

MEMORANDUM



TO: MAYOR FISCHER AND CITY COUNCIL
CC: VICTOR CARDENAS, CITY MANAGER
FROM: DANIELLE MAHONEY, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: HIGH-PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION (HPO) TRAINING
DATE: OCTOBER 9, 2025

Last week, approximately 30 members of Team Novi participated in a High-Performance Organization (HPO) training led by Angela Nicholson of Kansas University's *HPO in Local Government* program. The session was part of our ongoing effort to strengthen Novi's organizational culture and reinforce our shared values of Team, Innovation, Commitment, and Trust, and continue our focus on building a high-performing organization. The session provided an opportunity for staff to reflect on how they show up as stewards for the organization and how we can continue aligning our internal culture with the expectations of a high-performing, service-oriented government.

Key Themes & Insights

1. **Alignment Around Innovation and Priorities**
Participants shared thoughtful reflections on how innovation connects to stability and direction. There was appreciation that Novi's elected leadership is actively engaging in the long-range strategic planning process (Novi 2050 Plan), which will provide clear long-term priorities and a consistent framework for innovation across departments.
2. **Resourcing and Capacity**
Participants noted that with the City's growth and changing expectations, some functions have not evolved as quickly as others. This underscores the importance of regularly reviewing workload and service delivery approaches to ensure departments are equipped to serve the community effectively.
3. **Strengthening Internal Communication**
Employees consistently praised Novi's external communication with the community and expressed a desire for earlier or more proactive internal updates. Many noted that receiving key information sooner helps them serve as more effective stewards and ambassadors for the City's message.
4. **Continued Engagement of Novi Next Participants**
The Novi Next group remains enthusiastic and eager to be part of ongoing organizational development efforts. Their engagement represents an opportunity to

cultivate peer leaders and champions of the HPO framework throughout the organization.

5. After Action Reviews and Learning Culture

The team expressed interest in implementing After Action Briefings following significant events (such as the recent water main break). This would provide a safe, constructive space to reflect on what went well, identify opportunities for improvement, and celebrate teamwork, which is consistent with HPO's "learning organization" principles.

6. Leadership Philosophy Refinement

As part of the training, participants revisited the City's Leadership Philosophy, and updated drafts were created to help further define the behaviors that align with Novi's values and leadership expectations.

7. Focusing on What We Can Control

A recurring theme was empowerment, focusing on what's within our control: how we show up, how we support one another, and how we model the principles of a high-performing organization in every interaction.

Next Steps

Building on the momentum from this session, staff will continue to integrate HPO principles into our day-to-day work and leadership practices. In the months ahead, the Manager's Office will designate an internal lead(s) to coordinate ongoing HPO efforts, oversee future trainings, and maintain alignment across departments.

As City Council continues its long-range strategic planning process, staff will ensure that the HPO framework serves as a foundation for connecting organizational culture with long-term goals and priorities. Departments will also work to embed HPO concepts (including the Seven Questions, stewardship model, and Team Novi values) into meetings, onboarding, evaluations, and team development conversations.

The HPO framework is more than a training course; it is what drives us, and is a long-term investment in Novi's people, culture, and shared purpose. By continuing to live our values and strengthen our internal capacity, we position Novi to remain a high-performing, values-driven organization that delivers exceptional service to our community.

