



**2015 CENTER FOR ARMY LEADERSHIP ANNUAL SURVEY OF ARMY  
LEADERSHIP (CASAL): ARMY CIVILIAN LEADER FINDINGS**

**TECHNICAL REPORT 2016-02**

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<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> CASAL is the Army's annual survey to assess the quality of leadership and leader development. 2015 findings are based on responses from 5,928 Army civilians. This seventh year of the civilian survey has additional coverage on methods of engagement and workload stress. Among the Army civilian leaders assessed, the quality of most leader attributes exceeded the benchmark of 67% by up to an additional 10%, except for the leader attribute of total fitness, which was only 65% effective. Five of the 10 leadership competencies from doctrine fall below the benchmark: leading others, creating a positive environment, leading by example, building trust, and developing subordinates. 75% of civilian leaders rate their job experience effective in developing them; a lack of upward job mobility is cited as a reason why this level is not higher. 71% of civilian leaders rate self-development effective at preparing them for future responsibilities. 75% of recent graduates of Army civilian education courses rate the education quality as good or very good. Less than two-thirds rate each course effective at improving leadership capabilities. Engagement is a measure of initiative and productivity. Engagement is highest overall among civilian managers, but is at or below uniformed leader levels on items that reflect active support by superiors in the leader's development. The climate in which civilian leadership occurs has mixed indicators, with consistently high levels of commitment to one's team but an increasing percentage of civilian leaders who report increased career satisfaction after a sharp decline in 2013. There is an increase in workload stress to a level where almost two-thirds of civilian leaders report it as a moderate to serious problem, with unit personnel shortages cited as a key reason. Recommended steps that the Army and individual leaders can take are offered to address these tendencies.					
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# **2015 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Army Civilian Leader Findings Executive Summary**

## **Purpose**

The Center for Army Leadership (CAL) conducts an Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) on the quality of Army leadership activities and the effectiveness of leader development experiences. CASAL provides information on the level and trends of attitudes surrounding how effective leaders lead, and how effective leader development practices are for preparing leaders to assume greater responsibility. Since 2009, survey administration has included U.S. Army civilians. CASAL affords decision makers and stakeholders the option to make informed course corrections or to leverage prevailing strengths in policies and practices. Agencies and individuals may submit data queries to CAL for further analysis of CASAL survey results. CASAL results inform groups such as the Army Training and Leader Development Conference, Army Profession and Leader Development Forum, Human Capital Enterprise Board, Army Learning Coordination Council, as well as special studies and initiatives.

## **Method**

CAL applies scientific methods to survey development, sampling, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting to obtain accurate and reliable information. The survey addresses leadership and leader development as covered by Army regulations, field manuals, and doctrine. Survey items are chosen based on what has been tracked successfully in the past, new input from stakeholders, and CAL-identification of emerging issues. Data were collected from October 28 through December 7, 2015. Random sampling identified 26,444 Army civilians to be invited to take the survey, of which 5,928 participated for a response rate of 22.4%. The sampling included both Army civilian leaders and followers to ensure upward assessments of leadership. A successive screening approach to identify civilians in leadership positions resulted in a final sample of 1,723 managers, 2,237 first line supervisors, and 1,966 non-supervisory employees. Sampling practices produced results with a margin of error of +/-1.5% for the 38,905 Army civilian managers and supervisors, which is the total Army population of civilian leaders officially designated with supervisory responsibilities. With assessments from non-supervisory employees included, the margin of error is +/-1.3% for the population of 221,464 Army civilians. Data analysis includes assessment of percentages by supervisory level, analysis of trends, comparisons across experience and demographics, coding of short-answer responses, correlations, and regression analyses. Secondary source data are consulted to check and clarify results. This report discusses Army civilian leader findings and serves as a companion document to the technical report of CASAL uniformed leader findings (Riley, Cavanaugh, Fallesen, & Jones, 2016).

For most items, percentages are used to convey the relative frequency of respondents who assess leaders or leader development positively and to show trends across time. As an aid in

interpretation, benchmarks have been set based on past CASAL and other surveys. All CASAL item results are compared against a benchmark set at 67%, a sum of the positive response choices (e.g., *effective* plus *very effective*). Negative response choices that sum to 20% or greater are flagged as potential problem areas. Deeper analyses are used in determining acceptable or problematic levels. Across previous years of CASAL, several common patterns emerged that provide a backdrop to aid in understanding specific findings.

- Individuals of higher supervisory level and length of service tend to perceive leadership and leader development more favorably.
- Army civilians' assessment of their immediate superiors' effectiveness tend to be less favorable than ratings by military respondents of their immediate superiors.
- The data also confirm that items assessed by CASAL are not equally applicable to Soldiers and Army civilian leaders because of differences in policies and conditions of military service and federal employment.

## Summary of Findings

### Leadership

The Army's expectations for civilian leaders are established in Army leadership doctrine (ADRP 6-22) and are consistent with federal leadership models. Leader attributes are considered enablers to the decisions and actions of leaders. Leadership competencies are observable activities that leaders are expected to do and can be improved through development. Doctrinal leadership requirements are validated by CASAL results that show significant associations between how well leaders perform and what outcomes are achieved. Effective demonstration of the competencies and attributes by civilian leaders makes a significant and positive difference on organizational outcomes and subordinate attitudes, such as team cohesion, individual motivation, work quality, engagement, morale, and commitment to the Army.

Civilian leaders are rated favorably by subordinate civilians across all leadership attributes. The highest rated attributes of civilian leaders are the *Army Values*, *Self-Discipline*, *Confidence & Composure*, and *Expertise in Primary Duties*. More than 75% of civilian leaders are rated effective in these attributes. The lowest rated attributes at below 70% of civilian leaders rated effective are *Total Fitness* (physical, health, psychological, spiritual, behavioral, and social), *Innovation*, and *Interpersonal Tact*.

Civilian leaders are assessed as effective by less than two-thirds of the respondents on 5 of 10 competencies, indicating a need for improvement. Civilian leaders are rated most favorably in the competencies *Gets Results* and *Prepares Self*. The competency *Develops Others* continues to be an area for improvement for both civilian and uniformed leaders. Since 2009, only 54% of civilian leaders have been rated effective at developing their subordinates. The other competencies falling below the two-thirds benchmark include *Builds Trust* (62%), *Leads by Example* (63%), *Creates a Positive Environment* (63%), and *Leads Others* (64%). Two groups of behaviors supportive of the competencies are assessed at below a two-thirds effectiveness threshold. These are building effective teams and actions which support *Gets Results*, such as

managing people and time to complete work efficiently, providing sufficient guidance on how to accomplish tasks, and providing resources needed by subordinates.

At a broader level, civilian leader satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership remains at moderate levels. Between 59% and 64% of civilian leaders report satisfaction with either type of leadership in their organizations. Civilian satisfaction with the quality of leadership in organizations is significantly driven by the extent civilian leaders lead effectively and show trust, care, and concern for others.

### Morale and Career Satisfaction

Civilian leaders report strong commitment to their teams and immediate work groups, agree their assigned duties are important, and hold pride in being a member of their organization. About 50% of civilian leaders report high morale while one in four report low morale. Favorable levels of morale have stabilized after a notable decline in 2013 that reflected the fiscal climate of the federal government and especially the Department of Defense (e.g., pay and hiring freezes, budgetary constraints, and furloughs). A similar decline in levels of career satisfaction has been slower to recover. The decline in career satisfaction spanned from a high of 88% in 2009 to a low of 74% in 2013, and has gradually increased to 78% in 2015.

### Working Environments

About 80% of managers and first line supervisors hold favorable attitudes towards their working environments, including the ability of their organization to perform its mission and effective work dynamics of their team or immediate work group. A majority of civilian leaders assess their organization's climate as supportive of effective leadership, learning, and development. Many believe that unit members are enabled to determine how best to accomplish work, allowed to learn from honest mistakes, and encouraged to try new and better ways of doing things.

### Workload Stress

Stress is another indicator of the conditions of the working environment. Stress from a high workload continues to negatively affect one in three civilian leaders and the problem is not improving over time. A key factor cited as contributing to workload stress is personnel shortages in organizations. Distribution of workloads among personnel is an effective way leaders can mitigate stress, though this is less feasible in organizations with insufficient personnel (or insufficiently qualified personnel) to do the work.

### Engagement

Engagement is the individual involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm for work, stemming from day-to-day experiences of job involvement, organizational commitment, and intrinsic motivation. More plainly, engagement represents the level of commitment one has for their

organization and the level of initiative they apply to their duties. Sixty-eight percent of Army civilians have a positive level of engagement, ranging from 65% of nonsupervisory employees to 71% of managers. The most favorable of 10 CASAL engagement indicators include agreement that assigned duties are important, knowing what is expected in one's job, and effective collaboration among team members. The least favorable indicators include having access to the right resources to accomplish one's duties to standard and the frequency with which development is received from one's immediate superior. Engagement is positively associated with morale and career satisfaction as well as positive attitudes toward assigned duties and organizational climate.

### Trust

Trust serves as the basis for effective relationships between leaders and followers. From 71% to over 97% of Army civilians hold moderate, high, or very high trust in their subordinates, peers, and superiors. CASAL results show that trust is high in organizations that enable members to make decisions pertaining to their duties, allow and encourage learning from honest mistakes, encourage new and better ways of doing things, and uphold standards (e.g., professional bearing, adherence to regulations). Collective felt trust, or the shared feelings by an organization's members who agree on the extent to which they are trusted by senior leaders, is just below the two-thirds benchmark. Sixty-two percent of Army civilians rate their civilian immediate superior effective at building trust, while 21% rate them ineffective. Army civilians trust superiors who *Create a Positive Environment*, demonstrate *Sound Judgment* and *Empathy*, and *Lead by Example*. Civilian leaders who effectively *Build Trust* are viewed as positively impacting subordinate commitment, motivation, and work quality, as well as team cohesion.

### Mission Command

About two-thirds of respondents assess their civilian leaders as effective at demonstrating behaviors reflecting the six principles of mission command. Only 12% of Army civilian leaders report they are very familiar with mission command doctrine (ADP 6-0), and the level has not increased since 2013. Nonetheless, CASAL results demonstrate that organizational climates align with mission command principles because civilian leaders experience high levels of trust, feel empowered to work with relative autonomy, and are allowed to innovate.

### Civilian Leader Development

Civilian leader development occurs at moderate levels in the Army. Similar to uniformed leaders, civilian managers and first line supervisors favor the development they receive through operational job experiences and self-development over formal education opportunities. Informal practices (such as opportunities to lead others and on-the-job training) are viewed as having the largest positive impact on respondents' development as leaders. Seventy-five percent of civilian leaders rate their development through job experiences as effective. Those who view their experiences as ineffective cite a lack of upward mobility or opportunity for

advancement as primary reasons why they are not gaining the skills necessary for higher levels of leadership or responsibility.

### Leader Development Practices and Programs

Civilian leader involvement in their subordinates' development continues to show room for improvement. A majority of civilian leader respondents report their superior has developed them by remaining approachable for the subordinate to seek input, providing encouragement or praise, involving the subordinate in a decision-making or planning process, and providing feedback on performance. However, high impact leader development actions that are lacking for many (reported by about one-third) include the creation of learning opportunities for subordinate leaders, such as delegating tasks, providing new opportunities to lead, and identifying challenging stretch or developmental job assignments.

Performance counseling (formal and informal) occurs inconsistently and the perceived impact on development remains low, with only 44% of civilian leaders agreeing that counseling feedback was useful for setting improvement goals. Twenty-six percent of civilian leaders receive counseling only at rating time, while 13% indicate they never or almost never receive it. Two-thirds of civilian leaders rarely or only occasionally seek or ask for developmental feedback from others. Less than one-third currently receive mentoring (28%), and twice as many (55%) provide mentoring to others. Of those who receive mentoring, 67% rate it as having a large or great positive impact on their development.

One in four civilian leaders (24%) report having been assessed through the Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF) program, representing a gradual increase over the past three years. Over two-thirds of assessed civilian leaders indicate the experience was effective for increasing their awareness of their strengths and developmental needs, and more than half rate it effective for improving their leadership skills. Civilian leader attitudes toward the effectiveness of the MSAF program as a developmental tool are significantly more favorable than active component uniformed leader attitudes. However, excessive workload demands and a lack of available time for self-development are factors that impact civilian leader participation in self-development activities, such as MSAF. Further, the relatively limited occurrence of developmental actions suggests many civilian leaders engage in self-development without superior guidance, without mentoring, and without the benefit of multi-source assessment feedback.

### Civilian Education System

A majority of civilian managers and first line supervisors (85%) have completed the required Supervisor Development Course (SDC), while three out of five (60%) have participated in other Civilian Education System (CES) courses. More than half of civilian leaders (55%) rate institutional courses as effective or very effective in developing them for higher levels of leadership or responsibility. A majority of civilian leaders who have CES experiences rate the courses as providing a good quality of education, though courses are viewed moderately

favorable for improving leadership (53% to 67% rating effective or very effective). Blended learning courses with both a distributed learning (DL) and resident phase are viewed as more effective than entirely DL courses for preparing learners to work on teams, deal with unfamiliar situations, develop subordinate leaders, influence others, improve the organization, and solve complex problems. SDC course content is viewed as relevant to the current duties of civilian and uniformed supervisors who complete it, though less than half rate the course effective at improving leadership. When CES courses fall short of civilian leaders' expectations, it is most often because the content was not new to the learner or the content was not relevant to the learner's current job. The three courses that fall below a two-thirds threshold of favorable responses on the relevancy of course content to one's current job are the Foundation Course, the Basic Course, and the Advanced Course.

A majority of civilian leaders in grades GS11 to GS15 report that CES graduates with whom they work or interact are meeting or exceeding their expectations across a range of skill areas including technical knowledge, working with others on teams, leading subordinates, and solving complex problems. A potential gap in the education domain of civilian leader development observed is that only 60% of managers and first line supervisors surveyed have completed one or more of the currently offered CES course at some point in their career (i.e., 40% have not taken the initiative or have not been provided the opportunity to attend a course). As a majority view CES courses as relevant and useful to their assigned duties, there are both opportunities and benefits for increasing CES awareness and attendance among the Army civilian cohort.

## **Conclusions**

Army civilian leaders hold favorable attitudes towards the ability of their organization to perform its mission, report strong commitment to and efficacy within their teams and immediate work groups, and have pride in their unit or organization. Army civilians' assessments of their commitment, readiness, and mission capability equal or surpass uniformed leader's assessments. A majority of civilian leaders assess their organization's climate as supportive of effective leadership, learning, and development. However, other indicators show that the current operating environment is marked with an increased level of workload stress, lower levels of career satisfaction than a few years ago, and for some, limited developmental value of job experiences.

Army civilian leaders effectively demonstrate key leader attributes, however, less than two-thirds effectively display key leadership requirements such as *Leading Others*, *Leading by Example*, *Creating a Positive Environment*, *Building Trust*, and *Developing Subordinates*. As with uniformed leaders, *Develops Others* has consistently been the lowest rated of 10 leadership competencies since civilian leaders were first assessed by CASAL in 2009. Improvement is also warranted in leadership behaviors such as building effective teams, and actions related to getting results (e.g., managing people and time, providing sufficient guidance, providing resources).

Across all civilian leaders, 28% currently receive mentoring, 24% have been assessed through the MSAF program, and 35% indicate they have sufficient time for self-development. Only 54% of civilian leaders assess their immediate superiors as effective in developing subordinates. The most frequently reported methods for development used by leaders include minimal-effort actions such as remaining approachable, offering encouragement or praise, and allowing subordinate input during decision-making or planning. Furthermore, Army civilian leaders rated effective on basic leadership skills fall below the two-thirds benchmark. Leaders not meeting subordinates' expectations for how they lead and not engaging in the development of subordinates' leadership skills means that development is mostly left to the individual or occurs inadvertently. Many civilian leaders appear to be engaging in development without superior guidance, without mentoring, and without the benefit of multi-source assessment feedback.

Leader development among Army civilian leaders is not tied to automatic promotions, and there are no provisions in organizations for back-fill or added manpower to cover dedicated developmental or educational experiences of civilians. Thus, the incentives for development are not as embedded among Army civilians as among uniformed leaders. While development for civilians is a responsibility of supervisors and the individual, development needs to occur through those activities that best fit the conditions of civilian employment. Multi-source assessment, supervisor job feedback, and within-job stretch assignments are accessible choices for civilian leader development. The Army's new doctrine on leader development, FM 6-22, provides guidance on high impact activities that create opportunities for subordinates, such as task delegation, new opportunities to lead, and challenging job assignments, all of which currently occur for only 28% to 38% of civilian leaders.

The Army relies on its civilian leaders to serve as professional, technically proficient experts who provide a continuity of operations essential to its mission. By increasing the performance capabilities in *leadership* skills across the civilian workforce, the Army can alleviate concerns in a number of related areas including character, the profession, and developing others, which will also positively affect trust, engagement, and workload stress in organizations.

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**2015 Center for Army Leadership  
Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL):  
Army Civilian Leader Findings**

**Introduction**

In 2005, CASAL was established by the Center for Army Leadership (CAL), Combined Arms Center (CAC), to assess and track trends of uniformed leader perceptions on leader development, the quality of leadership, and the contribution of leadership to mission accomplishment. Since 2009, survey administration has also included U.S. Army civilians. This report discusses Army civilian leader results of the 2015 CASAL. Civilian leader attitudes toward leader development practices and their working environments are presented. CASAL results provide the percentage of Army civilian leaders who are rated effective on these concepts and the trends in those scores across seven years. This report is a companion document to the technical report of uniformed leader findings (Riley, Cavanaugh, Fallesen, & Jones, 2016).

**Survey Administration, Response Rates, and Demographics**

The 2015 CASAL was administered from October 28 through December 7, 2015. Random sampling identified 26,444 Army civilians to be invited to take the survey, of which 5,928 participated for a response rate of 22.4% and an overall margin of error of +/-1.3%. The sampling included both Army civilian leaders and followers.

Demographic Results

The sample of Army civilians that responded to the 2015 CASAL reflects the Army civilian workforce with regard to gender and ethnic origin (Office of the Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel, 2014). The reported education level of survey respondents exceeded the levels of the DoD workforce, with 29% holding bachelor degrees (compared to 27% of population) and 40% holding graduate or professional degrees (compared to 14% of population; Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, 2015). Pay grades from GS2 through GS15 (or equivalent) are represented, with 7% of respondents at the level of GS 7 and below, 20% GS 8 through GS 11, 39% GS12 and GS13, and 28% GS14 and GS15.

Sixty-two percent of the respondent sample (65% of managers; 62% of first line supervisors; 59% of non-supervisory employees) previously served in the military. The average tenure of civilians in their current organization was 121 months; average time in current position was 65

months; average time in current grade or pay level was 77 months; and average time reporting to current leader or supervisor was 34 months.

There were two points at the beginning of the survey that required respondents to indicate whether or not they were in a position represented by a bargaining unit and/or union. Data were not collected from respondents who indicated bargaining unit or union membership. Federal statute 5 USC 7116(a)(1) and (5) seeks to limit an agency's ability to 'bypass the union' using a survey to poll/question bargaining unit employees (typically consisting of GS-5 through 11 non-supervisory employees) on matters affecting their conditions of employment.

### Supervisory Status Classification

The 2015 CASAL sampling plan included Army civilian managers, supervisors, and non-supervisory employees. A random sample was drawn from a current population database of all Army civilians based on a supervisory status variable and excluded Senior Executive Service (SES). Prior to conducting data analyses, CASAL classifications of supervisory status relied on a combination of self-reported data (i.e., position, GS level, supervisory responsibilities) to determine civilian supervisory cohort membership. Similar to previous years, a multi-step process that examined consistency of responses on survey items was used.

A civilian leader is defined as an Army civilian who holds direct supervisory responsibility for other Army civilians and/or uniformed personnel. For the purposes of this research, civilian leaders are classified as managers or first line supervisors. To be included in one of the supervisory cohorts, civilian respondents had to respond 'yes' that they directly supervised subordinates (either civilian or uniformed personnel or both) and provide the number of direct-report subordinates they supervised (greater than zero). Respondents who also indicated their direct-report subordinates were supervisors themselves were classified as managers, while those who indicated their subordinates were not supervisors were classified as first line supervisors. Respondents who indicated they did not hold supervisory responsibilities were classified as non-supervisory employees. As a final determining factor, respondents reported their current position. These responses were used to identify any respondents not yet classified due to missing data for the other items.

The result of this successive screening approach defined three civilian cohorts for whom data were included in the analyses discussed in this report:

- Managers – supervise direct reports who are also supervisors ( $n = 1,723$ )
- First line supervisors – supervise employees that are non-supervisors ( $n = 2,237$ )
- Non-supervisory employees – do not hold supervisory responsibilities ( $n = 1,966$ )

## Organization of Findings

This report is presented in three parts:

- The first part, *Quality of Leadership*, discusses the current leadership quality in the Army, civilian leader effectiveness in meeting leadership requirements, and outcomes associated with effective leadership.
- The second part, *Climate and Situational Factors within the Working Environment*, discusses morale, career satisfaction, commitment, and other attitudes and characteristics of the working environments that provide context for factors that affect the quality of leadership, duty performance, and mission outcomes.
- The third part, *Quality of Leader Development*, discusses the current quality of Army leader development practices, programs, and activities, including civilian leader effectiveness in developing subordinate leaders, and the contribution of operational experience, self-development, and institutional education to civilian leader development.

The primary purpose of this report is to summarize CASAL results for Army civilian leaders. To accomplish this objective, discussions on civilian leadership effectiveness include assessments by non-supervisory civilian employees (as followers of civilian leaders). The last section of this report, *Quality of Leader Development*, only includes consideration of managers and first line supervisors, cohorts determined through the screening process described above.

## Results Interpretation

Most quantitative items ask participants to respond on a scale of 1-5, where '5' is the most favorable (e.g., very effective, strongly agree, very satisfied) and '1' is the least favorable (e.g., very ineffective, strongly disagree, very dissatisfied), with a neutral middle point '3'. To ease the interpretation of results, the five point response categories are collapsed into three point scales. For example, responses of '5' (strongly agree) and '4' (agree) are collapsed and reported as the percentage of participants who 'agree or strongly agree'. Thus, most charts in this report display the percentage of favorable, neutral, and unfavorable responses for an item or rank group.

A useful rule of thumb applied to CASAL's assessment of leadership is the two-thirds favorability threshold, whereby item results that receive two-thirds or more favorable responses (i.e., 67% agreement or effectiveness) are considered positive. Items where favorable responses fall below this threshold and/or receive 20% or more unfavorable responses are considered areas for improvement. Similarly, a 6% difference in results between

years is a useful guideline for identifying meaningful change over time. While these rules of thumb may be applied as general guidelines to data interpretation, each item warrants its own consideration. Several factors impact the interpretation of item favorability and change, including the sampling error for each sub-group, cohort and component being examined, and in some cases, variation in the way items are worded between years.

Within each sub-section, key findings are summarized, and presented in call-out boxes. Where appropriate, trend comparisons are made to CASAL findings reported in past years (Riley, Hatfield, Fallesen, & Gunther, 2015; Riley, Hatfield, Fallesen, & Gunther, 2014; Riley & Fallesen, 2013; Riley, Conrad, & Keller-Glaze, 2012; Riley, Keller-Glaze, & Steele, 2011; Riley & Steele, 2010). Comparisons to CASAL results pertaining to attitudes, opinions, and ratings of active component (AC) uniformed leaders are made when useful or for confirmation (Riley et al., 2016). Statistically significant differences between these groups, where relevant, are referenced in footnotes throughout this report. CASAL findings are also supplemented with results from other Army and Federal surveys that have assessed similar topic areas. Two recent survey initiatives that assessed factors common to CASAL are the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS; United States Office of Personnel Management, 2015) and the 2013 Army Civilian Attitude Survey (Civilian Personnel Evaluation Agency, 2013a; 2013b). Results of these surveys are discussed where applicable.

This report contains substantial detail and enumeration of percentages to facilitate precise interpretation of results. Additional statistical analyses are performed to aid in the interpretation of the survey domains and to draw out higher-level meaning across items. Accumulated trends reported over the past 7 years increase the clarity of interpretation. Thus, a high degree of confidence can be placed in the findings.

## 1. Quality of Leadership

This section discusses results for several perspectives of leadership performance and quality. CASAL assesses the quality of civilian leadership through ratings of effectiveness for superiors, peers, and subordinates as leaders; overall levels of satisfaction with civilian and military leadership; and assessments of one's immediate superior or supervisor as a leader. Leadership performance is examined through existing doctrinal frameworks including the Army core leader competencies and the leader attributes as described in ADRP 6-22.

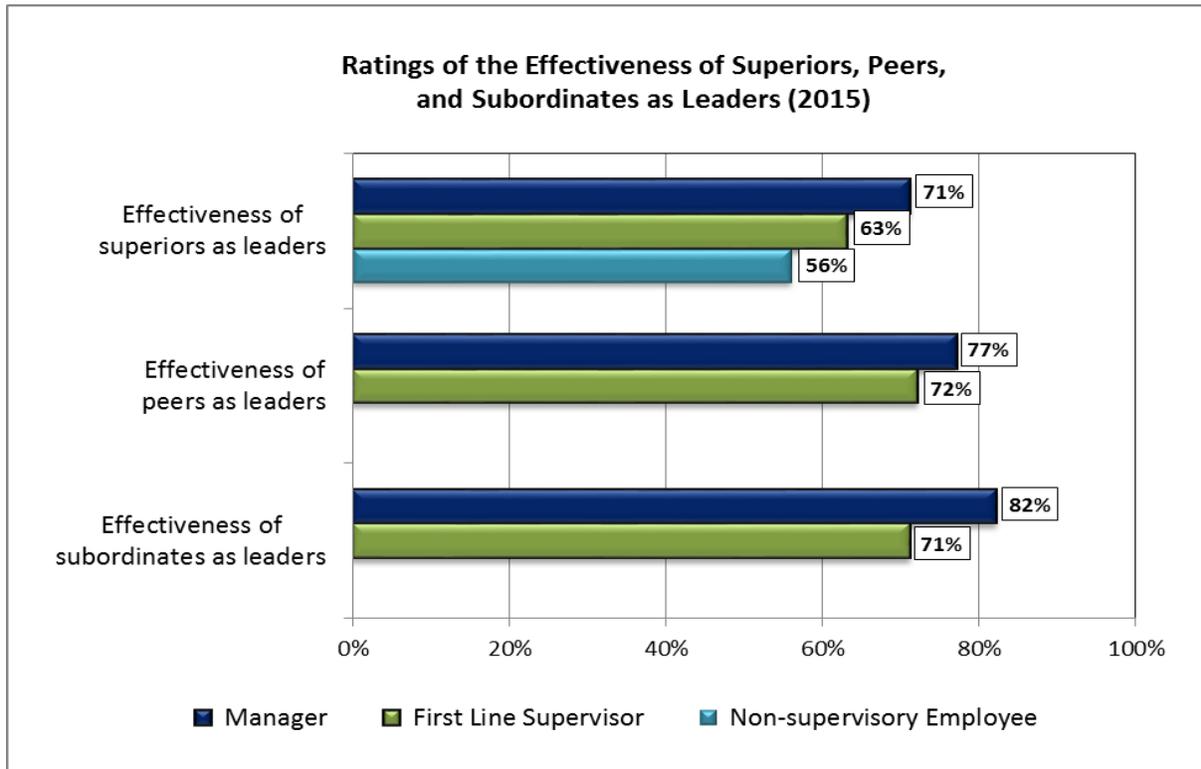
### 1.1 Perceptions of Leader Quality

Army civilian attitudes toward the quality of leadership in the Army continue to be generally positive. The 2015 CASAL found that a majority of Army civilian leaders rate their superiors, peers, and subordinates as effective leaders (see Figure 1). A consistent pattern in CASAL is that non-supervisory civilian employees report more unfavorable assessments of their superiors as leaders.

- More than two-thirds of managers (71%) rate their superiors as effective leaders. In comparison, smaller percentages of first line supervisors (63%) and non-supervisory employees (56%) view their superiors as effective.
- A majority of managers and first line supervisors view their peers as effective leaders (77% and 72%, respectively).
- Eighty-two percent of managers and 71% of first line supervisors rate their subordinates as effective leaders. This difference is reasonable as first line supervisors oversee non-supervisory civilian employees for whom there are fewer expectations as leaders.
- Overall, small percentages of Army civilian leaders rate their peers (9%) and subordinates (5%) ineffective as leaders. Upward assessments are slightly less favorable, as larger percentages of managers (16%), first line supervisors (19%), and non-supervisory employees (25%) rate their superiors ineffective as leaders.

Army civilians perceive the quality of leadership in their organizations to be positive. A majority views their superiors, peers, and subordinates as effective leaders.

**Figure 1. Effectiveness of Superiors, Peers, and Subordinates as Leaders as Rated by Managers, First Line Supervisors, and Non-Supervisory Employees**



Satisfaction With Military and Civilian Leadership

Since 2013, CASAL has assessed cross-cohort satisfaction with the quality of leadership in Army units and organizations (i.e., uniformed respondent satisfaction with Army civilian leadership and vice versa). In 2015, 64% of civilian managers and first line supervisors are satisfied with the quality of military leadership in their current organization, while 18% are dissatisfied. Army uniformed respondents show comparable levels of satisfaction with the military leadership in their unit or organization (63% satisfied; 21% dissatisfied). Smaller percentages of both civilian leader respondents (59%) and AC uniformed respondents (57%) are satisfied with the quality of the civilian leadership in their current organization. Dissatisfaction toward civilian leadership quality is found among 23% of civilian leaders and 19% of military leaders (see Table 1).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Levels of satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership were asked of all CASAL respondents regardless of assignment type. Respondents were instructed to select the response option “No basis to assess” as appropriate in instances where their unit/organization did not consist of military or civilian leaders.

**Table 1. Satisfaction With the Quality of Military and Civilian Leadership in Army Units and Organizations**

<b>CASAL Respondents</b>	<b>Satisfaction with the Quality of Military Leadership in Current Unit/Organization</b>	<b>Satisfaction with the Quality of Civilian Leadership in Current Unit/Organization</b>
Active Component Leaders	63% Satisfied	57% Satisfied
	21% Dissatisfied	19% Dissatisfied
Army Civilian Leaders (Managers and First Line Supervisors)	64% Satisfied	59% Satisfied
	18% Dissatisfied	23% Dissatisfied

Interpretation of the results presented in Table 1 requires two points of consideration. First, these ratings reflect respondents’ assessment of the quality of military leadership and civilian leadership inclusive of their entire unit or organization, not necessarily limited to the respondents’ superiors or chain of command leadership activities. Second, these results reflect ratings by respondents who are leaders themselves (Army civilian managers and supervisors, and AC officers, warrant officers, and NCOs). In comparison to civilian leader results, smaller percentages of non-supervisory civilian employees report satisfaction with the military (56%) and civilian (49%) leadership in their organizations, and comparable levels of dissatisfaction (18% and 25%, respectively). Junior enlisted Soldiers (non-leaders) are not assessed through CASAL.

