Establishing and Maintaining a Culturally Diverse Workforce, Looking Beyond the Numbers, and Identifying Opportunities for the Alameda County Fire Department

Leading Community Risk Reduction

By: Sheldon D. Gilbert
     Alameda County Fire Department
     San Leandro, California

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ABSTRACT

The identified problem is that the Alameda County Fire Department (ACFD) has diversified its work force in a concentrated short period of time, and the organizational cultural competency toward diversity is still developing. Senior management has determined that an effective culturally diverse department needs to look beyond the numbers and establish a department culture that values diversity and knows how to manage it as a vital resource.

The purpose of this research project was to evaluate the current ACFD diversity management and cultural competency factors and compare them to others in California. The project used evaluative research to examine the ACFD current diversity programs and initiatives in relation to other regional service providers. The research procedures included a literature search, interviews and survey questionnaire. Two interviews were conducted and six regional fire service providers were surveyed. The questions posed were:

1. What are the desired outcomes of the ACFD's diversity programs? Are these outcomes consistent and measurable in relation to other regional fire service providers?

2. What are the key drivers that impact diversity initiatives and programs in like size regional fire service providers in California?

3. What diversity outreach programs are being provided by like size regional fire service providers?

4.   How often do like size regional fire service providers offer diversity training for their staff and is it seen as effective?

The results of this study support the fact the ACFD's diversity programs do provide an adequate baseline for managing diversity within the organization. With some modifications, these programs can offer a more comprehensive cultural competency platform that enhances the effectiveness of diversity initiatives within the ACFD and accurately measures the benefits of a culturally diverse workforce.

Recommendations were made to ensure the ACFD diversity programs establish diversity as an asset:

1.   Create "Diversity as a Fire Service Business Strategy" and "Measuring Success in Diversity" guides.

2.   Establish a statewide central repository for diversity recruitment and management programs.

3.   Create a model cultural diversity-training curriculum.

4.   Implement a comprehensive diversity training program for the ACFD.

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INTRODUCTION

As local individual fire service providers face continuing financial hardships, greater attention is being paid to the regional fire service provider concept as a means of maintaining fiscal solvency while continuing to meet the life safety and emergency response demands of the public. While this trend of regionalization and consolidation has taken place, small jurisdictions have been melded into the Alameda County Fire Department (ACFD), forming a mid to large size jurisdiction serving a broad and diverse community base. A natural result of this increase in size and stature has been an intensified interest in the cultural diversity make up of the fire department and how it resembles and affiliates with the communities it serves. Local policy directives and industry driven trends both validate that an organization's ability to optimize service levels and reduce risk in the local communities is enhanced by proven credibility and acceptance by the communities it serves.

As a result of this increased attention being given to the demographics and make-up of the department's membership, the ACFD has determined that a comprehensive review of its diversity programs and cultural competencies needs to be conducted. The outcome of this analysis needs to clearly identify and articulate the philosophy and basic tenants that drive the ACFD diversity programs.

The problem is based on the lack of diversification of the departments who created the ACFD through consolidation. The ACFD cultural diversity program has been implemented to diversify the organization as quickly as possible while at the same time maintaining long established hiring and training standards.

Current department management had no input into the department demographic breakdown that created the ACFD. As a result, the initial county department's cultural diversity was nearly non-existent with more than 90% of the firefighting work force being white males.

As a result of this lack of diversity, fire department management was faced with the need to diversify the department as quickly as possible. While significant progress has been made, the numbers do not tell the whole story. Senior management has determined that an effective culturally diverse department needs to look beyond the numbers. It is the executive management team's goal to create a culture of diversity that clearly understands that any institution in the marketplace or the business place (fire service included) will be unable to compete or meet the customers' present and future demands without valuing diversity and learning to manage it as a vital resource.

The purpose of this research project is to evaluate the current effectiveness of the cultural diversity philosophy, strategies and cultural integration efforts within the ACFD. These programs will be bench marked against current best practices and compared to other established models utilized by other regional fire service providers within the State of California. Based upon the findings and conclusions, recommendations will be made as to whether the existing ACFD cultural diversity strategies and efforts to successfully manage diversity are effective as they currently exist, or should they be modified or altered to create a more effective cultural diversity philosophy and implementation strategy. In either case, the ACFD cultural diversity philosophy and cultural competencies must ensure an environment that capitalizes on the creativity and richness

that increased diversity offers. The evaluative research method was used to answer the following questions:

1. What are the desired outcomes of the ACFD's diversity programs? Are these outcomes consistent and measurable in relation to other regional fire service providers?

2. What are the key drivers that impact diversity initiatives and programs in like size regional fire service providers in California?

3. What diversity outreach programs are being provided by like size regional fire service providers?

4. How often do like size regional fire service providers offer diversity training for management and non-management staff and is it seen as effective?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

In the early 1990s an evaluation was conducted to look at the feasibility of a countywide consolidation of fire services within Alameda County. This evaluation showed that a regional fire service delivery system had value, would save money, would provide a higher level of service and could be accomplished if the political will existed for such an endeavor.

At that time, the political will did not exist to pursue a countywide fire department. However, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors did see value in the concept of a regional fire service delivery model. As a result, the ACFD was created.

