

# TCEC 10 Essential Attributes

## Understanding the Heart of How We Work

Welcome to Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

Whether you're exploring the possibility of joining our team or have recently come aboard, this resource will help you understand what makes TCEC's workplace culture unique.

At the start of 2025, President and CEO Scott Spence introduced Ten Essential Attributes to our team through a series of monthly columns. These attributes define how we work, the attitudes and behaviors that guide us as we fulfill our mission of providing safe, reliable power at the lowest possible cost.

These attributes aren't abstract concepts. They show up every day in how we serve our members, support one another, and work through challenges together. They're visible in our most successful moments and help us navigate difficult ones.

As you settle into your role, you'll discover that certain attributes may resonate more strongly depending on your position and daily responsibilities. A member service representative might emphasize different attributes than a lineman, who may focus differently than an accountant. That's natural and expected. What matters is that all ten attributes work together to build our culture of success.

Some internal articles that follow have been edited for brevity, while preserving the core message and essential insights from each attribute. We encourage you to discuss these attributes with your supervisor as you grow in your role. Understanding and embracing these principles will help you thrive at TCEC and contribute meaningfully to our shared mission.

Thank you for choosing to be part of TCEC.



Coachable

Collaborative

Communicative

Empathetic

Engaged

Humble

Reliable

Resilient

Responsible

Trustworthy



## Communicative

TCEC defines this, in part, as "demonstrating the ability to effectively listen, speak clearly, and show empathy and understanding" as well as the "willingness to be available to listen and exchange information and ideas to better the outcome." Another way to think about communication is intentionally looking for the intent of the other person. Both within the TCEC hallways and in the community with members, TCEC has placed great emphasis on being communicative.

In winter and spring 2025, leadership team members participated in two Member Connections meetings. During the in-person session, members were able to speak to experts one-on-one and ask questions about their specific accounts. During the virtual event, members submitted questions on matters facing the cooperative that are most important to them.

One topic that came up was the sale of property, especially the Aledo headquarters. This transaction and, in turn, the use of existing facilities for the roughly 100 employees based in Aledo, is a key component in ongoing efforts to cut long-term costs and save millions of dollars in interest. Internal communication was the next step in the increased transparency and communication that the cooperative is committed to. Our intent was to demonstrate that TCEC is more transparent than ever before, and we will continue this pattern of being as timely and transparent as possible.

Communicating in such a manner means that leaders do not always wait until they have all the answers. While that would be safer and more comfortable for the manager, that would not be fair to the team. Just as we will continue to communicate in a more timely and transparent manner with the members, TCEC leadership will continue to do the same with employees.

In meetings throughout 2025, we discussed probable scenarios regarding upcoming changes as various facilities are evaluated for best use. We do not have everything figured out yet, as there are variables that we simply cannot control. As a result, some details are subject to change. However, by sharing what we know and the probable driving forces at work, it helps to convey the intent, even if some details are still being sorted through. Regardless of what the future brings, communication will continue to be what members and employees alike can expect from Tri-County Electric Cooperative. After all, it is part of the successful culture the 10 Essential Attributes will help support.



## Coachable

Being coachable represents the transformative power of continuous learning. It is especially important to acknowledge that "leaders are learners," and embracing a coachable mindset means being emotionally and intellectually agile as a committed learner. Regardless of our title, role, or what a position description requires of us, the more coachable we are, the more successful we can be.

Consider the greatest athlete you can think of in any sport. Without exception, these champions have learned extensively from coaches throughout their careers. Often, these coaches may have possessed only a fraction of the athletes' natural talent, yet it was through their guidance that the best of the best honed their skills and achieved greatness. Even the most extraordinary athletes credit their success to mentors who may not have achieved similar heights.

One thing that sets these exceptional athletes apart is their proactive approach; they actively seek feedback and embrace the opportunity for growth. They do not wait for insights or feedback; they pursue it relentlessly.

