WORKING WITH COMMUNITY NON-PROFITS TO ESTABLISH CULTURAL COMPETENCE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES: IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Santa Cruz County Human Resources Agency provided a wonderful opportunity to examine efforts to work with community-based organizations to establish Cultural Competence Standards and Performance Outcomes in the provision of services offered to their client families. This case study examines the initiatives themselves, the background, the process, perspectives and implications.

Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department is in the process of developing and expanding policy on the administration and monitoring of contracts with outside agencies. The Children and Family Services Bureau, one of five divisions under the Employment and Human Services Department, is also in the process of assessing and implementing Cultural Competence strategies to address the fairness and equity of its services. The exploration of the initiatives in Santa Cruz County served as a mechanism to gain experience and insight into how to assist the Contra Costa County Employee and Human Services Department in the design and development of such cultural competence standards.

Information regarding the initiatives was gathered from several sources including an orientation with the Human Resources Agency Director, Cecilia Espinola and her staff. Written materials were provided that outlined details on the Agency, Cultural Competence Standards, Work Plans, Performance Outcomes, the Human Care Alliance and the process of developing Cultural Competence Standards. I also had the opportunity to interview key community delegates and Senior Analysts who participate on advisory committees and were able to provide a broad and diverse perspective. Moreover, I attended one of the Community Programs Outcomes Reporting Committee meetings.

FINDINGS

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors provides funding to private non-profit community organizations and other local governmental agencies for a variety of human services. This investment in Community Programs ensures the viability of a community safety net for the most needy and vulnerable constituents. During the late 1980's and early 1990's several events occurred that confirmed an increased need for services to the homeless and low-income Latinos. Community challenges caused the Board to reconsider the distribution on funds to ensure more equitable service provision. Based on changing demographics, constituent needs and the advocacy of community-based organizations, the Board adopted a specific funding strategy and standards of accessibility. This funding strategy known as Latino Equity ended in 2000 due to various concerns. The establishment of Cultural Competence Standards became the directive of the Board to build on the foundations of Latino Equity and

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Standards of Accessibility. The Human Resources Agency partnered with representatives from the Human Care Alliance, a collaborative of non-profit human services organizations, to develop guidelines and standards by which all Community Programs requesting finances from the County's general fund would be subject to. The Human Resources Agency also committed to adopting similar competence standards to operate within County departments. The Standards included five domains addressing topics such as Cultural Competency Planning, Organizational Management/Staffing, Evaluation, Data and Information Systems and Service Delivery.

The second initiative directed by the Board of Supervisors was for the Human Resources Agency to again work with community non-profit agencies to develop recommendations for a contract out-come-based reporting system. This proposed reporting system meant instituting a shift in focus from reporting how much and how well a service is provided to asking is the client any better off as a result of the service provided. This new process would also require a contractor to demonstrate how the service provided aligned with the Human Resources Agency missions and goals. The committee again developed values, guidelines and a comprehensive work plan to facilitate the process.

One of the major findings in Santa Cruz County was the use of Facilitative Leadership practices to navigate the Board's directives. This process involves: sharing an inspiring vision, focusing on results, process and relationships, seeking maximum involvement, designing pathways to action and facilitating agreement. This method proved to be instrumental in allowing the work to progress and was paramount to generating a collaborative course of action that allowed participation and engagement of the community non-profit agencies. The Human

Resources Agency also hired a consulting firm that specialized in Cultural Competence Assessment and planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Contra Costa County's Cultural Competence and Performance Outcomes projects can greatly benefit from the lessons learned in Santa Cruz County. The efforts toward Cultural Competence have primarily been within the Children & Family Services Bureau. They include:
- Ensuring the transfer of learning and account-ability of training previously provided on specific ethnic groups and cross-cultural communication.
- Adapting the work plan developed by the Santa Cruz Cultural Competency Advisory Committee in a way that addresses CFS staff versus community agencies.
- Adopting recommendations made in Child Welfare League of America Cultural Competence Survey
- Fostering the Workforce Preparation Work Group to evaluate and integrate the components of the Santa Cruz model.
- Authorizing and funding the training of key personnel in Facilitative Leadership Skills.
- Establishing and supporting an environment in the workplace that fosters the exchange of cultural information among staff.

Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department is currently making efforts to improve services to families through more effective contract development, mission alignment and monitoring. Recommendations to address this topic include:

- Adapting and implementing the Work Plan developed by the Santa Cruz Community Programs Outcomes Reporting Committee
- Expanding and supporting collaboration efforts with community non-profit organizations.
- Cultivating non-competitive communication and collaboration among community non-profit organizations through contract incentives.
- Fostering the District Community Partnership Work Group to focus on outreach and recruitment of non-profit agencies.
- Evaluating current community Asset Map to identify stakeholders and magnify publicity campaign to engage more grass roots or non-traditional community based agencies.
- Using the momentum of the Child Welfare Services Redesign to facilitate a paradigm shift.

There are certain challenges inherent in considering implementing the lessons learned from Santa Cruz County, such as:
- Size and demographics
- Current lack of informal collaboration between non-profit agencies
- Broad range of services needed to care for children and families
- Unwillingness to change
- Fear and apprehension
- Declining resources to support such a large project
- Lack of resources.

Opportunities to implement some or all of the above mentioned recommendations are readily available. The next steps require managerial coordination across bureaus, casting a shared vision and a department commitment to serve all people (and serve them better).

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY NON-PROFITS TO ESTABLISH CULTURAL COMPETENCE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES: IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will focus on my internship in Santa Cruz County, where the process of working with community non-profit organizations to design, develop and implement agreements and measurement models for Cultural Competence and Performance Outcomes was examined.

The objectives for the project included:

- Examining the initiatives promoting the establishment of Cultural Competence Standards and Performance Outcomes and the implementation process
- Assessing the impact of Cultural Competence Standards and Performance Outcomes on the Agency and the community
- Identifying the methods of measuring and monitoring Performance Outcomes

BACKGROUND

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors allocates funds to non-profit community organizations and other local governmental agencies for a variety of human services including child care, senior services, counseling, services to the disabled, and services to the homeless. This investment in Community Programs ensures the viability of a safety net for the community's most needy and vulnerable constituents. In the early 1970's the federal government invested $2.3 million in strategies to ensure a minimum standard of living and a safety net for the county's most at-risk citizens. Santa Cruz County chose to direct $1 million in Revenue

Sharing funds to empower the non-profit social services sector. In 1985 when Revenue Sharing was phased out these community-based organizations formed the Human Care Alliance and convened a Revenue Sharing Task Force. The Human Care Alliance is composed of approximately 70 non-profit organizations whose mission is to educate the public; advocate for human care services, ensure effective and efficient services by promoting diversity, communication, collaboration and mutual assistance among non-profit providers, and maintain service through non-competitive cultivation of public and private funding and support.

The Revenue Sharing Task Force developed a strategy for ensuring continued support for Community Programs and those who depended on their services by relying on a funding formula based on point-of-service and a proportion of sales tax revenue. The Board of Supervisors adopted the Task Force recommendations, and decided to offset the loss of federal dollars by replacing $1.4 million from the county's general fund to finance social services in Santa Cruz County. The Loma Prieta Earthquake, the national 1990 census and the local 1990 homeless survey, confirmed an increased need for services to the homeless and low-income Latinos. The 1990 census also confirmed changing demographics including the increase in the low-income Latino population in Santa Cruz County thereby influencing funding decisions (see Figure 1). This information was the catalyst for the formation of a joint subcommittee between the Human Services Commission and the Latino Affairs Commission. Although the Board of Supervisors granted money for many years to

Community Programs for a variety of human services for lower income people, concerns were raised by representatives of the Latino community that services to that ethnic group were not receiving their fair share of Community Program funding.

In 1992, using information from the first Latino Needs Assessment Survey conducted by HRA, a Latino Equity strategy was implemented to address these changing demographics and was adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The Board also adopted the Standards of Accessibility (see Figure 2) which would ensure Latino access to services provided by Community Programs. All programs contracting with the County were expected to comply with these standards if their agencies provided services in areas with a significant Latino population.

