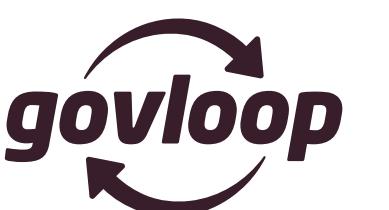


# Professional Development Best Practices for Government

QUICK TIPS RESOURCE



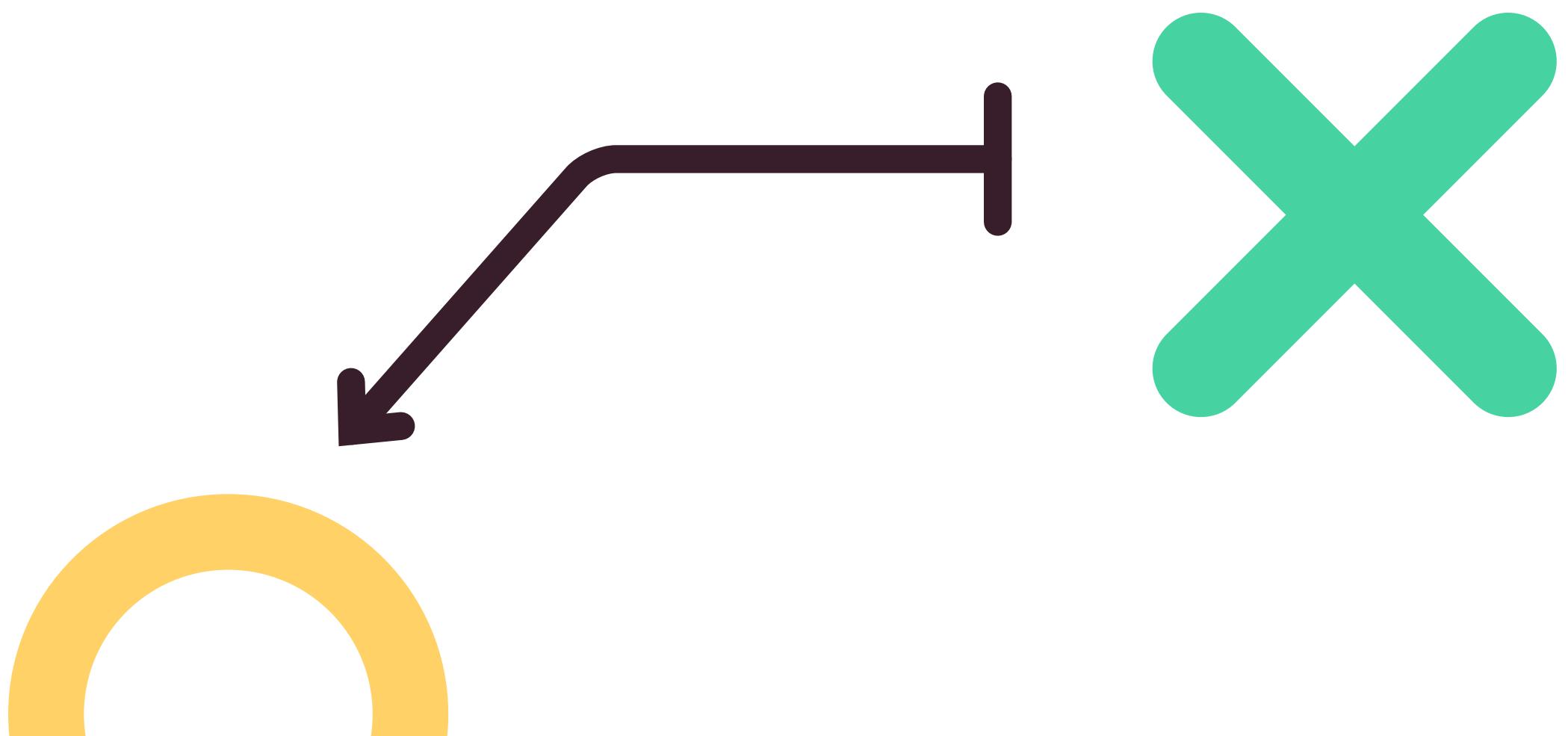
# Introduction

Now more than ever, public servants need practical resources for leading in difficult times, building culture across virtual workforces and balancing technical and soft skills to achieve mission outcomes.

That's why we put together this GovLoop In Brief, to provide an easy-to-skim resource that you and your colleagues can reference regularly and start using today. In it, you'll find best practices for tackling top-of-mind issues, such as mapping career goals, improving communication and workforce retention. We also share activities you can try with your team and additional links for further reading.

## Best Practice Focus Areas:

- Managing a Virtual Workforce
- Navigating Change
- Improving Communication
- Embracing Diversity
- Mapping Career Goals
- Workforce Culture



# Foster a Sense of Belonging

## Implementation tips: 8 actions you can take today.

- 1. Show that you care** about your employees by authentically checking in on all of them.
- 2. Make everyone feel visible** by considering small ways you can build a better relationship with employees, especially those who might feel invisible.
- 3. Respect their expertise** by asking for their advice.
- 4. Compliment their resiliency**, and honor the strength they have shown during this challenging time.
- 5. Be receptive to feedback** and show that you are approachable.

