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Building Human Resource Capacity: Core Competencies for Ontario Intervenor Services Sector

HayGroup®

*A Collaborative Initiative Between Intervenor
Services and Partner Agencies and the
Ministry of Community and Social Services*

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Executive Summary

Introduction, Background and Context

The Intervenor Services sector in Ontario seeks to provide a very high quality of service and support to individuals with deafblindness, to enable them to navigate their environment and achieve as much independence as possible. The sector is operating in a complex and changing environment, in which there is an increasing demand for services, and is faced with several critical human resource challenges. These challenges include:

- Recruiting and retaining qualified employees;
- Onboarding and training needs of entry level employees who are inexperienced and inconsistently trained, and lack some of the critical skills for working effectively with individuals who are deafblind;
- Limited availability of graduates from an Intervenor program, as well as a lack of these specialized programs;
- Lack of awareness of the intervenor profession and of Intervenor Services as a viable and “professional” career choice; and
- Lack of a commonly accepted standard set of skills, values, and/or traits for the Intervenor role.

As a result, in the fall of 2014, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Intervenor Services sector agreed to jointly undertake long-term, strategic initiatives to provide training opportunities for skills enhancement and the development of voluntary best human resources practices relevant to the delivery of Intervenor Services in Ontario, falling under the umbrella of the Intervenor Services Human Resource Strategy (ISHRS). To operationalize this initiative, the ISHRS Steering Committee was formed, and presented a proposal to MCSS on behalf of the sector accepting to undertake a multi-year plan to systematically improve human resource practices, while ensuring the delivery of quality services. The key objectives of the ISHRS include the following:

- Provide enriched learning opportunities for intervenors, supervisory personnel and senior management;
- Develop sector specific core competencies and related training opportunities;
- Develop and offer innovative and practical Human Resource tools to improve recruitment, on-boarding and retention of qualified intervenors;

- Enhance the overall delivery and quality of services that promote meaningful outcomes for adults who are deafblind; and
- Introduce marketing and communication approaches to elevate the profile and public awareness of the Intervenor Services Sector.

This initiative reflects a broad-based collaboration and cooperation between agencies and the MCSS. Guided by a Steering Committee co-chaired by both a Ministry and Sector representative, the ISHRS is comprised of the following four (4) sub-committees:

- Core Competencies;
- Marketing and Communications;
- Education and Training; and
- Best Practices in Human Resources.

This report focuses specifically on the work of the ISHRS Core Competencies Sub-Committee, particularly its role in developing core competencies for the three key roles in the Intervenor Services sector in collaboration with Hay Group. (See Appendix 2 for a list of Core Competencies Committee members.)

Commencing in March 2015, Hay Group's mandate was to develop core behavioural competencies for the following Intervenor Services positions:

- Intervenors;
- Supervisors; and
- Managers.

Competencies are defined as the skills, knowledge, abilities or personal characteristics that drive superior performance in a job role. There are two types of competencies – *technical* and *behavioural*:

- *Technical* competencies are the knowledge and skills required to do the job – they are WHAT a person needs to know or know how to do. Examples of technical competencies include knowledge of policies and procedures, applicable legislation, computer skills, how to administer first aid, etc. These competencies are often easier to see, train for and develop.
- *Behavioural* competencies – *core* competencies – on the other hand, are the behaviours a person demonstrates in performing the job – they are HOW an individual approaches his or her work. Examples of behavioural competencies include acting with integrity, influencing others, being

resilient, working collaboratively, etc. These competencies can be harder to see, yet are what make the biggest difference in performance.

While technical competencies are necessary to perform the job role, they are not the differentiating factors of superior performance. Hay Group's approach, therefore, focused on determining the behaviours that drive superior job performance – the *core competencies* – of highly effective people in these job roles.

Core Competencies Project Methodology – The Work Performed

To identify core competencies for the three (3) positions, Hay Group:

- Conducted a series of strategic interviews with Executive Directors and other senior leaders from within and outside the Ontario sector, and reviewed documentation to gain an understanding of the strategic context;
- Job shadowed Intervenors working with individuals with deafblindness, some with acquired deafblindness, and some with congenital;
- Conducted a series of focus groups in various locations across the province with individuals from each job role to identify the competencies for success in each role, and then distributed a survey to gather wider input;
- Analyzed the data and drafted the competency models; and
- Validated the competency models through a series of expert panels, and then finalized them.

The purpose of the strategic interviews was to consider the broader context within which the three key positions operate, including how the sector might evolve over time to continue to provide quality service to consumers and families. The purpose of the job shadowing and focus groups was to identify both the core behavioural competencies – the competencies that will drive success – for the job roles, as well the strategic challenges facing the sector. The Core Competencies Sub-Committee played a significant role in the oversight of the methodology and ensuring that the diversity within the sector was represented.

In total, approximately 61 individuals – including employees, consumers and families from key areas within the sector – provided input to the development of the core competencies. Seven focus groups were held in total, and three strategic interviews were conducted with individuals representing Deafblind Ontario Services, Canadian Deafblind Association (Ontario Chapter), George Brown College, E-Quality Communication

Centre of Excellence (ECCOE), Resource Centre for Manitobans who are Deaf-Blind, Sense and Sense International.

In addition, following the focus groups, Hay Group designed a survey that was distributed to all incumbents in each of the roles across the sector to gather information more broadly to ensure the competencies were relevant to the roles and truly reflect the behaviours demonstrated by outstanding performers in these roles. A total of 259 individuals completed the survey.

Once the preliminary set of competencies were identified for each job role, Hay Group then met with the Core Competencies Sub-Committee and the ISHRS Steering Committee to gather their input on the competencies for each job role, prior to validating the core competencies through a series of three (3) expert panels with individuals to whom each of the job roles report (i.e., Directors participated in the expert panel to review the Manager competencies; Managers participated in the expert panel to review the Supervisor competencies; and Managers and Supervisors participated in the expert panel to review the Intervenor competencies). Based on the input gathered in the validation phase, Hay Group then finalized the core competencies for the three roles.

Project Outcomes

Section 4 of the report presents the proposed core competencies for each of the three key positions: Intervenors, Supervisors and Managers.

Competencies – Intervenors, Supervisors and Managers

The following competencies were identified for each of the three positions (a more detailed description of each competency can be found in the body of this report:

Core Competencies		
Intervenor	Supervisor	Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act with Integrity ▪ Be Emotionally “In Tune” ▪ Be Flexible ▪ Build Trusting Relationships ▪ Commit to Personal Growth and Development ▪ Demonstrate Creative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act with Integrity ▪ Be Flexible ▪ Commit to Personal Growth and Development ▪ Demonstrate Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making ▪ Demonstrate Financial Acumen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act with Integrity ▪ Be Flexible ▪ Commit to Personal Growth and Development ▪ Demonstrate Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making ▪ Demonstrate Financial Acumen

<p>Problem Solving and Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate Self-Management and Resilience ▪ Engage, Influence and Advocate ▪ Foster Independence and Confidence ▪ Show Passion, Enthusiasm and Dedication ▪ Work as a Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage, Influence and Advocate ▪ Foster Independence and Confidence ▪ Hold Self and Others Accountable ▪ Lead and Develop Others ▪ Plan and Coordinate ▪ Work as a Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage, Influence and Advocate ▪ Foster Independence and Confidence ▪ Hold Self and Others Accountable ▪ Lead and Develop Others ▪ Plan and Coordinate ▪ Work as a Team
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Future Activities

Integrating competencies into the human resources framework will provide people with a common language with which to discuss performance expectations and accomplishments. It also encourages and supports an environment where ongoing behaviour-based coaching and feedback occurs. In addition, competencies guide the selection process by identifying those key behaviours that are essential for successful performance in a given job role. Once in a role, competencies can lay the foundation for learning and development as individuals work to improve their skills for their own job role or for aspiring to future job roles (i.e., Supervisor and Manager) and succession planning purposes.

Section 5 of the report focuses on embedding and integrating the competencies across key human resource processes, and identifies best practices and key steps to integrate competencies into these processes:

- Recruitment, selection and staffing;
- Performance management;
- Training and development; and
- Career planning, talent management and succession planning.

Each competency-based human resource process is described in more detail in the body of this report.

Section 6 of the report identifies the practical considerations for the sustainable implementation of competencies.

Final Conclusions

The implementation of workplace competencies in the Intervenor Services sector is intended to build, enhance and sustain a quality workforce, one that delivers a very high standard of service and support to individuals with deafblindness, despite the rapidly changing and complex nature of their environment.

Adopting and developing these new competencies must make sense to the people who will be asked to adopt them, and therefore, the implementation of the core competencies must be carefully planned. For this reason, a highly collaborative approach is required. This was commenced with the manner in which the competencies were developed, and should continue in all aspects of the roll-out.