These results, which show stable trends since first assessed in 2013, reflect broad and useful indicators of Army leader attitudes toward the current quality of leadership across Army organizations. A useful method for interpreting satisfaction with the quality of leadership is by identifying relevant factors with the strongest associations to ratings of satisfaction. A series of analyses was performed to further understand the factors that significantly contribute to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership in the Army.<sup>2</sup> Of particular interest is whether the same factors affect within-cohort ratings of satisfaction (e.g., civilian leader satisfaction with civilian leadership in their organization) compared to cross-cohort ratings (e.g., civilian leader satisfaction with military leadership in their organization). Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine respondent attitudes toward several characteristics of their working environment, including attitudes toward other members of

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<sup>2</sup> A stepwise multiple regression is an exploratory statistical approach to identify which variable provides the largest, singular contribution to the explanation of a dependent variable (i.e., ratings of effective leadership). After accounting for that variable, the process is repeated for the remaining variables to identify which variable explains unique variance in the dependent variable not explained by the first variable. This process is repeated until no remaining variables explain a statistically significant portion of the variance of the dependent variable. Stepwise regression results should be interpreted with caution because sample data guides the selection of variables; test results may be limited to the observed data and may not apply as a generalized prediction.

their unit or organization. A set of factors<sup>3</sup> was specifically chosen based on their potential theoretical contribution to ratings of satisfaction with the quality of leadership.

Results indicate that about half of the 12 factors examined explain a significant amount of variance in the ratings of satisfaction of leadership. The key factors were similar for explaining the satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership (see Figure 2). As was found in the 2013 and 2014 CASAL, the proportion of variance accounted for by the key factors was notably higher for within-cohort ratings (i.e., civilian respondents' satisfaction with civilian leadership and uniformed respondents' satisfaction with military leadership) compared to cross-cohort satisfaction (i.e., uniformed respondents' satisfaction with civilian leadership and civilian respondents' satisfaction with military leadership)<sup>4</sup>.

Respondent agreement that senior leaders place trust in their subordinates emerged as the factor with the largest contribution to civilian leader respondents' satisfaction with the quality

Civilian leader satisfaction with the quality of leadership is strongly dependent upon perceptions of being trusted by senior leaders and the effectiveness of leaders at lessening or limiting workload stress in subordinates.

of both military leadership and civilian leadership in their unit or organization. In comparison, the overall level of trust among unit members emerged as the factor with the largest contribution to AC respondents' satisfaction with the quality of both military and civilian leadership in their unit or organization. Other factors that explain a significant amount of variance in these models include respondents' perceptions

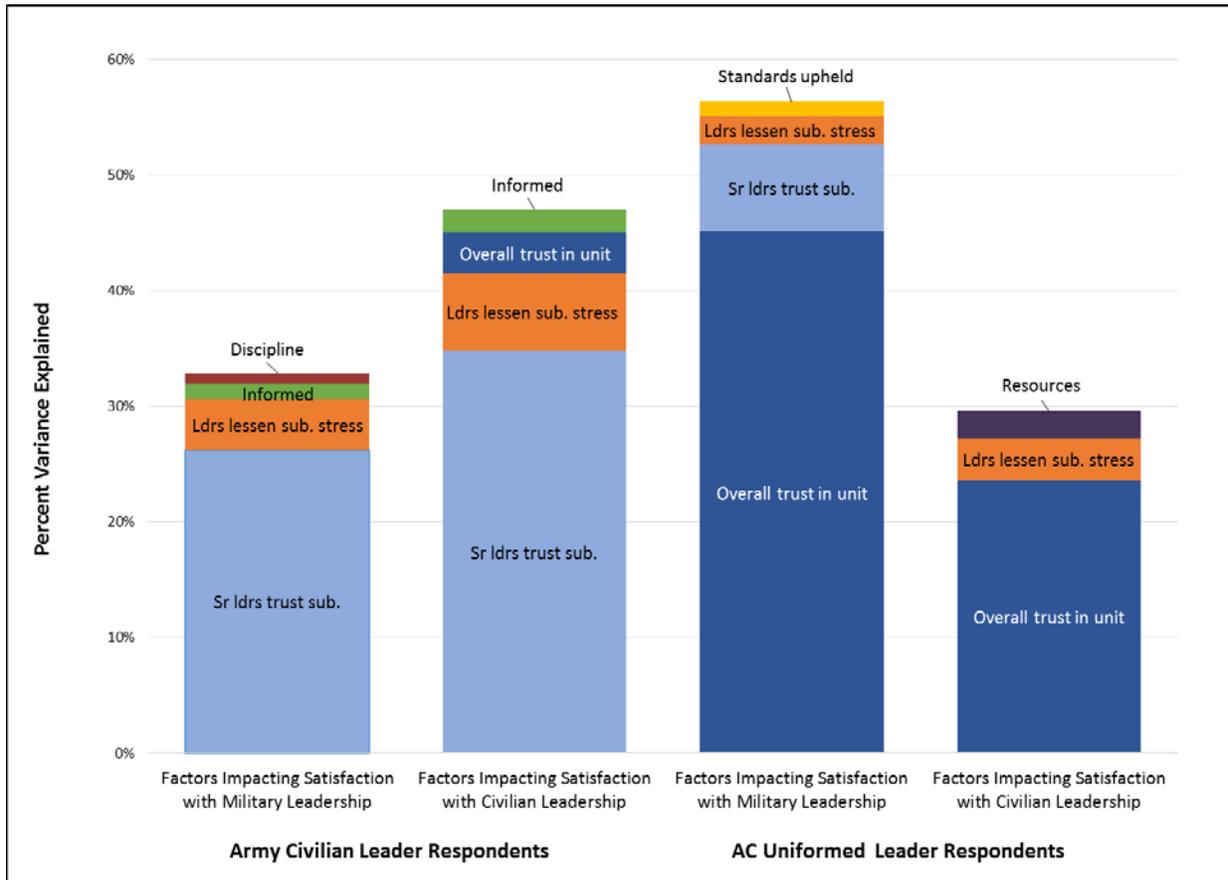
regarding senior leader effectiveness at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates; agreement that standards are upheld; having access to the right resources to accomplish duties to standard; feeling informed about decisions affecting work responsibilities; and a lack of discipline problems in units or organizations.

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<sup>3</sup> Multiple regression analyses were conducted using the stepwise method and examined the following variables to determine their impact on satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership: respondent satisfaction with the amount of freedom or latitude in the conduct of duties; respondent feels informed about decisions that affect work responsibilities; respondent feels encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things; agreement that respondent has access to the right resources (e.g., people, materials, budget) to accomplish duties to standard; agreement that members of unit/organization are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes; agreement that members of unit/organization are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties; agreement that standards are upheld; disagreement that there is a discipline problem in the unit/organization; agreement that senior leaders of unit/organization place trust in their subordinates; agreement that senior leaders of unit/organization encourage the expressions of different perspectives and points of view; overall level of trust among unit members; and the effectiveness of leaders of unit/organization at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress.

<sup>4</sup> Proportions of variance accounted for by key factors together:  $R^2 = .56$  (AC satisfaction with military leadership),  $R^2 = .30$  (AC satisfaction with civilian leadership),  $R^2 = .33$  (civilian leader satisfaction with military leadership),  $R^2 = .47$  (civilian leader satisfaction with civilian leadership).

**Figure 2. Factors That Explain Significant Variance in Army Civilian Leader and Active Component Leader Satisfaction With the Quality of Military and Civilian Leadership**<sup>5</sup>



The manner in which civilian leader and uniformed leader results differ in Figure 2 may reflect different mindsets for what drives perceptions of leadership quality in units and organizations. Army civilians, as technically competent professionals, perceive quality leadership when their superiors positively affect the climate of their working environments through promoting trust, lessening workload stressors experienced by subordinates, and sharing information. Compared to uniformed leaders, Army civilians tend to remain in organizations longer, as they are not subject to periodic reassignment. Therefore, it is not surprising that civilian followers attend to qualities of superiors that positively affect their work environment. In contrast, uniformed

<sup>5</sup> Item key for Figure 2: *Overall trust in unit* – Overall, how would you describe the current level of trust among members of your unit or organization; *Sr ldrs trust sub.* – Senior leaders in my unit or organization place trust in their subordinates; *Ldrs lessen sub. stress* – How effective are leaders in your unit or organization at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates; *Standards upheld* – In my unit or organization, standards are upheld (e.g., professional bearing, adherence to regulations); *Resources* – I have access to the right resources (e.g., people, materials, budget) to accomplish my duties to standard; *Informed* – I feel informed about decisions that affect my work responsibilities; *Discipline* – There is a discipline problem in my unit or organization (Reverse scored).

leaders more often hold a mindset geared toward camaraderie, trust, and reliance on their teams, and thus the perceived level of trust among unit members strongly influences their level of satisfaction with leadership quality in the unit.

Results of the 2013 Army Civilian Attitude Survey provide additional indications of civilian leader satisfaction with the quality of leadership in Army organizations. The survey reported that while 64% of civilian supervisors and 56% of non-supervisors agreed they have a high level of respect for their organization's senior leaders, smaller percentages (51% of supervisors, 43% of non-supervisors) were satisfied or very satisfied with policies and practices of their senior leaders. Two-thirds of civilian supervisors (68%) and more than half of non-supervisors (56%) agreed their organization's leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. Smaller percentages (52% and 43%, respectively) agreed leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce (Civilian Personnel Evaluation Agency, 2013a; 2013b).

### Civilian Leader Effectiveness

A majority of Army civilian respondents who have civilian supervisors<sup>6</sup> hold favorable perceptions about their supervisor's effectiveness as a leader. As a broad indicator, nearly two-thirds of Army civilians (64%) agree that their immediate superior is an effective leader, while 18% disagree. Further, 24% rate their immediate superior as 'best or among the best' and 33% rate them 'a high performer'. Their judgments were made in comparison to other leaders in a similar grade or position. Twenty-four percent view their immediate superior as 'middle of the road' compared to others, while 12% rate them 'a marginal performer' and 7% rate them as 'worst or among the worst'. Results for each of these indices of immediate superior effectiveness have remained consistent since first assessed in 2012.

The results of the 2013 Army Civilian Attitude Survey show similar attitudes toward civilian leadership effectiveness. Specifically, 77% of civilian supervisors and 70% of non-supervisor respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their immediate supervisor/team leader was doing a good job. These levels of agreement toward supervisor job performance remain unchanged from assessments in 2006 (Civilian Personnel Evaluation Agency, 2013a; 2013b).

A majority of civilian leaders are also viewed as having a positive effect on their organizations and their subordinates. More than half of civilian respondents indicate their civilian immediate superior has had a positive or very positive impact on subordinate work quality (62%),

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<sup>6</sup> CASAL data show fewer instances of Army civilians reporting to a uniformed leader supervisor ( $n = 1,329$ ; 23% of civilian respondents) and vice versa ( $n = 480$ ; 5% of AC respondents); specific results for these working relationships are not included in this discussion.

motivation (57%), and commitment to the Army (55%); and on unit/team discipline (58%)<sup>7</sup> and cohesion (58%). Between 7% and 16% of civilian leaders are rated as having a negative or very negative effect on any of the above mentioned outcomes. Civilian respondents who view their immediate superior effective as a leader also tend to indicate their superior has had a positive impact in each of these areas ( $r$ 's = .71 to .81,  $p < .001$ ). The levels of favorable responses for these indicators of leadership effectiveness have remained fairly consistent since first assessed in 2011. Additionally, civilian respondents who view their immediate superior as an effective leader also report high levels of morale ( $r = .54$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and engagement ( $r = .66$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Results for Army civilian engagement are described in greater detail in section 2.4 of this report.

## 1.2 Leadership Requirements Model

CASAL serves as the benchmark for assessing Army leader effectiveness in demonstrating the core leader competencies and attributes described in the Leadership Requirements Model (ADRP 6-22). Since 2009, CASAL has employed a consistent method of capturing upward assessments of survey respondents' immediate superior or supervisor, a practice that enables trend comparisons across years<sup>8</sup>. In the 2015 CASAL, 74% of Army civilian respondents indicated their immediate superior or supervisor is an Army civilian (23% indicated they report to a uniformed leader). This section presents findings on civilian leader effectiveness in demonstrating doctrinal competencies and attributes, and identifies strengths and areas for improvement for civilian leaders. Comparisons to assessments of uniformed leader effectiveness on the competencies and attributes are also made.

### Core Leader Competencies

Competencies provide a clear and consistent way of conveying expectations for Army leaders, apply to all levels of leader positions, and can be developed. Army leaders continuously refine and increase their proficiency to perform the core leader competencies and learn to apply them to increasingly complex situations (ADRP 6-22). Between 54% and 75% of Army civilians rate their civilian immediate superior effective or very effective on the 10 core leader competencies (see Figure 3). The competencies in which civilian leaders are rated effective by the largest

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<sup>7</sup> The percentage of civilian leaders rated as having a positive or very positive effect on unit or team discipline (58%) is significantly lower than ratings for AC uniformed leaders (71%).

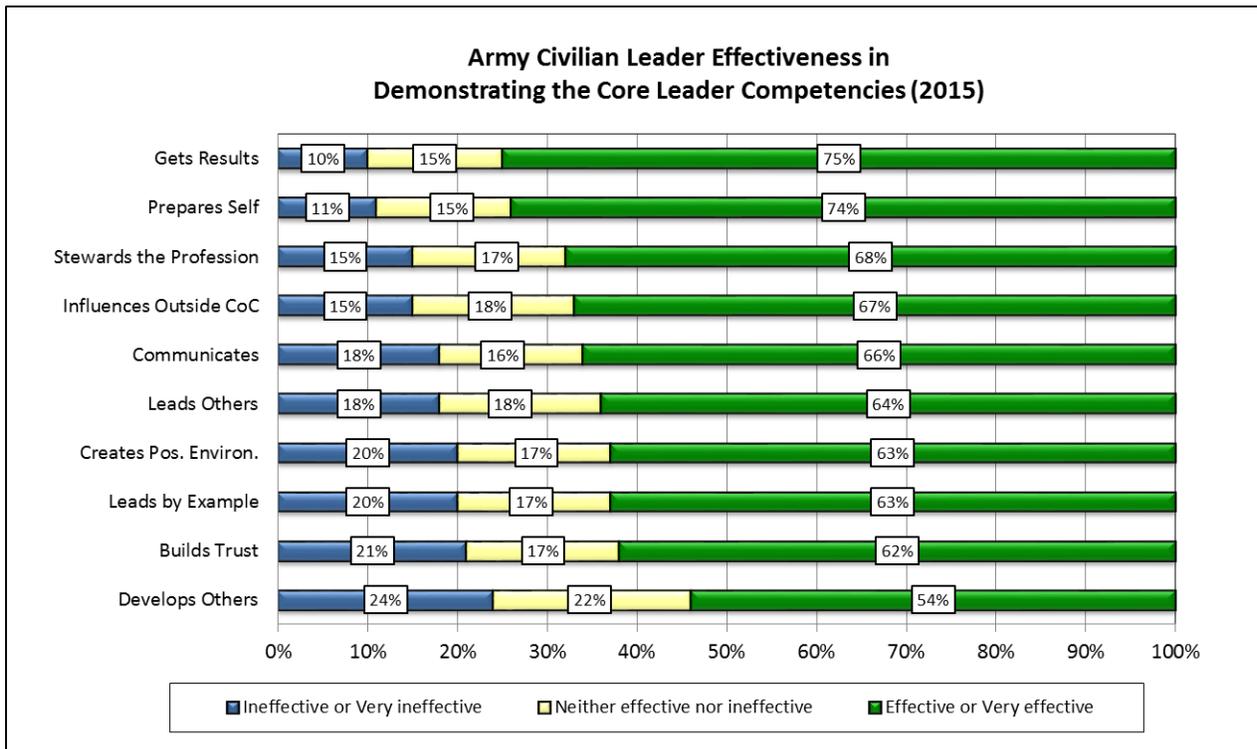
<sup>8</sup> CASAL items ask respondents to assess their immediate superior, supervisor, or first line leader on a range of behaviors, attributes, and outcomes. This approach of capturing upward ratings of a single target leader is effective, as most Army leaders have an appropriate opportunity to observe and become familiar with the effectiveness of their immediate superior's leadership behavior, attributes, and outcomes. Analysis of 360° assessments finds that subordinates generally observe more behaviors than do peers or superiors. The assessments, confined to direct relationships between subordinate and superior, are more precise than a respondent's global assessment of all superiors, peers or others, and avoids the bias inherent in self-ratings.

percentage of subordinates are *Gets Results* (75%) and *Prepares Self* (74%), which is a consistent trend observed by CASAL since 2009. *Develops Others* persists as the lowest rated competency and the area most in need of improvement for both civilian and uniformed leaders.

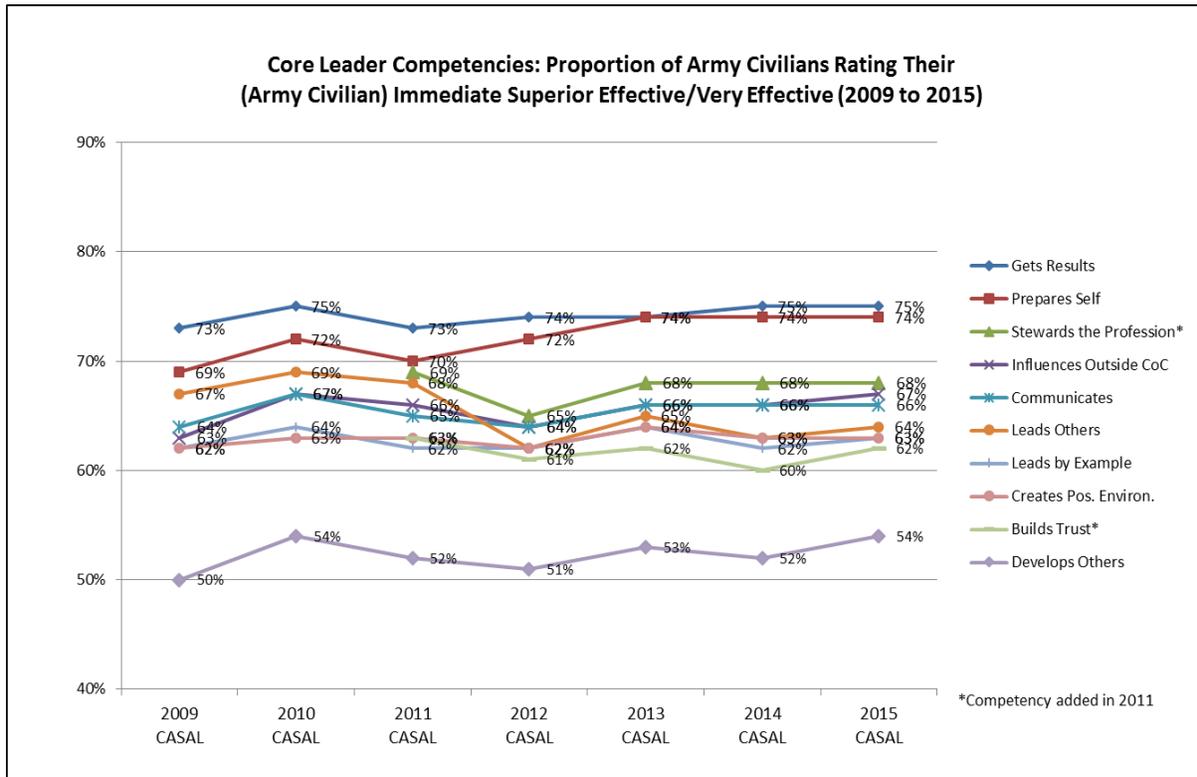
*Gets Results* and *Prepares Self* are the most favorably rated competencies. *Develops Others* continues to show the most need for improvement.

Assessments of civilian leader effectiveness in demonstrating the core leader competencies have remained fairly stable since 2012 (within +/- 3% when transforming responses to 3 categories). Figure 4 displays CASAL trends on civilian leader effectiveness in demonstrating the competencies from 2009 to 2015.

**Figure 3. Army Civilian Leader Effectiveness on the Core Leader Competencies**

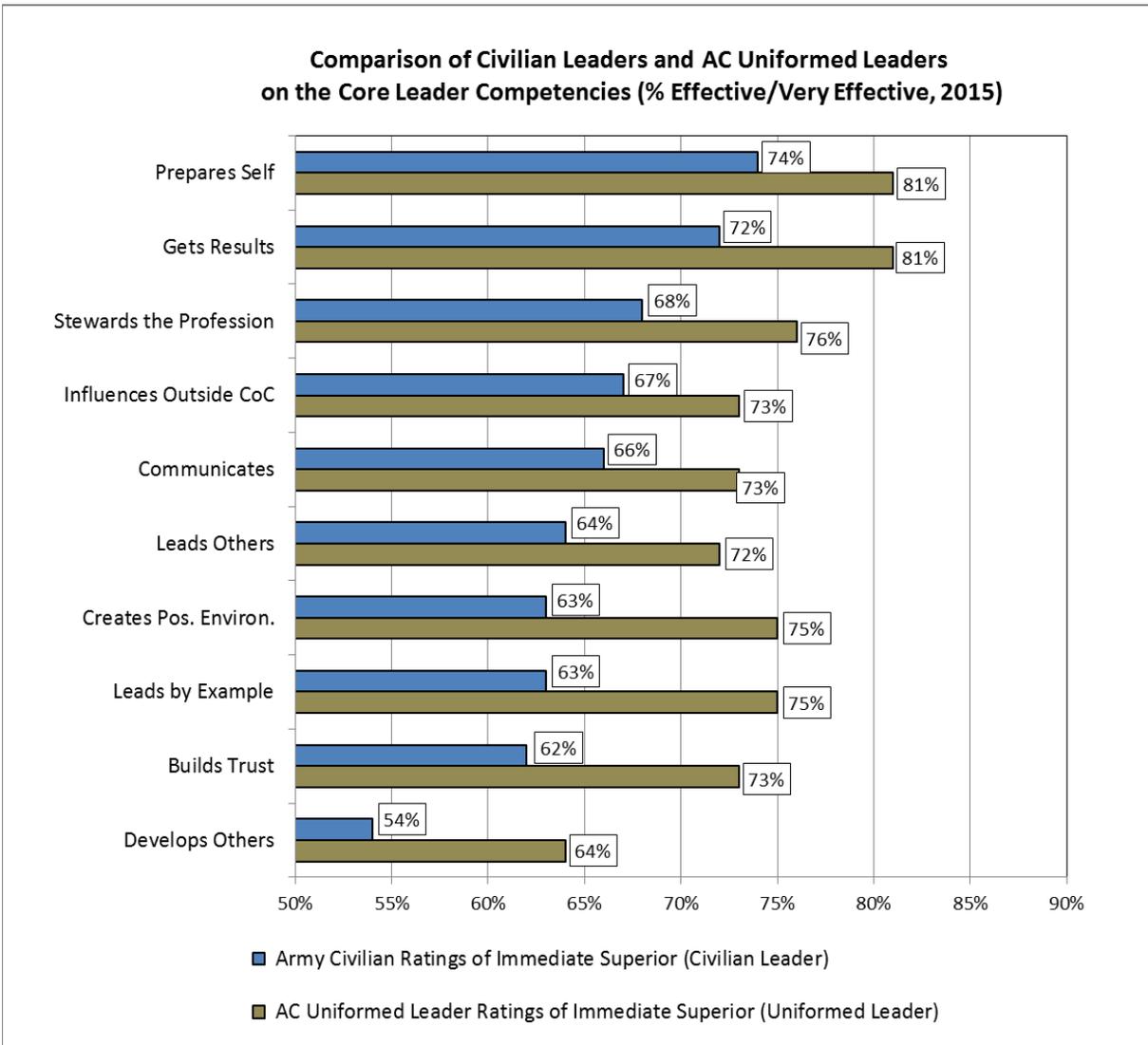


**Figure 4. Comparison of Army Civilian Leader Effectiveness in Demonstrating the Core Leader Competencies From 2009 to 2015**



The relative rank ordering of competencies from most to least favorable follows a generally consistent pattern between ratings for Army civilian leaders and AC uniformed leaders. In other words, the strengths and areas for improvement on the competencies do not tend to differ for civilian leaders and uniformed leaders. Another notable trend is that uniformed leaders are consistently rated favorable by 6% to 12% more subordinates on the competencies than are civilian leaders. Figure 5 displays results of the 2015 CASAL for both of these leader cohorts.

**Figure 5. Comparison of Army Civilian and Active Component Uniformed Leaders on the Core Leader Competencies (% Effective/Very Effective, 2015)**



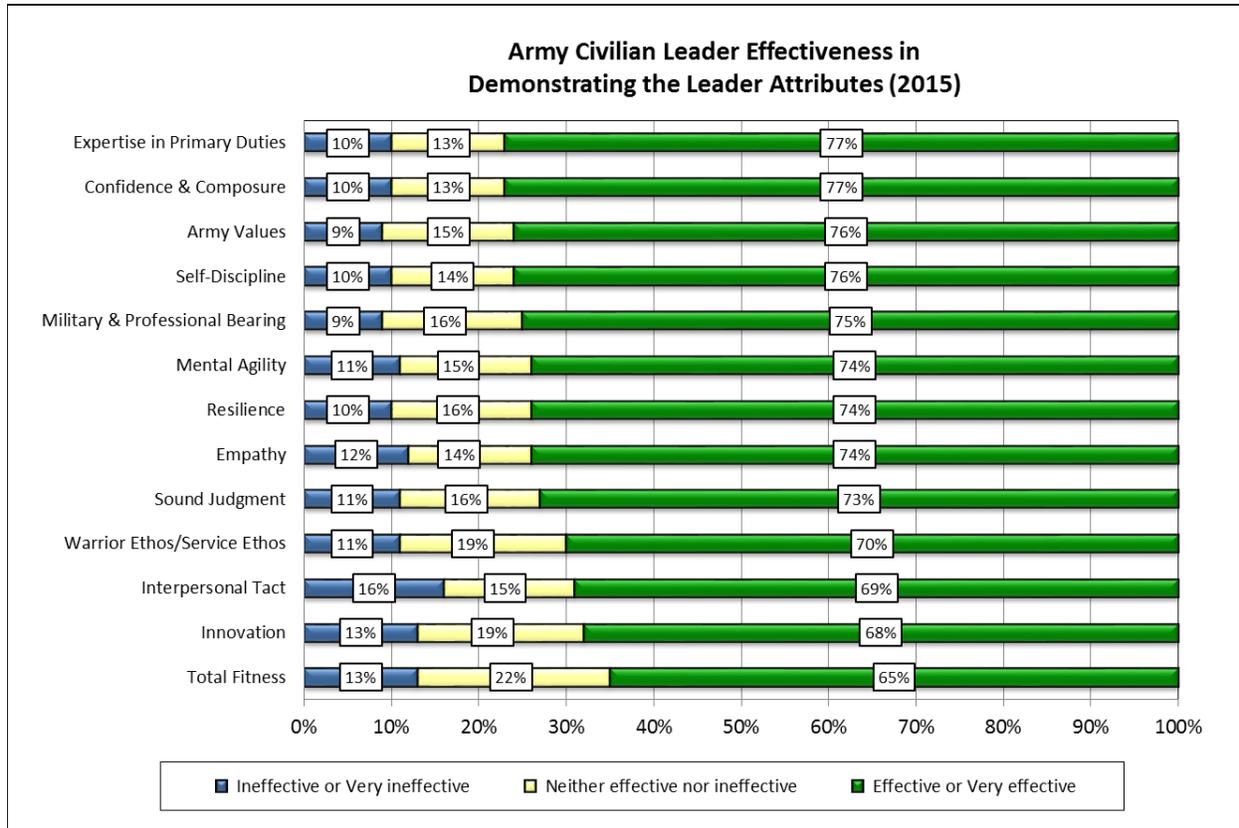
**Leader Attributes**

The attributes are characteristics desired of leaders that shape their capability to perform leadership actions. Specifically, the attributes represent the values and identity of Army leaders (character), how leaders are perceived by followers and others (presence), and the mental and social faculties that leaders apply when leading (intellect). CASAL’s assessment of the leader attributes has evolved over the past several years to reflect changes to descriptions within the Leadership Requirements Model (ADRP

The most favorably rated attributes for civilian leaders are *Expertise in Primary Duties, Confidence & Composure, the Army Values, and Self-discipline.*

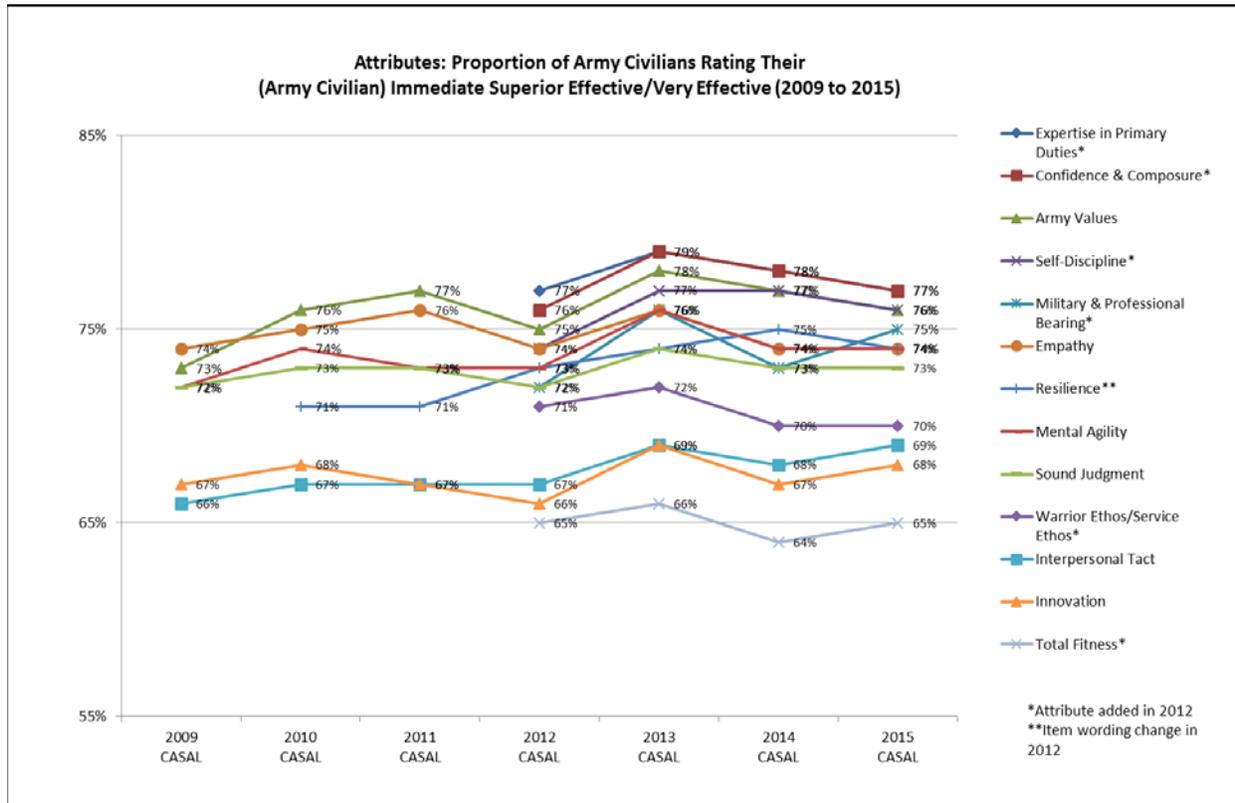
6-22), to better reflect the underlying attributes being assessed, and to limit perceived redundancy in survey items. The attributes assessed in 2015 have been included in CASAL since 2012, which provides a consistent means for examining trends. Between 65% and 77% of Army civilians rate their civilian immediate superior effective or very effective on the leader attributes (see Figure 6). These results represent a consistent trend across CASAL administrations.

