

Montgomery County Educational Partnership

Framework for Montgomery County Career Competencies



Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, and the Universities at Shady Grove are committed to supporting students in their journey to become prepared for the world of work. According to a 2018 Hart Research poll of 1000 business representatives - only 60% deemed recent college graduates as prepared for the workforce. Critical career readiness preparation can also be plagued by inequitable access for students. In fact, some reports show that only a quarter of low-income, public school students participate in activities that would prepare them for success in the workplace. To increase equitable access to supports which enable successful employment and retention, Montgomery County educators collaborated to develop a shared set of career readiness competencies, which reflect the key behaviors that employers, across all industries and functional areas, are seeking in graduates entering the world of work.

These nine competencies are adapted primarily from best practices and recommendations developed by the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE). In addition to NACE, other sources were consulted including USDOE Equipped for the Future (EFF), the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) for Adult Education, and University System of Maryland's Badging Essential Skills for Transitions (B.E.S.T.). Employer involvement was key to the development of these national best-practice models, and including employer priorities is central to our approach in Montgomery County.

Complementing the skills and experiences students receive in the classroom, students must seek experiences out of the classroom, which will help to develop these competencies over time. Organizing these key experiences around a framework that is easy to understand and articulate will help Montgomery County students to become the capital solution that regional employers seek. While each educational institution in the county has flexibility in how to implement and market career readiness supports - we commit to collaboration on the overarching competency framework, giving local students an opportunity to build sought after career skills progressively, across an educational ecosystem. The development of these competencies, in addition to completion of a college degree and participation in meaningful experiential learning experiences, will help students become prepared, competitive, and ready to thrive in the world of work.

Our shared career competency definition will enhance the work that Montgomery County professionals in education, workforce development and public policy can do together to support the career readiness of graduates at each stage of our educational pipeline.

Competency Name	Definition	Behavioral Examples
	Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. Assess and manage one's own emotions and those of others; use empathy to guide and motivate. Take initiative to organize, prioritize, and delegate work.	• Plan, initiate, manage, complete and evaluate projects. • Articulating a vision and strategy and using innovative thinking to go beyond traditional methods. • Seek out and leverage diverse or competing perspectives and feedback from others to inform direction. • Motivate and inspire others by encouraging them and by building mutual trust. • Recognize and support the strengths of others to achieve common goals.
	Identify and articulate transferable skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to desired career goals. Seek to continually add knowledge and skills required for progression along a career pathway. Explore and navigate steps necessary to pursue professional opportunities which match personal values and implement strategies for self-advocacy in the workplace.	• Recognize and articulate how specific strengths, skills, knowledge, and experiences connect to career goals and related opportunities. • Plan, renew, and pursue personal and career goals. • Display curiosity; seek and embrace development opportunities to learn career related skills. • Develop awareness of professional areas which have room for growth and pursue opportunities to develop related skill sets. • Assume duties or positions that will align with career advancement. • Establish, maintain, and/or leverage relationships with people who can help one progress professionally.
	Build collaborative relationships and maximize strengths across diverse teams. Navigate group dynamics and manage conflict to achieve common goals. Negotiate solutions to meet the varied needs of professional stakeholders.	• Collaborate with others to achieve common goals. Be accountable for individual and team responsibilities and deliverables. • Effectively manage conflict, diverse personalities, and exercise the ability to compromise. • Listen carefully to others, taking time to understand and ask appropriate questions without interrupting. • Build positive working relationships with supervisor and team members/coworkers.

	Demonstrate general proficiency in commonly used technology tools and applications to ethically solve problems. Engage in continual learning of emerging technologies to maintain adaptability. Employ innovative use of technology tools to enhance professional and organizational success.	• Navigate information, construct ideas, and use technology to achieve strategic goals. • Manage technology to integrate information to support relevant, effective, and timely decision-making. • Seek out opportunities to improve knowledge of tools and technologies that may assist in streamlining work and improving productivity. • Adhere to ethical standards and conventions for safeguarding privacy and security. • Adapt to new and quickly changing technologies.
	Demonstrate initiative, personal accountability, effective workload management, and efficient use of time. Exercise integrity and ethical behavior in the workplace. Develop an exemplary professional reputation and the ability to adapt to organizational culture and conduct expectations in varied work settings.	• Act equitably with integrity and accountability to self, others, and the organization. • Demonstrate dependability (e.g., report consistently for work or meetings). • Evaluate one's own performance, acknowledge and learn from mistakes. • Have an attention to detail, resulting in few if any errors in their work. • Understand the importance of nonverbal behavior in a professional setting.
	Value, respect, and learn from individuals with diverse identities and backgrounds. Demonstrate openness, inclusiveness, and sensitivity with all people. Continually seek deeper knowledge and understanding of varied cultures in order to skillfully navigate a local, national, and global landscape. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge individual and systemic racism, inequities, and personal biases.	• Advocate for inclusion, equitable practices, justice, and empowerment for historically marginalized communities. • Effectively integrate into new culturally diverse environments; effectively communicate and adapt in intercultural and multilingual situations. • Solicit and use feedback from multiple cultural perspectives to make inclusive and equity-minded decisions. • Keep an open mind to diverse ideas and new ways of thinking. • Address the systems of privilege that limit opportunities.

	Exercise sound reasoning and analytical thinking. Use knowledge, facts, and data to solve problems and make decisions. Strategically demonstrate innovation, creativity, and inventiveness to achieve outcomes.	• Navigate and use information for decision making, using sound, inclusive reasoning and judgment. • Organize and plan strategies and effectively communicate actions and rationale to stakeholders. • Come to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards. • Manage difficult or unexpected situations in the workplace, as well as complex business challenges. Maintain a resilient mindset to persist through challenges. • Multi-task well in a fast-paced environment and proactively anticipate needs.
	Utilize effective communication strategies to convey information to a target audience. Employ a variety of writing styles and formats to articulate ideas and messages in a clear, compelling, and sensitive manner when speaking publicly or engaging in professional interactions.	• Ask appropriate questions for specific information from supervisors, specialists, and others. • Frame communication with respect to diversity of learning styles, varied individual communication abilities, and cultural differences. • Demonstrate verbal/non-verbal abilities, such as oral and written communication skills for conveying information. • Demonstrate active listening skills, respect for others, and appropriate nonverbal behavior. • Communicate in a clear and organized manner so that others can effectively understand.
	Enhance self-awareness by developing a better understanding of personal motivations, emotions, and behaviors. Engage in the continual enhancement of one's physical, mental, and emotional health. Cultivate and foster habits of well-being to increase focus, productivity, and impact.	• Balance and support work, career, and personal and social needs. • Utilize organizational training and supports for well-being, and advocate for one's needs related to health and wellbeing. • Engage in regular self-evaluation and reflection of emotions, motivations and behaviors that could impact well-being and productivity. • Acknowledge the mind and body's impact on work and productivity and taking regular steps to promote health. • Utilize strategies for coping and building resilience to manage difficult or unexpected situations.

