

Women's Leadership Series Program Design

The City recently embarked on a focused effort at building equity especially as it relates to racial equity and the need to strategically address overwhelming racial disparities that currently exist in Dane County. This effort is also aimed at building equity across multiple identity groups both internally within City employment and externally in the community. The City's equity efforts go hand in hand with the City's Employee Engagement and Equity model, which focuses on increasing employee engagement, the need to provide development opportunities for staff, and improving equitable participation in decision making. In line with these efforts, Organizational Health and Development is designing a five-part women's leadership series to provide leadership development opportunities to current City female employees, in an effort to increase representation at the highest levels of City management.

Incumbent Representation

Internally, racial and gender disparities continue to exist in City employment, although significant progress has been made in that area. Please see the attached report on City hiring. While the City has several ongoing initiatives aimed at addressing internal racial and gender disparities through hiring, and efforts are being made to recruit a more diverse pool of applicants, many of the City's senior level management classifications continue to be significantly underrepresented for women, and applicants for many of those positions are internally sourced.

City gender disparities begin at the ground level but increase with increasing levels of responsibility and pay. City hiring data included in the 2013 Neogov report reveals the following:

The non-traditional occupations for females allows the City to take a more nuanced look at its application numbers relative to females. It is interesting to see that when the non-traditional occupations are excluded from the hiring data, the percentage of females being hired into City positions is exactly 50% in 2013. It is also positive that when reviewing the City's current female incumbency in many of the non-traditional occupations, it is higher than the nationwide average. However, the fact that the City has a significant number of occupations that are considered non-traditional for females should not be used as an excuse for low numbers in these areas, but rather seen as an explanation. It remains important for the City to continue to engage in outreach and other activities to improve the number of females throughout the workforce.

However, while women make up approximately 50% of the general population and 50% of hired employees when non-traditional occupations are included, when all position types are included, women make up approximately only 30% of all City employees. Further, this percentage is reduced as you climb the leadership ladder. Across all agencies, for example, women only comprise approximately 22% at the managerial level (CG 18/13 or equivalent and above), 18% at the senior management level (CG 18/15 or equivalent and above), and only about 16% of department heads.

The City's approach to the issue must be multi-faceted, whether considering gender or racial disparities. While our recruitment and hiring efforts should continue to be adapted to better represent the changing demographics of Madison, the fact that many of our most senior management employees are internal hires requires that we also focus internal development efforts at building female employee leadership competencies.

National Gender Gap

Gender disparities in highest level leadership positions are a well documented phenomenon; for example, women continue to comprise less than 5% of all CEOs of fortune 500 companies, and only 16% of corporate officers are female. While studies show time and time again that women are as capable as men at utilizing effective leadership skills and being perceived as effective leaders (even more so according to some studies), women continue to make up a remarkably low percentage of senior leadership. Traditional reasons for the absence of women in top leadership roles focus on less effective networking by women than men and the greater likelihood of women to remove themselves from the labor market. However, recent literature on this topic suggests that women continuing to meet a glass ceiling in the workplace is in part due to a gender related lack of confidence.

According to, “The Gender Gap,” studies show that “compared with men, women don’t consider themselves as ready for promotions, they predict they’ll do worse on tests, and they generally underestimate their abilities.” It goes on to say that competence and confidence are not only positively correlated, but that confidence has been seen to actually boost competence.

One study demonstrates that while women are perceived as equally effective leaders, they are perceived as less competent in three key areas: strategic planning, effectively exploiting business opportunities, and financial understanding. Supporting literature demonstrates that perception of an individual as competent in strategic planning is critically important to advancement.

Thus, making significant strides in achieving higher representation of women in senior management requires a multi-layered approach that doesn’t simply address bias or hiring practices, but is also tailored to address some of the unique skills and behaviors necessary for equitable advancement. Any such organizational development tool must begin to address basic leadership competencies as well as the role confidence plays in leadership, strategic analysis and planning, and the persuasive skills necessary to sell their ideas.

Feedback on Approach

This issue has been discussed and researched in part through the Women’s Initiatives Committee (WIC). Some of the input provided by that committee related to necessary development components are summarized by an article entitled “Women’s Leadership Development Strategic Practices for Women and Organizations,” which highlights the need for organizations to attend to seven core focus areas. After reviewing current City practices against this list, WIC recommends the City’s leadership series include:

- Mentoring
 - Assist employees in cultivating both female and male mentors, in actively managing their mentoring relationships, and in defining strategic learning objectives for the mentoring relationships.
 - Support of women in developing the skills needed to play the role of both mentee and mentor in an environment which is supportive of women’s leadership development needs.
- Networking
 - Encourage women to include both women and men in their networks (as men continue to maintain a significantly more powerful role in the upper ranks of management), to recognize the instrumental benefits of networks in addition to the social supports, and to cultivate varied task, friendship, and advice networks.

- Encourage women to connect with formal and informal networks of female professionals who share common experiences within organizations and industries.
- Career Planning
 - Assist women in thinking strategically about how to advance in organizations and in careers and in being purposeful and proactive about enhancing their career and leadership effectiveness.
 - Propose that women share their career desires and career plans with those who can facilitate success.

