

Jennings

Leadership Effectiveness/Stability (formerly *Leadership Continuity/Stability*)

Employer of choice candidates should describe in essay form how they systematically* create ongoing effectiveness in organizational leadership through habits, policies and practices that build trust in leadership, encourage workforce engagement, emphasize transparency in operations, communicate effectively with the organization and individuals within it, and ensure leadership continuity and stability. Responses to this item will address the following:

- How do organizational leaders communicate with the overall workforce as part of the routines of ongoing operations? How do they ensure that two-way communication (information flowing out from leaders as well as receiving input from team members at all levels) takes place on a consistent, meaningful basis? How do senior leaders listen to and learn from workforce members to create actionable information for improvement of the organization and the workplace experience? **The applicant's communication system is multi-faceted and systematic, and engages leaders and workforce members throughout the organization on a recurring basis. The emphasis of leaders on acting with honesty, humility and transparency sets the tone and expectation for the communications approaches, and the two-way communication opportunities created reinforce the importance of every team member to the success of the organization.**
- How do senior leaders inspire and demonstrate trust in their workforce? How do they ensure that trust levels are high among and between work groups and individual team members? **The applicant identifies that the organization's effectiveness is dependent on trust as its foundation, and defines actions leaders must prioritize to ensure the existence of such trust. Leaders spend their time side-by-side with the workforce members, listening and learning from employees, seeking feedback, providing timely follow up, reinforcing and praising desired behaviors and outcomes, and connecting with staff members as individuals, going beyond a relationship built on work and work performance alone.**
- How do senior leaders ensure that, as individuals, they are accessible/available to members of their organizational workforce? **The response above references ways that leaders actively engage with employees during the course of the daily work, but they also create accessibility and availability through active engagement of all employees in their strategic planning retreat, following up on requesting such input with sharing the results of the process, again seeking feedback from the front line employees. This action not only informs team members through direct interaction with leaders but also demonstrates how leaders value the employees as team contributors and individuals of importance.**
- How do senior leaders ensure transparency in operations to inform and equip workforce members to do their best in their jobs? **The foundation of transparency begins in the applicant's Management Philosophy and teamwork principles that seek to serve and support every customer, stakeholder and employee and is reinforced through the systems described above. The commitment to participative decision making as an organization demands that transparency be a part of operations to ensure that employees can be important contributors to decisions that impact themselves and others the organization serves.**
- How do senior leaders ensure that every member of the organizational team understands their individual role in fulfilling the organization's Mission? **It is clear that the Mission and Values are at the core of the workforce leaders actions which, in turn, reinforces alignment of team**

members with the Mission and Values. Rather than an annual reminder about the Mission and Values at the employee's performance review, this applicant's leadership modeling and messaging heightens the ability to sustain a highly aligned and effective team.

Key to this applicant's success, and why it is considered to "exceed" criteria requirements, is the clear demonstration of highly integrated systems of leadership and operations. The response demonstrates that the applicant sees that the sum of its component parts add up to an effective and larger whole. Leaders demonstrate through their philosophies and actions that everyone matters and contributes to the good of the whole, and they seek to lead by serving as the key to their success. The system built is not dependent on one person, but rather, it emphasizes the power and value of the team. This system would survive the absence or departure of any individual member of the team, strengthening the organization's prospects for sustainable success.

**"Systematic" is defined as follows: a process or approach that is systematic is characterized as well-ordered and repeatable, and uses data and information so that learning and improvement are possible.*

Leadership Effectiveness/Stability Essay - Jennings

Jennings' leaders are held accountable to Jennings' Management Philosophy and Jennings' mission and values: The Jennings Management style reflects our respect for the dignity of each member of the staff. We work as a team to serve our residents, tenants, participants, children, and their families, with the highest quality of service possible. We expect the best from our staff members, and we believe that an open participatory decision-making style will empower each person to make Jennings the best that it can be. In fulfilling our mission we commit ourselves to these values: Respect, Compassion, Community, Discovery of Potential and Celebration of Life. Staff satisfaction and turnover measures are used to hold Leaders accountable to leadership practices

Leadership on-boarding at Jennings consists of the same full day orientation all staff attend and in addition are given leadership training and a coach/mentor to assure their success in helping our staff be the best they can be. From day one, leaders are in the neighborhoods and/or department building trust with those they interact with by demonstrating competence in their responsible function, listening and asking for feedback, following-up in a timely manner when needed, helping and supporting staff, praising the good they see and connecting with staff members. Leaders are provided with policies and guidance that ensures consistency and fairness when making decisions. Leaders know their role is to lead by example with honesty, humility and transparency.

Communication flows openly once trust is established. Leaders heighten staff engagement by keeping staff informed: sharing leadership team meeting minutes, arranging staff attendance at all staff meetings and staff retreats, encouraging sharing of ideas and different ways to get things done. All staff meetings and staff retreats provide staff two way communication with all departments, staff and leaders at Jennings. Department meetings provide two-way communication within the department to share information, brainstorm solutions, training, discuss and resolve tools needed to do the job, etc. In addition, Jennings open door policy and no tolerance retaliation policy sets the expectation to ensure honest open communication.

A leaders' role is also to assure that the staff member aligns the work they do each day to Jennings' mission and organizational goals. This is being achieved through the strategic planning process implemented in 2018. Staff members, front line through management, participated in a strategic planning retreat where Jennings aspirations, strategies and goals were created and resulted in our final 2019 to 2023 strategic plan. We then held all staff meetings in which we shared this work and had interactive discussions with them about how the specific work they do each day fits into this plan. Staff were asked to select and submit to us special projects they wanted to be involved in to assure continuous involvement and job enrichment. Each manager has the responsibility to continue this discussion with their staff and to assure their staff the opportunity to participate in those projects and initiatives that they have expressed interest in. The strategic action plan tracks and ensures that all staff are engaged through participation, ideas and success in achieving our mission, organizational goals and aspirations.

For teams to fulfill their intended role of improving organizational effectiveness, it is critical that teams develop into working units that are focused on the mission and goals to be achieved. To assure team effectiveness, leaders exemplify and hold their staff accountable to our principles of teamwork.

- I lead by example and I am a role model of what I expect from my team members
- I set clear expectations that support our mission

- I listen and show interest in what others say and feel
- I encourage differences of opinions
- I treat mistakes as learning opportunities and celebrate successes
- My agenda is for the good of the whole, not myself
- I respond to the individual needs and styles of others
- I know and care about my team members – and they know it
- I create a climate of trust and make it a priority for the team

Finally, leaders at Jennings take pride in recognizing our staff and in celebrating their successes. Leaders formally recognize staff through Star of the Month, five annual awards recognizing outstanding staff members, appreciation events, the LeadingAge Ohio Stars Award and merit grams. Leaders recognize staff informally through a simple thank you, a team celebration or an individual recognition. But most of all through the respect and compassion shown our staff and the support given to help our staff discover their potential at Jennings.