For competencies to be most useful, however, they should ultimately be integrated into the various human resource processes, including recruitment, performance management, career planning, talent management and succession planning. It is recommended that competencies not be linked to compensation, but should certainly be linked to recognition. In implementing competencies, it is recommended that they be used initially for:

- *Recruiting new employees* – the better the fit between the requirements of a job and the competencies of an individual, the higher the person’s job performance and job satisfaction will be
- *Developing and training existing employees* – competencies can serve as the foundation for providing meaningful feedback, and ultimately learning and development as individuals work to improve their skills for their own role and/or future roles

Longer term, the core competencies may be used to evolve the sector, resolving key challenges such as a more system-wide approach to training and preparing individuals for the Intervenor profession, and for fostering a more consistent and aligned approach across the province.

The core competencies identified as a result of the work completed and the recommendations for their sustainable implementation are grounded in the values, ethics and goals of the Intervenor Services sector and the day-to-day realities of what it takes to deliver high quality service to individuals who are deafblind. Once implemented, competency development will help to foster the professionalization essential to increase the availability of highly skilled staff and enhance the quality of Intervenor Services delivery to adults living with deafblindness in Ontario to support the evolution of this sector.

1. Introduction and Background

In an effort to meet the challenges facing the Intervenor Services sector, in March 2015, the Intervenor Services Human Resources Strategy (ISHRS) Steering Committee contracted the services of Hay Group to establish core behavioural competencies for the following positions within the Intervenor Services sector:

- Intervenors;
- Supervisors; and
- Managers.

The goal of identifying and implementing core competencies is to provide a sector-wide foundation for recruitment, training, succession planning, and performance management, and will aim to professionalize the sector and position Intervenor Services as a valuable and rewarding career choice across the province.

A Collaborative Strategy

The recommendation to establish core competencies was one of several that resulted from the work of the Intervenor Services Program Renewal Strategy, which was launched in 2013 with the goal of transforming and modernizing the Intervenor Services program.

Subsequently, in the fall of 2014, the MCSS and the Intervenor Services sector agreed to jointly undertake province-wide, long-term, strategic initiatives to provide training opportunities for skills enhancement and the development of voluntary best human resource practices relevant to the delivery of Intervenor Services in Ontario. In support of this collaborative partnership, the Intervenor Services Human Resources Strategy (ISHRS) was established.

Guided by a Steering Committee jointly chaired by both a Ministry and sector representative, the ISHRS is comprised of the following four (4) sub-committees:

- Core Competencies;
- Marketing and Communications;
- Education and Training; and
- Best Practices in Human Resources.

The Core Competencies Sub-Committee was formed to provide leadership and guidance to Hay Group in developing the core competencies for the sector.

The report is intended to provide a pathway towards a competency-based sector, which will help to professionalize the sector, enhance services and raise the profile of Intervenor Services as a viable career choice.

Supporting the Transformation and Modernization of the Intervenor Services Sector through Competencies

Note: Please refer to Appendix 1 for a Glossary of Key Terms.

Hay Group's approach to determining the characteristics of superior job performance goes beyond traditional task and skill analysis to identify the specific competencies of highly effective people in specific roles. Several assumptions underlie Hay Group's methodology for identifying the characteristics that distinguish the top performers in a particular job from average performers:

- In every job or role, some people perform more effectively than others
- Outstanding performers approach their jobs differently and possess different competencies than average performers
- The best way to discover the competencies relating to effective performance is to study the top performers

Competencies are defined as the skills, knowledge, abilities or personal characteristics that drive superior performance in a job role. There are two types of competencies – *technical* and *behavioural*:

- *Technical* competencies are the knowledge and skills required to do the job – they are WHAT a person needs to know or know how to do. Examples of technical competencies include knowledge of policies and procedures, applicable legislation, computer skills, how to administer first aid, etc. These competencies are often easier to see, train for and develop.
- *Behavioural* – or *core* – competencies, on the other hand, are the behaviours a person demonstrates in performing the job – they are HOW an individual approaches his or her work. Examples of core competencies include acting with integrity, influencing others, being resilient, working collaboratively, etc. These competencies can be harder to see, yet they are what make the biggest difference in performance.

While technical competencies are necessary to perform the job role, they are not the differentiating factors of superior performance. Hay Group's

approach, therefore, focused on determining the *behaviours* that drive superior job performance – the *core competencies* – of highly effective people in these job roles, those behaviours that top performers employ more often, in more situations and with better results than average performers.

Performance is driven by a number of factors in people. One of the easiest ways to describe these factors is by using the analogy of an iceberg, as depicted below:



Above

knows how to do well, for example, medication administration. *Knowledge* is what a person knows about a particular substantive area, e.g., basic principles related to the safe management and prevention of aggressive behaviours. Skills and knowledge are easy to see/identify, easier to develop, and essential to perform the job, but they rarely predict or determine outstanding performance. They are often what one can see on a resumé.

Below the water line are the other factors related to performance – the key drivers of core (behavioural) competencies. They are not readily apparent and harder to see in someone; however, they are critically important as they tend to drive people’s long-term behaviour and, thus, their long-term performance. They help determine whether someone is well matched with his or her job or role; the better the match, the more effective and satisfied a person will be in carrying out what the job or role requires. In addition, core competencies can be developed. Following is a description of these factors:

- *Social Role* – the image a person projects to others, the “outer self,” e.g., being a leader or a follower. It reflects a person’s values – what he or she believes is important. For example, if a person has an attitude or value that supporting people is important, that person may be driven to provide

better support more often than someone else who doesn't feel the same way.

- *Self-Image* – the way a person sees himself or herself, “the inner self,” e.g., seeing oneself as a teacher or a leader. For example, some doctors may see themselves as *experts*, and focus on how much they know about a particular specialty or how much skill they have in a particular area. Others may see themselves as *helpers*, focusing on what they can do for others.
- *Traits* – relatively enduring characteristics of a person's behaviour, e.g., caring, being a good listener, resilient. For example, someone may demonstrate the trait of self-control consistently when confronted. Someone else may show a consistent concern for detail. A person's traits may be very helpful in a job, especially when the job calls for the kind of traits a person has.
- *Motives* – the non-conscious things a person consistently thinks about or wants that causes them to take action – they are what naturally energizes a person and are formed early in life. For example, a person may be highly achievement-oriented and this may drive their performance on the job – always striving to improve performance and achieve results. Or a person may be motivated by affiliation or friendship and this may drive their performance because the job involves dealing collaboratively with many people.

Core competencies, in summary, are the underlying personal characteristics and behaviours of an individual that are required for outstanding performance in a job role. In addition, because different jobs have widely differing demands, the competencies that contribute to outstanding performance will differ from job to job. For example, the job of an Intervenor in the Intervenor Services sector will require a different set of core competencies from the job of a Supervisor or that of a Manager.

This report describes the work completed by Hay Group in the identification of the core competencies that will lead to outstanding performance in each of the three job roles.

The report includes:

- An executive summary of the project;
- Our understanding of the organizational context;
- The key steps in the project – the methodology used for developing the core competencies for the Intervenor, Supervisor and Manager roles – and the outcomes;

- Recommendations for future activities related to integrating competencies into HR processes within the sector;
- Our high level recommendations regarding a plan for a province-wide implementation of the core competencies; and
- Our final conclusions.

2. The Context – Understanding the Environment in Which the Sector Operates and the Population Served

A core competency is a function of both the *person* and the *situation*. Therefore, the appropriateness of a competency model – the set of core competencies identified for a particular job role – is dependent not just on an understanding of what drives superior performance in individual roles, but also on an understanding of both the context in which an individual performs and how that may change in the future. To identify the core competencies that will lead to superior performance, Hay Group started by gaining an understanding of the Intervenor Services sector – the environment in which the sector operates and the population served – and how that may change in the future. The approach taken by Hay Group to gain an understanding of the context is described in Section 3: Project Methodology of this report.

Background

Since 2005, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) has been working to improve the Intervenor Services program. From 2005 to 2013, the MCSS undertook several activities in this regard, including:

- Revitalizing intervenor salaries and wages to support recruitment to increase the number of intervenors that provide services for people who are deafblind through funding enhancements announced in 2006/07;
- Providing one-time funding each year between 2006/07 and 2013/14 to address training needs and build capacity in the sector;
- In 2007/08 and 2008/09, providing an increase of two per cent to agency base budgets and for operational costs such as legal obligations or other cost of living increases;
- Providing funding for six intervenor training symposiums;
- Introducing the Standard Level of Service Initiative in 2012/13, to provide supports and services to deafblind individuals who had been receiving little or no service;
- Conducting the Deafblind Services Research Project in 2012/13 to help the Ministry better understand the characteristics of people who are deafblind and the intervention services being provided by agencies; and,
- Committing annualized funding for CNIB's Emergency Intervenor Services Program in 2013/14.

Subsequently, in 2013, the Ministry launched an Intervenor Services Program Renewal Strategy with the objective of transforming and modernizing the Intervenor Services program in collaboration with service providers, persons using intervenor services, families, researchers (including George Brown representatives) and partner ministries (Education; Children and Youth Services; Training Colleges and Universities; and, Health and Long-Term Care).

The renewal strategy includes the Intervenor Services Program Policy Framework and the development of a comprehensive sector-led human resources initiative, with a key component to increase the recruitment, talent and skill among intervenors and management personnel.

