

# CORE VALUES AND “WE STATEMENTS”

In high performing organizations, core values are linked to “we statements” that list the specific behaviors needed to support each core value. These “we statements” can be used for recruiting, hiring, promotions, and performance appraisals. In this way, all the work of the organization is tied to the core values.

The following sample set of core values is for one California agency. The agency’s core values fall under three categories: Integrity, Commitment, and Leadership.

## 1. Integrity

- We are always guided by how we can best improve California government.
- We base our findings, conclusions, and recommendations upon reliable evidence.
- We strictly adhere to relevant professional standards.
- We conduct our reviews in a nonpartisan manner, free from bias and outside influence, including that of the Legislature, governor, and the subjects of our audits and investigations.
- We take personal responsibility for our work.
- We hold the organization and ourselves to the same or higher standards than we use to evaluate others. We keep our commitments to stakeholders.<sup>1</sup>
- We are truthful in our communications.
- We ensure that our work is accurate, on time, and relevant.

## 2. Commitment

- We treat one another with respect.
- We encourage, appreciate, and reward excellence in ourselves.
- We communicate with one another in a way that enables us to work effectively and to stay informed.
- We provide our employees the training, development, and resources to do their jobs well.
- We communicate our expectations clearly, constructively, and promptly.
- We evaluate employees regularly, based on clearly stated expectations.
- We invite and provide prompt, constructive feedback to each other.
- We create a work environment that values diversity.
- We create a work environment that fosters a balance between work and other aspects of life.
- We hire and retain qualified, talented employees.

## 3. Leadership

- We promote excellence in government.
- We prepare work products that promote change.
- We make insightful recommendations that improve the performance of government.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes the public, legislators and staff, administration and departments (state and local government), internal customers within our office, press.

- We follow up to determine whether our recommendations are implemented.
- We are a resource that aids decision makers.
- We are proactive in educating our stakeholders about what we do.
- We provide prompt responses and appropriate updates to all our stakeholders.
- We anticipate and respond to key customer needs.
- We continuously evaluate and improve our policies and practices.
- We generate creative solutions to problems and issues.
- We regularly measure and communicate how well we uphold our core values.