



# Leaders working together for democracy and national prosperity

Government resolution on public service leadership



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service leadership

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### Abstract

Well-led public administration is a cornerstone of democracy and the rule of law. Bold, responsible and professional public service leadership safeguards the functioning and stability of society. Together, leaders ensure the overall sustainability of society and the prosperity of future generations.

This government resolution provides policies on shared values and principles, good leadership, and cooperation between political leadership and senior public officials. The principles for public service leadership are: effective, sustainable, collaborative, solution oriented, competent and ethical.

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the resolution in cooperation with municipalities, wellbeing services counties and the rest of public administration.

**Keywords** public administration, leadership (activity), principles, good governance, democracy

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## Yhdessä johtajina demokratian ja kansallisen menestyksen puolesta Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös julkisesta johtamisesta

### Valtioneuvoston julkaisu 2026:19

**Julkaisija** Valtioneuvosto

**Yhteisötekijä** Valtiovarainministeriö

**Kieli** englanti

**Sivumäärä** 11

### Tiivistelmä

Hyvin johdettu julkinen hallinto on demokratian ja oikeusvaltion peruskivi. Johtamalla rohkeasti, vastuullisesti ja ammattimaisesti julkiset johtajat turvaavat yhteiskunnan toimivuuden ja vakauden. Yhdessä johtajat varmistavat yhteiskunnan kokonaisekestävyyttä ja tulevien sukupolvien hyvinvointia.

Periaatepäätöksessä valtioneuvosto linjaa yhteisistä arvoista ja periaatteista, hyvästä johtamisesta sekä poliittisen johdon ja virkajohdon yhteistyöstä. Julkisen johtamisen yhteisiä periaatteita ovat: vaikuttavuus, kestävyys, yhdessä, ratkaisukeskeisesti, osaavasti ja eettisesti.

Valtiovarainministeriö vastaa periaatepäätöksen toteutuksesta ja seurannasta yhdessä kuntien, hyvinvointialueiden ja muun julkisen hallinnon kanssa.

**Asiasanat** julkinen hallinto, johtaminen, periaatteet, hyvä hallinto, demokratia

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## Tillsammans som ledare för demokrati och nationell framgång

### Statsrådets principbeslut om offentlig ledning

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#### Statsrådets publikationer 2026:19

**Utgivare** Statsrådet

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**Utarbetad av** Finansministeriet  
**Språk** engelska

**Sidantal** 11

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#### Referat

En välskött offentlig förvaltning är en grundsten för demokratin och rättsstaten. Genom modigt, ansvarsfullt och professionellt ledarskap tryggar de offentliga ledarna ett fungerande och stabilt samhälle. Tillsammans säkerställer ledarna samhällets övergripande hållbarhet och välfärden för kommande generationer.

I principbeslutet drar statsrådet upp riktlinjer för gemensamma värden och principer, gott ledarskap samt för samarbete mellan den politiska ledningen och tjänstemannaledningen. De gemensamma principerna för det offentliga ledarskapet uttrycks genom följande ledord: verkningsfullt, hållbart, tillsammans, lösningsorienterat, kunnigt och etiskt.

Finansministeriet ansvarar för att genomföra och följa principbeslutet tillsammans med kommunerna, välfärdsområdena och den övriga offentliga förvaltningen.

**Nyckelord** offentlig förvaltning, ledarskap, principer, god förvaltning, demokrati

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# 1 Good public service leadership safeguards the nation

Well-led public administration is a cornerstone of democracy and the rule of law. Bold, responsible and professional public service leadership safeguards the functioning and stability of society. Together, leaders ensure the overall sustainability of society and the prosperity of future generations.

Public service leaders work in a complex and rapidly evolving environment. Public finances are under increasing pressure and technological development is accelerating. Leadership challenges include changes in the security environment, the reliability of information and the evolution of work.

Committed and professional leadership is one of the strengths of Finnish public administration. Leadership ensures the continuity of good governance and balances change. This requires prioritisation, which means that some functions need to be discontinued. At the same time, new solutions must be created and partnerships must be led. Political leadership and senior public officials bear the responsibility for good public service leadership together and support one another.

