



# NCO STRATEGY



## The Army NCO Strategy

### NCO Journal

The NCO Journal recently spoke with Sgt. Maj. Brad J. Lopes, the noncommissioned officer professional development directorate analyst at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, for a podcast about the newly developed NCO Strategy. The following are the key takeaways from the discussion.

#### What is the NCO Strategy?

“The NCO Strategy is a way to lead leaders and NCOs into the future,” said Sgt. Maj. Lopes.

“The four lines of effort are nested within the NCO common core competencies. They have those lines of effort we need to reach the end-state, but in order to reach the end-state, they’ve come up with key tasks to get after those lines of effort.

“Although the four lines of effort are actually within the strategy, those four lines of effort will never change, but the key tasks associated with those lines of effort will change. So as tasks are completed, they will be removed from the strategy and new tasks will be implemented to keep driving those lines of effort to reach the end-state to ensure future Soldiers are reaching the end-state of being fit, disciplined, well-trained and a Soldier for Life.”

#### Why Develop an NCO Strategy?

“The Army developed the strategy to help leaders face the challenge of preparing squads to meet the demands of a changing operational environment. Changes happen frequently, and with all the advances coming out so rapidly, the NCO Corps needed to devel-

op an enduring and flexible strategy that can lead us into the future.”

#### Lines of Effort

##### 1. Leadership and Communication

“With leadership, NCOs need to set the example so there are role models. They’re going to do this through commitment, intellect, presence; even humility and character. And for communication, communication establishes trust by keeping others informed, setting expectations, providing feedback; just developing commitment.

“Effective leaders understand that communication is essential when it comes to leading, supervising, providing counsel, coaching, mentoring or even simply building teams to communicate clearly.”

##### 2. Operations and Training Management

“As we know, NCOs are directly responsible for training individual Soldiers, crews and teams. So NCOs will plan,

prepare, execute and assess tough realistic training at all levels including individual, organizational, and institutional levels. That all falls under operations and training management.”

### 3. Readiness and Program Management

“When talking about readiness, we’re not just talking about operational readiness, but strategic readiness as well. So as NCOs we need to anticipate the Army’s needs through modernization across all readiness programs; while at the same time managing programs that support Soldiers and their Families.”

### 4. Profession of Arms

“This includes stewardship from all different levels such as strategic, organizational, and individual levels. This also gets after Army culture, which is the attitudes, values, goals, beliefs, and even behaviors that are rooted in tradition such as customs and courtesies. And all this is influenced by leadership; so you can see how each line of effort is crucial for all NCOs.”

### Initiatives

“There are several initiatives within the NCO Strategy that will help develop future NCOs. For example, a critical one is holistic fitness. This is going to help get after the big three for the Army right now: sexual assault, suicide, and racism.

“For example, when talking about fitness, we talk about generating lethal Soldiers who are physically, mentally, and spiritually fit. Well, this is holistic fitness. Holistic fitness includes everything from physical fitness, resiliency, training, individual spirituality such as self-identity and beliefs, as well as social interactions like positive connection with oth-

ers and physical, psychological, and even behavioral health.

“So again, this incorporates everything within fitness, it’s not just physical, but it’s mental as well. So a squad’s focus on training, fitness, cohesiveness, discipline and even readiness will see a decrease in sexual harassment, sexual assault, suicide, racism, even domestic issues and alcohol incidents.”

### NCO Professional Development

“The professional development courses have 55 curriculum hours that cover the common core competencies that we now know are nested in the Army Strategy. For example, to talk about LOE one again, leadership and communication, we have courses that cover the Army leader, military briefing classes, and all that falls under leadership and communication.

“For LOE two, operations and training management, we have classes teaching mission orders, troop leading procedures, and the military decision-making process.

“LOE three, readiness and program management, we have courses that cover physical fitness programs, not just for the squad, but also the platoon level as well as Army maintenance programs.

“For the profession of arms we have courses that are taught specifically on Army discipline and standards as well as classes on ethical leadership. So you can see how all professional development courses for NCOs are nested with the NCO Strategy.”

### Lasting Importance

“It’s new, and it’s going to be here to stay. It’s going to continue to grow as the Army moves forward in the future. That’s what I really like about it, there’s no date associated with it.

“It’s going to be a living, breathing strategy that’s going to grow and develop depending on which direction the Army goes in the future.” ■



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