

CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Study Session Worksheet

Presentation Date: 06/05/2012 **Approx Start Time:** 2:00 PM **Approx Length:** 45 Min.

Presentation Title: Diversity Recommendations

Department: Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), and Diversity Leadership Council (DLC)

Presenters: Dan Chandler (Past DAC Chairperson), Ron Guerra (DLC Chairperson), Judi Martin (Clackamas County Hispanic Services Coordinator), and Tracy Moreland, Rosalynn Greene, Abby Ahern (DAC Members)

Other Invitees: DAC and DLC Members as are able to attend

WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING FROM THE BOARD?

1. Board review of the proposed DAC and DLC's recommendations
2. Board approval of the proposed recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Since 2001 Clackamas County (the employer) has implemented and developed an ongoing diversity and inclusion program (D&I). The strength of the D&I program was enhanced and continues to be sustained by the hiring of a Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

With the formation of both the DAC and DLC, these advisory councils have developed recommendations that will benefit both the County as an employer and the constituents the County serves.

Given the demographic changes since the 2001 census, the recommendations set forth by the DAC and DLC will enhance the County's D&I programs.

The recommendations align with general accepted diversity practices at work in organization and workplace culture.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (current year and ongoing):

This presentation is the report of two volunteer advisory committees. Neither advisory group was asked to create a specific evaluation of the cost to implement their recommendations. Determining the cost of each recommendation will require further study and analysis, and will depend on whether and how the County chooses to

implement them. It is anticipated the Board of County Commissioners may direct county staff and administration to further evaluate some of the recommendations, which will include cost-benefit information.

LEGAL/POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

N/A

PUBLIC/GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION:

Board approval of recommendations

OPTIONS:

- Adopt the recommendations
- Modify the recommendations
- Do not approve the recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

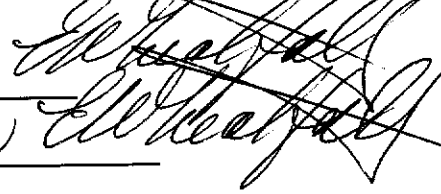
DAC & DLC

ATTACHMENTS:


- Aggregated Recommendations From The Diversity Advisory Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Diversity Advisory Council

with permission 

Diversity Leadership Council

with permission 

For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Emmett Wheatfall at 503.655.8291.

Diversity Leadership Council

The Diversity Leadership Advisory Council ("DLC") was created by Board Order of the Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners on May 15, 2003. The DLC may consist of up to 19 members all appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Clackamas County.

At the direction of the Board of County Commissioners, and in conjunction with the recommendations from the Complete Communities report, the main purpose of the DLC is to act as a liaison to the County government on matters concerning diversity in the County.

The DLC's Recommendations

From its inception, the DLC has been committed to honoring the diversity of all of the residents of Clackamas County. The Council's main objective is to continue to support Clackamas County in creating an environment in which all citizens are valued and respected. The following recommendations are the distillation of the past 9 years in which the DLC met with citizens and elected officials, gathered resources, reviewed policies and procedures, and have been helping to make Clackamas County a more welcoming community for all of its citizens.

The DLC recommends that Clackamas County develop a comprehensive diversity plan that will include the following:

- 1. Clackamas County should take a leading role in facilitating community partnerships that support the diverse communities we serve.**

We are all in this together. In our continued economic and environmental unrest, it is more important than ever to partner with local agencies, non-profits, businesses and individuals. Limited resources are better utilized when we work together. Clackamas County can take a lead role by:

- Convening culturally specific service providers to coordinate services and funding of those services
- Learning what specific types of services are offered and reducing barriers to access by forming partnerships with appropriate service and business providers in Clackamas County
- Augmenting county provided services by partnering with culturally specific providers
- Determining gaps in services and focusing efforts and resources in those areas
- Working more closely with the business community to learn what they are doing and collaborating around best practices.

2. Clackamas County should continue to support diverse communities with culturally appropriate services and to make diversity awareness a priority for all of its employees.