Figure 1
Shifts in Santa Cruz County Population Data

Ethnicity	1990	2000
White	83.9%	75.1%
Black/African American	1.1%	1.0%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native, Aleut	0.8%	1.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.7%	3.6%
Other	10.4%	15.0%
Bi/Multi Racial		4.4%
Hispanic/Latino	20.45	26.8%

In 2000 the Board of Supervisors discontinued Latino Equity Funding for several reasons:
- Concerns regarding competitive access to funding.
- Declining economic times.
- The growth in the Latino Equity Fund and Community Programs that increased dependence on the fund for sustainable support.

- The growth of Latino organizations requesting funding.
- The HRA Study Session
- Proposition 209, "Prohibition Against Discrimination or Preferential Treatment by State and Other Public Entities"

Figure 2
STANDARDS OF ACCESSIBILITY
FOR LATINO SERVICES

A. All materials are available in Spanish and are culturally sensitive and appropriate.
B. Services are actively marketed to the Latino community.
C. All services – and the entry points to services (reception, information and referral etc.) – have bilingual capability with equal levels and quality of service.
D. Services are located in areas readily accessible to the Latino community.
E. Services are culturally competent.
F. Agency leadership is culturally competent, aware of the special needs of the Latino community, and effective in empowering the Latino community.
G. When recruiting new staff, the agency advertises vacant positions in locations and publications readily accessible to the Latino community and actively conducts outreach to ensure equal employment opportunities for Latinos.
H. The Latino community is adequately represented of the agency's service and geographic areas.
I. Client demographics are representative of the agency's service and geographic areas.
J. HRA's monitoring of agencies will include compliance with these standards and conformance in service provision with the demographic characteristics of the geographic area in which they are located.

To build on the foundation established by the Standards of Accessibility and to ensure that all Community Programs provided culturally competent services to members of the Latino community, as well as other cultural groups, the HRA developed a process by which Cultural Competence Standards would be implemented in all Community Programs contracts.

THE BIRTH OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE STANDARDS

In January of 2002 the Community Programs Cultural Competency Advisory Committee convened its first meeting to begin planning for implementing Cultural Competence Standards in Community Programs contracts to enhance service provision to clients. The HRA hired a nationally recognized expert in the field of Cultural Competence Standards, JTR & Associates to assist in the process. The HRA also committed to ensuring the development of similar cultural competence standards within county departments. HRA staff developed a work plan to integrate the Board-directed initiatives. Using Facilitative Leadership skills to ease problem-solving and agreement building processes, the committee proceeded with the following steps:

- Identifying and convening stakeholders to ensure maximum engagement, involvement and participation at all stages in the process.
- Establishing common definitions & agreements, to ensure maximum involvement and support for operationalizing cultural competence in the county.
- Seeking Board of Supervisors approval for planning processes and information regarding progress and proposed work-plans.
- Conducting assessment of community data: to increase the understanding of the current popu-lation of Santa Cruz County and whom Community Programs are serving.
- Seeking consumer input to increase knowledge of diverse groups in Santa Cruz County and determining which cultural groups were not receiving equitable access to services.
- Evaluating community programs to get a snap shot of agencies' current level of cultural competence and concerns relating to the issue.
- Summarizing community assessment information to identify needs and gaps in access to services.
- Reporting back to Board of Supervisors to keep them informed.
- Developing an implementation plan to ensure all community programs understand expectations relating to increasing cultural competence within their agencies.
- Determining Standards (See Figure 3)
- Establishing accountability of agencies to Cultural Competence Standards
- Reviewing & summarizing standards and implementation issues in order to clarify specific recommendations to be made to the Board.
- Reporting back to the Board of Supervisors to inform them of the results of the process and gain adoption of an implementation plan.
- Enabling all agencies to increase their capacity to provide culturally competent services and ensure accountability.
- Developing cultural competency training and technical assistance plans.
- Recommending tools for monitoring cultural competence.
- Developing proposed protocol for ensuring accountability.

