

Mentee Application

What is the Mentoring Jail Leaders Program?

The purpose of the Mentoring Jail Leaders (MJL) Program is to develop excellence in current and future jail leaders. It is an extension and implementation of the skills developed in the National Jail Leadership Command Academy (NJLCA). Coaching and mentoring have become widely accepted techniques for extending such development beyond classroom training and on-the-job experience.

Although this program has been specifically developed to support the NJLCA, the strategies may be used by jails wishing to implement a leadership development program. A copy of this mentoring program, which may be adapted by any jail facility, is available in a standalone module at www.leadingjails.com.

To be a Mentee . . .

For NJLCA participants: For acceptance as a mentee in the MJL Program, participants must be enrolled in NJLCA, participating in a class at NJLCA, or a recent graduate of NJLCA. Recent NJLCA graduates will be considered as a mentee on a first-come, first-served basis only if mentors are available.

For jail facilities developing their own mentoring program, this application may be modified for their use.

The Process of Becoming a Mentee

For NJLCA participants: Complete this application in order to be accepted. All materials including this application and any questions may be e-mailed to the program coordinator at: MJLP@aja.org or mailed to MJL Program Coordinator, American Jails Association, 1135 Professional Court, Hagerstown, MD 21740-5853. Most mentees will be matched with a mentor during the NJLCA (or when one becomes available). After finishing NJLCA, mentees will begin the MJL Program.

Jail facilities developing their own mentoring program may use or modify the information in this application.

Orientation

For NJLCA participants: As part of the NJLCA week, accepted mentees will participate in the Mentee's Orientation. (For additional information, copies of the Orientation, Mentee Handbook, and all other mentee materials are available for download at: www.leadingjails.com.) After an initial conversation/meeting with the proposed mentor,

mentee's may complete the Mentor-Mentee Agreement—a working agreement between the partners for the duration of the mentoring relationship. The program requires several meetings a month plus some research or other preparation. Anticipate committing approximately 8 hours monthly for the duration of the 1-year program.

For jails developing their own mentoring program, the Mentor Handbook is available for modification.

Questions for Prospective Mentees:

The responses to these questions will match the mentee with the jail leader who is most qualified to help advance the mentee's career.

1. Meetings/Conversations - While face-to-face meetings are ideal, these conversations will be over the telephone or with another form of electronic communication. The mentee and mentor decide the best way to communicate. We anticipate that they will meet twice a month including research or other preparatory work as suggested by the mentor. The total time commitment is approximately 8 hours a month. Are you willing to make this time commitment?
2. Yes ___ No ___ If unable to devote 8 hours a month, please reconsider requesting a mentor.
2. Highest Educational Degree Obtained:
3. Professional Certifications (e.g., CJM, etc.):
4. Professional Associations (e.g., AJA, etc.) :
5. The 22 core competencies of a jail leader are attached (Also see www.leadingjails.com). After reviewing the list: identify the five core competencies improve your leadership skills in your organization?

Are there specific issues about these core competencies that need to provide more information? (See example below)

#	My Priority (1 of 5, 2 of 5, etc.)	Core Competency	Specifically what I'd like to improve related to this core competency.
15.	2 of 5	Manage labor relations.	How to work more cooperatively with the union's leadership. What are the legal requirements I have to follow? How can I avoid going to arbitration when I terminate someone?

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Core Competencies of Jail Leaders

The 22 core competencies of jail leaders are listed below in alphabetical order followed by two paragraphs. The first paragraph briefly describes the core competency and the second outlines the knowledge, skills and abilities required for that core competency.

1. Anticipate, analyze and resolve organizational challenges and conflicts.

Description

Use critical thinking skills, evidence-based practices, and information analysis to inform decision-making and address organizational problems; proactively identify pending crises or opportunities.

Rationale

Jail leaders must be able to not only chart their organization's future course, but also to navigate the present. Dealing with current organizational challenges must be predicated on a sound knowledge of the past and a clear vision of the future, including strategies for preventing organizational conflicts.

2. Assure organizational accountability.

Description

Direct the process for collecting ongoing feedback and assessing long-term outcomes; model self-accountability through words and actions.

Rationale

Jail leaders are ultimately accountable to the public, the inmate population, and those both above and below them in the chain of command. This includes identifying, collecting, analyzing, and disseminating which data and information are needed to assure accountability in a transparent method that provides a "report card" for stakeholders.

3. Build and maintain positive relationships with external stakeholders.

Description

Develop reciprocally-beneficial external partnerships to achieve shared goals.