One of the County's greatest strengths is the wonderful array of services and providers that we currently contribute to the community. We have many opportunities to collaborate internally such as:

- County Departments and Divisions that fund rural and/or culturally specific programs should look at opportunities to coordinate or blend funding to enhance services to diverse populations
- Include direct line staff in program design and funding priorities for diverse populations
- All staff should be required to participate in on-going training to raise awareness about the importance of intercultural dialogue, diversity and inclusion in order to provide better customer service to all citizens
- County contracts should be required to include language that assures a commitment to hiring and serving diverse populations represented in Clackamas County

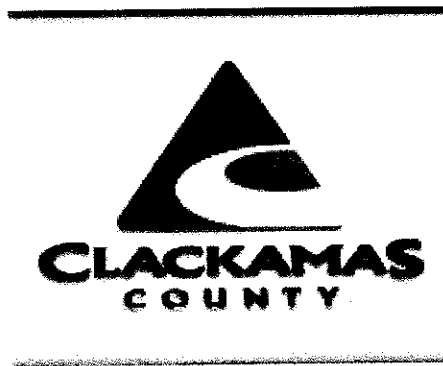
3. Clackamas County should show the community that it honors diversity by making it a prominent part of the County's infrastructure

We can honor all of our citizens by showing them that Clackamas County is here to serve everyone, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, orientation or age. In order to demonstrate this, Clackamas County diversity issues need to be prominent and centralized so that citizens know where they can be heard. We can do this by:

- Creating a Diversity department within Clackamas County government with a direct report to the County Administrator to demonstrate the importance and value of diversity within Clackamas County government and the community.
- Incorporate diversity considerations into county-wide succession planning. The pool of candidates can be monitored according to specific demographics
- Provide alternatives to the Online Employment Application process, such as accepting handwritten applications. This would remove some of the barriers that the on-line employment application process creates for some cultures

Recommendations of the
Clackamas County Diversity Advisory Council

June 2012



RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CLACKAMAS COUNTY DIVERSITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Clackamas County Employee Diversity Advisory Council.

In 2010, Clackamas County established the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) in order to provide a resource to assist the County in furthering diversity goals. The DAC is comprised of 15-20 employees from a wide range of County departments and divisions, including:

- WES
- County Counsel
- PGA
- Clerk
- Sustainability
- Assessment and Taxation
- Jail
- Social Services
- Justice Court
- Sheriff-Patrol
- Sheriff-Corrections
- Mental Health

Now in its third year, the DAC meets monthly, discussing issues as they arise and planning diversity related activities. Early on, the DAC made a commitment to not shy away from controversial topics. The DAC has held brown bag sessions on civil rights, poverty, mental health, bullying, gay and lesbian issues, and difficult issues around faith in the workplace. Last year, the DAC organized the County's first Cultural Fair, which has been selected for recognition by the National Association of Counties (NACO). These events will ultimately change both the County's employee culture, and its reputation in the community.

In its first year, the DAC put forth its guiding vision:

"We strive to understand, value, and incorporate the contribution each employee brings to the county so that we can build a multicultural workplace and reflect the growing diversity and inclusion of our community."

Diversity in Clackamas County.

Clackamas County's 2010 Strategic Plan noted that Clackamas County's diversity was a key strength of the County: "Clackamas County is a microcosm of Oregon; it has a wide diversity of residents, geography, communities, businesses and leadership." Diversity in Clackamas County reaches across many different dimensions, including geography, vocation, race, ethnicity, faith, sexuality and gender identity. Our urban and rural areas, small cities and urban unincorporated areas each contribute to our diversity. All of these dimensions of diversity, and the experiences that come from them, contribute to our strength and resiliency as an organization.

It is also important to remember that we are multi-faceted, and few people identify themselves along only one dimension. With that in mind, the DAC stated the following

"We view diversity broadly, allowing people to define for themselves what does and does not make them diverse."

The DAC serves the Board of County Commissioners, managers, and the employees, reviewing and recommending the means by which the county both sets and implements its diversity objectives.

1. To recommend in an advisory capacity diversity goals and activities that promote and foster a workplace culture welcoming of diversity;
2. To serve as an advocate and champion regarding the purpose and benefits diversity brings to the County's workplace and operations.

The Council's Recommendations

Over the past year, the DAC has had several sessions to discuss ways to enhance diversity, and address diversity issues in Clackamas County. In February, 2012, the DAC met at a retreat to discuss and further refine its recommendations. In order to eliminate any self-censoring, the DAC asked that it be allowed to conduct the recommendation sessions without the Diversity Manager. These recommendations are the collective work of the DAC itself.

The DAC's recommendations fall within three key areas:

1. **The Clackamas County Board of Commissioners Should Take Firm, Visible and Ongoing Steps To Show Its Commitment to Diversity**
2. **Clackamas County Should Encourage The Formation of Employee Resource (Affinity) Groups To Provide Informal Connections and Networks Among Employees.**
3. **The County Should Continue to Implement Its Commitment to Diversity Through Hiring, Training and Promotion Practices.**

Clackamas County Should Take Firm, Visible and Ongoing Steps To Show Its Commitment to Diversity.

