# VSCPA COMPETENCY LADDER

# THE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

**ABOUT THE VSCPA COMPETENCY LADDER:** The Virginia Society of CPAs (VSCPA) Competency Ladder is composed of three primary areas: Innovation & Strategic Thinking, Leadership Development and Personal Development. Each focus area is broken down into Basic Level, Intermediate Level and Advanced Level to help you understand the knowledge and skills required to excel in your current and future roles.

**FOUNDATION:** This requires a basic understanding of the business structure and includes responsibility for implementing and achieving results without assistance.

**DEVELOPING:** This requires an ability to advise on strategic options for the business. This includes formal responsibility for colleagues or team and that their decisions have a bigger impact.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** This requires expert knowledge or skills in the field outside of the organization. This has a high-level of strategic impact, unique insights, leads others and perfoms at an exceptional level.

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# INNOVATION & STRATEGIC THINKING

| | FOUNDATION | DEVELOPING | IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CRITICAL THINKING** | • Practices proactive thinking vs. reactive thinking<br><br>• Can process and summarize data using financial and non-financial information to evaluate performance<br><br>• Demonstrates appropriate judgment when determining actions | • Looks beyond symptoms to identify causes of problems and possible solutions<br><br>• Provides strategic interpretation of data to drive decision making<br><br>• Raises vital questions and considers new perspectives | • Shares strategic insights and knowledge to help others make sound decisions<br><br>• Applies broad knowledge and seasoned experience when addressing complex issues<br><br>• Encourages the critical analysis of data and knowledge by staff<br><br>• Proactively looks for outside opportunities to drive revenue, performance and growth |
| **INNOVATION** | • Open to new possibilities and opportunities<br><br>• Supports organizational changes and actively helps management meet goals<br><br>• Asks questions and provides feedback about change | • Challenges the status quo and provides potential solutions<br><br>• Openly communicates the business case for needed change<br><br>• Supports organizational change | • Creates an environment that encourages innovation, risk-taking and teamwork<br><br>• Strong advocate for change even in the face of opposition, making a compelling argument<br><br>• Champions new initiatives and paves the way for needed changes |
| **RESOURCES** | • LEAD Articles<br>• LEAD Seminars<br>• LEAD Leadership Webinars<br>• MentorMatch Mentee<br>• Networking Events<br>• Volunteer– Community Engagement Opps.<br>• Volunteer– Student Engagement Opps.<br><br>Resources available at vscpa.com/LEAD | • LEAD Articles<br>• LEAD Seminars<br>• LEAD Leadership Webinars<br>• MentorMatch Mentee<br>• Networking Events<br>• Volunteer– Community Engagement Opps.<br>• Volunteer– Student Engagement Opps. | • CFO Roundtable<br>• LEAD Leadership Webinars<br>• Leaders' Summit<br>• Management of an Accounting Practice Event<br>• MentorMatch Mentor<br>• Networking Events<br>• Volunteer– Speaking and Writing Opps<br>• Volunteer– VSCPA or Chapter Leadership |

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# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

|  | FOUNDATION | DEVELOPING | IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE** | • Thinks through process before taking initiative<br><br>• Accepts and adapts to change<br><br>• Avoids quick judgement of others<br><br>• Actively listens to others | • Displays full control over emotions<br><br>• Understanding of the wants, needs and viewpoints of others<br><br>• Demonstrates adaptability of differing work styles and personalities<br><br>• Models integrity and fosters a culture of openness, honesty and collaboration | • Helps team develop and shine over own individual success<br><br>• Manages conflict and understands perspectives<br><br>• Politically astute, able to detect social networks and read key relationships<br><br>• Listens empathetically to understand emotional signals of individuals |
| **INSPIRING & MOTIVATING** | • Develops relationships with team members throughout the organization<br><br>• Encourages and supports team members<br><br>• Recognizes achievements of team members<br><br>• Creates personal development plan with manager | • Understands what motivates others<br><br>• Communicates strengths and opportunities for development in staff<br><br>• Takes ownership for project outcomes<br><br>• Maintains a healthy balance between results and relationships | • Creates culture that inspires people to do their best<br><br>• Initiates crucial conversations and has a stake in the outcome<br><br>• Champions the development of high-potential staff |
| **TEAM-BUILDING** | • Accepts new and opposing points of views<br><br>• Willingly contributes and participates in teams<br><br>• Uses team approach to solve problems or achieve goals | • Supports teammates in meeting their goals<br><br>• Understands dynamics of peer and supervisor relationships<br><br>• Facilitates discussion of different viewpoints | • Fosters an environment of collaboration and inclusion over competition<br><br>• Reminds staff to lean on other staff's skills to help drive a project forward<br><br>• Creates a mission-driven culture where everyone feels included and supported |
| **RESOURCES** | • LEAD Articles<br>• MentorMatch Mentee<br>• Networking Events<br>• StrengthFinder Assessment<br>• Volunteer– Community Engagement Opps.<br><br>Resources available at vscpa.com/LEAD | • LEAD Articles<br>• LEAD Seminars<br>• KnowledgeNow Conference<br>• MentorMatch Mentee/Mentor<br>• Leadership Academy<br>• Networking Events<br>• Volunteer– Speaking and Writing Opps.<br>• Volunteer– VSCPA Ambassador | • CFO Roundtable<br>• Leadership Webinars<br>• MentorMatch Mentor<br>• Networking Events<br>• Management of an Accounting Practice Event<br>• Volunteer– Chair a Committee or Task Force |

