



CULTURAL COMPETENCE PLAN

2004 - 2006

**Updated by
The Cultural Competence & Civil Rights
Committee
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CULTURAL COMPETENCY PLAN 2004 - 2006

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MESSAGE FROM THE AGENCY DIRECTOR



“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main” –John Donne

This is the second edition of the Human Services Agency’s Cultural Competence Plan. It is based on the fundamental recognition that we are social beings, all of us—clients and employees—and as such we *don’t* all speak the same language nor have the same cultural assumptions.

If I were a client, I would want the person who was helping me to understand “where I was coming from.” I would be forgiving for minor “violations” of intercultural codes of conduct. And I would look past some language difficulties. But I would certainly expect the helper to value me enough to try and understand my differences. Some of those differences include body language, child-rearing practices, clothing, gifts, religion, food, male-female relations, elders, prejudice, time, and verbal expressions. If I don’t sense that you care for and respect me enough to try and understand me before helping me, then I will not lose confidence in you and your ability to help me. Hope will be diminished, and hope is essential for growth and change.

We must constantly develop our skills as professionals working with children and adults from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We need to be conscious of the influence of culture on people's beliefs, values, and behavior. We need to be sensitive to the challenges families’ face adapting to a different culture. And we need to develop strategies for fostering respectful and effective interactions.

Congratulations to the Human Services Agency Cultural Competence and Civil Rights Committee for keeping our attention focused on the importance of cultural competence and civil rights in our work as human services professionals. It is an essential component of another value of ours, “Clients Come First.”

INTRODUCTION

In 2001, the Human Services Agency published its first agency-wide Cultural Competence Plan ("Plan"). The Plan established a framework for the Agency to increase the cultural competence of individual staff and the Agency as a whole. The Plan identified key objectives in the following areas: process, people, climate, and performance. The expectation was for each department to choose objectives in these areas and develop action plans for implementing their objectives.

The establishment of the Human Services Agency Cultural Competence and Civil Rights Committee is an example of an initiative that was implemented to meet the objective to institutionalize the Agency's commitment to cultural competence. The Cultural Competence and Civil Rights Committee is charged with the role of monitoring progress on the achievement of the Cultural Competence Plan and facilitating an environment where such changes can take place.

In 2003, the members of the Cultural Competence and Civil Rights Committee decided to publish an annual cultural competence plan. The Plan would accompany the Civil Rights Plan sent to the State each spring. The Committee agreed that the Cultural Competence Plan would highlight the progress and/or completion of Agency and departmental objectives in the prior year and identify the next year's cultural competence objectives.

The Human Services Agency is committed to understanding and appreciating the importance of the diversity of our clients, staff and society. We strive to treat everyone with respect, understanding and dignity. As an Agency, we remain vigilant to continue to build awareness of our diversity on a daily basis and to honor one of our core values, which states: "We demonstrate the ability to work in multicultural environments and ensure policies, programs, and actions communicate respect for the dignity of all people."

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

VISION

Together we bring hope and improve lives.

MISSION

We strengthen families, support self-sufficiency, and promote safety, health and well-being.

VALUES

Clients Come First

The strengths, needs, interests and diversity of individuals, families, and communities are the priority in the design and delivery of services.

Employee Excellence

Excellence in employees is the most valuable resource in achieving the Agency's goals.

Cultural Competency

We demonstrate the ability to work in multicultural environments and ensure policies, programs and actions communicate respect for the dignity of all people.

Collaboration

Through respect and collaboration we seek to develop service, family, community, work place, and fiscal partnerships to achieve mutual goals for our clients.

Service Integration

We maximize the use of inter-disciplinary expertise to create the most effective blending of services for our clients.

Owning Our Performance

We hold ourselves accountable by defining and measuring outcomes to achieve short-term and long-term effectiveness for our continuous improvement.

Employee Development

We create a work environment that provides employees with opportunities to maximize their potential for career and professional development.

2002 - 2003 ACHIEVEMENTS

PROCESS

1. Completed an organizational self-assessment in cultural competence with a 72 percent participation rate.
2. Contracted with Ventura College for providing Cultural Competence training based on the organizational self-assessment final report SWOT findings.
3. Established the Resource Materials/Web sites listing.
4. Adopted the policy to include a cultural competence question in all hiring interviews.
5. Increased the number of Spanish-speaking foster parent homes by actively recruiting in the community.
6. Held monthly "Cultural Competence & Civil Rights" committee meetings and achieved the following: instituted committee charter and bylaws; approved Cultural Competence training curriculum and trainer; piloted Cultural Competence training program with management and direct reports; initiated the updating of the 2001 Cultural Competence Plan; Committee has \$440.00 for culturally competence activities.

PEOPLE

1. Increased opportunities for bilingual/bicultural staff by encouraging participation in MSW programs and mentoring of staff seeking to expand their skill base.
2. Instituted mandatory participation in cultural competence training, including in The Leadership Academy.
3. Published a bilingual newsletter for foster parents.
4. Established a Language Bank: list of employee volunteers who speak a second language. The Language Bank is found in each of the Agency program manuals.

