



# COLORADO YOUTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK

## Standards for Leadership Knowledge, Skills and Values

(Updated April 15, 2008)

### The Colorado Youth Leadership Network

The Colorado Youth Leadership Network (CYLN) is a network of youth development and education professionals and others who are interested in youth leadership. The CYLN promotes youth leadership in Colorado by providing opportunities and tools for learning, sharing, collaboration and advocacy among young leaders, educators and youth development professionals.

For more information on the CYLN, visit [www.youthleadership.com/cyln/cylnmain.html](http://www.youthleadership.com/cyln/cylnmain.html).

### The Standards

This document describes the knowledge, skills and values that members of the Colorado Youth Leadership Network believe are essential for effective, responsible leadership. The standards may be used in several ways:

1. Youth development professionals may use the standards to design new youth leadership programs, events and opportunities.
2. Youth development professionals may use the standards to assess and improve existing youth leadership programs, events and opportunities.
3. Education and community leaders may use the standards to assess the extent to which a school or community is succeeding in providing opportunities for its youth to acquire leadership competencies. These leaders can use the standards to identify opportunity gaps and establish new initiatives and partnerships to fill those gaps.
4. Young people may use the standards to advocate for the creation of new leadership programs, events or opportunities, or for improvements to those that already exist.

### Other CYLN Products

The CYLN will use these standards to develop tools for youth development professionals, educators and communities. These tools will include:

1. A document describing a developmentally appropriate path by which young people can meet the standards;
2. A database of effective practices that can help youth meet the standards;
3. A community self-assessment tool that can be used by local communities to assess the effectiveness of their efforts to help youth along the path to leadership;
4. A database of youth leadership opportunities, programs and events across Colorado.

**Please send comments on this document to Jeff Miller at [jeff@leadingnow.org](mailto:jeff@leadingnow.org).**

## Standards for Leadership Knowledge, Skills and Values

*Please note that the standards are organized into sections for ease of use. Many of the competencies could be included in multiple sections. To avoid repetition they are listed only once.*

### I. Knowledge

#### ***Section 1: Self-Knowledge***

1. Understand own leadership strengths and weaknesses.
2. Recognize the limits of own knowledge.
3. Recognize own biases.
4. Understand own life roles and responsibilities to others.

#### ***Section 2: Leadership Styles***

1. Understand how different people lead, and how different styles of leadership can be effective with different individuals and groups, and in different contexts.

#### ***Section 3: Situational Knowledge***

1. Obtain and utilize knowledge needed for effective leadership a given situation or setting.

### II. Skills

#### ***Section 1: Self-Management***

1. Utilize own leadership strengths and find ways to minimize effects of own weaknesses.
2. Control own biases.
3. Manage life roles and responsibilities.
4. Exhibit flexibility and adaptability to change; demonstrate ability to use different leadership styles depending on the situation, the people involved and the goals.
5. Seek and accept feedback with a positive attitude.
6. Seek and accept responsibility.
7. Show willingness to take reasonable risk.

#### ***Section 2: Communication, Information Sharing and Information Gathering***

##### **A. Listening and Observing**

1. Attend closely to others; demonstrate appropriate body and facial expressions and verbal responses common during active listening.
2. Demonstrate understanding of what is heard by synthesizing and summarizing, taking action or following directions.
3. Identify assumptions observed to be operating in particular situations.
4. Understand the impact one's observations of others' assumptions have on one's own attitudes and actions.
5. Identify themes and patterns of behavior and interactions and use them to identify individual and group strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies.

## **B. Speaking**

1. Engage in reasoned discussion, offering reasons (evidence) to support ideas, opinions and feelings.
2. Elaborate on others' ideas.
3. Give constructive oral feedback to others.
4. Use different formats orally to convey ideas, opinions, or feelings (individual, small group, large group, telephone, video-conference, etc.).
5. Engage in an open exchange of ideas with others.

## **C. Reading and Research**

1. Access information from a variety of sources (newspapers, books, magazines, journals, pamphlets, videos, television, radio, the internet, etc).
2. Organize information obtained from a variety of sources.
3. Demonstrate understanding and accurate interpretation of the ideas, opinions, or feelings presented in various information sources.
4. Critically analyze information sources for assumptions, myths, validity and reliability.

## **D. Writing**

1. Write an informative report or persuasive essay.
2. Use a variety of writing forms to convey personal ideas, opinions, or feelings.
3. Write a clear descriptive report.
4. List an accurate and complete set of steps in a method, technique, or procedure.
5. Accurately summarize results of an investigation or action research, including data analysis and interpretation.
6. Write a proposal, including a budget, to obtain funds for a project, such as a grant or fund raising campaign.

## **E. Multimedia**

1. Understand how words, images, and sounds observed in various media are used to convey messages, viewpoints and values.
2. Demonstrate understanding of the strengths and limitations of various forms of media in informing and persuading.
3. Use a variety of communication forms appropriately to inform and persuade others.

