monitors and evaluates plans, focuses on results and measuring attainment of outcomes

<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completes assigned tasks in a timely and effective manner</li> <li>• Takes personal responsibility for own actions</li> <li>• Notifies supervisor when tasks are unable to be met so that alternative plans can be made</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows policies and procedures with minimal guidance</li> <li>• Keeps stakeholders informed of changes in schedules and deliverables</li> <li>• Conveys to others the importance of accomplishing goals and delivering results on time</li> <li>• Takes responsibility for work unit or project outcomes, regardless of positive or negative results</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guides others in the interpretation and application of policies, procedures, and guidelines</li> <li>• Establishes expectations for self and/or work unit so that goals are reasonable and achievable and projects are set up to succeed</li> <li>• Provides guidance and communicates methods for achieving results to correct failed or delayed department-level efforts</li> <li>• Ensures a culture of accountability among others by defining roles and responsibilities<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Denotes a supervisory responsibility. Not all senior-level employees will have supervisory responsibilities, as some may be individual contributors. Ensuring a culture of accountability among others by defining roles and responsibilities does not apply to employees in non-supervisory roles.

Table 5: Compliance Competency Definition and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Compliance</b>	
Knowledge of procedures for assessing, evaluating, managing, and monitoring financial assistance programs or projects for compliance with statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures	
<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists in implementing financial assistance management policies, directives, standards, and procedures</li> <li>• Assists in reviewing information and data requirements</li> <li>• Reviews reports and other information for compliance with financial and program requirements</li> <li>• Reviews internal grants management policies for compliance with both Federal and agency-specific financial assistance policy</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performs analysis of financial assistance activities (e.g., program announcements, application reviews, pre-award, post-award adjustments, closeouts, audits, etc.) to ensure required actions are performed in a timely and efficient manner and comply with regulations and policies</li> <li>• Develops and recommends financial assistance management policies and procedures</li> <li>• Analyzes policy and operational issues that cross organizational lines</li> <li>• Assists in the development of internal control risk assessments and business practices to ensure the financial assistance management program performs efficiently and effectively as intended</li> <li>• Utilizes the results of monitoring activities to develop and implement corrective actions when necessary</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluates financial assistance policies and procedures for applicable revisions</li> <li>• Provides expert advice and technical assistance to stakeholders on interpretation of financial assistance management regulations</li> <li>• Responds to internal and external audit related issues and brings resolution to the findings/recommendations</li> <li>• Resolves financial assistance management policy issues across organizational lines to identify updates and improvements to Federal and agency-specific financial assistance policy</li> </ul>

Table 6: Creative Thinking Competency Definition and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Creative Thinking</b>	
Develops innovative ideas and solutions; designs new methods where established policies or procedures are inapplicable, unavailable, or could be improved to promote efficiency and effectiveness	
<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes opportunities for improvement</li> <li>• Identifies issues and recommends solutions to immediate supervisor</li> <li>• Applies approved innovations</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies problems, considers available information, and evaluates alternative solutions</li> <li>• Anticipates potential issues and takes actions or proposes innovative solutions</li> <li>• Synthesizes information from internal and external sources to address complex issues</li> <li>• Develops new and innovative methods for promoting efficiency and effectiveness</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manages a group’s problem solving process, assisting others in staying focused on the current problem and systematically working through the issue</li> <li>• Identifies and resolves problems of particular difficulty, sensitivity, or strategic importance that cross organizational lines</li> <li>• Collects and synthesizes abstract ideas to promote understanding of complex issues</li> <li>• Generates highly novel and groundbreaking solutions to complex problems</li> <li>• Fosters an environment that recognizes and respects cultural and individual differences</li> </ul>

Table 7: Financial Analysis Competency Definition and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Financial Analysis</b>	
Knowledge of financial management and budgeting methods, policies, procedures, systems, and practices to assess the financial capability of non-Federal entities applying for or receiving Federal financial assistance	
Proficiency Rating	Behavioral Indicators
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates the ability to perform basic mathematical calculations</li> <li>• Assists with the collection and review of financial information (e.g., liquidity, ratios, budgets, 990's, etc.)</li> <li>• Demonstrates an understanding of the internal business process around capacity analysis</li> <li>• Demonstrates an understanding of fiscal management in order to analyze financial management system processes of non-federal entities</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performs and advises on complex financial analyses</li> <li>• Assesses and compares financial capacity</li> <li>• Recommends appropriate course of action</li> <li>• Uses established financial data analysis models and tools for analyzing financial information</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a variety of mathematical and statistical techniques and tools</li> <li>• Assesses performance and makes judgments on financial capacity</li> <li>• Compares results of analyses and determines course of action</li> <li>• Determines methods for calculating and computing complex financial analyses</li> </ul>

