City of Madison
Learning + Development Framework

Turning Learning into Lasting Impact

Navigate This Document:

Introduction

The City of Madison's Learning + Development framework explains how we help the people who work for the city grow and succeed. It connects to our City's Mission, Vision, and Values and Human Resources goals. The framework is built on four main parts:

1. **Identity:** Who we are and why we exist.
2. **Purpose:** What we aim to do—helping every employee learn, grow, and serve with excellence.
3. **Methodology:** How we do our work—fair and organized systems that reflect city values.
4. **Impact:** How we measure success—tracking access, skill growth, and performance across 30+ agencies.

This framework makes sure our Learning + Development programs are consistent, inclusive, and strategic. It also helps employees build skills while serving the City of Madison and its agencies.

Identity: Who We Are

The City of Madison's Learning + Development is an inclusive, data-driven ecosystem of learning experts. Our goal is to give all employees across the city fair chances to build skills and grow their careers. We work together to create a strong system that helps employees succeed, and we measure success by the real results employees achieve. The system provides high-quality skill building and equitable career pathway opportunities for all employees. Key collaborators within the Learning + Development ecosystem are listed below.

Human Resources (HR) & Organizational Development (HR-OD)

- Lead citywide learning strategy with a focus on equity, access, and clear results.
- Manage the Learning Management System (LMS) to track progress and improve training.
- Connect learning with other talent programs like onboarding, performance, career pathways, and workforce planning.
- Act as instructors and consultants in their areas of expertise.
- L+D team members are Organizational Development specialists who partner with experts across the city.

Learning Partners

- Subject experts who teach courses on topics like city policies, leadership, accessibility, and workplace safety.
- Work together across agencies with a commitment to high quality training.
- Help HR-OD to improve this framework, use technology better, and create meaningful learning experiences.

Agency Liaisons

- Leaders or administrators who connect their agency with L+D.
- Make sure training opportunities are shared and available to employees.
- Support consistent practices across the city.

On-the-Job (OTJ) Trainers

- Provide hands-on training for specific jobs, technical skills, and compliance needs.
- Share technical knowledge through mentoring and shadowing.
- Help new and transitioning employees learn from peers and build connections.

3rd Party Facilitators and External Partners

- Offer specialized programs, certifications, and new best practices.
- Works with L+D to make sure outside training matches city standards and supports workforce goals.

City Partners

- People from non-profit organizations that serve Madison residents.
- For approved courses, a set number of spots are reserved for City Partners to join. Purpose: What We Do

Purpose: What We Do

Why We Exist

Learning + Development exists to "develop our employees and organization to be an inclusive and high-performing City." (HR Strategic Plan 2023-2027).

As part of our Organizational Development system, we focus on:

- Giving all staff access to Learning + Development opportunities.
- Building leadership that is fair, inclusive, and empowering.
- Providing tools and resources to support best practices in change managements, continuous improvement, strategic planning, and Performance Excellence.

What We Offer

Our learning experiences help every employee to grow, belong, and lead. We create learning environments that are welcoming, fair, and easy to access so all staff can succeed. By investing in our people, we support them in building meaningful, lasting careers with the City of Madison.

We believe that investing in employees is the best way to serve our community. Learning + Development is more than just teaching compliance—it's about preparing and supporting a workforce that is motivated to make a difference. We want employees to strengthen their abilities and find purpose in the work they do every day.

Our learning culture is built on:

- A positive employee experience.
- Creative development opportunities and clear career paths.
- Excellent customer service.
- A growth mindset.

Methodology: How We Work Together

In the Identity section, we described the members of the Learning Ecosystem. Together we focus on making an impact by designing systems, structures, and quality standards to advance employees' competencies.

Unified Model

We use a unified model that combines the best parts of centralized and decentralized approaches to Learning + Development. (td.org/MemberTools) With 32 agencies, each with different learning needs, this approach helps us balance efficiency and flexibility. By working together, we solve problems around the most important priorities, making the best use of resources and training funds. The unified structure ensures fairness, strong organizational capacity, learner-centered practices, and effectiveness.