2002 - 2003 ACHIEVEMENTS

5. Contracted with CyraCom for telephonic translating service. Five centers have CyraCom phones and all departments have PIN numbers to access the services. Over 160 languages are now available to our employees.
6. Maintained level III Spanish bilingual staff to do translation of forms into other languages as needed.
7. Parenting classes in Spanish are given at Healthy Start Sites.
8. CFS provided Cultural Competence training to law enforcement as a collaborative partner.
9. HR Foundations for Success curriculum includes a cultural competence component.

CLIMATE

1. Translated the Vision, Mission statement to Spanish, that is available to all departments.
2. Established "Cultural Events and Information" display boards in all offices.
3. Promoted cultural competence awareness by publishing monthly "Cultural Topics" and cultural events calendars.

PERFORMANCE

1. Adopted the "Human Diversity Awareness" performance standard and identified performance measurement indicators.
2. Adult Services established a "Caught Doing Something Right" award certificate to recognize individual staff and teams that demonstrate initiative in cultural competence.

KEY POINTS

- Cultural competence is the ability to work in cross-cultural situations.
- Culturally competent service agencies incorporate the importance of culture by:
 - Continuous self assessment
 - Maintaining vigilance regarding the dynamics that stem from cultural differences
 - Expanding cross-cultural knowledge and adapting services to meet culturally-unique needs
 - Developing effective services that involve diverse community input into service delivery
 - Advocating continuously for cultural competence
- Cultural competence can be learned.
- Cultural competence must be seen as the way we do business rather than a special program.
- Cultural competence provides a continuum for individuals and organizations to plan and track progress. All individuals and organizations can increase their cultural competence.
- Beneficiaries of increased cultural competence include the:
 - Consumer
 - Service provider
 - Service organization
 - Community
 - Taxpayer

2004 - 2006 OBJECTIVES

The 2004 - 2005 Cultural Competence Plan seeks to increase the continual effectiveness of the Human Services Agency through planned and specific actions to increase the cultural competence of individual staff, program departments and the Agency as a whole.

The following objectives will be used by each department to ensure that the Agency continues to strive to integrate cultural competence into its overall organizational culture. Each department will develop action plans by August 1, 2004. Cultural Competence and Civil Rights Committee members will provide a report of their department's action plans at the August 2004 meeting and make quarterly progress reports on the implementation of their department's action plans.

- Human Services Agency administrators shall support and guide staff in delivering HSA programs and policies in a culturally competent manner.
- Employees within each department shall understand the fundamentals of cultural competence and its relevance to the environment.
- Human Services staff have the knowledge / experience to work effectively with culturally diverse communities.
- The Human Services Agency, as a whole, shall provide cultural competent services, and public relations materials shall outline services to culturally diverse communities.
- Program departments will conduct informal cultural audits to identify the needs of the department for training purposes and improvements in the delivery of services.

DEPARTMENTAL INITIATIVES

Each department has identified the following initiatives for meeting the Agency objectives.

Administrative Services

Human Services Agency administrators shall support and guide staff in delivering H.S.A. programs and policies in a culturally competent manner.

- Managers and Supervisors in monthly staff meeting forums will discuss a workplace example, topic or specific issue related to cultural competence. Managers and Supervisors will encourage staff to share experiences of their personal cultures, beliefs, values or behaviors that provide others an opportunity for learning and new perspectives as related to workplace experiences.
- Each Operational Division of Administration will establish internal and external Customer service Standards that are measurable and uphold the tenants of professionalism, ethics, courtesy, respect and dignity for all.
- All staff attending training will return from training with a homework assignment that will require them to identify a past or current incident that occurred in the workplace that was culturally inappropriate and, given the learning and awareness generated from the training, the employee will explain how they would have acted differently or the same to the incident, upholding the tenants of cultural competence.

Employees within each department shall understand the fundamentals of cultural competence and its relevance to the environment.

- All staff must attend mandatory cultural competency classes and refresher classes on an annual basis to expand cross-cultural knowledge and awareness.
- Cultural Competence will become a core competency of the Performance Review and Employee Development process. Staff will be measured upon this competency with internal and external interactions.
- Provide education and awareness through emphasizing data about our cultural diverse population in Agency materials such as the Year in Review and Agency newsletters.

- Development of an Agency Cultural Competency page on the Agency Intranet and provide for culturally diverse information on the page. BTD develops page and Cultural Competency Committee manages the content for posting.
- Formalize and approve Agency ethics policy and disseminate to all staff.
- Modify service level commitments when unique cultural needs warrant.

Human Services staff have the knowledge/experience to work effectively with culturally diverse communities.