Rationale

Since jails are impacted by other criminal justice agencies, local and state policy-makers, and community organizations, they cannot operate effectively without developing working relationships with such groups. Establishing linkages with these stakeholders not only assists with accomplishing the jail's mission, but also with managing related external forces over which jails have no direct control. Identifying and building such relationships is a two-way process for the mutual benefit of everyone involved.

4. Build and maintain teamwork; mentor and coach others.

Description

Work with staff to strengthen the team and members of it; lead by example; go beyond the expected to assure the success of all involved.

Rationale

Creating and nurturing a successful team takes thoughtful planning, time, energy, and ongoing attention. This includes building and maintaining teamwork through both formal and informal strategies, such as mentoring, role modeling, and other approaches to uniting the talents of a diversified workforce. Great teams are not accidental, but rather, are the product of great leadership.

5. Communicate effectively, internally and externally.

Description

Engage in written and oral communication that is clear, unambiguous, transparent, and consistent with the organizational vision, mission, and values.

Rationale

This competency is actually a fundamental component of each of the other twenty-one competencies. It includes effectively using all available means of communication (e.g., oral, written, electronic) to manage people, make decisions, and collect and disseminate information in a way that is appropriate, unambiguous, and mutually beneficial.

6. Comprehend, obtain and manage fiscal resources.

Description

Understand the larger financial picture, as well as obtain the fiscal resources needed to achieve organizational goals, allocating resources in a manner that supports the organizational vision, mission, and values.

Rationale

Not only must jail leaders comprehend specifics of the budgeting process, but they must also be able to assure that the jail has sufficient financial resources to fulfill its mission by obtaining stakeholder support. This includes not only assessing what resources are needed, but also managing them in a cost-effective manner by effectively prioritizing, eliminating waste and duplication, identifying alternatives to supplement the budget, and making reductions as necessary.

7. Develop and maintain a positive organizational culture *that promotes respect for diverse staff.*

Description

Assess the agency's internal culture, assure that it is aligned with the mission, vision, and values; work to change culture as necessary; support culture that moves toward identified organizational goals.

Rationale

Managing a diverse workforce, (and inmate population), requires considerable effort to create “one out of many.” This includes identifying, developing, and maintaining an organizational culture that values diversity, embraces change, promotes a positive approach, and is consistent with the organization’s vision, mission, and values.

8. Develop and sustain organizational vision/mission.

Description

Establish a long-range purpose for the organization and provide overall direction and guidance for achieving its mission and measuring success.

Rationale

This competency establishes the basis for pursuing all others. It clarifies the essence of the organization’s existence by creating, implementing and maintaining the jail’s vision and mission through participatory consensus-building with staff and stakeholders.

9. Engage in strategic planning.

Description

Proactively analyze emerging trends, anticipate related organizational needs, and develop strategies for meeting them.

Rationale

Effective management and accountability requires long-range planning efforts and structured operations. This includes maintaining a comprehensive foundation of information, collecting and analyzing relevant data, and working with community stakeholders who are impacted by the jail.

10. Enhance self-awareness; maintain proactive professional commitment.

Description

Identify personal strengths and weaknesses; make use of professional resources (e.g., technical assistance, research reports, professional organizations, peer reviews, networking, etc.).

Rationale

Before anyone can effectively lead others, he or she must have sufficient insight into their own strengths and weaknesses, especially in terms of how they potentially impact their staff. Leaders must be willing to take an objective and in-depth look at themselves and be willing to change.

11. Establish organizational authority, roles, and responsibilities.

Description

Assure that duties and responsibilities are properly distributed throughout the organization, along with the authority necessary to fulfill them, in order to promote smooth, efficient functioning within legal parameters.

Rationale

Jails do not run themselves. While the leader's job does not extend to day-to-day operational management, it is the leader's responsibility to develop an overall organizational structure that ensures effective functioning, complies with relevant laws, establishes clear lines of authority and accountability, and ultimately, promotes fulfillment of the jail's vision and mission.

12. Leverage the role of the jail in the criminal justice system.

Description

Maintain outcome-focused interaction with other components of the justice system to identify and resolve problems and advance the vision/mission of the jail.

Rationale

Because jails are so profoundly affected by operations of other agencies throughout the criminal justice system, they cannot afford to engage in autonomous policy development or decision-making. Yet all too often, local jails operate as an island, trying to independently solve system-created problems. Local jail leaders need to take the initiative to establish system-wide collaboration. This calls for understanding the interdependent relationships between components of the justice system and developing working relationships that minimize the negative impact of other agencies' actions while maximizing creative

13. Make sound decisions.

Description

Establish a decision-making style that is firm, fair, and consistent, data-driven, and aligned with the organization's vision, mission, and values; appreciate the impact of decisions on those in and outside of the organization.