MCSS commenced the development of a funding framework for the Intervenor Services program in consultation with the Intervenor Services sector. The funding framework is guided by the policy framework, and reflects the program's mission, objectives and principles.

The purpose of the policy framework is to:

- Set the overall strategic direction of the Intervenor Services program;
- Guide the operation of the program;
- Provide written policy direction and increase program transparency; and
- Inform decision making for the program and ground the development of a funding framework and implementation of the renewed intervenor services program.

The mission of the program is to enable adults who are deafblind to live as independently as possible in their environment, including the broader community.

Program objectives include the following:

- To facilitate communication between individuals who are deafblind and their environment, using their preferred method of communication to assist them to live as independently as possible;
- To help individuals who are deafblind access information through a variety of communication methods, making it possible for them to participate in activities of their choice, connect with other people, and make informed decisions;
- To support individuals who are deafblind to understand, access, coordinate, and organize community-based services that enable them to integrate or re-integrate with the broader community; and

- To provide intervenor services in coordination with other Ontario government programs to address the needs of the individual in an effort to improve quality of life.

Principles of the program include the following:

1. **Self-Directed and Responsive** – Intervenor services will be delivered in a way that empowers and is responsive to the needs and self-directed goals of individuals using these services.
2. **Choice** – Individuals who are deafblind will be able to choose which service provider they wish to engage, within available resources.
3. **Fair and Equitable** – Recognizing that each individual has unique circumstances, a similar level of funding for supports is provided to individuals with similar needs across the province.
4. **Accountability** – Service providers are responsible for ensuring that funding is used through its intended purposes, and is being managed to meet the needs and goals of the individual.
5. **Sustainability** – Services are delivered within available program resources and leverage innovative programs and partnerships with the broader community.
6. **Professionalism** – Intervenor services are delivered in a professional manner by staff who have the expertise and training necessary to respond to the needs of consumers.
7. **Family and Community** – Intervenor services will be delivered in partnership with the appropriate supports of the consumers' broader network of formal and informal supports (family, friends and community).

In the fall of 2014, MCSS and the Intervenor Services sector agreed to jointly undertake long-term, strategic initiatives to provide training opportunities for skills enhancement and the development of voluntary best human resource practices relevant to the delivery of intervenor services in Ontario, falling under the umbrella of the Intervenor Services Human Resource Strategy (ISHRS). To operationalize this initiative, the ISHRS Steering Committee was formed.

Later that year, in December of 2014, the Steering Committee presented a proposal to MCSS on behalf of the sector accepting to undertake an earnest agenda including a comprehensive multi-year plan to systematically improve human resource practices, while ensuring the delivery of quality services. With approval from the Ministry for Phase 2 of the HR Strategy, a

governance structure was established, including four (4) working Sub-Committees:

- Best Practices in Human Resources;
- Core Competencies;
- Education and Training; and
- Marketing and Communications.

In March 2014, Hay Group was contracted to work with the Core Competencies Sub-Committee to help achieve its mandate of identifying core competencies for key roles within the Intervenor Services sector – Intervenor, Supervisor and Manager.

The ISHRS was then officially launched in June 2015, which included an introduction to competencies and the work to be undertaken by Hay Group in developing the core competencies.

Understanding the Population Served

A critical aspect of developing competencies that are relevant to, and will resonate with, the Intervenor Services sector requires an understanding of the population served – there is a lack of awareness and understanding of this disability.

The people served by the Intervenor Services sector include individuals with deafblindness, which is defined as “a unique disability”. People who are deafblind have either *congenital* or *acquired* deafblindness, defined as follows:

- *Congenital Deafblindness*: Individuals who are born with a sight and hearing impairment or develop sight and hearing loss before they have developed language in their early years (by approximately age three). Most also have a developmental disability or co-existing medical condition. Conditions that cause deafblindness include Rubella and CHARGE Syndrome, an extremely complex condition involving extensive medical and physical difficulties that differ from child to child
- *Acquired Deafblindness*: Individuals who lose their sight and hearing after they have developed language – they became deaf and blind later in life. This may be due to an accident, illness or as a result of aging. In some cases, people may be born with a genetic condition such as Usher syndrome, which may mean that they progressively lose their sight

As of 2013/14, there are more than 325 adults who are deafblind in Ontario receiving intervenor services through MCSS. Research conducted into the

characteristics of people who are deafblind receiving MCSS-funded intervenor services indicated that:

- Approximately 36% also have a diagnosed or suspected developmental disability;
- The average age of consumers served was about 50 years and the age of consumers ranged from 20 to 103 years of age;
- Approximately 51% of consumers have acquired deafblindness;
- Females represented approximately 52% of the population served; and
- Consumers lived in a variety of living arrangements, such as intervenor residential support, family residence, on their own, developmental services residential or supportive housing, and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care housing.

Understanding the Environment in Which the Sector Operates

Hay Group’s research into the context of the Intervenor Services sector confirmed that this sector is experiencing significant challenges, both from a broad, overall perspective, as well as from a human resources perspective.

General Challenges Faced by the Sector

Through Hay Group’s work to understand the context, including conducting strategic interviews, reviewing related data/documentation (e.g., reports, job descriptions, etc.) and websites, and shadowing intervenors, what emerged was a picture of highly dedicated and caring employees providing support to people with a wide range of needs beyond deafblindness. The needs of these individuals are continuing to grow, including:

- Mental health issues, such as mental distress that affects many people with deafblindness, such as high levels of anxiety, depression, physical symptoms and/or social impairment related, as well as mental health issues related to certain conditions associated with deafblindness that have emerged in the more recent past, such as CHARGE Syndrome;
- An aging population and the associated diseases and disorders, such as dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease; and
- Other healthcare needs, including working with individuals who are “medically fragile”.

In addition, other key challenges include:

- Limited government funding, one of the biggest barriers to providing intervenor services, and “the unknown” in terms of future funding and

funding models; currently, funding is based on an individualized approach, but this will likely change; the MCSS is exploring other funding models;

- Changing demographics, e.g., language issues as people come “from all walks of life”;
- Expanding service areas, e.g., because deafblindness is a low incidence disability, setting up and providing services in more remote areas is more difficult;
- Assessment of future consumers, particularly the more elderly consumers (seniors);
- Increased workload due to increased need for intervenor services; and
- Maintaining service levels as people live longer.

Key Human Resources Issues Faced by the Sector

In addition to the aforementioned challenges, the Intervenor Services sector in Ontario is also faced with the following critical human resource issues, including:

- Recruiting and retaining qualified employees, a challenge that is further pronounced in the more remote areas of the province;
- Limited availability of graduates from specialized intervenor programs (e.g., George Brown Intervenor for Deafblind Persons Program), and even from these programs, graduates are insufficiently equipped to meet the often sophisticated interpretation/communication needs of consumers with acquired deafblindness, e.g., in terms of communicating with medical, legal and government workers;
- Entry level employees who are inexperienced and inconsistently trained – in particular, many lack the skills required to communicate effectively with individuals who are deafblind, as well as an understanding of deafblindness and what is required to support these individuals;
- Intervenor services not being recognized as a viable career choice;
- Lack of understanding and awareness of the intervenor role and the educational opportunities targeted to the role; and
- Lack of a defined set of skills and traits, as well as in-house training, for entry level positions across the sector to drive consistency and professionalization.

The current environment of the Intervenor Services sector is triggering a need for professionalizing the sector in terms of the skills and behaviours required by individuals who support those with deafblindness.

While the Intervenor designation addresses primarily technical skills, an alignment of program standards and curriculum with the core competencies would promote the behaviours required to work effectively within a sector that is undergoing change and transformation. A “universal” competency model will be critical to drive consistency and professionalization, particularly in the Intervenor role, across agencies. Furthermore, a “universal” competency model would provide a platform upon which an aligned set of human resource processes could be established, enabling the sector to more effectively recruit, train, develop and performance manage those individuals in the role, and addressing the duplication of effort that can occur from one organization to another in the execution of these key activities.

The increasing need for intervenor services, combined with expectations of families and government, anticipation of a new funding model, and changing demographics will require this sector to strategically position itself for the future. It will be essential to recruit, train and retain employees who possess and/or have the potential to develop the core competencies identified in this report. In addition, not only will these core competencies provide employees with a clear picture of the behaviours required for success in their current role, but will be valuable for career planning, enabling employees to identify the behaviours required for success in future roles (e.g., Supervisor and Manager), whether in their own agency or across agencies in the sector. Hence, the ISHRS and MCSS view this as an opportunity to identify the competencies that would enhance the quality of services, the value and profiles of those delivering these services, and, thus, enable agencies to operate effectively in this transforming sector.

