Permanent City Manager Recruitment

City of Tacoma | Human Resources

OSAC Competency Assessment Exercise
July 25, 2025

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?

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. 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

4. 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

5. Encourages Long-Term Fit

- Helps you select a City Manager whose **style and strengths align with your community's needs** and organizational culture.

- Increases the likelihood of a successful placement who can **lead effectively, gain stakeholder trust**, and stay long enough to make a real impact.

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Korn Ferry: Why we use it

6. 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

a. How does the role drive or support the strategy of the organization?

b. What are the expectations and deliverables?

c. Which behaviors measurably affect key performance indicators?

d. What differentiates high performers from average or low performers?

e. 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

- Narrow to 1/3 of the total competencies
  - 2 teams, 2 sorts
    - Compare results
      - Agree on the 1/3 to move forward for consideration

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