

Core Competencies Framework

PURPOSE: This framework outlines the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities required for effective corridor management in Philadelphia’s diverse neighborhoods. It serves as a foundation for professional development, performance evaluation, and career advancement within the CDC sector.

1. Business Support & Economic Development

Essential Skills:

- **Direct Business Assistance:** Help businesses solve immediate problems and access resources
- **Commerce Program Navigation:** Connect businesses to Commerce programs (Storefront Improvement, InStore, Security Camera, etc.)
- **Regulatory Compliance Support:** Guide businesses through licensing, permits, taxes, and inspections
- **Crisis Intervention:** Respond to business emergencies and urgent needs
- **Anti-Displacement Strategies:** Implement tools to help businesses stay and thrive

Key Activities:

- Conduct regular business visits and need assessments
- Maintain current business database and track changes
- Help businesses navigate City services and agencies
- Assist with BIRT, NPT, wage tax compliance
- Support L&I compliance (signage, zoning, codes)
- Connect businesses to technical/financial assistance
- Support access to translation/interpretation services
- Track and respond to business emergencies

2. Community Engagement & Organizing

Essential Skills:

- **Relationship Building:** Develop trust with merchants, residents, and property owners
- **Intercultural Competency:** Navigate diverse communities with respect and understanding
- **Meeting Facilitation:** Lead inclusive meetings that amplify marginalized voices and experiences
- **Conflict Resolution:** Mediate disputes and find common ground
- **Coalition Building:** Unite stakeholders around shared goals

Key Activities:

- Organize and support merchant associations/groups
- Facilitate community listening sessions
- Build bridges across different cultural groups
- Create communication channels in multiple languages
- Develop local leadership for corridor initiatives
- Mediate merchant-to-merchant or merchant-to-resident conflicts
- Connect corridor work to neighborhood goals

3. Corridor Operations & Safety

Essential Skills:

- **Environmental Assessment:** Monitor corridor cleanliness, safety, and functionality
- **Problem-Solving:** Address quality-of-life issues creatively
- **Vendor/Staff Coordination:** Manage cleaning and maintenance contractors and staff
- **Safety Planning:** Implement CPTED principles and coordinate with local police districts and other partners
- **Crisis Response:** Prepare for and respond to corridor emergencies

Key Activities:

- Coordinate clean and safe programs
- Document and report infrastructure issues
- Work with Streets, Water, and other departments
- Build relationships with district police
- Address public safety concerns collaboratively
- Manage communications with businesses about crisis management or emergency response
- Monitor and activate vacant properties

4. Marketing, Events & Communications

Essential Skills:

- **Event Planning:** Organize corridor events that build community and drive traffic
- **Communications:** Use and manage social media, websites, and other digital marketing tools effectively
- **Storytelling:** Share authentic corridor narratives in various formats (writing, brochures, photos, videos, etc.) and use a mix of data and anecdotal evidence to reinforce claims about corridor strengths
- **Corridor Brand Identity:** Maintain a consistent “voice” and visual cues that celebrate corridor identity
- **Media Relations:** Work with press and other media to promote positive corridor stories

Key Activities:

- Plan and execute corridor events and festivals
- Manage corridor social media presence
- Create promotional materials (multilingual)
- Coordinate holiday decorations and lighting
- Document corridor success stories
- Build relationships with local media and influencers
- Promote corridor businesses to target customers
- Develop and maintain corridor brand identity

5. City Systems Navigation & Advocacy

Essential Skills:

- **Department Navigation:** Build relationships across Commerce, L&I, Streets, Police, Health, etc.
- **Process Expertise:** Understand and assist with permitting, licensing, and other City procedures
- **Strategic Advocacy:** Know when and how to escalate issues
- **Policy Awareness:** Understand how City decisions and actions impact corridors
- **Political Savvy:** Navigate elected officials, City agencies, and public perception effectively

Key Activities:

- Serve as liaison for businesses and City agencies
- Assist with permit/license applications/maintenance
- Attend and represent the corridor at City meetings
- Build relationships with City agency staff
- Track systemic barriers and propose solutions
- Connect with elected officials’ offices
- Advocate for policies that support the corridor
- Navigate RCO and civic association relationships

6. Data, Planning & Administration

Essential Skills:

- **Data Collection:** Design and implement counts, surveys, and assessments
- **Basic Analysis:** Source and interpret data to inform decisions
- **Report Writing:** Communicate clearly to a range of diverse audiences
- **Budget Management:** Track expenses and manage program funds, contribute to funder reporting
- **Strategic Planning:** Think long-term and corridor-wide while managing daily tasks with individual businesses

Key Activities:

- Maintain accurate business and property databases
- Conduct pedestrian counts and market analyses
- Prepare reports for CDC leadership and funders
- Track corridor metrics and outcomes
- Manage program budget and expense receipts
- Support corridor strategies and planning
- Document before/after project impacts
- Use data to advocate and share corridor stories

7. Professional Leadership & Development

Essential Skills:

- **Self-Management:** Prioritize effectively amid constant interruptions and competing demands
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Navigate complex relationships with grace, understand underlying dynamics
- **Continuous Learning:** Stay current with best practices, seek out peer learning opportunities across nonprofits
- **Team Collaboration/Partnership Management:** Work effectively within organization and with partners
- **Self-Care, Safety & Resilience:** Take action to prevent burnout and maintain mental/emotional/physical safety

Key Activities:

- Participate in trainings and peer learning
- Build network with other corridor managers
- Share knowledge and resources with peers
- Practice self-care and boundary setting
- Seek mentorship and provide it to others
- Implement project management strategies/tools
- Represent CDC professionally in community
- Model inclusive leadership practices

Competency Levels:

Level 1: Foundational

Learning corridor context and key players
Building initial relationships
Understanding basic City processes
Developing time management skills

Level 3: Advanced

Leading complex initiatives or projects
Mentoring new corridor staff
Influencing systemic change
Recognized for deep knowledge of corridor

Level 2: Proficient

Managing multiple projects independently
Trusted by key stakeholders
Navigating City systems confidently
Contributing to broader corridor strategy

Level 4: Expert

Shaping sector practices
Leading multi-corridor collaborative initiatives
Training and consulting with external partners
Policy influence at City level