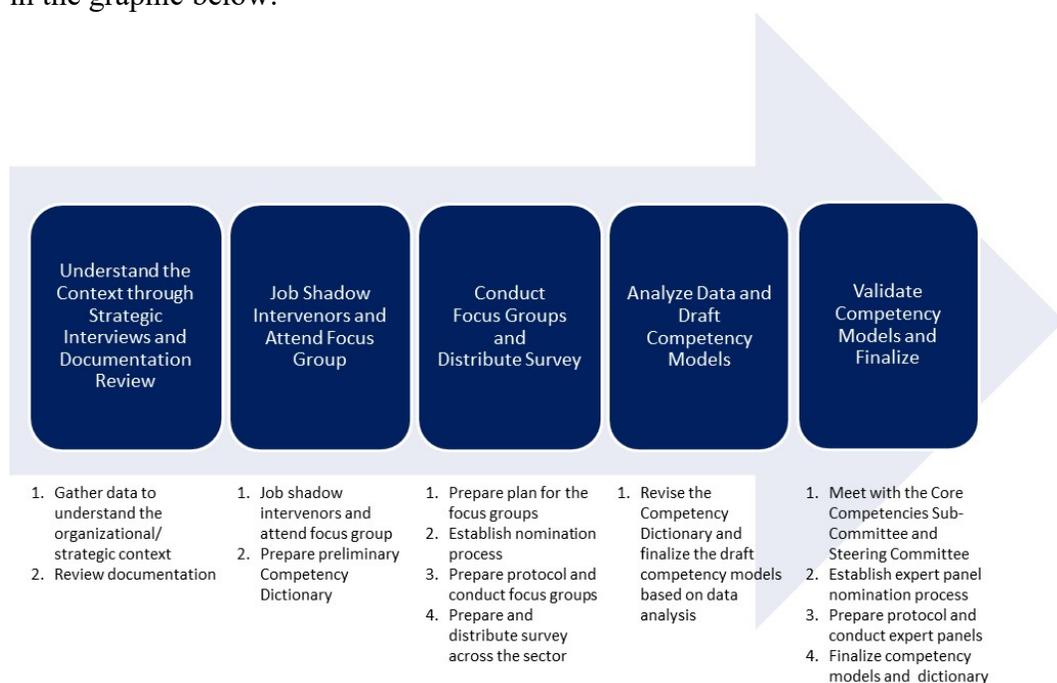
3. Project Methodology

Hay Group followed a comprehensive methodology for developing competency models for the Intervenor, Supervisor, and Manager roles, and partnered with the Core Competencies Sub-Committee, who played a significant role in the oversight of the methodology to ensure adequate representation from:

- The various groups, including Intervenors, Supervisors, Managers, consumers, and families;
- Different geographic locations including, London, Toronto and Ottawa; and
- Both anglophone and francophone employees.

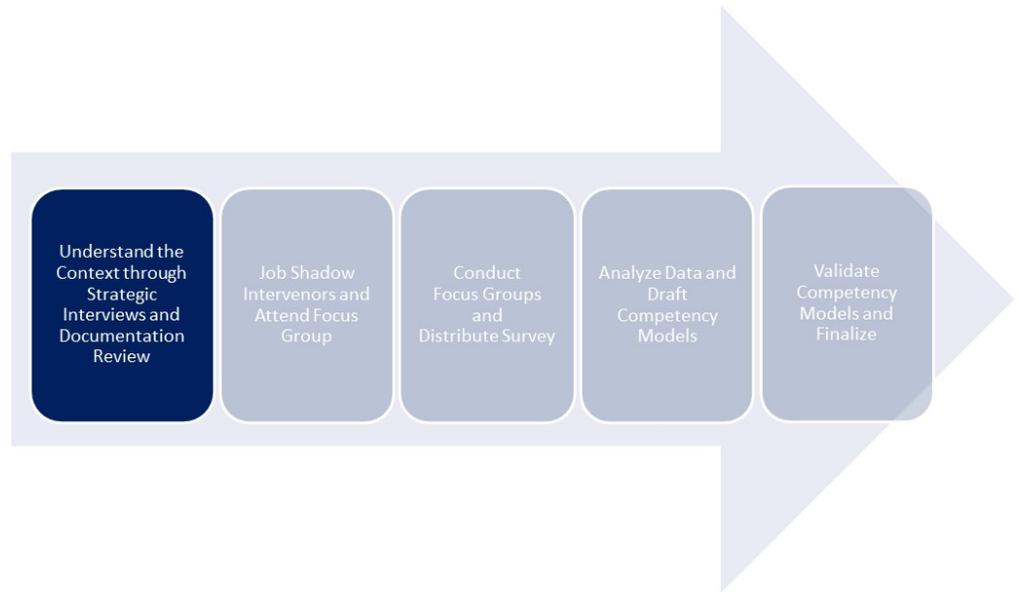
(See Appendix 2 for a list of the ISHRS Core Competencies Sub-Committee members.)

This section describes Hay Group’s approach to identifying the core competencies including the key phases and steps in each phase, as outlined in the graphic below:



Following is a detailed description of each phase, along with a breakdown of the key steps and work completed in each phase.

Phase 1: Understand the Context through Strategic Interviews and Documentation Review



When developing competency models, it is critical to gain an understanding of the context and roles to ensure the competencies are aligned to this context and are representative of the key behaviours that differentiate outstanding from typical performance in these roles.

During this phase, to gain this understanding, Hay Group completed the following steps:

Step 1: Gather data to understand the organizational/strategic context

As a first step, Hay Group conducted three 90-minute strategic interviews with Executive Directors and other senior leaders within and outside the Ontario sector to better understand the environment and how it is evolving, and to discuss best practices.

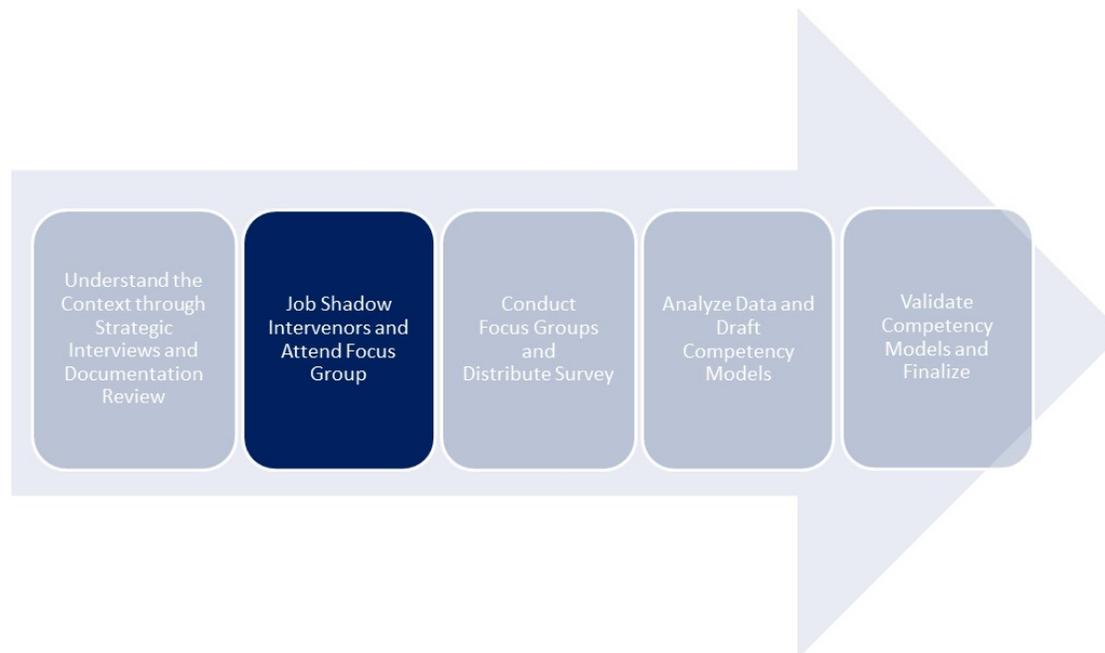
The interviews were conducted via telephone, and were held on the following dates and with the following individuals:

- June 10, 2015: Bonnie Heath, Executive Director, ECCOE, and Jane Sayer, Coordinator of the Resource Centre for Manitobans who are Deaf-Blind
- June 23, 2015: Gillian Moreby, Chief Executive, Sense and Sense International
- June 30, 2015: Karen Keyes, Director of Client Services, Deafblind Ontario Services; Cathy Proll, Executive Director, Canadian Deafblind Association, Ontario Chapter; and Betty-Jean Reid, Program Coordinator/Professor, George Brown College Continuing Education

Step 2: Review documentation

Hay Group reviewed a variety of documentation to gain insight into the Intervenor, Supervisor, and Manager roles, including job descriptions, CDBA National competencies for Intervenors, as well as information on the ISHRS and other relevant websites – provincial, national and international.

Phase 2: Job Shadow Intervenors and Attend Focus Group



Step 1: Job shadow Intervenors and attend focus group

During this step, Hay Group observed Intervenors on the job, which provided significant insight into the accountabilities of the role, the challenges they are faced with in their role, the behavioural competencies required for success, and the differences in working with individuals with acquired versus congenital deafblindness. Hay Group conducted this job shadowing at the following locations:

- Rotary Cheshire Home and The Canadian Helen Keller Centre in Toronto; and
- Two residential locations in Innisfil for individuals with congenital deafblindness.

