

THE HAWAII LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLAN

When the State of Hawaii decided to institute a formal leadership development program, it chose a route unique among the local and state-government organizations we interviewed: It hired the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to develop and help deliver an eight-month program. The Hawaii Leadership Academy's curriculum has four components, each taught as a one- or two-week seminar: Front-line Leadership; Leading People; Leading Organizations; and Moving the Organization Forward. Each seminar focuses on selected competencies from Hawaii's competency model. Class size is limited to 30.

Academy participants complete the same three-part process for each program component: Phase I is the time spent in the classroom. In Phase II, each person must apply the concepts and theory learned in the classroom on the job. In Phase III, his or her manager evaluates the success of this application process.

To ensure the process was rigorous and not simply an empty exercise, the Leadership Academy received help from the

Hawaii Department of Education in designing an Individual Action Plan (IAP) that is the centerpiece of Phases II and III. The IAP is reproduced on in the pages that follow. Sample responses are provided.

The IAP not only helps participants make an explicit connection between classroom learning and learning on the job. It also requires that they reflect on what they are learning, or have learned, at several points in the project. Such reflection is a critical factor in successful action learning projects, yet it is often sacrificed for lack of time. By providing a formal structure for reflection and making it a program requirement, the Hawaii Leadership Academy has gone further than many programs to ensure that reflection isn't just a nice-to-have. The Academy's IAP is a tool that other organizations should consider using.

To date, the Hawaii Leadership Academy has produced 136 graduates, primarily state employees, but 25 from the City and County of Honolulu.

SAMPLE

State of Hawaii Hawaii Leadership Academy Individual Action Plan

"Leading Organizations" Seminar

A. Competencies: Leading Organizational Change, Problem Solving, Creativity and Innovation, and Accountability.

Leading Organizational Change

- Determines short- and long-term objectives and strategies.
- Develops realistic plans to accomplish goals and objectives.
- Coordinates with other parts of the organization to accomplish goals.
- Identifies and integrates key issues and needed changes affecting the organization.
- Adapts behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.
- Adjusts rapidly to new situations warranting attention and resolution.

Problem Solving

- Identifies and analyzes problems.
- Distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions.
- Provides solutions to individual and organizational problems.

Creativity and Innovation

- Develops new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to make organizational improvements.
- Creates a work environment that encourages creative thinking and innovation.
- Designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs/processes.
- Develops and uses measures and rewards to hold self and others accountable for achieving results that embody the principles of diversity.

Accountability

- Assures that effective controls are developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the organization.
- Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities.
- Can be relied upon to ensure that projects within areas of specific responsibility are completed in a timely manner and within budget.
- Monitors and evaluates plans.
- Focuses on results and measuring attainment of outcomes.

B. How IAPs will be evaluated: The Individual Action Plan (IAP) will be evaluated according to the table below.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	
Pass	Shows a solid understanding of the relevant ideas or processes. The concepts, evidence, and methods used are appropriate for addressing the issues/problems. There are no misunderstandings of key ideas or overly-simplistic approaches.
Fail	Shows little apparent understanding of the relevant ideas and issues. The concepts, evidence, and methods used are inadequate for addressing the issues/ problems. Response reveals major misunderstandings of key ideas or methods.

C. Planning Phase

1. Describe the situation (what and why):

Our division is reorganizing so that many of the division level activities will be passed on to the branches thereby enabling a broader scope for the division. Recently, an affected branch chief retired and, consequently, senior branch staff must increase the scope of their authority and responsibility in anticipation of a new branch chief. This is a good opportunity to incorporate new changes without resistance from an incumbent. Further, this will allow employees to get involved in the reorganization and, hopefully, result in “buy-in.”

2. What is your objective(s)?

To create a smooth transition as senior branch staff (and the branch chief) move into a new role. The branch chief will be expected to manage more of the external environment, while senior branch staff will increase the scope of their responsibilities.

3. Develop an action plan (what, with whom, when, where, how) for a 30-day period and describe how these actions would demonstrate at least two (2) of the competencies listed above.