Centralized
(Controlling)

Unified
(Collaborative)

Decentralized
(Siloed)

Benefits:

1. Greater efficiency when some L+D functions are centralized, saving time and money.
2. Better alignment across business units as they work more closely together.
3. Stronger community of practice, sharing learning across similar roles and scenarios.
4. Consistent employee experiences across careers at #TeamCity

Challenges:

1. Competing initiatives can cause duplicate efforts, change fatigue, and waste.
2. Some groups outside of L+D may not follow best practices or use supported tools.
3. Costs may rise as resources and staff are spread out.
4. Units may feel a loss of autonomy or customization.

Our unified approach guides how we plan and prioritize training resources. For programs that reach all agencies and employees, we use methods to create consistent, high-quality learning experiences. helps us make decisions and prioritize how we plan for and where we allocate our training resources. When we have programming that reaches across all agencies and impacts all employees, we strive to incorporate unified methods to create consistent employee experience.

Competency Approach

The City of Madison builds a strong workforce by finding and closing skills gaps. (Talent Management Strategy, 2025) Learning + Development supports this by using a competency-based approach. This means we look at employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities, then provide learning experiences to help them grow. We also take training referrals directly from city leaders.

Learning + Development is an investment in long-term public value. When we train and keep skilled employees, they strengthen the community. Every training dollar helps staff face today's challenges and prepare for tomorrow's opportunities.

Employees can build skills through four Learning + Development tiers:

1. City Foundations
2. Development
3. Continuous Improvement
4. Consultation-Based

We also organize learning by five leadership role types, moving from self to city (A, B, C, D, E). This system will guide learners in the future Learning Management System.

	Learning Experience Categories	Definition	Leading Self (A/B) Beginning Examples	Leading Others (C) Intermediate Examples	Leading City (D/E) Advanced Examples
1	**City Foundations: Prepare Every Employee to Succeed**	Entry and minimum training	• City Vision, Mission, Values, Service Promise • Customer Service	• Systems • Onboarding	• RESJI • Policies: APM3-5, 2-52
2	**Development: Grow Professionally & Personally**	Career growth in trade or profession	• Interpersonal Communications • Well-Being • Mentorship • Growth & Career Pathways (Leaders, Data, Women, Comms) • Emerging Leaders	• Growth & Career Pathways (Leaders, Data, Women, Comms) • Supervisor and Manager Development	• Supervisor and Manager Development • Executive Development
3	**Continuous Improvement: Advance City Impact**	Growth and advancement of #TeamCity	• Project Management	• Large-Scale System Implementation • Team Training	• Systems Thinking and Planning • City-Wide Strategic Priorities
Consultation-Based	**Operations: Build Individual Expertise in Respective Agency**	Agency and role-specific experiences	• Job-Specific Skills • Safety and Compliance	• Expanded Training Skills for Subject Matter Experts	• Cross-Functional Capabilities

Learning Partners

The Learning Partners (LP) program was created to help City agencies by making training and professional development consistent across the city. The Learning Partners program is led by the Learning + Development Specialist in the Human Resources - Organizational Development Unit.

We support Learning Partners and other cross-agency contacts in several ways:

- **Expertise:** Upon request, we share knowledge about adult learning, curriculum design, and course materials to improve outcomes. Combined with your subject expertise, this creates strong, high-quality courses.

- **Support:** We provide information, resources, and assistance through the course development and delivery process. This includes building trainer competencies, so Learning Partners can grow into effective facilitators and mentors.

- **Flexibility:** You can choose the level of support you need - whether small or extensive - throughout the course development and delivery process.

We also recognize that our agency On-the-Job trainers may need support. That's why we offer tiered L+D Support Levels to support our employees who train others. While the agencies lead their own content, we encourage everyone to work together to create a consistent, high-quality learning experience across the city.