It took two years to develop the Cultural Competence Standards and implementation guidelines. All agencies requesting Community Programs

funding are now required to submit a Cultural Competence Plan along with their application for funding by June 30, 2004. These agencies have five years to implement the plan to 85% compliance by year seven.

Attaining quality outcomes for clients requires that services clients receive are culturally competent. Therefore, the establishment of Cultural Competence Standards to which programs will be accountable goes hand in hand with identifying and monitoring client outcomes.

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

The second initiative directed by the Board of Supervisors was to require HRA to assess Community Programs alignment with the Agency's mission statement and move toward an outcome based reporting system. In the past Community Programs have been relied upon to address many needs of families in Santa Cruz County. The scope of these services was not derived from any evidenced-based data that could ensure that the constituents who were most in need were benefiting from the services provided. Community based organizations were required to demonstrate how their services support the specific goals in each of HRA's program divisions.

This new requirement process shifted Community Programs from reporting process outcomes, which answer questions about how much and how well service is provided, to a performance or client outcome system, which asks whether clients are better off as a result of the service provided. Compliance requirements in this area were phased into contract

Figure 3: Santa Cruz County Cultural Competence Standards

Domain: Cultural Competency Planning
• A Cultural Competence Plan shall be developed, approved and integrated within the overall organization to assure attainment of cultural competence within manageable but concrete timelines. The plan shall include measures related to the standards in each of the following Cultural Competence Domains: Organizational Management & Staffing, Evaluation, Data & Information Systems, and Service Delivery.

Domain: Organizational Management/Staffing
• All levels of the organization including governing body, management, staff and volunteers shall be:
• Representative of community demographics: Organization composition is proportionally representative of the consumer populations to be served.
• Knowledgeable: Training and development in the area of cultural competence is implemented at all levels.
• Accountable: All levels are accountable for the successful implementation of the cultural competence plan

Domain: Evaluation
• Organizations shall conduct evaluation to track progress on implementation and results of its Cultural Competence Plan. Organization shall be evaluated by the contracting agency in accordance with the organization's Cultural Competence Plan.

Domain: Data and Information Systems
• Organization shall collect and analyze data to inform decisions and to demonstrate progress toward successful implementation of its Cultural Competence Plan.

Domain: Service Delivery
• The organization's services shall be culturally:
• Accessible: Organizations shall ensure that all potential consumers have the opportunity to use all services provided by the agency.
• Appropriate: Organizations shall ensure that consumers receive, from all service providers, effective, understandable and respectful service that is provided in a manner compatible with their cultural beliefs and practices, and preferred language.
• Representative: Consumer demographics are representative of the agency" services and geographic area.

reporting starting in fiscal year 2001-2002, where Community Programs were given the option to report using performance outcomes. HRA, working with representatives of the Human Care Alliance, began to develop recommendations for improving client outcomes reporting and for a contract provision requiring Community Programs to demonstrate alignment with the HRA missions and goals. The committee worked to identify values that guided the planning process and designed a comprehensive work plan that would lead to the development of improved performance outcomes. The Community Programs Outcomes Reporting Work Plan included the following steps:

- Identifying and convening stakeholders to ensure maximum involvement and participation at all stages in the process.
- Establishing Agreements to clarify what we're doing and why and ensure maximum involvement and support for enhancing and standardizing outcomes in Community Programs.
- Seeking Board of Supervisors' approval for planning process and informing policy makers and seeking approval of proposed work plan.
- Establishing common definitions and creating a shared language, reviewing existing documents to inform committees of work already done, and then agreeing on terms, such as goals and objectives, method of measurement, client outcomes, etc.
- Analyzing current reporting requirements and establishing shared understanding of current CP reporting requirements by reviewing and identifying strengths and potential areas for development.
- Assessing Community Programs' capacity and understanding community-based organization's current outcomes reporting requirements, as well as assessing agencies' level of familiarity

