

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY: PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH
Renee Sims and Victoria Fedor-Thurman*
Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, social services agencies have experienced profound changes in the programs they administer and in the delivery of services. Agency leadership has experienced difficulty communicating the changes to their employees, clients, customers, and to the broader community. Many agencies did not have long-standing positive, working relationships with the media, community groups and advocates to build upon; hence they experienced significant problems in adequately communicating to the public the potential impacts of the changes.

This case study is built upon the need for social services agencies to create and implement a strategic communications plan, which could result in funding for public education and outreach. This case study examines the structure and methods of the successful Office of Public Information in Contra Costa County's Department of Employment and Human Services.

RECOMMENDATION

Our primary recommendation is that a Public Information Committee be created under the auspices of BASSC. The Committee would create common messages and themes for all BASSC counties to use as they update their public education and outreach materials. We suggest that the media campaign would initially focus on programs that serve the aging population. The number of aged residents is increasing in the Bay Area. They and their caregivers need to be informed about the array of services available to them. Benefits of the collaboration include cost sharing, economies of scale in the printing of materials, as well as other benefits. Relatedly, we recommend that BASSC designate a liaison with the CWDA Public Education and Awareness workgroup in order to coordinate and collaborate on public education and outreach activities.

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, social services agencies have not successfully implemented and sustained long-term positive media relations, along with public education and outreach strategies. Positive media coverage of social services programs has been scarce while media coverage of programs serving the aged, disabled, and mentally ill populations has been virtually non-existent. Our nation and our region are observing a substantial increase in the number of adults nearing retirement age. The California Policy Research Center's Strategic Planning on Aging series report entitled: "Population Aging in California" indicated that there are more people over 65 years of age in California than in any other state. In the next few decades the number of older adults is expected to triple. This demographic shift has profound, broad-ranging implications for policy makers. (Lee and Villa, 2001) One of the implications is the need to educate and inform our community about the services available to improve the quality of life for dependent adults and seniors.

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BACKGROUND

The Public Information office in Contra Costa County was created as a result of the vision and leadership of the agency director, John Cullen. The establishment of a formal public information function in Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department was an outgrowth of a case study that BASSC participants, Shirley Kalinowski, and Jamie Buckmaster wrote in 1996. As a result of their recommendations, the Employment and Human Services Department commissioned a study by the BASSC "Developing a Public Information and Community Relations Strategy" (Goldberg et al., 1996) The Public Information Office is now in its sixth year of operation. This case study: 1) analyzes the public information functions in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties; 2) describes the purpose of public information and outreach in a social service agency; 3) examines the structure and function of the Public Information Office in Contra Costa; and 4) recommends implementation of public information and outreach strategies for aging and adult services.

The experience of one of the authors in Santa Clara County's Department of Adult and Aging Services (DAAS) Steering Team process reflects the need for institutionalization of communication processes. The DAAS Staff in Santa Clara County identified external and internal communications processes to be very important to them. The DAAS staff supported the creation of crossfunctional teams to develop and implement external and internal communications, specifically, public outreach activities in order to enhance the image and profile of their Department. It is compelling to note that the impetus for change to a public education focus came from line staff.

Our research focused on the successful Office of Public Information in Contra Costa County. We examined the role of the Public Information Officer (PIO) and the methods to inform and educate the public about Contra Costa County's programs and services. We believe that a key factor in the lack of positive media stories and limited understanding regarding the services our agencies provide is due to the lack of a communications strategic plan and its implementation. We examined the reasons for the success in Contra Costa County and conclude with recommendations to our counties about applying some of the successful methods utilized in Contra Costa.

ALAMEDA COUNTY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

In Alameda County the Public Information Officer is the Executive Assistant for the Agency Director and the PIO is a member of the executive team. The PIO/Executive Assistant spends 70% of her time on executive assistant tasks leaving 30% time for public information functions. There are two clerical positions that provide support for the PIO. With the limited time devoted to the public information function, the PIO's primary focus is responding to press inquires. Occasionally, the PIO is involved in special campaigns such as the recent recruitment of foster families. Because of the limited staffing in Alameda County, there is not the "in-house" expertise to create the needed materials let alone develop and implement public education materials and perform outreach activities on a departmental level.

The PIO is the editor of the agency's internal newsletter, "The Buzz". Each department has a representative on the editorial board that submits articles about services or activities in their departments. "The Buzz" also includes a column with a message from the Director, Chet Hewitt. "The Buzz" and agency-wide email are primary vehicles used to communicate to staff. The PIO may represent the Director on councils or boards. There is no special advisory council for the Public Information Office. The departments conduct the advisory council meetings.

