

V. COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTION EXAMPLES

BEGINNING LEVEL ACTIONS:

Assess bureau's community relations practices:

- Review bureau's workplans for ensuring public involvement strategies are accessible to diverse constituencies. e.g. meetings spaces accessible to people with disabilities, allocation of resources for translation or interpretation when appropriate, building diverse stakeholder databases, etc.
- Assign lead public involvement staff person to participate or monitor Citywide Public Involvement Task Force, which is developing recommendations for Council approval of public involvement standards that will address bureau outreach to diverse constituencies.

Publicize Bureau Diversity Goals and Principles:

- Make any bureau written policy statements known to the public. Publish diversity goals and principles in bureau newsletters and brochures, post on the web, provide copies to staff with frequent access to public.

Develop/maintain database of diverse range of community resources:

- Lists of diverse media contacts in communities of color, gay/lesbian community, low-income. Work with ONI to maintain an updated list.
- Lists of community based organizations and key leadership from diverse constituencies including communities of color, low-income and unhoused, GLBT, immigrants and refugees, seniors, youth, people with disabilities, etc.
- Lists of non-profit Community Development Corporations and social service organizations working with low-income and unhoused people.
- Lists of resources for translations and interpreters for quick access. City directory for language translation/interpretation resources.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL ACTIONS:

Incorporate culturally competent community relations strategy into bureau workplans

- Develop a bureau written policy for community relations, public involvement and/or customer service efforts.
- Seek Customer/Stakeholder/Citizen Feedback on status of Bureau Diversity/AA Efforts. Utilize Bureau Advisory Committees if in existence.
- Ensure compliance with minimum citywide standards for public involvement (if adopted by Council from work of Citywide Public Involvement Taskforce in fall 2003).
- Include commitment to culturally competent community relations in bureau mission statement.
- Provide staff orientation to bureau community relations policies, standards, practices to emphasis bureau expectations for working with diverse constituencies.

- Develop strategy for regular communications and relationship building with key diverse stakeholders in your bureau programs, e.g. regular check-ins and follow-up.
- Incorporate bureau success stories of accomplishments of diverse staff and volunteer resources, community-based partners, projects that exemplified outreach and involvement of diverse constituencies.
- Develop recruitment strategy for diverse representation on bureau program or project Citizen Involvement Committees and Advisory Groups.

Incorporate examples of standards into your bureaus public involvement policies:

- Strategy for building relationships with key diverse constituencies/stakeholders, “Communities Beyond Neighborhood Boundaries,” affected by bureau programs.
- Develop media strategy that includes ethnic, immigrant and refugee, GLBT and other non-mainstream media.
- Ensure bureau brochures, web sites, and printed materials are ADA compliant, e.g. use of 14 pt., avoid colors difficult for people who are color blind, etc.
- Improve public meeting accessibility by providing childcare or box of toys, public transit access, evening meeting times, use of multiple opportunities for people to provide input, providing food/snacks, etc.
- Ensure meeting accommodations are accessible to people with disabilities, e.g. wheelchair accessibility.
- Translate key bureau forms and applications into multiple languages: Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Chinese are four key ESL language groups used in Portland.
- Translate key bureau web pages and brochures into multiple languages: Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Chinese are four key ESL language groups used in Portland.
- List notice of requests for interpretation service on event promotional materials. Attempt to commit to providing interpretation at minimum number of key bureau events.
- List public transit options on notices for bureau event promotional material.
- Ensure broad mailing efforts reach beyond property owners. City of Portland GIS mapping to create labels misses many low-income individuals living in apartments or shared housing.
- Attempt to hold citywide outreach events in multiple locations throughout the city other than downtown.
- Utilizing posting notices on public bulletin boards in neighborhoods and organizing door-to-door notification for narrowly defined geographic projects.
- Access GIS community based assets mapping of diverse range of community resources. Several CDC non-profits have been developing such efforts.

ADVANCED LEVEL ACTIONS:

Establish, or diversify an existing project Citizen Involvement Committees or Bureau Advisory Committee for ongoing feedback and recommendations on diversity issues

- Review recruitment practices for biases in outreach efforts with diverse community/customer/stakeholder constituencies.

- Set bureau goals for recruiting individuals for these committees representing diverse range of community demographics.
- Develop procedures to collect and track data on representation and involvement of diverse constituencies on these committees and other public involvement efforts.
- Organize focus groups for unique community constituencies to provide feedback on bureau progress in meeting goals and objectives in your workplans and polices for working with diverse constituencies.
- Review community relations strategy on a regular time line. Bi-annually?
- Develop criteria by which programs will be evaluated for meeting community relations goals and objectives.

Hold ongoing staff workshops for customer service, public involvement, and public information:

- Provide adequate funding for staff training on cultural competency skills building.
- Training on surname syntax in multiple languages and database management. This addresses bad stakeholder database management for individuals with foreign national surnames and spellings.
- Awareness of changing City demographic trends for broad range of diverse populations.
- Awareness of unique immigrant and refugee cultural practices when interacting with business and governmental institutions. e.g. unfamiliarity with how public approaches government services in U.S. limits many foreign nationals from approaching our services.
- Training on culturally appropriate outreach strategies for immigrants and refugees, youth, seniors, communities of color, people with disabilities.
- Create list of City staff with training skills on these topics available to provide advice and technical assistance. Provide release time and compensation rates to train others.

Public involvement, customer service, community relations contracting procedures:

- Contracting criteria that adds points in the RFP process for cultural competency experience and skills of private public involvement and information firms.
- Rotate utilization of MWSEB firms for public involvement processes through RFP and RFSS contracting.

Budgeting adequate resources for culturally competent public involvement efforts:

- Providing specific bureau budget line items providing for practices and standards listed above.
- Policy that provides for flexible and lengthy enough public involvement process timelines to ensure diverse constituencies have the opportunity to be engaged.
- Commitment of minimal percentage of project budgets to be utilized for outreach to diverse constituencies.

Develop workforce diversity strategy that supports culturally competent community relations skills:

- Recruit and hire staff in customer service and public involvement programs that represent diverse constituencies and can speak multiple languages: Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese and Spanish are four key ESL languages used in Portland.

- Place a higher value on candidate's cross-cultural or inter-ethnic experiences and skills in hiring criteria and job descriptions. e.g. experience working with diverse constituencies.
- Developing workload policies for public involvement and public information staff that acknowledge the extra time required for building relationships with diverse constituencies.