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Leadership Academy **--Team Projects—**

Team projects provide a real-world learning and leadership experience for Academy participants.

Goals

The goals of the team projects include:

1. Generate learning in respect to a new subject area
2. Promote leadership skills as participants self-lead their teams to a successful conclusion
3. Enhance communication skills since participants must communicate with other team members from different agencies and the Executive Sponsor as well as effectively present their report to the local government agency or City Manager Association at the end of the process
4. Promote networking, especially with the Executive Sponsor and staff members in the client agency or with members of the City Manager Association
5. Provide valuable assistance helping a local government agency or the City Manager Association address a real-world challenge of significance

Ideal Projects

Ideal projects for an Academy team feature the following attributes:

- The problem to be addressed is a significant real-world concern for the local government agency or the City Manager Association.
- The project is “do-able. In other words, it is limited in scope and can be addressed by a team over a six month period recognizing that team members have their regular full-time jobs.

- The project is focused on a key “deliverable” that is of value to the agency or association.
- The outcome of the project should not already be a foregone conclusion.

Expectations

1. Academy Director

As Academy Director, Dr. Frank Benest is expected to:

- Solicit team projects and select the most viable for the Academy teams to address
- Help organize the teams and orient them at the first session of the Academy
- Provide some feedback to ensure the team’s plan of work is do-able within the time constraints
- Schedule time at the end of each monthly session for the teams to meet
- Schedule team reports to the Academy

2. Executive Sponsor

The Executive Sponsor is a chief executive, assistant city or county manager, or department director who is the “go-to” person for the Academy team. It is expected that the Sponsor:

- Describe the project opportunity and complete the Team Project Idea Form
- Focus the team project so it is do-able and identify the key deliverable
- Meet with all the team members at the beginning of the project, mid-course, and at the end of the project when the report is presented
- Provide key documents and other materials or suggest how to access them
- Recommend “key informants” whom the team members can interview
- Be available to consult with the team if it confronts a major obstacle

3. Team Members

It is expected that the team members:

- Help “lead” the team to a successful conclusion
- Schedule meetings with the Executive Sponsor at the beginning, at the mid-point, and at the end of the project in order to present the team report
- Adopt uncomfortable roles that stretch the participants (for example, if the participant is comfortable doing document research and analysis, the participant should interview key informants or help present the report)
- Share in the work so no one is unequally burdened
- Ensure that the project is do-able within the time available and communicate with the Executive Sponsor what will be in fact delivered by the end of the project
- Seek out help from the Executive Sponsor as needed

As leaders, team members are also expected to deal with any problems, obstacles, and other “messiness” as the project evolves.

Presentation of Team Report

In respect to presenting the team report, a powerpoint (but no written report) is required. The maximum duration of the oral presentation (not including Q & A) is 20 minutes. Two to three members of the team will make the formal presentation. Other team members can respond to questions and comments.

One team report will be present to the Academy during the last few monthly sessions. (Consider this presentation a practice run-through.) Another presentation will be made to the Executive Sponsor and key staff members of the local government client agency or to the City Managers Association.