

**Bay Area  
Social  
Services  
Consortium**

**Counties**

*Alameda  
Contra Costa  
Marin  
Monterey  
Napa  
San Benito  
San Francisco  
San Mateo  
Santa Clara  
Santa Cruz  
Solano  
Sonoma  
Stanislaus*

**Universities**

*California State  
University, Monterey Bay  
California State  
University, Stanislaus  
San Francisco State  
San Jose State  
University of  
California, Berkeley*

**Foundations**

*The Zellerbach  
Family Foundation  
Van Loben Sels/Rembe Rock  
Foundation*

**Step by Step:  
Building the Infrastructure for Transforming  
Public Social Service Organizations into  
Learning Organizations**

Third Progress Report

Prepared by the Bay Area Human Resources Committee  
for the Bay Area Social Services Consortium

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Donna Woche, San Mateo County



## **Executive Summary**

BAHRC was initiated by BASSC in October, 1997 to discuss shared issues relating to training and personnel arising out of the changes demanded by welfare reform. The learning organization framework was identified by BAHRC as an important model for creating flexible, responsive agencies able to cope with increasingly complex environmental challenges and service goals. In 1998 and 1999, the group focused on defining the learning organization in the context of public social service agencies, and describing initiatives to transform social service agencies into learning organizations.

In 2000, in addition to further development of learning organization activities and structures, BAHRC has focused on the benefits of the learning organization in addressing the changed goals of social service agencies in the era of welfare reform. Numerous initiatives exemplifying the learning organization principles are underway, including organizational development processes, career development activities, training focusing on transfer of learning, succession planning, and more. The group was given the additional charge this year of addressing regional staff recruitment and retention issues.

### **The Learning Organization: Meeting the Demands of the Future**

The learning organization framework has increasing value as policy reforms continue to impose new demands on our agencies, requiring staff to develop new knowledge and skills. Welfare reform reauthorization is only one of the anticipated possible reforms looming in the near future. In light of the learning organization benefits identified by BAHRC and described in the body of this report, a series of recommendations are made to further implementation of the learning organization principles.

In addition to ongoing policy reform, agencies face an environment of increasing competition for skilled workers, creating a challenge to improve recruitment and retention. The learning organization principles offer a means to improve job quality, through raising the level of responsibility and challenge, and ensuring all staff participate in creating the vision that guides their work. In order to build upon these benefits of the learning organization framework, concrete strategies for regional recruitment and retention need to be developed.

Finally, BAHRC proposes a set of recommendations relating to its own role in promoting learning organization concepts and improving recruitment and retention in our agencies. These recommendations are designed to ensure that agencies create the leadership structures and organizational cultures that promote organizational learning.

## Learning Organization Recommendations

### 1. Continuing Recommendation

BAHRC recommends that the BASSC directors ensure that Human Resources/Staff Development managers are located within the upper management level. Implementation of this recommendation has varied across the counties, and consequently the recommendation should be reviewed and approval granted or terminated.

### 2. Create a Learning Organization Team

BAHRC recommends that agencies create a learning organization team, charged with leading and overseeing learning organization planning and initiatives. The team will provide the necessary leadership and modeling to facilitate translating learning organization principles into practice, ensuring that they are not simply viewed as abstract concepts.

## Recruitment and Retention Recommendations

### 3. Develop a Human Resources staff position at the Bay Area Academy.

The position will coordinate information gathering, strategy development and implementation of regional and individual recruitment and retention efforts.

### 4. Participate in the CalSWEC study on staff retention

Participation will facilitate gathering of data on the scope and causes of the problem.

## Recommendations for BAHRC Activities

5. Continue to function as a collaborative work group, developing and exchanging ideas relating to implementation of learning organization principles and recruitment and retention strategies.

A. Oversee the continuing development and implementation of the transformation of our agencies into learning organizations.

B. Oversee the development of recruitment and retention strategies and efforts to implement these strategies in our agencies.

C. Develop a series of case studies to capture key learning organization initiatives in our agencies. These will be designed to be used as tools or guides for agencies seeking to develop similar initiatives.

# **Step by Step: Building the Infrastructure for Transforming Public Social Service Organizations into Learning Organizations**

## **I. Introduction**

BAHRC was initiated by BASSC in October, 1997, to discuss shared issues relating to training and personnel, in response to massive changes brought about by welfare reform. In 1998 and 1999, the group focused on defining the learning organization in the context of public social service agencies, and describing initiatives to transform social service agencies into learning organizations. In 2000, in addition to further development of learning organization activities and structures, BAHRC focused on the benefits of the learning organization in addressing the changed goals of social service agencies in the era of welfare reform. The group was given the additional charge of addressing regional staff recruitment and retention issues.

This progress report consists of the following:

- Brief overview of the origins of BASSC's commitment to learning organization principles in the BASSC 1999 Vision Statement and in the study of welfare reform implementation and organizational change.
- Brief overview of the activities and recommendations of the group's first two years.
- Summary and analysis of the learning organization and recruitment and retention initiatives taking place in the counties and the Bay Area Academy, highlighting more recent initiatives.
- Recommendations regarding the most promising approaches to fostering a learning organization, and continuation of recruitment and retention work.
- Appendix providing full descriptions of county-based learning organization activities.

## **II. Origins of the Learning Organization Concept for BASSC**

### **BASSC Vision Statement**

The 1999 BASSC Vision Statement was revised through a process of discussions initiated in 1997, intended to reflect the changed roles of social service agencies in light of welfare reform. It was organized around eight principles:

- A social development approach to social services.
- Building community and fostering a civil society.
- Developing a career resilient workforce.
- Supporting the family.
- Family-focused, neighborhood-based human service systems.
- Changing professional roles.
- Social service agencies as catalysts for private action.
- Public policy directions addressing the unfinished business of welfare reform.

These principles reveal a recurrent theme calling for new skills and knowledge to foster flexibility and responsiveness on the part of social service agencies. The Vision Statement stresses the social development approach, emphasizing the importance of skills and knowledge developed through education and training for the populations we serve; this should include the people providing services. Social service agencies are seen in the Vision Statement as catalysts for change in their communities; if we are unable to change ourselves, how will we be able to serve as catalysts for others? Specifically, the changing professional roles of staff require ongoing learning opportunities to help staff meet the demands of new roles. The final principle recognizes that policy reform is a continuing process, requiring agencies to develop the ability to learn and respond to new mandates.

### **Study of Organizational Change and Welfare Reform Implementation**

In the Spring of 1999, BASSC engaged in a self-study of the process of organizational change and welfare reform (Carnochan & Austin, 1999). The study was intended to capture the change process itself and the lessons learned, rather than simply identifying the outcomes of the process. The study itself was an example of a learning organization process, in which the organization seeks to look beneath the surface of its actions, and derive deeper lessons about itself. The directors interviewed for the study reiterated in a number of ways the importance of learning for change, with one director articulating it thus: "I want to build a learning organization in which the workplace is a laboratory where all learn from their mistakes and make a commitment to gaining new skills."

### **Defining the Learning Organization (1998)**

In the first year, BAHRC determined that the traditional views of training and staff development were inadequate to respond to the challenges of continuous and comprehensive change. It drew upon Senge's (1990) learning organization framework:

- Shared vision (integrating the individual visions of all members, and calling for genuine commitment).
- Personal mastery (juxtaposing accurate view of individual's current reality with vision for the future).
- Systems thinking (identifying interrelationships and patterns of causation in problem solving processes).
- Mental models (surfacing, testing and reformulating assumptions about how the world works).
- Team learning (thinking insightfully about complex issues, operating in state of trust, and engaging in dialogue and discussion).

The BAHRC applied these principles to public social service agencies, identifying the following as key learning organization components:

- Organization's mission is shared by all staff, regularly reviewed and made "alive".
- Change is viewed as a challenge and the organization has a process in place to analyze, meet, and embrace necessary change.
- Accuracy, frequency and ease of information sharing and communication are key characteristics of a learning organization.
- Learning is the responsibility of all.
- Learning organizations need the flexibility to respond to new demands from their customers and shareholders.
- Learning organizations include a process of continual improvement.
- Accountability at every level of the organization is valued and supported.

With these principles, BAHRC made a series of recommendations in its 1999 progress report, outlining the roles and activities for direct service staff, supervisors, managers, staff development, personnel, and BASSC directors to promote the transformation of BASSC agencies into learning organizations. These recommendations, summarized in Figure 1 below, were approved by the BASSC directors. Among the most important recommendations was the locating of Staff Development/Personnel/Human Resources managers within the top management level, in order to facilitate leadership of the learning organization process. This recommendation has been implemented to varying degrees across the counties.

### **Strategies for Developing the Learning Organization (1999)**

In its second year, BAHRC focused on identifying and tracking initiatives implementing the recommendations made in its first report. It identified a series of strategies and initiatives being implemented by agencies that included:

- Establishing formal mentoring programs for employees at all levels.
- Implementing organizational development and strategic planning activities.
- Conducting learning needs assessments at all levels.
- Targeting training to supervisors and managers regarding their role in the learning process.
- Utilizing annual reviews to promote individual learning and development.
- Collaborating with junior colleges and universities to design and provide higher education for employees.
- Creating positions or structures to support the transition to a learning organization.
- Creating forums to examine the way agencies do business and supporting intra-agency learning.
- Inclusion of line staff in planning for business improvements.

