Maine Intercultural
Communication Consultants

Steps for Building and Supporting an Intercultural Workforce

1. Consider your goals.
    - Have workforce/boards/committees be reflective of the demographics of the community served
    - Recruit and retain a creative, innovative workforce and volunteers
    - Communicate effectively across differences
    - Increase productivity, decrease conflict
    - Create a more welcoming environment for all
    - Avoid lawsuits
    - Be a place that leverages and truly welcomes diversity (is inclusive)

2. Get your "house" in order.
    - Are you ready to work successfully across difference?
    - Is difference seen as something to be leveraged or overcome? Is it ignored or seen as a potential strength?
    - Do you know how difference may influence outreach, communication, or conflict?
    - Do you know what intercultural competence is and how your municipality measures up?
    - Assess your municipality's level of intercultural competency.
        - ➔ Consider having the Intercultural Development Inventory© (IDI©) be administered to leadership, workforce, committees, and boards to determine a municipality's Intercultural Development Orientation.
        - ➔ If the IDI reveals a "monocultural mindset," your efforts to diversify will likely fail. You should engage in targeted training before proceeding to Step 3 "Outreach: Cast a Wider Net".
        - ➔ If the IDI reveals an "intercultural mindset," your efforts to diversify your staff will likely be successful.

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3. Outreach: Cast a Wider Net
    - How are people currently recruited? How are jobs advertised?
    - Are these methods reaching all populations? What are other methods?
    - Develop and cultivate relationships over time
        - Talk to people who are different from you. Ask them about their concerns. Tell them about your municipality's intention of having boards, committees, and workforce reflective of the city/town's demographics.
        - Leave your office; take a "listening tour"
            - Have coffee with leaders or members of diverse groups
            - Go to organizations serving the populations you want to hire and meet with leaders.
            - Attend events where diverse people are present.
    - Sponsor professional engagement experiences as part of recruitment. (Internships/"mid-termships", job shadowing, coffee meetings, open houses)
    - Remember the value of the schools in your city/town as a recruitment stop.

4. Examine application and hiring procedures for unintentional barriers.
    - Consider questions that are asked in the interview process; do questions inadvertently favor a certain cultural group? Who is part of the interview committee? Are your questions measuring competency or interpretation of cultural values?
    - Consider the application itself. Consult "Top 10 Application Barriers Encountered by Foreign Born Professionals in Maine".

5. Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Committee of people interested in and excited about this work, and affinity groups to keep the momentum going.

6. Be continuously curious and adaptive based on new understanding and insight.

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