In the Department of Adult and Aging Services, the Area Agency on Aging conducts regular meeting of the Advisory Commission on Aging and the Long Term Care Planning Council that provide avenues for public input. The Advisory Council has established subcommittees that address specific issues affecting the aging and adult services such as Legislative Advocacy and Public Relations. In collaboration with the Area Agency on Aging, the Advisory Commission on Aging also publishes a bimonthly senior newsletter, the Senior Update.

In an effort to expand public education and outreach to the aging and persons with disabilities, Alameda County, in collaboration with Sacramento County, launched the Network of Care Website, a highly interactive on-line community, sponsored by a California Department of Aging Long Term Care Innovation Grant. The Network of Care website provides consumers, their family members, caregivers, providers, and agencies information on services, health education, early intervention and prevention, political advocacy, and other various services.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND PLANNING

The organizational structure of the agency is quite different in Santa Clara County. The Public Information Officer is situated within the Office of Community Relations that in turn, is part of the Department of Governmental Relations and Planning. The Director of Governmental Relations and Planning is a member of the Agency Executive Team. Because Santa Clara County is a large agency, all of the Directors have multiple demands on their time and attention. The Director of Governmental Relations and Planning is assigned a number of other duties besides overseeing the Office of Community Relations. The multiple demands on the Director's time reduce her ability to closely oversee the day-to-day activities of the Office of Community Relations and the Public Information Officer.

As appropriate, department directors, managers and other senior staff act as liaisons and/or serve on various advisory boards and commissions. The Manager of the Office of Community Relations serves on or acts as liaison to several advisory boards and commissions. The messages from agency participation in these groups are communicated up through the agency chain of command, eventually reaching the director. The social services agency publishes and distributes to all agency staff a number of newsletters and brief resource guides. The resource guides are printed and distributed monthly with a schedule of events and classes offered to program participants. The overall intent of these documents is to inform staff, especially professional staff, about resources available to clients. Most of these "in-house" publications focus on departments other than Adult and Aging Services.

Currently, DAAS does not publish an "In-House" newsletter on a regular basis. The DAAS brochure intended to briefly describe all programs within the department is undergoing a major revision at this time. As time permits, there are DAAS All Staff meetings. At these meetings one of the DAAS offices will make a presentation informing staff of the services they offer and a brief review of the eligibility requirements for program participation. These all-staff meetings arose from the steering team process facilitated by Professor Becky Proehl. Currently, DAAS has program specific brochures available. At this time there are no other materials available to disseminate information regarding the array of services DAAS provides to the community.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ALAMEDA AND SANTA CLARA COUNTIES

The gaps for both Alameda and Santa Clara Counties include:

- Not enough information sharing and education within large and diverse agencies about what other programs and services are offered to the community
- Lack of publications specialist within the agency's to assist the departments in the creation of their brochures and newsletters and to oversee development of a common "look" for agency materials
- In Santa Clara County, there is a need for expanded use of the county web site as a public education tool and also a need for enhancement of the DAAS section
- Formalized and frequently updated communications plan with a broad distribution within the agencies and community partners
- Quarterly all staff meetings for DAAS staff
- In Alameda County, there is a dire need for a full-time PIO.

A few years ago the Bay Area Social Service Consortium (BASSC) Adult and Aging Policy Workgroup produced a Social Services Policy Brief, "Riding The Wave: Charting the Course of Adult and Aging Services into the Next Decade". The brief identified five characteristics that would have a profound effect on future services for the adult and aging population. Of particular relevance are the characteristics noted that "individuals are increasingly demanding more information, choice and control in their lives". Furthermore, "the majority of baby boomers are not saving adequately for retirement."

Considering the changing demographics and needs of the aging and adult population, the BASSC Policy Workgroup recommended that a Regional Adult and Aging Public Information Outreach Collaboration be initiated. Some the workgroups recommendations included:

- Creating a regional media campaign to address current and future issues.
- Developing public awareness programs to educate local, regional, and state opinion leaders on adult and aging issues.
- Increasing public awareness of aging issues and to improve the image of older adults.
- Developing a consensus on critical regional and state issues and connect various county advocacy efforts.