- a. I will assess what our long-term goals and objectives should be. This will give me a framework to work from when I meet with the staff later. I will also review the current and projected workload and needs of the branch senior staff in order to plan for the succession of a new branch chief, and to move the senior branch staff to a higher level of authority and responsibility.

b. I will meet with senior staff to:

- i. Share my thoughts about the branch’s long-term goals and objectives and roles;
- ii. Solicit their comments and suggestions and brainstorm for creative solutions;
- iii. Clearly define expectations and accountability.
- iv. Facilitate process related exercises with the group to orient the change in a positive direction.
- v. Develop plans in collaboration with branch staff.

Actions will demonstrate:

Leading Organizational Change by determining short term objectives and strategies; working in a collaborative fashion; and developing realistic plans to accomplish goals and objectives

Problem Solving by identifying and analyzing problems, finding alternative solutions to complex problems, and distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical judgments.

Targeted start date: 1-27-02
Submit to HLA date: 2-27-02

NOTE: If you are unable to obtain your supervisor’s signature before the submittal date (for example, your supervisor is out of state), please FAX (587-1107) OR e-mail to BOTH Jane (jane.c.uyetake@hawaii.gov) AND Steve (steve.s.kamaura@hawaii.gov) your completed IAP. The signed original can be submitted later, but we need to review what you have completed by the due date.

D. Evaluation

1. What happened when you implemented your action plan?

I met with senior branch staff. We reviewed current roles, short-term and long-term goals and objectives and how they needed to change for the future. I solicited their ideas and listened to their concerns. This generated a lot of discussion as people took this opportunity to get some things off their chest about their past responsibilities, which was okay with me (better than letting it simmer). New ideas came forth during the brainstorming session and we incorporated them in our new operational plans.

I met with other division staff later to ascertain support and help for the affected senior branch staff. This meeting went more smoothly since the senior staff was privy to more information.

2. What went well?

Staff was able to do problem solving, plan for a role change, and evaluate their anticipated needs. Other division staff was able to respond by thinking creatively in ways to assist, and thus build better teamwork. Although things were a little shaky in the beginning, people warmed up to the possibilities since they were now involved with the process. Communication between members has noticeably improved. Previously, management would make all these decisions and inform employees what was decided for them.

3. In retrospect, would you have done anything differently? If yes, what would that be?

If only I had some control of the hiring freeze and the pace demanded during the legislative session, I could have been more successful. More time was necessary on my part and, unfortunately, some of the work had to be put off until a later time. We are under a court agreement to almost double the size of our system, and yet we had to endure the slow down of the hiring freeze. Consequently, non-essential work had to take a back seat, while those of us have had to work in high priority mode.

E. Reflection (Use the following questions to help GUIDE your reflection of the situation/project.)

- 1. What concepts, principles, and/or approaches have you learned from this project?
2. What new information did you acquire that changed your knowledge and understanding of the project/situation?
3. What have you learned about yourself in terms of leadership that might be useful to you in the future?

I could not undertake this task alone. With the involvement of the senior branch team, we were able to collectively plan for the succession of a new branch chief as well as new roles. As a team (utilizing other division staff), we used our "creative thinking" process to assist the branch through the transition. The time factor is difficult to manage because of the involvement of the court. I would like to involve my staff more, but quick decisions are required or we end up in violation of the court. This has been explained to the staff and I continue to remind them. Something that I promised to them was that when the court order is removed we will have more collaborative decision making.

In the not too distant past, we would not have involved the staff so much about filling the branch chief's position. However, times have changed and employee expectations are higher about being involved in decisions affecting them. If we, as leaders, ignore their concerns and anxieties then everybody loses. I have to be more sensitive about the decisions I make, especially how it impacts the employees even peripherally because it can otherwise send the wrong message that I am not concerned about their welfare.

F. Supervisor's comments

She has demonstrated excellent management skills in very trying times. The knowledge and skills acquired in class were significantly demonstrated and applied during this difficult time. I have asked her to share her knowledge and experience with other staff members. I am also learning from her. It is uplifting to watch her grow as a manager and leader and the impact it is having on the organization.

G. IAP reviewed and discussed

HLA Participant's signature and date

HLA Participant's Printed Name

Supervisor's signature and date

Supervisor's Printed Name

For Department of Human Resources Development Use

Certification Section

The Department of Human Resources Development certifies that this employee has satisfactorily demonstrated the competencies of the Leading Organizations Seminar.

HLA Program Manager

Date

Reviewing Official and Title

Date