Communication Platforms

Learning Partners Hub

Learning + Development is here to help you bring your course content to life and make a real impact for learners. All of this information is organized in one place--the Learning Partners Hub. Think of it as a self-service guide that supports every step of training across #TeamCity.

On the Learning Partners Hub, you'll find detailed information, tips, tools, and prompts for each stage of the Course Development Process. The process follows six steps, adapted from the ADDIE instructional design model. The most current information is always available on the Learning Partners Hub.
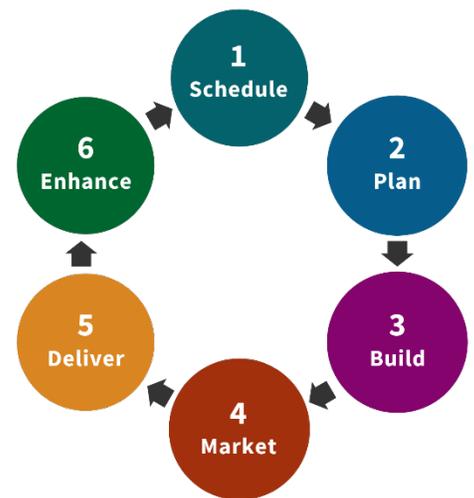
1. **Schedule**
   - Purpose: Reserve your spot on the calendar well in advance to ensure ample planning.
   - Tools: 2026 Calendar Availability spreadsheet giving visibility on #TeamCity events calendar.

2. **Plan**
   - Purpose: Gather and submit all course details. This is where you start determining your learners' needs, course scope, learning objectives, audience, format, and other items. The tools in this section help you communicate operational details HR-OD needs to build into the back end to support your course from start to finish.
   - Tools: **Course Planning Form, Course Planning Checklist**, Learner Needs Assessment

3. **Build**
   - Purpose: Collaborate with HR-OD to build your course webpage, registration page, and get your session(s) added to calendars. You'll review proofs to make sure everything is correct. As course facilitator and the Subject Matter Expert, you develop content to increase skills, apply adult-learning best practices, design engaging materials, and finalize slide decks, workbooks, pre-work. HR-OD is here to support you through it all. We'll help with different ways to design learning experiences including microlearning, in-person training, hybrid or blended learning, on-the-job training, and learners applying their new knowledge.
   - Tools: Course Proofing Email, Course Building Toolkit, Lesson Plan, Course Quality Review

4. **Market**
   - Purpose: Promote your course broadly and strategically. Reach your target audiences and achieve strong registration. Use the course calendar on Upcoming Courses or on the screens located throughout city agencies to reach as many learners as possible.
   - Tools: Marketing Your Course

5. **Delivery**
   - Purpose: Leading up to and on the day of the course, make sure everything runs smoothly. That includes practicing and deeply knowing your content; logging in early, taking attendance, using best facilitation practices, collecting feedback, and following up with the learner and their supervisor. HR-OD provides tools and resources to help you succeed.
   - Tools: Inclusive Language for Facilitators, Tips to Make Virtual Training Engaging (Facilitator Tip-Sheet), Effective Facilitator Course Resources, Trainer Coaching Form, Course Evaluation, Lead Learners to Use New Skills

6. **Enhance**
   - Purpose: Learning + Development evaluates and develops learning opportunities based on our City's, agencies', and employees' needs. We collect and analyze data through evaluations, employee check-ins, development discussions, and surveys to identify training needs. As our organization advances and implements new technology we'll partner to build in continuous improvement practices including skills gap analysis, Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation, and performance benchmarks. We'll also provide Learning Partners with a quarterly and annual training effectiveness reports.
   - Tools: Learner Needs Assessment, Course Evaluation

Learning Management System (LMS)

In 2026, #TeamCity is investing in its first-ever, city-wide Human Resources Management (HRM) System. This system will bring together learning content, processes, and growth plans in one secure, streamlined platform that supports staff, supervisors, and HR.