Coincidentally, both authors are from Departments of Adult and Aging Services and are interested in discovering how to maximize public information and outreach for programs serving

the aged, disabled and mentally ill. In addition to BASSC, the California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) has formed a Public Awareness and Education Committee. This committee is currently collaborating on strategies to better inform and educate the public on programs and services prioritized by CWDA. At this time, programs and services generally located within Adult and Aging departments have received a lower priority for creation of public education campaigns in the near future.

WHAT IS PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH?

For purposes of this case study, Public Information includes an array of both internal and external communication processes. We view communications as a process rather than a discrete set of actions. Generally, the dissemination of public information education within a public service agency is designed to educate clients, community agencies, stakeholders, other departments, and the public at large about program services, activities, policies, and outcomes. Public information may also entail sharing client information with other agencies, and receiving public input. An outcome of public information and outreach is increased visibility, which may result in increased public support.

WHY IS PUBLIC INFORMATION IMPORTANT?

There are many reasons why social service agencies need to reach out to the community. When we use the term "community" in this report, we mean it in its broadest sense. We mean all of the recipients of social services, along with the Board of Supervisors, other political leaders, business leaders as well as the public at large. Each segment of the community has different reasons to be informed and hence this impacts the creation of a communications plan. The reasons for sharing public information as a part of a broader communications plan can range from "the need to know" for program participants to soliciting political support for services.

The public information functions include for most social service agencies include: educating the public, delivering presentations, responding to inquiries, promoting visibility, and coordinating information with other departments. Typically, obtaining public input is a limited component of the public information function and only obtained when required by a funding agency or policy board. (Goldberg et al., 1996) We believe that the need to reach out to the community to inform them about programs and services is a vital function of social services agencies. It is considered part of the agency's overall customer service perspective. The need to educate and communicate the value of an array of social services offered by the agencies is critical (Goldberg et al., 1996). This is the primary reason why several social services agencies have established their own Offices of Community Relations, such as Santa Clara County, and/or created Public Information Officers, such as Contra Costa County.

Other reasons include the need to counter negative perceptions about government programs in general. In public agencies, commonly known as "welfare" agencies, both the clients and employees are considered in a negative light. For a short while, after the events of September 11", government agencies and workers were seen in a positive light, regrettably, the positive perceptions are now slipping back to the usual lower levels.

Another important reason for social services agencies to reach out to the community includes the need to inform their Board of Supervisors. The Board needs to know about the activities, services and programs because it is an essential part of their public policy oversight responsibilities. Hopefully, a positive outcome of this education process will be sustained or increased funding for the agency's services and programs, especially in difficult financial times.

The BASSC study, "Developing a Public Information and Community Relations Strategy", identified five steps to developing an effective public information program:

- Establish a Public Information Function
- Enhance the internal communication infrastructure and understanding of the public information function
- Devise an external communications infrastructure and strategy
- Develop relationships in the community
- Implement a communications strategy (Goldberg et al., 1996)

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The need for strong internal communications has been documented in "Developing a Public Information and Community Relations Strategy" (Goldberg et al., 1996); namely that an internal communications infrastructure, would serve to improve vertical and horizontal communication among staff. We will argue on this paper that there is a need to enhance communication within a social services agency.

In "Santa Clara County: Transforming an Agency" by Selina Toy (Toy, 2001, pp 3-8) Toy analyzes the transformation process occurring within the Agency. The role of both internal communications processes through newsletters and external communications processes through "conducting presentations and road shows agency-wide" Toy recommends that the role of the public information be enhanced. (Toy, 2001, pp-5)

When internal communications infrastructures are institutionalized, many different methods are needed such as materials given to each employee, mandatory training sessions, orientation sessions for new employees or through professional development classes offered by the agency. With institutionalization of processes also comes the need for periodic updating of materials.

There are several methods that can be utilized to improve internal communication. First, the use of all-staff meetings is an excellent tool to inform staff about programs and services within their department as well as other agency programs. Second, the creation of common handbooks and/or other "in house" materials distributed to staff. Third, staff orientation training for new employees. Fourth, the development of viable, ongoing linkages with Institutions of Higher Education, which are generally considered useful in the context of addressing training needs of staff. Yet, indirectly they can provide other benefits for the agency including educating staff about agency services.

Contra Costa County has developed and distributed to all Department of Adult and Aging Services (DAAS), the "WISH Book" (Written Information Sharing Handbook). The contents of

the WISH book include a 20-page glossary of common term and acronyms that divisions within DAAS use; brief explanations of each DAAS program and a chart indicating program eligibility requirements. This handbook empowers all DAAS staff with information to become better informed on programs and services their department offers to the community ultimately enabling them to better serve the public.