**Figure 6. Army Civilian Leader Effectiveness on the Leader Attributes**



It is important to note that assessments of civilian leaders are favorable across all of the leader attributes, as only 9% to 16% of Army civilians rate their civilian immediate superior ineffective in demonstrating any of the attributes. However, the three consistently lowest-rated attributes for civilian leaders are *Total Fitness* (65%), *Innovation* (68%), and *Interpersonal Tact* (69%). Figure 7 displays CASAL findings on civilian leader effectiveness in demonstrating the attributes from 2009 to 2015. Since 2012, the level of favorable assessment for each individual leader attribute has remained fairly stable (within 4%).

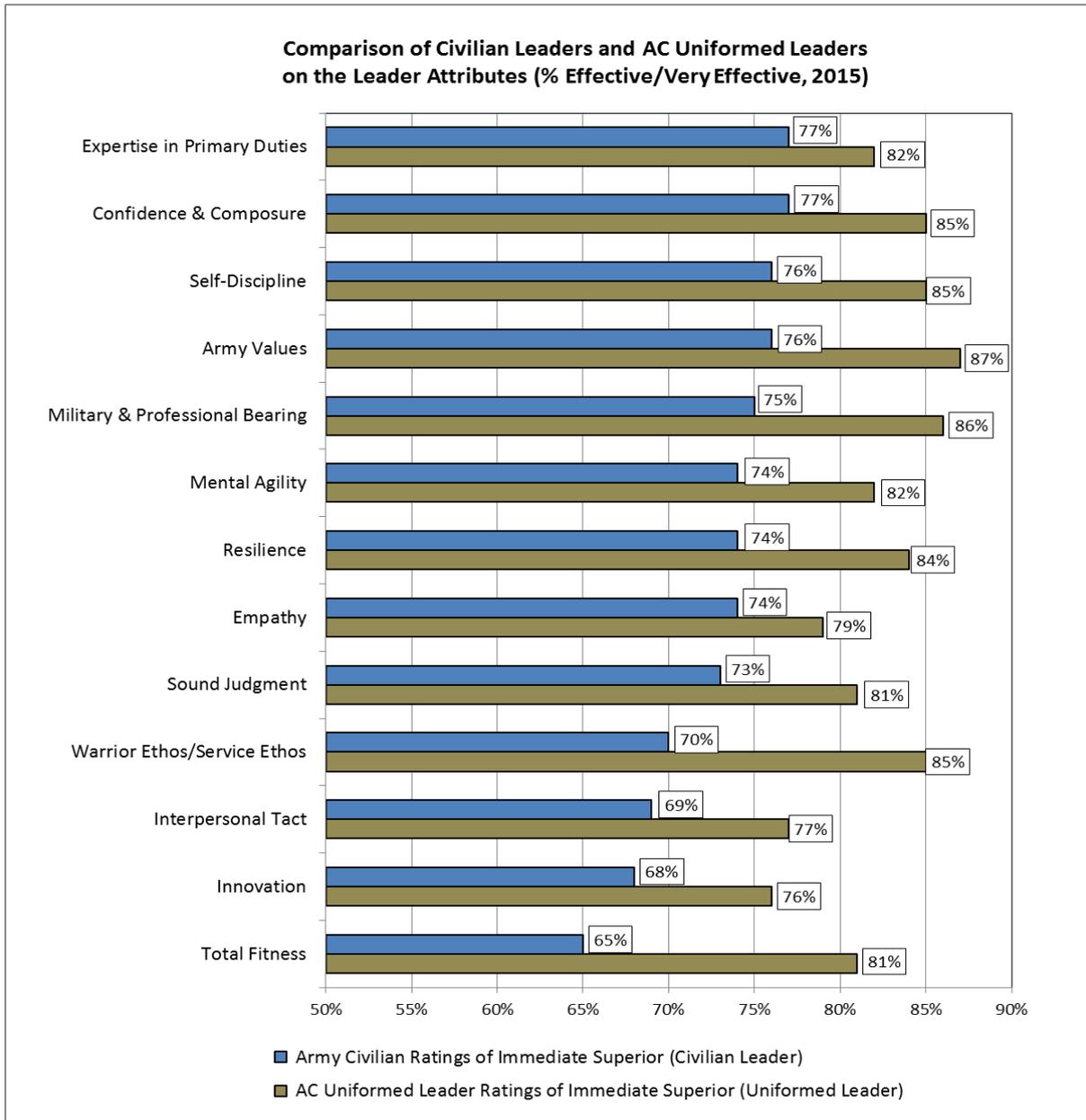
**Figure 7. Comparison of Army Civilian Leader Effectiveness in Demonstrating the Leader Attributes From 2009 to 2015**



Assessments for uniformed leaders show greater favorability across the attributes when compared to results for civilian leaders. There are several similarities between these leader cohorts in terms of the relative rank ordering of the attributes (see Figure 8). The *Army Values*, *Confidence & Composure*, and *Self-discipline* are among the highest rated attributes, while *Innovation* and *Interpersonal Tact* are among the lowest for both cohorts. There are also notable differences, as civilian leaders are rated most favorably in demonstrating *Expertise* and *Confidence & Composure*, while ratings for *Military & Professional Bearing* and *Army Values* rank relatively higher for uniformed leaders.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The percentages of civilian leaders rated effective/very effective at demonstrating the *Army Values* (76%), the *Warrior Ethos/Service Ethos* (70%), and *Total Fitness* (65%) are lower than ratings for AC uniformed leaders (87%, 84%, and 80%, respectively).

**Figure 8. Comparison of Army Civilian and Active Component Uniformed Leaders on the Leader Attributes (% Effective/Very Effective, 2015)**



Relationship Between the Leadership Requirements Model and Leader Effectiveness

CASAL includes two single-item, global assessments of leader effectiveness. First, three-fourths of Army civilian respondents (64%) agree or strongly agree their Army civilian immediate superior is an effective leader. Eighteen percent neither agree nor disagree, while 18% disagree or strongly disagree. Additionally, respondents provided a single judgment on the relative

ranking of their immediate superior's leadership abilities compared to other leaders at the same grade or in a similar position. The results of the characterizations of one's immediate superior are generally favorable:

- 'Best or among the best' – 24%
- 'A high performer' – 33%
- "Middle of the road" – 24%
- 'A marginal performer' – 12%
- 'Worst or among the worst' – 7%

These findings are positive for the Army, as a majority of Army civilians indicate their civilian immediate superior is performing at a high level, while small percentages report their superior demonstrates ineffective leadership. The levels of favorable ratings for both of these indicators are stable in comparison to results from the past five years.

The 10 competencies and 13 attributes assessed by CASAL were examined through the use of a stepwise multiple regression to identify which of the competencies and attributes best explain ratings of effective Army civilian leadership. Two competencies and one attribute significantly explain 80% of the variance ( $R^2 = .80$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in effectiveness ratings for one's immediate superior: *Leads by Example*, *Leads Others*, and demonstrates *Sound Judgment* are most strongly associated with agreement that one's superior is an effective leader. This means that these three factors best differentiate levels of effective leadership for Army civilians. These results overlap with two of the three competencies and attributes found to best differentiate levels of effective uniformed leadership: *Leads Others* and demonstrates *Sound Judgment*. Ratings for civilian leader effectiveness in demonstrating the other competencies and attributes explain less variance in ratings when accounting for the impact of *Leads by Example*, *Leads Others*, and *Sound Judgment*, and are therefore less useful in differentiating levels of leadership effectiveness for Army civilian respondents.

Army leadership research by Horey et al. (2007) observed that in comparison to leader behaviors, leader traits have less impact on leadership outcomes. This assertion has been supported by recent CASAL findings. Since 2012, multiple regression analyses utilizing composite scale scores<sup>10</sup> for leader effectiveness have examined the impact of the

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<sup>10</sup> The 10 items that reflect behaviors associated with immediate superior effectiveness in demonstrating the core leader competencies were combined into a single scale composite variable. Values across the 10 items were averaged to produce a single score with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. Scale scores of '5' indicate a respondent's average rating across all 10 items equals 5 (i.e., the highest rating that immediate superior demonstrates the competencies). A composite score was only generated for respondents who rated their immediate superior on all 10 competency items. This same process was used to develop a single scale composite variable for the 13 items that assess the leader attributes.

competencies and attributes on indices of effective leadership. Results continue to indicate that the core leader competencies have a stronger impact<sup>11</sup> on ratings of effective leadership (approximately 2-to-1) compared to the impact of the leader attributes (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Results of Multiple Regression Examining the Impact of Leader Competencies and Attributes on Indices of Effective Army Civilian Leadership**

	Agreement Army civilian immediate superior is an effective leader	How do you rate the leadership abilities of your immediate superior relative to other leaders at the same rank/position?
Core Leader Competency Composite Score	$\beta = .62$	$\beta = .60$
Leader Attribute Composite Score	$\beta = .28$	$\beta = .28$
<b>Model Summary</b>	$R^2 = .79$	$R^2 = .75$

Note. Standardized beta weight ( $\beta$ ) and  $R^2$  significant at  $p < .001$ .

### 1.3 Characteristics of Effective Leadership

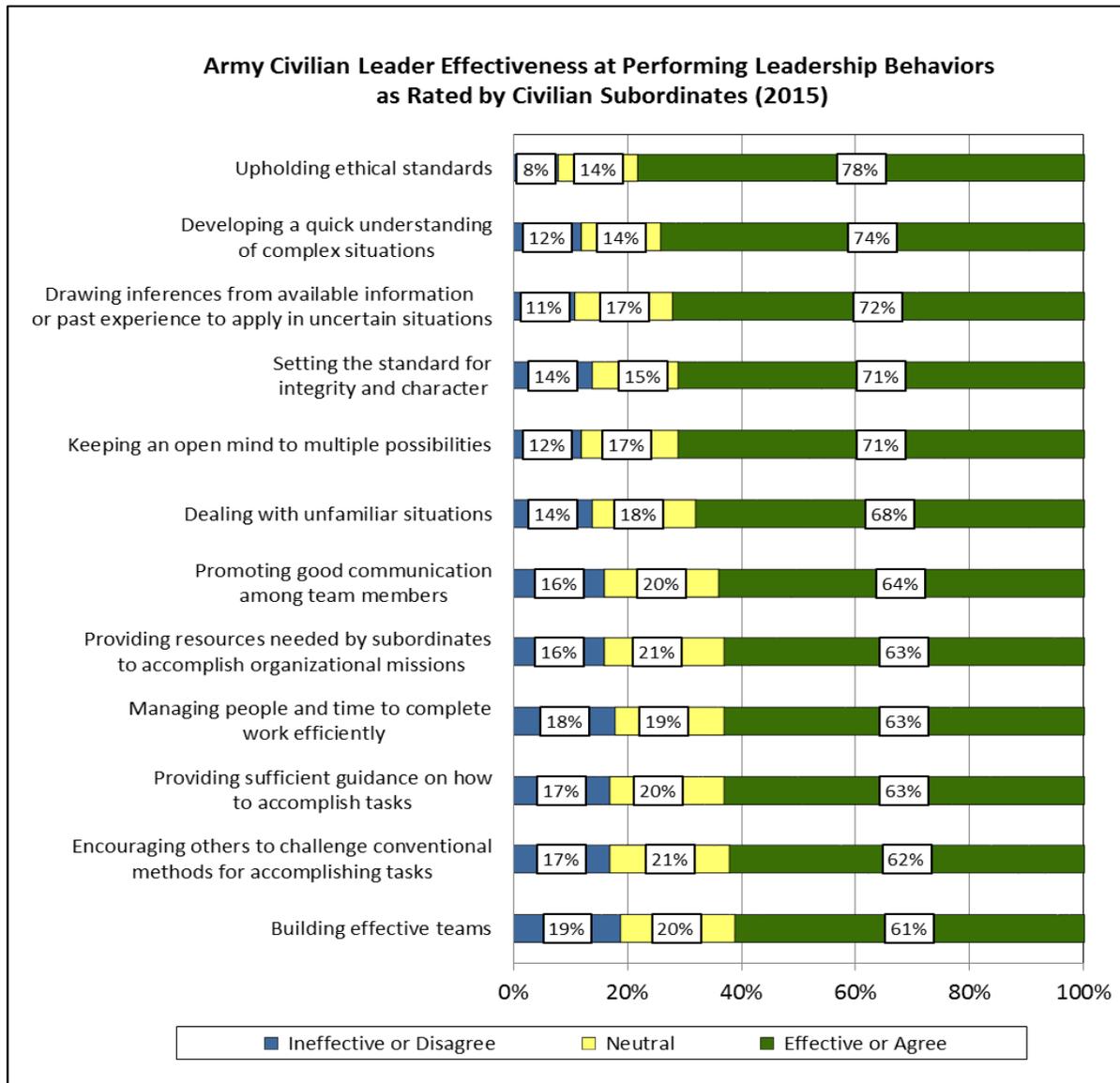
The 2015 CASAL assessed additional characteristics of leader performance beyond the named competencies and attributes in doctrine. A majority of civilian leaders are rated favorably in demonstrating a range of leadership actions or skills (see Figure 9) that are bulleted items in ADRP 6-22 tables.

Favorable indicators include subordinate ratings of their civilian immediate superior’s effectiveness in setting the standard for integrity and character (71%), and agreement that their superior upholds ethical standards (78%) and puts the needs of the organization and mission ahead of self (71%). Each of these behaviors is positively related to the competency of *Leads by Example* ( $r$ ’s = .84, .71, and .69, respectively,  $p$ ’s < .001) and the attribute of *Army Values* ( $r$ ’s = .81, .75, and .69, respectively,  $p$ ’s < .001). Also positive is that small percentages of civilian leaders are reported to exhibit counter-productive (or negative) leadership behaviors such as berating subordinates for small mistakes (14%), blaming other people to save himself/herself from embarrassment (16%), and setting misplaced priorities that interfere with accomplishing goals (18%).

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<sup>11</sup> A statistic called a standardized beta weight represents the specific impact each factor within the model has on the outcome measure, accounting for the contribution of other factors within the model. Standardized beta weights are similar to correlation coefficients in that they range from -1.0 to +1.0, with the size of the weight indicating the extent of impact and the direction (+ or -) of the relationship. The larger the standardized beta weight, the larger the impact scores for that variable have on the dependent variable.

**Figure 9. Civilian Leader Effectiveness in Demonstrating Various Leadership Behaviors**



Effective leaders motivate, inspire, and influence others to take initiative, work toward a common purpose, accomplish critical tasks, and achieve organizational objectives. Specific behaviors within the *Leads Others* competency include use of appropriate methods of influence to energize others; providing purpose, motivation, and inspiration; enforcing standards; and balancing mission and welfare of followers (ADRP 6-22). As mentioned previously, 64% of civilian leaders are rated effective at leading and influencing others (18% are rated ineffective). A specific behavior related to *Leads Others* is balancing subordinate needs with mission requirements, for which 66% of civilian leaders are rated effective. This behavior positively relates to the competency *Leads Others* ( $r = .75, p < .001$ ).

Notably, *Leads Others* is not among the most favorably rated competencies, nor are any of the four other competencies from the *Leads* category (*Builds Trust*, *Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command*, *Leads by Example*, and *Communicates*).

The competencies within the *Leads* category are central to the meaning of leadership, represent the essence of influence and providing purpose, motivation, and direction, and therefore warrant focus and attention to prepare leaders to perform these skills effectively.

Leadership is critical to mission accomplishment, yet four competencies in the *Leads* category are not among the most favorably rated for civilian leaders.

The competency *Gets Results* encompasses the leadership behaviors and actions required to get the job done on time and to standard. As discussed previously, 75% of civilian leaders are rated effective at *Gets Results*, and this is consistently among the most favorably rated competencies. Smaller percentages of Army civilians rate their civilian immediate superior effective at specific behaviors or actions that comprise *Gets Results*, such as providing sufficient guidance on how to accomplish tasks (63%), managing people and time to complete work efficiently (63%), and providing resources needed by subordinates to accomplish organizational missions (63%). Similarly, 62% of civilian leaders are rated effective at encouraging others to challenge conventional methods for accomplishing tasks, a method of promoting innovation to achieve results. Each of these behaviors is positively related to *Gets Results* ( $r's = .70$  to  $.75$ ,  $p's < .001$ ).

Leaders demonstrate *Mental Agility* through flexibility of mind and when anticipating or adapting to uncertain or changing situations (ADPR 6-22). More than two-thirds of civilian leaders are rated effective at developing a quick understanding of complex situations (74%), at dealing with unfamiliar situations (68%), and drawing inferences from available information or past experience to apply in uncertain situations (72%). In addition, 71% of Army civilian respondents agree their civilian immediate superior keeps an open mind to multiple possibilities. Each of these characteristics is positively related to *Mental Agility* ( $r's = .70$  to  $.81$ ,  $p's < .001$ ).

Civilian leaders effective at demonstrating *Mental Agility* draw inferences from past experiences and keep an open mind to multiple possibilities.

Team building is a skill area where civilian leaders are assessed favorably by fewer respondents than are other behaviors. Less than two-thirds of Army civilians rate their immediate superior effective in building teams (61%) or agree their superior promotes good communication among team members (64%). One in five (21%) indicates his/her superior does little to help the team be more cohesive. Communication is important for building cohesion in teams and work groups. Results show positive relationships between civilian leaders who promote good

communication among team members and their effectiveness in building teams ( $r = .79, p < .001$ ) and having a positive effect on team cohesion ( $r = .79, p < .001$ ).

### ***Summary of Findings on the Quality of Leadership***

Army civilians continue to report moderate levels of satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership, and attitudes are associated with the perceived effectiveness of their superiors as leaders and various aspects of trust. Civilian managers and first line supervisors exhibit moderate to strong levels of leadership quality, and indicators represent an established pattern since first assessed by CASAL in 2009. A majority of Army civilians view their civilian superiors as effective leaders. The leadership competencies and attributes assessed by the most civilian respondents as favorable continue to be *Gets Results* and *Prepares Self*, as well as demonstrating *Expertise in Primary Duties*, *Confidence & Composure*, *Self-discipline*, and the *Army Values*. Missing from the most favorably rated competencies are any within the *Leads* category (*Leads Others*, *Builds Trust*, *Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command*, *Leads by Example*, and *Communicates*). These, along with the competencies *Develops Others* and *Creates a Positive Environment*, and behaviors for building effective teams, warrant continued focus and improvement.

## **2. Climate and Situational Factors**

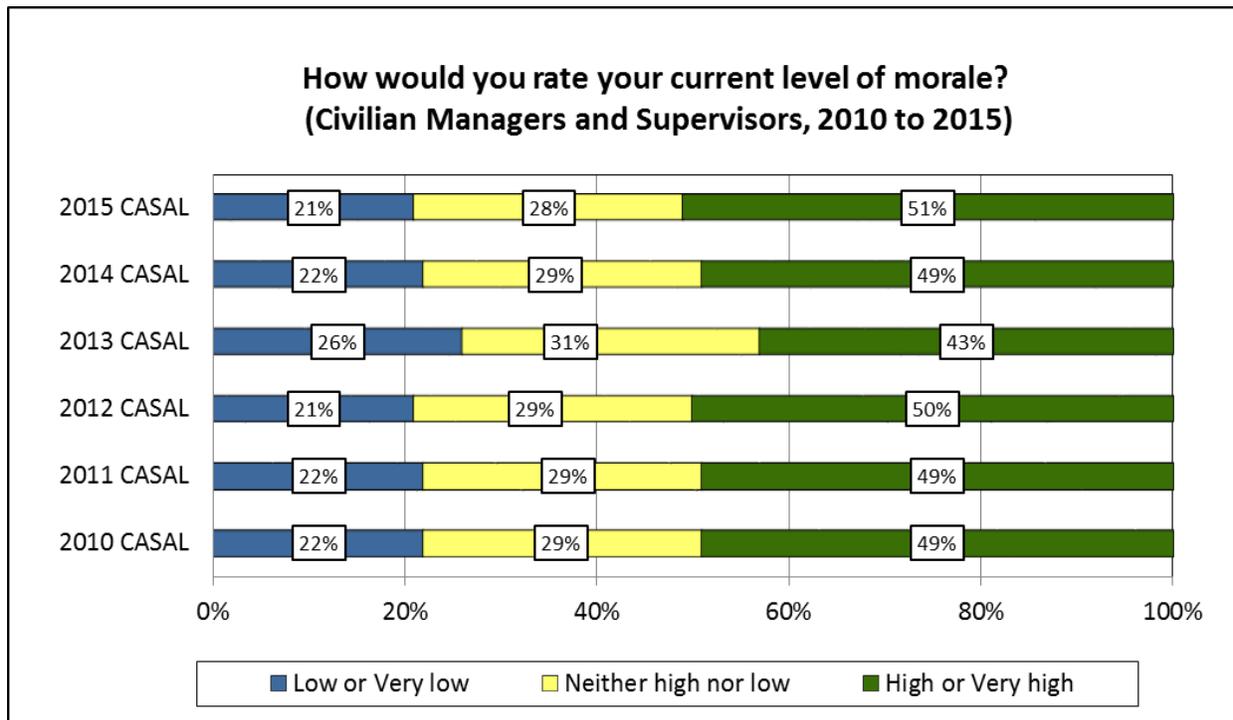
CASAL assesses and tracks trends on civilian leader morale, commitment, and career satisfaction, and examines the interrelationships between these factors. Additionally, attitudes and perceptions about characteristics of the current working environment (e.g., job characteristics, team efficacy, and organizational climate) provide context for factors that affect the quality of leadership, duty performance, and mission outcomes.

The 2015 CASAL includes closer examination of Army civilian engagement as assessed through a series of items. Also examined are trends in civilian leader perceptions about the levels of trust in organizations, leader demonstration of trust-building behaviors, the principles of mission command, and the extent that current operating environments reflect the mission command philosophy.

## 2.1 Morale and Career Satisfaction

Results of the 2015 CASAL indicate 54% of managers and 48% of first line supervisors report high or very high morale (19% and 23% report low or very low morale, respectively). Levels of civilian leader morale reported by CASAL have remained generally stable since assessed in 2010, with the exception of a sharp decline observed in 2013 (see Figure 10). The downturn during 2013 coincided with a climate of fiscal uncertainty within the federal government and specifically the Department of Defense around the time of the survey (October/November 2013). Army civilians experienced pay and hiring freezes, budgetary constraints, and furloughs, which suspended many civilian employees from their assigned duties for short periods of time. Results of the 2014 and 2015 CASAL indicate morale levels have increased and stabilized, but still show room for improvement, as one in five civilian leaders report low or very low morale.

**Figure 10. Levels of Civilian Leader Morale From 2010 to 2015**

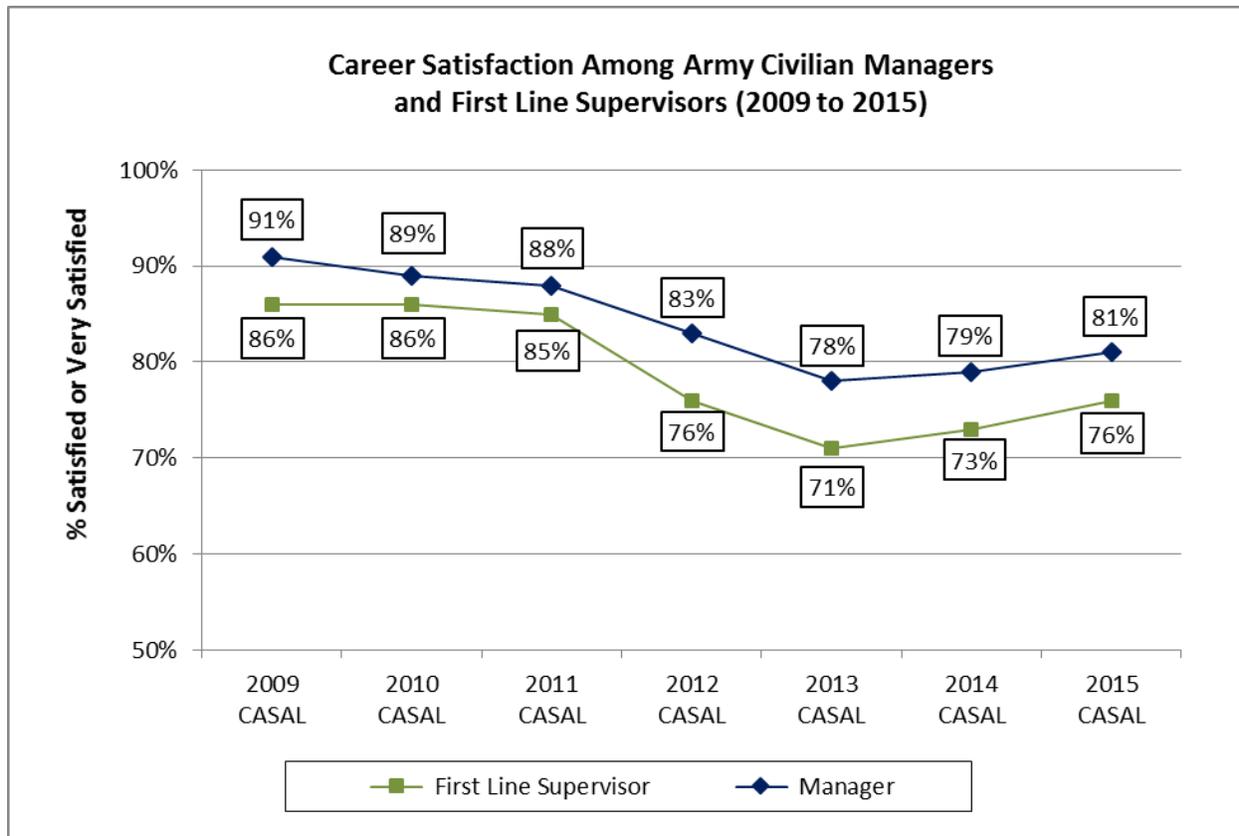


There is a positive relationship between civilian leaders' current level of morale and their career satisfaction ( $r = .62, p < .001$ ). Morale represents leaders' current affective reaction to the environment or job in which they operate. In contrast, career satisfaction represents a compilation of affective and other attitudes regarding characteristics spanning a leader's career (Locke, 1976; Pinder, 1998).

While overall levels of career satisfaction among civilian leaders remain favorable, a pattern of gradual decline and recovery has been observed since 2011 (see Figure 11). In 2015, 81% of managers and 76% of first line supervisors report they are satisfied or very satisfied with their Army career up to this point. Satisfaction levels reached their lowest point in 2013, concurrent with the decline in morale. In 2015, civilian leader career satisfaction has improved but not to the same degree as morale.

CASAL results show a positive association between effective leadership and civilian leader morale and career satisfaction. Specifically, civilian leaders who agree their immediate superior is an effective leader also tend to report favorable levels of morale ( $r = .53, p < .001$ ) and career satisfaction ( $r = .40, p < .001$ ). Other factors not assessed by CASAL, such as those mentioned previously (e.g., budgetary constraints, fiscal uncertainty) likely have considerable impacts on levels of civilian leader career satisfaction as well.

**Figure 11. Career Satisfaction Among Army Civilian Managers and First Line Supervisors From 2009 to 2015**



## 2.2 Characteristics of the Working Environment

CASAL includes assessments of civilian leaders' attitudes toward their assigned duties, their teams and working groups, characteristics of Army working environments, and other factors related to the mission and organizational climate. The underlying assumption for assessing these characteristics of Army working environments is that organizations with positive climates are a reflection of effective leadership and provide better conditions in which to lead and achieve results.

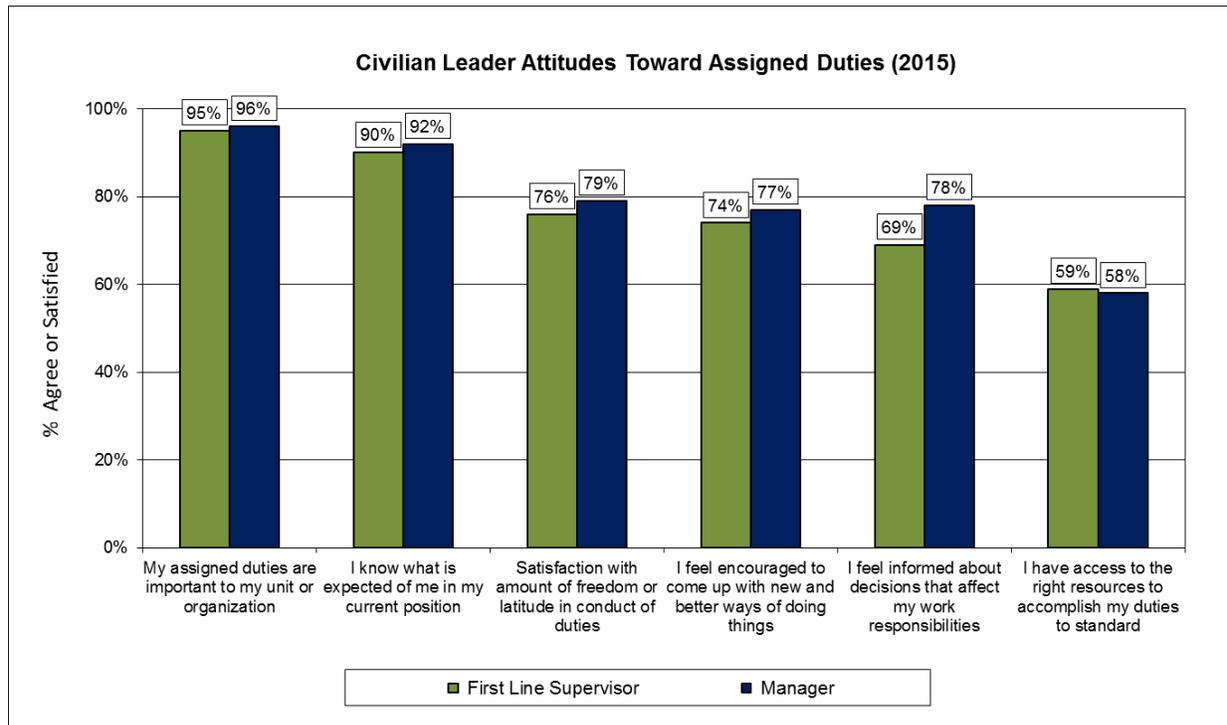
### Attitudes Toward Assigned Duties

Managers and first line supervisors continue to report moderately to strongly favorable attitudes toward their assigned duties and working environments:

- A majority of civilian leaders (96%) agree that their assigned duties are important to their unit or organization (3% disagree; see Figure 12).
- Ninety-one percent of civilian leaders agree they know what is expected of them in their current position (5% disagree).
- Three-fourths of civilian leaders (77%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the freedom or latitude they have in the conduct of their duties (13% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied).
- Results of the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) provide support for these findings (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2015). Specifically, the survey reported that 90% of Army civilians (compared to the subset of civilian leaders from CASAL as reported above) agreed the work they do is important, 79% agreed they know what is expected of them on the job, and 71% agreed that their work gives them a feeling of personal accomplishment.

