

Prince George's County
Planning Department



Understanding Ourselves • Understanding Others

Culture Change Initiative

**Culture
Change
Initiative:
Our First
Year**

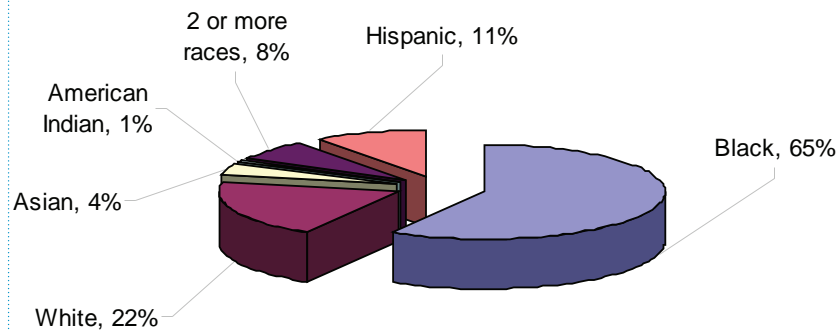


Introduction

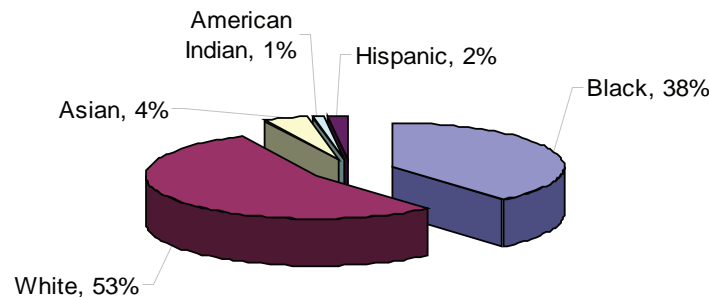
Prince George's County is an increasingly diverse county. Census figures show that over the past decade the county continued to lose its white, non-Hispanic population and became markedly more diverse with the movement of immigrants from Latin America, Africa and Asia into the county. As the county continues to evolve, our ability to respond to the needs and desires of its residents is strengthened when we foster and strategically manage diversity and inclusion in our workplace. In February 2005, the Planning Department undertook a "Culture Change Initiative" (CCI) to further the Department's abilities in this regard. Our intent exceeds any narrow thinking limited to race and gender. Diversity may involve differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, disabilities, language and sexual orientation.

Culture is inclusive of who we are and how we treat one another and the community at large. It includes how decisions are made, how we attract new employees, and how current and future residents are treated. Culture change embraces diversity and can provide many benefits including improved customer services and relationships and enhanced innovation and creativity. We will reduce negative employee perceptions, improve staff morale, and retain valued employees. The pages that follow provide details of our journey to become a more culturally competent organization.

Prince George's County Race and Ethnicity

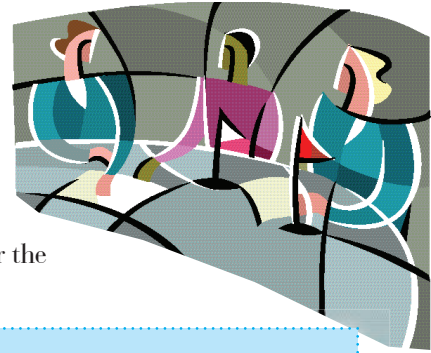


Planning Department's Race and Ethnicity



In the Beginning

Our initiative began in 2005 when, based on our desire to measure where we are and where we plan to go in the future, a *Cultural Climate Assessment* was conducted by Trinity Transition Consultants. Trinity surveyed all employees regarding the treatment of staff by management, opportunities for advancement, communication, and other issues related to diversity and inclusion. The results of the survey provided the context for the development of the Culture Change Initiative.



Goals of the initiative are:

To improve the way we work with communities and others we serve outside the organization

To improve the way we work with each other inside the organization.

Culture change that embraces diversity and inclusion is important because it enriches our performance and products, the communities we serve, and our personal experiences. Inside the Department, we can use CCI to improve our relationships, recruitment and promotions, morale and teamwork; enhance problem solving, innovation and creativity; and provide better mentoring and coaching.