Athletes learning from coaches is an example of taking "ownership of personal behaviors, actions, and emotions, and identifying opportunities for learning and development." Coaching often applies to behaviors, emotions, and learning. In these three areas, many or most of us have "blind spots," which are seen by others but not yet by us.

Coaches are helpful in minimizing blind spots and helping us navigate through or around them so that we can grow and develop to our fullest potential.

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TCEC Internal Newsletter



## Collaborative

Teammates who practice open communication and collective problem-solving work best toward reaching a common goal. Being willing to receive feedback is a critical component of collaboration.

Take March Madness, which happens every spring. Every team in the college basketball tournament collaborates on game plans and strategy all season long toward the shared goal of winning. For TCEC, winning looks like working toward long-term financial health and improved member service.

In early March 2025, when powerful winds led to outages, our office team collaborated with linemen across the service area to respond quickly and safely and restore power to members. This critical work is not possible without an open exchange of information and teamwork.

Recently in 2025, several team members prevented cyber fraud by reporting an email from a hacker disguised as a contractor asking to modify their banking information. This collaboration and following of proper protocols potentially saved our members hundreds of thousands of dollars.

We've made huge progress on lowering the Construction Works in Progress (CWIP) balance thanks to the collaboration of our accounting and finance teams. We've gone from a \$140 million balance in summer 2024 to \$85 million as of February 28, 2025, while decreasing the window to close by five months.

The cooperative's willingness to listen to the auditor, who pointed to CWIP as an important item to work on, shows collaboration in action.

*April 2025  
TCEC Internal Newsletter*



## Reliable

A successful team runs on people you can count on, every day and through every challenge.

Reliability goes beyond showing up on time or checking boxes. TCEC defines it as "consistently demonstrating high standards in quality, performance, and task completion while maintaining responsibilities, attention to detail, and a successful team perspective."

That last part matters most: "successful team perspective." True reliability means understanding how your work impacts others. Your colleagues can move forward with confidence because they know you'll deliver. Members trust that when they flip a switch, the lights will come on. And when they don't, we'll be there.

Reliability doesn't require perfection. You don't need flawless communication or ideal circumstances to be reliable. You need consistency, care, and commitment to doing your part well.

Many team members demonstrate this every single day. When storms knock out power, our crews work through the night. When members call with urgent questions, our service team responds with solutions. Invoices get processed, lines get inspected, data gets entered with attention to detail. All of it happens because people do what they said they would do.

In summer 2025, reliability showed up in our financial audit results. That favorable opinion didn't happen by accident. It happened because finance teams, operations teams, engineering teams, and support teams all maintained high standards and followed through on commitments. Consistently, over time.

Reliability builds trust. Trust allows us to face difficult challenges together and come out stronger.

Reliability doesn't go unnoticed. It's the steady foundation that keeps everything else moving forward.



## Engaged

At its core, being engaged means having the commitment and motivation to help achieve organizational goals. It also means continuing to move forward in ways that empower, benefit, and support the team as a whole. Engagement includes a passion for the organization, the work you do, and a mindset of continual learning and development.

Authentic engagement requires consistent communication, a positive attitude, and a willingness to collaborate. It involves adaptability in the face of change, a strong sense of both personal and team commitment, and the awareness to understand how your efforts contribute to the bigger picture.

It means showing initiative, demonstrating determination when challenges arise, and actively participating in identifying and implementing solutions—not just reacting to problems, but helping prevent them. Engagement is a habit we build together.

Every department contributes in its own way. In spring 2025, during a quarterly all-management meeting, leaders reviewed many key accomplishments that strengthened both the cooperative's financial position and its service to members.

That knowledge sparked conversation, reflection, momentum, and renewed engagement. When we share progress and solutions across departments, we continue building a workplace culture rooted in humility, results, and a shared path toward a brighter future.

Maybe for you, engagement means suggesting a new idea to improve something right now. Offering your supervisor potential solutions is a great way to collaborate on aligning more closely with your department's and the cooperative's goals. Maybe it simply means choosing to stay curious and connected.

However your engagement shows up, it makes a difference. It's a vital part of what makes TCEC strong enough to overcome the financial challenges we've inherited and move forward with confidence.



## Humble

To be humble doesn't mean to downplay your skills or stay quiet when you have something valuable to offer. It means understanding your strengths and using them in service of something greater than yourself. It means taking pride in the work we do, individually and together, without needing constant credit or attention.

TCEC defines humility as having "a modest estimate of one's importance while feeling pride in the work produced individually and as a team." It shows up in everyday moments: when someone listens instead of talking, accepts correction with gratitude, shares success with their team, or admits when they don't have the answer.

In a cooperative like ours, humility is foundational to trust, growth, and collaboration. It creates space for others to contribute. It removes ego from problem-solving. It welcomes learning, even when the lessons are hard.

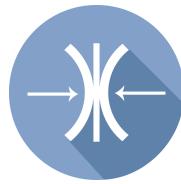
Many team members demonstrate this attribute every day by offering support without being asked, staying open to feedback, or giving others the spotlight. They are unassuming but impactful, inclusive and approachable, and willing to put the mission first. That mindset is critical as we continue rebuilding financial strength and member trust.

Humility doesn't mean thinking less of yourself. It means thinking of yourself less. And in doing so, lifting others higher.

Humility is often what makes resilience possible. When we're willing to admit we don't have all the answers, accept feedback, and learn, we build the strength to adapt, grow, and keep going. Humble people don't crumble. They adjust, persist, and improve.

*July 2025*

*TCEC Internal Newsletter*



## Resilient

TCEC defines resilience as the ability to respond effectively when circumstances call for new or different methods, philosophies, or results than what has been used before. It's about adapting, handling stress, overcoming obstacles, and embracing change with grit, innovation, and flexibility.

When we faced financial challenges ranging from the Brazos bankruptcy fallout to mounting debt, responding with resilience was nonnegotiable. Rather than sticking to old playbooks, we pivoted. Our team stepped in, leaned in, and helped reshape our path forward.

Because we've been adaptable and solution-oriented, we're now reversing trends, making progress, and rebuilding strength, while keeping our mission of delivering safe, reliable power at the lowest possible cost front and center.

Our team's effort reflects resilience through:

- Adaptability and versatility: changing course when conditions change
- Problem-solving and creativity: innovating amid pressure; asking good questions
- Grit and perseverance: staying the course through uncertainty
- Collaboration: working together as part of the solution, creating a future for the cooperative and all of us to serve the members for a long time

This team can tackle whatever lies ahead and comes out stronger on the other side as one resilient group of individuals committed to each other and the mission.

August 2025  
TCEC Internal Newsletter



## Trustworthy

A successful team is built on trust: trust in each other, trust in ourselves, and most importantly, trust from our members.

Trustworthy teammates demonstrate strong values and principles through their actions, words, and beliefs. They take responsibility for their actions, show respect for others, and maintain a positive attitude. And they do the right thing even when no one is watching. That's what gives our members confidence in us, not just in moments of crisis, but in the everyday details of running their cooperative.

In summer 2025, our team's work resulted in something worth celebrating: another highest-rated financial audit. That is not just an accounting milestone. It is another trust milestone that was earned. Every member dollar we manage reflects a promise, and our auditor's favorable opinion tells members, once again, that we keep that promise. That kind of trust isn't built in one dramatic moment. It's built in thousands of small, consistent actions by each team member.

Members see it beyond the balance sheet. When we make decisions like repurposing the Aledo Bearcat facility into a new crew dispatch location, they see proof that TCEC is working to respond more efficiently in their moments of need.

When there's an outage, they trust we'll act safely from a thoughtful use of resources trusted to us. When they call with a question, they trust that we'll have a solution.