**6. Enrich them professionally** by brainstorming topics your team would benefit from and hold a few development sessions.

**7. Establish a valuable career connection** for your employees and introduce them to someone in your network who can help advance their career development.

**8. Have meaningful conversations** with your team and ask them thoughtful questions.

### Try this:

Looking to build strong relationships across your organization? Skip-level meetings can help. [Get started](#).

# Prepare and Support Employees

## Implementation tips: 6 conditions that support effective change management.

**1. Sponsorship:** Ensuring senior executives encourage the change

**2. Buy-In:** Gaining support for the changes from those involved and affected, directly or indirectly

**3. Involvement:** Involving the right people in the design and implementation of changes

**4. Impact:** Assessing and addressing how the changes will affect people

**5. Communication:** Telling everyone who's affected about the changes

**6. Readiness:** Ensuring people have the right information, training and help to adapt to change.



### Try this:

Use the PIN format to communicate changes or updates that are positive (P), interesting (I) and negative or need-to-know issues (N).

## Improving Communication

# Have Open and Honest Conversations

**Implementation tips: 6 ways to support change in a flexible and innovative manner.**

### 1. Err on the side of over-communicating.

Ensure that important information is communicated in several ways and in various forums.

### 2. Restructure staff meetings.

Consider focusing staff meetings on a theme or problem and then have a discussion that engages everyone.

### 3. Communicate bad news.

If you don't have the full story yet, it is OK to tell people that you don't know everything but that you will say what you can. If you cannot tell a full story because of privacy issues, say so.

### 4. Talk in person, if possible.

COVID-19 has made this challenging, but email is not the only alternative. Pick up the phone or schedule a video meeting to have a more robust conversation.

### 5. Be clear and concise.

Think elevator briefing every time you communicate.

### 6. Have an open mind.

Suppress your opinions and solicit input with a genuine desire to learn from others.

### Try this:

What can you do when your manager won't listen? Use these approaches.

## Embracing Diversity and Inclusion

# Start With Yourself

### Implementation tips: 5 steps for embracing diversity with empathy.

**1. Be authentic.** Develop self-awareness by exploring your identity, background, principles and life experiences. Do those experiences cloud your vision when interacting with people of the same race? What do you do when you encounter differences?

**2. Self-manage.** Develop an "in the moment" strategy to practice self-control, such as taking a deep breath or a six-second pause when presented with conflict.

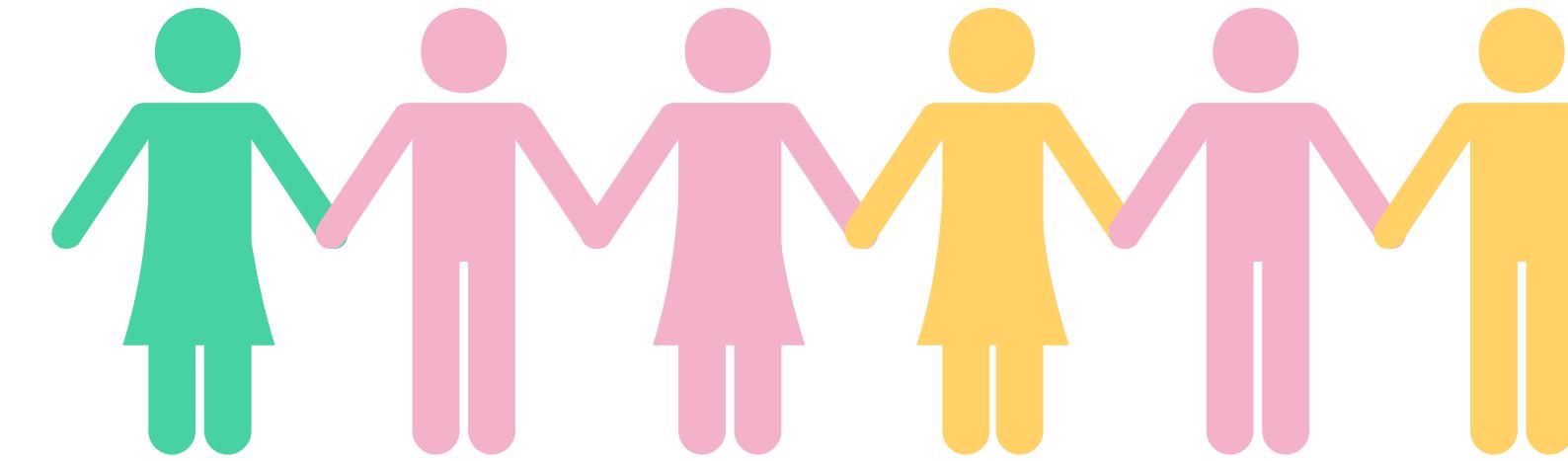
**3. Practice active listening.** Make sure you turn your inner voice off for a moment and focus entirely on the other person, including verbal and non-verbal cues.