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# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

| | FOUNDATION | DEVELOPING | IMPLEMENTATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PRODUCTIVE MANAGEMENT** | • Allows proper amount of time to a task<br><br>• Prioritizes work<br><br>• Minimizes barriers to productivity | • Delegates tasks appropriately<br><br>• Plans and executes multiple projects to meet stated goals<br><br>• Implements innovative ways to accomplish project goals | • Leads projects and sets expectations for the team<br><br>• Anticipates/identifies barriers for a team to accomplish goals and proactively addresses them<br><br>• Drives commitment to simplify processes |
| **VERBAL & NON-VERBAL SKILLS** | • Speaks effectively and demonstrates active listening<br><br>• Prepares written communications using clear, grammatically correct language<br><br>• Uses appropriate communications for audience | • Presents to internal and external audiences<br><br>• Understands appropriate tone when interacting with colleagues; understands non-verbal cues<br><br>• Speaks professionally and writes business communications clearly and with impact | • Presents controversial or complex information confidently<br><br>• Constructively participates in challenging conversation<br><br>• Models open and honest communication methods |
| **SELF-MANAGEMENT** | • Displays positive attitude<br><br>• Commits to accountability and ethical behavior<br><br>• Shows consistency between words and actions | • Understands motivations, values and strengths of team<br><br>• Receptive to feedback and takes action<br><br>• Manages stress and well-being | • Adaptable to new challenges and change<br><br>• Displays integrity by being transparent about actions; open about feelings<br><br>• Stays calm under high stress or during a crisis |
| **PERSONAL BRAND** | • Makes connections within and outside the office<br><br>• Stays abreast of important business trends<br><br>• Participates in professional organizations | • Volunteers with professional organizations<br><br>• Participates in conversations happening online<br><br>• Attends industry related conferences and events | • Considered an expert; sought out to speak<br><br>• Serves on boards, task forces or committees<br><br>• Actively follows up with new contacts |
| **RESOURCES** | • Attend CPA Assembly Day<br>• LEAD Leadership Webinars<br>• MentorMatch Mentee<br>• Networking Events<br>• Volunteer– Community Engagement Opps.<br>• Volunteer– Conference Engagement Opps.<br>• Volunteer– Student Engagement Opps. | • Attend CPA Assembly Day<br>• LEAD Articles<br>• LEAD Seminars<br>• KnowledgeNow Conference<br>• MentorMatch Mentee/Mentor<br>• Leadership Academy<br>• Networking Events<br>• Volunteer– Speaking and Writing Opps.<br>• Volunteer– VSCPA Ambassador<br>• Volunteer– Conference Planning | • CFO Roundtable<br>• Leadership Webinars<br>• MentorMatch Mentor<br>• Networking Events<br>• Management of an Accounting Practice Event<br>• Volunteer– Chair a Committee or Task Force<br>• Volunteer– Chapter Leadership |

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**1** What are your personal and professional goals, and how do they relate to your current or future role?

**2** Based on the VSCPA Competency Ladder, identify the knowledge or skills you need to develop in order to reach your goals.

**3** Depending on your knowledge and skill level, identify 2-3 VSCPA resources or LEAD programs that you can enroll in to help achieve your goals.

**4** What are the tangible benefits you can bring back to your office after attending the VSCPA program or event you identified?

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