Women's Leadership Series

A women's leadership series will help provide female City employees with many of the tools necessary to develop leadership capacity and advance in a more equitable manner. This series would provide approximately five full-day sessions and would be focused on the specific leadership development needs of female City employees. This feedback-intense learning experience is intended to provide participants information and an understanding of all of the following:

- Unique challenges of women in leadership; how to lead with authenticity and confidence, clarify personal values and how they fit within the organizational culture, and how to think strategically about actively managing one's own career.
- Networking and mentoring; strategies for networking and using power and influence more effectively within the organization, as well as how to cultivate formal/informal mentoring to increase development opportunities.
- Leadership and emotional intelligence; building a strong foundation for extraordinary leadership by increasing emotional intelligence and self-leadership — which impact all aspects of life, health, career and relationships.
- Effective communication and relationship intelligence; the perspectives and techniques that make exceptional leaders effective communicators, including training on relationship intelligence, active listening and self-awareness.
- Conflict management skills; the perspectives, strategies and skills needed to manage difficult interactions and overcome team toxins.
- Strategic planning and motivation; the critical skills needed to create environments that motivate, support and inspire the best performances from others toward strategic goals.

Women have different views of success, different career related value orientations, and experience different competing priorities for their time and attention across life and career stages. This proposal recommends establishment of a five-part series providing female City employees with not just core competencies but also specific skills for strategically approaching leadership in the organization. This development opportunity would help prepare greater numbers of women in City employment to take on roles in the highest levels of management that are traditionally held by men. While development of a women's leadership series is an important step toward reducing gender disparities in the City's highest levels of leadership, this effort is also best complemented by review of hiring practices and training on unconscious bias related to gender.

Design

The program will consist of five day-long sessions. These sessions will be divided into five main topic areas including relationship management, conflict management, communication and leadership, strategic management, and career management/self-care. Each day long session will consist of an externally led program in the morning, lunch, and a facilitated discussion, networking, panel discussion, and practice component in the afternoon led by City staff. Each session will include an action item to allow participants to reflect on key learning items between sessions. At the initial session, cohorts will be created to help deepen learning and provide support for participants.

The program will be offered to approximately 70 City employees and approximately 30 County employees, at a cost of \$50 and \$75 per session, respectively. Each employee is required to sign up for all five sessions to participate. The program components for each day are anticipated to include:

Day 1	Morning Session Focus Areas	Afternoon
Communication and Leadership	Confidence and communication	Facilitated discussion, networking, and practice component in the afternoon led by City staff.
	Delegation and giving direction	
	Leading teams, modeling behaviors/ethics	
	Power of perception	
Day 2		
Relationship Management	Self awareness	Facilitated discussion, networking, and practice component in the afternoon led by City staff.
	Emotional intelligence	
	Power of confidence	
	Situational leadership	
Day 3		
Conflict Management	Personal conflict management	Facilitated discussion, networking, and practice component in the afternoon led by City staff.
	Managing team conflict	
	Effective problem solving	
Day 4		
Strategic Management and Leadership	Power and influence, leveraging partnerships	Facilitated discussion, networking, and practice component in the afternoon led by City staff.
	Setting org. goals, plans, milestones	
	Building support and an alliances	
	Developing organizational awareness	
Day 5		
Career Management/ Self Care	Mentoring and Networking	Facilitated discussion, networking, and practice component in the afternoon led by City staff.
	Career Planning and goal setting	
	Self care and work-life balance	
	Managing stress and wellness	

Selection of Participants

Participants will require recommendation by a coworker, supervisor, or department head, and will require supervisory approval. Department/Division heads will receive the initial request for recommendations of women interested in enhancing leadership skills, and encouraging them to consider, in particular, women of color to apply. The intention is to impact not only representation of women, but also racial/ethnic representation at levels of leadership through this program. Selection will be made by the Women's Leadership Committee, with the primary focus on ensuring representation from all levels of the organization, and throughout a variety of departments. Recommendation forms will be turned in Organizational Health and Development, for selection by the committee. Form will include the following required information:

Name of potential participant:

Recommended by:

Supervisor Approval: Yes No

City/County: City County

Department:

Level in organization (Please circle)

- Front line employee
- Supervisor
- Mid-level management
- Executive manager

Why are you recommending this person for the series?

Program Evaluation

The program will be evaluated using a pre and post leadership series assessment tool, which will be completed approximately 3 weeks prior to and 6 weeks after the series, by each participant and their supervisor. The assessment tool is intended to capture perception of changes in behavior related to leadership competencies targeted for women in each one of the focus areas, as well as overall increase in readiness and likelihood to compete for, higher level positions. The self/supervisor assessment will be utilized in afternoon programming at the end and beginning of the sessions in development of an understanding of strength and potential for areas of growth, as well as development of a career plan. A copy of the assessment is attached.

The program will also utilize standard session evaluations, and an end of the series learning evaluation.

Attachments

Leadership Competencies and Outcome Assessment

WLS Save the Date Flyer