The report also identified a number of areas where further attention is warranted, including: 1) strategic placement of human resources leaders at the upper levels of the organizational structure; 2) capturing the components of the learning organization in departmental mission or value statements; 3) using organizational development activities as a link to learning organization principles (DuBrow, Wocher & Austin, 1999)

**Figure 1: Summary of Year 1 Recommendations for Becoming a Learning Organization**

<p><u>Direct Service Staff</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Serve as mentors and experts within the organization and utilize the benefits of their learning by representing the organization to the community.</li> <li>2. Accept responsibility for becoming an active participant in the learning organization.</li> <li>3. Take responsibility for the transfer of formal and informal learning to practical application.</li> <li>4. Identify for supervisors and managers how the application of new learning impacts on effective delivery of service. This may include the need to reevaluate existing policies and/or procedures.</li> <li>5. Take an active role in providing feedback to Staff Development and supervisors regarding the quality and effectiveness of training.</li> </ol>	<p><u>Supervisors</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Act as coaches and mentors with their staff, developing and supporting the learning and career development plans of each staff member.</li> <li>2. Actively participate in training sessions and take action to improve and ensure the transfer of learning from formalized training to the worksite and back to where it influences policies, procedures and training content.</li> <li>3. Conduct regular unit meetings to effectively promote and reinforce unit and individual learning goals.</li> <li>4. Utilize individual worker supervisory sessions to maximize learning opportunities.</li> <li>5. Support the creative use of Staff Development as consultants.</li> <li>6. Collaborate with staff development to creatively use existing training and development resources in an expanded array of situations.</li> </ol>	<p><u>Managers</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Move away from the "training as panacea" approach to crises and legislative changes.</li> <li>2. Encourage the on-going professional development of all staff not only by supporting learning but by being the champion of succession planning, mentoring, coaching, continuing education, etc.</li> <li>3. Work with staff development in the utilization of resources and staff expertise to creatively address organizational learning needs.</li> <li>4. Support or accommodate workloads that allow for the time needed for all staff to meet their learning objectives and obligations.</li> <li>5. Actively participate in training sessions and assist staff in reinforcing the transfer of learning from the training room.</li> </ol>
<p><u>Staff Development</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assist management in proactively addressing learning needs of the organization.</li> <li>2. Assist personnel in addressing succession planning, promotion, on-going education, recruitment, retention and other critical issues.</li> <li>3. Assist the organization in effectively handling change by being "on call" in the consultant role to units, managers and departments.</li> <li>4. Work with supervisors and managers to improve the reinforcement and transfer of training and to promote learning throughout the organization.</li> <li>5. Pursue and maintain the highest level of organizational development efforts and evaluation of the processes.</li> </ol>	<p><u>Personnel</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assist managers in identifying the best candidates for prospering in a learning organization.</li> <li>2. Share expertise on application screening and hiring practices.</li> <li>3. Collaborate with staff development to update existing job specifications and monitor minimum qualification standards.</li> <li>4. Assist the organization in the creation of professional growth opportunities.</li> <li>5. Collaborate in agency reorganization projects, by providing statistical and historical information on staffing levels, staffing patterns, workload and workflow, staff turnover, and retention.</li> </ol>	<p><u>Directors</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze organizational problems and challenges with a consultant" perspective: utilizing questions and discussion and demonstrating the learning focus.</li> <li>2. Advocate for and explain the transition to becoming a learning organization to all stakeholders.</li> <li>3. Assure that organizational structures and reporting lines support human resources in making the transition to a learning organization.</li> <li>4. Promote an open decision-making and information-sharing structure to allow human resources increased access to management and critical information.</li> <li>5. Expect accountability and participation from all staff in promoting and supporting learning principles.</li> <li>6. Reward on-going learning through merit increases, promotional opportunities and the opportunity to utilize highly valued skills.</li> </ol>



The BAHRC developed an additional set of recommendations in its February, 2000 report to further the development and assessment of learning organization implementation. These included:

- Review composition of executive team to ensure personnel, staff and organizational development divisions are included in planning and implementation of learning organization principles.
- Encourage managers to promote the following: develop management consensus regarding learning organization value; develop and implement plan to become learning organizations; develop and support agency culture that supports learning organization; identify assessment and evaluation tools to be used in implementation.
- Promote and model organizational development tools.

The report further recommended that BAHRC continue its work with a series of action steps, listed here with a summary of steps taken toward accomplishing the actions:

Recommendation	Steps Taken
Prioritize steps in learning organization transformation	Recommendations in this report reflect the priorities identified by BAHRC
Develop assessment tool to assess readiness and prototypical action plan	Assessment tool and prototypical action plan have not been developed.
Build on experiences of county initiatives with community colleges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Representatives from the Community College Foundation presented to BAHRC</li> <li>2) Family Development Credential and Human Services Certificate Programs are being established in collaboration with colleges</li> </ol>
Sponsor regional workshops on organizational development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) San Mateo OD staff presented to BAHRC</li> <li>2) Private OD consultant presented to BAHRC</li> </ol>
Create plan for a regional learning archive	The Academy will establish the archive.
Continued commitment by BAHRC members to serve as link to directors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ongoing communication with Directors</li> <li>2) Annual reporting to BASSC</li> </ol>

### **III. Determining the Benefits of the Learning Organization (2000)**

In the third year, BAHRC has worked to identify the benefits of implementing learning organization principles. The individual BASSC agencies are engaged in numerous and innovative initiatives designed to further organizational learning and responsiveness. A number of these, including the Executive Development Program and the Family Development Credential, highlighted here, involve collaborations among the counties. These initiatives, in addition to promoting specific learning by staff, have the broader effect of instilling and institutionalizing learning organization principles. The following section summarizes these initiatives, and discusses them with reference to the learning organization framework developed by Senge. Full descriptions of these programs and projects, identifying challenges and successes as well as lessons for agencies seeking to develop similar projects, are located in Appendix A.

#### **Collaborative Initiatives: Family Development Credential:**

The Family Development Credential (FDC) is a program that teaches staff to work with families from an empowering, strength-based perspective. It forms an important step in the career development pathways being created in the counties. A number of the counties have developed programs offering the FDC to staff, using a variety of models to deliver the training. In several instances, agencies are working with other partners to offer the trainings, in an example of the collaborative work being promoted by the BAHRC:

- San Mateo has implemented its FDC program using a train the trainers model. Agency staff and staff from other county departments and community organizations are now teaching the curriculum in programs that include San Mateo staff, as well as staff from community organizations and agencies in other counties.
- In Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey agencies are collaborating with local community colleges to make the FDC training available to staff.

#### **Alameda**

Alameda has initiated multiple learning organization activities, and incorporated learning organization principles into all aspects of agency-wide planning:

- A Learning Organization Forum for senior management staff, chaired by the Director, initiated the learning organization development process.
- Comprehensive training curriculum has been developed including: Passport to Excellence for new employees; Enhancing Workplace Skills; Management Skills; Professional Development; and Computer Skills.
- Management development and succession planning strategies include the BASSC Executive Development Program, senior management forums, and advanced institutes for senior managers.
- Other initiatives include: an evaluation of transfer of learning, performance planning, and a mentoring program.

## Monterey

Monterey has created "institutes" as a learning environment for staff, engaged in ongoing organizational development activities, and developed a cultural awareness/civil rights workshop.

- The CalWORKS Redesign Institute was developed to provide training and skill enhancement for workers serving clients meeting minimum work requirements, but with insufficient income to transition off cash aid.
- The Clerical Institute goes beyond training in automation systems to focus on personal excellence, clerical team building, listening skills, and telephone skills.
- Organizational development activities included staff participation in the Pacific Institute, which teaches the ways of thinking that lead to success, as well as ongoing team building, facilitation on agency wide issues such as work flow processes and space planning, and promoting OD practices among agency partners.
- A Cultural Awareness/Civil Rights Workshop was developed in collaboration with the Santa Cruz Human Resources Agency, and is being expanded to other county departments. It uses internal trainers, allowing staff to develop training skills.

## San Francisco

The major initiative in San Francisco has been the strategic planning process, as well as diversity training, mentoring, and other education and training initiatives:

- The strategic planning process was initiated to allow the Department to review the substantial and rapid changes of the past years, and look comprehensively at future directions for the agency. It is also designed to allow ongoing review and modification of operations.
- San Francisco has initiated a Diversity Training Program to respond to concerns about organizational climate and diversity, and a Mentoring Program to assist employees in developing better understanding of the agency, and increased trust.
- A Human Services Certificate program has been created in collaboration with SF City College, and After Training Reviews instituted to facilitate transfer learning to practice.
- After Training Reviews have been instituted to facilitate transfer of learning.

## San Mateo

Learning organization initiatives in San Mateo are led by the Human Resources Policy Team (HRPT), created in 1999 and drawn from multiple programs and classifications.

- The HRPT oversees the learning organization recommendations, the development of a career development program, and a job analysis project.

- San Mateo held a Learning Organization Conference in November, 2000, sponsored by the HRPT to kick off the agency's focus on learning, career development, and education.
- A number of the elements of the career development program have also been developed, including the Human Services Certificate and AA programs offered in collaboration with the Community College system, and the Family Development Credential, as well as the Succession Planning program for leadership development.
- Additional learning organization initiatives include an IT apprenticeship program, and ongoing integration of Organizational Development practices into the agency's culture and work processes.

### Santa Clara

Santa Clara has a series of training and professional development projects underway:

- The agency is working with Evergreen Valley Community College to provide the Family Development Credential training to staff.
- Additionally, an expanded professional development program has been proposed, and 200 staff have participated in a project management training series.
- Training units for new DFCS Social Workers and a Regional Adult Services Training Institute have been established.
- New cultural competency curricula are being developed, with an emphasis on the link to practice.

### Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz has developed multiple training strategies to foster organizational learning and staff development.

- A Succession Strategy and Professional Development training series have been established, including the Family Development Credential, supervisory prep training and mentoring.
- Integrated services Workshops and activities are designed to ensure workers have a comprehensive view of their role in the agency and the agency's services.
- A Supervisory/Management training series has been developed with goals including improved staff retention.

### Solano

Solano has a range of training and staff development efforts under way, including the following programs and activities:

- The Human Services Certificate program in collaboration with Solano Community College, and using agency staff as instructors.
- Ongoing training activities, both internally offered and in collaboration with UC Davis.
- Solano is also developing a Supervisor/manager development program.

