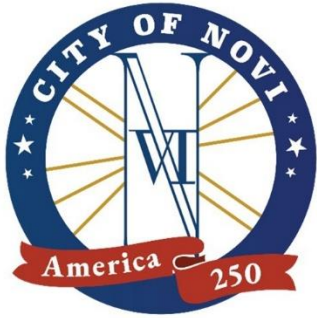


MEMORANDUM



TO: MAYOR FISCHER AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: DANIELLE MAHONEY, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION (HPO)
FRAMEWORK – OVERVIEW AND APPLICATION IN NOVI
DATE: APRIL 30, 2026

Key Highlights

- Novi has a longstanding commitment to the **High Performance Organization (HPO)** model, dating back to earlier leadership in the early 2000s and now renewed with a stronger, more intentional focus.
- HPO is a **proven local government framework** that strengthens culture, leadership, and organizational performance through shared values and continuous improvement.
- Since 2023, we have **reinvigorated this work** through formal training (University of Kansas Leading EDGE), on-site leadership programs, and expanded internal alignment efforts.
- Current efforts are focused on **embedding HPO at the department level** and developing a “**Novi Drive Toolkit**” to sustain and scale this approach across the organization.

What is HPO in Local Government?

A **High Performance Organization (HPO)** is one that intentionally aligns its **people, culture, and processes** to consistently deliver exceptional results for the community. In local government, this model emphasizes:

- **Leadership at all levels** – empowering staff across the organization to lead and solve problems
- **Clarity of purpose and values** – ensuring decisions align with organizational priorities
- **Continuous improvement** – using data, feedback, and reflection to refine operations
- **Trust and accountability** – fostering a culture where teams collaborate and perform

Many municipalities implement HPO principles through structured programs such as the [University of Kansas \(KU\) Public Management Center Leading EDGE program](#), which provides practical tools and frameworks tailored to public sector organizations.

Novi's HPO Journey

Novi's commitment to high performance is not new. Foundational work began under prior leadership as far back as 2001, including during the tenure of former City Manager Clay Pearson, when the organization first explored and applied HPO principles to strengthen culture and service delivery. Between 2001 and 2019, training programs were offered to thirty (30) staff through the Senior Executive Institute (SEI) at the University of Virginia and LEAD (the earlier iteration of what's currently known today as Leading EDGE at KU).

Since that time, and particularly over the past two and a half years, we have renewed and modernized this commitment:

- **Leadership Development Investment:**
 - **Leading EDGE Program at KU**
 - Since 2023, four staff members have participated in the new **Leading EDGE program** through the University of Kansas, building a shared foundation of HPO knowledge and tools. Our goal is to continue to provide this opportunity for staff.
 - **On-Site Training in Novi:**
 - We hosted a **one-day HPO training in September 2023** for administrative staff that resulted in the creation of "strategic anchors" for the organization: recruitment and retention, organizational priorities (the "stop list"), organizational culture, and the budget/CIP process.
 - Most recently, we hosted a **condensed three-day Leading EDGE training in September 2025**, expanding access to a broader **group of thirty staff** throughout all levels of the organization, reinforcing a common language around leadership, values, and performance. We hope to offer this program annually, as it represents a **high-impact, scalable investment**, with trained staff extending the value across the organization through shared tools, practices, and leadership development.
 - **Novi Drive 101 (in development):**
 - In parallel and like our friends in McKinney, we are working to develop an internal "**HPO 101**" offering that will allow us to extend these concepts to all staff. This approach will supplement external training and ensure broader, consistent exposure across the organization in a cost-effective and scalable way.
- **Organizational Alignment:**

This work has been rebranded from HPO to [Novi Drive](#) to feel less academic and more approachable. It is intentionally aligned with [Novi's Leadership Philosophy, core values of Team, Commitment, Innovation, and Trust, and with our broader vision of being a high-performing, service-oriented organization](#). Having a clearly defined vision and set of values is a key foundational component of HPO work.

Current and Ongoing Work

We are now focused on **embedding HPO more deeply into day-to-day operations** so that it becomes part of how we work—not a standalone initiative.

Key efforts underway include:

- **Established Novi Drive Team:**
To advance HPO efforts throughout the organization and model leadership at all levels, this is an interdepartmental group of staff from various levels of the organization charged with bringing HPO in Novi to life.
- **Novi Drive Toolkit Development:**
Creating a practical, internal guide that translates HPO concepts into **simple language and actionable tools** for staff and leaders. This toolkit will support consistent application across departments and serve as a resource for onboarding, team development, and decision-making.
- **Department-Level Integration:**
Working with departments to incorporate HPO principles into:
 - Team meetings and goal setting
 - Performance management and project planning
 - Continuous improvement efforts and service delivery enhancements
- **Leadership and Culture Reinforcement:**
Continuing to build a shared understanding of what high performance looks like at Novi, emphasizing:
 - Ownership and accountability at all levels
 - Cross-department collaboration
 - Data-informed decision-making and adaptability

In closing, our continued investment in the High Performance Organization framework reflects a deliberate commitment to strengthening how we serve the Novi community. By aligning our values, leadership practices, and day-to-day operations around a shared model of performance and continuous improvement, we are building an organization that is both responsive in the short term and resilient over the long term. We look forward to continuing this work and keeping Council informed as we further embed these principles across Team Novi.

As requested, attached are HPO resources discussed and shared by McKinney's Office of Organizational Development: HPO 101 and Coaching 101.