The 2015 CASAL also found that nearly three-fourths of civilian leaders (73%) agree or strongly agree they feel informed about decisions that affect their work responsibilities (17% disagree or strongly disagree). Civilian leader attitudes toward information flow have trended more favorably since 2010 and have returned to a level that approximates 2009 results (74%). A sharp decline and gradual increase was observed from 2010 to 2014 (from 59% to 68% agreement). The 2015 FEVS reported comparable attitudes toward the level of information flow within organizations, as 68% of managers/senior leaders (55% of supervisors/team leaders) indicated satisfaction with their involvement in decisions that affect their work, and 66% of managers/senior leaders (49% of supervisors/team leaders) were satisfied with the information they received from management on what is going on in the organization.

**Figure 12. Army Civilian Leader Attitudes Toward Assigned Duties**



Three-fourths of civilian managers (77%) and first line supervisors (74%) agree they feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things (12% and 15% disagree, respectively). These attitudes reflect positive working conditions that foster innovative thought and action. These results are more favorable than those reported by the 2015 FEVS, which found agreement by 75% of managers/senior leaders and 64% of supervisors/team leaders.

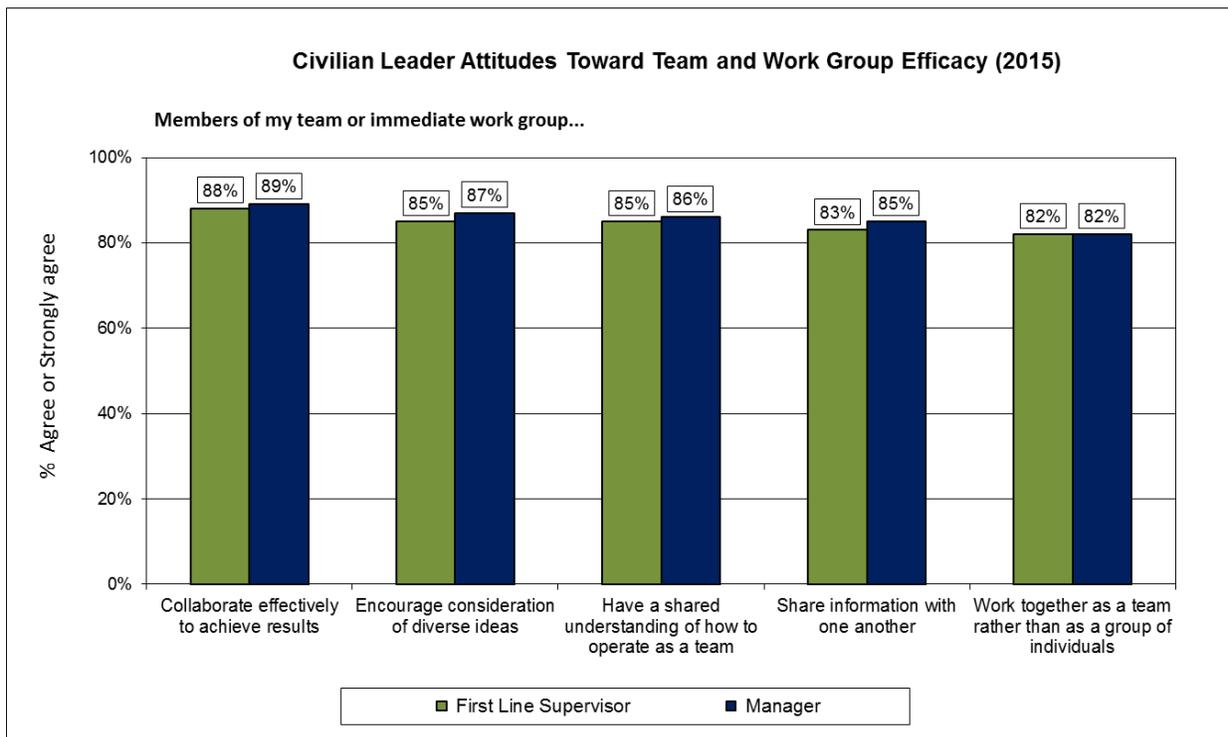
An area new to CASAL is civilian leader attitudes regarding resources to perform their assigned duties. Only 59% of managers and first line supervisors agree they have *access* to the right resources (e.g., people, materials, budget) to accomplish their duties to standard. More than one-fourth (27%) indicate disagreement, indicating a potential area for focus and improvement. These findings are corroborated by recent results of a similarly worded item on the 2015 FEVS. The 2015 FEVS reported that only 37% of managers/senior leaders and 40% of supervisors/team leaders agreed they have *sufficient* resources (for example, people, materials, budget) to get their job done (49% and 43% disagreed, respectively). These levels of agreement showed a steady decline from 2008 to 2013 (from 55% to 43% agreement) and have been only slightly more favorable since then. CASAL respondents were not asked to specify what resources they are lacking to perform their duties to standard. However, civilian respondents who reported experiencing stress from a high workload indicate that insufficient personnel is a

key source of the stress. Discussion of civilian experience with stress from high workloads is presented in section 2.3 of this report.

### Attitudes Toward Teams and Working Groups

An overwhelming majority (98%) of civilian leaders are committed to their team or immediate work group. This finding is a consistent trend across years and is one of the most favorable items assessed by CASAL. Effective teams are ones that collaborate effectively, hold a shared understanding of how to operate as a team, encourage consideration of diverse ideas, share information with one another, and work together as a team rather than as a group of individuals. More than four out of five civilian leaders (82% to 89%) rate their team or immediate work group favorably across these considerations (see Figure 13); between 6% and 9% indicate disagreement. These results offer favorable indications across Army organizations, that there are strong teams, positive working relationships, and civilian leaders with high levels of commitment to those with whom they work.

**Figure 13. Civilian Leader Attitudes Toward Team and Work Group Efficacy**



Results of the 2015 CASAL also show that 86% of civilian leaders agree they are proud to tell others they are a member of their unit or organization (6% disagree), and 84% agree they are confident in the ability of their unit/organization to perform its mission (8% disagree). Levels of confidence in one's organization to perform its mission have remained generally stable since 2012 (83 to 85% agreement) with the exception of an anomaly (79% agreement) observed in 2014.

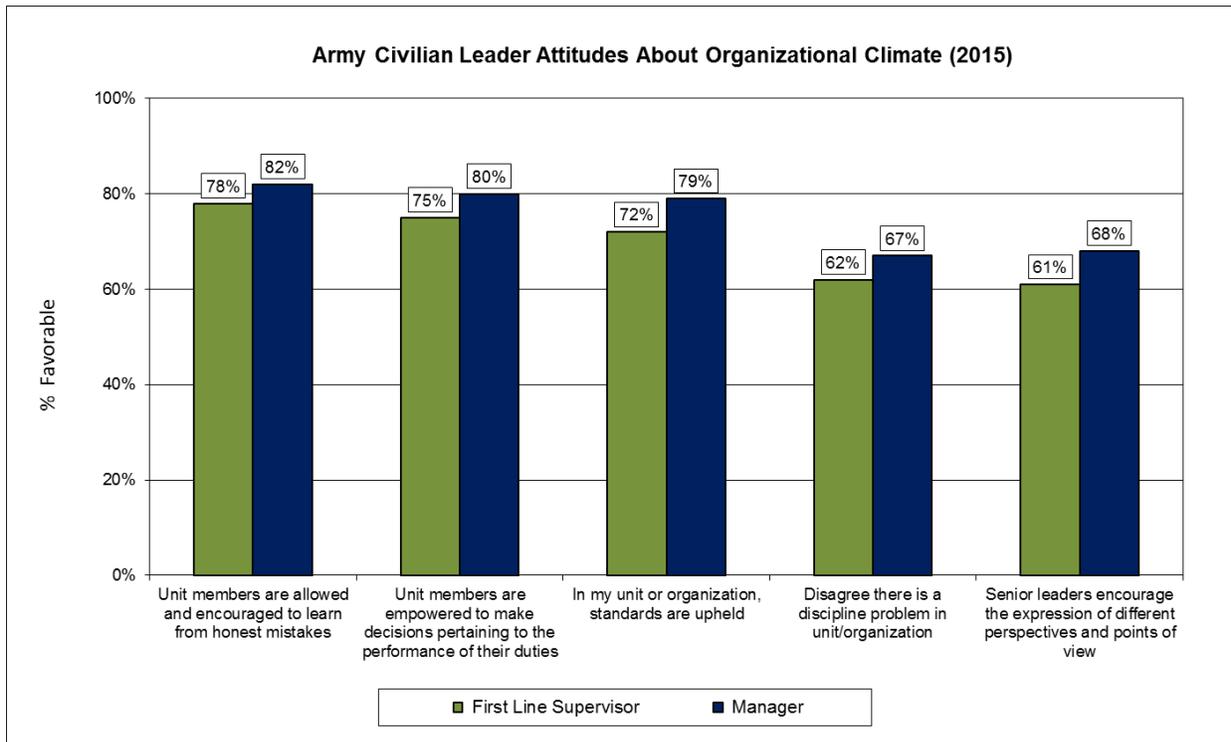
Similar favorable results were reported by the 2015 FEVS, which reported that 82% of managers/senior leaders and 73% of supervisors/team leaders agreed that employees in their work unit share job knowledge with each other. Additionally, a majority of these respondents (89% and 82%, respectively) rated the overall quality of work done by their work unit favorably.

### Indicators of Organizational Climate

CASAL findings reflect positive civilian leader attitudes regarding the organizational climates in which they operate. Three-fourths of civilian leaders (75%) agree that standards are upheld in their unit or organization (e.g., professional bearing, adherence to regulations) while 13% disagree. Further, nearly two-thirds (64%) disagree that a discipline problem exists (19% agree). Each of these indicators show no change since first assessed in 2012.

A majority of civilian leaders perceive the climate of their current organization to be supportive of learning, as 80% of managers and first line supervisors agree that members of their unit/organization are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes (10% disagree). The levels of agreement toward this issue have remained favorable but inconsistent over the past three years (76% agreement in 2013, 87% in 2014, and 80% in 2015). Another positive indicator of organizational learning is leader empowerment to perform one's assigned duties. More than three-fourths of civilian leaders (78%) agree that members of their unit/organization are empowered to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their duties (12% disagree). Civilian leader attitudes toward empowerment in their duties have trended more favorably since first assessed in 2013 (from 73% to 78% agreement). Finally, nearly two-thirds of civilian leaders agree that senior leaders in their unit/organization encourage the expression of different perspectives and points of view (18%). The 2015 results for manager and first line supervisor attitudes toward organizational climate factors are presented in Figure 14.

**Figure 14. Army Civilian Leader Attitudes About Organizational Climate**



In summary, civilian managers and first line supervisors generally hold favorable attitudes toward their assigned duties and the organizations in which they work. This is important, as research (e.g., Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Morgeson & Campion, 2003) has demonstrated that the characteristics of one’s job and working environment are positively associated with both individual outcomes (e.g., employee satisfaction, motivation, job performance) and organizational outcomes (e.g., turnover and absenteeism).

CASAL results demonstrate a positive relationship between civilian leaders’ attitudes toward their assigned duties (e.g., satisfaction with freedom or latitude in job, feeling informed about decisions affecting work responsibilities, feeling encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things) and their current level of morale ( $r$ 's = .49 to .57,  $p$ 's < .001). Similarly, civilian leaders’ attitudes toward their organization or work group (e.g., proud to tell others they are a member of the organization, confident in ability of organization to perform its mission, agreement organization’s members are empowered to make decisions) are also positively related to current levels of morale ( $r$ 's = .43 to .49,  $p$ 's < .001). Civilian leader respondents who perceive their immediate superior as effective at the competency *Creating a Positive Environment* also tend to assess these indicators of organizational climate favorably ( $r$ 's = .36 to .47,  $p$ 's < .001).

## 2.3 Workload Stress

High levels of work stress can negatively impact morale and effectiveness. Stress from overwork is an important factor in why employees decide to leave an organization (Branham, 2005; Partnership for Public Service [Partnership], 2010). Army leaders are expected to mitigate workload stress by contributing to an environment where subordinates can focus on accomplishing critical tasks (ADRP 6-22). Leaders assess the capabilities of their organization and set priorities or seek relief when demands exceed capacity. Effective leaders balance mission accomplishment with the welfare of followers. Ineffective leaders are likely to contribute to problems by poor scheduling of work, unmetered workload, not addressing role and interpersonal conflicts, and overlooking the effects of stress on subordinates (Committee on the Department of Homeland Security Workforce Resilience [Committee], 2013).

### Incidence of Workload Stress

Since 2009, CASAL has assessed and tracked trends on the severity of stress from high workloads that Army civilian leaders perceive in their jobs. A persistent trend is that about one in three civilian leaders indicate stress from a high workload is a serious problem (from a low of 30% in 2010 to a high of 37% in 2011).<sup>12</sup> Workload stress is not an isolated concern of civilian leaders, as uniformed leaders also identify it as a problem (25% of AC respondents). Since 2011, less than 10% of civilian leaders have reported that workload stress is not a problem at all. Results of the 2015 CASAL are consistent with prior years, and demonstrate this problem is not improving for civilian leaders (see Figure 15) or uniformed leaders (Riley et al., 2016).

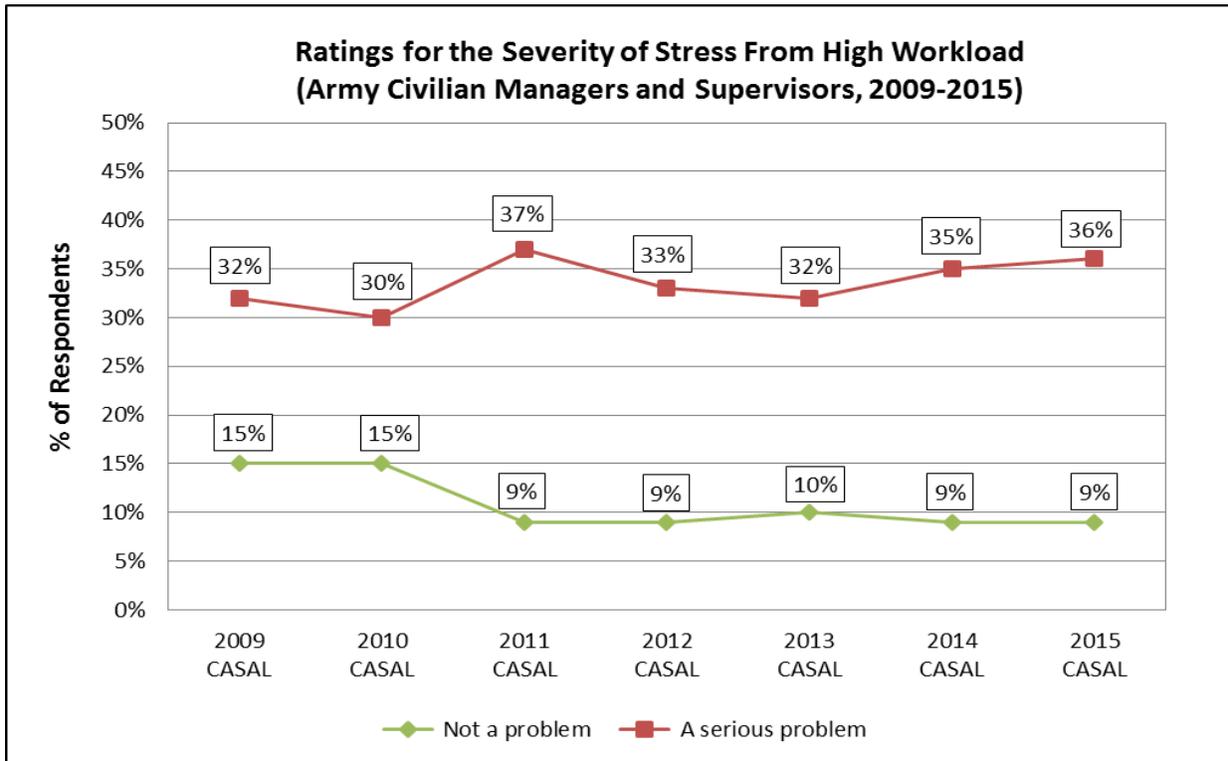
One in three civilian leaders perceive workload stress as a serious problem, and the problem is not improving.

In addition to these results, findings reported in the 2013 CASAL showed that of the civilian leaders experiencing moderate to serious stress from a high workload, more than half indicated the stress was negatively affecting their well-being (62%) and the quality of their work (51%) to a moderate, large, or great extent (Riley et al., 2014).

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<sup>12</sup> On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicates 'Not a problem at all' and 7 indicates 'A serious problem,' civilian leaders ( $M = 4.82$ ) differ significantly from AC uniformed leaders ( $M = 4.28$ ) in ratings for the severity of the problem of stress from a high workload.

**Figure 15. Army Civilian Ratings for the Severity of Stress From High Workload From 2009 to 2015**



Sources of Workload Stress

2015 CASAL respondents who rated their current stress from a high workload as a moderate to serious problem were asked to indicate what factors contribute to the stress. More than two-thirds of civilian leader respondents reported that insufficient personnel contributes to workload stress in their unit or organization, while nearly half reported not enough well-trained personnel (see Table 3). Other factors that contribute to stress include time constraints, poor guidance from senior leaders, poor organizational climate, and lack of physical resources or materials. Smaller percentages of civilian leaders indicated leaders do not account for peoples’ psychological fitness, that conflict exists among team members, or that that there is poor organization of work among team members. These factors also affect the workload stress experienced by AC uniformed leaders, as noted in the results presented in Table 3.

Civilian leaders primarily attribute problems with workload stress to shortages in personnel.

A sub-sample of civilian leader respondents commented on additional factors that contribute to workload stress, and frequently cited organizational factors such as a high OPTEMPO, funding or budget issues, challenges with communication or information flow, last minute planning or

changes, and additional taskings on top of mission requirements. The comments also cited leadership factors such as leaders holding unrealistic expectations; ineffective, inexperienced, and unqualified leaders; counter-productive leaders; micromanagement; and leaders overcommitting to new taskings pushed down from higher levels.

**Table 3. Reported Factors That Contribute to Workload Stress by Component**

<b>Factors That Contribute to Workload Stress (Rank Ordered by Frequency of Civilian Leader Respondents)</b>		
	<b>Army Civilian Leaders</b>	<b>Active Component Leaders (SGT-COL)</b>
Not enough personnel	71%	61%
Not enough well-trained personnel	46%	50%
Lack of time available	42%	47%
Poor guidance from senior leaders in higher HQ or Chain of Command	34%	37%
Poor organizational climate	27%	30%
Lack of physical resources or materials to accomplish the work	24%	31%
Leaders/managers who do not account for peoples psychological fitness	19%	25%
Conflict among team members	17%	14%
Poor organization of work among team members	15%	24%

*Note.* AC uniformed leader results are included for the purpose of comparison.

Findings from the 2015 FEVS also provided indications that personnel shortages are a key reason for workload stress among civilian supervisors. In these results, high workloads were evident in that only about half of managers/senior leaders (50%) and supervisors/team leaders (51%) agreed their workload was reasonable. This survey also reported that less than half of managers/senior leaders (45%) and supervisors/team leaders (39%) agreed their work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills.

#### Leadership Response to Stress From High Workload

There are several ways that civilian leaders can respond to stress from high workloads. One way to help subordinates is to foster a climate in which seeking help for stress-related issues is accepted and encouraged. The 2014 CASAL found that 59% of managers and 53% of first line supervisors agreed or strongly agreed that seeking help for stress-related problems (not limited to seeking help just at work) was accepted and encouraged in their unit or organization (12% and 13% disagreed, respectively), which is consistent with levels observed in 2013.

Another way civilian leaders can respond to high workloads is by taking action to mitigate or alleviate demands associated with subordinate stress. Results of the 2015 CASAL show that 58% of civilian respondents rate their civilian immediate superior effective at taking action to help subordinates manage excessive workload demands, while one in five (21%) rate their superior ineffective. At a more holistic level, only 30% of managers and first line supervisors agree that the leaders in their organization are effective at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates; one-fourth of respondents (25%) rate leaders in their organization ineffective in this regard.

Table 4 displays 2015 CASAL results for indicators of workload stress for Army civilian managers, first line supervisors, and AC uniformed leaders. Civilian leader respondents who report stress from a high workload as a serious problem tend to view organizational leaders as ineffective at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates ( $r = .40, p < .001$ ), and rate their immediate superior ineffective at taking action to help subordinates manage excessive workload demands ( $r = .25, p < .001$ ). Civilian managers report the highest incidence of workload stress as a serious problem, while first line supervisors provide the least favorable ratings for the effectiveness of leaders at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates. Stress from a high workload is also a problem for AC uniformed leaders. However, in comparison to civilian leader respondents, a smaller percentage of AC uniformed respondents report workload stress is a serious problem and a larger percentage rate unit leaders effective at supporting subordinates by addressing the stress.

**Table 4. Indicators of Stress From High Workload in Army Organizations**

Indicators of Workload Stress in Units and Organizations	First Line Supervisors	Managers	Active Component Leaders (SGT-COL)
Rating stress from a high workload as 'a serious problem' (6 or 7 on a 7-pt scale)	33%	40%	25%
Rating stress from a high workload as 'a moderate problem' (3, 4, or 5 on a 7-pt scale)	57%	52%	59%
Rating stress from a high workload as 'not a problem' (1 or 2 on a 7-pt scale)	10%	8%	16%
Effectiveness of leaders in unit/organization at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates	28% (25%)	33% (25%)	39% (20%)
Effectiveness of immediate superior at taking action to help subordinates manage excessive workload demands	58% (20%)	55% (20%)	68% (16%)

*Note.* The percentage of respondents rating these items ineffective or very ineffective are displayed in parentheses. AC leader results are included for the purpose of comparison.

The 2015 CASAL captured respondent comments regarding ways that leaders effectively lessen or limit the effects of workload stress in subordinates, as well as reasons why other leaders fail to do so.

**Effective Mitigation of Workload Stress.** The themes for positive actions that civilian leaders take to lessen workload stress fall within two broad categories, including problem-focused solutions to accomplish the mission, and methods to motivate subordinates and sustain morale and well-being. Within the first category of themes (problem-focused solutions), the most frequently cited work-related action for addressing workload stress was to simply spread the

Civilian leaders mitigate workload stress in subordinates by enacting problem-focused solutions to accomplish tasks, and attending to subordinate morale and well-being.

workload to evenly distribute the tasks or requirements. Another prominent theme was the use of effective communication and cross-talk within units and organizations, and included information sharing, two-way communication between leaders and unit members, and open-door policies where unit members could initiate dialogue with leaders. Comments also frequently

reflected actions by leaders to effectively plan and prioritize missions and taskings, and to anticipate high workloads so that the impact on unit members can be mitigated.

Other comments indicated effective leaders address subordinate stress by remaining engaged with subordinates by holding periodic team or group meetings to discuss and assess the current workload and listen to concerns. Depending on the type of work, these meetings, group huddles, or round table discussions could occur at a set time each week, or be pulled together as needed. Stress is also mitigated in organizations where senior leaders set realistic workloads and reasonable timelines for task completion, and remain flexible and adjust course as needed. Other comments noted that units and teams benefit when leaders personally get involved and assist subordinates in completing work during periods of high OPTEMPO. Comments also indicated that workload stress is mitigated when subordinates are empowered to act in their duties, including making decisions, setting their own schedules, and owning the tasks they perform. These situations are the opposite of micromanagement, and demonstrate trust in the subordinate to complete the work. Additionally, workload stress is mitigated in settings where effective teamwork or group collaboration and cooperation occur.

Less frequently mentioned themes indicated that effective leaders shield or protect subordinates from excessive taskings or workload demands; recognize and acknowledge workload stress and are willing to address it; delegate tasks appropriately (to the right personnel); fight for and provide the appropriate work resources; develop subordinates through coaching, mentoring, and job cross-training; ensure proper staffing levels and manage

personnel effectively; foster a positive work environment that tolerates honest mistakes; and hold all unit members accountable for contributing to work.

The second category of themes related to ways leaders motivate subordinates and sustain morale and well-being. The most frequently cited theme in this category related to leader encouragement or respect for subordinates' time away from work, including their use of personal leave, days off, family time, and work-life balance. Similarly, a prominent theme reflected respect for subordinates' time, whereby leaders allow for flex or comp time, enforce standard workday hours (e.g., everyone leaves at 1700), and limit overtime hours and work on weekends. Additional themes within this category included morale-building activities or events (e.g., picnics, parties, MWR activities), team-building activities or events, support for wellness, resilience, and mental health (e.g., stress classes), and recognition, awards, and incentives to motivate subordinates.

**Ineffective Mitigation of Workload Stress.** The themes for reasons civilian leaders are ineffective at taking action to lessen workload stress also fall within two broad categories, including leadership behaviors and unit or organizational issues. Respondents most frequently cited negative leadership behaviors and attributes, including leaders being overly focused on results with no regard for subordinate well-being, selfish leadership, micromanagement (e.g., lack of empowering or trusting subordinates), toxic leadership (i.e., a range of counter-productive behaviors), and use of threats and intimidation. Comments also frequently cited ineffective leadership in general, and noted behaviors such as poor planning, poor guidance, failure to lead by example, indecisiveness, and incompetence. Less frequently cited leadership themes included work not being equally distributed by leaders, leaders creating stress (by adding to the workload), and leaders saying 'yes' to additional requests when subordinates are already overtasked.

Respondents also commented on assumptions they hold about their leaders, including leaders not caring about workload stress in subordinates (i.e., they are aware of stress, but are unconcerned about it); leaders not being aware of workload stress in subordinates (i.e., they are not aware of the stress nor its impact on subordinates); leaders being negligent and complacent about workload stress (i.e., they do not acknowledge the stress, and may or may not be aware of it), and leaders being passive and complacent about workload stress (i.e., leaders acknowledge the stress, but are unable or unwilling to address it).

Ineffective and disengaged leadership, personnel and resource shortages, and poor organizational communication are perceived to exacerbate stress from a high workload.

The most prominent themes that aligned with unit or organizational issues included personnel shortages, resource shortages, and poor organizational communication in general. Comments on personnel shortages noted that demands and workload continue to increase while the number of personnel remains the same or decreases. Other comments noted that leaders hold the same high expectations and aggressive timelines for organizations that are not fully staffed. Some respondents indicated that leaders are unable or unwilling to hire new employees and that the hiring process takes too long to alleviate personnel shortage issues. Comments on resource shortages frequently mentioned that limited funding, physical, and/or technical resources cause difficulties in completing tasks in a timely and satisfactory manner. Additionally, comments indicated that leaders respond to personnel and physical resource shortages by attempting to foster a climate of “do more with less.”

Examples of poor organizational communication include challenges with two-way communication in general between leaders and subordinates, leaders not clearly communicating guidance or instructions, and leaders not soliciting feedback from personnel or not using the feedback they do receive to address workload problems. Comments less frequently addressed other challenges in their organizations including inconsistent standards and objectives, bureaucracy preventing leaders from addressing workload stress, and organizational members feeling discouraged from speaking up about workload stress problems.

## **2.4 Civilian Engagement**

Engagement is the individual involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm for work, stemming from day-to-day experiences of job involvement, organizational commitment, and intrinsic motivation (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). More simply, engagement represents the level of commitment one has for their organization and the level of initiative they apply to their duties. When measured, items assessing engagement reflect employees’ effort directed to their work and organization (Macey & Schneider, 2008), feelings of responsibility and commitment to job performance (Britt & Adler, 1999), and their physical, cognitive, and emotional experiences during work (Kahn, 1990).

Research has shown that engagement is associated with a range of important positive outcomes that effective organizations work to improve, such as reduced turnover, increased safety, increased overall satisfaction (Harter et al., 2002), less sick leave used, fewer EEO complaints, less time lost due to work-related illness or injury (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board; MSPB, 2012), increased performance (Harter et al., 2002; Schneider, Macey, Barbera, & Martin, 2009), and reduced burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Thus, Army organizations with high levels of engagement can save the Army valuable resources and ensure

mission accomplishment. The President’s Management Agenda (Donovan, 2014) sets goals for all federal agencies to reach engagement index scores on the FEVS of at least 67% in 2016.

The 2015 CASAL assessed engagement through 10 items that were chosen based on their relevance to engagement constructs in the research literature and their similarity to items on previously developed and validated engagement measures (Harter et al., 2002; Schaufeli et al., 2006). The 10 engagement items and their respective facets (i.e., categories) are presented in Table 5. Results for these individual items are also discussed in more detail in their respective sections of this report.

**Table 5. Facets of Engagement and Associated CASAL Items**

<b>Engagement Facet</b>	<b>CASAL Item</b>
<i>Perceived work conditions</i>	I know what is expected of me in my current position.
	I have access to the right resources (e.g., people, materials, budget) to accomplish my duties to standard.
	Members of my team or immediate work group collaborate effectively to achieve results
	How effective is your immediate superior at balancing subordinate needs with mission requirements?
<i>Attitudes towards assigned duties</i>	I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.
	How satisfied are you with the amount of freedom or latitude you have in the conduct of your duties?
	My assigned duties are important to my unit or organization.
<i>Leader development</i>	How often does your immediate superior take the time to talk with you about how you could improve your duty performance?
	How often does your immediate superior take the time to talk with you about how you are doing in your work?
	How effective has your operational experience (work experience) been in preparing you to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility?

Army civilian leader results for these 10 indicators of engagement are presented in Figure 16. CASAL uses varying response option scales to assess engagement items, as noted for each set of items. The indicators with the largest percentages of favorable responses include agreement that respondents’ assigned duties are important to the unit or organization, respondent agreement that they know what is expected of them in their current positions, and agreement that members of respondents’ teams or immediate work groups collaborate effectively to

achieve results. In comparison, the least favorable indicators are agreement that respondents have access to the right resources (e.g., people, materials, budget) and the frequency with which development is received from one's immediate superior (which occurs rarely or occasionally for most).