### Sonoma

Sonoma's learning organization strategies include efforts directed at recruitment and retention, staff performance, integrated services and succession planning:

- A recruitment and retention strategy for eligibility workers in multiple programs has been developed that includes improving the applicant test and surveying workers about factors related to retention.
- Progressive Discipline training series is aimed at helping supervisors and managers assist workers to reach their potential, and respond to those who are not doing so.
- The Integrated Services team is assessing and developing integrated services strategies.
- Succession planning includes the BASSC Executive Development program, the county's Management Academy in collaboration with Sonoma State University, HRD's Supervisory Academy in collaboration with Sonoma State University, and supervisory training in collaboration with Santa Rosa Junior College.

### Bay Area Academy

The Bay Area Academy has focused on the transfer of learning in all its training work, and will be engaging in an assessment of learning transfer. Additionally, to respond to the need for timely supervisor training, the Academy has initiated a Supervisory Mentoring Project, hiring a supervisor coach to work with managers and new supervisors before and after the core supervisory training. Services will include coaching, consulting, planning for additional training, technical assistance, and individual tutoring as needed. The Academy will be sponsoring a summit on foster care and education with the BASSC Research Response Team in the Spring, with the goal of developing the link between research and practice in this area.

### **Learning Organization Principles**

In addition to promoting tangible learning for staff involved in the initiatives described here, the initiatives also reflect and foster Senge's learning organization principles, including developing systems thinking, identifying and changing mental models, developing a shared vision, fostering personal mastery, and engaging in team learning. Particular examples are highlighted in Figure 2 below.

## Figure 2: Learning Principles in Action:

### Systems Thinking

- San Mateo: Career Development Program integrates multiple systems to facilitate staff growth and development.
- San Francisco: Strategic planning process involves analysis and strategy across all divisions and levels of the agency, seeing it as a system.
- Santa Cruz: Integrated Services Strategy is designed to help staff look holistically at the agency and its services.
- Sonoma: Integrated Services Team includes members from all divisions and is studying integrated services possibilities focusing on client access to services.
- Multiple collaborations between counties and including the Academy illustrate the benefits of a view of the human services system that extends beyond county boundaries.

### Changing Mental Models

- Monterey: Focus on strengths in organizational development work using appreciative inquiry and interest based bargaining, involves a different model of how the world works, and what is important.
- San Francisco: Diversity Training Program is designed to uncover, explore, and share cultural assumptions and beliefs.
- Santa Clara: Cultural Competency curriculum helps staff examine cultural beliefs and assumptions, and integrate them into practice.
- Multiple counties: Family Development Credential offers a new way to understand and work with families.

### Shared Vision

- Alameda: Self assessment and planning process has focused on developing and clarifying the agency's mission and core values.
- Monterey: Organizational development work is transforming agency culture to encourage creativity and life-long learning.
- San Francisco: Strategic planning process is used to create a shared vision about the direction of the agency.
- San Mateo: Learning Organization Conference goal is to articulate and promote learning organization values throughout the agency.
- Santa Cruz: Integrated Services Strategy is aimed at developing a shared vision of the agency and the community.

### Personal Mastery:

- Monterey: Clerical Institute focuses on personal excellence, not simply job related skills. Similarly, the Pacific Institute training is intended to help staff identify their goals, and achieve them.
- San Mateo: Career Development Program integrates internal training and outside educational resources to help workers achieve their professional goals.
- Santa Clara: Professional development program is designed to help staff develop leadership skills, and enter leadership roles.
- Solano: Human Service Certificate program provides an opportunity for individual development.
- Sonoma's Progressive Discipline training is aimed at helping staff reach their optimal performance levels.

### Team Learning

- Monterey: OD activities focus on team building and increasing cooperation and team work within the agency and with outside entities.
- San Francisco: Mentoring program creates micro-teams where learning takes place.
- San Mateo: HRPT is using team learning processes to develop and oversee learning organization initiatives.
- Integrated Services initiatives in Sonoma and Santa Cruz offer multiple opportunities to promote team learning.
- The Academy trainings and retreats offer an opportunity for learning in cross-county groups.

#### **IV. Recruitment and Retention**

In addition to its learning organization work, the BAHRC was charged with addressing the challenge of recruitment and retention in its third year, based on recommendations that emerged from the Recruitment and Retention Summit (May 1999) co-sponsored with the Bay Area Academy. This section provides the following: 1) A brief review of the origins of that charge; 2) Identification of the link between the learning organization principles and recruitment and retention; and 3) Summary of steps taken by BAHRC to fulfill the charge.

##### **Early Recruitment and Retention Work**

In 1999, Alameda County hired a consultant to identify and report to the agency on emerging recruitment and retention issues. In her report to the agency, she made a series of recommendations, including developing national outreach strategies. In subsequent discussions with Mike Austin, recruitment and retention was identified as a regional issue, and he suggested that the consultant meet with BAHRC. The consultant was invited by Rita Hayes of Alameda to present the report findings at BAHRC. Discussion by the BAHRC identified a number of advantages and potential problems involved in regional recruiting, including unequal benefits to large and small counties. The group identified a summit as a means to address the issues in a broader forum, resulting in the Child Welfare Workforce Summit, co-sponsored by BAHRC and the Bay Area Academy. Findings of the summit were presented to the BASSC directors, and they charged BAHRC with addressing recruitment and retention issues from a regional perspective.

##### **Perspectives from the Private Sector: Recruitment and Retention and the Learning Organization**

Caryn Joseph Siegel, a consultant working with private sector organizations, presented on recruitment and retention and the learning organization to the BAHRC. She traced the link between learning organization components and staff retention, noting that staff retention starts the day you offer the job. She presented a number of findings, including:

- Compensation is not the most important factor in staff retention.
- Employees' relationship with their manager is a key component of job satisfaction.
- 35% of employees will leave if there is no development plan for them.
- 90% cite career growth and development, exciting and challenging work, or meaningful work that makes a difference as the most important reasons for remaining in a job.
- These top retention factors are followed by: great people; part of team; good boss; recognition for good work; fun on job; autonomy; flexibility; fair pay and benefits; inspiring leadership; pride in organization; great work environment; location; job security; family friendly; cutting edge technology.

These findings regarding staff retention indicate that the learning organization framework can offer key benefits to agencies working to respond to the challenge of recruiting and retaining staff throughout the agency, including social workers in child welfare as well as other divisions. For example, the learning organization framework emphasizes creating opportunities for career growth and development, and using teams to develop and implement services. Additionally, by holding all responsible for organizational goals and learning, it ensures staff will be engaged in challenging work.

#### Development of Regional Recruitment/Retention Strategies

The BAHRC has identified the following objective in regards to regional recruitment and retention: BAHRC will develop and recommend to BASSC concrete regional strategies to improve recruitment and retention of human service professionals, linked to its learning organization work and the work of the BASSC media group. A series of tasks to accomplish this objective have been identified including system level tasks, personnel level tasks, and integration-oriented tasks. Related efforts by CWDA and CalSWEC have been identified and BAHRC will coordinate BASSC county participation in these initiatives. Additionally, the recommendations below identify a specific function located within the Academy to support BAHRC work on the recruitment and retention charge.

### **V. BAHRC Recommendations**

#### **Learning Organization Recommendations**

The initiatives based upon learning organization principles described in this report offer a number of benefits to agencies. In an environment of continuing policy reform, the learning organization model can assist agencies to develop much needed flexibility and responsiveness. An agency in which staff is engaged in ongoing learning and reflection will be better equipped to develop new structures and services in order to achieve new goals.

In the context of welfare reform, we have seen that implementation of learning organization principles has helped agencies in a number of ways. For example, changing mental models has been essential in moving from an eligibility culture to a self-sufficiency culture. The team based learning and other initiatives described above have been extremely valuable in this process of cultural change. Similarly the learning organization principle of personal mastery provides the foundation for initiatives designed to help staff meet increasing demands as jobs become more complex and agency goals more difficult. The Career Development pathways being developed across the counties are aimed directly at ensuring that staff can meet these demands.



Welfare reform is certainly not the last policy reform affecting our agencies; reauthorization is only one of the anticipated possible reforms looming in the near future. In light of the learning organization benefits we have identified, the following recommendations are designed to further the implementation of the learning organization principles.

### 1. Continuing Recommendations

BAHRC recommends that the BASSC directors ensure that Human Resources/Staff Development managers are located within the upper management level.

- This will facilitate the integration and promotion of learning organization principles at all levels of the agency.
- Experience in one county has shown that by placing these managers at the top, better results are achieved with regard to learning organization goals.
- Although this recommendation has been made in previous years, the degree of implementation has varied substantially across counties. It is important to review this recommendation, and renew BASSC commitment to its prior approval, or based upon discussion, decide not to approve the recommendation.

### 2. Create a Learning Organization Team

BAHRC recommends that agencies create a learning organization team, charged with leading and overseeing learning organization planning and initiatives. The team will provide the necessary leadership and modeling to facilitate translating learning organization principles into practice, ensuring that they are not simply viewed as abstract concepts.

A. Specific steps for the directors to develop a learning organization team include:

- Identify key staff for participation in learning organization team.
- Select team members from multiple classes and programs, to ensure broad representation and integration opportunities.
- Ensure linkage with the CAO and unions.
- Support the team's work on learning organization initiatives (without executive support, the team's work will be less effective).

B. The activities to be overseen by the learning organization team include:

- *Creation of a Career Development Strategy:* Each county should develop a continuum of training and development opportunities. This is essential to ensure that staff are able to increase their skills, and have access to improved employment opportunities within the agency. Elements that might be developed include:

- In house training
  - Family Development Credential
  - Human Services Certificate
  - AA degree
  - Four year and graduate level programs
  - Develop collaborations with educational partners to use existing resources and expertise and expand beyond the social services system.
- *Development of a Succession Planning Strategy.* Without succession planning, the wave of retirements due to the baby boom contraction, as well as the competition for managers and supervisors in other fields, will lead to a significant loss of talent and leadership:
  - *Promotion of Coaching and Mentoring:* These activities should be incorporated into all staff development and succession planning processes. They develop important interpersonal links, and offer the opportunity for sharing of skills, knowledge and support.
  - *Promotion of Critical Learning Strategies:* It is important to develop training models that address a range of critical needs, including:
    - Transfer of learning
    - Cultural competence
    - Leadership skills
  - *Promotion of Organizational Development:* Developing and promoting OD practices throughout the agency has a number of benefits, including: dissolving traditional concepts of turf; addressing team learning needs; and fostering a shared vision.