Through this Learning + Development platform, all employees will have self-service access to their employee information—no more chasing forms or waiting on emails. It will make HR and talent processes faster and more transparent, including onboarding training, and employee check-ins.

The rollout will take place over five years:

- **Year 1:** First use of the Learn module alongside the CoreHR, eForms, and Onboard modules.
- **Year 2:** Possible integration of the Learning Partners Hub.
- **Year 3:** Full implementation to centralize, automate, and put resources directly in employees' hands.

Growth and Career Pathways for Learning + Development Practitioners

We are researching career paths for Learning + Development practitioners. Some employees step into training roles naturally, while others may be less prepared. This potential future pathway will be built on competencies—knowledge, skills, and abilities that can be identified, developed, and measured for effectiveness.

Learning Partners Community of Practice

Over time, we will form a Learning Partner Community of Practice to strengthen organizational Learning + Development. The group will bring together employees who train others to build confidence, share best practices, and grow together.

Impact: What We Measure

5-Year Learning + Development Metrics

What we do matters and how well we do it matters, too! We set and achieve goals in a unified, consistent, and rewarding way. Our work aligns with the Human Resources Strategic Plan, Talent Management Strategy Metrics, Quality Benchmarks, and quarterly and annual reporting cycles.

Human Resources Strategic Plan Goals

Learning + Development supports all HR goals in the HR Strategic Plan, but our main focus is to **DEVELOP** our employees and organization to be inclusive and high performing.

- ATTRACT a talented and diverse workforce.

- RETAIN an engaged and diverse workforce where all employees feel they belong.
- **DEVELOP** our employees and organization to be an inclusive and high performing City.
- IMPLEMENT innovative and progressive Human Resources practices.

We will achieve the **DEVELOP** objectives by completing the tasks listed below.

A. Provide access to learning and development opportunities for all staff.
   1. Update APM 2-10, ensuring training and development access for all employees regardless of position type, location, or classification.
   2. Create and implement a Talent Development Program.
   3. Create a phased implementation plan for the Learning Management System.

B. Develop inclusive and empowering leadership.
   1. Deepen, develop, and implement feedback mechanisms for Department/Division Heads, supervisors and managers, and non-positional leaders. This will include 360 surveys and adjustments to the Executive check-in process.
   2. Develop a phased implementation approach for intersectional, relationship-based supervisor and leadership development programs.
   3. Identify management and leader competencies in alignment with City values, including equity and inclusion. Incorporate into hiring processes (e.g., interview questions), performance management, and development plans.
   4. Create career and learning pathways while addressing barriers, inequities, and underrepresentation in leadership. Map and track required trainings in this pathway.

C. Provide a framework and resources to reinforce best organizational practices in change management, continuous improvement, strategic planning, and Performance Excellence.
   1. Create and implement City-wide project management standards.
   2. Create process so all agencies have a strategic plan that feeds into annual work plans.
   3. Ensure all agencies have standard operating procedures.
   4. Create City-wide process improvement standards.
   5. Create City-wide change management standards.

We look at both leading and lagging metrics to predict future success and the likelihood of achieving our HR Strategic Plan goals. Leading indicators for a training function are metrics that predict future success, such as employee engagement scores and training hours completed. Lagging indicators measure past results, like performance improvements or skill-based promotion rates.

Talent Management Strategy Metrics

For talent management, leading indicators include internal mobility and succession plan readiness, while lagging indicators are things like employee turnover and time to fill open roles. Using both helps measure past outcomes and influence future performance.
   1. Improved employee experience (engagement and job satisfaction) shown through organization survey results.
   2. Improved first year permanent staff retention rates.
   3. Increased number and rate of internal promotions.
   4. Increased retention rates especially among BIPOC and traditionally marginalized genders.
   5. Improved performance management.
   6. Increased partnership pipelines with diverse community organizations shown by number of hires.

Reporting

Reporting is how Learning + Development shows the impact of our work. It's a way to tell the story of how training supports employees, supervisors, and agencies. By tracking both participation and outcomes, we can see what's working, where improvements are needed, and how learning connects to the City's mission. Our reporting system has three parts.