Table 8: Financial Assistance Management Competency Definition and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Financial Assistance Management</b>	
Knowledge of statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures of financial assistance programs, including their order of precedence and their application in the financial assistance lifecycle (e.g., soliciting, receiving, reviewing, and processing proposals, and awarding and administering grants closeouts and audits)	
Proficiency Rating	Behavioral Indicators
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates a general knowledge and understanding of financial assistance management</li> <li>• Assists with the analysis and implementation of financial assistance activities</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses established analysis models and tools for analyzing financial assistance activities</li> <li>• Reviews work products (e.g., USAspending, progress reports, financial reports, audits, etc.) from/to stakeholders for accuracy and completeness</li> <li>• Applies analytical and evaluative techniques to the identification, consideration, and resolution of issues and problems of a procedural and/or factual nature</li> <li>• Obtains information necessary to evaluate and analyze financial assistance management processes, issues, trends, and leading practices</li> <li>• Recommends the appropriate funding mechanism(s)</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes decisions on how to best analyze data and allocate resources based on program-specific variables</li> <li>• Develops internal control risk assessments and business line reviews to ensure the grants management program performs efficiently and effectively as intended</li> <li>• Develops internal controls to ensure work products (e.g., USAspending, progress reports, financial reports, audits, etc.) from/to stakeholders are accurate, complete, and timely</li> <li>• Leads the implementation of solutions (i.e., technical, administrative, and program) in response to identified issues or administrative priorities</li> <li>• Manages the effectiveness and efficiency of financial assistance activities</li> <li>• Leads the business implementation of complex system adaptations involving multiple agencies or departments</li> <li>• Identifies and implements the appropriate funding mechanism(s)</li> </ul>

Table 9: Organizational Awareness Competency Definition and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Organizational Awareness</b>	
Knows the agency's and organization's mission and functions, including the strategic plan, structure, technological systems, and leadership; understands external economic, political, and social trends that affect the organization	
<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies components of the agency</li> <li>• Understands agency structure</li> <li>• Understands program and financial assistance management in order to respond to inquiries on behalf of the organization</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assesses available tools and systems within agency to ensure optimal use</li> <li>• Recognizes organizational factors needed to support decision-making</li> <li>• Devises responses to inquiries from outside of the agency</li> <li>• Collaborates within and outside of the agency on operational issues on behalf of the organization</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compiles and disseminates information on new developments in financial assistance</li> <li>• Communicates agency and departmental goals as they relate to financial assistance</li> <li>• Generates official communications</li> <li>• Interprets information to formulate official responses to issues</li> <li>• Understands, leverages, and communicates external economic, political, and social trends and how they affect the agency</li> <li>• Collaborates both within and outside of the agency on operational and strategic issues on behalf of the organization</li> </ul>

Table 10: Planning and Evaluation Competency Definition and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Planning and Evaluation</b>	
Aligns planning activities to support objectives and/or performance goals of the agency and program mission, as appropriate; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes to inform decisions and accomplish goals	
<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researches best practices and participates in planning activities</li> <li>• Collects and disseminates data that can inform decisions and evaluation techniques to accomplish goals</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses training, technical assistance, collateral materials, recipients' learning networks, and information systems that help implement effective programs</li> <li>• Uses outcome-oriented strategies, where allowable and appropriate, to meet performance goals</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans activities to support the strategic objectives and/or performance goals of the agency mission</li> <li>• Uses strong evaluation designs to test and find effective practices</li> <li>• Evaluates the efficacy of program outcomes</li> </ul>