- Cultural Competence will be assessed through a broad array of prospective candidate responses to interview questions. Prior to interviewing the candidates, the panel will be primed as to the types of responses that are required to support the principles of cultural competence in the workplace. The response to the questions should clearly demonstrate the candidates understanding of the influences of culture on peoples beliefs, values and behavior and the candidates ability to work in multi-cultural environments to ensure policies, programs and actions that communicate respect for the dignity of all people.

The Human Services Agency, as a whole, shall provide cultural competent services and public relations materials shall outline services to culturally diverse communities.

- Expand print and broadcast media coverage in Spanish language media.
- Increase the number of interview placements on Spanish language radio that highlight Agency experts, programs and services.
- Convert Agency Logo into Spanish.
- Develop plan to add other appropriate languages to address the broader community spectrum.

Program departments will conduct informal cultural audits to identify the needs of the department for training purposes and improvements in the delivery of services.

- Review all Admin Performance Review data to determine percentage of employees meeting core competency and provide additional training as warrant global and or individually.

Adult, Children and Family Services

Human Services Agency administrators shall support and guide staff in delivering H.S.A. programs and policies in a culturally competent manner.

- Provide training and informational resources regarding cultural considerations in interviewing and case management activities.
- Recruit and hire qualified staff experienced with culturally diverse environments that reflects the populations serviced by Adult, Children and Family Services, including conducting special recruitments if indicated by data on primary language skills of clients.
- Ensure that service provider contractors have the capacity to provide culturally and language relevant services to the populations they service.
- Set up an outline cultural competency library on the Agency Intranet.

Employees within each department shall understand the fundamentals of cultural competence and its relevance to the environment.

- Include cultural competence as a measurable expectation for all staff by including it in performance evaluations and development goals.
- Regularly schedule discussion of cultural topics and issues as part of supervision, training, staff meetings and case conferences when relevant.

Human Services staff have the knowledge/experience to work effectively with culturally diverse communities.

- Develop an interagency resource group to meet language and cultural needs of significant cultural subgroups in the county.

The Human Services Agency, as a whole, shall provide cultural competent services and public relations materials shall outline services to culturally diverse communities.

- Review and revise, if necessary, all assessment formats to insure that they are culturally sensitive.

- Insure that County forms used by clients, brochures and other documents are translated into Spanish and other languages as resources allow.
- In the absence of certified bilingual staff or qualified translators, insure that staff uses Cyacom to communicate with non-English speaking staff.

Business and Employment Services

Human Services Agency administrators shall support and guide staff in delivering H.S.A. programs and policies in a culturally competent manner.

- We will implement the practice of having a Cultural Competence Committee report each month at the BESD Management Team meeting, and managers will have a practice of including cultural relevant topics each month at staff meetings.

Employees within each department shall understand the fundamentals of cultural competence and its relevance to the environment.

- Continue the commitment of sending all employees to the Cultural Competency classes.

Human Services staff have the knowledge/experience to work effectively with culturally diverse communities.

- Expect that each Center has a designated cultural competency corner.
- Establish a task force with a representative from each Center (supervisor and line staff) whose primary responsibility would be to develop and disseminate cultural relevant topic information via e-mail. Goal would be to have more detailed information on the intranet that would be referenced in the initial e-mail.
- Specific questions will be developed for the selection interview process that will identify the candidate's skills set and philosophy related to our cultural competence values.

The Human Services Agency, as a whole, shall provide cultural competent services and public relations materials shall outline services to culturally diverse communities.

- Outreach activities will be presented in the community.

Program departments will conduct information cultural audits to identify the needs of the department for training purposes and improvements in the delivery of services.

- Develop an evaluation form that each participant that attends the Ventura College Cultural Competency training would complete.
- Demonstrate that we are meeting our objectives by having the Center Directors conduct in-house analysis and report findings at Center Director's meetings.

Transitional Assistance

Human Services Agency administrators shall support and guide staff in delivering H.S.A. programs and policies in a culturally competent manner.

- The East County IEC will be decorating each of its interview rooms to represent a different culture.

Employees within each department shall understand the fundamentals of cultural competence and its relevance to the environment.

- Continue the commitment of sending all employees to the Cultural Competency classes.
- Each of the IEC Centers has a Cultural Competency Committee. The decision was made to have a quarterly meeting with a representative from each Center to ensure implementation and compliance with our department's goals. Also share information and ideas to enhance our Cultural Competency Committee.

Human Services staff have the knowledge/experience to work effectively with culturally diverse communities.

- Specific questions will be developed for the selection interview process that will identify the candidate's skills set and philosophy related to our cultural competence values.

The Human Services Agency, as a whole, shall provide cultural competent services and public relations materials shall outline services to culturally diverse communities.

- Outreach activities will be presented in the community using, for example, the new Food Stamp video that was designed to meeting the community needs. There were actually two videos done, not just "dubbed" over in Spanish.

- Pursue having the radio “spots” done on the Spanish language stations.
- Develop guest spots on Spanish language radio stations that would give callers a chance to ask questions.