**Figure 16. Army Civilian Leader Results for Engagement Items**

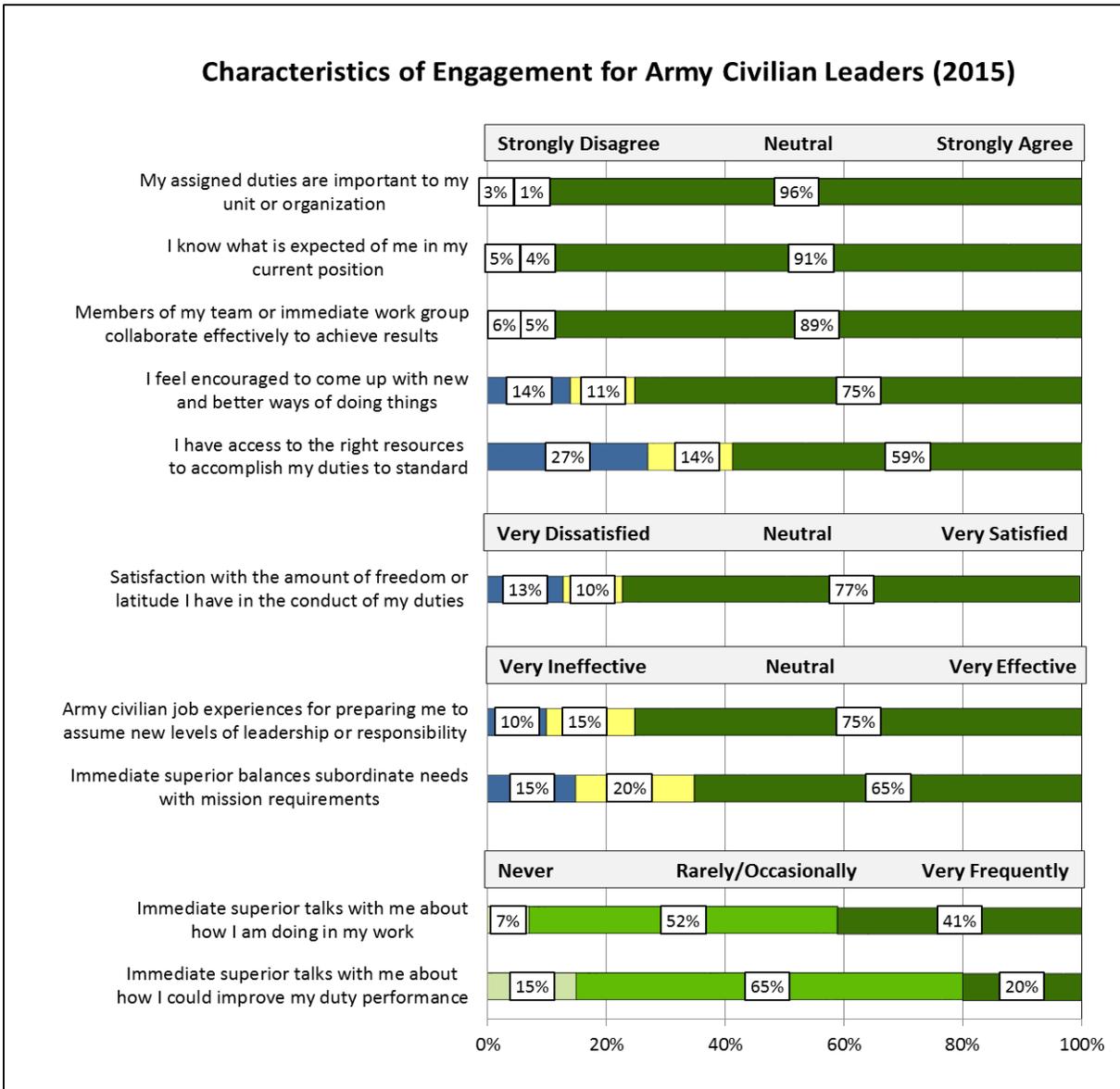
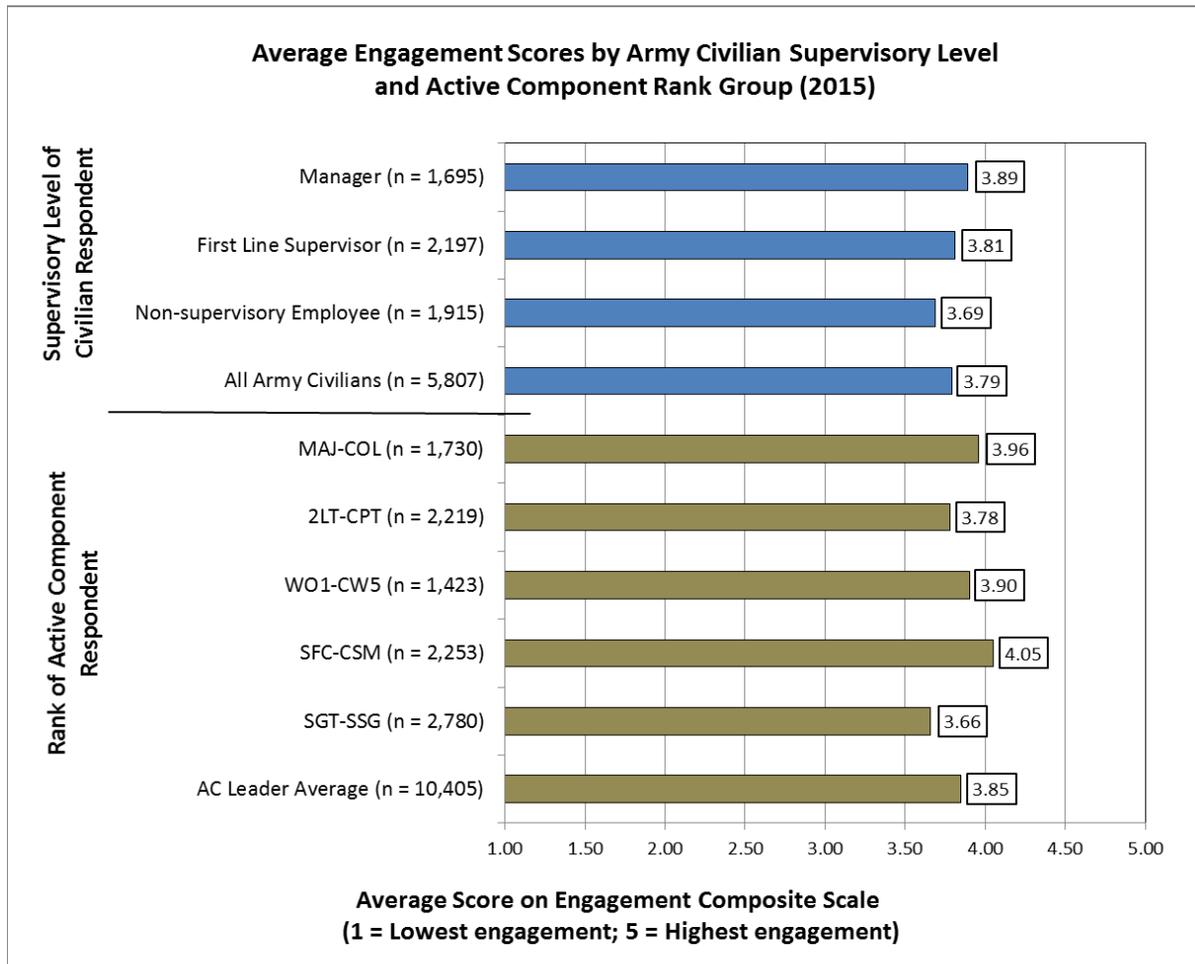


Figure 17 displays the means based on a composite scale score<sup>13</sup> of engagement for Army civilian supervisory levels; for comparison, the means for AC uniformed leader rank groups and Army non-supervisory civilian employees are also presented. The scores for Army civilian respondents demonstrate general consistency across a fairly narrow range of means, where managers rank the highest ( $M = 3.89$ ), followed by first line supervisors ( $M = 3.81$ ), and non-supervisory employees ( $M = 3.69$ ). Overall, the engagement mean score for Army civilians is slightly lower ( $M = 3.79$ ) compared to AC uniformed leader respondents ( $M = 3.85$ ).

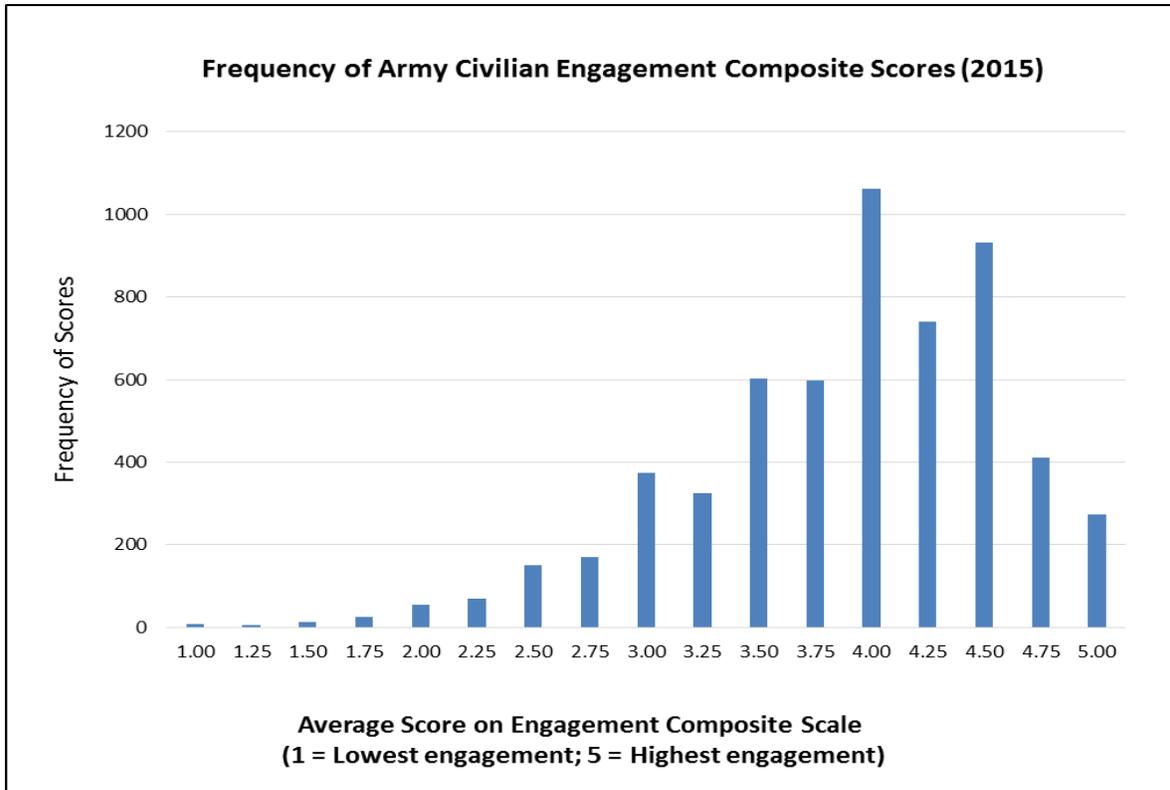
**Figure 17. Engagement Indicators by Army Civilian Supervisory Levels and Active Component Rank Groups (2015)**



<sup>13</sup> Ten items that reflect engagement were combined into a single scale composite variable. The composite variable included the items presented in Figure 16. Values across these 10 items were averaged to produce a single score with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. Scale scores of '5' indicate a respondent's average rating across all 10 items equals 5 (i.e., the highest rating for agreement with engagement). A reliability analysis showed that this set of items demonstrates strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .86$ ). Reliability indices above .80 are generally considered acceptable for a measurement scale while values greater than .90 are considered very strong (Guion, 1998).

Figure 18 displays the frequency distribution of scores on the engagement composite scale and shows that across the continuum of values, only small percentages of Army civilians report low engagement. The high frequency of scores at 4.00 and higher is a positive result, as it indicates a large proportion of Army civilians report high levels of engagement. Again, the average score of 3.79 for Army civilians indicates that a majority rate engagement items favorably.

**Figure 18. Frequency of Composite Score for Ten Engagement Indicators Assessed by CASAL**



Other recent Army-wide studies provide greater depth in understanding engagement across the Army civilian workforce. The FEVS assesses engagement using three subscales: Intrinsic Work Experience, Supervisors, and Leaders Lead. In 2015, 70% of all Army civilian employees responded positively to the five items on the FEVS Intrinsic Work Experience subscale<sup>14</sup> (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2015). The level of favorable responses for this subscale has remained consistent since 2013 (69% to 70%), after showing a small decline from the previous two years (73% favorable in 2011 and 2012).

<sup>14</sup> The FEVS Intrinsic Work Experience subscale consists of the following items: I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things; My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment; I know what is expected of me on the job; My talents are used well in the workplace; I know how my work relates to the agency’s goals and priorities.

Additionally, the FEVS Supervisors subscale consists of five items that address supervisors supporting employee development, trust, and respect.<sup>15</sup> Levels of favorable responses to this subscale have remained fairly stable over the past five years (between 69% and 72% from 2011-2015). Notably, results for Army civilian employees from these two FEVS engagement indices (Intrinsic Work Experience and Supervisors) exceed the President's Management Agenda of obtaining 67% favorability ratings.

The FEVS Leaders Lead subscale consists of five items that assess perceptions of senior leader integrity, communication, and effectiveness.<sup>16</sup> Army civilian employee's positive responses to the FEVS Leaders Lead subscale have declined from 59% in 2011 to 50% in 2014, with a small increase to 52% in 2015. Army civilian employees fall below the acceptable threshold of 67% per the President's Management Agenda on the FEVS Leaders Lead subscale of engagement. The Leaders Lead subscale, with results consistently below an acceptable level, parallel CASAL results that identify a need for civilian leader improvement in the Leads category of competencies, specifically with regard to civilian leaders communicating effectively and generating motivation and commitment. Notably, while CASAL results reflect assessments of one's immediate superior, the FEVS Leaders Lead subscale assesses respondent attitudes about senior leaders above the immediate level.

A follow-up to the 2015 FEVS was conducted with Army civilians who participated in focus group discussions and completed questionnaires about engagement. Results of this investigation showed that the majority (89% to 94%) of the participating civilian employees, civilian supervisors, and military supervisors of civilians responded favorably to items that measured work-related job satisfaction (Army Civilian Workforce Engagement Report, 2015).<sup>17</sup>

Conclusions drawn from the broader results of this study noted that Army civilian employees are largely satisfied with their jobs, though trust in their senior leaders and managers is declining, and civilians desire to be more involved and informed in decision-making processes. Items assessed by the 2015 CASAL provide supporting findings for each of these themes:

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<sup>15</sup> The FEVS Supervisors subscale consists of the following items: Supervisors in my work unit support employee development; My supervisor listens to what I have to say; My supervisor treats me with respect; I have trust and confidence in my supervisor; Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor?

<sup>16</sup> The FEVS Leaders Lead subscale consists of the following items: In my organization, senior leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce; My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity; Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization; Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manger directly above you immediate supervisor?; I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders.

<sup>17</sup> The Work-Related Job Satisfaction subscale consist of the following items: The work that I do is important; I understand how the work I do supports the mission of my organization and the Army; I like the kind of work I do; I know what is expected of me at work.

- Job satisfaction is evidenced by 75% to 96% of civilian leaders who indicate agreement that their assigned duties are important, know what is expected in their current position, feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things, and perceive effective collaboration within their team or immediate work group.
- Distrust in senior leaders is evidenced in relatively smaller percentages of managers (57%), first line supervisors (49%), and non-supervisory employees (43%) who report having high or very high trust in their superior two levels higher; 20% to 29% report low or very low trust. However, regarding the decline in this type of trust, CASAL results show no notable change since first assessed in 2013.
- A lack of involvement in decision-making processes is evidenced by only 62% of non-supervisory employees who agree that they feel informed about decisions that affect their work responsibilities; larger percentages of first line supervisors (69%) and managers (78%) indicate agreement.

Other conclusions from this study were that many Army civilian employees distrust the fairness of processes for assessing, recognizing, and rewarding performance, and are dissatisfied with the support they receive for professional development (Army Civilian Workforce Engagement Report, 2015). Taken together, recent investigations of Army civilian engagement provide evidence that engagement is moderate with room and opportunities for improvement.

#### Relationships Between Engagement and Other Civilian Attitudes

Results of the 2015 CASAL confirm that Army civilian leader engagement is positively and significantly related to important outcomes such as an individual's morale ( $r = .63, p < .001$ ) and career satisfaction ( $r = .54, p < .001$ ), but also to a range of other relevant factors. As expected, engagement is strongly related to Army civilian leader attitudes toward their assigned duties and conditions within their organization (e.g., feeling informed about decisions affecting work, confidence in organization to perform its mission, satisfaction with the quality of civilian and military leadership in the organization, trust among unit members, and standards being upheld). Engagement is also strongly related to a respondent's assessment of his/her immediate superior's demonstration of leadership (e.g., core leader competencies, leader attributes, mission command, trust-building behavior, and lack of counter-productive or 'toxic' leadership) and other attitudes toward his/her superior (e.g., level of trust). Tables 6 and 7 display the strength of these positive relationships for both Army civilian leader respondents and AC uniformed leader respondents.

**Table 6. Correlations of Engagement Composite With Assessment of Immediate Superior**

<b>Relationship Between Respondent Engagement and Assessment of Immediate Superior as a Leader</b>		
	<b>Army Civilian Leader Respondents (n = 3,363)</b>	<b>Active Component Respondents (n = 7,768)</b>
Immediate superior demonstrates mission command philosophy	.70	.68
Immediate superior demonstrates core leader competencies	.69	.67
Immediate superior exhibits trust-building behavior	.69	.67
Effectiveness of immediate superior at developing subordinates	.68	.65
Immediate superior demonstrates leader attributes	.65	.63
Current level of trust in immediate superior	.65	.62
Agreement immediate superior is an effective leader	.64	.61
Immediate superior does not exhibit counter-productive leadership	.62	.56

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

**Table 7. Correlations of Engagement Composite With Attitudes Toward Job and Unit**

<b>Relationship Between Respondent Engagement and Attitudes Toward Job and Unit Characteristics</b>		
	<b>Army Civilian Leader Respondents (n = 3,100)</b>	<b>Active Component Respondents (n = 8,391)</b>
Feel informed about decisions that affect work responsibilities	.72	.74
Confident in the ability of unit or organization to perform its mission	.62	.67
Senior leaders in unit or organization encourage the expression of different perspectives and points of view	.64	.64
Satisfaction with the quality of military leadership in unit/organization	.49	.65
Satisfaction with the quality of civilian leadership in unit/organization	.62	.49
Current level of trust among members of unit or organization	.60	.63
Senior leaders in unit or organization place trust in their subordinates	.64	.62
Standards are upheld in unit or organization	.58	.58
Effectiveness of leaders in unit or organization at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates	.57	.58

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

## 2.5 Trust

Results of the 2015 CASAL support the Army's emphasis on trust within units and organizations and leader effectiveness in building trust.

The following points summarize the key findings related to trust in the Army:

- At a broad level, four out of five Army civilians describe the current level of trust among members of their unit or organization as moderate, high or very high; one in five report low or very low trust among unit members. The reported levels of trust by Army civilians are consistent with those observed since 2013.
- More than two-thirds of civilian managers and first line supervisors report having high or very high trust in their subordinates. Nearly two-thirds of all Army civilian respondents report having high or very high trust in their peers and their immediate superior. High levels of trust in one's superior two levels up is less common. Non-supervisory employees report the lowest levels of high trust in others. The reported levels of trust in others remain unchanged over the past three years.
- Sixty-two percent of Army civilians rate their civilian immediate superior effective or very effective at building trust while 21% rate them ineffective. A majority of civilian leaders (57% to 80%) are also viewed favorably in demonstrating trust-related behaviors such as showing trust in subordinates' abilities, following through on commitments, looking out for subordinates' welfare, and correcting conditions in units that hinder trust.
- Army civilians are more likely to trust superiors who *Create a Positive Environment*, demonstrate *Sound Judgment*, display *Empathy*, and *Lead by Example*. Civilian leaders who *Build Trust* are viewed as positively impacting subordinate commitment, motivation, and work quality, as well as unit or team cohesion.

### Trust in Army Units and Organizations

Army civilians continue to report moderately favorable perceptions of trust at the unit or organizational level, as demonstrated by several indicators. As a broad assessment, 43% of Army civilians report trust is high or very high among members of their unit or organization, while 36% indicate there is moderate trust. Low trust is reported by 16% of managers, 21% of first line supervisors, and 26% of nonsupervisory employees. Results are comparable to levels of trust assessed by CASAL since 2013.

Previous CASAL results have demonstrated that trust exists in Army organizations where unit members exhibit supportive behaviors such as treating others with respect, doing their share of

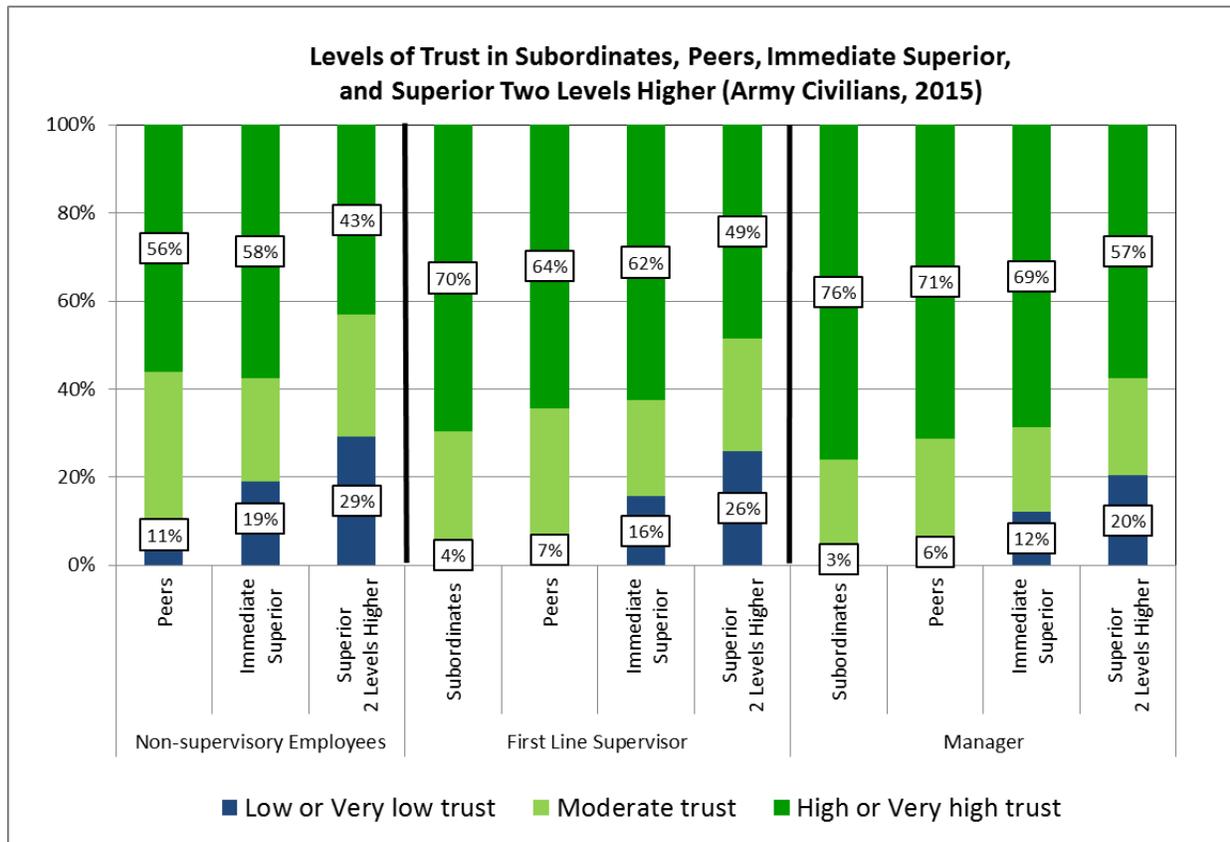
the work, delivering on what they say they will do, and helping protect others from psychological harm. Organizations promote trust through fostering positive work climates that emphasize ethical conduct, adherence to standards, learning from honest mistakes, and decentralized decision-making (Riley et al., 2014). Current results reaffirm the positive relationships between these organizational characteristics and the perceived level of trust among unit members, as rated by Army civilians:

- Trust tends to be high in organizations with climates that empower unit members to make decisions pertaining to their duties ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ), allow and encourage learning from honest mistakes ( $r = .57, p < .001$ ), encourage new and better ways of doing things ( $r = .50, p < .001$ ), and uphold standards ( $r = .62, p < .001$ ).
- Army civilian perceptions that senior leaders in their organization place trust in their subordinates and encourage expression of different perspectives and points of view are also related to the perceived level of trust among unit members ( $r$ 's = .63 and .61,  $p < .001$ ).
- These types of factors (e.g., a climate for learning and continual improvement) represent conditions that senior leaders can promote to foster trust in their organizations.

Army civilian ratings for the level of trust they have in others also continue to reflect the presence of positive relationships in Army units and organizations. Figure 19 displays results for the reported levels of trust that Army civilian managers, first line supervisors, and non-supervisory employees have in others. A majority of Army civilians report having moderate, high, or very high trust in those with whom they work and interact. These results have trended slightly more favorably since first assessed in 2013 (+1% to +3%). A consistent pattern is that larger percentages of civilian leaders report high or very high trust in their subordinates than in their peers or superiors. For each civilian supervisory group, smaller percentages of respondents report high or very high trust in their superior two levels up.

A majority of Army civilians report having high or very high trust in their immediate superior. The relative low frequency of distrust in one's immediate superior is further supported by results of the 2015 FEVS, which reported that 71% of civilian supervisor and 63% of non-supervisor respondents agreed with the statement 'I have trust and confidence in my supervisor' while 14% and 19% disagreed, respectively (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2015).

**Figure 19. Civilian Leader Ratings of Trust in Subordinates, Peers, and Superiors**



CASAL results demonstrate that Army civilians’ level of trust in their civilian immediate superior is significantly related to the extent the superior exhibits two leadership competencies and two attributes. Specifically, a civilian leader’s effectiveness in *Creating a Positive Environment*, demonstrating *Sound Judgment*, demonstrating *Empathy*, and *Leading by Example* explain a

Subordinates trust leaders who *Create a Positive Environment*, demonstrate *Sound Judgment*, display *Empathy*, and *Lead by Example*. significant amount of variance in the level of trust Army civilian subordinates have in that leader ( $R^2 = .81, p < .001$ )<sup>18</sup>. These characteristics, along with demonstrating the competency *Builds Trust*, exemplify a civilian leader’s trustworthiness (from subordinates’ standpoint).

About half of Army civilians report high or very high trust in their superior two levels up (i.e., the individual directly above their immediate superior). Low trust in one’s superior two levels up is reported by 20% of managers, 26% of first line supervisors, and 29% of non-supervisory

<sup>18</sup> A stepwise multiple regression was conducted to identify the core leader competencies (excluding *Builds Trust*) and leader attributes that account for the largest amount of variance in Army civilian respondent ratings of trust in their civilian immediate superior. The competency *Builds Trust* is significantly related to the Trust composite scale ( $r = .89, p < .001$ ) and is included as an item that comprises the scale.

employees.<sup>19</sup> Previous responses from the 2013 CASAL identified reasons for low or very low trust in superiors two levels higher, and reasons tended to center on communication issues (e.g., lack of communication, ineffective or unclear guidance), character or integrity issues (e.g., dishonesty, ethical breaches, inconsistent standards) and ineffective leadership behaviors (e.g., self-interest, favoritism, poor judgment, and lack of presence).

A new area assessed by the 2015 CASAL is collective felt trust, which refers to shared feelings by unit members who work together and who come to agree on the extent to which they are trusted by senior leaders (Deutsch Salamon & Robinson, 2008). The collective perception is likely to be prompted by procedures or systems implemented in the organization as well as by leadership behavior. Collective felt trust addresses unit members' global perception regarding the extent that the organization trusts them (i.e., *they trust us*) as opposed to more proximal perceptions of trust (i.e., *my immediate superior trusts me*) or broader, generalized perceptions of trust in units (i.e., *we all trust each other*). Results show that 64% of Army civilians agree that senior leaders in their unit or organization place trust in their subordinates (19% disagree). Favorable responses differ by supervisory level, as larger percentages of managers (70%) and first line supervisors (63%) indicate agreement that senior leaders trust subordinates than do non-supervisory employees (58%).

64% of civilian leaders favorably perceive collective felt trust, the shared feelings among unit members that they are trusted by senior leaders.

Perceptions of collective felt trust are positively related to several characteristics of effective working environments. Specifically, when trust from senior leaders is perceived, respondents also indicate agreement that senior leaders encourage the expression of different perspectives and points of view ( $r = .83, p < .001$ ); that unit members are empowered to make decisions pertaining to their duties ( $r = .66, p < .001$ ); that unit members are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes ( $r = .60, p < .001$ ); and that standards are upheld in the organization ( $r = .56, p < .001$ ). Perceptions of collective felt trust are also related to individual job characteristics conducive to disciplined initiative (see ADP 6-0), including satisfaction with the freedom or latitude to perform one's duties ( $r = .58, p < .001$ ); feeling encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things ( $r = .57, p < .001$ ); unit pride ( $r = .47, p < .001$ ); and confidence in one's unit ( $r = .49, p < .001$ ).

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<sup>19</sup> The 2015 CASAL did not collect the position, rank, or cohort of respondents' superior two levels up.

## Civilian Leader Effectiveness in Building Trust

Leadership doctrine (ADRP 6-22) states that Army leaders build trust to mediate relationships and encourage commitment among followers. This starts with respect among people and grows from both common experiences and shared understanding. Trust establishes conditions for effective influence and for creating a positive environment (Department of the Army, 2012b).

In 2015, 62% of Army civilians rate their civilian immediate superior effective or very effective at the competency *Builds Trust*, which is consistent with findings observed since 2011 (60%-63% effective). The results for several other indices of civilian leader effectiveness in building and sustaining trust among followers are presented in Figure 20. These results reflect subordinate Army civilian assessments of their civilian immediate superior's effectiveness in behaviors that include demonstrating trust in subordinates' abilities; honoring commitments to others; positively correcting unit climate conditions that hinder trust; looking out for subordinate welfare; and refraining from displaying favoritism.