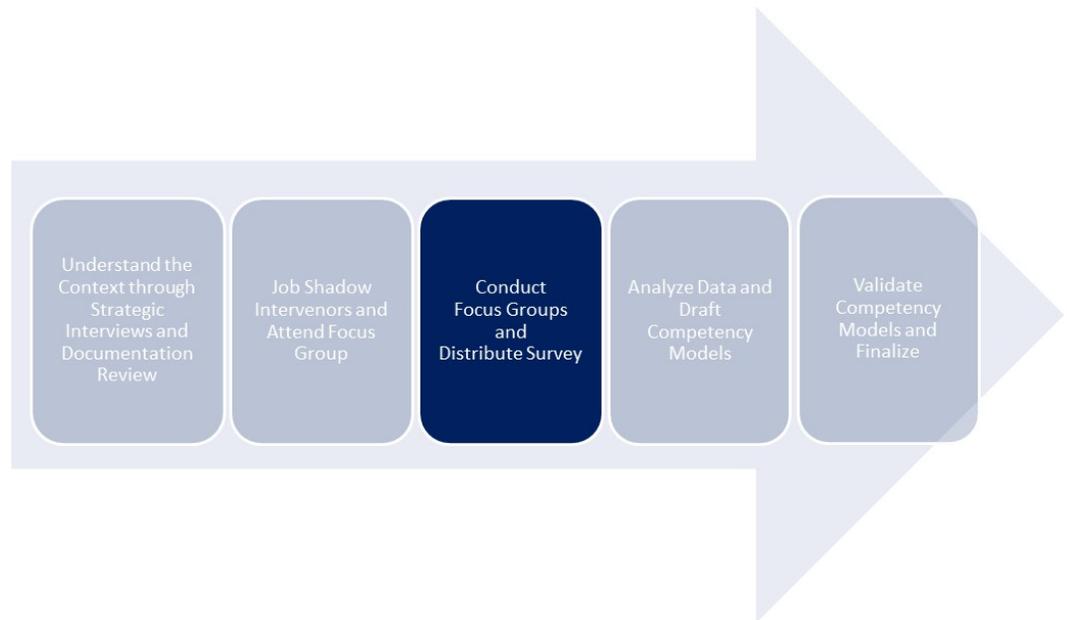
In addition to job shadowing Intervenors, Hay Group attended a focus group at George Brown College on April 21, 2015, about the Intervisor role. During the focus group, participants had an opportunity to watch a video of an Intervisor working with a child with congenital deafblindness, and discuss the critical skills, knowledge, and behaviours required to be an effective/outstanding Intervisor.

Step 2: Prepare preliminary Competency Dictionary

With an understanding of the organizational and strategic context, as well as the three roles, Hay Group prepared a preliminary Competency Dictionary – a compilation of competencies considered to be relevant to the roles and sector. Hay Group referred to the Hay Group Millennium Dictionary, as well as researched competencies for similar types of organizations in the preparation of the preliminary Competency Dictionary.

The preliminary Competency Dictionary consisted of 15 competencies, and included competencies relevant to the Intervisor, Supervisor, and Manager roles.

Phase 3: Conduct Focus Groups and Distribute Survey



Hay Group conducted seven 2.5-3-hour focus groups in various locations in Ontario, including London, Toronto and Ottawa.

The purpose of these focus groups was to:

- Gather data about each of the three roles, including key accountabilities and challenges;
- Gather input on the critical behaviours for success in each of the roles;
- Gather feedback on the preliminary competencies in the Competency Dictionary; and
- Help gain commitment to, and acceptance of, the process across the province.

The outcomes of the focus groups would serve as input into the development of the competency models for each position.

Step 1: Prepare plan for the focus groups

ISHRS Core Competencies Sub-Committee and Hay Group met to discuss and plan for the focus groups, including the number of focus groups to be conducted, dates and locations of the focus groups, and criteria for identifying participants. It was agreed that focus group participants would include:

- Exemplary performers in the Intervenor, Supervisor, and Manager roles to identify the current accountabilities, key challenges and critical behaviours required for success in these roles; and
- Consumers and families, to understand their needs, and discuss their experiences and what they feel makes an outstanding Intervenor, Supervisor, and Manager.

In total, seven focus groups were held as follows:

- 3 focus groups with Intervenors:
 - Ottawa – August 25, 2015
 - Toronto – August 26, 2015
 - London – September 2, 2015
- 1 focus group with Supervisors and Managers:
 - Toronto – August 27, 2015
- 2 focus groups with consumers:
 - Ottawa – August 25, 2015
 - Toronto – August 27, 2015
- 1 focus group with families:
 - London – September 2, 2015

Overall, approximately 55 individuals participated across the seven focus groups (29 Intervenors, 10 Supervisors/Managers, 10 consumers, and 6 family members/caregivers), providing input into the development of the competency models.

Step 2: Establish nomination process

Employees were nominated to participate in the focus groups based on the following criteria:

- The employee should be successful in his/her role (i.e., has consistently received above average ratings in performance reviews; has received positive feedback from a variety of sources, such as colleagues, former managers, peers, consumers, families; are seen as effective by others, are respected by others);
- The employee should be in the role for a minimum of a year as it is critical to be able to clearly understand and describe the role accountabilities; and
- The employee should be someone who is committed to the best interests of individuals with deafblindness.

Hay Group prepared two communications for ISHRS to send out: one to explain the initiative, and a second outlining the nomination criteria.

Members of the ISHRS Core Competencies Sub-Committee and other representatives in the sector assisted in organizing the focus groups and ensuring a good representation of exemplary performers in each of the roles.

Step 3: Prepare protocol and conduct focus groups

With a plan for the focus groups in place, the next step was to design the focus group “protocols”, and then conduct the focus groups. Two focus group protocols were created:

- One for exemplary performers in the roles; and
- One for consumers and families.

Each of the protocols is described in detail on the following pages.

Protocol for exemplary performers in the role:

The focus group protocol for exemplary performers in each role consisted of the following:

1. **Welcome, Introductions and Overview:** Each session began with the objectives, agenda, brief introductions to “break the ice” (each participant shared their name, role and length of time with the agency/within the sector, and key challenges they face), and an overview of the initiative – the purpose and key steps.
2. **Introduction to Competencies:** Participants were given an introduction to competencies to provide them with a general understanding of what they are, why they are important, their benefits, and how they can be used (e.g., recruitment, training, and performance management).
3. **Role Analysis:** A considerable amount of time was spent exploring each role. Participants were asked to identify the key accountabilities of the role, critical behaviours that lead to success in the role – those that really make a difference – and the key challenges faced in the role now and into the future.

The goal of the role analysis was to anchor participants in the role to help them in identifying the competencies for success in the role in the next exercise.

4. **Identifying the Competencies for Success:** Once participants were grounded in the role, they were provided with the preliminary Competency Dictionary and asked to identify the seven competencies they felt were most critical for successfully achieving the accountabilities and dealing with the challenges. In addition, for each competency, they were asked to select the target level that they felt defined outstanding performance in the role. Note: Hay Group provided a list of criteria for selecting the target level.
5. **Review Results:** As a last step, participants were asked to consider whether the competencies identified were really the most critical ones, and if anything was missing that would differentiate outstanding performance. They were also asked for their feedback on the competencies in the Competency Dictionary, whether the language resonated, and what changes, if any, they would suggest. These were captured by Hay Group.

Protocol for Consumers and Families:

The focus group protocol for consumers and families consisted of the following:

1. **Welcome, Introductions and Overview:** Each session began with the objectives, agenda, brief introductions to “break the ice” (each participant shared their name, the agency that supports them or their family member, a little bit about themselves (the consumer) or their family member (the individual with deafblindness), and what is most important to them (the consumer) or their family member (the individual with deafblindness) when working with an Intervenor.
2. **Understanding Competencies:** Participants were given a brief introduction to competencies to provide them with a general understanding of what they are, why they are important, their benefits, and how they can be used.
3. **Identifying the Competencies for Success:** For each of the roles – Intervenor, Supervisor, and Manager – participants were asked to:
 - Identify what an individual in each role does that makes a positive difference for them or their family member; and
 - Share examples that capture when the individual made a positive difference for them or their family member.

These stories were collected verbatim and “coded” to identify the behavioural competencies described. Collecting these stories informed the selection of competencies for superior performance in a given role.

Following the focus groups, it was evident that there was a high level of agreement in terms of the most critical competencies.

Step 4: Prepare and distribute survey across the sector

In this step, Hay Group designed a survey to be distributed by Intervenor Services to all incumbents in each of the roles. The purpose of the survey was twofold:

1. To be inclusive, allowing everyone an opportunity to provide input to the competency models; and
2. To gather information more broadly across the sector to ensure the competencies were relevant to the roles and truly reflect what makes the difference between outstanding versus typical performance.

A total of 259 individuals completed the survey (202 Intervenors, 33 Supervisors, and 24 Managers).

