

**Supervising in State Government Level 2: Building Excellence
Center for Achievement in Public Service
32 College Street, Montpelier, Vermont**

**Opening Seminar: Your Strengths and Your Development Plan
Pre-Class Assignment**

Welcome to the Opening Seminar of SSG2. We look forward to helping you build on your success as a supervisor!

The SSG2 seminars focus on the skills a supervisor needs to succeed in state service. Strength-based supervision is the core of enhancing employee engagement, and of all of our supervisory and management training. SSG2 will build on the strengths foundation established in SSG1, using extensive practice and application opportunities to build proficiency for lasting success.

This handout includes the opening seminar description, and your pre-class assignments. Please be sure to read this completely and complete the pre-class assignment on page 2.

Seminar Description: Opening Seminar: Your Strengths and Your Development Plan

As the foundation for all other SSG2 seminars, participants will create their own Individual Development Plan (IDP) to explore personal development opportunities throughout the entire program. Building on a strengths-based philosophy, participants will develop goals, learn tools and best practices for IDP's, and apply learning to a capstone project showcasing their IDP for personal career development. Participants will work with their own supervisors in this process. The IDP will be used to frame the learning experience for SSG2 seminars, and will prepare supervisors to create effective IDP's with their employees.

Learning Objectives for Participants

- Develop a strengths-based Individual Development Plan (IDP) for growth as a supervisor based on self-assessment, career objectives, work with one's supervisor, and organizational needs.
- Commit to the use of IDP's consistently with each employee as a part of an SOV strategy for effective performance management, workforce planning, and strategic planning.
- Develop skill in using tools, best practices, and appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities for implementing IDP's with direct reports.
- Develop a communication plan to share IDP with manager.
- Use the IDP planning process to achieve greater self-awareness, reflection, and emotional intelligence as participants achieve higher levels of competence.
- Understand how to utilize IDP's for increasing employee engagement and performance.

Supervisory Competencies Addressed in this seminar:

Self-aware, accountable, effective communicator, talent manager, strategic leader, problem-solver/decision-maker.

Pre-Class Assignment

1. Complete the Supervisory Skills Inventory and Areas for Development questions.
2. Think of questions you may want to ask your supervisor for planning your professional development. Add these as needed to the Manager/Supervisor questionnaire at the end of this document.
3. Share with your Manager/Supervisor the Supervisor's Responsibilities (Job Description) document and ask your supervisor to review it in advance of your conversation.
4. Schedule a meeting with your Manager/Supervisor and complete the interview questionnaire.
5. Review your Gallup StrengthsFinder reports. Bring your reports to class.
6. Bring both completed Supervisory Skills Inventory and Manager/Supervisor interview questionnaire with you to your first seminar course.

SUPERVISORY SKILLS INVENTORY

Identified below are skills and knowledge needed for a supervisor to be effective in today's workplace. Please complete the inventory in a thorough and thoughtful manner, using the scale provided. You will use your results in class to create an Individual Development Plan, which you can use with your supervisor to help guide your work in all your job duties, supervisory and general.

Please keep in mind that this is not a pass/fail assignment but simply an opportunity for you to reflect on your current supervisory strengths and potential.

1	2	3	4
I'm good at it, and I enjoy it.	I am interested in this area and have potential that I could develop.	I can do this, but it does not come easily to me, and I don't enjoy it.	I do not do this well, and don't have any real talent for it.

Self-Aware

Rating

Self-Reflection. Ability to reflect on one's own beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors, seeking feedback where appropriate, and adjusting supervisory approaches to motivate and engage employees. _____

Self-Development. Ability to evaluate personal strengths, talents, and limitations and set personal performance and development goals that stretch into new and improved skills. _____

Self-Care. Ability to attend to one's own wellness (health, work-life balance, attitude, etc.) and to promote this quality in employees and teams. _____

Accountable: Resource Management Skills

Rating

Information about the Job. Ability to provide adequate information about the task/project to be accomplished, and the skills, knowledge and tools needed to get the job done. _____

Delegation. Ability to plan for and delegate job responsibilities in a fair, consistent manner; modeling best practices of human resource management. _____

Ability to organize and schedule the staff workload to meet organizational goals. _____

Work Environment. Ability to provide a physical and psychological work environment where staff want to produce and are encouraged to develop their talents. _____

Financial Resource Management. Ability to understand the financial implications of the work completed; the resources utilized and the budget impact. _____

Policies and Procedures. Ability to seek information about SOV policies and procedures including laws and labor contracts, interpret that information accurately and appropriately for the team, and maintain compliance.