with and capacity to identify and measure outcomes
- Discussing relationships between Community Programs and HRA and confirming the alignment of Community Programs with HRA's mission and HRA Division goals.
- Reviewing other outcome reporting models and establishing shared understanding of current models.
- Establishing standard concepts for outcome reporting and ensuring modifications of reporting process to reflect values and needs outlined in previous steps.
- Seeking Human Care Alliance and Board of Supervisors approval, and having a shared understanding of Outcome Reporting.
- Identifying considerations to operationalize new outcome reporting model, and ensuring that the reporting model has flexibility to accommodate individual agency variables.
- Developing process and tools to use for outcomes reporting and ensuring ease of implementation and consistency of reporting across programs.
- Reviewing and summarizing the implementation approach and clarifying specific recommendations to be made to the Board
- Seeking Board of Supervisor' approval on Implementation approach, and informing policy makers and seeking approval of the proposed process.
- Implementing the work plan and ensuring a smooth transition to a standard outcomes reporting model across all Community Programs.
- Amending the Community Programs contract to include new reporting requirements.
- Revising the Community Programs procedures manual to include outcomes reporting tools.
- Developing proposed protocol for ensuring accountability.

- Providing outcomes training and technical assistance options.

As of the writing of this case study, the Advisory Committee had completed half of the steps indicated in the Work Plan.

Several challenges were identified in designing and implementing a standardized process for reporting performance outcomes:
- HRA was not able to obtain 100% compliance from all Community Programs thus weakening the effectiveness of data analysis;
- Agencies are at different developmental levels in their familiarity and mastery of developing, reporting and utilizing both process and client outcomes;
- Agencies use a variety of evaluation models that do not always translate easily to HRA reporting formats; and
- HRA's reporting format itself does not provide a structure that supports consistent reporting for the wide range of outcomes that agencies strive to achieve.

COMMUNITY VIEW

In order to obtain the perspective of the Community-Based Organizations and their historical point of view, six delegates were interviewed. The first group of representatives shared their views on the topic of contract requirements for Cultural Competence Standards. There were several successes identified which included:
- Acknowledgement of Santa Cruz County's progressive approach to establishing Cultural Competence Standards
- Pioneering collaboration of the HRA and Community Programs

- The leadership and organization of the Human Care Alliance
- The HRA's commitment to becoming Culturally Competent.
- Potentially broad impact to the community at-large

The positive views of Performance Outcomes included:
- Outcomes providing opportunity for better alignment of funders/jurisdictions
- Producing evidence-based data to substantiate budget requests
- Achieving large representation of CBO's on the Advisory Committee

Some of the struggles identified included:
- Systematic change must begin with HRA in cases where clients are referred to CBO's.
- CBO's have different funders who require different reporting methods
- CBO's are not provided with the administrative funds to comply with requirements
- The need for Universal Outcome Measures that are easy to collect
- Concern for how the data collected will be used
- Standard categories of reporting across the complexity of program design and percentage of funding received
- HRA must demonstrate their commitment to Cultural Competence, e.g. hiring Spanish-speaking social workers and recruiting foster parents who welcome gay children into their homes
- Although, the consultant that HRA hired was very skilled and experienced, some of the delegates felt that the process took too long and was somewhat cumbersome
- External models were relied upon more than the expertise inherent in the Human Care Alliance

• Some felt that the tools and forms were too complicated

Some CBO's reported changes in practice influenced by the Cultural Competence process, such as:
  • New service office in Watsonville, where 80% of the population is Latino
  • Services material written in Spanish
  • Staff Development
  • Changes to the physical plant to accommodate ADA requirements
  • Recruitment and hiring of bi-lingual Spanish staff
  • Inclusive language in services literature
  • Raising of cultural awareness
  • Evidence-based service provision

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Contra Costa County Children and Family Services (CFS) is dedicated to increasing community capacity to provide safe environments free from abuse/neglect for children, youth and families. CFS has made great strides in this area but are just now in the infancy stage of designing contractual systems based on Performance Outcomes to ensure that services provided are actually benefiting those most in need. Contra Costa County's interest in the aforementioned Santa Cruz initiatives was to gain ideas for improving services to families through effective contract monitoring, quality contract development and linking contracts to departmental performance improvements.