## **Recruitment and Retention Recommendations**

In addition to ongoing policy reform, agencies face an environment of increasing competition for skilled workers, creating a challenge to improve recruitment and retention. In one BASSC county, there are 300 vacancies, resulting from a range of factors, including job movement, difficulty, and quality. The learning organization principles offer a means to improve job quality, through raising the level of responsibility and challenge, and ensuring all staff participate in creating the vision that guides their work. In order to build upon these benefits of the learning organization framework, concrete strategies for regional recruitment need to be developed. The recommendations here are designed to facilitate those strategies.

BAHRC recommends that it continue to work on recruitment and retention, including regional work and participation in state or national initiatives where appropriate. As efforts to address the recruitment and retention challenge have been initiated by state and national organizations, including CWDA and CWLA, it is important not to duplicate this work. BAHRC should take steps where it can act effectively and quickly to improve recruitment and retention.

3. Develop a Human Resources staff position at the Bay Area Academy:

- Position would serve as a centralized resource to work with BAHRC on recruitment and retention issues in the BASSC counties.
- The position would facilitate accomplishing system level tasks identified below, help to address issues of inter-county competition, and provide cost savings through coordinating actions and removing need for duplicate efforts.
- As a regional staff position, individual would work as liaison between counties to develop common strategies, as well as working on individual implementation of recruitment and retention strategies.
- The scope of the work would not be limited to child welfare, but would address recruitment and retention throughout the agencies.
- Costs would be shared by BASSC agencies, with contribution based on county size.
- BAHRC would act as oversight committee to guide and coordinate the position, with direct reporting to Peter Dahlin.
- The initial responsibilities for this position would include the following tasks identified by BAHRC:
  - *System Tasks:* a) Identifying the breadth and depth of the recruitment/retention issue; b) Defining retention; c) Addressing competition issues, and the meaning of collaboration as defined by the directors; d) Identifying other statewide activities addressing this issue; e) Addressing diversity issues for recruitment and retention.
  - *Personnel Tasks:* a) Identifying which classifications to study; b) Determining the reasons for vacancies; c) Defining and identifying incentives; d) Developing criteria for a "normal leave rate"; e) Developing a regional recruitment approach that includes recruitment activities at universities and other key locations; f) Identifying civil service barriers that could be eliminated or reformed to streamline and coordinate inter-county recruitment (e.g., exams on campus, no list, oral board performance, integrated testing).

4. Participate in the CalSWEC study on staff retention: Participation will facilitate gathering of data on the scope and causes of the problem.

**BAHRC Recommendations**

In order to continue its work to promote and implement learning organization principles and improve recruitment and retention in BASSC counties, the following recommendations are made for BAHRC work in 2001:

5. Continue to function as a collaborative work group:
- Develop, share, and evaluate ideas and information critical to human resources and staff development work in the promotion of learning organization principles and recruitment and retention in our agencies.
  - Identify valuable external resources and information.
  - Oversee dissemination and utilization of information throughout BASSC agencies.
  - Continue to collaborate with the Bay Area Academy to create a system to facilitate access to BASSC research, materials and reports (archive, website with on-line documents, traveling brown bag information meetings, summits linking research and practice, etc.)
- A. Oversee the continuing development and implementation of the transformation of our agencies into learning organizations.
- Leadership of Learning Organization Teams.
  - Oversight of career development planning.
- B. Oversee the recruitment and retention efforts in our agencies:
- Oversight and coordination of Bay Area Academy Human Resources Staff position.
  - Participation in CWDA recruitment and retention study.
- C. Develop case studies:
- Create a series of short, practical case studies, focusing on problem solving and best practices (include tools and instruments generated in conjunction with initiatives described).
  - Develop strategies for the effective dissemination and utilization of case studies as learning tools for the new learning organization.

## Appendices

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## Alameda County

Alameda County Social Services Agency embarked on an ambitious self-assessment and planning process in 1999 in response to the intense changes affecting the social services delivery system in this country. The plan provided a client-centered blueprint for change which emphasized the importance of the mission statement and agency core values as well as the themes of protecting individuals and families, promoting independence, strengthening families and communities, prevention and partnering with communities. The plan promoted lifelong learning and respectful customer service. Learning organization principles were reviewed in depth by Office of Agency Planning staff and were incorporated into all aspects of agency wide planning.

A concurrent planning process for agency-wide staff development significantly impacted the staff development process. An agency-wide needs assessment was completed which included input from staff at all levels. Implementation of the plan focused on the following:

1. Creation of the Human Resources Consulting Team as a model learning organization to address agency-wide training needs.
2. Reorganization of an agency orientation program for ALL staff which reflects the principles of a learning organization by welcoming employees, informing about the mission and values of the agency, educating about the importance of our customers as well as the services the agency provides and providing information about career and personal development opportunities.
3. Development of a comprehensive curriculum in a series of courses designed to reach ALL levels of staff.
4. Emphasis on transfer of learning principles to evaluate whether training in the classroom is transferred back to the job.

The following activities reflect the incorporation and implementation of learning organization principles into agency programs at all levels.

### *Learning Organization Introduction*

A Learning Organization Forum was held in November, 1999 for Senior Management staff. This forum, chaired by the Director, identified the agency goal of becoming a learning organization, introduced the principles of a learning organization, elicited support for introducing the learning organization principles to all levels and departments.

### *Series Development*

A training curriculum was developed to address the needs of staff at all levels as follows:

Passport to Excellence—A series of classes for new employees which includes information on customer service, health & safety issues, civil rights and diversity,

working together in a multi-cultural workplace, and drug and violence in the workplace.

Enhancing Workplace Skills—Designed to give employees skills both for their current job as well as jobs they may hold in the future, this series includes interpersonal skills, time management and change management issues. This series also includes an Alcohol and other Drug Training program which is targeted to all staff with an introductory course and to case management staff with an additional advanced course.

Management Skills—This series of classes was designed to support supervisors and managers in their work including orientation to supervision, managing meetings, dealing with labor, coaching and training employees, preparing performance expectations, evaluating and managing disciplinary issues.

Professional Development—This series is focused toward all levels of staff in preparation for career development. It includes preparation for civil service examinations, discussion of career goals and interviewing, business and report writing, as well as courses for non-supervising managers and professional staff such as project management, analyzing operations, and strategic planning.

Improving Computer Skills—Over 1800 of a total of 2300 employees have computers. Improving skills has been a major goal of this series. Classes in PC introduction, how to use a mouse, file management, and utilizing the E-Mail program and its enhancements have been important additions. In addition, this series trains MS Word with plans to add classes in Excel, and Access. Main frame systems training is also included in this series.

### *Management Development/Succession Planning*

- Full participation in the BASSC Executive Development Program
- Participation in an Executive Development Program for Deputy/Assistant Directors
- Senior Management Forums which address global, political or change issues
- Advanced Institutes for senior managers that address labor, BOS relations, media, contracts and contracting, and finance

### *Supervisor Development*

- Supervisor orientation the first week on the job as a supervisor which identifies what skills are needed immediately—how to identify leadership styles, how to delegate, how to hold a unit meeting and other issues of concern
- Effective Supervisor Series--Collaborative project with County Conference Center. HRCT staff are trained to present the class to all county employees in exchange for training days for SSA staff
- Supervisor Forums—Celebrations of first line supervisor successes as well as opportunities to partner with HRCT. Supervisory input into series development, supervisors as trainers, transfer of learning, and Learning partnerships with supervisors have been addressed in the forums.

### *Support Staff Development*

- Clerical orientation the first week on the job to identify what skills are needed immediately and how to operate in this agency. Mainframe orientation is included in this series. Temp clerks and CBO support staff are included in this training series
- Development of beginning business writing for support staff with the option of 2 additional levels of business writing.
- Support Staff Institute which includes desktop management, time management, filing systems and methods for improving job performance. Temp. clerks and CBO support staff are included in this series.

### *Social Work Series*

- Managers and social work supervisors have just started a process with HRCT to determine training which social work staff in Adult & Aging and Welfare to Work need to provide better customer service. Line staff will be included in this process to identify training needs and learning goals.

### *Welfare To Work Institutes*

- Managers and Welfare to Work staff development and HRCT have just started a process for determining training needs. Interpersonal skills training and employment focused training to staff will be piloted beginning January, 2000. Line staff will be included in the process of assessment and evaluation.

### *Transfer Of Learning*

Identifying the effectiveness of training and its application on the job is an important goal for the agency. HRCT has incorporated a transfer of learning evaluation process in both the supervisor development series and the Passport series for new employees. First line supervisors are involved in the process and the pilot will begin in January, 2000. The Welfare to Work Institutes are also in the process of incorporating a transfer of learning process.

### *Performance Planning*

Performance planning is a project of the Office of Agency Planning as part of the Enhancement Initiative in the 1999-2004 Strategic Plan. The interdepartmental Planning Workgroup and the Budget Workgroup have started the process of selecting department Outcomes and Indicators. Performance measures will be designed around these indicators. Training for all levels of staff regarding performance measures and evaluating the impact of training on the activities related to the measures are goals for staff development. These are still in the planning stages.



### *Web Site Development*

Distributions of training information and equal access to classes by staff have been a frequently discussed issue in this large and geographically challenging department. Involvement in the development of a training web site has improved access considerably. Most employees now have computers and can access the county INTRANET. The current training schedule and the training catalog are available on line. Flyers about classes are also accessible. Employees can access their individual training history, and can send information to HRCT by E Mail. Plans to utilize the web site for needs assessment, evaluation and on line registration and in the planning stages. The web site development group is composed of representatives at all levels from all departments.