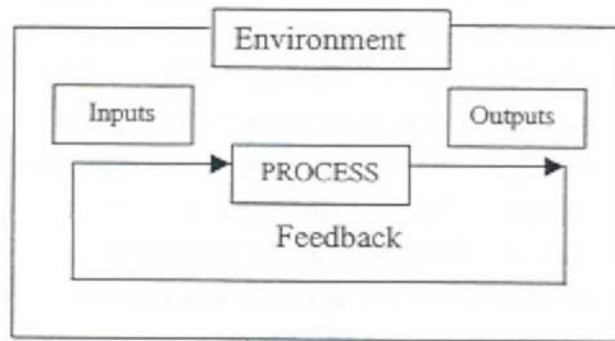
Successful media relations, public outreach and education efforts encourage public contact. An agency's efforts to educate the community about the programs and services offered by the Agency can be quickly undermined by a negative experience in the lobby of an office. The first contact the public has with the Agency is usually its receptionist staff. Improving customer service is a critical component of any successful media relations and public outreach campaign. (O'Neil, Austin, and Hassett, 2001).

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

External communication is the exchange of information between an organization and its environment. It is important that external communication include the flow of information in and out of an organization. The communication network within an agency and how it is connected and maintained is an important consideration.

As open systems that evolve and change, agencies are dependent on the flow of information from their environment. This process may result in negative feedback, which the system can in turn use to correct its deviations from its course. (Katz and Kahn, 1966) The feedback systems commonly used in social service agencies are advisory councils, needs assessments, surveys, and focus groups. Borrowing from Weiner's System Model, a public information communications network should include information flowing in and outside the organization with a feedback process used to correct misconceptions (Weiner, 1948).

COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK



Efforts to educate or increase community awareness of the services provided are typically part of most agencies' public information and outreach strategies. Producing external publications, attending community fairs, organizing special events or campaigns, coordinating a speaker's bureau, and conducting focus groups, and needs assessments are methods that agencies utilize to outreach to the public. These types of activities are commonly done in Contra Costa County and are coordinated by the PIO.

LESSONS LEARNED IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Professional Image

A major accomplishment of the Public Information Office in Contra Costa County has been the production of professional quality brochures and newsletters for the Agency. The Public Information Office produces and distributes 24 bimonthly newsletters annually. The newsletters produced include Senior Information, Foster Families, and Opportunity Knocking for Workforce Services. Additionally, the PIO produces the Community Information Report and Senior Resource Guide. Brochures have been created for all the programs with photos taken by a free-lance photographer and professionally printed on high quality paper. The brochures have a consistent design and layout; in addition, each program has its own identifying color. A freelance photographer took pictures of the staff and their families and these photos are recycled and used in the brochures and newsletters. Since Lynn Yaney, the Public Information Officer, has an advertising background, much of the design and layout of the brochures is completed in-house, which reduces cost. To preserve the professional quality of the multi-color output, the printing is contracted out.

Organizational Structure

Examining an agency's organizational structure is essential to understanding the relationship between various positions and departments within the organization (Gulick, 1937). An organization's formal structure, chain of command, span of control, unity of command, and level of authority are issues that impact the role of the public information officer and their decision-making authority in an agency.

The organizational structure of the Public Information Office (PIO) in Contra Costa County is dedicated position which we believe leads to its success. The PIO does not supervise a wide array of programs and staff with different, yet related tasks. The PIO is assigned to oversee all media relations and to collaborate and coordinate on all public education and outreach activities. This allows the PIO to focus her skills and talents on working with the local and regional media and creating and implementing tools for the department's public education and outreach efforts. The PIO creates and directs the application of consistent messages and themes to the community regarding the Department's actions. This clearly gives the staff and the community the message that "we are working together".

Media Collaboration

Another accomplishment of the Public Information Office has been their media collaboration. Lynn Yaney came to the Agency with an extensive media background and is comfortable pitching news stories and handling the press. Since public information and outreach is a full-time responsibility, media inquiries are top priority and receive timely and appropriate attention. Additionally, Lynn Yaney has successfully developed cooperative working relations with the media. We had the opportunity to attend a media training that included a panel of reporters representing the San Francisco Chronicle and Contra Costa County Times. SF Chronicle reporters Meredith May and Jason Johnson provided useful suggestions on the elements of a good story and how to "pitch" stories to print journalists. Other elements of the media training included instruction on the agency's media protocol, how to handle press interviews and how to respond to crisis situations.