Phase 4: Analyze Data and Draft Competency Models



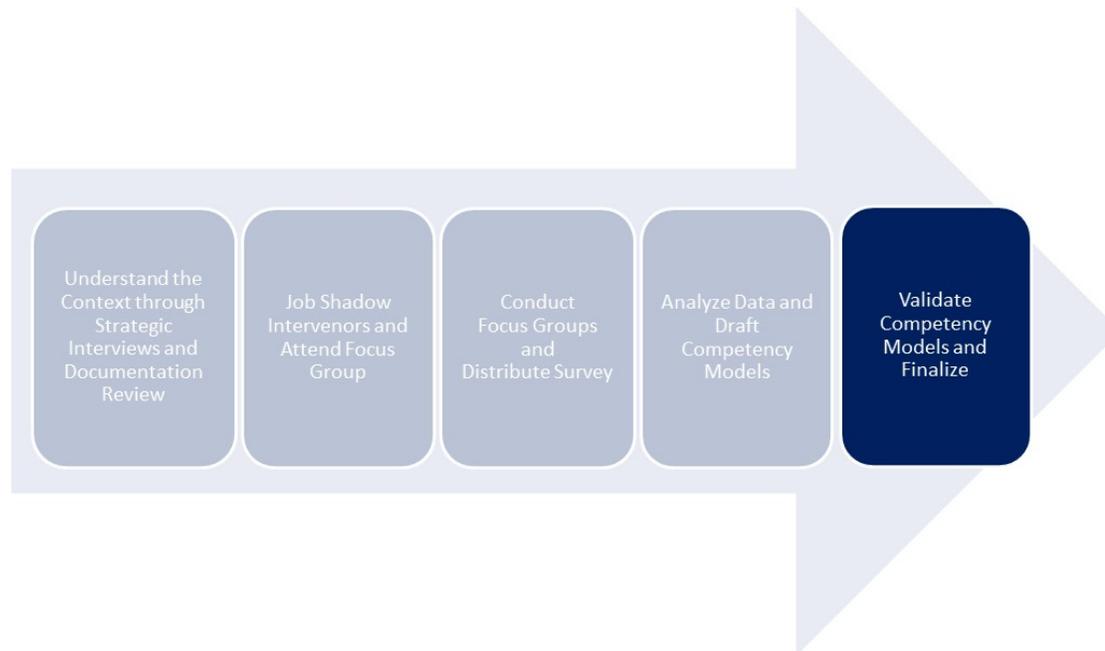
Step 1: Revise the Competency Dictionary and finalize the draft competency models based on data analysis

Based on the input from all of the focus groups, survey results, as well as the documentation review and an understanding of the strategic context, Hay Group:

- Revised the competencies in the Competency Dictionary to reflect the language of, and roles in, the sector, including titles of the competencies, definitions and behavioural indicators for each level of a competency, and
- Drafted the competency models for each of the three roles by identifying the competencies and target levels for each role.

The goal of this step was to ensure the language/wording of the competencies resonated within the sector. Note that the level required for each competency was carefully considered by drawing on job descriptions, input from the focus groups, and input from the ISHRS Core Competencies Sub-Committee.

Phase 5: Validate Competency Models and Finalize



This next stage involved validating the competency models as follows:

- Holding meetings with the ISHRS Core Competencies Sub-Committee and the ISHRS Steering Committee to review the draft Competency Models and Competency Dictionary and gather their feedback. The meetings were held on the following dates:
 - ISHRS Core Competencies Sub-Committee Meeting: October 30, 2015 in Paris, Ontario
 - ISHRS Steering Committee Meeting: November 24, 2015 in Newmarket, Ontario
- Conducting a series of expert panels. Three 3-hour expert panels were conducted in London, Toronto and Newmarket to confirm/validate the competency models.

- The expert panels were held as follows:
 - London – November 30, 2015: Supervisors provided input on the competencies for success in the Intervenor role;
 - Toronto – December 2, 2015: Directors provided input on the competencies for success in the Manager role; and
 - Newmarket – December 3, 2015: Managers provided input on the competencies for success in the Intervenor and Supervisor roles.

Overall, 25 participants attended the three expert panels (10 participants on November 30, 7 participants on December 2, and 18 participants on December 3).

Step 1: Meet with the Core Competencies Sub-Committee and Steering Committee

Prior to conducting the expert panels, Hay Group met with both the Core Competencies Sub-Committee and the ISHRS Steering Committee to gather their feedback on the draft competency models.

Core Competencies Sub-Committee Meeting

A presentation was prepared for the Core Competencies Sub-Committee meeting. During the meeting, committee members were:

- Provided with an overview of the key steps in the project, a brief refresher about competencies and a summary of the outcomes of the role analysis from the focus groups including key accountabilities, key challenges and critical behaviours.
- For each role, were asked to:
 - Identify the competencies that truly differentiate outstanding from typical performance in the role;
 - Identify whether the target level identified is appropriate and reflective of superior performance in the role;
 - Provide any suggested changes with respect to language; and
 - Identify if anything was missing (e.g., any competencies/behaviours).

ISHRS Steering Committee Meeting

A presentation was prepared for the ISHRS Steering Committee meeting. During the meeting, committee members were:

- Provided with a brief refresher about competencies, an overview of the key steps in the project, and a summary of key observations from the focus groups and survey.
- Asked to discuss and review the competencies and target levels for each role in detail, and provide feedback.

Step 2: Establish expert panel nomination process

Employees were nominated to participate in the expert panels based on the following criteria:

- Participants should be the leaders/managers of the individuals in the role in question and are, therefore, experts in the role. For example, for the Intervenor role, participants should be at the Supervisor or Manager level (the role into which Intervenors typically report). For Supervisors, it would be the people they report into, i.e., Managers, etc.
- Participants should be individuals who are recognized by others as high performers, and whose advice and input is valued by others.

Hay Group prepared a communication outlining the nomination criteria for the expert panels, and provided this to the Core Competencies Sub-Committee to send out to agencies asking for their participation and outlining the logistical details for each expert panel.

Step 3: Prepare protocol and conduct expert panels

A protocol was prepared for conducting the expert panels which consisted of the following:

1. **Welcome, Introductions and Overview:** Each session once again began with brief introductions to “break the ice”, objectives of the session, agenda, and overall goals of the initiative. The facilitator shared the process to date, explaining where we are at in the process, how the focus groups were conducted, and the goal of the expert panels.
2. **Introduction to Competencies:** Participants were given a brief introduction to competencies to provide them with a general understanding of what they are, why they are important, their benefits, and how they can be used.

3. **Role Analysis:** To ground participants in the role, they were asked to briefly identify the key accountabilities of the role, critical behaviours that lead to success in the role – those that really make a difference – and the key challenges faced in the role now and into the future.
4. **Confirming the Competencies for Success:** Participants were divided into small working groups and provided with the competency model relevant to the role, and Competency Dictionary. They were then tasked with the following:
 - Determine if the competencies identified truly differentiate outstanding from typical performance in the role;
 - Confirm, for each competency, if the target level identified is appropriate and reflective of superior performance in the role;
 - Identify any language/wording issues in the competencies, and to provide alternatives to ensure the language resonates within the sector; and
 - Determine if anything was missing.
5. **Review Results:** As a last step, participants were asked to consider whether the competencies identified were really the most critical ones, and if anything was missing that would differentiate outstanding performance.

Step 4: Finalize competency models and dictionary

Based on the feedback from the expert panels, the draft competency models and Competency Dictionary were finalized.

The competency models and definitions are captured in Section 4: Competencies – Project Outcomes.

4. Competencies – Project Outcomes

Hay Group identified 15 competencies in total across the three roles – 11 have been identified for success in each role.

The Intervenor Services competencies have been organized into four clusters: Be Your Best Self; Build Bonds; Deliver Excellence; and Lead and Engage Others, as illustrated in the following graphic:

Be Your Best Self	Build Bonds	Deliver Excellence	Lead and Engage Others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act with Integrity • Be Flexible • Commit to Personal Growth and Development • Demonstrate Self-Management and Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Emotionally “In Tune” • Build Trusting Relationships • Engage, Influence and Advocate • Foster Independence and Confidence • Work as a Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making • Demonstrate Financial Acumen • Plan and Coordinate • Show Passion, Enthusiasm and Dedication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold Self and Others Accountable • Lead and Develop Others

- **Be Your Best Self** focuses on those competencies that are critical to managing and motivating yourself to be the best you can be.
- **Build Bonds** focuses on those competencies that are critical to engaging others and growing and maintaining trusting relationships.
- **Deliver Excellence** focuses on those competencies that are critical to delivering excellent service and achieving the desired results for Consumers, Families, and the agency.
- **Lead and Engage Others** focuses on those competencies that are critical to inspiring and growing your team.