### *Mentoring Program*

"Passing the Torch", the agency mentoring program, is a collaborative project of the Office of Human Relations and Diversity Affairs, HRCT, and the Office of Agency Planning. A pilot program identifying 12 mentor partners will begin in January of 2000. The program is targeted at all agency employees and is designed to encourage, coach, develop, and inspire leadership at all levels. An evaluation of the program will occur over 12 months to determine the efficacy of the program.

### *Collaborative Programs*

- Offsite B.S degree completion program with California State University, Hayward
- Offsite Master in Public Administration degree completion program with California State University, Hayward
- Distance Learning MSW program with California State University, Long Beach and California State University, Hayward

### Monterey County

#### *Creation of "Institutes" as a Learning Environment for Staff*

Each year, the Monterey County Department of Social Services conducts a planning process to determine the priorities for trainings that are secured through a contract with the UC Davis Center for Human Services Training and Development. The planning group this year, which included the CalWORKS Management Team and Staff Development, decided to cluster specific classes together to form "Institutes", with managers and supervisors taking an active role in customizing the classes, selecting participants, and defining outcomes. Two Institutes were scheduled: one for a new newly formed functional unit within CalWORKS and one for Clerical Staff. For each Institute, a staff development

"point person" was assigned to work with designated program staff and the instructor in clearly defining needs and desired outcomes, coordinating logistics, and providing follow-up coaching and activities designed to promote transfer of learning.

CalWORKS Redesign Institute: Earlier this year, a cross-division workgroup was convened to examine challenges and strategies in moving from a "welfare" organization to a CalWORKS Family Sufficiency model of operations. One of the identified target populations needing special attention was those participants working a minimum number of hours, yet not earning enough to terminate cash aid. A specialized unit of benefits workers was established to work with these families to increase their hours and/or activities to enhance employability and earnings. It was noted that the workers assigned to the new unit could benefit from training and skills enhancement in case planning and management, barrier busting, interviewing with an employment focus, and job retention support. A group of classes were selected to address these learning outcomes and an instructor obtained who was able to adapt the standard curriculum to meet the unique needs of the new unit. The Staff Development specialist worked closely with the instructor, the unit supervisor, and managers to provide a customized training for the selected participants, with a strong emphasis on skill and confidence building for the workers in their new roles and responsibilities. During and after classes there continued to be refinements and adjustments to meet the learning needs of the institute participants and to tie the classes together so that they built upon each other.

*Challenges:* Because both the new unit and the linking of independent classes into an institute were new concepts, there were many lessons learned. There was some lack of clarity and consensus about content and purpose of the Institute, no doubt exacerbated by major planning occurring during the summer when many of the key planners took vacations. For example, decisions would be made and work would move forward, then there would be further discussion and sometimes redirection when key players returned. This was most evident in the selection of participants and expectations of attendance at all classes in the series.

*Successes and Next Steps:* The participants have gained needed skills and have enhanced their confidence level in approaching new tasks. They have identified and help create tools that will help them as they try out their new skills. The Staff Development point person continues to be involved in helping to refine those tools, in coaching and follow-up activities with the unit and its supervisor. She has offered to provide on-going support through participation in client-customer interactions and well as de-briefings. Staff development participation is viewed as an enhancement to an ongoing agency project, rather than solely the provider of a classroom experience.

Clerical Institute: The second Institute that was requested was for clerical staff within the department. Prior to automation, a clerical induction class was held, but for several years staff development resources were largely utilized for helping

staff at all levels within the organization to become proficient in the automated systems, and the only formalized induction which continued was for Benefits staff. The Institutes were seen as a way to provide immediate training for clerical staff while the possibility of reinstating clerical induction was explored. Topics identified by the managers for this class series included achieving personal excellence, clerical team building, listening skills, and telephone skills. A representative group of clerical supervisors worked with the staff development specialist to customize the classes, and the initial group targeted for the training included clerical supervisors and those staff who had the most direct contact with clients and customers.

*Challenges:* One of the initial challenges was determining priorities for attendance, since the class was seen as valuable for all clerical staff. At about the same time, the County's Leadership Institute was developing a much lengthier series for office professionals. While department staff was involved in that effort, there was not an awareness of it until the county program was ready to start. This created a concern about duplication of effort, so it was important to quickly obtain more clarity about the county program and how the two might complement each other.

*Successes and Next Steps:* The first classes have been very well received and the participants have been most appreciative. A link has been established with the County's program, and the staff development "point person" for the project will be attending the initial pilot of the county series. We are able to then move forward in a more coordinated and focused manner in meeting the training needs of our clerical staff. The clerical supervisors have been particularly energized by meeting again as a group and wish to resume regular meetings. They have asked Staff Development to be an ongoing part of the group and to work with them on transfer of learning strategies.

### *Organizational Development Activities*

During the year 2000, many Organizational Development (OD) activities were introduced in Monterey County. New learning concepts were implemented and supported in order to further the transformation of the department from a rule-based culture to one that encourages creativity and life-long learning. These new concepts focused on the strengths of staff, as well as the strengths of the families served by the agency.

The Pacific Institute: This worldwide training institute founded by Lou Tice teaches people within organizations "how to manage change, set and achieve goals, lead more effectively, and think in ways that create success." Employees involved in creating the first One Stop office were afforded an opportunity to attend *Investment in Excellence* training through the Pacific Institute at the end of 1999. This training, which includes social learning and cognitive theory, also instructs in the life-changing, personal power of vivid affirmations. The use of these concepts was new for the department.

*Challenges:* This training requires a substantial financial investment. Moving the concepts through the organization is, therefore, being addressed over several fiscal years using creative approaches. Also, as with all new endeavors, reinforcement over time is critical. Turnover of senior level staff presented the challenge to expose all new and interim executive team members to the concepts and obtain their support. Under the leadership of the Interim Director, this commitment has continued unwavering, over the last six months, and full endorsement has been obtained to move forward. The Department is collaborating with the Monterey County's Leadership Institute to further extend this valuable training experience in 2001 using interdisciplinary, inter and intradepartmental staff at all levels as facilitators.

*Successes:* The training was well received and highly praised by the majority who attended.

*Lessons:* Trainings relating to cultural transformation often involve concepts that are new and "strange" in the public sector, such as the effective use of affirmations to enhance success in one's career as well as one's personal life. The value placed on the training by those who attended was very important to helping move these concepts forward. However, endorsement, support and reinforcement from leaders in the department as well as the County were also essential.

Other OD Activities in Monterey County: Many innovative and successful OD activities were undertaken throughout the year to enhance and encourage healthy work relationships, accountability, and individual and team effectiveness. There is a growing recognition of the value and role of OD in our department at all levels that is evidenced by increasing requests and communicated appreciation for OD services. Methods most frequently applied were:

- Team-building sessions
- Intervention to enhance work-flow processes and work through issues
- Facilitation of the department-wide challenges, such as space planning
- Moving OD techniques and ideas forward to outside agencies and groups with whom the agency partners
- Increasing teamwork, cooperation and capacity building among Organizational Development, Staff Development and Human Resources disciplines in the department and the County.

An HR staff member, who is completing a Masters Program in OD, is writing her thesis on Appreciative Inquiry, and using this method to assist HR, OD and Staff Development to focus on the Monterey County and Department of Social Services' mission and values. One goal is that these three divisions will work together in cooperative, innovative, and creative ways. In general, Appreciative Inquiry and interest based bargaining processes are being generated to influence outcomes before problems arise, while focusing on individual and organizational strengths.

*Challenges:* Cultural change doesn't occur until it is reflected at every level of the organization. Reaching the "line" levels in a meaningful way requires involvement, commitment, support and ongoing reinforcement from the first line supervisors as well as managers.

*Successes:* Initially, OD assistance was most often sought in situations that involved crises. During the last year, the organization has grown more familiar with OD principles and trusting of OD staff. As a result, requests are increasing from first and second level supervisors for assistance in building healthy environments where creative thinking and team work are encouraged.

*Lessons:* Cultural change does not lend itself to "quick fixes" though some strategies can create immediate, positive transformations.

### *Cultural Awareness/Civil Rights Workshop*

In order to provide State mandated Civil Rights training to all seven hundred Monterey County Department of Social Services staff member, the Human Resources and Staff Development team collaborated with the Santa Cruz Human Resources Agency, which had developed an interactive Cultural Awareness curriculum that satisfied State Civil Rights training requirements. Santa Cruz County provided the curriculum and a Training for Trainers presentation for Monterey County trainers. The Monterey County trainers then modified the training to address issues and needs specific to DSS staff. The training pool was expanded by inviting all staff with an interest in developing their training skills, to attend an internal Training for Trainers. Trainers from the County's Leadership Institute were also invited to observe. This began the preparation to launch forty scheduled "Valuing Diversity, Cultural Awareness/Civil Rights Workshops."

*Challenges:* As the topics of discrimination and disparate treatment were discussed during the trainings, some issues of dysfunction within the Department were identified. This has resulted in some immediate and long-term responses. The Clerical Supervisors will be meeting on a monthly basis to problem solve and share effective supervising strategies. Coincidentally, a U.C. Davis training series had already been scheduled to address some of the identified needs of clerical staff through a skills enhancement curriculum.

*Successes:* The process of responding to a State mandate evolved into a learning experience, including: 1) Learning from peers in another county, 2) Analyzing our internal needs and adapting the training module, 3) Creating a "fear free" learning environment, 4) Analyzing input from staff, 5) Responding with programs and planning to address staff concerns. Another outcome has been the adoption and expansion of the Department's Cultural Awareness curriculum into a training module for all County employees to be conducted by the County's Leadership Institute staff. Hopefully, this is an indication that the learning experience will permeate throughout the County organization.

*Lessons:* The interactive nature of the training and sensitivity surrounding the subject matter required that a fundamental element of the trainings was to create a safe learning environment, "free of fear." Additionally, we discovered

that staff, from a variety of classifications, functioning as trainers encouraged a more open dialogue throughout the trainings.