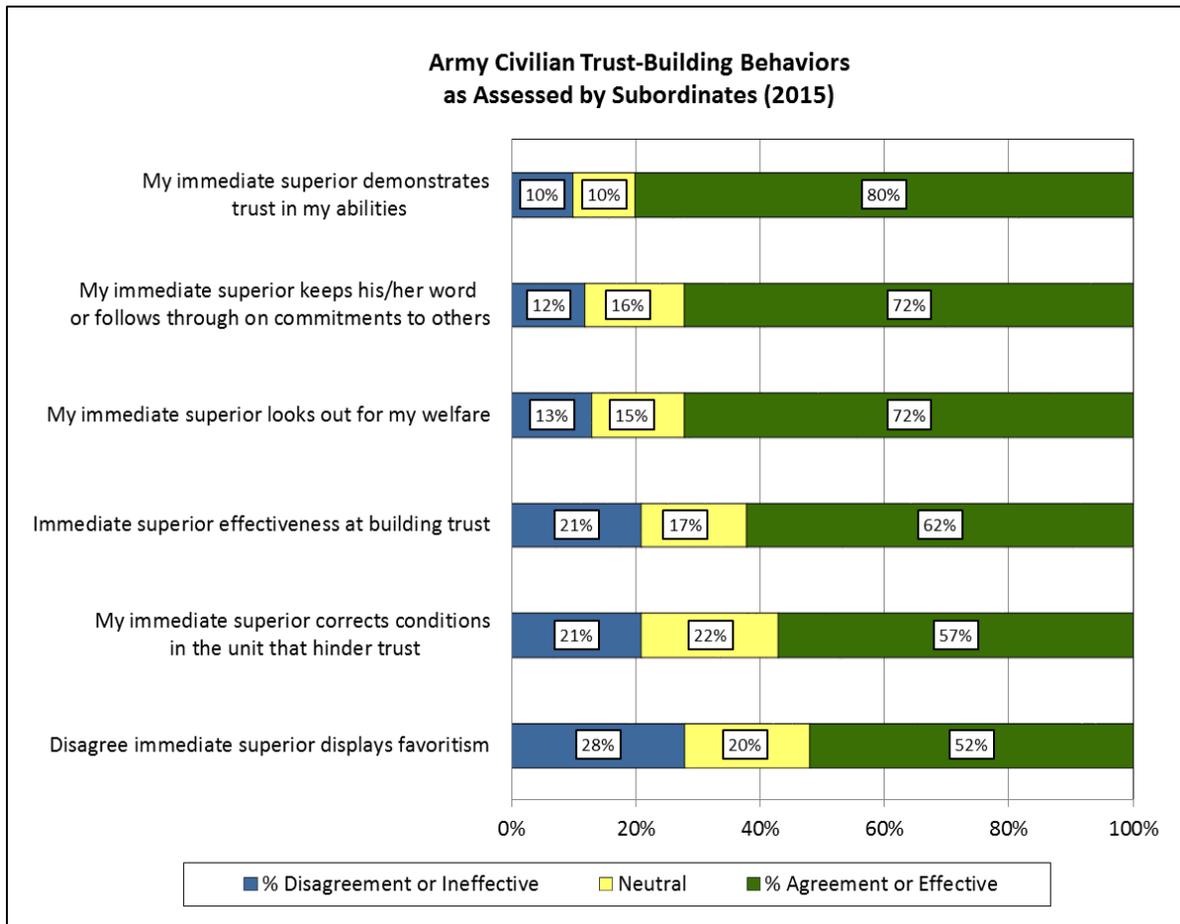
The results for these behaviors are consistent with results observed over the past three years (within 3%). The largest percentages of Army civilian subordinates continue to rate their civilian immediate superior effective in demonstrating trust in subordinates' abilities, keeping their word/following through on commitments to others, and looking out for subordinate welfare.

As described in previous CASAL reports, an area where civilian leaders continue to be assessed below a two-thirds favorability threshold relates to correcting conditions in the unit that hinder trust<sup>20</sup>. Army leadership doctrine states that leaders build and sustain climates of trust by assessing factors or conditions that promote or hinder trust, and correct team members who undermine trust with their attitudes or actions (Department of the Army, 2012b). CASAL results have identified poor communication (or lack of communication), discipline problems, and favoritism or inconsistent standards as conditions that hinder trust in Army organizations. Leaders who demonstrate effective leadership (i.e., character, leading by example, empathy), uphold standards, enforce discipline, and hold others accountable promote trust in environments where negative conditions may threaten it.

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<sup>20</sup> The percentage of Army civilians indicating agreement/strong agreement that their civilian immediate superior corrects conditions that hinder trust (57%) is significantly lower than AC uniformed leader agreement (71%).

**Figure 20. Indicators of Trust in Immediate Superiors by Civilian Leaders**



Another area where civilian leaders are rated below a two-thirds favorable threshold is with regard to demonstrating favoritism. Favoritism, preferential treatment, and inconsistent enforcement of standards are factors that hinder trust by creating climates of perceived inequality. Leaders who show favoritism are not viewed as effective in the competency *Creates a Positive Environment* ( $r = -.53, p < .001$ ). Results of the 2012 CASAL defined favoritism as reflecting cronyism, unfair personnel actions, and decisions made to benefit a select group. Examples included offering unfair advantages or benefits to friends or close colleagues to the detriment of others, unequal enforcement of standards and discipline, and use of discretion in workplace justice.

Finally, civilian leaders who build trust are also viewed as demonstrating effective leadership and as having a positive impact on their organization and followers. CASAL uses a composite scale score<sup>21</sup> to examine the relationship between trust building behavior, effective leadership,

<sup>21</sup> Six items that reflect behaviors associated with immediate superior effectiveness in demonstrating trust were combined into a single scale composite score. The composite variable included the items presented in Figure 20.

and subordinate and organizational outcomes. Army civilians who rate their civilian immediate superior favorably across the six behaviors (the trust composite score) also rate their immediate superior effective in demonstrating the core leader competencies ( $r = .88, p < .001$ ), the leader attributes ( $r = .86, p < .001$ ), and agree their immediate superior is an effective leader ( $r = .85, p < .001$ ). Similarly, trust-building behaviors are positively associated with

Civilian leaders effective at *Building Trust* are perceived as positively impacting subordinate motivation, work quality, commitment, engagement, and morale.

favorable subordinate attitudes including the leader's effect on subordinate motivation, work quality, commitment to the Army, engagement, and morale ( $r$ 's = .72 to .82,  $p$ 's < .001). These findings continue to demonstrate the importance of building trust, as civilian leaders who are effective in trust-building behaviors have a positive effect on their followers and the organization.

## 2.6 Mission Command

Mission command is a central tenet underpinning how the Army currently operates. It represents a philosophical shift that emphasizes the centrality of the commander and the decentralization of capability and authority in increasingly complex operational environments (Perkins, 2012). Army doctrine on mission command (ADP 6-0) describes the mission command philosophy as the exercise of authority and direction by the commander, using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent, to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations (Department of the Army, 2012a).

The 2013 CASAL was the first year to include assessment of Army leader effectiveness in demonstrating principles of the mission command philosophy and the extent current operational climates support mission command in practice. A goal has been to capture insights to support the Army's understanding and movement toward *Strategic End 1*: All Army leaders understand and practice the mission command philosophy (Department of the Army, 2013b). The six principles of the mission command philosophy as outlined in ADP 6-0, and associated CASAL items are presented in Table 8.

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Values across these six items were averaged to produce a single score with a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5. Scale scores of '5' indicate a respondent's average rating across all six items equals 5 (i.e., the highest rating that immediate superior demonstrates trust-building behaviors). A reliability analysis showed that this set of items demonstrates very strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Reliability indices above .80 are generally considered acceptable for a measurement scale while values greater than .90 are considered very strong (Guion, 1998).

**Table 8. Principles of the Mission Command Philosophy and Associated CASAL Items**

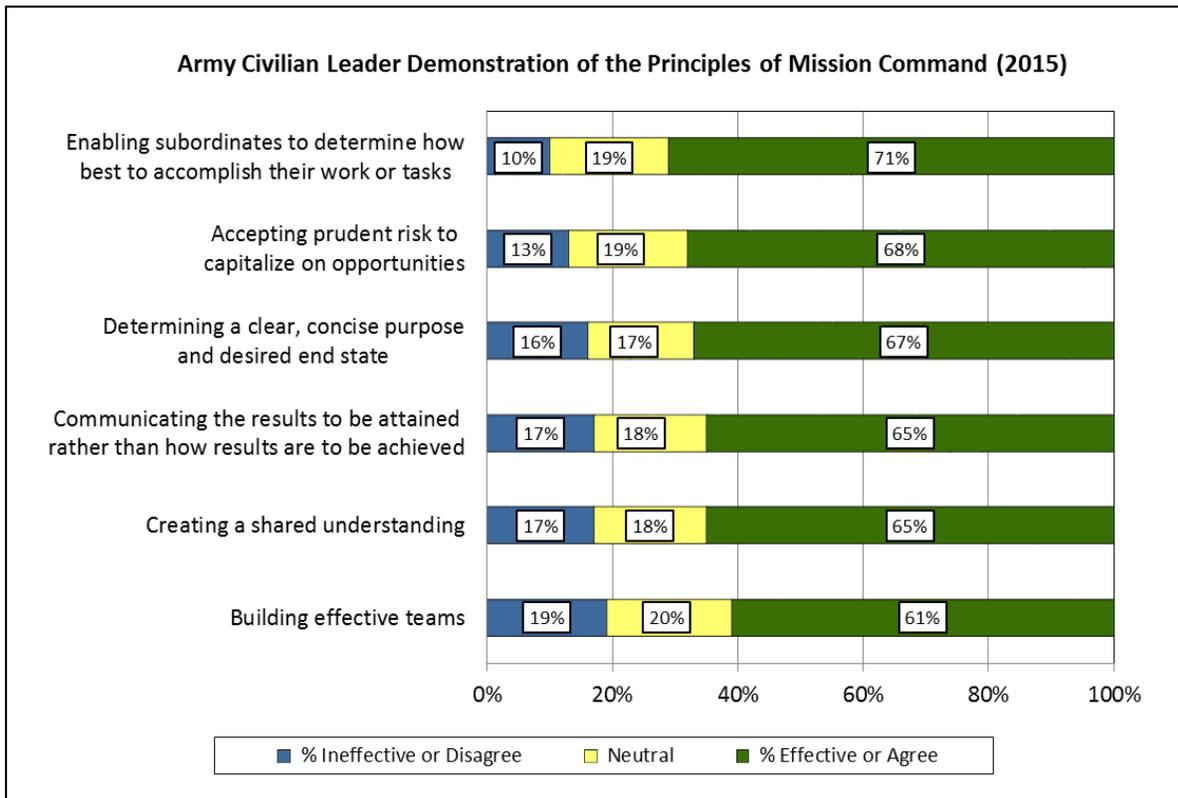
<b>Mission Command Principles ADP 6-0</b>	<b>CASAL Item “How effective is your immediate superior at...”</b>
<i>Build Cohesive Teams through Mutual Trust</i>	Building effective teams
<i>Create Shared Understanding</i>	Creating a shared understanding
<i>Provide a Clear Commander’s Intent</i>	Determining a clear, concise purpose and desired end state
<i>Exercise Disciplined Initiative</i>	Enables subordinates to determine how best to accomplish their work or tasks ( <i>Agreement item</i> )
<i>Use Mission Orders</i>	Communicating results to be attained rather than how results are to be achieved
<i>Accept Prudent Risk</i>	Accepting prudent risk to capitalize on opportunities

Civilian Leader Demonstration of the Mission Command Philosophy

A majority of Army civilians rate their civilian immediate superior favorably in demonstrating behaviors that reflect the six principles of mission command (see Figure 21). However, results of only three of six behaviors exceed a two-thirds favorability threshold. Nearly three-fourths of civilian respondents (71%) agree or strongly agree their immediate superior enables subordinates to determine how best to accomplish their work or tasks. This is an important indication that Army civilians are given the latitude to exercise disciplined initiative. Two-thirds of civilian leaders are rated effective at determining a clear, concise purpose and desired end state (67%), and accepting prudent risk to capitalize on opportunities (68%). Less than two-thirds of civilian leaders are viewed as effective in communicating the results to be attained rather than how results are to be achieved (65%), creating a shared understanding (65%), and building effective teams (61%). The results for each of these behavioral indicators show no notable improvement or decline (+/- 2%) since first assessed by the 2013 CASAL.

Civilian leader effectiveness in demonstrating mission command is moderate. Results exceed a two-thirds threshold on 3 of 6 principles.

**Figure 21. Civilian Leader Behaviors Related to the Mission Command Philosophy**



Mission Command Within Army Organizations

Army civilians continue to report positive attitudes toward several organizational climate indicators supportive of the mission command philosophy. Managers, first line supervisors, and non-supervisory employees provide generally favorable ratings across the mission command indicators presented in Table 9. As with other CASAL results, favorable results increase with supervisory level. The percent of favorable trends for these indicators have varied since 2013, but remain near or above a two-thirds favorability threshold for each supervisory level.

**Table 9. Indicators of Mission Command in Units and Organizations**

Indicators of Mission Command in Army Organizations (% Favorable)	Non-Supervisory Employees	First Line Supervisors	Managers
Moderate, high, or very high trust among members of unit/organization	74%	79%	84%
Satisfaction with amount of freedom/latitude in the conduct of duties	75%	76%	79%
Agreement that members of unit/organization are allowed and encouraged to learn from honest mistakes	68%	78%	82%
Agreement that members of unit/organization are empowered to make decisions pertaining to their duties	65%	75%	80%
Agreement that respondent feels encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things	66%	74%	77%

Mission Command Doctrine

An additional indicator of Army leader awareness and understanding of the mission command philosophy is the level of familiarity with Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command*. As expected, CASAL results demonstrate that familiarity and awareness of this doctrine by civilian leaders continues to lag behind uniformed leaders (see Table 10). Less than half of managers and about one-third of first line supervisors are somewhat or very familiar with ADP 6-0, and there has been little increase since 2013 (+2% to +4%). In comparison, three-fourths of AC leaders report familiarity with this doctrine in 2015, a level that has increased 16% since 2013.

**Table 10. Army Leader Familiarity with Mission Command Doctrine, ADP 6-0**

Army Civilian Leader and AC Respondents (% Somewhat familiar or Very familiar with ADP 6-0)	2013 CASAL	2014 CASAL	2015 CASAL
<b>Civilian Managers</b>	44%	48%	48%
<b>Civilian First Line Supervisors</b>	34%	35%	36%
<b>AC Uniformed Leaders</b>	59%	71%	75%

A goal of the mission command strategy is for Army-wide understanding and effective practice of the mission command philosophy. The 2015 CASAL is the third year in which several factors related to mission command were assessed. In summary, ratings for civilian leader

effectiveness in demonstrating mission command principles are moderate (i.e., 3 of 6 principles exceed a two-thirds favorability threshold) and unchanged since 2013. Civilian manager and first line supervisor awareness and familiarity with mission command doctrine (ADP 6-0) remains low and relatively unchanged since 2013. The most favorable organizational climate characteristics related to mission command include Army civilian empowerment, job latitude for decision-making, and learning climates that allow for honest mistakes.

### ***Summary of Findings on Climate and Situational Factors***

The percentage of civilian leaders reporting high or very high morale has re-stabilized after a drop in 2013 that sharply mirrored a federal climate of challenge and uncertainty in job security. Career satisfaction has begun to rebound after a steady decline that began since 2011. Civilian leaders report moderately to strongly favorable attitudes toward their assigned duties and working environments, including satisfaction with the degree of freedom or latitude in their jobs, agreement that standards are upheld, and team collaboration to achieve results. Stress from a high workload continues to be a serious problem for one in three civilian managers and first line supervisors, and the problem is not improving. Civilian leaders cite personnel shortages as a key reason for workload stress.

Indices of civilian leader engagement are favorable as assessed using a set of 10 items. Results show that small percentages of Army civilians report low engagement as measured by a composite scale score, and levels of engagement increase with supervisory level. Civilian leader engagement is positively associated with morale and career satisfaction, as well as attitudes toward assigned duties, working conditions within units and organizations, and team and organizational efficacy.

The levels of trust Army civilians hold in those with whom they work have remained steady over the past 3 years. From 71% to over 90% of Army civilians hold moderate, high, or very high trust in their subordinates, peers, and superiors. Trust is high in organizations that enable members to make decisions pertaining to their duties, allow and encourage learning from honest mistakes, encourage new and better ways of doing things, and uphold standards. Collective felt trust, or shared feelings by an organization's members who agree on the extent with which they are trusted by senior leaders, is just below a two-thirds favorable level. There are positive associations between effective leadership, trust, and positive organizational and subordinate outcomes. Army civilians trust superiors who *Create a Positive Environment*, demonstrate *Sound Judgment* and *Empathy*, and *Lead by Example*. Civilian leaders who build trust are viewed as positively impacting subordinate commitment, motivation, and work quality, as well as unit or team cohesion.

Assessments of civilian leader effectiveness in demonstrating mission command principles are moderate and unchanged since first assessed in 2013. Civilian manager and first line supervisor awareness and familiarity with mission command doctrine (ADP 6-0) remains low and unchanged. Army civilians continue to report positive attitudes toward several organizational climate indicators supportive of the mission command philosophy.

### **3. Quality of Leader Development**

CASAL assesses and tracks trends in the quality of leader development in the Army. Findings on civilian leader development are organized by the following topic areas:

- The Army Leader Development Model
- Civilian Leader Development
- Leader Development Practices and Programs
- Civilian Education System (CES)

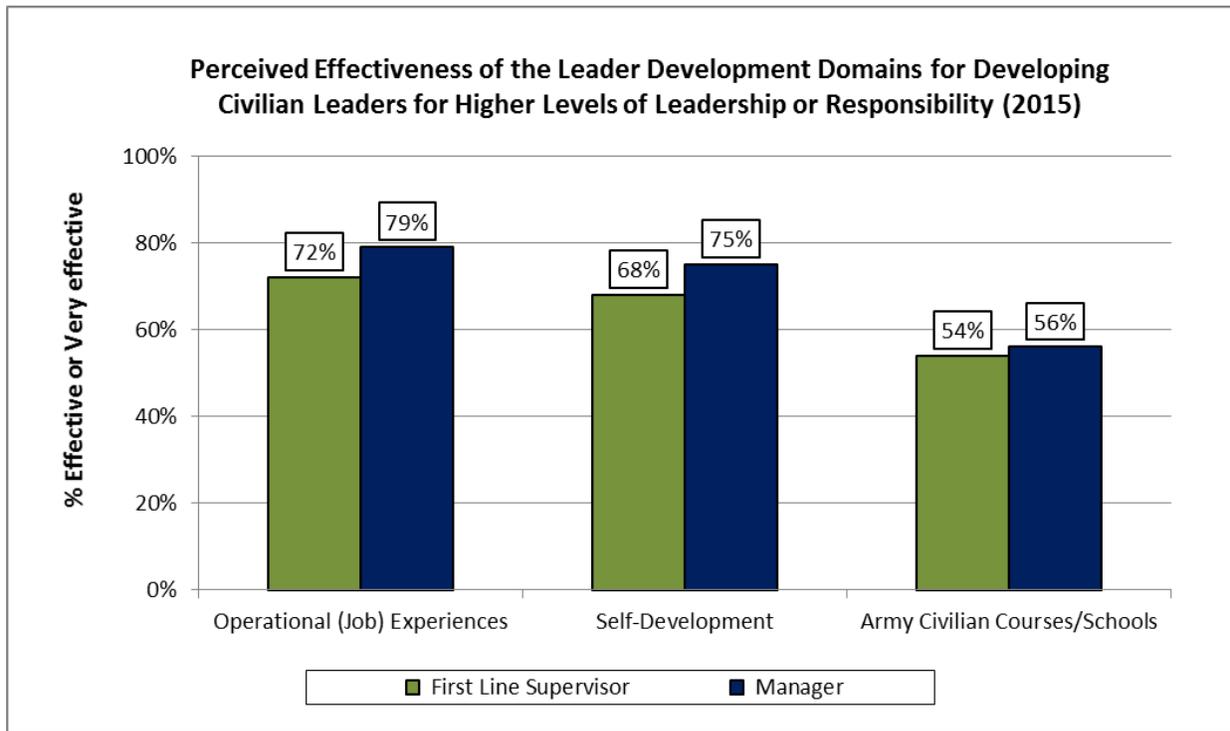
Key findings for each topic area provide an assessment of the current quality, effectiveness, role, and level of support for civilian leader development in the Army.

#### **3.1 The Army Leader Development Model**

Leader development is a continuous and progressive process, and spans a leader's entire career. The Army's leader development model comprises training, education, and experience gained through three mutually supporting domains: operational, self-development, and institutional. By design, a majority of leader development occurs in operational assignments and through self-development, as limited time is allotted for schoolhouse learning (ADP 7-0).

CASAL assesses the effectiveness and relative positive impact of the three leader development domains in preparing civilian leaders for higher levels of leadership responsibility. The percentages of managers and first line supervisors rating each domain effective or very effective in 2015 are presented in Figure 22. A consistent pattern observed with these results is the relatively larger percentage of civilian leaders who favor self-development and operational experience over the development that occurs through Army institutional courses and schools.

**Figure 22. The Perceived Effectiveness of the Leader Development Domains by Civilian Leaders**



### Operational (Job) Experiences

Civilian leaders enhance their leadership skills and prepare for future roles and responsibilities through leadership opportunities and experiences in their current roles. About three-fourths of civilian leaders indicate their job experiences have been effective or very effective in developing them for higher levels of leadership or responsibility (7% of managers and 11% of first line supervisors indicate they have been ineffective). Further, civilian leaders have consistently viewed methods for development through job experiences, such as opportunities to lead others and on-the-job training, as having a large or great impact on their development (76% and 70%, respectively, in 2015).

The percentage of civilian leaders rating their job experiences as effective for developing them for higher levels of leadership or responsibility has fluctuated greatly in recent years (from 84% in 2012, to 74% in 2013, to 64% in 2014, and a return to 75% in 2015). Across these years, no more than 14% of civilian leaders rated their job experiences as ineffective or very ineffective. To gain more clarity on this variable pattern, the 2015 CASAL asked civilian leader respondents to comment on reasons why their job experiences are not perceived as effective. Respondents identified a lack of upward mobility as a primary reason their job experiences have not been effective in developing them for higher levels of responsibility. Comments referenced no

pathway or opportunity to advance to a higher level in their organization, in their job category, at their location, or due to their pay level or structure. In essence, the perceived lack of opportunity for higher-level responsibilities is viewed as a roadblock and reason that operational experiences are not effective for developing civilians for those higher-level responsibilities.

Comments also reflected respondent attitudes that job experiences have not be developmental because development has not been structured and/or provided through actions such as mentoring and coaching, or through opportunities to lead. Respondents also listed a lack of learning opportunities that are not necessarily tied to experiences *in* their current jobs, such as formal training, education and course attendance, and promotions or new job assignments. Some comments noted that senior leaders hinder their opportunities for effective job experiences (in general), or that senior leaders exhibit preferential treatment in providing development and job opportunities to subordinates. Other themes in these comments reflected that work and job duties are more of a priority than a person's development, and that some managers and leaders are not supportive or encouraging of civilians developing beyond the scope of their current duties. Finally, several respondents who had prior military experience generally indicated that their leader development occurred through operational experiences in the Army prior to their service as an Army civilian, and thus they did not view their civilian job experiences as effective for preparing them for increased responsibility.

Lack of opportunities for career advancement is a key reason why up to 14% of civilian leaders rate the operational domain as ineffective for preparing them for higher levels of leadership responsibility.

### Self-Development

Self-development encompasses the planned, goal-oriented learning that reinforces and expands the depth and breadth of an individual's knowledge base, self-awareness, and situational awareness to enhance professional competence and meet personal objectives (ADP 7-0). Self-development represents a continuous, life-long process that is used to supplement and enhance knowledge and skills Army leaders gain through their operational experiences, and institutional education and training (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009).

Overall, 71% of civilian leaders (75% of managers and 68% of first line supervisors) rate their self-development as effective or very effective for preparing them to assume new levels of leadership or responsibility. Only 7% of civilian leaders rate their self-development as ineffective. Additionally, while most civilian leaders (61%) rate the practice of self-development

More than two-thirds of civilian leaders rate their self-development as effective for preparing them for increased leadership responsibility.

as having a large or great impact on their development, about one-fourth (27%) rate the impact as moderate (see section 3.3 of this report). One challenge to civilian self-development is the perceived amount of time available for training and development. Only about one-third of civilian leaders (35%) agree they have sufficient time for self-

development in their current assignment, while nearly half (46%) disagree they have time.<sup>22</sup> Results of each of these indicators for civilian self-development show no change in recent years.

Results of the 2014 CASAL also revealed that civilian leaders frequently engaged in professional reading, networking with others, and skill improvement. However, a notable trend was that civilian leaders cited mandatory training as a primary purpose for self-development, which reflects passive learning as opposed to an active and tailored pursuit of lifelong learning and development (Riley et al., 2015).

### Institutional Education

Of civilian leaders who have attended a civilian education course at some point in their career, 55% rate Army civilian courses/schools effective or very effective in developing them for higher levels of leadership or responsibility. Nearly one-third of civilian leaders (28%) rate their Army civilian education as neither effective nor ineffective in developing them, while 17% rate it ineffective.

As a leader development practice, Army civilian course attendance is not widely viewed as impactful on development. Larger percentages of civilian leaders view resident course attendance as having a large or great impact on their development (42%) compared to nonresident or distributed learning (DL) courses (25%). About one-third of civilian leaders view either resident attendance or DL/nonresident courses as having a moderate impact on their development (29% and 33%, respectively). Each of these findings represent consistent trends observed by CASAL since first assessed in 2009. Specific findings regarding the Civilian Education System (CES) are described in detail in section 3.4 of this report.

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<sup>22</sup> The percentage of civilian leaders who agree or strongly agree they have sufficient time for self-development in their current assignment (35%) is significantly lower than AC uniformed leaders (51%).

### 3.2 Civilian Leader Development

Army Regulation 350-1 states that civilian leader development (training and education) will “prepare agile and innovative Army civilians who can lead during times of change and uncertainty; are prepared for the rigors of service as multi-skilled leaders; and are armed with the values, skills, and mindset to serve as competent, resilient members of the Army Civilian Corps”.

It is important to note that leader development for Army civilians is fundamentally different from uniformed leader development because of the differing terms of federal employment and conditions of military commissions, appointments, and assignments. One indication of this difference is reflected in the average length of time a civilian leader has in an organization of over 10 years (see page 1 of this report), compared to the typical two- to three-year assignments for Soldiers. Time-based progression in ranks for Soldiers is another difference compared to conditions of Army civilian employment. Most Army civilians are hired for a position at a fully qualified level and can stay until they choose to leave (or are terminated). Most federal positions have no guarantee of advancement and there are limited opportunities within an organization’s structure for advancement. Most openings occur when a current employee decides to leave a position. Pay advancement within a General Schedule (GS) grade occurs automatically by tenure, and is not based on development or superior performance. Advancement to positions of greater responsibility is an individual choice for Army civilians, while it is a condition for Soldiers in order for them to stay until retirement or the Army decides on their separation. It is speculated that civilian leaders have an unofficial disincentive to develop subordinates, because current members usually leave the direct supervisor’s work unit or the organization to receive advancement.

Leader development for Army civilians is fundamentally different than for uniformed leaders. Most Army civilians are hired fully qualified. Openings occur when an incumbent leaves a position, and pay advancement does not hinge on development or superior performance.

#### Subordinate Development

The results of several CASAL indicators confirm that civilian leader development occurs at moderate levels in the Army. First, only about one-third (31%) of managers and supervisors indicate that formal leader development programs within their organization have had a large or great impact on their development. In comparison, 41% rate the impact as small, very little, or negligible. Additionally, results from the 2014 CASAL indicated civilian leader development is not perceived by many to be a top priority in Army organizations. Two-thirds of managers and

first line supervisors (66%) indicated that leaders in their unit or organization developed the leadership skills of their subordinates to a 'slight' or 'moderate' extent.

Results of the 2013 Army Civilian Attitude Survey also show moderate levels of civilian leader development in organizations, and provide additional insight (Civilian Personnel Evaluation Agency, 2013b). Specifically, this survey reported:

- Only half of civilian supervisors indicated satisfaction with the priority their organization places on leader development (48%) and with the quality of available leader development training (48%). Satisfaction for both indicators showed a slight increase (+3%) since 2010.
- Fifty-six percent agreed they are given a real opportunity to improve their skills in their organization; the level of agreement declined 5% since assessed in 2010.
- Less than half indicated satisfaction with the availability of opportunities to expand the range of their skills (43%) and with developmental assignments that offer experience in other functions in their organization (39%). Both of these indicators are consistent with 2010.

More recently, the 2015 FEVS reported that 62% of Army civilian respondents agreed or strongly agreed that supervisors in their work unit support employee development. Three out of five (61%) agreed or strongly agreed they are given a real opportunity to improve their skills in their organization, while smaller percentages (50%) reported satisfaction with the training they receive for their present job. The favorable level of response for each of these indicators is about 5% lower than results from a decade ago (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2015).

The core leader competency *Develops Others* has consistently received the least favorable assessments across rank levels and positions. In 2015, 54% of civilian leaders are rated effective at developing their subordinates while 24% are rated ineffective. Since 2009, the percentage of civilian leaders rated effective in developing subordinates has ranged from 50% to 54% (about half), while the percentage rated ineffective has ranged from 22% to 27% (about one in four).

The 2014 CASAL gained a deeper understanding of subordinate development through assessment of several doctrinal behaviors (ADRP 6-22) that comprise the competency *Develops Others*. Results confirmed strong relationships between each of the developmental behaviors and the competency *Develops Others* ( $r$ 's = .76 to .82,  $p$ 's < .001). About half of civilian leaders were rated effective across these behaviors, while nearly one-fourth were rated ineffective.

Specific results included the following:

- 55% of civilian leaders were rated effective at coaching subordinates to improve what they are capable of doing (22% ineffective).
- 54% of civilian leaders were rated effective at providing appropriate developmental feedback (24% ineffective).
- 53% of civilian leaders were rated effective at creating or calling attention to leader development opportunities (23% ineffective).
- 53% of civilian leaders were rated effective at assessing the developmental needs of subordinates (22% ineffective). Results from the 2015 CASAL for this item (56% effective, 22% ineffective) were slightly more favorable than the prior year.

Results of the 2013 Army Civilian Attitude Survey support CASAL findings on subordinate development. Specifically, this survey reported that less than half of civilian supervisor respondents (46%) were satisfied with the way their supervisor creates or calls attention to leader development opportunities, while 23% were dissatisfied. While low, this level of satisfaction shows slight improvement (+4%) since previously assessed in 2010 (Civilian Personnel Evaluation Agency, 2013b).

Similarly, findings from the 2015 FEVS (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2015) provide additional indications and trends for civilian leader effectiveness in developing others:

- In 2015, about half of civilian respondents (52%) agreed or strongly agreed that their training needs are assessed. The level of agreement has ranged from 48% to 57% since the 2006 survey.
- Also in 2015, more than half of civilian respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor provides them with constructive suggestions to improve their job performance (59%) and provides them with opportunities to demonstrate their leadership (65%). Levels of agreement for each of these indicators show stability since the 2012 survey.

### Developmental Actions

Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Leader Development*, states that developing leaders involves a holistic, comprehensive, and purposeful group of activities. Leader development occurs through daily opportunities to learn and teach, and in a range of settings such as at home station, in offices, laboratories, depots, maintenance bays, during exercises, and while deployed.

