



Permanent City Manager Recruitment

City of Tacoma | Human Resources

COW Competency Assessment Exercise
August 5, 2025



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TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

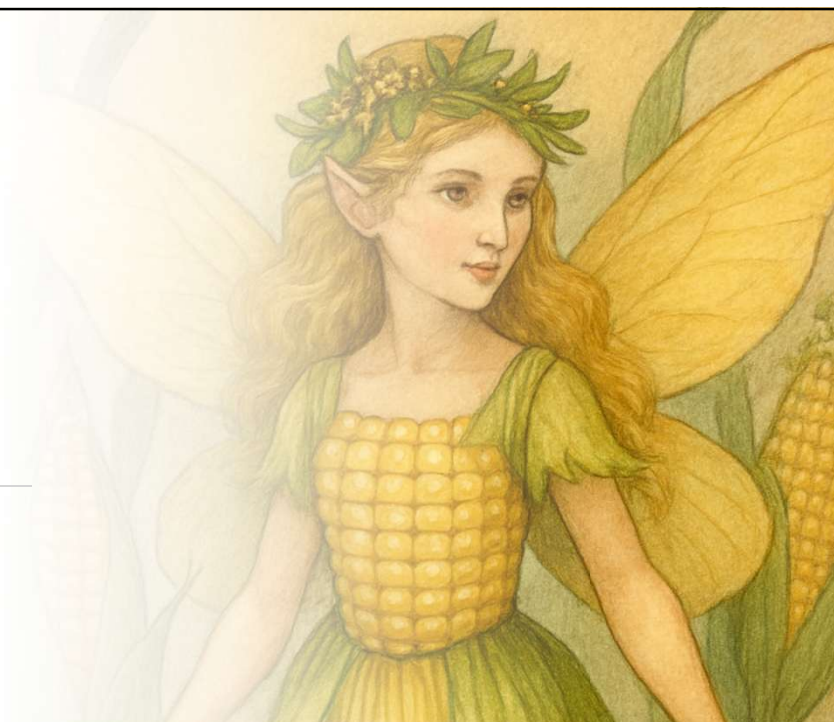


- Focus on key competencies for the permanent City Manager
- Understand the Korn Ferry Competency Framework
- Identify key competencies to support recruitment

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Korn Ferry: What is it?



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●●● Korn Ferry: What is it?



- A strategic talent tool that helps organizations define, measure, and develop the capabilities needed to achieve business and leadership success.
- Brings structure, fairness, and clarity to every stage of the employee lifecycle.

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Korn Ferry: What is it?



- Backed by decades of research across industries and leadership levels – both private and public sector
- Specific to roles and levels of leadership
- Widely used by organizations around the world to support:
 - **Hiring**
 - Development
 - Performance Management
 - Succession Planning

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Korn Ferry: What is it?



- Research-based model that defines skills, behaviors, personal attributes
- Framework organizes competencies into four broad **clusters**:
 1. **Thought** – How someone processes information and makes decisions
 1. Examples: *Decision Quality, Nimble Learning, Strategic Mindset*
 2. **Results** – The ability to get things done and deliver outcomes
 1. Examples: *Plans and Aligns, Ensures Accountability, Drives Results*
 3. **People** – How someone interacts with others
 1. Examples: *Builds Networks, Communicates Effectively, Develops Talent*
 4. **Self** – How someone manages themselves
 1. Examples: *Manages Ambiguity, Self-Development, Being Resilient*

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Korn Ferry: Why we use it



1. Aligns Stakeholders on What Matters Most

- The card sort process **engages stakeholders** in identifying the most important leadership behaviors for the role.
- Helps **build consensus** on what success looks like for the next City Manager.
- **Reduces misalignment** or hidden assumptions about the ideal candidate.

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Korn Ferry: Why we use it



2. Clarifies Job Expectations

- Surfaces the **critical leadership competencies** needed for your community's specific challenges—such as strategic thinking, political savvy, community engagement, or change leadership.
- Ensures the position profile reflects not just technical needs, but the **behaviors and mindsets** needed to lead effectively in your local government context.

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Korn Ferry: Why we use it



3. Promotes Equity and Reduces Bias

- The card sort process grounds decisions in **observable, job-relevant traits**—not vague preferences or personal impressions.
- Creates a more **transparent and fair selection process**, especially important in public sector hiring.

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Korn Ferry: Why we use it



4. Strengthens Interview and Assessment Design

- Once competencies are selected, you can:
 - Develop **structured interview questions** tied to the key competencies.
 - Use **behavioral interview techniques** that focus on how candidates have demonstrated these traits in the past.
- This leads to more **objective, defensible hiring decisions**

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Korn Ferry: Why we use it



5. Provides a Foundation for Onboarding and Development

- The selected competencies can also guide the new City Manager's **onboarding, performance goals**, and leadership development.
- This continuity strengthens **long-term success and accountability**.

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Discussion



- How does the role drive or support the strategy of the organization?
- What are the expectations and deliverables?
- Which behaviors measurably affect key performance indicators?
- What differentiates high performers from average or low performers?
- What challenges will be faced in the short- and long-term, both internal and external?

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Results from Preliminary Survey



- **(36) Instills Trust:** Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity.
- **(7) Communicates Effectively:** Developing and delivering multi-mode communications that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of different audiences.
- **(2) Action Oriented:** Taking on new opportunities and tough challenges with a sense of urgency, high energy and enthusiasm.
- **(13) Drives Results:** Consistently achieving results, even under tough circumstances
- **(1) Ensures Accountability:** Holding self and others accountable to meet commitments.

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Instructions



1. Shuffle your deck
2. Place Cards D, F, and G in the front of you to label the piles.
3. Read the brief definition and SKILLED behaviors on the front side of the cards, then sort the cards into three piles:
 - 12 cards in pile D (Essential),
 - 14 cards in pile F (Nice to Have)
 - 12 cards in pile G (Not important)
4. Set aside the F and G pile.
5. Take the D pile and further filter this Essential pile down to 5 to 7 crucial competencies.
6. Discuss and get consensus on 5 to 7 crucial competencies

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Next Steps



- Use information to inform:
 - The job description
 - Interview questions

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