## San Francisco

### *Strategic Planning*

Within the past few years, DHS has undergone many changes to and within its programs. It was recognized by the Executive Team that the Department needed to take a step back and look at the programs and the direction that which it was headed. Because of this great movement within a relatively limited amount time, the Department needed consolidate its thought processes across programs as it prepared move forward. The current strategic planning process allowed the Department to do this as well as lay the foundation for a continuous review of its operations and adjust course as necessary.

The major players in implementing the Strategic Planning process were the Executive Director, Planning and Budget staff, consultants, and most importantly line staff. The process was meant to be as participatory as possible and draw upon the pragmatic information that only our line staff could provide, as well create a pool of individuals that could take the information gained from the process back to programs. Planning and Budget staff provided the necessary support and technical staff assistance needed to coordinate the effort.

*Challenges:* There were essentially a few key obstacles that needed to be overcome immediately: attitude, commitment and support. The first was the attitude that this was just going to be another “8th floor” activity that had nothing to do with programs and/or line staff. Another obstacle was getting commitments from staff to participate in a process that would be ongoing and require work in addition to their normal workloads. The final obstacle was securing the appropriate level of support (staff and consultants) for the individuals participating in the process, the teams, and the Department as a whole.

*Successes:* Though our strategic planning effort is viewed as being dynamic and ongoing, to date the effort could be credited with creating an environment that encourages staff to think creatively/critically about our internal and external processes, how we provide services and communicate. Another result would be increased level of awareness of staff of various programs and some of the innovative things that are already occurring within the Department. The effort also provided a means for staff to get involved in the future planning of the Department and motivated some individuals to act on ideas prior to the completion of the process. The process also affirmed the belief that staff wanted to be more involved and informed about the various aspects of the Departments workings. This has resulted in community presentations about development of the Department’s annual budget and events within the Planning and Budget program.

*Lessons:* The strategic planning process offered a number of lessons. First, agencies using a bottom up approach should incorporate an up-front training component. One of the problems encountered early on was the need to

educate individuals about the process and objectives of strategic planning, delaying the planning process. A second recommendation is to spell out clearly and communicate process and timelines to the participants at the onset of the process.

### *Diversity Training Program*

San Francisco DHS initiated a Diversity Training Program, after the DHS Affirmative Action Officer conducted a study of complaints received by her office, and recommended Diversity Training. A contractor was hired and a comprehensive three year Diversity Training plan was developed. The Affirmative Action Officer, Diversity Task Force, Training, and DHS Administration were involved in initiating the program.

*Challenges:* Some of the main obstacles to overcome included: budgetary issues, developing the plan, employee distrust, and managing a complex plan.

*Successes:* The program has demonstrated a number of successful outcomes: DHS has an improved climate of Cultural Diversity, in which employees are willing to explore cross-cultural experiences, such as an integrated Choir and the DHS Art Show, and a Cultural Diversity Day is celebrated.

*Lessons:* It is important to recognize that this is a long term process, requiring patience, flexibility, and inclusiveness. Celebrating and communicating successes, and including a diverse group of employees in the planning process are important elements.

### *Mentoring Program*

In addition to the Diversity Training Program, the Diversity Task Force recommended a Mentoring Program, based upon the findings from an employee survey. Employees participate in the program as Mentees and managers, supervisors and other key employees serve as Mentors.

*Challenges:* Implementation of the Mentoring Program identified a number of challenges, including: finding the right matches; finding a balance between structure and flexibility; and making time for the mentee/mentor relationship to develop.

*Successes:* Employees in the program have a better understanding of different operations and levels of responsibility, and a higher level of trust in the organization.

*Lessons:* For other agencies seeking to implement mentoring programs, several lessons should be noted:

- Help employees find the right match, ensuring the mentor is not too many levels of authority above them.
- Provide follow-up meetings with the mentoring coordinator to check progress and make adjustments.
- Continue to improve the program from feedback gathered during and after each program.

## *Human Services Certificate Program*

As DHS searched for different options for training in employment counseling skills, a Deputy Director found a collaborative model from another county, which would involve Human Services and City College. DHS made the proposal to SF City College and a plan/program was developed by City College Administration members, DHS Administration, Training staff, and Employee Focus Groups.

*Challenges:* Creating a program that met the skill development needs of DHS staff, while maintaining City College academic standards was the primary challenge faced. Policy decisions about participation in the program were also challenging. Ultimately it was decided that Employment Specialists had priority, but supervisors, eligibility workers, and clerical support staff could participate in the training.

*Successes:* 105 employees from diverse line assignments have participated in the program, enhancing their skills and improving customer service.

*Lessons:* For agencies developing similar programs it is important to apply a systems approach to developing and managing the program. Continuous communication is critical in developing policies and procedures and making ongoing changes, since many players are involved.

## *After Training Reviews*

Staff Development has instituted After Training Reviews (ATR) to help employees remember learning and apply it back at the job. The principle of the ATR process is to provide employees with an opportunity after training to share their learning in a small group process and commit to applying it, with the goal of application of learning on the job. The ATR process involves training participants and Training facilitators in a unit setting.

*Challenges:* One of the primary obstacles was to create an ATR system that simple enough so it wouldn't be perceived as a major change.

*Successes:* Employees enjoy sharing their learning, along with the synergy and dialogue generated in the ATR's, and have started to help each other apply the learning.

*Lessons:* The following steps are important in implementing ATR's. Three simple questions are used to guide the ATR process:

- What were the most important points that you learned from this training?
- What are you willing to use/apply on the job?
- What obstacles do you anticipate and how will you tackle them?

All feedback generated in the ATR should be recorded on flip charts, and a summary document created that is made accessible to all employees on the agency intranet. Systems, policy and process issues that arise should be reported to management for resolution.



## *Automation-Introduction of Networked PC'S*

In 1989 the department implemented the DEC All-In-One system which provided connectivity for e-mail, word processing and mainframe application connectivity. Subsequently, in 1997-1998 the department implemented the DHS Wide Area Network (WAN) introducing networked PCs to the workplace. In implementing the WAN there were three major objectives: establish a network of linked and remote access PCs providing a uniform set of office automation tools to facilitate improved communication among staff; provide access to DHS applications and external information sources; and enhance existing major systems, as well as implement new systems such as on-line forms, documents, shared resources. In late 1997 the department also implemented the statewide Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS), which required a separate, closed network of PC's connected to local servers and the host system in Boulder, Colorado. Major players involved in these initiatives included Budget and Planning, the State Department of Social Services, the IT Group, and Consultants

*Challenges:* It was difficult to identify a sufficient number of technically trained IT staff - most were self taught. Timely and adequate PC training, installation of devices, maintenance of devices, and an adequately staffed help desk for problem solving also proved challenging. Finally, resources were a huge challenge – these projects involved added complexity but no added resources.

*Successes:* The Department has hired technically sound network administrators, and technically trained field technicians, established a formal help desk with service delivery standards, and begun using project management techniques in planning and installation of new PCs incorporating needs analysis, purchasing cycle, and installation tasks. It has also implemented a customer service feedback mechanism, an automated help desk tracking system, and developed standards for each IT staff person, and for help desk staffing. Training has been coordinated to coincide with installation. The Department is providing ongoing training in productivity products, as well as developing forms on-line (public drive), and providing learning workshops. An Adult Protective Services System has been developed in response to new mandates in APS reporting. Finally, an IT Steering Committee was created, to ensure utilization of existing city resources to fill in the gaps in technology, training, etc.

*Lessons:* Planning, planning, planning. Early buy in from line staff is important, and comprehensive needs analysis is critical. Prioritizing requests, streamlining business processes, and constant evaluation of where you are in relationship to where you want to go. It is helpful to use all available resources in the department, city, other agencies, counties - no need to reinvent the wheel. Learn from others' mistakes, and document the mistakes and learn from them. Share your successes, and failures. Have executive leadership/sponsorship. Provide ongoing training to staff to keep up their technical skills, recognize and acknowledge good work, promote from within when appropriate and don't link

promotions to "time served" but to skills, talent and the ability to do the job. Know your limitations and challenge yourself without risking the project.

*Other Initiatives in Progress:*

- CalWIN Consortium: DHS is part of an 18 county CalWIN consortium, planning to implement a Statewide PC automation system by August 2003. The system would restructure our operational systems and create single points of service for clients.
- Cross-Over Training: Family and Children/CALWORKS/PAES common cases cross-over training is in progress, in an effort to better serve these clients in a coordinated, comprehensive and preventive manner.
- Technology and Training: Exploration of computer/web-based training to allow more self-paced and flexibility in the use of training resources.
- Additional Training: 1) Group leadership and supervisor/manager training with an emphasis on coaching, team building, group facilitation and organization development. 2) In-Service training, provided by internal training staff and by contract with local universities and other adult learning sources.

San Mateo

The San Mateo County Human Services Agency supports, promotes and expects life long learning. To that end, the following processes, projects and programs have been developed:

*Human Resource Policy Team*

The Learning Organization paper was presented to the Executive Team in March 1999. Along with the paper, a recommendation was made to establish a Human Resource Policy Team (HRPT), whose charges include overseeing the recommendations contained in the Learning Organization paper and approved by the Directors. The goal of the HRPT is to "Create a Human Resource Development System for the Human Services Agency by: 1) Designing a career development program which addresses recruitment and retention issues, succession planning, training/learning and career planning; 2) Overseeing the implementation of the recommendations contained in the BAHRC Learning Organization paper; and 3) Overseeing a job analysis project which will include updating job descriptions, responsibilities and expectations. The HRPT membership is a cross-section of staff, mixing program and classification. The HRPT meets monthly and makes recommendations to the Executive Team.

*Learning Organization Conference*

The first recommendation made by the HRPT to the Executive Team was to put together an Agency conference as a way to "kick off" the focus on learning, career development and education. The event takes place in November 2000

and includes the following workshops: Cultural Diversity: Challenges for Future Service Delivery; Career Assessment Tools; Surviving in an Automated Environment; The Human Services worker of the Future; Case Management, Family Development program as a career and educational advancement; Career Counseling by Colleges and Universities; and Information Interviewing for Career Advancement.