In the communities, our challenge is to develop ideas and effective communication techniques to reach out to all the diverse communities that make up Prince George's County. If our customers lack trust in us, this lack makes our work more difficult and often places us in an adversarial role with the community. If we use CCI as a way to help us work closer with the communities, we become a workforce that embraces differences in approaches, insights and experiences. Citizens then see us as trusted allies, making them feel confident in seeking out staff and expressing their views. We are all positioned then to successfully engage in and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Performance is measured by quantity, quality, cost, time, and customer and community satisfaction. Success in these areas is directly dependent on our ability to relate to the different identities, values, and perceptions that are inherent in diverse cultures and races. This necessitates having a workforce that understands and reflects the diversity of our customers and the communities we serve; a workforce, regardless of race, that embraces differences in approaches, insights and experiences. Some of the benefits of a successful CCI program include:

- Increased personal awareness
- Improved recruitment and promotional policies
- Greater retention of valued employees
- Improved morale
- Improved cooperation and teamwork
- Better mentoring and coaching
- Increased managerial effectiveness
- Reduction of tension and conflict
- Reduction of bias-based incidents
- Better working relationships with the citizens of Prince George's County

Our Vision, Mission and Values Along With Principles of Cultural Competence

Our vision is an image of what we aspire to become. Our mission tells us how we fulfill that vision. Our core values are the basis for the way we do business. Together they set our direction and provide a framework for growth and development.

Over the last year, ten Principles of Cultural Competence (PCC) were developed to be used by all levels of staff and management .

1. Treat others with respect and dignity by recognizing, appreciating and valuing diversity.
2. Take the initiative and motivate others regarding diversity and inclusion.
3. Engage in ongoing learning to increase personal effectiveness regarding diversity and inclusion.
4. Understand and effectively communicate the expectations and accomplishments of culture change within the Commission.
5. Make decisions genuinely based on equity and fairness.
6. Encourage others to contribute to their full potential by providing support, training and a positive work environment.
7. Give and receive feedback in ways that are useful for growth and development.
8. Identify and resolve issues relating to cultural diversity in a sensitive, effective and timely manner.
9. Take appropriate action to eliminate discrimination and harassment.
10. Participate in and contribute to the Commission's cultural events.

These principles combined with our vision, mission and values provide the guidance to ensure that we treat each other with respect and dignity. This extends to our relationship with the citizens of Prince George's County.

Principles of Cultural Competence

1. Treat others with respect and dignity by recognizing, appreciating, and valuing diversity

- Exhibiting positive and welcoming body language (smile, look in the eye, warm handshake, etc.)
- Greeting everyone
- Working with diverse groups and cultural patterns
- Communicating constructively and in a friendly manner
- Pronouncing names correctly
- Listening to show interest in what the other party is saying

2. Take initiative and motivate others regarding diversity and inclusion

- Talking openly about diversity issues in staff meetings and other appropriate forums and also, informally, in one-on-one interactions
- Modeling a spirit of constructive inquiry
- Team building
- Flexing work styles
- Supporting a work environment free of fear, retribution, and suspicion
- Providing encouragement

3. Engage in ongoing learning to increase personal effectiveness regarding diversity and inclusion

- Reading, attending seminars, participating in discussions regarding diversity and inclusion
- Continually relations and/or outreach (working with informal support and helping networks where connections are full partners in decision making)
- Conducting assessments (identifying and understanding needs of individuals, families, and groups)
- Approaches to knowing
- Conversations reflecting a recognition that the managers/leaders are knowledgeable/competent in diversity issues

4. Understand and effectively communicate the expectations and accomplishments of cultural change within the Commission

- Consistently monitoring Commission policies and spearheading their timely implementation
- Assurance that there is a serious commitment on the part of the Commission to address diversity issues

5. Make decisions genuinely based on equity and fairness

- Discussing with concerned party parties and taking time to mull over the issue before reaching a decision
- Demonstrating and ensuring the fairness of the administration

6. Encourage others to contribute to their full potential by providing support, training, and a positive work environment

- Ensuring that office facilities, job functions, and training opportunities are assigned fairly and equitably
- Training accessible at all levels
- Recruitment/retention of employees and volunteers
- Better public services and increased productivity

7. Give and receive feedback in ways that are useful for growth and development

- Close interaction with staff, providing explanation when things are not clear to avoid misunderstandings
- Flexible communication styles
- Constant approaches to accountability in completing tasks
- Participatory management
- Solicit staff input prior to finalizing a plan