Rationale

Jail leaders are responsible for the decisions they make, as well as for the decisions made by their subordinates. This includes making decisions in a manner that ensures organizational accountability, as well as consistency with policies, procedures, and effective leadership practices. It likewise means making decisions within legal guidelines, in concert with the jail's vision/mission, and in accord with positive trends in jail management.

14. Manage change.

Description

Progressively implement change through strategies that encompass relevant stakeholders.

Rationale

Because change is so discomfoting, it is often feared and resisted. Effectively implementing change therefore includes awareness of how change impacts organizational and human dynamics, including understanding the change process itself, as well as how to implement change in a manner designed to ensure sustainability.

15. Manage labor relations.

Description

Work collaboratively with unions/employee organizations and effectively manage collective bargaining agreements.

Rationale

Clear communication, well-defined regulations, and consistent application of rules are integral to good management in any work environment, and with collective bargaining agreements, they are even more essential. This includes understanding the collective bargaining process, related laws, and the implementation of bargaining agreements in order to promote effective personnel management and positive labor/management relationships.

16. Manage power and influence.

Description

Understand the organization's history and political climate; use the political process (internal/external and official/unofficial) to accomplish goals; understand the impact of your use of power on the organization and the community.

Rationale

While a certain degree of power accompanies the position of jail leader, the ability to use it effectively and in a responsible manner is a personal attribute. It is especially important that jail leaders understand both the limits and the widespread impact of their power and influence on internal operations as well as external stakeholders.

17. Manage time.

Description

Set an agenda that includes realistic deadlines, defines priorities, and addresses critical issues promptly.

Rationale

Because so many issues are competing for the jail leader's attention, it is essential to establish priorities in order to avoid becoming consumed by the job

and to allow the personal time needed to decompress. This includes setting and meeting deadlines, delegating when appropriate, and avoiding the temptation to try to “do it all” at once.

18. Obtain and manage human resources.

Description

Obtain the human resources needed to achieve organizational goals, allocating them in a manner that supports the jail’s vision, mission, and values; assess employee strengths/weaknesses; properly delegate authority.

Rationale

Since a majority of the operating budget of most jails is spent on staff salaries and benefits, recruiting, retaining, and developing competent personnel are significant priorities. Doing so requires insights concerning human resource issues, both nationally and locally. Moreover, assuring a sufficient quantity and quality of well-trained and highly motivated staff is fundamental to safe and secure jail management, administration, and operations.

19. Oversee inmate and facility management.

Description

Assure that inmates are receiving proper care, custody, and control according to professional and Constitutional standards, as well as appropriate treatment programming.

Rationale

This competency relates to the core mission of local jails. Everything else—from fiscal considerations to power, decision-making, team-building, liability concerns, accountability measures, etc.—essentially supports this endeavor. As such, it not only embraces the laws, court cases, policies/procedures, research findings, and industry standards guiding jail operations, but also the good faith of jail leaders to move the field forward in progressive directions based on evidence-based practices.

20. Oversee physical plant management

Description

Assure that the physical plant is in proper condition to assure the safety of inmates, employees, and the public.

Rationale

As the overall facility administrator, it is the jail leader’s job to assure that the physical plant is in proper operating condition, to determine when it is necessary to obtain assistance for repairs or preventive maintenance, to plan ahead for projected structural needs, and to insure that the physical plant will be viable for the anticipated life of the building.

21. Reduce jail-related liability risks.

Description

Oversee risk management initiatives to reduce vulnerability and assure compliance with state/national standards and case law.

Rationale

Jails are guided by Constitutional mandates and case law, and thus, can be fertile grounds for liability lawsuits and civil rights claims. Litigation is costly and time consuming, but can be reduced with well-designed policies and diligent operational oversight. This includes understanding current case law and industry standards, training staff accordingly, and assuring that organizational policies and procedures are in compliance.

22. Understand and manage emerging technology.

Description

Remain aware of emerging technological innovations and their potential organizational applications.

Rationale

As part of their responsibility to visualize future organizational needs, leaders need to keep abreast of the rapidly changing array of jail-related technology and how it can be used to improve operations. Being an informed consumer of expensive technology is important to assure that funds are spent efficiently and cost-effectively. This includes identifying subject matter experts to evaluate, test, and assess new technology, as well as building a level of personal understanding of relevant hardware, software, and security devices in order to make knowledgeable procurement decisions.