**4. Get curious.** Ask open-ended questions that start with "what" or "how." Remember, your only mission is to understand.

**5. Respect, connect.** We as the human race share 99% of the same DNA. It's important to share stories with others and connect beyond work and government life.

#### Try this:

Today, do five random acts of kindness for your colleagues. Large and small acts can make all the difference.



# Understand Your Core Feelings

**Implementation tips: 3 questions and guided exercises to help you own your career.**

**We must first understand the core feelings we are looking to experience in our day-to-day jobs.**

- How do we want to feel when we get to work in the morning? Energized? Calm? Purposeful? Grateful?
- How do we want to feel when we close our laptops at the end of the day? Nourished? Certain? Connected? Grounded?
- What will the greatest feeling you experience during your day-to-day be?

## Try this:

Create a list of five important "feelings" words — the five words you most want to frequently feel in your intentional career.

Sit with those feelings, and list them out in a journal. Answer these prompts:

- What is my definition of each of those feelings?
- When in my past jobs did I experience any of these feelings?
- What kind of career or job might allow me to experience these feelings more regularly?

# Learn the Heartbeat of Your Team

## Implementation tips: 5 questions to consider around essential employee care.

### **1. Can we fill empty seats?**

If you have unfilled positions that put pressure on other employees or leave pieces of projects undone, now is the perfect time to hire for those vacancies.

### **2. Can we connect deeper with our people?**

Inquiring about how things are going or how employees are handling challenges allows managers to suggest personalized forms of self-care, such as flexibility in the workday.

### **3. Can we create culture without an office?**

Think about team lunches while connecting over Skype or Teams or assigning partners to check in with one other.

### **4. Can we look at our policies with fresh eyes?**

Even if offices reopen, allowing telecommuting may make more sense now that employees have had months to work out the kinks and managers have seen proof points.

### **5. Can we move forward?**

Look at your current state and your desired future state and identify gaps. Be more agile.

#### **Try this:**

Tired of forced morale-building events?  
**Do this instead.**

# What Data Can Tell You About Current and Future Employees

Many agencies are operating in a virtual environment and can't rely on instincts or in-person interactions to manage a workforce they can't physically see.

Especially now, leaders need a data-driven, technology-enabled approach to match employees with agency priorities. Infor specializes in talent management software that uses behavioral and performance data to select, develop and retain the right people. Behavioral analytics, for example, can help agencies identify transferable skills across the workforce and support or refute assumptions about team dynamics.



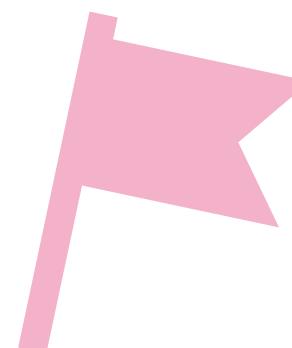
**"We look at the cognitive, cultural and behavioral data of individuals to make better decisions for and about our people."**

- Marcus Mossberger, Industry and Solution Strategy Director at Infor.



# Next Steps...

We hope that you found this resource helpful. To explore these and other workforce topics in greater depth, **make sure to download our GovLoop guide, "Your Professional Development Playbook for Government."**



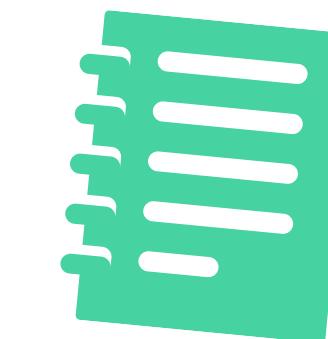
## For managers:

Use this resource as a conversation starter to connect with your staff during team meetings and individual check-ins. Try being vulnerable and sharing areas where you'd like to improve as a leader.



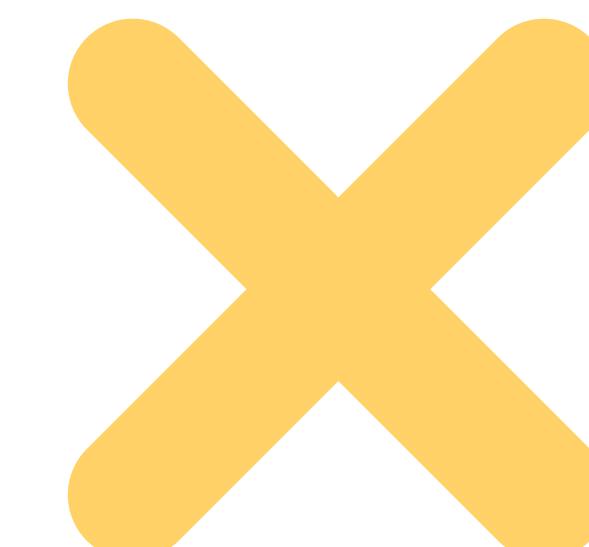
## For aspiring leaders:

Consider using virtual brown-bag sessions to share what you've learned with your colleagues.



## For new government employees:

Use this resource to help you settle into your new role and forge relationships with your colleagues.



**Thank you to Infor for their support  
of this valuable resource for  
public sector professionals.**