8. Identify and resolve issues relating to cultural diversity in a sensitive, effective and timely manner

- Paying attention to issues and asking staff verbally if they would like to raise any diversity issues during a meeting. If not working well, need to take an appropriate and immediate action
- Positive attitudes, conflict resolution, and problem solving
- Compassionate attitudes about staff emotional/personal matters
- Ensuring there are no outstanding issues

9. Take appropriate action to eliminate discrimination and harassment

- Timely response to discrimination and harassment issues
- A free, fair, and democratic work environment
- Clear actions and words that demonstrate zero tolerance to discrimination and harassment in the work environment

10. Participate in and contribute to the Commission's cultural events

- Managers playing an active role, an organizer and supporting cultural participation
- Managers encouraging staff participation in cultural events
- Cultural events providing a forum for staff to appreciate and value each other's impact in creating a better working relationship

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Understanding Ourselves U6+UO=Cultural Understanding Others

The World, the County, the Department

The county and the Department are a reflection of the diversity of the world. We are made up of people from many different countries of origin, language and cultural backgrounds, as well as different races. Using the “Village of 100” model, here is a comparison between the county, the Department and the village. The county figures are from the 2005 American Community Survey, which does not include the population residing in group quarters (dorms, jails, nursing homes, barracks, etc.).



The “Village of 100” uses the world’s population and reduces it to a village of 100 persons, with all existing ratios the same.

Village of 100

60% Asians
 14% Africans
 12% Europeans
 8% Latin Americans
 5% from the USA and Canada
 1% from the South Pacific
 51% male; 49% female



Prince George’s County

65% Black
 22% White
 4% Asian
 11% Hispanic
 1% American Indian
 8% Two or more races
 52% female; 48% male



Planning Department

38% Black
 53% White
 4% Asian
 2% Hispanic
 1% American Indian
 57% female; 43% male

Where We Are

At this point, CCI is made up of 54 Prince George's County Planning Department employees, organized into three units. These units are the five Strategy Resource Teams (SRT), six Divisional Action Resource Teams (DART), and the Steering Committee. Each SRT and DART has a chair and co-chair. Ultimately, everyone on staff will be involved with CCI. The five Strategy Resource Teams are:

- Communications—providing communications support and regular diversity-related articles
- Opportunities to Practice—providing opportunities for all staff to participate in CCI.
- Lead by Example—finding ways to encourage, track and support managers leading by example
- Ongoing Learning—organize training and create events that foster collaboration and personal growth
- Reviewing Progress—asking how are we doing and are we moving forward?

Each division (including the director's office) has its own Action Resource Team. The DARTs support the implementation of and make recommendations regarding CCI strategies and activities at the division level. Most divisions have included CCI and the DART reports as part of their regular staff meetings. The goal is to have all employees active in the individual DART meetings

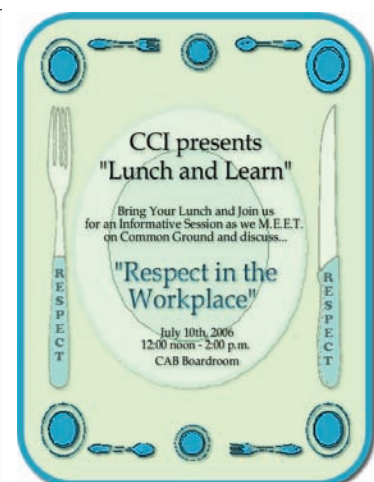
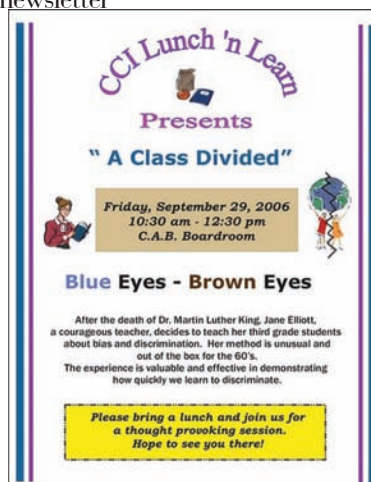
The Steering Committee consists of seven members of senior management and one of the co-chairs from each SRT and DART. The members are:

Steven Adams
 Nkosi Akinlana
 Ellen Brous
 Betty Carlson-Jameson
 Al Dobbins
 Sonja Ewing
 Harold Foster
 John Funk
 Rana Hightower
 Dale Hutchison