The 2014 CASAL sought to understand the types of activities Army leaders engage in when developing their subordinates. Respondents were asked to describe the actions taken by their

immediate superior in the past year to develop their (i.e., the respondent's) leadership skills (Riley et al., 2015). Five broad categories of themes emerged from the comments and included: promoting continuous learning; providing learning/developmental opportunities; assessing performance and development; focusing on individual development; and exemplifying leader behaviors.

The most prominent and relevant themes within these five categories were included as items in the 2015 CASAL. This was done to better assess the level of engagement in these developmental activities in the Army. Notably, the fourteen items that reflect developmental activities also align with the four fundamentals of development as described in FM 6-22:

- **Setting conditions** for development involves leaders personally modeling behaviors that encourage development, and creating environments that encourage learning.
- **Providing feedback** starts with opportunities for observation and assessment and leads to immediate, short bursts of feedback on actual leader actions that enhance development, in addition to regular counseling.
- **Enhancing learning** involves the use of leaders as a learning source (i.e., role modeling, mentoring, coaching) and encouraging subordinate self-study, training, and education.
- **Creating opportunities** includes deliberate position assignments and other methods integrated into day-to-day activities that challenge and grow leaders' skills.

Table 11 displays the results for Army civilian leader respondents regarding developmental actions taken by their immediate superior in the past 12 months. Individual actions are nested within the four fundamentals of development (described above), then presented in descending order by frequency of respondent selections<sup>23</sup>.

There are several conclusions that may be drawn from these results. First, a majority of civilian leaders are reported to engage in relatively lower effort methods of development such as providing encouragement and/or praise and remaining approachable for subordinates to seek input and ask questions. While these are important ways leaders set conditions for development to occur, reliance on these methods may result in missed opportunities for enhancing subordinate learning and development. In comparison, less than half of civilian leaders are reported to delegate tasks to develop subordinates, provide new opportunities to lead, create or call attention to challenging job assignments, or provide training, teaching, coaching, or skill development. Activities such as these that involve on-the-job learning and

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<sup>23</sup> The item assessing developmental actions by one's immediate superior was assessed using a select-all-that-apply method, whereby respondents indicated whether or not their immediate superior had engaged in each of the behaviors in the past 12 months. Ratings were not made regarding the effectiveness or frequency with which one's immediate superior engaged in these actions.

opportunities to lead are assessed by civilian leaders as having a large impact on development (see section 3.3).

**Table 11. Leader Development Actions Taken by Respondents' Civilian Immediate Superiors**<sup>24</sup>

<b>Actions That Respondents' Civilian Immediate Superiors Have Taken in the Past 12 Months to Develop the Respondents' Leadership Skills (Categorized by Fundamentals of Development and Rank Ordered by Frequency of Army Civilian Leader Respondents)</b>	
<b><i>Setting Conditions for Development</i></b>	
1. Remained approachable for me to seek input and ask questions	64%
2. Fostered a climate for development (e.g., allowed learning from honest mistakes)	46%
<b><i>Providing Feedback</i></b>	
3. Provided encouragement and/or praise	62%
4. Provided me with feedback on my performance (e.g., formal or informal counseling)	56%
<b><i>Enhancing Learning</i></b>	
5. Involved me in a decision-making or planning process	60%
6. Shared experiences, lessons learned, or advice	49%
7. Authorized or allowed me to attend resident training or education	28%
8. Provided training, teaching, coaching, or skill development	26%
9. Encouraged or recommended continuing education (e.g., college courses, job certifications)	23%
10. Referred me to developmental resources (e.g., online courses, readings, study topics)	18%
11. Provided mentoring to prepare me for future roles or assignments	19%
<b><i>Creating Opportunities</i></b>	
12. Delegated tasks to develop me	38%
13. Provided me with new opportunities to lead	35%
14. Created or called attention to challenging job assignments or opportunities	28%

Second, a majority of civilian leader respondents indicate their immediate superior involved the respondent in a decision-making or planning process in the past year. These interactions can serve as a form of on-the-job mentoring (e.g., five minute job shadow, see FM 6-22), and often can involve showing the subordinate a task or process related to job duties at the next level. However, relatively few respondents report that their immediate superior actually mentored or

<sup>24</sup> Responses by civilian leaders and AC uniformed leaders differed by 8% or more on 3 of the 14 developmental activities, indicating a notable difference. The percentage of civilian leader respondents indicating their civilian immediate superior developed them through providing feedback on their performance in the past year (56%) is notably higher than the percentage of AC uniformed respondents (46%) that endorsed this activity. In comparison, the percentages of civilian leader respondents indicating their civilian immediate superior developed them through delegating tasks (38%) and mentoring to prepare them for future roles or assignments (19%) is notably lower than the percentage of AC uniformed respondents that endorsed these activities (49% and 27%, respectively).

prepared them for future roles or assignments. About half of civilian leaders indicate mentoring occurs (more traditionally) through their immediate superior sharing experiences, lessons learned, or advice.

Finally, referrals and authorizations for training, education, and other learning resources occur least frequently. Subordinates react to the priorities set by their superiors, and this can include a commitment to personal development. Some subordinates will not know what developmental resources or opportunities are available to them to address their leadership needs, and leaders can address this gap by making specific suggestions or recommendations.

Not all civilian leaders perceive a favorable developmental relationship with their immediate superior. Approximately 11% of respondents indicated their immediate superior has engaged in no actions to develop them (the subordinate) in the past 12 months. An additional 1% of respondents indicated this type of development did not apply to their current situation (e.g., immediate superior had just arrived to the organization). It is important to note that these results provide an overview of the types of activities leaders use to develop subordinates as viewed from the receiver of the development (i.e., the subordinate). A pattern previously observed in results of the 2014 CASAL was that respondents reported themselves engaging in a broader range of activities and in higher frequency (i.e., to develop their subordinates) than what they gave credit to their immediate superior for doing (i.e., to develop the respondent, as the subordinate; Riley et al., 2015).

### Formal and Informal Counseling

Nearly one-third of civilian leaders report they receive formal or informal performance counseling semi-annually, while about one-fourth report they receive it at rating time (see Table 12). About one in eight civilian leaders report they never or almost never receive formal

62% of civilian leaders receive formal and informal counseling at about the right frequency while one-third feel they receive counseling too infrequently.

or informal counseling, which falls short of the requirement for civilians to conduct this annually (per AR 690-400). Additionally, 62% of civilian leader respondents characterize the frequency with which they currently receive formal or informal performance counseling as 'about right' while about one-third (34%) believe they

receive counseling too infrequently or much too infrequently. The frequency of counseling received shows no notable change in recent years, and the finding that one-third of civilian leaders believe they receive counseling too infrequently is consistent with results from 2014.

**Table 12. Frequency That Army Civilian Leaders Report Receiving Counseling**

How Often Do You Receive Formal or Informal Performance Counseling?					
Army Civilian Leaders	Monthly or More Often	Quarterly	Semi-Annually	At Rating Time	Never or Almost Never
<b>Managers</b>	20%	13%	28%	25%	14%
<b>First Line Supervisors</b>	17%	12%	31%	27%	13%
<b>Total</b>	19%	12%	30%	26%	13%

Less than half of civilian leaders (44%) agree the feedback they received during their last performance counseling was useful in helping them to set performance goals for improvement (26% disagree), while about one-third (32%) agree the feedback covered how well they practice the six principles of the mission command philosophy (35% disagree). Overall, the results demonstrate generally steady trends, as the frequency and quality with which civilian leaders report receiving performance counseling have remained fairly stable since 2012. Taken together, these results suggest that for some civilian leaders, there is currently an unmet need with regard to the frequency and usefulness of formal and informal performance counseling.

Civilian leaders do not generally view their counseling feedback as effective for setting performance goals for improvement.

As first reported in the 2013 CASAL, less formal developmental interactions are more common than formal performance counseling (Riley et al., 2014). These types of interactions include supervisor-subordinate discussions on job performance, performance improvement, and preparation for future roles. The 2013 results showed that modest percentages of civilian leaders agreed or strongly agreed their immediate superior takes the time to talk with them about how they are doing in their work (64%); how they could improve duty performance (52%); and what they should do to prepare for future assignments (41%). Starting in 2014, CASAL assessed the frequency with which these less formal developmental interactions occur for civilian leaders. In 2015, civilian leaders report that their immediate superior frequently or very frequently talks with them about the following:

- How they are doing in their work – 41% (52% rarely/occasionally; 7% never)
- How they could improve their duty performance – 20% (65% rarely/occasionally; 15% never)
- What to do to prepare for future assignments – 19% (53% rarely/occasionally; 27% never)

These results are very consistent with those observed in 2014.

Results of other Army civilian surveys demonstrate comparable attitudes by civilian leaders regarding the frequency and quality of performance feedback and counseling they receive:

- The 2013 Army Civilian Attitude Survey reported that 57% of civilian supervisor respondents had received regular performance feedback and an equal percentage (57%) agreed the performance feedback they received was useful. A promising finding is that 71% of supervisors agreed that discussions with their supervisor about their performance are worthwhile (Civilian Personnel Evaluation Agency, 2013b).
- The 2015 FEVS reported that 73% of Army civilian respondents agreed that their supervisor had talked with them about their performance in the last six months, a stable finding since 2010. Additionally, 61% agreed that discussions with their supervisor about their performance are worthwhile; the level of agreement for this indicator has fluctuated between 59% and 64% since 2006 (United States Officer of Personnel Management, 2015).

As stated in ADP 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, individuals are responsible for their own professional growth. Thus, it is important for every Army leader to seek out or request developmental feedback from his/her superior and others to benefit their growth as a leader. Results of the 2015 CASAL show that:

- Two-thirds of civilian leaders (66%) rarely or occasionally seek developmental feedback from their immediate superior, while one in five (19%) do so frequently or very frequently.<sup>25</sup>
- Similarly, about two-thirds of civilian leaders rarely or occasionally seek developmental feedback from someone other than their immediate superior (65%), while one in five (21%) do so frequently or very frequently.

The results from the previous CASAL (2014) provide a more thorough understanding of civilian leaders' propensity to seek out developmental feedback from others. Specifically, these results showed that nearly one-third of civilian leaders frequently or very frequently asked for developmental feedback from their subordinates (31%) and their peers (28%), while one-fourth asked their immediate superior (25%). Small percentages of civilian leaders (6%) indicated they frequently asked for developmental feedback from their superior two levels higher, while nearly half (47%) indicate they never do so. One-fifth of civilian leaders (20%) reported they frequently or very frequently sought developmental feedback from others outside of their chain of command, and specified that this included friends or acquaintances; former supervisors, colleagues, and co-workers; mentors; and peers outside of their organization or the Army.

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<sup>25</sup> The percentage of civilian leaders who frequently or very frequently seek or ask for developmental feedback from their immediate superior (19%) and someone other than their immediate superior (21%) is significantly lower than AC uniformed leaders (31% and 41%, respectively).

## Mentoring

The Army's definition of mentoring describes a voluntary and developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience, characterized by mutual trust and respect (AR 600-100). Army leadership doctrine (ADRP 6-22) expounds on this definition by identifying general characteristics of a mentoring relationship. Namely, mentorship affects both personal and professional development, both individuals must be active participants, and mentoring is not limited to superior-subordinate relationships.

In the Army, mentorship is more common among uniformed ranks than it is in the civilian workforce. CASAL results show that in comparison to uniformed leaders, smaller percentages of civilian leaders have mentors. Overall, 28% of civilian managers and first line supervisors report currently receiving mentoring (from one or more mentors) compared to 60% of uniformed leaders. Similarly, about half of civilian leaders (55%) indicate they serve as a mentor to others, compared to 65% of uniformed leaders.

28% of civilian leaders currently receive mentoring, while 55% serve as a mentor to others.

Results of the 2013 Army Civilian Attitude Survey also demonstrate the relatively low prevalence with which civilian leaders receive mentoring. The survey reported that only 16% of civilian supervisors had received 'a lot' to 'a great deal' of help from a formal or informal mentor on planning their career path in the Army. Nearly half of civilian supervisors reported receiving 'a little' to 'a moderate amount' of help from a mentor, while 37% reported receiving no help (Civilian Personnel Evaluation Agency, 2013b).

CASAL findings show that mentorship for Army civilian leaders is characterized by the following:

- Less than one-third of civilian leaders (28%) receive mentoring. Of those, 36% indicate their mentor is their immediate superior or supervisor, while 31% indicate it is a person outside of their organization or chain of command.
- Two-thirds of civilian leaders (69%) interact with their mentor monthly or more often; 33% report receiving mentoring weekly or more often.
- Sixty-seven percent of civilian leaders who receive mentoring indicate the relationship has had a large or great impact on their development; 26% rate the impact as moderate.

These findings are generally positive and are consistent with results observed since 2013. One new insight is that a majority of civilian leaders who receive mentoring indicate the exchange is meeting (62%) or exceeding (31%) their expectations. Thus, for those who receive mentoring, the need is generally being met with regard to the frequency of interaction and the impact on development.

### 3.3 Leader Development Practices and Programs

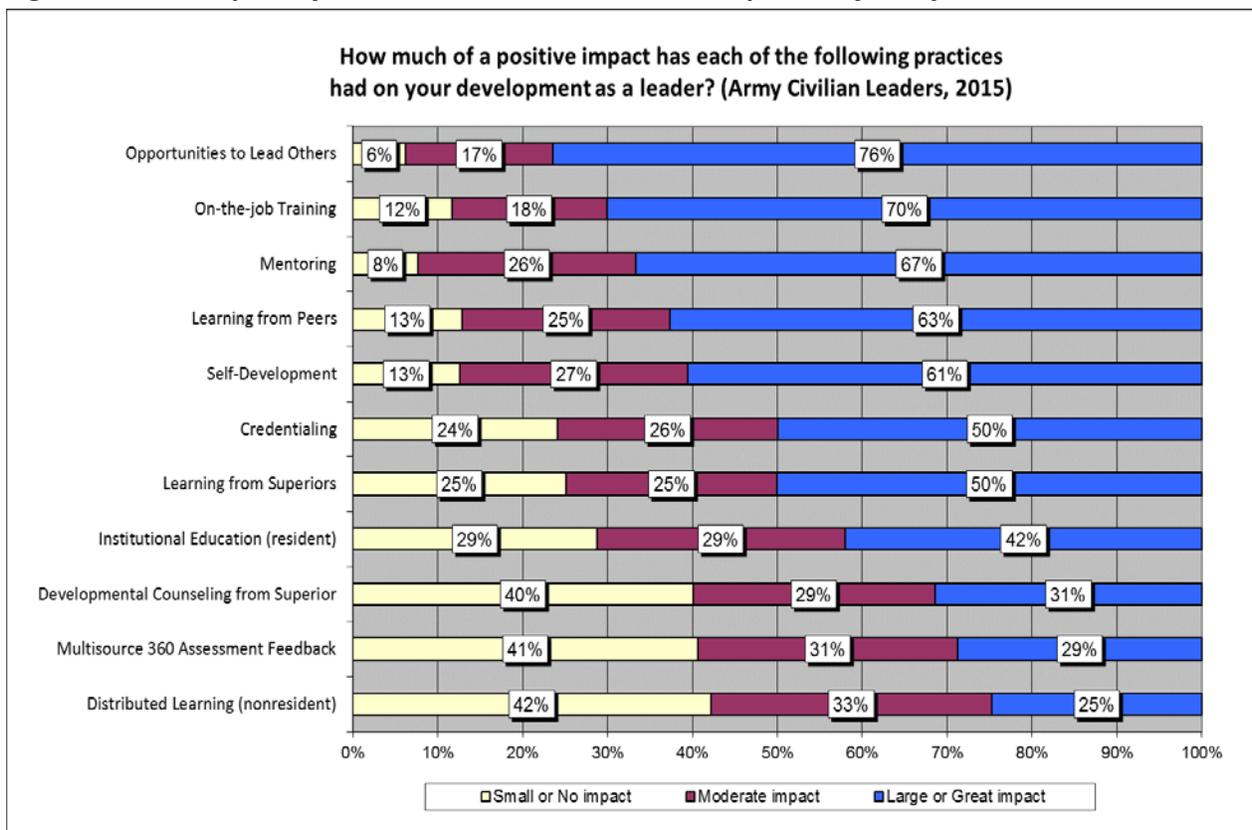
Since 2009, CASAL has assessed and tracked trends on the relative contribution that various practices have on civilian leader development. In 2015, civilian respondents rated a list of 11 developmental practices in terms of the positive impact each has had on their development as a leader. As findings on the positive impact of these practices are integrated into results discussions throughout this report, a brief overview and summary is provided here. Leader development practices are activities such as on-the-job training, opportunities to lead others, mentoring, self-development, resident and nonresident course attendance, and learning from others.

The relative rank ordering of practices in terms of their positive impact on development has remained stable across the past several years (see Figure 23 for 2015 results). Civilian leaders tend to view less-formal methods of learning as having a large or great positive impact on their development. Several of these practices relate to development that occurs through operational work experiences and interpersonal interactions. These include opportunities to lead others, on-the-job training, mentoring, learning from peers, and self-development activities. Relatively few civilian leaders (13% or less) assess these practices as having a small, very little, or no impact on their development.

In comparison, smaller percentages of civilian leaders view learning from superiors, obtaining credentials, formal resident institutional education, developmental counseling from one's supervisor, 360-degree assessment feedback, and required DL as having a large or great impact on their development as a leader. The trend in the relative ordering of these practices (lowest to highest impact) has remained generally consistent since first assessed in 2009.

While Figure 23 compares the impact of the practices, in doing so it does not address other variable factors such as required supporting activities (e.g., curriculum development, faculty, online resources), required time (e.g., 15 minutes, 1 month) or cost (e.g., no direct costs, \$50 per leader, \$10,000 per leader). Thus when considering the Army's and individual's investment in each of the practices, some lower impact practices have a high return on investment (e.g., I observing other leaders, multisource 360 assessment feedback). High impact practices such as opportunities to lead others and on-the-job training may have high time investments but low support costs, and the overall result is a high return on investment. In comparison, a middle-of-the-pack impact practice such as resident course attendance is associated with higher direct costs (e.g., travel, lodging, time away from assigned duties).

**Figure 23. The Impact of Various Practices on the Development of Army Civilian Leaders<sup>26</sup>**



### The Army 360/MSAF Program

The Army 360/MSAF, a program of record operated by the Center for Army Leadership (CAL), provides uniformed and civilian leaders a validated 360-degree approach to garnering feedback. Assessments from superiors, peers, and subordinates, are compared to the assessed leader’s self-assessment based on the Army Leadership Requirements Model (ADRP 6-22). The goals of the program are to increase leaders’ self-awareness of their abilities and to help them improve their leadership. The program features: individual and unit-level feedback reports; confidential and anonymous feedback from others; developmental resources available online (i.e., the Virtual Improvement Center); no cost to the unit or leader (other than time); and dedicated support staff. The program is complemented by a professional coaching component whereby MSAF participants interact with a coach (in person, via telephone, or via e-mail) to receive assistance in interpreting their feedback report; to create an individual leadership

<sup>26</sup> The percentages of civilian leaders who rate on-the-job training (70%) and learning from superiors (50%) as having a large/great impact on their development is significantly lower than AC uniformed leaders (80% and 64%, respectively). The percentage of civilian leaders who rate multi-source 360-degree assessment feedback (29%) as having a large/great impact on their development is significantly higher than ratings by AC uniformed leaders (20%).

development plan (ILDLP); and to receive suggestions on resources and activities for developing their leadership skills.

Civilian leader participation in MSAF continues to increase, though reactions to the value of the experience show a slight decline in favorable ratings since 2012. Overall, 24% of civilian leader respondents reported having been assessed through the Army MSAF program at some point in their career (compared to 21% in 2014, and 16% in 2013). In 2015, an additional 17% of civilian

Civilian leader participation in MSAF has increased from 16% assessed in 2013 to 24% in 2015. Two-thirds of assessed leaders view MSAF effective for increasing awareness of strengths and developmental needs.

leader respondents indicated they participated in the program only to assess someone else. About two-thirds of assessed civilian leaders rate the program effective for making them more aware of their strengths (70%) and their developmental needs (64%). Smaller percentages of respondents rate

MSAF effective for improving their leadership capabilities (57%) and for improving their unit or organization (46%).<sup>27</sup>

Findings from a recent MSAF program evaluation (Freeman, Hinds, Jenkins, Keller-Glaze, & Daugherty, 2015) reported that 61% of Army civilian participants agreed they learned a significant amount about their strengths/developmental needs from completing an MSAF event. However, only 55% agreed the experience made them more motivated to devote time to developing their leadership skills (36% provided neutral response and 9% disagreed). Previous evaluation research of the MSAF program (Hinds & Freeman, 2014) indicated that about one-third of Army civilians (33%) self-initiated their MSAF assessment (i.e., to increase their personal insight) while nearly half (47%) participated to fulfill a requirement (i.e., as part of a unit-wide event or course requirement). Nearly two-thirds of Army civilians reported devoting minimal effort to their own development planning in the months following their MSAF participation; 40% spent less than five hours per month, while 24% had no plan to set aside time for their development. These results are notable, as the MSAF experience is optimized only when leaders take action beyond the assessment and feedback component (i.e., request additional feedback from others, interact with a coach, develop an ILDP, and engage in self-initiated learning). These later components of the program are valuable but require time, effort, and commitment by leaders to 'own' the process of their development. These are the types of developmental resources that civilian leaders can refer their subordinates to as a way to enhance their learning and development (as discussed in section 3.2).

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<sup>27</sup> The percentages of civilian leaders who rate the Army 360/MSAF program effective or very effective for making them more aware of their strengths (70%) and developmental needs (62%), improving their leadership capabilities (57%), and improving their unit or organization (46%) are significantly more favorable than ratings by AC uniformed leaders (49%, 47%, 41%, and 31%, respectively).

## Credentialing

Many occupations are guided by certain professional and technical standards. The process of meeting these standards and earning official recognition (i.e., in the form of licenses or certificates) is termed *credentialing* (Army Credentialing Opportunities On-line, 2016).

Overall, more than one-third of Army civilian managers and first line supervisors (36%) report they currently hold one or more credentials (i.e., a professional certification or license). As would be expected, credentials are largely job-specific and in many cases required for performance of certain duties. The professional certifications, licenses, and training that civilian leaders reported tend to align with occupational or functional areas such as medical care, transportation (e.g., commercial vehicles, aircraft), legal services (e.g., law license), project management (e.g., lean six sigma), information technology (e.g., A+, Network+), mechanical engineering, and various other areas. Civilian leaders reported obtaining credentials primarily from sources outside of the Army (24%) though approximately 12% have received a credential from an Army source. Results are presented in Table 13.

**Table 13. Army Civilian Leader Experience With Obtaining Credentials**

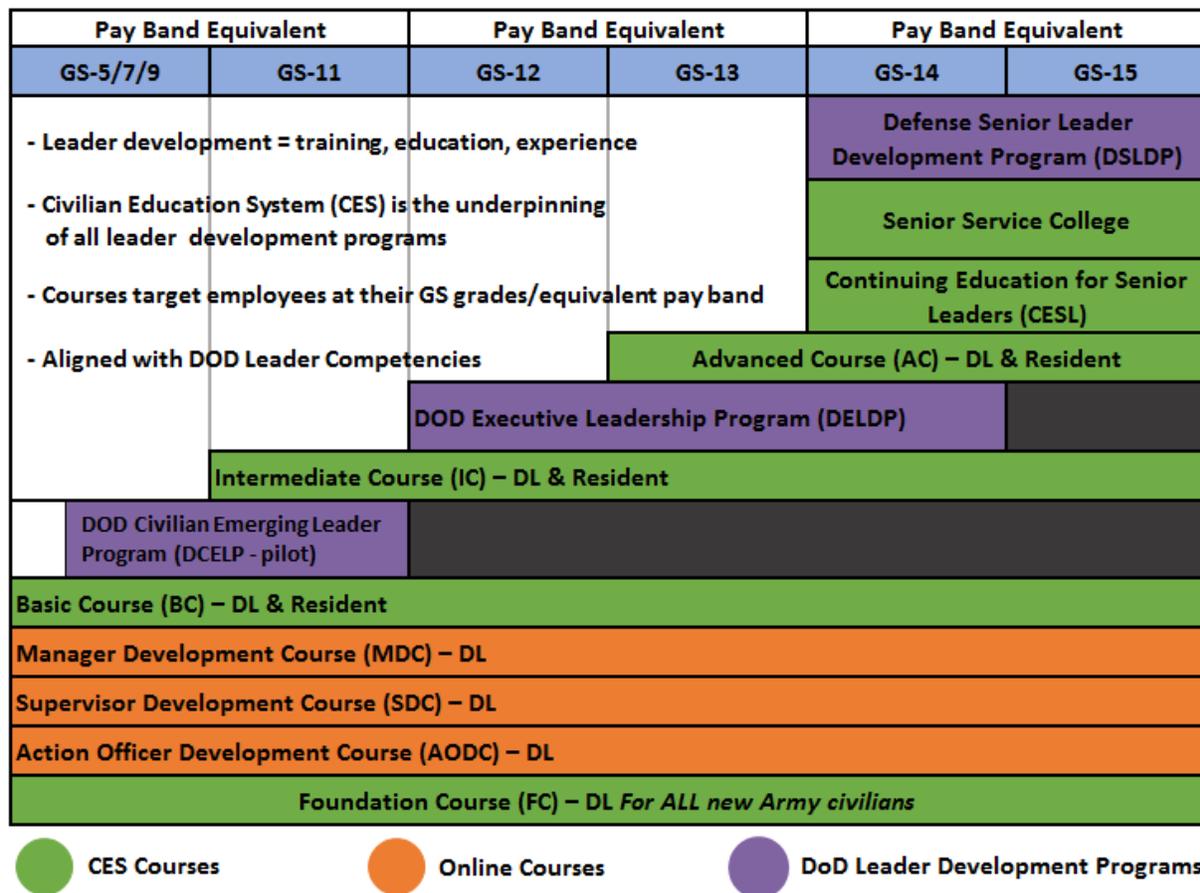
<b>What is your experience with credentials (i.e., professional certifications or licenses)?</b>				
<b>Army Civilian Leaders</b>	<b>Hold credential(s) from an Army source</b>	<b>Hold credential(s) from source outside of the Army</b>	<b>Currently involved in a credentialing process</b>	<b>No experience in obtaining credentials</b>
<b>Manager</b>	13%	25%	3%	62%
<b>First Line Supervisor</b>	11%	23%	3%	65%
<b>Total</b>	12%	24%	3%	64%

About half of Army civilian managers (53%) and first line supervisors (47%) indicate that obtaining credentials has had a large or great impact on their development as a leader, while about one-fourth (23% and 28%, respectively) report the impact has been moderate. In comparison to other leader development practices, credentialing is viewed as having a larger positive impact on development than practices such as resident education and distributed learning.

### 3.4 Civilian Education System

The Civilian Education System (CES) provides Army civilians progressive, sequential leader development training and education at key positions throughout their careers. A graphical depiction of the Army’s civilian leader development program is presented in Figure 24. The 2015 CASAL collected Army civilian assessments of their recent CES experiences, as well as perceptions of senior leaders regarding the value of CES in developing Army civilians for current and future duties.

**Figure 24. Overview of Army Civilian Leader Development**



#### 3.4.1 Army CES Courses

CASAL assesses CES and online courses associated with pay band equivalent GS-5 to GS-15.<sup>28</sup> The results discussed in this section reflect ratings by civilian managers and first line supervisors

<sup>28</sup> The 2015 CASAL did not assess the Action Officer Development Course (AODC), the Senior Service College (SSC), or the DoD Leader Development Programs.

who completed a course between 2014 and 2015. Given the small size of participant samples for each course, results do not include trend comparisons between years of course completion.

### Supervisor Development Course

The Supervisor Development Course (SDC) provides uniformed and civilian supervisors and managers of Army civilians the administration skills for management and basic supervision (AR 350-1). The SDC is conducted via distributed learning (DL) and contains lessons on topics mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010, spanning from workforce planning and merit system principles to performance management. Topics specific to leadership outcomes include creating an engaging work environment, leading change, and coaching, counseling, and mentoring. The SDC is a requirement for all new supervisors of Army civilians and must be completed within one year of placement in a supervisory position. The SDC is also required for supervisors as refresher training every three years, and is available to all Army employees as self-development. Given the nature of the SDC as both mandatory and recurring refresher training, the results are discussed here separate from other CES and DL course findings.

Eighty-five percent of civilian managers and first line supervisors surveyed by the 2015 CASAL

85% of civilian managers and first line supervisors have completed the required SDC. Only half of AC uniformed leaders who supervise civilians report completing this requirement.

had completed the SDC (15% report they had not). Fifty-four percent of AC uniformed leaders who supervise civilians report having completed the SDC; 46% report they had not, indicating a gap in the force meeting this training requirement.<sup>29</sup> Fifty-nine percent of civilian leaders had taken the course more than once (i.e., as refresher training), compared to 41% of uniformed leaders.

Consistent with previous years, the 2015 CASAL captured modest ratings for SDC from civilian and uniformed leaders who recently completed the course. A majority of leaders agree the course is relevant to their current job (73% to 77%). Nearly half of civilian leaders (48%) and uniformed leaders (47%) rate what they learned from the SDC as being 'of considerable use or extremely useful' while more than one-third (38% and 36%, respectively) indicate what they learned was 'of some use'.

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<sup>29</sup> Analyses for the SDC included 1,243 civilian managers and first line supervisors and 242 AC uniformed leaders. Respondents completed SDC in 2015.

## CES Opportunity and Timing

Sixty percent of the 2015 CASAL civilian leader sample (62% of managers, 58% of first line

Half of the civilian leader workforce has completed a CES course (other than SDC). One-third to one-half of recent graduates feel they attended the course too late in their career.

supervisors) report having attended a CES course in their career, including a small percentage that received constructive credit or a course waiver (about 8%). The balance of civilian managers and supervisors (40%) indicate they have not attended CES in their career. Additionally, more than half of non-supervisory civilian employee respondents (55%) indicate they have not completed a CES course.

A finding reported in the 2014 CASAL was that just over half of recent CES attendees (between 51% and 62%) indicated their most recent course occurred at 'about the right time' in their career to prepare them for responsibilities they now hold. From one-third to one-half of civilian leaders indicated they attended the Foundation Course (48%), Basic Course (41%), Intermediate Course (40%), Manager Development Course (37%), and Advanced Course (44%) 'too late' or 'much too late' in their careers, while negligible percentages believed they received this education too early in their career (1-3%).

Taken together, these results indicate a potential gap in Army civilian leader participation in the institutional education domain of leader development. While a majority of civilian managers and first line supervisors (85%) have completed required online training for supervisors (i.e., SDC), only half have participated in other CES courses, and many who have participated believe the education occurred too late in their career to support responsibilities they have held.

## CES Course Ratings

Civilian managers and first line supervisors who recently completed CES assessed their course experience, the quality of the education received, and the usefulness, relevance, and effectiveness of what they learned.<sup>30</sup> A positive finding is that the quality of education received through CES continues to be viewed favorably by most civilian leaders who complete the courses. About two-thirds or more rate course quality as 'good' or 'very good.' Additionally, across CES offerings, about half of civilian leaders indicate what they learned in their course was 'of considerable use/extremely useful' (49%) while 41% indicate it was 'of some use'.