## 2 Reforming administration through bold leadership

### 2.1 Unifying administration through the values and principles for public service leadership

A shared understanding of the key values and principles for public service leadership makes it possible for a large-scale entity like public administration to work in concert for the benefit of the county. The key values underpinning professional and responsible public service leadership include: democracy, public interest, rule of law, justice, equality, transparency, trust, human-centredness, independence and impartiality. Different organisations can use this shared foundation of values to define more specific values that support their own activities.

Public service leadership has specific features that differentiate it to a degree from leadership in general. These features include the scope and nature of the operating environment, action on behalf of the public interest, the use of public powers of coercion, the protection of citizens under the law, the use of tax revenue, the openness of administration, democracy and citizen participation.

#### Shared principles for public service leadership

**EFFECTIVE:** We lead steadily, proactively and in a way that provides value to all of society.

**SUSTAINABLE:** We lead sustainably and in accordance with good governance principles.

**COLLABORATIVE:** We lead in cooperation and interaction with members of the public, partners, personnel and stakeholders, including on the international level.

**SOLUTION-ORIENTED:** We lead boldly and through solution-oriented reforms.

**COMPETENT:** We have leadership skills and make expert use of information.

**ETHICAL:** We lead ethically and based on shared values.

## 2.2 Public service leaders are responsible and professional

Public service leaders do meaningful work in a wide variety of positions. Good public service leaders take responsibility for their entire organisation. This means simultaneously being responsible for the organisation's performance, its people, the sustainability of its governance and its development. A leader understands the importance of their role to their organisation and its customers as well as to public administration and society as a whole.

Responsible public employers make sure that the responsibilities of their leaders are clear and the requirements for their leaders are on a human scale. Public employers help leaders grow into and succeed in their roles and support their wellbeing. They encourage good leadership is encouraged, and address poor leadership. The responsibilities of senior public officials are evaluated on a regular basis. These responsibilities include producing results, being effective, carrying out reforms, being loyal, developing as a leader and behaving ethically.

## 2.3 Political leaders and senior public officials need a clear division of responsibilities and good interaction

Political leadership in public administration by nature operates on different assumptions than management by public officials. Political leaders must be able to make value judgments and decisions, even in difficult situations. Senior public officials use their expertise to prepare and implement these decisions and are liable for acts in office. This necessitates a clear division of responsibilities between political leadership and senior public officials as well as impartiality and independence on the part of senior public officials. Senior public officials are also responsible for ensuring that the knowledge base used in decision-making is sufficient and accurate.

A clear division of responsibilities is the foundation for mutual trust and good interactions. Both sides need to be able to act according to the requirements of their own role and position. Senior public officials must lead with professionalism and responsibility. Political leaders must have trust in senior public officials and support them in the implementation of decisions. Mutual trust, respect and the ability to listen to each other improve cooperation. When this is the case, both groups can find their work meaningful.

The goal is for political leadership and senior public officials to engage in constructive dialogue about the key values and principles for public service leadership. This will ensure that both sides have a clear understanding of their positions, duties and responsibilities. Mutual respect improves the ability of public administration to function and boosts its impact.

### 3 Implementation and monitoring of the principles

The Government resolution on public service leadership includes the following key measures for 2016–2017:

1. Members of public administration will discuss the shared values and principles for public service leadership so that different parties can commit to them.
2. The Ministry of Finance will work with municipalities, wellbeing services counties and the rest of public administration to draft a model for good public service leadership.
3. The Ministry of Finance will work with municipalities, wellbeing services counties and the rest of public administration to draft templates and practices for management discussions and agreements to support the success and development of public service leaders.

The Ministry of Finance will implement the measures it is responsible for as part of its official duties.

The Ministry of Finance will monitor the implementation of the government resolution and assess the completion of the objectives over the long term together with municipalities, wellbeing services counties and the rest of public administration. The ministry will update the status of public service leadership and decide on further measures in 2027. This will allow each Government to draw the necessary conclusions on the development of public service leadership.



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