Table 11: Project and Program Management Competency, Definition, and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Project and Program Management</b>	
Knowledge of the principles, methods, and tools for developing, scheduling, coordinating, and managing projects or programs and resources; including monitoring and inspecting costs, work, and recipient performance	
Proficiency Rating	Behavioral Indicators
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assesses needs of stakeholders and methods of meeting those needs</li> <li>• Disseminates project information to others (e.g., project abstracts, newsletters, email, and phone calls)</li> <li>• Plans, coordinates, and implements project schedules</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafts notices and makes revisions to proposed and/or final priorities and closing date notices for projects</li> <li>• Identifies non-compliance or performance issues and develops corrective action, performance improvement, or technical assistance plans</li> <li>• Responds to complex inquiries from internal and external stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements and/or improves procedures to enhance program effectiveness and efficiency</li> <li>• Applies department and program policies, procedures, regulations, and laws to financial assistance management and monitoring</li> </ul>

Table 12: Relationship Management Competency Definition and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Relationship Management</b>	
Builds relationships that promote effective implementation of financial assistance management activities; works with stakeholders to assess their needs, to provide information or technical assistance, and to address their issues; and is committed to providing high-quality customer service	
Proficiency Rating	Behavioral Indicators
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treats stakeholders with respect</li> <li>• Responds to simple questions or requests from stakeholders in a timely and professional manner</li> <li>• Refers unresolved stakeholder issues to supervisor</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops relationships with diverse stakeholders</li> <li>• Provides clear and concise guidance to stakeholders on agency policy and procedures</li> <li>• Identifies potential issues that could affect stakeholder relations and informs supervisor</li> <li>• Gathers stakeholder feedback to identify opportunities to enhance stakeholder satisfaction</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops and implements transparent processes that take into account the needs of all stakeholders</li> <li>• Creates opportunities and strategies to enhance interdepartmental collaboration to meet stakeholders' complex needs</li> <li>• Resolves complex situations with stakeholders while still maintaining strong working relationships</li> <li>• Develops and/or implements initiatives that significantly promote quality and enhance stakeholder satisfaction</li> <li>• Anticipates and prepares for the consequences of policy changes and improvements for stakeholders</li> <li>• Identifies situations where negotiations are needed and manages the negotiation process</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Definitions and Behavioral Indicators for Financial Assistance Management Leadership Competencies

The following leadership competencies define the individual characteristics and performance requirements for the Financial Assistance Management professionals in leadership positions who are responsible for managing both self and others. The following five competencies are OPM's Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). The purpose of incorporating ECQs is to encourage and align leadership development throughout the Financial Assistance Management workforce in the Federal Government.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 13: Leadership Competencies and Definitions**

<b>Leadership Competency</b>	<b>Competency Definition</b>
Leading Change	This core qualification involves the ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment
Leading People	This core qualification involves the ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork, and supports constructive resolution of conflicts
Results Driven	This core qualification involves the ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks
Business Acumen	This core qualification involves the ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically
Building Coalitions	This core qualification involves the ability to build coalitions internally and with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, nonprofit and private sector organizations, foreign governments, or international organizations to achieve common goals

<sup>2</sup> Please note individuals who are preparing to apply for Government Executive Service should refer to and work from the more extensive list of competencies on OPM's ECQ web page (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/executive-core-qualifications/>).

Since leadership competencies are applicable to various experiential levels and are often driven by the agency culture, the following tables contain general behavioral indicators to further describe each leadership competency.

**Table 14: Leading Change Competency, Definition, and Behavioral Indicators**

### **Leading Change**

This core qualification involves the ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment

<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages creativity to generate new ideas</li> <li>• Seeks feedback from peers and superiors to help understand and identify areas for improvement</li> <li>• Contributes to the implementation of change management (e.g., policies, practices, processes, and operations)</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies opportunities for operational improvement or anticipated demands for improvement</li> <li>• Makes necessary shifts in programs, processes, or overall strategy by generating novel ideas</li> <li>• Analyzes unexpected outcomes and demonstrates flexibility to change processes</li> <li>• Remains productive, persistent, optimistic, and even-tempered, despite facing significant pressure, stress, or uncertainty; encourages others to do the same</li> <li>• Helps analyze setbacks and develops plans to avoid similar setbacks in the future</li> <li>• Capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks</li> <li>• Translates broad organizational goals into well-defined strategies, plans, priorities, and assignments</li> <li>• Leads change management efforts for implementation of new technologies and systems, and changes in policies, practices, processes, and operations</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually looks for strategic opportunities or demands for strategic change</li> <li>• Creates an organizational vision that is simple, clearly captures a desired future state, and provides direction by helping others see their role in achieving that vision</li> <li>• Anticipates challenges and resistance to implementing planned changes and develops strategies to address them</li> <li>• Considers various viewpoints from internal and external sources when developing new organizational mission, vision, and goals</li> <li>• Develops, recommends, and implements strategies, goals, and operational plans for financial assistance functions and initiatives with agency-wide impact and scope</li> </ul>