Strategic Communication Planning

For a different perspective on media relations, we met with Bobbi Fischer of Fischer Communications. According to Bobbi Fischer prior to embarking on a public outreach campaign agencies should develop a strategic communication plan. The communications strategic plan will help an agency decide where to focus their efforts. Additionally, media advocacy and crisis communications strategies should be included in the plan. Once the plan is created, the public information officer will be equipped with a media relation's strategy, to develop media protocols, and train management on media interview techniques. Some agencies may need the assistance of a media consultant familiar with public agencies to help them develop an effective communications plan.

Barriers to outreach efforts can take many forms; some barriers are unique to the services and programs being offered to the community. Other barriers are common across programs in the Social Services Agency. Overcoming barriers to outreach will not necessarily be a one-time activity as with all communications discussed in this paper. In regards to hearing what the community thinks of the programs and services, Kirson recommends that a taskforce be created including community leaders to "...offer feedback, suggestions, and recommendations." (Kirson, 2001, pp. 162)

LISTENING TO THE PUBLIC

Institutionalizing public input has been a challenging task. Some agencies use public opinion surveys to obtain public input but most do not routinely conduct public surveys. Moreover, the survey results are not widely communicated throughout the agency and are not necessarily incorporated into service delivery strategies. The overall costs, primarily financial, inhibit some agencies' from implementing processes to encourage public input.

For another approach to public information and outreach, we met with the Public Information Officer for the City of Walnut Creek, Brad Rovenpura. Since Walnut Creek is very committed to providing quality services to their upscale communities, public input is a vital part of city's public information strategies. Walnut Creek contracts with a pollster to conduct an annual survey of a minimum of 400 residents. This process is costly and most public agencies have limited resources and are not willing to fund these types of surveys.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Establishing performance outcomes for public information functions is an arduous task. If the purpose of public information and outreach is to increase visibility, how do agencies measure increased visibility? The Public Information Office in Contra Costa County set the following performance outcomes during fiscal year 2000-01:

- Create a positive professional image of the Department with the public, elected officials, partners, and community based organizations
- Generate a positive internal atmosphere and spirit of teamwork for staff
- Ensure that clients feel respected, supported and empowered.
- Build mutually respectful relationships with print and broadcast media
- Provide each Bureau in the Department with ongoing marketing and public relations support.

Additionally, performance measures were established for public information office working with the various bureaus. It's a particular challenge for aging services to set positive performance measures since outreach efforts geared towards increasing awareness of program services may in turn increase demand for services that are already under budgeted and understaffed. Agency director, John Cullen indicated that the effectiveness of outreach campaigns are typically intangibles such as an increase in calls for speakers at chambers and civic organizations, more requests for outreach publications, additional invitations to participate in public events and fairs, and increase verbal feedback from the public and policy board members who have read the newsletters.

To detractors, who question the cost of outreach publications; John Cullen responds that public education and outreach is a small part of their general administrative claim. Recognizing the vital importance of public information, Contra Costa County simply finds the money to pay for it. In

these times of reduced budgets when the need for public support increases, public information efforts should not be eliminated. Occasionally, public information and outreach materials are paid in part by grants and donations. For example, a portion of the publication expense for the Senior Resource Guide was partially paid by donations from local hospital.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We conclude that there are several strengths with the Office of Public Information in Contra Costa County. The strength's we observed include:

- The support and vision of the agency director, John Cullen, to implement a media strategy and progressive public education and outreach effort
- The director's commitment to continuously fund the public education and outreach efforts.
- The professionalism and expertise of Lynn Yaney, as the Public Information Officer
- The Public Information Officer is a member of the Executive Team
- The duties of the Public Information Officer are narrowly focused in a bureaucratic sense

From our experience and observation in Contra Costa County we recommend that media training, Public education and outreach activities be institutionalized. By institutionalize we mean that there be a scheduled updating of Agency and Department brochures and periodicals. Further, we recommend that that our respective Departments also review their distribution plan for public education and outreach materials. As appropriate, that our respective Agency's begin or broaden the scope of their media training for staff including first line supervisors. We also recommend the increased use of Agency web sites to provide information and education to the public about our programs, policies and services.

Where needed, upgrade the web sites with attractive graphics, current, useful information. Of course the web sites must be easily navigable. Most importantly, we recommend that our Agency's re-double their commitment to funding public outreach and education activities on a continuous basis.

