

CMS Core Values

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services are guided by a set of core values. These values embody our commitment to our programs—our pledge to quality services and responsiveness to beneficiaries, health care professionals, and partners.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Public service is our foundation. We take pride in our unique and privileged role in the health care of the Nation.

- Provide vision and leadership to shape the Nation's health care future.
- Aim high, work hard, work smart, have fun.
- Respond to our customers timely and accurately.
- Recognize that we are stewards of the Nation's largest health care programs and their funds.

INTEGRITY

Integrity is our pathway to credibility. We hold ourselves to the highest standards of honesty and ethical behavior.

- Act as responsible stewards of our resources.
- Behave in the highest ethical manner.
- Do what is lawful and right.
- Give information completely and honestly.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is our attitude. We earn trust by being responsible for the outcomes of our actions.

- Take initiative, make commitments and honor them.

- See tasks through to completion—don't pass them off.
- Explain instead of defend.
- Say it clearly, simply, promptly.
- Exercise leadership to produce results.

EXCELLENCE

Excellence is our only option. Each of us performs our job exceptionally well for the public and the beneficiaries we serve.

- Take risks; raise the bar; reach beyond the obvious.
- Provide value to the taxpayer.
- Practice continuous quality improvement.
- Seek innovation.
- Maintain pride in our work, our agency and our programs.
- Think it through, solve it, do it.

RESPECT

Respect is given and earned. We treat everyone with courtesy, dignity, and empathy.

- Value the needs, abilities and contributions of everyone.
- Foster personal growth and development.
- Encourage creativity and risk taking.
- Embrace diversity in all aspects of our operations.
- Care for people, care about people.



Core Values

of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services



The Excellence in Government Program

The Council for Excellence in Government (CEG) is a national organization that seeks practical public-sector reform of government at all levels. The Excellence in Government Fellows Program offered by the Council is a year-long leadership development opportunity for mid-level federal managers. The CEG leadership development model challenges participants to define and connect a vision of the future to the specific missions of their agencies and to develop strategies for achieving and measuring results.

In fiscal year (FY)2001, 14 managers at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) participated in the CEG fellowship program. These Fellows worked as a team on a results project intended to apply the leadership lessons learned and produce real changes in Government operations and programs. The goal of the FY2001 CEG Team's results project was to produce a set of core values that are endorsed by the Agency's leadership; inform every CMS employee of these core values; and propose a long-term plan for communicating and reinforcing these values.

Why Core Values are Important

Core values are an important feature of an organization's commitment to excellence. A clear set of agency core values would be beneficial to CMS.

- "Values management" is a recognized approach that can help organizations improve performance and customer service.

- When organizations publicly state their core values, members' behavior is more likely to be consistent with those values.
- Visionary organizations with a long-term record of excellence take active steps to make their values pervasive throughout their organization.
- CMS has been criticized by Congress and various customer, partners and stakeholder organizations for being inefficient, bureaucratic, and not customer-friendly. Internally, many CMS employees and managers believe that we do not communicate well with each other and that our members are not aligned toward a clear set of common goals and values that guide our actions.
- Data from the National Performance Review (NPR) survey of government employees in 2000 show that many CMS employees are unclear about our values. The percentage who feel that managers communicate the organization's mission, vision and values well declined between 1999 and 2000.
- In addition, only 15% of CMS (HCFA) employees surveyed in NPR reported they are clear about how "good" performance is defined. These data show a need to clarify our core values and expected behaviors.

Improving the agency's alignment around a set of core values should help CMS achieve higher levels of excellence and greater respect from our beneficiaries, other customers, and partners.

How the Core Values were Identified

To identify our set of core values, the FY2001 Fellows:

- Carried out historical research to explore what values have been implied in past documents about HCFA/CMS and our programs;
- conducted interviews with Executive Council members and other CMS leaders and asked for their views on the Agency's values; and
- benchmarked outside organizations to learn how they formed their core values and communicated them to employees.
- The Fellows found that five values recurred in the historical research and leadership interviews conducted during this process:
 - **Public Service**
 - **Integrity**
 - **Accountability**
 - **Excellence**
 - **Respect**
- To help every CMS employee understand how the values could affect the way we work, the team then developed recommended behaviors for each value.