The following table lists the competencies and target levels identified for success in each of the roles – Intervenor, Supervisor and Manager. You will notice that for some competencies, there are two target levels, which depend on two key factors: whether the individual typically works with individuals with acquired versus congenital deafblindness, or the particular accountabilities for the role within the agency (e.g., in some agencies, Supervisors have performance management responsibilities, while in other agencies, they do not):

Competencies	Roles		
	Intervenor	Supervisor	Manager
Be Your Best Self			
Act with Integrity	3	4	4
Be Flexible	3	3	4
Commit to Personal Growth and Development	2	3	4
Demonstrate Self-Management and Resilience	4	--	--
Build Bonds/Do With, Not For			
Be Emotionally “In Tune”	3	--	--
Build Trusting Relationships	4	--	--
Engage, Influence and Advocate	3	3	4
Foster Independence and Confidence	4	--	--
Work as a Team	3	4	4
Deliver Excellence			
Demonstrate Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making	3	3	4
Demonstrate Financial Acumen	--	2/3*	4
Plan and Coordinate	--	3	4
Show Passion, Enthusiasm and Dedication	2	3	4
Lead and Engage Others			
Lead and Develop Others	--	3	4
Hold Self and Others Accountable	--	3/4*	4

* Depends on the agency and its expectations of the role

Competencies – Definitions

Following is the definition of each competency found in the competency models, organized by cluster

Be Your Best Self:

Act with Integrity: The ability to demonstrate and be sensitive to the core values of the profession, agency and sector. It includes using sound ethical judgment in an ethically complex work environment, and interacting respectfully, professionally and honestly with Consumers, Families and the community at large.

Be Flexible: The ability to adapt to, and work effectively within, a variety of situations and with various individuals or groups. It involves being open to and flexibly responding to different needs and perspectives, as well as easily accepting changes in tasks, responsibilities or job requirements.

Commit to Personal Growth and Development: The commitment to continually develop and enhance one's personal and professional skills, knowledge and abilities. This involves regularly reflecting on your performance and abilities, seeking feedback from others (e.g., Manager, colleagues, Consumers), and taking action in light of that feedback.

Demonstrate Self-Management and Resilience: The ability to display commitment, self-discipline, determination and enthusiasm despite challenges, setbacks, and in the face of routine or repetitive tasks. It includes bouncing back from disappointments or confrontations, and not letting them negatively influence ongoing interactions with others.

Build Bonds:

Be Emotionally “in Tune:” The ability to tune in to the needs, perspectives and sensitivities of others (e.g., team, Consumers), and act with these in mind. It involves active listening, truly understanding, accepting and respecting the feelings and perspectives of others, and using this understanding to respond appropriately.

Build Trusting Relationships: The ability to establish and maintain bonds and trusting relationships with individuals, while maintaining professional boundaries.

Engage, Influence and Advocate: The ability to encourage or influence others (e.g., Consumers, team members, community partners, government) to motivate or gain their commitment and support. It involves giving voice to others who cannot speak for themselves or communicate their needs, or enabling others to self-advocate.

Foster Independence and Confidence: The ability to enable and empower Consumers to build their confidence and self-esteem, and achieve their highest potential, based on the “do with, not for” philosophy. It involves promoting their social and personal development, encouraging their independent/life skills, and facilitating their communication and interaction with the world around them to help “redefine the possible”.

Work as a Team: The ability to collaborate and work cooperatively with others (e.g., Consumers, co-workers, occupational therapists, behavioural specialists, physicians, family members, etc.) to achieve shared goals and deliver outstanding service for Consumers and Families.

Deliver Excellence:

Demonstrate Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making: The ability to come up with creative ideas and solutions to solve problems and make decisions. It involves understanding the situation, gathering information, weighing alternatives, and choosing the most appropriate solution or course of action. It includes “thinking outside the box” and going beyond the conventional, exploring creative ideas and approaches.

Demonstrate Financial Acumen: The ability to manage finances and resources to maximize results. It includes understanding financial management principles and reporting requirements, and effectively managing the agency’s funding through careful planning and monitoring of resources (e.g., financial and other).

Plan and Coordinate: The ability to plan and coordinate work and execute individual and team activities in a way that ensures the achievement of individual, agency, and Consumer objectives.

Show Passion, Enthusiasm and Dedication: The belief in, and passion for, enhancing the lives of individuals who are deafblind, and being a champion for them, enabling them to live rich, meaningful lives. It is about demonstrating through words and actions a true commitment to supporting and promoting the interests and priorities of individuals who are deafblind, the agency and the sector as a whole.

Lead and Engage Others:

Hold Self and Others Accountable: The ability to hold oneself and others accountable for meeting the highest standards. It involves consistently monitoring one's own and others' performance, and appropriately and effectively taking corrective action to improve performance.

Lead and Develop Others: The ability to energize and develop agency staff, creating a climate in which they are motivated to do their best.

Differences Between Intervenor Services and Developmental Services Sector Competencies

In comparing the competencies identified for the roles in the Intervenor Services sector to those identified for the roles in the Developmental Services sector (this work was also completed by Hay Group), while there were many similarities, there were also several differences based on the unique and complex nature of the Intervenor role, in particular. For example, there is much more complexity in how Intervenor need to communicate with individuals who are deafblind and help them navigate the world, including being their eyes and ears and “doing with, not for.” In addition, while some of the competencies are quite similar, others vary in terms of the behaviours required at the higher levels in the scale due to the differences in the roles based on Hay Group's research, while other competencies were unique to the sector (e.g., Build Trusting Relationships).

5. Recommendations for Future Activities

In an effort to build, enhance and sustain a high quality workforce, the ISHRS is introducing core competencies for key roles within the sector (i.e., Intervenor, Supervisor and Manager). For competencies to provide the greatest value, they should also be integrated into other human resource applications.

Integrating competencies into the human resources framework will provide people with a common language with which to discuss performance expectations, professional development and accomplishments. It also encourages and supports an environment where ongoing coaching and feedback occur, resulting in individuals feeling they play a key role in determining their own development. In addition, competencies guide the selection process by identifying those key behaviours that are essential for successful performance in a given role. Once in a role, competencies can lay the foundation for learning and development as individuals work to improve their skills for their own role or for succession planning purposes.

Competency-based human resource processes provide:

- A proactive approach to management and a way to translate vision and strategies into action;
- Valuable tools to assist leaders in managing their talent, and to support them in identifying development and career opportunities;
- A foundation for a continuous learning environment;
- Selection, development and support processes to facilitate retention; and
- A means to raise the performance bar.

This section outlines best practices and key steps to integrate competencies into the following human resource processes:

- Recruitment, selection and staffing;
- Performance management;
- Training and development; and
- Career planning, talent management and succession planning.

Each competency-based human resource process is described in more detail on subsequent pages.

Recruitment, Selection and Staffing

Competencies play a key role in recruitment, selection and staffing. They provide a “template” of the *behaviours* required for success in a particular role, and help ensure a better initial job/person fit. If a candidate has been selected for a role based on the fit between the requirements of the job (both technical and behavioural) and the individual’s competencies, it is more likely that the individual will not only perform better, but will experience a higher level of job satisfaction.

Recruitment

Competencies can be used to ensure individuals applying for a position fully understand the requirements of the position and the competencies required for success. Based on this information, candidates can then effectively determine if they would like to apply for the position and prepare for the interview.

For example, when recruiting for an Intervenor position, it is important to let potential candidates know that in addition to the technical requirements for the role – which are critical to “getting in the door” – behavioural competencies such as “Build Trusting Relationships” and “Be Emotionally ‘In Tune’” are a critical part of the job.

Sector-wide competencies may also help to attract individuals more broadly to the profession.

Selection and Staffing

Competencies are a powerful tool for selection and staffing. Research indicates that those candidates who demonstrate the competencies required for success in the role will meet performance expectations more quickly (i.e., a faster ramp-up time), will require fewer training resources, and are more likely to stay with the agency. In addition, less time is likely to be spent on coaching and addressing performance issues. It is therefore important to ensure that candidates meet not only the technical requirements of the role, but the behavioural requirements – competencies – as well.

Key Steps:

1. Identify, in job postings, the competencies required for success in the role (including a brief description of each competency) to help job candidates determine if they might be a good fit for the job.
2. Prepare candidates for the interview by explaining the process of a behaviour-based interview to enable them to prepare and to ensure the best quality data is collected during the interview.

3. Use an interviewing technique that focuses on the behaviours/competencies required for success in the role – this is known as behaviour-based interviewing. (Hiring managers will need to develop their skill in this area.)
4. Using the data collected through the behaviour-based interview, assess candidates based on evidence of them having demonstrated the competencies in the past (based on the premise that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour).

Performance Management and Rewards and Recognition

Performance management is defined as a process for establishing a shared understanding about *what* is to be achieved, *how* it is to be achieved, and an approach to managing people that increases the probability of achieving success. It not only includes performance appraisal, but other means of communicating expected behaviours and preparing development plans with employees.

Because the competencies identified for the three roles (i.e., Intervenor, Supervisor and Manager) are the critical behaviours that drive success in these roles, integrating them into the performance management process will help to ensure the focus is not just on *what* needs to be achieved (i.e., accountabilities and/or goals), but *how* (i.e., the behaviours one uses in carrying out the accountabilities). Assessing competencies as a part of performance management is an important means of helping employees understand performance expectations, their areas of strength and development opportunities. Competencies also lead to more meaningful, objective feedback as they enable managers to focus their feedback on specific behaviours/competencies, and remove personal bias as much as possible from the process.