*Challenges:* Probably the biggest challenge was creating the time to devote to making the conference a success. Second was getting the approval of the County Manager to allow the funds (in excess of \$25,000) to be expended.

*Successes:* The conference focused entirely on staff and how important they are to the continued success of the agency. It was an entire day of workshops and discussions on how each individual can grow, learn and develop in their careers. Feedback from staff was that they really felt the day was a "gift" and a true acknowledgement. They say they are rejuvenated and inspired to go forward.

*Lessons:* The biggest lesson learned was to do it again. The value of increased morale and renewed passion will bring to the agency significant rewards.

### *Human Services Certificate and AA Programs*

In 1997 a collaborative was established between the Community College system and HSA to develop the curriculum for a Human Services Certificate and a Human Services AA program. The goal of the program was to meet HSA in service training needs brought about by Welfare Reform and to provide an educational opportunity for staff and the community. Classes toward the certificate are given at HSA sites, half work time and half personal leave time. Some classes are taught by HSA trainers, some by college staff. Classes are offered to the community at college locations, with some taught by college staff and some by HSA trainers.

*Challenges:* The development of this creative project required working through two bureaucratic organizations (Department of Education and Human Services ). People working on this project need to be willing to compromise and cooperate.

*Successes:* The strength gained from having this cooperative agreement that resulted from the Human Services Certificate and AA is immeasurable. Staff and members of the community have gained a great resource to further their careers. The colleges and our Agency have also gained a great resources by sharing talent. Having the case study written up on the project has helped with marketing and funding.

*Lessons:* Have the right people at the planning table. Our success and the relative ease with which implementation took place was due in part to having decision makers participate in the planning phase.

### *Succession Planning Program*

HSA has developed a Succession planning program in order to develop the leaders for the future executive level positions. Specific positions are targeted that would provide both specific skills and an opportunity to learn broad based leadership concepts. The Succession program will be an element of the career development program being developed by HAS.

*Challenges:* Although we are still in the development phase, we have a partial implementation. A critical challenge has been developing a strategy that would allow Succession Planning participants to have "work relief" in order to participate in the program.

*Successes:* We have been permitted to "double fill" specific management positions and have those positions designated as "Succession Planning Positions".

*Lessons:* We are just beginning to learn the lessons that became clear early on is the need for leadership's commitment to leadership development. We chose to have succession planning part of our agency conference agenda. Staff seems to have gotten the message.

### *Family Development Credential*

The Family Development Credential (FDC) program has been implemented in HSA. We sponsored a 5 day "train the trainers" event, attended by HAS staff, other County staff, and staff from community organizations. Thirty people were trained and are now able to teach the class to staff. It is expected that HSA trainers and community organization trainers will collaborate in the trainings for staff at HSA and in community organizations.

The educational ladder that has been developed includes the following steps: 1) in-service training ; 2) FDC; 3) Human Services Certificate; 4) AA; and 4) 4 year degree and above. Through steps 1-4, we are promoting the concept that learning takes place in a variety of ways, with a variety of teachers. We encourage front line supervisors to be seen as an important step in the learning chain, from teaching to overseeing the transfer of learning.

*Challenges:* The greatest challenge we faced was marketing prior to implementation. We needed to show the value of this program and that it was not "just another training program". The ongoing challenge has now become how to enroll all of the eager participants.

*Successes:* Our greatest success was involving the community and other counties. By "hosting" the train the trainers event, we were able to invite the community and surrounding counties to learn to be FDC trainers. Now that we have implemented the class, we continue to use our community partners to train, and their staff participates in the training sessions.

*Lessons:* As with the Community College collaboration, the value of engaging the colleges and other members of the community is immeasurable.

The value of having programs that increase the capability of staff, that encourage their growth and development is a profitable investment.

#### *Additional Learning Organization Activities*

- "Performance analysis" to assess whether the issue is a training need, supervisory issue, org. structure issue, etc. HSA trainers have gone through training in order to provide this service, which will be effective January, 2001.
- HAS is developing an apprenticeship program to provide a training experience for staff to learn automation technology. Staff who apprentice must be enrolled in technology classes and will have the opportunity to do OJT as a technician.
- The HSA Human Resource and Development (HRD) section (formerly Staff Development, OD and Personnel) is publishing a monthly newsletter and has initiated "HRD on the Move", involving going out and meeting with staff to identify their needs and preferences.
- HSA's Human Resource and Organizational Development unit takes their "show on the road" and visits all sites to hear directly from staff what their learning needs/wants are.
- The second 5 year Human Services Strategic Plan has been completed with full participation from community leaders.
- Organizational Development has been fully integrated into HSA and in the daily work processes and culture.

#### Santa Clara

##### *Family Development Credential*

Santa Clara is working with Evergreen Valley Community College to make the Family Development Credential training available to staff. One group is currently underway, with another anticipated to start soon.

*Challenges:* Challenges include finding enough instructors; contractual disincentives to offering voluntary training on County time; and a lack of clerical staffing making it difficult to release clerical staff on County time.

*Successes:* The FDC has received high initial interest and enthusiasm from staff.

*Lessons:* It is important to build the infrastructure to support this effort.

##### *Training Units*

Training units for new DFCS Social Workers have been established; after three units have completed the training it is apparent that turnover among new workers has been substantially reduced, with corresponding benefits for clients and social workers.

*Challenges:* Challenges included a change in Unit Supervisors after the initial series; the hiring of many non-MSW's, making it difficult to have one

curriculum address MSW and non-MSW training needs; linking training units with the hiring process.

*Successes:* Improved processes to better link hiring and training and dramatic improvement in retention.

*Lessons:* It is important not to ignore administrative support and activities related to training.

### *Cultural Competency*

New curricula emphasizing the link between cultural factors and staff's work are being developed, thereby making the training more meaningful and effective. This includes working with a vendor to develop courses in culturally competent customer service and managing/supervising a diverse workforce, as well as incorporating cultural competency into new and existing job-related classes.

*Challenges:* The central challenge was meeting a wide variety of expectations.

*Successes:* Consensus was reached (mostly) on a new approach of linking cultural factors with job related training.

*Lessons:* Making training job related reduces resistance to taking staff off of the line.

### *Professional Development:*

An expanded professional development program has been proposed, which will emphasize using work experience as the primary method to develop future Agency leaders (supervisors, managers, and executives) from current Agency staff. This may include elements such as job shadowing, mentoring, special projects, and will be complemented by existing educational and training opportunities.

*Challenges:* Providing the substantial administrative support for a well-run program when ongoing immediate training needs are never-ending. Developing a program from scratch, even when using research on best practices.

*Successes:* Establishes competencies or expectations for Agency leaders, and a complementary review process.

*Lessons:* There is a great deal of enthusiasm and interest in professional development. It is important to get some early successes.

### *Project Management*

The agency has trained 200 staff in 3-day project management training series, and is using Cal WIN and related projects to drive the use of more formal planning and management techniques into agency practices. The initiative is too new to evaluate.

## *Adult Services Regional Training Institute*

A Regional Adult Services Training Institute has been established to meet the increased demand for training that has resulted from expansion of adult protective services legislation.

*Challenges:* The Institute requires substantial administrative support to provide training on a regional basis.

*Successes:* The initial classes have been well-received.

*Lessons:* It is too early to report on lessons.

## Santa Cruz

### *Succession Strategy*

The Staff Development Unit in the Santa Cruz Human Resources Agency (HRA) is in the process of implementing a Succession Strategy and Professional Development Training Series for all employees. The strategy includes the mapping of an educational pathway in the Human Services field and a series of workshops and activities to prepare employees for professional advancement.

The first step in the educational pathway is the *Family Development Credential* (FDC). The FDC program, offered through Cabrillo College in partnership with HRA, will instruct employees on how to work with families from an empowering, strength-based approach. The program is scheduled to begin in February and the courses will be held on site at HRA. The next three steps in the educational pathway include a two-year degree from Cabrillo College, a four-year degree from Monterey Bay College and a MSW distant learning program sponsored by Long Beach and Monterey Bay College. In addition, Santa Cruz has been negotiating to offer other college courses on site that will be of value to employees in their professional careers.

Another part of the succession strategy is to offer employees a series of workshops and activities to prepare them for advancement within the agency. One of the workshops under development is our *Supervisory Prep Training* – a workshop for employees who aspire to become supervisors. We also have recently implemented a *Mentoring Program* – an activity for employees to learn about other jobs in the agency.

*Challenges:* Some of the continuing challenges include identifying options and a variety of career tracks for employees, and supporting supervisors in establishing individual development plans for their employees.

*Successes and Next Steps:* Successes include identifying an educational pathway and the establishment of activities and workshops to help employees prepare for career advancement. One of our next steps is to identify the education level and professional experience of each employee.

*Lessons:* It was important for all players and community partners to be involved in the development of the FDC program. The local college had specific

requirements that needed to be incorporated into the program so that college credit could be earned by the participants.

### *Integrated Services Strategy*

Another initiative in making the Human Resources Agency (HRA) in Santa Cruz a “Learning Organization” is the development of a series of workshops/activities to provide employees with the fundamental knowledge of all the services our agency provides to the community. The series will help employees understand their overall role in the agency and will include workshops and activities to:

- Promote a holistic approach to serving clients.
- Promote an understanding of all the services provided by HRA and some of the services provided by community-based human service agencies.
- Promote a “strengths based” approach to providing services to individuals and families.
- Promote an understanding of the agency vision, mission and values.
- Promote an understanding of some basic requirements for each service that the agency provides.
- Provide employees with an overview of computer systems used in all divisions.