Trust grows the same way habits grow: small step after small step, choice after choice, day after day. Our team proves, through steady and consistent effort, that TCEC is a cooperative our members can count on.

*September 2025  
TCEC Internal Newsletter*



## Empathetic

A successful team understands one another and shows genuine care for each other's perspectives. Our success depends on our ability to listen, understand, and care.

Those who are empathetic don't just "hear" others; they listen with curiosity, patience, and respect. They acknowledge different viewpoints and respond with genuine compassion. They're willing to share knowledge, lend a hand, and look for solutions that help everyone succeed.

When we show empathy to our colleagues, we build confidence. People share ideas more freely when they know their perspective matters and will be met with understanding. We strengthen our culture every time we take a moment to ask, "How can I help?" or "Tell me more about your experience."

Empathy also extends inward. We all face challenges, and treating ourselves with the same grace we'd offer others helps us grow stronger and more resilient.

Our members count on that same understanding. When someone calls with a billing question or faces an outage, they trust that we see them, hear them, and care about their situation. Our efforts through the Brazos Electric Ratepayer Hardship Fund and the application fairs held in fall 2025 in Granbury, Seymour, Azle, and Keller show that commitment in action.

We also design better member experiences when we listen empathetically. Expanding MyTriCountyTX app features and offering multiple billing options come from understanding that no single solution fits everyone's needs.

Empathy takes time to build, but it changes everything when it's present. Being empathetic isn't just part of what we do.

It's who we are.



## Responsible

This month, we continue our look at TCEC's Essential Attributes with a focus on responsibility.

Being responsible means taking ownership of our attitudes, actions, decisions, behaviors, and commitments. Responsibility isn't just individual—it's also collective.

As a Cooperative, TCEC has demonstrated what shared accountability looks like. We have owned the reality of our current financial situation, and more importantly, we are taking deliberate steps to strengthen it for the future.

The nearly 300 employees who make up TCEC have faced this moment with professionalism, determination, and care. While none of us chose to be in a position requiring hard financial decisions, most have met the challenge by focusing forward rather than looking back.

As a team, we've resisted the temptation to blame or defend past actions. Instead, we've leaned into solutions and kept our attention where it belongs—on serving our members and ensuring the Cooperative's long-term stability.

Responsibility also shows up in smaller ways every day—through reliability, teamwork, and a willingness to make improvements rather than excuses. Each of these moments builds trust within our organization and confidence among our members, reminding us that how we handle challenges says as much about us as the results we achieve.

By examining issues honestly, pursuing solutions diligently, and choosing what is right over what is easy, we are showing what responsibility means in action—together.

It makes me proud to be part of a team, and a Cooperative, that continues to live this attribute every day.

## Putting the Attributes into Practice

These Ten Essential Attributes aren't aspirational ideals—they're practical tools that guide our daily work at TCEC. You'll see them in action during team meetings, storm response, member interactions, and in how we approach both routine tasks and unexpected challenges.

As you begin or continue your journey with Tri-County Electric Cooperative, consider these steps:

- Reflect on which attributes come naturally to you and which you'd like to develop further
- Observe how experienced team members demonstrate these attributes in their work
- Practice incorporating these behaviors into your daily habits
- Discuss with your supervisor how these attributes apply to your specific role and goals

Embodying these attributes is an ongoing process, not a one-time achievement. Every day brings new opportunities to demonstrate humility, coachability, empathy, communication, collaboration, engagement, responsibility, reliability, trustworthiness, and resilience.

Some days you'll excel. Other days you'll stumble and learn. That's exactly how growth happens.

What matters most is your commitment to this journey alongside nearly 300 teammates who share our mission: to provide safe, reliable power at the lowest possible cost to the members we serve.

These attributes represent who we are at our best. They're the foundation of everything we accomplish together. Welcome to a team that values these principles and lives them every day.

Thank you for choosing to be part of TCEC.

*We're glad you're here!*

**Scott Spence**

President & CEO