Ethics. Ability to make ethical decisions and conduct all matters to a high standard of accountability while maintaining professional and organizational ethics.

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Accountable *Continued*

Rating

Customer Service. Ability to meet and exceed the expectations of customers, and to motivate employees to do so.

Time Management Skills. Ability to manage time effectively to ensure that the most important work gets done first.

Ability to manage the variety of tasks that fall under the title of "supervisor" and meet established deadlines.

Ability to plan projects, including to establish resources, deadlines and to conduct ongoing project evaluations to monitor progress.

Effective Communicator

Rating

Principles of Communication. Ability to grasp the purpose of communication and its' various modes of delivery.

Ability to use verbal and non-verbal language effectively, conscious of potential impact.

Ability to engage diverse perspectives.

Listening Skills. Ability to "actively" listen to others through non-verbal and verbal techniques, including: appropriate use and interpretation of body language, checking for understanding and asking for clarification.

Speaking Skills. Ability to express oneself clearly, using proper English.

Presentation Skills. Ability to speak formally or informally to groups and to demonstrate competence, composure and credibility.

Written Communication. Ability to express oneself in writing clearly, concisely and using proper rules of grammar.

Information Processing. Ability to keep staff informed of what is happening within the organization through oral and written communication. Interprets policies and procedures correctly and relays this information in an effective manner. Seeks information from appropriate sources.

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Team Builder: Skills for Group Success

Rating

Team Development and Group Dynamics. Ability to inspire and foster team commitment and trust through effective team development, mentoring, and role-modeling. _____

Meeting Management. Understands when and how to plan, utilize, and manage meetings effectively. _____

Facilitation Skills. Possesses the skills and tools to help groups discuss issues, resolve problems, make decisions and set plans. _____

Conflict Management. Knows how to effectively manage conflict so the conflict can enhance problem solving but does not digress into personal attacks or morale deflating behavior. _____

Coaching, Observation and Feedback. Ability to work with staff members individually to assist in reaching their potential by providing training, feedback, and meaningful assignments, which help them develop professionally. _____

Talent Manager: Performance Management

Rating

Recruiting and Hiring. Ability to contribute to and/or performs recruitment and selection process with a strengths-based and strategic approach for high performing staff. _____

Strengths-Based Approach. Ability to identify employee strengths, supporting challenges with a strengths-based approach, and promoting employee engagement through proactive coaching and mentoring. _____

Addressing Performance Problems. Ability to act swiftly and confidently to address performance problems, engaging HR and management's assistance. _____

Setting Performance Expectations. Ability to determine essential job functions and establish performance expectations for staff. _____

Communication Skills Applied to Performance Management. Ability to apply strong communication skills to the performance management process, including:

- Observation Skills: observe employees to assess performance. _____
- Feedback: _____
 - Plan for and provide feedback to employees effectively. _____
 - Seek feedback from employees and peers. _____
- Recognition: Provide appropriate and meaningful recognition through formal and informal approaches. _____

Conducting the Annual Evaluation Meeting. Ability to plan for and conduct an annual evaluation meeting in which all parties are engaged in the assessment of performance and the planning of performance expectations for the future. _____

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Strategic Leader

Rating

Vision. Ability to build a clear, shared picture of a desired future. Focuses group efforts on attaining the vision, in addition to completing day-to-day tasks.

Role Model. Models best practices with respect for individuals, hard work, creative problem-solving, inclusion, etc.

Forward-Looking, Strategic, "Big Picture" Thinking. Looks beyond today and makes plans in light of such questions as:

- What changes are happening within the department, within the state, or in technology that may affect how we do business?
- What are our organization's strengths and weaknesses, and how do we meet our goals in light of them?

Promoter of Diversity

Ability to challenge stereotypes and hold others accountable for addressing bias or prejudice.

Ability to foster an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued.

Ability to develop and maintain a culturally diverse environment.

Ability to use fair and equitable hiring practices.