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<sup>30</sup> CASAL assesses the Manager Development Course (MDC) and Civilian Education for Senior Leaders (CESL) with the same items as the four CES courses.

Recent course graduates continue to provide favorable ratings with regard to the effectiveness of instructors and faculty. A majority of recent graduates of the Basic Course (58%), Intermediate Course (75%), Advanced Course (75%), and Civilian Education for Senior Leaders (58%) agree that course instructors and faculty provided them with constructive feedback on their leadership capabilities. Less than one-fifth of recent graduates for these courses disagree that course instructors provided constructive leadership feedback (11%, 6%, 10%, and 18%, respectively).

Two-thirds or more of recent CES graduates rate the quality of education received as good or very good.

The level of rigor and challenge in CES continues to be a potential area for improvement. Just under two-thirds of recent graduates from courses that include a resident phase (i.e., BC, IC and AC, CESL) rate the course effective at challenging them to perform at a higher level. In comparison, smaller percentages of civilians that completed (entirely) DL courses (i.e., FC and MDC) rate the courses as effective in challenging them. Figure 25 presents results for civilian courses as rated by recent graduates.<sup>31</sup>

### Course Effectiveness in Educating Civilians

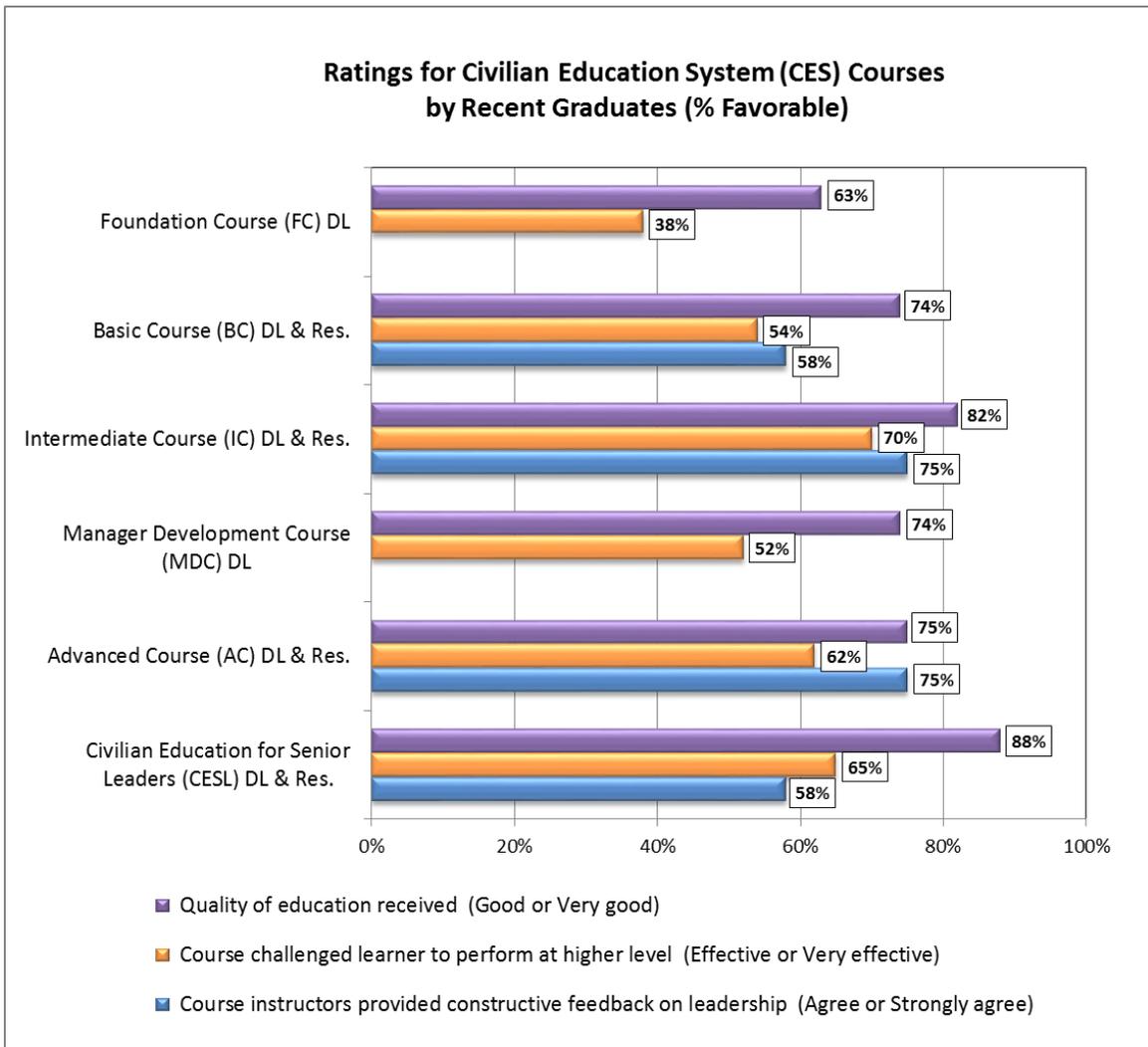
CES courses have specified learning objectives to enhance civilian skills in leadership, supervision, and management. Several topics and learning outcomes align with the core leader competencies described in ADRP 6-22. For example, intended outcomes of each course, as described in AR 350-1, include the following:

- The Basic Course includes content on leading small teams, communicating effectively, and developing, coaching, and counseling subordinates.
- The Intermediate Course aims to enhance learner abilities to lead people, manage resources, develop a cohesive organization, and increase civilian abilities to be flexible and resilient while accomplishing the mission.
- The Manager Development Course enhances civilian abilities to manage work and lead people by focusing on communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.
- The Advanced Course includes content on developing a positive culture and cohesive organization, creating high performing teams, and managing resources.
- Civilian Education for Senior Leaders provides an interactive environment in which senior leaders discuss current issues and relevant challenges facing civilian and military leaders, and provides a continuing education program on specific topics.

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<sup>31</sup> Course-level analyses included the following samples of civilian respondents by course: Foundation Course – 168; Basic Course – 103; Intermediate Course – 135; Manager Development Course – 229; Advanced Course – 184; Civilian Education for Senior Leaders – 84. Respondents completed their course between 2014 and 2015.

**Figure 25. Ratings for Civilian Courses by Recent Graduates (2014-2015) <sup>32</sup>**



Throughout the progression of courses, common themes in content areas include development of the core leader competencies *Leads Others, Communicates, Creates a Positive Environment, Stewardship of the Profession, Develops Others, and Gets Results*, among others. A majority of recent graduates across the Basic Course, Intermediate Course, Manager Development Course, Advanced Course, and Civilian Education for Senior Leaders (53%-67%) rate their course effective at improving their leadership capabilities. Across these CES courses, between 5% and 15% of respondents rate any individual course ineffective at improving their leadership capabilities.

<sup>32</sup> Figure 25 does not include results for respondent agreement that instructors provided leadership feedback for the Foundation Course and Manager Development Course, as these courses are conducted entirely via DL.

More specifically, CES courses are rated moderately favorable in preparing learners to demonstrate a range of leadership skills, including working with others on a team, dealing with unfamiliar situations, developing subordinates' leadership skills, influencing others, improving the organization, and solving complex problems (see Table 14). The Intermediate Course and Civilian Education for Senior Leaders were the two most favorably rated courses by recent graduates. Smaller percentages of recent Basic Course and Advanced Course graduates rate their course effective in several of the considerations. The Manager Development Course, which is conducted entirely via distributed learning (DL), is rated least favorably at preparing recent graduates for the range of leadership skills (46% to 57%). Less favorable ratings for DL courses is an established pattern across CASAL administrations.

**Table 14. Ratings for Civilian Education System (CES) Courses in Preparing Graduates for Leadership (2014-2015)**

Course Effective or Very Effective at Preparing Civilian Leaders to...	CES Basic Course (BC) DL & Resident	CES Intermediate Course (IC) DL & Resident	Manager Development Course (MDC) DL	CES Advanced Course (AC) DL & Resident	Civilian Education for Senior Leaders (CESL) DL & Resident
Work with others on a team	<u>64%</u>	78%	<u>57%</u>	72%	77%
Deal with unfamiliar and uncertain situations	<u>54%</u>	68%	<u>52%</u>	69%	67%
Develop the leadership skills of subordinates	<u>57%</u>	69%	<u>53%</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>56%</u>
Influence others in the unit/organization	<u>56%</u>	66%	<u>54%</u>	<u>61%</u>	67%
Improve the organization	<u>55%</u>	65%	<u>52%</u>	<u>53%</u>	67%
Solve complex problems	<u>49%</u>	69%	<u>46%</u>	<u>61%</u>	<u>58%</u>
Course effective/very effective at improving leadership capabilities	<u>53%</u>	69%	<u>55%</u>	<u>59%</u>	67%

Note. Percentages that are bolded and underlined represent areas within civilian courses that received effectiveness ratings below a threshold of 65%.

The Foundation Course, which is also conducted entirely via DL, is rated least favorably in preparing recent graduates for leadership skills. While not included in Table 14, favorable ratings for the Foundation Course across those areas range from 28% to 45% effective. This course provides an introduction to the Army and orientation to being an Army civilian and is geared toward new civilians of any grade or leadership level. While this DL course includes leadership concepts such as team building, managing conflict, and effective communication skills, it is not generally viewed as effective for improving leadership capabilities.

Course Relevance and Value

Ratings for CES course relevance fall below a two-thirds favorability threshold for the Foundation Course (56%), Basic Course (64%), and Advanced Course (61%; see Table 15). These three courses also reflect the highest levels of disagreement regarding relevance of content to civilian leaders’ duties (18%, 12%, and 19%, respectively).

**Table 15. Percent of Favorable Ratings for Course Content Relevance and Effectiveness by Civilian Leaders (2014-2015)**

	Agreement course content was relevant to current job	Course met, exceeded, or greatly exceeded learners’ expectations
CES Foundation Course (FC) DL	<b><u>56%</u></b>	66%
CES Basic Course (BC)	<b><u>64%</u></b>	76%
CES Intermediate Course (IC)	71%	81%
Manager Development Course (MDC) DL	76%	76%
CES Advanced Course (AC)	<b><u>59%</u></b>	69%
Civilian Education for Senior Leaders (CESL)	70%	80%

*Note.* Percentages that are bolded and underlined represent areas within civilian courses that received effectiveness ratings below a threshold of 65%.

Results in Table 15 also show that CES courses are meeting or exceeding the expectations of a majority of civilian leaders who attend. About one-third of recent graduates of the Foundation Course (34%) and the Advanced Course (31%) indicate the course fell short or fell well short of their expectations. Similarly, about one-fourth of Basic Course (24%) and Manager Development Course (24%) graduates’ expectations were not met. CASAL respondents whose expectations were not met were asked to indicate reasons why. This sub-sample of respondents is not large enough to represent findings for each particular course. However, the

following results from across CES represent broad themes as to why course expectations are not being met for some civilian leaders:

- Information was not new to me (e.g., covered in previous course, learned through self-development or my experiences) – 50%
- Content was not relevant to what I do – 43%
- Lack of rigor or challenge (e.g., felt like a check-the-box activity) – 34%
- Course did not have enough emphasis on leadership skills – 33%
- Course did not offer enough practical experiences or exercises – 24%

Civilian leader respondents also provided qualitative comments on this issue, which predominantly reflected attitudes that distributed or online learning is ineffective in general, along with reiteration that the course content was not new to the learner.

Similarly, respondents who indicated their course met or exceeded their expectations were asked to comment on ways they had utilized what they had learned or how the information had benefited them. Comments covered themes that described skills, knowledge areas, and outcomes of course attendance. The most frequently mentioned skills civilians demonstrated as a result of their course learning were leadership, teamwork (or interacting with others), general management or supervisory skills, communication, team building, critical thinking, and problem solving. The most frequently mentioned themes relating to knowledge areas were awareness of the Army structure and organization, and how the Army runs, while the most frequently cited outcome of CES attendance was learner self-awareness. Finally, some respondents commented that their course benefitted them as refresher training for topic areas they already knew.

### 3.4.2 Quality of CES

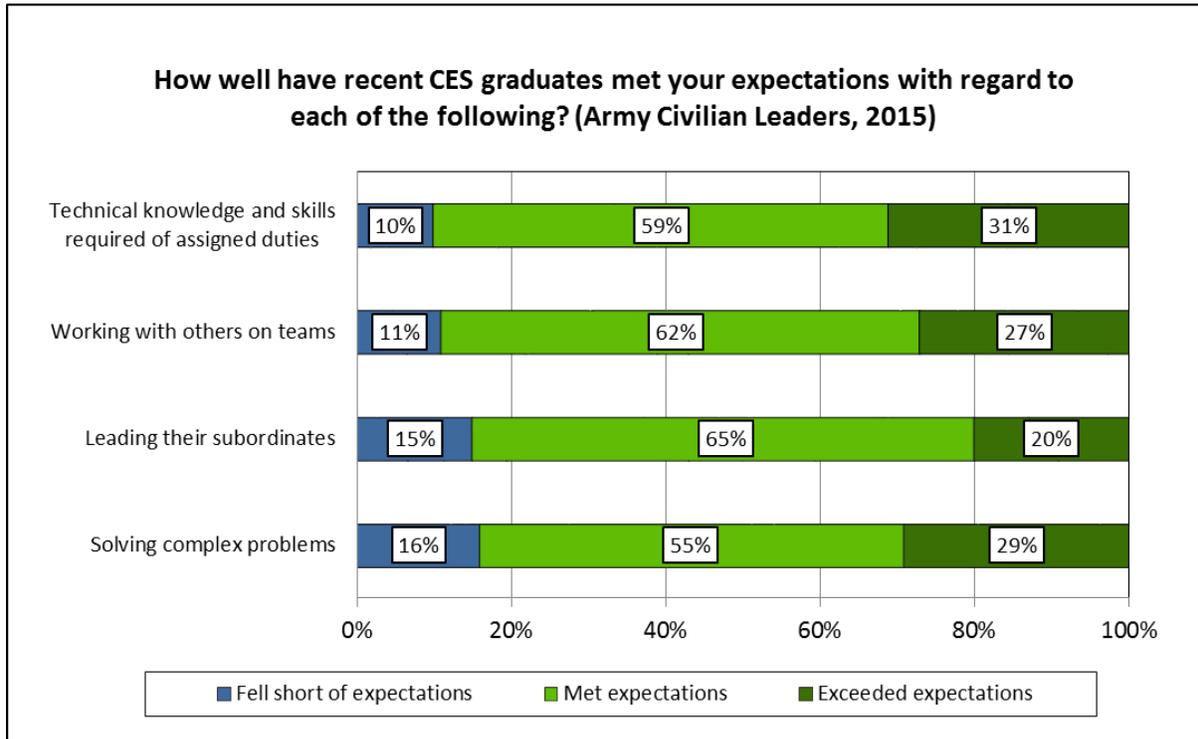
The 2015 CASAL asked senior Army civilian leaders in grades GS 11 to GS 15 to assess Army civilian CES graduates with whom they interact with, work alongside, supervise, or lead. The goal was to understand civilian leaders' attitudes regarding the benefits of CES and to identify potential areas for improvement. Just over half (56%) of civilian managers and first line supervisors (in these grades) indicated they interact with an Army civilian who had completed a CES course in the previous 24 months.

Recent CES graduates are meeting or exceeding the expectations of a majority of civilian leaders with regard to their technical knowledge and ability to work with others, lead subordinates, and solve problems.

Results show that Army civilian CES graduates are meeting, and in many cases, exceeding the expectations of civilian leaders in their demonstration of a range of skills. Figure 26 presents the percentages of civilian leaders who indicate that their expectations are not met, met, or

exceeded regarding technical knowledge and skills, team work, leading others, and problem solving.

**Figure 26. Senior Civilian Leader Attitudes Regarding CES Graduates Meeting Their Expectations in Various Areas**



Perceptions of the value of CES are mixed. Half of civilian leaders agree CES graduates are gaining the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful. One-third neither agree nor disagree.

At an overall level, 55% of civilian leaders agree or strongly agree that CES graduates are gaining the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities in their courses that they need to be successful in their jobs (32% neither agree nor disagree, and 13% disagree). The minority of respondents who indicated disagreement were prompted to identify the skills

that CES graduates lack even after completing a course. The most frequently selected skills by the 13% of respondents included:

- Ability to lead and influence others
- Critical or creative thinking skills
- Analytic or problem-solving skills
- Planning and time/resource management skills
- Ability to develop and mentor others
- Communication skills (e.g., written and oral communication)

Additionally, qualitative comments from these respondents primarily addressed two areas. First, comments indicated that CES is ineffective in general or ineffective specifically in improving the skills of civilians who complete the courses. Second, comments noted that some employees show no change in their skillsets due to CES attendance, often because those employees “were already developed” through their job experiences or other education, or through their prior military careers. There was also a sentiment by several of these respondents that CES is not the mechanism by which civilians develop these types of skills.

These results must be interpreted with caution, as more than half of civilian leader respondents indicate agreement (and an additional one-third neither agree nor disagree) that CES is appropriately preparing civilian learners for their duties. In addition, these results reflect civilian leader attitudes toward Army civilians and their CES experiences in general, not any particular group of employees or specific course(s).

### ***Summary of Findings on the Quality of Leader Development***

Leader development for Army civilians occurs at moderate levels in the Army, and is characteristically different from leader development of uniformed leaders, as Army civilians are traditionally hired already fully qualified for their assigned duties. Civilian leaders favor the development they receive through operational job experiences and self-development over formal education opportunities. A majority of civilian leaders who have CES experiences rate the courses as providing a good quality of education, though courses receive moderately favorable ratings regarding effectiveness for improving leadership capabilities. A potential gap observed in current and previous CASAL findings is that only about half of managers and first line supervisors surveyed have completed a current CES course at some point in their career. As a majority view CES courses as relevant and useful to their assigned duties, there are both opportunities and benefits for increasing CES awareness and attendance among the Army civilian cohort.

Interpersonal methods of civilian leader development continue to show room for improvement. *Develops Others* is consistently the least favorably rated core leader competency. Formal and informal performance counseling occur inconsistently and the perceived impact remains low for most civilian leaders. Most seek or ask for developmental feedback from others only rarely or occasionally. Civilian leader participation in mentoring lags behind reported levels by uniformed leaders. Less than one-third of managers and first line supervisors (28%) report having a mentor, though twice as many (55%) indicate they provide mentoring to others.

One in five civilian manager and first line supervisor respondents (24%) indicate they have been assessed through the MSAF program at some point in their career, a proportion that has increased in recent years. Most Army civilian MSAF participants view the experience as effective for increasing their awareness of their strengths and their developmental needs. While MSAF is a valuable self-development tool, other results indicate civilian leaders perceive a lack of sufficient time available for self-development. Excessive workloads and a lack of available time for development are factors that impact both the purposes and types of self-development activities in which civilian leaders engage.

## Conclusions and Considerations for Improvement

CASAL results continue to show that leadership doctrine and the Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS) endorse sound leadership requirements. Attributes and competencies that doctrine and the ALDS establish as expectations of Army leaders are strongly related to leaders producing desired outcomes. Effective leaders produce proficient teams and capable units. What leaders do and how well they do it impact morale, unit cohesion, confidence in the team's ability to perform missions, leader effectiveness, productivity, and the absence of counterproductive leadership behaviors.

However, numerous leaders (35% of Army civilian leaders) are rated ineffective or neutral in critical leadership skills. Factors that should contribute to improvement of leadership skills, such as CES course completion are a concern because improving leadership capabilities are rated low in most CES courses. Combined with the finding that many leaders are not receiving adequate leader development support from their immediate superior and do not have adequate time for self-development makes for a situation whereby leader development happens unintentionally. Deliberate attention to leadership and development should increase leadership capabilities and decrease undesired outcomes.

The levels are not improving on their own. These needs can be addressed through a concerted Army emphasis on improving critical leadership skills, specifically those within the *Leads* category of competencies (*Leads Others, Builds Trust, Extends Influence beyond the Chain of Command, Communicates*). By increasing the performance capabilities of *leadership* across the civilian workforce, the Army can alleviate concerns in a number of areas including character, the profession, and developing others, and also positively affect trust, engagement, and workload stress in organizations.

As in past years CASAL findings lead to areas that should be studied in greater detail or acted upon to address a problem or take advantage of an opportunity. In some cases the measured levels are sufficient, and in other cases areas needing improvement are identified. Individual agencies, including CAL, have acted upon the findings in the past, but the efforts have not been consistently integrated and synchronized. The leader development initiative process under the Army Leader Development Program (ALDP, DA PAM 350-58) is an existing way to determine whether findings merit improvement and to identify what actions that the Army and the leader development community should take. The Army is also working to add a tenet of *leading* to the strategic readiness assessment program (SRT, AR 525-30). HQ DA staff are looking at the best ways to incorporate *leading* with the five other tenets (equipping, training, manning, sustaining, and installation). In the readiness program, strategic indicators are used to identify what

strategic levers could be applied. In both the ALDP and SRT programs, CASAL findings provide information on the state of leadership and leader development. CASAL assessments help select which shortfalls or opportunities should be addressed. CASAL is also a valuable source of information on human performance capabilities and development for workforce transformation initiatives, employee engagement, and other similar programs and studies.

Findings from the 2015 CASAL provide the Army with several new insights on the quality of leadership and leader development within the Army. The points under the following sections, *What can be done*, are considerations for improvement and are not provided as an exhaustive list of everything that is being done or could be done. These points provide a sample of actions responding to each category of findings. They stem from the judgment of the authors over several years of conducting the CASAL studies and are shaped by criteria that try to address highest need with the most promise at the lowest resource expenditure. They are not intended as a complete plan for action, but as a starting point for additional consideration and implementation. As individual leaders read and consider the findings and the given ideas for action, they too can consider what areas they can influence and how they would do so. The following points summarize insights, important trends observed across multiple years, and areas that warrant further consideration.

## **Quality of Leadership**

### Leadership Effectiveness and Satisfaction

**Findings.** Many Army Civilian first line supervisors and managers see their subordinates and peers as effective leaders (71% to 82%), and notably fewer non-supervisory employees (56%) and first line supervisors (63%) see their superiors as effective leaders. Civilian leader satisfaction with the quality of military and civilian leadership in their organizations remains at moderate levels. Between 59% and 64% of civilian leaders report satisfaction with either type of leadership. Satisfaction is most strongly driven by perceptions that senior leaders place trust in subordinates (collective felt trust) and perceptions that organizational leaders are effective at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress in subordinates.

**What can be done.** More deliberate attention to the performance of leadership skills by Army civilian leaders and their superiors is a first step to improve leadership capabilities. Improved curriculum on leadership is a possible consideration, however, CES courses recently have better aligned themselves to Army leadership doctrine. Also CAL is developing an Army training circular on how to improve engagement in Army organizations. The resource will be available from the Army Publishing Directorate. While many self-development materials are already

available for improving leadership, better priorities and resource usage need to occur to free up Army civilians' time to engage in development.

### Leadership Requirements Model

**Findings.** While civilian leaders are consistently rated favorably in exhibiting *Expertise in their Primary Duties*, levels of effectiveness in five of the 10 leadership competencies falls below a two-thirds benchmark. Leadership is fundamental to influence and completing missions. Yet, the competencies within the *Leads* category are not among the most favorably rated for civilian managers and first line supervisors. The quality of leadership among Army civilians is below the two-thirds benchmark on five of the 10 leadership competencies, a relatively stable finding since first assessed in 2009. Civilian leaders are rated most favorably on the competencies *Get Results* and *Prepare Self*, while the persistent area for improvement is *Develops Others*. Missing from the most favorably rated are any from the *Leads* category of competencies (*Leads Others*, *Builds Trust*, *Extends Influence beyond the Chain of Command*, *Leads by Example*, and *Communicates*), which are the essence of influence and providing purpose, motivation, and direction. The demonstration of leader attributes is consistently at more favorable levels, such as exhibiting *Expertise in Primary Duties*, *Confidence & Composure*, *Self-discipline*, and the *Army Values*. In contrast, *Total Fitness* (physical, health, psychological, spiritual, behavioral, and social), *Innovation*, and *Interpersonal Tact* are the lowest rated of the doctrinal leader attributes. Other leader behaviors showing room for improvement include building effective teams and specific actions for getting results, such as managing people and time to complete work efficiently, providing sufficient guidance on how to accomplish tasks, and providing resources needed by subordinates.

**What can be done.** Cultivate an Army-wide emphasis on improving critical leadership skills, specifically those within the *Leads* category of competencies. The increased attention would be supported by publishing a training document applicable to both military and Army civilian cohorts. The core of the training would cover effective influence techniques, ways to build and sustain trust, effective communication, and what it means to lead by example. The emphasis would be reinforced by developing instruction on leadership actions. Numerous leader development resources are already available to civilian leaders but remain underutilized. For example, only about one in four have been assessed through the MSAF program and have received feedback on their leadership strengths and developmental needs.

## Climate and Situational Factors

### Commitment and Morale

**Findings.** Army civilian managers and first line supervisors display commitment to their teams and immediate work groups, view their assigned duties as important to their organization, and have confidence and pride in their organizations. Civilian leader morale has stabilized after experiencing a sharp decline in 2013. Career satisfaction shows gradual improvement after falling 12% in 2013 from its peak in 2011. Civilian leaders score favorably on a set of 10 indicators of engagement, and working environments and organizational climates are generally supportive of effective leadership, learning, and development.

**What can be done.** Past results show that leaders who get to know those they lead, who affirm subordinates' contributions to their units, and who help them develop will strengthen subordinates' commitment and morale. One straightforward way to sustain or improve commitment and morale is simply for leaders to fulfill their responsibilities of leading and developing others. There is value to continue assessing Army civilian leader commitment, morale, and engagement as indicators of the impact from leadership quality and the effectiveness of leader development.

### Trust

**Findings.** Overall, Army civilians report moderate to high levels of trust in those with whom they work and interact. Trust is also evidenced in operational climates that reflect favorable aspects of the mission command philosophy in practice (e.g., unit members are enabled to determine how best to accomplish their work, allowed to learn from honest mistakes, encouraged to try new and better ways of doing things).

**What can be done.** Through increased emphasis on the *Leads* category of competencies, Army leader skill in trust-building behavior can be enhanced concurrently. This begins with promoting a mindset of being a genuine and caring leader, and extends to creating positive climates that allow honest mistakes, communicating effectively and honestly, and fostering vertical trust. Trust should be continued to be assessed to track how it impacts influence and the development of others.

## Workload Stress

**Findings.** Civilian leaders complete their tasks and missions despite stress experienced from high workloads, which is a persistent challenge that is reported by one in three managers and first line supervisors. Many leaders attribute the problems with workload stress to personnel shortages. While effective leadership can mitigate adverse working conditions for subordinates, less than half of civilian leaders view their organization's senior leaders as effective at lessening or limiting the effects of workload stress, an important finding as these attitudes are closely associated with perceptions of leadership quality in organizations.

**What can be done.** Army civilian leaders can be encouraged to use existing leadership instruction on the competency *Gets results*, which addresses distributing workload, planning and prioritizing taskings, and shielding subordinates from excessive taskings. In addition, the recent Team-Building training publication, ATP 6-22.6, can be followed to increase the capacity of teams to accommodate additional or peak workload. Findings from CASAL on the ways that leaders mitigate stress can be incorporated into future updates to Chapter 9, Leadership in Practice, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*. Doctrine and training materials only provide information and will not change anything by themselves unless they are useful and are used.

## **Quality of Leader Development**

### Civilian Leader Development

**Findings.** Civilian leader development occurs at a moderate level, and supervisor involvement in subordinate development continues to show room for improvement. About half of civilian leaders are rated effective at developing subordinates, and tend to rely on relatively low effort methods of development such as remaining approachable for subordinates to seek input and providing subordinates encouragement or praise. Operational job experiences and self-development are the favored leader development domains for civilian leaders. Operational work experiences are viewed as less developmental for those who do not perceive upward job mobility or opportunity for increased leadership responsibility. Participation in the Army 360/MSAF program remains limited (one in four civilian leaders) but continues to increase. The individual benefits of the MSAF experience (e.g., self-awareness of strengths and developmental needs) are rated well by those civilian leaders who have participated. High impact leader development actions that are occurring for smaller percentages of civilian leaders (reported by about one-third) reflect the creation of learning opportunities such as delegation of tasks, new opportunities to lead, and challenging stretch or developmental job assignments.

**What can be done.** Senior leaders and senior raters can reinforce the importance of developing subordinates through the leadership example they set, the developmental behaviors they role model, and the questions they ask their key subordinate leaders. A culture of leader development can be cultivated. Enhancements to leader development practices at the organizational level will convey the importance of these activities. Practices that can be emphasized include fostering formal and informal counseling, implementing developmental and stretch assignments, coaching and mentoring others, and a mindset for seeking feedback and development from others. Developmental interactions between civilian leaders and their subordinate leaders could occur more frequently and focus more on feedback about leadership performance. Most civilian leaders are not reported to enhance their subordinates' development through recommendations or referrals to learning resources, though doing so would help to prioritize this need and foster subordinate commitment to improve their leadership skills. A majority of civilian leaders report that their self-development has had at least a moderate impact on their development, yet organizations will need to grant employees time to engage in self-development if they want to change the prevailing culture.

#### Performance Counseling

**Findings.** Formal and informal performance counseling occurs inconsistently and the perceived impact on development for many remains low. Currently, most civilian leaders only rarely or occasionally seek or ask for developmental feedback from their immediate superior or others. One in four civilian leaders reports having a mentor and one in five reports their immediate superior has provided mentoring in the past year to help them prepare for future roles.

**What can be done.** Increasing the frequency of day-to-day interactions in which leaders talk with their subordinates about how they are doing in their work, how they can improve their job performance, and how they can prepare for future roles will benefit the ongoing development of employees, first line supervisors, and managers. The techniques of interaction and degree of formality are less important than the impact they achieve.

#### Army Education

**Findings.** Civilian leaders continue to assess education less favorably than the other two leader development domains. A majority of civilian leaders have completed the required Supervisor Development Course, though its perceived effectiveness for improving leadership capabilities remains low. Only 60% of civilian leaders have completed other CES courses. While most view the CES quality of education as good or very good, CES effectiveness in preparing civilians to demonstrate leadership skills could be enhanced. CES courses offered entirely via DL are rated

lowest in terms of leadership improvement. When courses fall short of civilian leaders' expectations, it is most often because the content was not new to the learner or the content was not relevant to the learner's current job.

**What can be done.** Information about why the intermediate course receives higher marks than the basic and advanced courses should be sought. The best practices across courses should be incorporated into future course updates. Suggestions from graduates and their leaders who are not impressed with course outcomes should be consulted to identify any trends in expectations. Better outcomes in the areas of leadership, management, and communication abilities were some of the suggestions obtained from this survey.

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