Appearances matter. The community, prospective employees and others cannot help but take note of whether the County looks like an organization that values diversity. Clackamas County (both as a government and as a geographic area) does not have a strong reputation for diversity. The DAC believes the County can make significant strides toward changing that reputation through a number of simple public steps.

Vision Statement and Resolution

The County should adopt a strong, inclusive vision statement that demonstrates that Clackamas County values and embraces diversity, and that diversity includes many things beyond traditional categories, including age, economic situations, faith, vocations and geography. This vision should be reflected in a resolution affirming the County's commitment to diversity.

Visible Diversity Presence

The County's commitment to diversity should be made visible in the workplace and in the community. It should be visible in our public spaces and on the county web site.

One key step will be for the County to show the public that diversity matters by taking steps to make signage and interpretation services available, and visible to citizens who may have difficulty with English. Today, a person that comes to the Red Soils Campus sees only English. The County should create a list of volunteer employees, and others in the community who are willing to assist with translation services. Many governments and law enforcement agencies around the country have similar lists and pools.¹

Diversity Should be an Executive Level Function

The County should investigate moving the Diversity Manager position out of the Department of Employee Services into a stand-alone position that is part of the County's Executive Management Team. First, Diversity is more than a human resources issue. Second, doing this would strengthen the position and provide concrete evidence of the level of importance the county places on this function.

The County Should Encourage The Formation of Employee Resource (Affinity) Groups To Provide Informal Connections and Networks Among Employees.

Affinity groups, also called Employee Resource Groups provide forums for employees to gather socially and share ideas outside of their particular work units. Employee Resource Groups are now common in both private sector and government organizations.

In addition to racial, ethnic-background and gender-based affinity groups, organizations have affinity groups that bring together employees based on country of origin, religion, physical disabilities, military service, age, sexual orientation and many other parameters. Multnomah County, for example, has affinity groups for veterans, aging employees and parents, as well as persons of color.

For Clackamas County, Employee Resource Groups will serve a number of functions. First, the creation of Employee Resource Groups sends a message to the community that the County cares about diversity. Second, it creates networks of peer support, mentoring and an informal mechanism for a reality check around diversity concerns. In

1. ¹ <http://www.cityofboston.gov/newbostonians/programs/>; <http://www.jpso.com/Interpreter.aspx>; www.migrationinformation.org/.../MontereyParkAdminPolicy.doc

this way, affinity groups serve a wellness function as well. Third, it provides the organization with a sounding board to learn about issues early on.

A key factor in our recommendation to create Employee Resource Groups arises from the fact that, with few employees of color, Clackamas County has fewer opportunities for informal networks and interaction.

The County Should Continue to Implement Its Commitment to Diversity Through Hiring, Training and Promotion Practices.

The DAC sessions discussing recommendations to the county were extremely valuable because individuals could discuss their experiences as County employees. The experiences of employees of color were particularly telling to the DAC. Through those experiences, the DAC adopted a list of recommendations.

Hiring

The County should work to continue to diversify its pool of qualified applicants, including more speakers of other languages, and should work to recruit men into non-traditional positions.

Interviewing

There should be a diversity question in all applications and interviews, particularly for supervisory and managerial positions. This would make a strong "first impression" statement that the County values diversity.

Based on their experiences, many DAC members believed that interview panels could unknowingly be subject to subtle bias, based on a lack of understanding of cultural issues. In most cases, the interviewers do not even realize it is happening. DES staff spends significant time ensuring access to a diverse applicant pool. That time is wasted if people of color and other minorities are screened out during the interview process due to cultural differences in communication styles. Interview panel members should have additional training or materials around diversity issues.

Training

Diversity training should be mandatory, with accountability for failing to undertake the training. Diversity training is already mandatory for most employees. However, it has become clear that there is no consequence for those who sign up, but never attend the training.

There should be on-going diversity training, with support from County managers. In order to show a true commitment to the ideals of diversity within the county, one mandatory training in the entire career of Clackamas County employees is not enough. Managers should both attend and schedule on-going trainings to show their commitment to diversity and so they can ensure that the trainings happen at a time when most of their staff can attend.

Managers should have special training on diversity issues. The DAC recommends that the County include outside diversity training in mandatory management meetings,

including the Executive Management Team and Quarterly Management Team Meetings. Diversity requires leadership, and, without focused and additional training for managers, how can we expect them to take on this type of leadership role?

The County should maintain a high level of understanding and sensitivity to issues related to domestic partner benefits. Several past and present DAC members indicated that DES staff should maintain a high level of understanding and knowledge of issues related to domestic partner benefits, including sensitivity to the fact that members of a same-sex partnership may be reticent to being "outed" in the process of securing partner benefits.