Problem-Solver/Decision-Maker

Decision Making Styles. Understands various methods for decision-making, which style comes most easily, and when and how to apply all styles appropriately.

Problem-Solving. Ability to utilize multiple tools for the two phases of problem-solving: opening up ideas and narrowing down options in order to make a decision.

Ability to engage others in solving important problems.

Ability to foster a culture that promotes creativity and innovation.

Ability to apply analytical skills to develop effective strategies and solutions.

CONGRATULATIONS ON COMPLETING THE INVENTORY.

Please go to next page to assess your responses.

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AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- A. List briefly in #1 below the skills/knowledge areas you rated as 1, and continue similarly with numbers 2, 3 and 4 below.
- B. Review the results with your supervisor, paying special attention to areas of agreement or difference between you.
- C. Identify at least one item in section "1" or "2" that you will pursue for development.
- D. Discuss with your supervisor whether there is anything in "3" or "4" that requires attention. Is your performance in these areas sufficient to allow you to excel in your strengths? If so, spend little attention on them. If one is significantly getting in the way of success, explore how you might use your strengths to improve in this area.

Be as specific as possible, e.g. rather than list "Time Management", list areas within time management that you wish to develop, such as project planning.

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Supervisor's Responsibilities (Job Description)

Most supervisors in State Government carry a combination of responsibilities including supervisory duties and a portion of the technical/subject matter/functional work of the unit. In the left-hand column are common supervisory duties.

Directions: **1)** Add a few of your major functional responsibilities in the right-hand column.

2) Highlight 5-8 items in either column that you consider to be high priority items.

3) Circle the number or bullet of the ones you spend the most time on.

Supervisory Duties	Functional Duties
1. Plan and organize work to accomplish the organization's goals efficiently and effectively, drawing on the strengths and ideas of team members.	•
2. Assign work appropriate to the roles and skill levels of employees.	•
3. Provide the materials and equipment needed to succeed.	•
4. Ensure employees understand their duties and performance expectations.	•
5. Document performance, and provide recognition/reward for progress and provide feedback for improvement.	•
6. Provide annual performance evaluations, including future goals.	•
7. Communicate essential information between management and employees.	•
8. Develop the workgroup as a team, fostering an environment of team engagement in problem-solving and continual improvement.	•
9. Orient employees to the job, and ensure their orientation to all relevant HR and labor contract information.	•
10. Provide opportunities for growth and development through planning, coaching and feedback, rewards and recognition, and opportunities for learning and skill development, using a strengths-based approach.	•
11. Work with DHR on labor contract matters, including disagreements, complaints, performance and disciplinary actions, and grievances.	•
12. Account to their manager for the performance of those they supervise, and for their own performance.	•
13. Support continuous improvement at the organizational level.	•
14. May also recruit and hire.	•
15. Other important administrative duties: approving time and expenses, report FMLA, etc.	•
16. Act as a role model for professional and ethical behavior.	•

Vermont Labor Board Definition of a Supervisor

A supervisor is an employee who has authority in the interest of the employer to:

- Hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline other employees or recommend such action,

IF

- In the above, the exercise of such authority is not of a merely routine or clerical nature but requires the use of independent judgement

Manager/Supervisor Interview Questionnaire

As part of developing your own individual development plan (IDP), you will have conversations with your direct supervisor. The first conversation will help you to think about how to focus your professional development.

- A. Review the questions below and schedule a time to meet with your direct supervisor. You will need at least 20 minutes for this conversation.
- B. Provide your direct supervisor a copy of the Supervisor's Responsibilities (Job Description) to review prior to the meeting.
- C. At this conversation, inform your supervisor that part of SSG Level 2 is the development of your own individual development plan (IDP) and you will need to get some information for your planning. Inform him/her you will be following up with them once your plan has been created and for the final capstone project.
- D. Ask the following questions and record your supervisor's responses. Add to this list any additional questions that would assist you in planning your professional development.

1. Based upon the Supervisor's Responsibilities (Job Description), what are your priorities for me in this role as a supervisor?

2. Where do you see that I am succeeding in my supervisory responsibilities? Where are my strengths?

3. What future expectations do you have for me as a supervisor?

4. Where do you see my untapped potential in this role?

5. What resources are available for me for my professional development?

6. Is there anything else you want me to be aware of that would inform my professional development planning?