Tiffany Williams Jennings
 Jimi Jones
 Candy Laudenberger
 Ivy Lewis
 Yvonne Magee
 Tom Masog
 Cecelia Moore
 Lauren Oliphant
 Fern Piret
 Arie Stouten

Over the past year, the Strategy Resources Teams, Divisional Action Resource Teams, and the Steering Committee worked together to “get the word out” about our CCI commitment and activities. Department-wide activities included:

- Analyzed 2005 assessment conducted by Trinity Transition Consultants and identified issues as lack of trust, lack of awareness, insensitivity, lack of respect and lack of fair administration
- Developed ten Principles of Cultural Competence
- Authored and published quarterly CCI newsletter
- Created a Department-wide employee directory
- Took lead roles in the Commission's celebrations of Black History Month, GLBT Pride Week and Hispanic Heritage Month
- Shared winter holiday traditions around the world
- Collected and analyzed over 250 separate evaluations of different events and programs held, including the three lunch and learn sessions



- Implemented the idea of a county tour (one north, one south county) to familiarize Department staff (current and new) with the county, its diverse communities, and our projects.
- Hosted the Jeopardy Game, Flavors of Other Countries, and October discussion on Christopher Columbus: Explorer or Exploiter?
- Implemented mandatory CCI training for all staff.
- Made CCI training of diversity and inclusion a part of the orientation for new employees
- Senior management coaching, alignment and coordination (“Integrity” meetings)
- Held monthly division learning sessions facilitated by Trinity Transitions Consulting. Topics included:
 - » Village of 100
 - » MEET on Common Ground
 - » Diversity Wheel & Ladder of Inference
 - » Gender
 - » Micro-messages



**COUNTY TOUR
A CCI EVENT**

Tour: **NORTHERN COUNTY**
 Date: **June 12, 2007**
 Time: **9 a.m. (promptly) return 3 p.m.**
 Leaving from: **County Administration Building
(CAB-Pond Side)**
 Bus holds **26 people**
 Sign up at **G: CCI_Tours/Sign-up sheet2**

**NEXT TOUR: June 29, 2007
TO SOUTHERN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY**

It is the staff's responsibility to get permission from their supervisors.
 Boxed lunches will be provided.

Questions?
 Call Phil Taylor
 301-780-2026



Many divisions added diversity debriefings to their regular staff meetings. Other division activities have included:

- Team building day; personality type exercises as a continuation of the baseline training
- Pizza and discussion: Discussed the movie “Crash”
- Multinational pot lucks and tastings and presentations on different aspects of “home” countries
- Presentations by staff and outside persons accompanied by visuals and graphics. Included topics were Paralympics Blind Runner Guide, Caste System in India, and others on India, Sierra Leone, and Ecuador.

The SRTs recommended a Recognition Award for staff participating in CCI events. They developed criteria and a nomination form and presented them to the Steering Committee for their review, input and acceptance. When nominations were received, they were reviewed and recommendations were made to the Director for approval. The following people have received awards through this process:

M'balu Abdullah

Bill Akerley

Nkosi Akinlana

Tanya Biggs

Joe Chang

Sonja Ewing

Laurie Farris

Marcy Gonzales

Mary Goodnow

Wendy Irminger

Reyna Kosla

CJ Lammers

Dee McChesney

Faramarz Mokhtari

Cecelia Moore

Marilyn Vega

Through our CCI activities we have embraced the cultural diversity within our country and our organization. It has become clear how we can all benefit from having people from various cultures contribute to the continued growth of our organization

I feel really good about participating in the CCI activities when I hear staff saying how they are applying what they are learning at home.

CCI has provided a forum for productive discussions about topics that are meaningful to us, both as a society and as individuals... We are growing so fast, so it is important to nurture a culture that is productive and inviting, safe and stimulating.

Division and Department Activities in Collaboration with CCI



Cultural Allies Network for Diversity Learning Experiences

Cultural Allies (C.A.N.D.L.E.)

C.A.N.D.L.E. stands for Cultural Allies Network for Diversity Learning Experiences. To date, over 50 of our employees have participated in C.A.N.D.L.E. sessions. This group now comprises the Department's C.A.N.D.L.E. Club. The club meets once a month to discuss topics of interest and current affairs as they relate to diversity and inclusion. It will be reopened to new membership later this year.