An additional consideration in integrating competencies into the performance management process is determining how employees will be rewarded and/or recognized based on their performance. To be effective, rewards and recognition need to be consistent with organizational expectations and linked to organizational goals. Competencies are one way of conveying the organization's expectations with respect to behaviours.

Key Steps:

1. Consider which competencies are most closely tied to the achievement of personal/individual accountabilities/goals.
2. Include a competency assessment in your performance management

process (for purposes of development).

3. Equip managers with the skills to provide feedback on competencies and development advice.

Training and Development

Competencies are particularly effective for training and development to enhance performance. They enable the agency/organization to provide employees with more focused training and development, and the basis for better development planning. In addition, they provide managers with more focus for coaching and lead to collaborative partnerships with employees. They support the achievement of more readily measurable criteria, such as meeting budgets or achieving departmental goals.

The competencies observed during a selection interview or assessed as part of performance management can be used as a starting point for development planning. Individuals can compare the competency level they are currently demonstrating to the level they need to be demonstrating for successful performance.

Research indicates that competency development takes place through a combination of:

- On-the-job/hands-on experience, development in role and challenging job assignments. Approximately 70% of learning occurs through on-the-job/hands-on experience.
- Social learning, coaching, mentoring, collaborative learning and other methods of interaction with colleagues/co-workers (including peers, managers, direct reports, mentors, etc.). This can also include community involvement, industry associations, etc. Approximately 20% of learning occurs through interactions with others.
- Professional development through formal training, workshops and education typically account for 10% of learning.

It is important to note that each person learns in their own way. Therefore, a variety of programs and tools will provide a broad resource upon which individuals can draw on for their personal learning and development.

Key Steps:

1. Have individuals assess where their strengths and development opportunities are relative to the competencies for their role.
2. Have them identify 1-3 competencies to focus on for their development.

3. Have them identify ideas for practical steps they can take to develop those competencies.

Career Planning, Talent Management and Succession Planning

To achieve the goal of “professionalizing” the sector, and having current and future employees view opportunities in the sector as *career* opportunities as opposed to just a job, competencies should be integrated into career planning. They enable employees to better understand the requirements of future roles in the agency, and how they need to develop to prepare themselves for these roles. For example, if an Intervenor aspires to a Supervisor role, he or she can look at the competency requirements for the Supervisor role, assess his or her competencies against the competency expectations of the role, and not only determine if there is likely to be a good fit, but prepare a plan to develop the competencies for success in that role.

In addition, it is recommended that competencies be integrated into talent management and succession planning processes. Both talent management and succession planning are focused on building the talent the agency/sector requires now and into the future, and are critical to the long-term success of individual agencies and the sector.

Talent management is the process of defining future talent requirements in terms of critical roles for the future success of the agency, and identifying, attracting, developing and retaining a pool of talent that meets these requirements. It involves assessing, developing and retaining the agency’s current talent, and recruiting additional talent, as necessary, to meet the talent needs of the organization. Talent management is about identifying a steady flow of qualified talent.

Succession planning plays a key role in talent management. It is the process of identifying and developing high potential successors to fill key positions within an agency. The key objective is to minimize interruptions and negative business impact in the event a leader in one of these key positions leaves the agency. A robust succession plan will enable an agency to readily fill key positions in the event that they become vacant.

Competencies are a valuable tool for assessing individuals’ potential for future job roles, including “mission critical” roles, and preparing appropriate development plans to prepare them for these future job roles.

Key Steps:

1. Ensure managers discuss career aspirations with employees, as appropriate, so that they can better support their employees in their career planning and development.

2. Assess potential successors for leadership roles against the competencies for these roles.
3. Build customized learning and development plans for potential leaders.

6. The Sustainable Implementation of Competencies

As important as the actual development of the competencies, an effective implementation plan will make the difference between acceptance of the competencies and indifference or outright dismissal of the competencies. Successful implementation of competencies is based on four key areas:

1. Continuous communication around the importance of competencies and the impact on individual stakeholder groups.
2. Structuring an implementation team representing the interests of all stakeholder groups.
3. Equipping key resources with the necessary skills to effectively understand and use competencies in their day-to-day activities. This includes training all personnel on competencies – what they are, why they are important, how they were developed, and how to learn and apply them. For managers/leaders (including Supervisors with managerial responsibilities), the training should include how to coach to competencies.
4. Roll-out of competencies into other HR processes, e.g., recruitment, performance management, etc., as described in this section – this will require that the ISHRS Steering Committee and/or Core Competencies Sub-Committee to develop a formal implementation plan.

7. Final Conclusions

The Intervenor Services sector is in the midst of significant renewal as it works to transform and modernize the Intervenor Services program. The sector is currently faced with a number of key challenges, including:

- Human resource issues, including challenges recruiting, selecting and retaining qualified employees, inconsistently trained and inexperienced entry-level employees, limited availability of graduates from specialized Intervenor programs, not being seen as a viable career choice, lack of a commonly accepted standard set of skills and behaviours, and tight labour market conditions;
- The need for a new funding formula – for the past several years, the MCSS has been working on developing a new funding model for Intervenor Services that would meet the unique needs of consumers, both those with congenital and acquired deafblindness; and
- Increased demand for Intervenor Services, due to both the needs of an aging population, as well as greater awareness of Intervenor Services to those who have not previously been aware of and benefitted from them.

These issues – particularly the human resources issues – are triggering a shift in the skills and behaviours required by those working in Intervenor Services. The implementation of core competencies for job roles in the sector is intended to improve and sustain a quality workforce at all levels, enabling them to successfully meet the demands of this rapidly transforming sector and continue to serve individuals with deafblindness to a very high standard.

As a result of the work completed, core competencies were identified for the following three roles:

- Intervenors;
- Supervisors; and
- Managers.

For the competencies to be most useful, they should ultimately be integrated into the various human resource processes, including recruitment and selection, performance management, career planning, talent management and succession planning.

In implementing competencies, our recommendation is that they be used initially for:

- Developing and training existing employees – competencies can serve as the foundation for learning and development as individuals work to improve their skills for their own role and/or for future roles; and
- Recruiting new employees – the better the fit between the requirements of the job and the competencies, including threshold competencies, demonstrated by an individual, the higher the person’s job performance and job satisfaction will be.

The learning and development in terms of competencies will be the implementation of the behaviours required for success. Adopting and developing these new competencies must make sense to the people asked to adopt them.

For this reason a highly collaborative approach was used in all aspects of developing the competencies and recommending their sustainable implementation.

We believe that the competencies identified in this report and the recommendations for their sustainable implementation are grounded in the values, ethics and goals of the Intervenor Services sector, and the day-to-day realities of what it takes to deliver a high level of service to individuals with deafblindness.

Appendix 1 – Glossary of Key Terms

The following table lists the key terms used throughout this document and the definition of each:

Term	Definition
Competencies	The skills, knowledge, abilities or behavioural characteristics that drive superior performance in a job role.
Competency model	The set of core competencies, including target levels, identified for superior performance in a job role.
Technical competencies	The knowledge and skills required to do the job – they are WHAT a person needs to know or know how to do. Examples of technical competencies include knowledge of policies and procedures, applicable legislation, computer skills, how to administer first aid, etc. These competencies are often easier to see, train for and develop.
Core (behavioural) competencies	The behaviours a person demonstrates in performing the job – they are HOW an individual approaches his or her work. Examples of behavioural competencies include acting with integrity, influencing others, being resilient, working collaboratively, etc. These competencies can be harder to see, yet are what make the biggest difference in performance.
Motives	The non-conscious things a person consistently thinks about or wants that causes them to take action – they are what naturally energizes a person and formed early in life, e.g., a person may be highly achievement-oriented, always striving to improve performance and achieve results.
Traits	Relatively enduring characteristics of a person’s behaviour, e.g., caring, being a good listener, resilient.
Self-image	The way a person sees himself or herself, “the inner self,” e.g., seeing oneself as a teacher or a leader.
Social role	The image a person projects to others, the “outer self,” e.g., being a leader or a follower. It reflects a person’s values – what he or she believes is important.

Appendix 2 – Membership of ISHRS Core Competencies Sub-Committee

Following are the members of the ISHRS Core Competencies Sub-Committee:

Beverly Morris:	Manager, Deafblind Services, CNIB West Region
Amanda Mesko:	Team Leader, DeafBlind Ontario Services
Cathy Pascuttini:	Manager of Intervention Services at Canadian Deafblind Association Ontario Chapter
Cheryl Ramey:	Professor, George Brown College/Consultant in Deafblindness and Multiple Disabilities
Cheryl Wilson:	Ontario Interpreting Services Program Director, Canadian Hearing Society, Peterborough
Gwen Sheridan:	Supervisor, CNIB Deafblind Services, Toronto
Laurie Marissen:	Executive Director, Lions McInnes House
Nancy Longo:	Intervenor Services Manager, Rotary Cheshire Homes
Nicol Rumball:	Specialist, Intervention, CNIB Deafblind Services, Barrie