Table 15: Leading People Competency, Definition, and Behavioral Indicators

### Leading People

This core qualification involves the ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork, and supports constructive resolution of conflicts

Proficiency Rating	Behavioral Indicators
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages discussion of differences of opinion to foster healthy debate</li> <li>• Identifies potential conflicts and proactively addresses them</li> <li>• Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish assigned tasks and functions in support of financial assistance programs and activities</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses conflicts by providing a safe and respectful environment for each party to discuss their needs and concerns</li> <li>• Assists employees in developing short- and long-term career goals</li> <li>• Identifies and provides resources (e.g., time) and allows flexibility in accomplishing daily work to support employees' efforts to participate in training and other developmental opportunities</li> <li>• Provides challenging and stretch assignments to employees to leverage and improve their skills</li> <li>• Creates opportunities and processes for others to develop and apply new skills in the organization</li> <li>• Provides mentoring and training to financial assistance specialists in developing and recommending strategies, including accomplishing long and short-term goals and building customer relationships</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops a culture that encourages and reinforces the open exchange of ideas and inclusive and diverse work teams</li> <li>• Advocates for unit or department-level resources in support of employees' development needs</li> <li>• Evaluates success of professional development initiatives in the organization and makes adjustments as necessary</li> <li>• Establishes and supports organization-wide training and development policies that foster continual learning and development</li> <li>• Provides direction, supervision, and guidance in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the agency's financial assistance programs and services</li> </ul>



Table 16: Results Driven Competency, Definition, and Behavioral Indicators

**Results Driven**

This core qualification involves the ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks

<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies problems and analyzes the relevance and accuracy of information to define scope of activities</li> <li>Analyzes results based on pre-determined performance metrics</li> <li>Seeks and presents opportunities to management for improving products and services</li> <li>Plans, coordinates, and administers various financial assistance functions (e.g., closeout, audit resolution, etc.) that support assigned customers and programs</li> <li>Understands principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies related to specialized expertise</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops the organization by improving products (e.g. technical assistance) or services, or by identifying new opportunities</li> <li>Takes calculated risks to accomplish organizational objectives</li> <li>Appropriately applies principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies</li> <li>Develops and sets performance metrics for recording specific financial assistance related results</li> <li>Leads and directs the administration of lifecycle support, execution, and management of financial assistance activities</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defines and establishes effective methods of measuring organizational success across financial assistance products and services</li> <li>Generates and evaluates alternative solutions based on the analysis of performance data to mitigate obstacles</li> <li>Makes determinations regarding re-allocation of work based on agency priorities, workload, or special initiatives in order to ensure effective and timely delivery of services and operations</li> </ul>

Table 17: Business Acumen Competency, Definition, and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Business Acumen</b>	
This core qualification involves the ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically	
<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draws accurate conclusions from financial information</li> <li>• Models ethical behavior (e.g., conflicts of interests, PII, financial disclosures, etc.)</li> <li>• Utilizes current technology and resources and follows security standards and policies</li> <li>• Receives, reviews, and provides input on statements of work, plans, schedules, performance metrics, and other relevant documents</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiently executes budget</li> <li>• Creates reports to explain the overall financial performance of the program and the resulting capacity to manage supported projects</li> <li>• Uses financial analysis to evaluate strategic options and opportunities and recommends effective, efficient, and practical alternatives as needed</li> <li>• Evaluates performance fairly and differentiates rewards and recognition based on performance</li> <li>• Identifies poor performers and creates opportunities for them to improve performance; identifies opportunities for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) when necessary</li> <li>• Identifies efficiencies in human capital, financial management, and information resource activities</li> <li>• Ensures that technology resources are deployed efficiently</li> <li>• Provides expert advice and support to leadership, staff, and customers in the planning, administration, and operation of financial assistance programs</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informs budget formulation process</li> <li>• Ensures that leadership is effectively overseeing performance management by providing feedback on an ongoing basis and regularly rewarding and recognizing performance</li> <li>• Proactively partners with HR to effectively source, select, and develop talent to meet strategic needs</li> <li>• Champions a culture where development of the next generation of leaders is a strategic priority and succession management and individual development are embraced</li> <li>• Champions a culture of high performance committed to and accountable for ongoing performance management and feedback</li> <li>• Champions the adoption of innovative technological solutions to drive strategic priorities</li> <li>• Establishes and translates long- and short-range financial assistance management program goals and objectives into effective operations</li> </ul>