Some of the topics covered in the CANDLE meetings were:

- » Gender Communications
- » Generations in the Workplace
- » The Diversity Wheel
- » The Ladder of Inference
- » Don Imus
- » The Virginia Tech Incident
- » M.E.E.T. on Common Ground
- » The Village of 100

*C.A.N.D.L.E.
has provided an opportunity
to build relationships and heightened
awareness about other cultures and world
views.*

*This
quote sums up what I believe CCI
reinforced:
"Wherever you go... there you are"
I take it to mean: be it work, home, vacation, "wherever" we
are all the product of all our life experiences and that
is what we bring with us.
"There you are".*

*It's
about learning
to understand others
and then being more
compassionate..*

*I
learned to think outside the
box. The way I was brought up was not
to focus on myself or how I relate to others.
Here, (in C.A.N.D.L.E.) I've learned how to
BE myself*

*You
can't buy this
experience or even read about it
in a book. You have to experience it
first hand to really benefit from it*

*Each
C.A.N.D.L.E. meeting
provided an opportunity to learn something
new about a fellow Department staffer, even some
that I had known for 20 years or more. There are so many
varied experiences that shape our lives and add to the rich
cultural fabric of the Department Without the Culture
Change Initiative, and C.A.N.D.L.E. in particular,
I would not likely have had the opportunity
to share these experiences.*



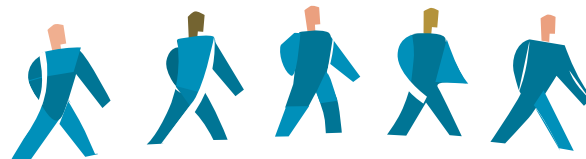
Where Are We Going

During the past year we have identified many challenges for CCI from staff and also suggestions of what CCI and diversity might mean to our future. Some staff ideas included

- Focusing our CCI activities on several (3 or 4) major initiatives with clearly articulated objectives and expected outcomes, that are highly visible across the Department;
- A major challenge will be planning for the replacement of those experienced people—succession planning—in a way that encourages internal upward mobility, contributes to an increasingly diverse employee base, and preserves our emphasis on hiring well-qualified people. Better recruitment is an important part of this. Another part is training, and much of it is finding incentives for keeping good people (retention). We need to rethink how we do these tasks while at the same time furthering our goals of fairness, respect and inclusion.
- Periodic progress evaluation of the CCI impact is necessary for planning future actions.
- Consider hiring a diversity officer or make that a major responsibility of an existing position.
- Provide a central location to store diversity information such as articles, books and audio/video presentations.
- How do we keep CCI fresh? How do we encourage nonmembers to join?
- Concerned about the clarity of CCI (what it can/cannot do as it relates to employee social and professional issues)
- Managers not demonstrating that they support CCI by not allowing staff to participate in CCI activities.
- Some staff still fear reprisals if they speak openly.
- Staff want CCI to tackle tough work issues such as the burden of conflicting demands.
- A major concern is burnout and the low levels of consistent participation by team members.
- The way that CCI is being implemented mirrors the way the organization, Departments, divisions, and sections are run top down. This is a concern because it does not allow for staff to have ownership of their role in CCI.



- A reoccurring concern of staff is the challenge of making time for CCI meetings with an ever-increasing workload. There is also a concern about balancing work performance and participation in CCI activities, should this become an employee performance evaluation factor.
- Culture change is normally realized through an assimilation process and this requires a long period of time.



Future steps are being planned at both the Department and the division levels. Some division activities in the coming months are a job shadowing activity, continued presentations from staff about their “home” countries, and team building days. All divisions will keep CCI debriefings and presentations as part of their monthly staff reports.

On a Department level, the next steps include:

- The quarterly newsletters will continue, with a goal to produce them monthly
- There will be a Black History Month celebration highlighting the diversity within our Department and showcasing Africans in the Department who have come to the United States
- Continue the lunch and learn sessions
- Hold Diversity Management Seminar Series—a four-part series designed to address critical success factors for the pilot recruitment and retention program
- Continue senior management coaching, alignment and coordination (“Integrity” meetings)
- Leadership coaching and facilitated guidance for the duration of the Culture Change Initiative
- Conduct train-the-trainer sessions with staff volunteers.
- Implement cultural competency as an essential job function for managers.

Our goal is to be a culturally competent organization. That means each one of us must learn how to be culturally competent and practice it every day. We’re on our way.