Ongoing Tracking

We continuously collect data from course evaluations and employee feedback. This gives us a real-time picture of how employees are engaging with learning opportunities.

Quarterly Reports

Every quarter, we compile this data into a report that highlights attendance, course completions, and learner feedback. These reports allow us to make quick adjustments and celebrate wins along the way.

Annual Reports

At the end of each year, we take a broader view. The annual report summarizes all programs and outcomes, showing long-term trends and how learning contribute to workforce development an organizational goals. This is published internally and externally in the quarter following the closing year.

Together, these three levels of reporting ensure that Learning + Development is transparent, accountable, and continuously improving. They give leaders and employees confidence that training is not only happening, but making a measurable difference across #TeamCity.

Quality Benchmarks

We help employees develop their capabilities and find meaning in the work they do every day. Outlined below are the quality benchmarks we use to create, deliver, and continuously improve learning experiences.

Item	Description	Source
City of Madison	Inclusive, Innovative, and Thriving.	5 Components of Performance Excellence
APMs	*APM 2-10:* Policies and Procedures for Internal and External Training We believe our employees are the key to providing exceptional service. To support employee efforts, the City provides programs to engage and develop employees, and to make employee wellness a vital part of the City. *Last updated in August of 2023; goal of updating this to reflect current and forecasted approaches to training and development beginning in 2026.	Link to APM 2-10
HR Vision	People choose to work at the City of Madison to make a difference and stay because they belong.	HR Strategic Plan 2023-2027
HR Mission	We attract, retain, and develop a diverse and engaged workforce to create an inclusive and high performing organization.	
HR Strategic Plan	**HR Strategic Plan** prioritizes essential projects by providing clear structure and creating a roadmap for the next five years. This will enhance collaboration with city agencies, maximize impact,	HR Strategic Plan 2023-2027

	improve practices to become more efficient, and best support the City of Madison.	
Talent Management Strategy	**Talent Management** includes all the ways the City of Madison brings employees on board, develops and retains high-performing employees and aligns their skills and potential with the organization's needs.	Talent Management Strategy
Accessibility	**Accessibility Requirements**: We know our users come to us on a wide variety of devices. In order to best serve our community, we work to make our content respond to the device you are using, including mobile phones, tablets, laptops and desktops.	https://www.cityofmadison.com/policy/accessibility
Human Resources Management System	**NEOGOV HRM** system that empowers city employees, supports a consistent employee experience, improves service delivery, and aligns with the *City of Madison's vision, mission, values, and service promise*. It also enables HR, Learning Partners, and leaders to optimize and utilize the Talent Management Strategy to improve the employee experience.	HRM System Implementation Webpages coming soon. In Year 1 of 5-Year Implementation
Public Sector HR Association (PSHRA)	**Public Sector HR Association (PSHRA)** is the leading member community connecting public sector HR professionals with the insights, education and expertise to realize their potential and position them for future success.	https://pshra.org/
Association for Talent Development (ATD)	**Association for Talent Development (ATD)** is a globally recognized powerhouse in the field of talent development and workplace learning. ATD is a trusted resource and thought leader for professionals and organizations striving to enhance their workforce's capabilities. ATD's dedication to advancing talent development makes it an essential ally for anyone committed to enhancing workplace performance and learning.	https://www.td.org/

Conclusion

This document brings together the people, tools, and strategies that shape our Learning + Development work. It shows how our HR, trainers, and partners all work together to support learning across the city for every employee.

With shared goals and clear methods, we're building a system that helps staff grow and success. By using the right technology and focusing on skills, we are creating more opportunities for learning every day.

Every employee has the chance to learn, belong, and lead. Together, we are shaping a stronger, more connected workplace—one that reflects our city values. When each of us invests in growth, we invest in the future of #TeamCity and the community we serve.

Looking for more details on Learning + Development?

Reach out to OrganizationalDevelopment@cityofmadison.com to get in touch.