Table 18: Building Coalitions Competency, Definition, and Behavioral Indicators

<b>Building Coalitions</b>	
This core qualification involves the ability to build coalitions internally and with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, nonprofit and private sector organizations, foreign governments, or international organizations to achieve common goals	
<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>1 – Basic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies the internal and external policies and existing relationships that impact the work of the organization</li> <li>• Understands overall culture of the organization</li> <li>• Interacts and communicates with internal and external stakeholders (e.g. Federal agencies, awardee community, and the general public)</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses current projects as opportunities to collaborate internally and externally to establish strategic relationships</li> <li>• Maintains strategic relationships and collaborates with internal and external stakeholders to fulfill the organization’s mission</li> <li>• Creates a process for evaluating the success of internal and external collaborative efforts</li> <li>• Prepares and presents reports, briefings or training at conferences, meetings, and hearings on financial assistance and other related topics</li> </ul>
<b>3 – Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fosters the development of and maintains the health of cross-departmental and organizational partnerships</li> <li>• Navigates political landscape (e.g. Federal, state, and tribal governments; private organizations; and other partners and sponsors) to advance the organization's mission</li> </ul>

## Appendix A: Subject Matter Expert Panel Members

Last Name	First Name	Title	Agency	Office
Allen	Lara	Senior Advisor to the Assistant Attorney General	Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs	Office of the Assistant Attorney General
Berger	Brenna	Senior (Lead) Grants Management Specialist	National Endowment for the Arts	Office of Grants and Contracts
Brookins	Marsha	Program Manager	Department of Homeland Security	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Bunch	Robin	Division Chief	Department of Commerce	Grants Management Division, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce
Finch	Thomas	Director	Department of Education	Training and Services Programs Division, Rehabilitation Services Administration
Fuss	Joanne	Management Analyst	United States Department of Agriculture	Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Transparency and Accountability Reporting Division
Henry	Jacqueline	Branch Chief	United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	Grants and Agreements Policy
Hine	Scott	Director	Department of Energy, Department of Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy	Project Management Coordination Office
Jacobs	Nicki	Director	National Endowment for the Arts	Office of Grants and Contracts
Johnson	Jeffrey	Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary	Department of Health and Human Services	Office of Grants and Acquisitions Policy and Accountability, Division of Grants
Johnson	Lisa	Associate Director	Department of Homeland Security	Grants Financial Assistance Division
Liogys	Rimas	Deputy Associate Administrator	Department of Health and Human Services	Office of Federal Assistance Management, Health Resources and Services Administration
Lloyd	Mildred	Management and Program Analyst	Department of Homeland Security	Office of Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight
Lynch	Pamela	Program Analyst	Department of Transportation	Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight Division

Meyer	Marcy	Compliance and Certification Officer/Financial Analyst	Department of the Treasury	Community Development Financial Institutions Fund
Petrucelli	Anthony	Senior Grants Policy Analyst	Department of Health and Human Services	Division of Grants
Ramirez	Lisa	Director	Department of Education	Office of Migrant Education and the Office of School Support and Rural Programs
Simpson-Porter	Arlene	Director	Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	Acquisition and Grants Office, Grants Management Division
Swineford	Maria	Deputy Director	Department of Justice	Grants Management Division, Office of Justice Programs
Walker	Andrala	Management Analyst	Department of Housing and Urban Development	Office of Strategic Planning and Management, Grants Management and Oversight Division
Wiley	Lori	Senior Staff Associate	National Science Foundation	Division of Grants and Agreements