### *Performance Management and Retention Strategy*

The Supervisory/Management Training Series will provide a more uniform performance management system and will also provide supervisors with skills that will promote retention of employees. This strategy will include the following training modules:

- *Performance Management System* – A UC Davis training series that will be offered in the Spring.
- *Coaching for Success* – This module is under development by staff development and will be offered in the fall.
- *Performance Enhancement Employee Retention (P.E.E.R.)* – The training module has been completed and is currently being offered.

### Solano

The Solano County Health & Social Services Department (H & SS) has various levels of on-going training for staff, as well as supervisory and management development programs that are currently being developed.

### *Human Services Certificate Program*

H & SS is working with Solano Community College to offer a Human Services major designed for students who plan to work as paraprofessionals with such agencies as welfare, rehabilitation, mental health and schools. Instructors include staff members from the H & SS Department.



### *Ongoing Training Programs*

- Training units in the Eligibility & Employment Services Division and the Child Welfare Services Division continue to provide on-going induction and caseload management technical training to new and journey-level employees.
- Various generic topics such as Legal Issues and Diversity Training for line and supervisory/management staff are offered through the Center for Staff Development under the consortium of counties.
- A contract with UC Davis with Title IV A funds continues to provide training for employment and eligibility staff.
- The H & SS Department training coordinator is presently developing a supervisory and management development program.

### Sonoma

The Sonoma County Human Services Department is using a learning organization focus in the following areas:

#### *Recruitment and Retention*

In addition to the Director's participation in a county-wide recruitment committee which is addressing issues common to all departments, the Human Services and the Human Resources Departments are collaborating on a focused effort to recruit and retain eligibility workers for the Medi-Cal, TANF and Food Stamps/General Assistance programs. Since June 2000 a work group from the two departments has been meeting. As a result of collaborative efforts, eligibility workers and supervisors have helped design and participated in two surveys. One survey was a job task analysis to identify questions to ask in the revised written test administered by the Human Resources Department to eligibility worker applicants. The next recruitment will use the revised written tests. The other survey was an extensive and anonymous questionnaire to all eligibility workers who have been working for the department between six months and eighteen months for their input, including why they accepted the job, why they stay, what are their ideas on how to recruit and how to ensure retention. Based on results of the questionnaire, one program has already modified some program practices to address identified retention issues. The collaborative committee is now working to refine interview questions asked by program staff to applicants who pass the written test.

To recruit and retain child welfare social workers, the department has instituted continuous recruitment, eliminated oral boards and began hiring from interviews of candidates by program managers and supervisors. A successful six-week induction training was instituted in 2000. Program staff are now exploring establishing a training unit to which newly hired social workers would be assigned for ongoing training until they are re-assigned to an intake or placement

unit. Additionally, supervisors are encouraged and being further trained to use the probationary period to continue screening new hires for suitability to the job as a child welfare social worker, which directly ties into the following initiative.

*Development of a Training Series in the Department's Progressive Discipline Process for Supervisors and Managers who Supervise*

The department's human resource section has developed a training series for supervisors and managers both to assist their staff in reaching their potential and to know what steps to follow for staff who are not performing at an acceptable job level. The series will kick-off with a two-day training by a U. C. Davis trainer on how to define job objectives and performance measurements and how to assess what training and re-training the supervisor can provide to assist staff to reach an acceptable job performance. Several weeks after this training, a staff development trainer will present a training on coaching skills that supervisors and managers can employ to encourage staff to reach their potential. Then, after the session on coaching, two staff development trainers will co-train sessions on the department-wide progressive discipline process, which includes both informal and formal steps in the process. The human resource section developed the written procedural guide, based on county policy, on one division's written policy, and on other counties' written guides (kindly provided via BAHRC contacts). An anticipated outcome of these trainings is a decrease in personnel actions that reach the formal disciplinary process. We hope to see supervisors and managers handling personnel issues earlier and at the informal level using conferences, coaching and counseling. If or when personnel actions require further disciplinary action, then we expect documentation to support any further action. We also anticipate that supervisors and managers will more fully realize they are in the key role in supporting, encouraging, and providing resources for their staff to be successful in their jobs.

*Integrated Services Team*

A task force of staff representing each division of the department has been meeting monthly since April 2000 to study the possibilities for integrating services within the department. In early meetings the team created a flow chart of how services are delivered, identified "crossover" services that might be combined across divisions to streamline the process for clients to obtain services, and brainstormed the ideal system. The integrated services team has set goals and objectives and developed strategies to begin addressing these questions: (1) How can managers help line staff to think about integrates services? (2) How do we empower supervisors and line staff to go beyond division lines to provide integrated services? and (3) How do we best inform our community of all the services we provide? This task force will continue to meet to monitor progress on how department services are being integrated.

### *Child Welfare Social Worker Safety Concerns*

Since mid-2000 the department's director and division directors have been meeting with job stewards of the main labor organization to collaborate on how to best ensure staff safety of child welfare staff both within department offices and while on home visits to clients' homes. The department's human resources section developed a survey for staff in the child welfare division to identify problem areas, causes and possible remedies to safety concerns. When the questionnaire is returned, program staff will analyze results and share them with the committee. Then the committee will be involved in designing remedies to identify problems. A series of safety trainings is planned; the first one is to occur in January 2001 on "Verbal Judo" to assist staff in de-escalating verbal confrontations. This work group initiative is an example of staff being involved in resolving issues of concern to them.

### *Succession Planning*

Like other departments in this county and other counties, we are aware of the need for succession planning to ensure a cadre of trained and able staff to fill positions of retirees within the next few years. The department has encouraged managers to continue their professional development by attending the BASSC Executive Development Program, as well as the county's Management Academy, a ten-day program (in a three-month period), which is a collaborative effort of Sonoma County and Sonoma State University. Additionally, we encourage supervisors to participate in three supervisory modules (four sessions in each module), which is a collaborative effort of Sonoma County and Santa Rosa Junior College. In 2000 the county's Human Resource Department initiated a Supervisory Academy with Sonoma State University, based on the popular Management Academy. We will be looking for further ways to offer training opportunities to department staff to prepare them to take over supervisory and management positions of future retirees.

### *CalWIN Planning*

CalWIN implementation in Sonoma County is to occur in July 2003, but it is not too soon to begin planning for this major change, and we have been doing so. So far, three supervisors have been transferred to work on aspects of the CalWIN project. Additionally, staff from all affected programs have been attending regional planning sessions. Preparing for CalWIN will involve many more department staff over the next two and a half years. We want to be fully prepared for this major transition. We want our staff to feel confident and well trained by the implementation date. Involving many staff in the planning and training process is a major strategy in accomplishing our goal of a smooth transition to CalWIN.

## The Bay Area Academy

The Bay Area Academy has been involved in two specific initiatives that are particularly relevant to the learning organization endeavor, the supervisory mentoring project, and ongoing work to facilitate transfer of learning.

### *Supervisory Mentoring*

The Supervisory Mentoring project is being developed to address the need for supervisory training not met by the Academy's core Supervisory training. Still in its early development, the Supervisory Mentoring program has hired a part-time supervisory coach to work with managers in supporting new supervisors as they wait for the next core training. Following the core training, the coach will be available to work with managers and newly trained supervisors on specific issues, and help identify appropriate advanced supervisory courses. Additionally, individualized tutorials and intensive technical assistance will be provided to new supervisors and/or staff development officers to meet immediate training needs.

*Challenges:* In some counties and regions, supervisors are being promoted at a rate that exceeds the Academy's capacity to provide the core Foundations training, while in others, there aren't enough new supervisors to fill a new class.

*Successes:* At the participants' request, the Academy recently held its first retreat for the graduates of one of our Foundations of Supervision series. During this day and a half retreat, supervisors energetically exchanged ideas and discussed their experiences with applying the skills learned in Foundations. Given this success, we plan to hold similar retreats for future graduates, thereby strengthening the cross-county networking opportunities in Foundations that have been proven to be so successful in the BASSC Executive Development Program.

*Lessons:* Based on the feedback of participants, we are becoming more aware of the need for greater program manager involvement in the Foundations training process. Though we do currently send program managers a pre-test, we need to explore additional ways to include them in the training process and gain their "buy-ins" as a way to promote transfer of learning.

### *Transfer of Learning*

The Academy incorporates transfer of learning elements in all its training work and tries to engage supervisors by emphasizing the crucial role they play in this process. An example of this is our Executive Summaries, which are designed to give supervisors more information about the training their staff is attending. These executive summaries include descriptions of the training, the course objectives and sample questions for the supervisor to ask before and after the training, to aid in the transfer of learning. Thus, the supervisor is assisted in

creating a learning environment beyond the classroom. Ongoing measurement processes will include:

- All trainers are required to have course objectives approved by the training coordinators in advance of the training. Coordinators ensure that the objectives reflect the content requested by the counties and that they are consistent with the CalSWEC Competencies, Standards, and Values. These objectives are then given to trainees at the start of the training, and upon completion of the training attendees are asked to evaluate how well these objectives were met.
- The Academy will assemble focus groups (consisting of TAB members, staff development and supervisors) to discuss the effectiveness of skill transfer to the workplace.
- Individual interviews will also be conducted to determine transfer of skills to practice.
- A training on the role of the supervisor in transfer of learning will be developed and presented.

*Challenges:* Since learning objectives deal not only with an increase in knowledge but a change in behavior and/or values, measuring the extent to which the objectives were met can be difficult. Likewise, it can be challenging to decipher how much of the participants' change in behavior, knowledge or values can/should be attributed to their participation in a certain training.

*Successes:* In order to better measure transfer of learning elements as well as increase the reliability and validity of our evaluation tool, we have redesigned our participation satisfaction scale and will be implementing this new design as of January 1, 2001.

*Lessons:* Direct feedback from participant supervisor is essential to measuring how effective the training was for a certain participant. Pre and post training tools that elicit this type of feedback need to be developed.

### *Linking Research and Practice*

The BASSC Research Response Team and the Bay Area Academy are planning a special Summit, scheduled for the Spring, to provide a platform to share the results of the RRT's regional study on foster children in the schools with relevant audiences. The summit is a pilot effort to establish a formal link between research and practice.