

# BC PUBLIC SERVICE

## Leadership Expectations

November 2018



Where ideas work

## LEADING IN A CHANGING CONTEXT

*“As a member of the British Columbia Public Service, I do solemnly swear that I will...  
conduct myself honestly and ethically, in a manner that maintains and enhances the public’s  
trust and confidence in the public service and does not bring it into disrepute.”*

- BC Public Service Oath of Employment

These are the words sworn by every member of the BC Public Service as a condition of employment. Our ability to fulfil that commitment is challenged more than ever by the more complex context in which we work today. Shifting citizen expectations, a rapidly evolving and globally connected economy, a more diverse population, our own internal demographic pressures, and the relentless march of technological innovation all demand a different kind of public service.

The public service has faced pressures like this before, but rarely if ever of this magnitude and scope. The business model of the public service – its fundamental purpose – remains as valid as ever. But the operating model of the public service – how it delivers on the promise and potential of that purpose – needs to be modernized. Modernizing that operating model requires reconsideration of every aspect of how the public service works, from centuries old conventions, to entrenched policies and practices, to the tools and resources applied and how they are procured, managed and deployed.

Being a part of the leadership team in this context requires an openness to learning and ideas. It requires an authentic focus on citizens and an understanding of their priorities in addition to the priorities of government. It requires the ability to cultivate the power of networks, within the organization and with outside partners. It requires a broad view of the entire operation, from concept to design to execution – and a willingness to embrace new approaches. It requires a commitment to building a truly inclusive workplace culture that can benefit from the potential of a more diverse public service. Particularly at senior levels, there is a new skills and literacy profile required to lead change and to lead in a changing world.

To provide clarity and direction for today’s executive and senior leaders, the BC Public Service has introduced the Leadership Expectations set out in this document. These are designed to complement the expectations set out in the BC Public Service Oath of Employment, the Standards of Conduct and the BC Public Service Values with direction specific to senior leaders in the BC Public Service.

## BC PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

Be models and advocates of the BC Public Service Values and Standards of Conduct in professionally serving government to the highest ethical standard.

### THIS MEANS:

- You model integrity and a commitment to ethical conduct and decisions in everything you do – especially when those decisions challenge you and others.
- You hold colleagues to account for upholding the corporate values and behaviours expected of a professional public servant.
- You reflect on the importance of respect, inclusion, ethics and integrity as part of your regular communication with your team.
- You ensure members of your team are aware of their obligations with regard to ethics and professional conduct.
- You take responsibility for delivering on the priorities of government to the best of your ability.
- You demonstrate commitment to and pride in the BC Public Service, and you contribute to enhancing its reputation.

## BC PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

Be active enablers of innovation and engagement as keys to maintaining and enhancing public trust and confidence.

### THIS MEANS:

- You visibly and actively invite and advance new ideas within your organization and demonstrate the courage to embrace change.
- You engage regularly and openly with your team, demonstrating a spirit of collaboration, inclusion, honesty and trust.
- You recognize the motivational power of giving others credit for their ideas and you reward thoughtful risk-taking.
- You model a culture of curiosity by asking questions, seeking out new knowledge, encouraging dialogue and inviting competing ideas.
- You encourage curiosity from those around you and challenge unquestioning adherence to the status quo.
- You create the time and space for ideas and experimentation – including those ideas that are potentially disruptive.

## BC PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

Demonstrate foresight and an understanding of our modern, digital context to better serve citizens.

### THIS MEANS:

- You think and make decisions with consideration of the long-term impacts and context, responding not just to the current need but also emerging priorities.
- You invest in personal and organizational learning about trends and new ideas in your sector and the broader government context, and you expect the same of others.
- You develop and maintain a base level of understanding about current and emerging technologies and how they are relevant to your work.
- You know who the leading thinkers and jurisdictions are in your sector and in your organization, and you actively learn from their expertise.

## BC PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

Be proactive, resilient and nimble in taking thoughtful, calculated risks.

### THIS MEANS:

- You welcome change, recognizing that effective risk management does not necessarily mean maintaining the status quo.
- You plan for success and identify alternative solutions, but accept failure without casting blame.
- You support and champion those willing to try something new, recognizing their intent and effort even if they are unsuccessful.
- You talk about what doesn't work, learn from it, improve and move forward.
- You refuse to accept ambiguity as a justification for inaction.

## **BC PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS WILL:**

**Be biased to action and removing unnecessary complexity to deliver the best possible service and outcomes for citizens.**

### **THIS MEANS:**

- You seek out the best evidence available to you but are prepared to act even when the evidence is incomplete.
- You constructively question assumptions, timelines and recommendations to ensure they are driven by citizens' needs rather than administrative convenience.
- You ask what citizens expect and need, and embrace experimental approaches that help ensure citizen perspectives are reflected in policy and program design.
- You assess your organization's performance based on outcomes for citizens or clients rather than internally focused metrics.
- You demonstrate a citizen focus by using and expecting plain language in all internal and external communication.

## BC PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

Act to improve the corporate capacity, capability and commitment of the public service.

### THIS MEANS:

- You actively and visibly champion the Corporate Plan for the BC Public Service in your communication and interaction with your teams.
- When faced with a corporate direction that competes with your organization's own interest, you support the corporate direction.
- You foster and demonstrate the power of collaborative teams.
- You actively participate in corporate initiatives, recognizing your role as a collaborative leader not only in your organization but in the BC Public Service as a whole.
- You recognize that identifying, attracting and developing talent is a core part of your role as a leader, and you foster that expectation within your leadership team.
- You promote and contribute to an inclusive public service culture that embraces a respect for the diversity of our communities, perspectives and lived experiences.
- You expect high standards of performance and take responsibility for managing the performance of your team.