Furthermore, this included performance outcome requirements in every contract, a requirement that all contracts would support the mission of the Employment & Human Services Department

(EHSD), and vigilant monitoring of service and fiscal performance. Currently there exists no compulsory language or requirements for Performance-Based Outcomes or Cultural Competence Standards in typical contract documents.

To improve services to families through developing and implementing more effective Performance Outcomes measures, the following recommendations should be considered:
  • Adapting and implementing the Work Plan developed by the Santa Cruz Community Programs Outcomes Reporting Committee.
  • Developing monitoring standards and integrate performance-based outcomes in small inter-department contracts i.e. between CFS and FFA and Group Homes.
  • Enlisting Management and Planning MSW interns to assist in developing performance outcomes to combat reduced availability of staff resources.
  • Using current Community Partnership District Implementation groups as pilots to start the Facilitative Leadership consensus building tasks.
  • Including in the strategic plan for implementing performance outcomes in contract requirements a requirement for collaboration.

Efforts toward cultural competence in Contra Costa County have virtually been within county departments. The Bay Area Academy and the Staff Development department designed a plan to assess the cultural competency of the agency by interviewing staff, foster parents and clients. The Child Welfare League of America's Assessment tools were utilized to identify key areas of concern. Preliminary results indicated:

- A need for more training on Cultural Competence and specific ethnic groups
- Lack of family engagement in culturally competent case planning
- Lack of cultural resources
- Limited understanding of certain specific cultures

A specific training plan was developed to address these deficits including a series of trainings offered to staff, other departments and the community that offered insight into the Latino, Asian and African American cultures. The agency is still in the process of developing a Transfer of Learning or accountability system that measures the significance of the training.

Child Welfare Redesign efforts will require Culturally Competent, Evidenced-Based Performance Outcomes, in order to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of children, youth and families. Expanding the roles of community non-profit organizations creates a perfect opportunity for revising contracting standards to include requirements that will improve services to families. This will require investment in community capacity-building for viable partnering and collaborating with community-based organizations in Contra Costa County. The following elements should be considered:

- Clarifying the eligibility criteria for grassroots or non-traditional community based organizations to become partners
- Providing a clear understanding of the goals, objectives and procedures of the Agency
- Providing technical assistance to prepare these organizations to collaborate, such as, designing mission and vision statements, developing polices and procedures, organizational charts,

Memorandum of Understandings, 501c(3) applications, and fiscal planning
- Develop a plan to ensure that the obligations, roles and responsibilities of agreements or requirements are met
- Assisting in organizing and in the networking of community based organizations to foster non-competitive cooperation and collaboration
- Training of staff and/or volunteers
- Developing community awareness and publicity

By assuming and adapting the Work Plan from Santa Cruz County with the additional recommendations from the Cultural Competence Survey and capacity-building components, Contra Costa County can greatly improve outcomes for all constituents.

There are certain challenges inherent in considering implementing the wisdom learned from Santa Cruz County, such as:

- Contra Costa County's size and design of district offices reflects the complexity of responding to the different demographics.
- The lack of incentives to encourage coordination of non-profit agencies
- The vast range of services needed to care for children and families
- Attitudes that block collaboration and a willingness to change
- Fear and apprehension
- Declining resources
- Competing priorities of other projects
- Community confidence in the County Agency
- Lack of resources to ensure monitoring and accountability

During one of the interviews with the non-profit organizations the following a motto emerged:

"Committed to serve all people...and serve them well". Although it's broad and simplistic, it summarizes the philosophy behind providing culturally competent, evidenced based services that lead to performance outcomes that improve the lives of our client families. The initiatives examined in Santa Cruz County are very impressive. The fact that against all odds they persevered to address emotionally and politically charged issues, such as service equity and racial bias, is to be applauded. Contra Costa County does not have the incentive of a National Emergency, such as an earthquake, nor has it received a directive from the Board of Supervisors, but it has the unique opportunity to design, develop and implement a better system without the barrier of an acute crisis, and to foster a paradigm shift from the way we deliver services to create a safety net and build strong, healthy and self-sufficient communities. As we consider the benefit of Performance Outcomes, one might ask oneself "is anyone better off because of these initiatives"? Hopefully the data will provide some answers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS