



R394

Dear National Fire Academy Student:

Congratulations on your acceptance into the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) National Fire Academy's (NFA's) *Cultural Competence in Risk Reduction* (CCRR) course, a **6-day class**. This new 6-day NFA course seeks to improve cultural and linguistic determinants within the application of risk-reduction strategies. The course aims to connect fire/emergency medical services (EMS) prevention personnel with diverse and cultural groups with the community(s) they serve, specifically to increase the reach and effectiveness of fire/life safety prevention services and programs. The course is designed for a variety of prevention specialists such as public fire and life safety educators, inspectors, juvenile firesetter intervention specialists, fire marshals, and code enforcers.

The course applies a risk-reduction model, which is used in several other NFA courses, as the context to discuss and interact with aspects of cultural competence. The cultural aspects that this course deals with are nationality and language (other than English), although the principles of cultural competence taught in this course can be applied in any multicultural environment. Students learn that these populations can be potentially hidden, underserved, and/or emerging within their community(s).

CCRR is challenging and innovative. The course is designed to maximize interactivity among students and instructors. A variety of instructional methods are employed. We look forward to having you as a student.

It is important to note that this is a 6-day class, and the first day of class will begin on Sunday at approximately 8 a.m. Subsequent classes will meet daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with graduation occurring on Friday at 4 p.m. Because of this schedule, you will be provided lodging for Friday night. Evening classes may be required.

The course contains a short precourse assignment to complete and mail to the NFA prior to class. This precourse assignment is explained in an attachment to this correspondence. You will have two requirements to complete before coming to class.

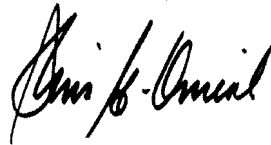
1. A precourse assignment to complete and mail to the NFA prior to class.
2. One optional item to bring to class that is explained in the precourse assignment.

End of class graduation ceremonies are an important part of the course and you are expected to attend. Please do not make any travel arrangements to leave campus until after you and your classmates graduate.

Increasing numbers of students and instructors are bringing laptop computers to campus. You alone are responsible for the security and maintenance of your equipment. The NFA cannot provide you with computer software, hardware, or technical support to include disks, printers, scanners, etc. There are a limited number of 120-volt AC outlets in the classrooms. A Student Computer Lab is located in Building D and is available for all students to use. It is open daily with technical support provided in the evenings. This lab uses Windows XP and Office 2007 as the software standard.

Should you need additional information or have questions pertaining to course content or requirements, you should contact Mr. Gerry Bassett, Fire Prevention Public Education Curriculum Training Specialist, at (301) 447-1094 or email at [gerry.bassett@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:gerry.bassett@fema.dhs.gov)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denis Onieal". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent  
National Fire Academy  
U.S. Fire Administration

**Precourse Assignment**  
**Cultural Competence in Risk Reduction (R394)**

**The Course Description**

This new 6-day National Fire Academy (NFA) course seeks to improve cultural and linguistic determinants within the application of risk-reduction strategies. The course aims to connect fire prevention/emergency medical services (EMS) personnel with diverse and cultural groups with the community(ies) they serve, specifically to increase the reach and effectiveness of fire/life safety prevention services and programs. The course is designed for a variety of prevention specialists such as public fire and life safety educators, inspectors, juvenile firesetter intervention specialists, fire marshals, and code enforcers.

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The course is not about any one particular culture but about the building blocks of culture which correspond to four broad categories of human experience. Note: Other NFA courses and U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) risk-reduction efforts focus on reaching specific populations characterized by urban inner city, rural, older adults, young people (0 to 5 years), socioeconomic class, and disabled populations. These populations are not part of this course.

The course introduces students to four fundamental dimensions or building blocks of culture which correspond to four broad continuums of cultural similarities and differences.

These four building blocks of culture are

1. Concept of self: individualist and collectivist.
2. Personal versus societal responsibility: universalist and particularistic.
3. Concept of time: monochronic and polychronic.
4. Locus of control: internal and external.

Students learn these four concepts and how they connect to the various cultural and linguistic settings found in prevention. Students learn to encounter and interact with these dimensions of culture through realistic prevention scenarios and interactions. Even though the course deals with a modest understanding of the four building blocks of culture, students discover that these enhanced skills may also bring a decrease in the community risk(s) they have identified.

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Students learn to select interventions based on cultural and linguistic determinants, including some guidelines on culturally appropriate translation methods and how to communicate through an interpreter.

### **Course Topics**

- Getting Ready to Improve Cultural Competence:
    - Risk-Reduction Model/Processes;
    - Four Building Blocks of Culture; and
    - Cultural Competence Assessments—individual, organizational, and program/service.
  
  - Assessing Community Risk for Cultural Groups:
    - Identifying Risk;
    - Identifying Hidden Populations/Cultural and Linguistic Populations;
    - Using Geographic Information System (GIS); and
    - Writing a Risk-Reduction Goal.
  
  - Developing Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Intervention Strategies:
    - Selecting Intervention Strategies;
    - Applying Cultural and Linguistic Determinants;
    - Using Translations; and
    - Communicating Through an Interpreter.
  
  - Action Plans and Delivery Techniques—Culturally Competent and Linguistically Appropriate:
    - Developing Culturally Competent Action Plan; and
    - Prevention Interactions Within the Four Building Blocks.
  
  - Evaluating Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Programs and Services:
    - Four Stages of Evaluation;
    - Need for Cultural Competence in Evaluation;
    - Prevention Evaluation in Cultural and Linguistic Settings; and
    - Challenges in Conducting Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Evaluation.
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Precourse Assignment**  
***Cultural Competence in Risk Reduction (R394)***

Please answer the questions below and submit to the National Fire Academy (NFA) 2 weeks prior to the start of the class. If you need additional space to answer any of the questions, you may use an attachment.

**Community Risk-Reduction Questions**

1. Describe how familiar you are with the concepts of community risk reduction.
  2. Given your current position in your organization, how have you applied the steps of community risk reduction?
  3. Have you taken any NFA courses that apply the risk-reduction model? If so, which courses?
  4. List three risks in your community that your organization is currently undertaking (for which you have some responsibility).
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## Demographic Information Questions

Demographic information can be obtained for nearly all communities in America by visiting the U.S. Census Bureau ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)). Data for the Decennial Census is collected by the Bureau every 10 years. Data from the Decennial Census is used to determine congressional districts. The Decennial Census seeks to determine the number of people who live in a community.

A second type of census, the American Community Survey (ACS), is an ongoing task of the Bureau. The ACS is mailed to over three million U.S. residents annually. The Bureau's goal is to survey each U.S. resident every 7 years, thus, providing current profiles about local communities. ACS data are important to risk-reduction specialists because they provide information about **how** people live.

Data from the ACS are available to the public through the American FactFinder database. FactFinder is an important tool to risk-reduction practitioners because it allows them to explore demographic data by census tracts. Census tracts are defined geographical areas within a city, town, county, or village. Each tract carries a numerical identification.

A word of caution—many hidden or potentially underserved populations may be inadequately identified by census data. There are many reasons for this potential challenge that include:

- language and reading barriers;
- people choosing not to participate in the census; and
- people/groups not wanting attention brought to their existence in the community.

Other important sources of information that may be helpful in locating populations that may have previously been hidden, emerging, or underserved include, but are not limited to:

- City and County Planning Departments;
  - Office of Community Development;
  - Housing Authority;
  - Economic Development Commission;
  - Chamber of Commerce;
  - Community Action Council;
  - Local schools, hospitals, and health departments;
  - Head start programs and childcare organizations;
  - Department of Social Services;
  - Commission on Aging;
  - Advocacy groups;
  - Neighborhood associations; and
  - Houses of worship.
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After checking some of these sources in your community, please answer the following questions:

1. How many census tracts does your serving area population cover?
2. What is the demographic dispersion of groups by nationality (ancestry) in your service area?
3. What languages other than English are spoken, and what are the numbers/percentages of each?
4. Which Web site or organization was most helpful with any information in this section?

### **Culture Questions**

1. To what degree has your current position provided opportunities to engage with cultural groups and people who speak a language other than English?
  2. Have you been part of an effort in which translated materials/publications/brochures/Web sites, etc., were developed into a language other than English? If so, briefly describe.
  3. Are interpreter services available to you within your organization or service area? If so, briefly describe this service.
  4. Have you had an opportunity to use an interpreter as part of your current job responsibilities in risk reduction? If so, describe.
  5. Describe what part of your current job is most likely to bring cultural interactions or interactions with people who speak a language other than English?
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### Optional Purchase Question

Please read the following sheet regarding this optional purchase and answer this question.

1. I will bring my own copy of "Figuring Foreigners Out: A Practical Guide" to class.  
 Yes  No

Please complete and submit 2 weeks prior to class. Email with attachment is preferable.

Gerry N. Bassett  
National Fire Academy  
16825 South Seton Avenue  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
Phone: (301) 447-1094  
Email: [gerry.bassett@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:gerry.bassett@fema.dhs.gov)  
Fax: (301) 447-1372



### **Optional Purchase—Prior to Class**

Please read the following and answer the last question (optional purchase question) on your precourse assignment worksheet.

Congratulations on your acceptance into NFA's pilot offering of *Cultural Competence in Risk Reduction* (R394). In addition to this precourse assignment, you have one additional option.

The paperback book "Figuring Foreigners Out: A Practical Guide" is used throughout the class. You may check out a copy from the campus Learning Resource Center (LRC). However, you must return your book to the LRC at the end of the class.

The book is an excellent resource for you to use in your fire department/organizational setting. The NFA would like to provide information on ordering your own copy, "Figuring Foreigners Out: A Practical Guide," for use both in class and after class.

You may order this book through the publisher, Intercultural Press at [www.nicholasbrealey.com](http://www.nicholasbrealey.com) and it takes about a week to arrive. The cost is approximately \$26. You can also check with [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for a better price. Amazon's prices range from \$7.98 used to \$17.97 new.

NFA is unable to reimburse students who bring their own book to class. It is an optional student decision and expense.

The advantage to bringing your own book is that not only do you get to keep it for future reference, but you can mark up the book in class. Students will not be allowed to mark in the LRC book and must return it at the end of the class.

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