## **F. Interpersonal Skills**

1. Use verbal and nonverbal cues to indicate sincerity and honesty, and understand these cues when used by others.
2. Avoid sarcasm, put-downs, and hurtful language; use positive or neutral language to draw out and clarify others' ideas.
3. Take initiative in building relationships and respond appropriately to others' attempts to initiate relationships.
4. Demonstrate respect for others' ideas, opinions and feelings.
5. Assert oneself (including expressing disagreement) without showing disrespect for others.

## **G. Conflict Management**

1. Acknowledge one's own emotions, motives and reactions.
2. Recognize and acknowledge others' needs and motives.
3. Express ideas and needs assertively without being disrespectful or selfish.
4. Disagree with ideas, not the person.
5. Consider different points of view.
6. Understand both the benefits and challenges of diversity.
7. Express emotions calmly, in nonabrasive and non-inflammatory ways.
8. Speak clearly, in neutral terms and tone.
9. Recognize and defuse potential conflict situations.
10. Identify areas of agreement and identify root causes of disagreement.
11. When disagreement occurs, offer compromise strategies focused on the larger goal.
12. When presented with challenges or complaints, avoid responding defensively and stay focused on solutions.

### ***Section 3: Group, Organizational and Problem-Solving Skills***

## **H. Group Discussion Skills**

1. Work with a group to develop a plan or analyze a problem and recommend solutions.
2. Identify competencies needed to reach goals and recruit people with those competencies.
3. Help team members acquire competencies needed to achieve group goals.
4. Participate in group discussions and encourage others to participate.
5. Respond to questions asked by group members.
6. Ask clarifying questions of other group members.
7. Maintain awareness of the group's core values and remind the group when necessary.
8. Monitor individual group members' contributions to the group to be sure all members contribute, and encourage others to do the same.
9. Synthesize differing views into a strategy that members can agree on.
10. Work cooperatively to reach consensus.
11. Recognize, and help others recognize, when it is time to move from discussion to action.

## **I. Problem Solving and Problem Prevention Skills**

1. Interpret and explain a problem or task.
2. Propose solutions to a problem or strategies for completing a task.
3. Seek input from those who may have different perspectives on an issue or problem.
4. Offer amendments to others' proposed solutions or strategies without denigrating the original proposals.
5. Accept reasonable criticism or amendments to proposed solutions or strategies from others.
6. Evaluate alternatives in light of core values.

## **J. Organizational and Planning Skills**

1. Identify critical steps in a process aimed at achieving a goal.
2. Create a detailed action plan based on a genuine need or goal in school, family, work, or community.
3. Identify human and other resources available and identify tasks that can be accomplished with those resources.
4. Establish committees.
5. Organize tasks and delegate responsibility for completion of tasks.
6. Set timelines and establish accountability mechanisms for completion of tasks.
7. Analyze results accomplished through teamwork and use the results to determine tasks and allocate responsibility for future work.

## **K. Group Action Skills**

1. Fulfill individual responsibility to the group (i.e., complete assigned tasks).
2. Ensure that the group completes group (shared) tasks.
3. Monitor the group's overall progress and use the achievement of objectives and milestones along the way to maintain the group's focus and momentum.
4. Identify and react to outside forces that could affect the group's ability to meet its goals.
5. Contribute to group maintenance by fostering a spirit of cooperation and cohesion among members.

## ***Section 4: Values and Ethical Behaviors***

### **A. Demonstrate ethical sensitivity**

1. Treat others with compassion, caring, and kindness.
2. Take others' perspectives into account.
3. Identify with others' interests and concerns.
4. Understand others' rights.
5. Understand others' needs.
6. Anticipate direct and indirect effects on others of decisions and actions.
7. Practice discretion with regard to sensitive information.

### **B. Demonstrate good judgment**

1. Identify issues that could raise ethical questions.
2. Use sound reasoning to determine what to believe and do.
3. Reflect on the reasoning process and outcomes.

### **C. Demonstrate character traits and values that others will want to emulate and follow**

1. Tell the truth, even when it isn't easy.
2. Challenge injustice.
3. Challenge biased assumptions, statements and behaviors.
4. Help others in need.
5. Defend one's beliefs but recognize when compromise is necessary for the greater good.
6. Learn from mistakes and failure, and persevere.
7. Be optimistic.
8. Demonstrate generosity with one's time and resources.

### III. Special (Leadership) Competencies

#### ***Section 1: Leadership Qualities***

1. Demonstrate attributes that make people glad to follow.
2. Inspire others' trust.
3. Inspire others to act, especially when circumstances are difficult.
4. Take charge when the situation demands it.
5. Hold self accountable for decisions, statements and actions.

#### ***Section 2: Vision***

1. Conceive and communicate a vision of the future.
2. Gain the commitment of others to the vision.
3. Identify group goals aligned with the vision.
4. Influence people to work toward goals.
5. Help others accept and work for change.

#### ***Section 3: Shared Leadership***

1. Cultivate ownership by involving others in decision making and planning.
2. Develop processes that enable people to contribute to the success of the group.
3. Provide support for people to succeed.
4. Empower people by giving them authority to work toward the goals in the most efficient manner.

#### ***Section 4: Coaching and Training***

1. Recognize that learning happens all the time, including from mistakes.
2. Mentor others to become leaders.
3. Serve as a role model to others.
4. Provide performance feedback and coaching to help people maximize their chances for success.

### Sources

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