In our opinion, having a PIO create and implement an overall media strategy, direct an ongoing public education and oversee outreach activities is a vital function of the Social Services Agency. There are several reasons for this:

- As a governmental agency, we are duty bound to inform the community about our activities. We must let the public know what we are doing with their tax dollar and why;
- Generally, the community has little awareness of the array of programs and services that the Agency provides and therefore needs education regarding those ever changing programs;
- We need the community to support and advocate for our programs and services. We must consistently advocate for our clients, customers, consumers and conservatees in order to get and maintain ongoing political support for programs to meet their needs.
- The community can become disillusioned with public programs so they need various reminders of the valuable services the Agency provides to the community. The community demands more public services to meet their wide-ranging needs but is generally reluctant to

fund governmental agencies and their programs. This is a component of the reinventing government theme.

We believe that the commitment to these activities is arguably even more valuable in constrained fiscal environments.

We recommend that social services agencies must have systems in place to generate public feedback on their policies and programs. In order to garner public support the agency must reach out to the community to seek its opinion on the current programs and services and the agency's performance in delivering those services. In sum, the agency must be consistently responsive to the community and therefore needs to institutionalize these systems.

One outcome of the public education and outreach efforts to reach the broader community is that social service agencies can build and maintain political support for their programs. We see the communication process, including public information, outreach, and education as continuing efforts. We believe that these efforts are critical for social services agencies to maintain and enhance as ongoing concerns within their agency. The positive outcomes for gaining public participation in the programs include increased employee morale, political support, and community advocacy.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Considering California's record \$23.6 billion budget deficits and the anticipated fiscal impacts on county budgets, we argue that it is even more important to communicate to the public the positive outcomes of the services that agencies provide. Leveraging funds through a regional collaboration, BASSC agencies could jointly fund vital public information and outreach efforts in even in these tough economic times. Additional funding strategies:

- Use current staff and resources to limit start-up costs
- Develop shared vision and messages that counties could implement when ready and able
- Incorporate themes and messages as current materials are updated
- Apply for grants from foundations, corporations, and other funding sources
- Build on the successful partnership and track record of BASSC
- Collaborate with CWDA Public Awareness Workgroup

IMPLEMENTATION

We are in an environment where the public is demanding more information about how their tax dollars are being spent. Social Services Agency's must be more proactive in reaching out to the community to inform, educate and hopefully, advocate for existing programs and the possible implementation of new programs to meet the needs of the community.

We recommend a regional media and public education effort for DAAS under the auspices of BASSC. We recommend a Public Information Committee be formed and further, a subcommittee to be created in order to address the special needs of the Adult and Aging Departments. We also recommend the use of some type of performance measure that could

include a customer service survey, to be implemented in conjunction with a regional media and public education campaign. We believe that there are a number of benefits to a regional medial campaign for DAAS, including, but not limited to:

- Overall cost sharing
- Reduced amount of staff time devoted to the project because of the collaborative effort
- Overlapping of media exposure for the region
- Training of staff to implement the campaign, expenses can be shared
- Networking and idea sharing
- Economies of scale for the publications for the campaign
- Form linkages and synergies with the Bay Area Schools of Social Work to utilize their resources and expertise
- Renew linkages with regional colleges and universities to use their skills to reach out to the broader community

NEXT STEPS FOR ALAMEDA AND SANTA CLARA COUNTIES

Encourage our respective counties to enhance their public information and outreach efforts

- Ask our respective agency directors to advocate for the creation of a BASSC Committee on Public Education and Information
- Meet with agency directors and Departments of Adult Aging Services directors to present case study and recommendations
- Meet with respective public information officers and present recommendations
- Meet with community partners and stakeholders to solicit input and support
- Obtain approval and commitment of staff time to these efforts from agency directors
- Present concept of Public Information Workgroup and CWDA Public Awareness liaison to BASSC

NEXT STEPS FOR COMMITTEE

- Modeling upon the successful BASSC program committees, create Public Information Committee
- Meet with the CWDA Public Education and Awareness Workgroup Chairperson to discuss establishing a regional section of the CWDA Public Education and Awareness Committee and designate a liaison to BASSC Public Information Committee
- Collaborate on regional media training
- Develop a Work Plan and identify key stakeholders and community partners
- Develop a regional communication strategy for Adult and Aging Programs
- Create shared vision and common messages and for use in joint media campaign
- Duplicating the success and creating a sustainable model of the Regional Adult and Aging campaign for other social services programs.

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