The department is new by fire service standards. It was officially formed in 1993 as a Dependent Special District with the County Board of Supervisors designated as the governing body. The new district was the result of the consolidation of the Castro Valley

and Eden Consolidated Fire Districts as well as the Alameda County Fire Patrol. These agencies served the unincorporated areas of Alameda County.

This consolidation was initiated to maximize fire protection efficiency and effectiveness in the unincorporated areas of Alameda County. The intended outcomes of this consolidation included the reduction of redundant overhead, increased service delivery coordination, increased cooperation and service levels, realization of economies of scale within the new fire district and a fire service delivery platform for cities and other entities to participate in.

In response to the formation of the ACFD, in 1995 the City of San Leandro chose to contract for fire services with the Alameda County Fire Department. This was followed by the City of Dublin in 1997 and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in 2002.

As a result of all the aforementioned consolidations, the ACFD currently provides fire and emergency services to several diverse and unique communities within Alameda County. These areas include commercial, industrial, residential, urban interface and rural settings. The department serves a population of 261,000 and covers over 400 square miles. The ACFD responds to over 22,000 calls annually from 19 fire stations utilizing 18 engine companies, 4 truck companies and 1 heavy rescue company. All 23 fire department response units are staffed with a minimum of 1 paramedic firefighter and 2 EMT firefighters.

As a result of the consolidation that took place in 1993, three fire districts were merged that protected the unincorporated areas of Alameda County. None of these jurisdictions had a formal diversity recruitment or retention program. These agencies had

not conducted regular or validated diversity awareness training, and all of these agencies had in excess of a 95% white male demographic. The departments had not created a culture or environment that saw diversification of the workforce as a priority or a benefit. While the governing Board of Supervisors emphasized cultural diversity as a priority, little to no progress had been made. There had not been significant progress in establishing a workforce that accurately represented the population of Alameda County.

When the City of San Leandro contracted with the ACFD in 1995 for fire services, they brought the most diverse workforce of any of the consolidated departments to date. Of the 85 personnel who became ACFD employees, 15% were from underrepresented classifications with approximately 85% being white males. The City did have a history of encouraging the recruitment of underrepresented classifications and had made some attempts to diversify the City's fire department. That being said, the process of diversification was in its beginning stages and the numbers not large enough to make a significant impact on the ever-growing ACFD. The San Leandro Fire Department did conduct regular scheduled diversity training but did not have a definable strategy or philosophy regarding cultural diversity that was accepted or distributed department-wide.

The Dougherty Regional Fire Authority (DRFA) joined the ACFD in 1997. The district was dissolved and 31 employees were assumed by the ACFD. The district served a population of 40,000 in a mid to high-income area. The department had little to no diversity and consisted of 97% white males with 3% underrepresented classes. Recruitment and hiring was done as part of a combined Tri-Valley testing and training academy, which had no formal cultural diversity recruitment or training component.

Diversity training was conducted as mandated by law, and there were no known diversity programs or initiatives being conducted by the department. The department had no printed cultural diversity philosophy or goals that were distributed or acknowledged by department personnel.

The last department consolidated into the ACFD was the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) Fire Department. This department was previously managed by the University of California and fell under its cultural diversity recruitment and training programs. Twelve personnel were absorbed from LBNL Fire with 80% being white males and 20% from underrepresented classifications. LBNL had the most extensive policies, directives and philosophies regarding cultural diversity based on oversight provided by the University of California. Regular training was conducted and fire department diversity goals were published and monitored as a part of the University's Affirmative Action Plan.

In short, while differing levels of importance and attention were placed on obtaining and managing diversity within each organization, collectively, the ACFD demographics were nowhere close to looking like Alameda County.

As a result of this lack of cultural diversity, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and the ACFD collectively made a commitment to create and implement an Affirmative Action Plan and several diversity enhancing initiatives. The ACFD has worked diligently to make significant changes that contribute to the appropriate diversification of the organization. New recruiting practices have been implemented, including a comprehensive tiered ACFD reserve program that provides an entry point for all interested individuals. This program allows individuals with varying levels of

education, training, experience and interest to be a part of the ACFD reserve program that provides a training and mentoring program developed specifically to meet their needs and prepare them for employment as a firefighter with the ACFD. In addition, recruitment teams have been utilized by sending out small diverse groups of employees and reserves to speak to the community, schools and other targeted groups about a career with the ACFD. Recruitment procedures and postings have been expanded to include over 50 publications or periodicals directly targeted at underrepresented groups. These approaches combined with outreach teams and other marketing tools implemented have resulted in significant progress in a short amount of time. However, it should be noted that with the creation and implementation of these programs, no hiring or training standard reductions have taken place.

The implementation of these programs and the subsequent increase in cultural diversity within the ACFD have been influenced by a number of factors. These programs started with clear vision and commitment from top management. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors and Fire Chief Bill McCammon have been consistent and unwavering in their desire to establish a workforce that accurately represents the demographic make up of Alameda County. There is no doubt that under the department's current leadership significant progress has been made in the cultural diversification of the ACFD workforce. Over the past five years, as a result of a large number of retirements and growth, 72 safety and/or civilian employees have been hired. Of these 72 employees, 64 % are from underrepresented cultural classifications.

In addition to the culturally diverse make up of these new employees, collectively they represent a new generation of diversity to the ACFD. This generation of firefighters

is not the veterans of the 1970's or the bubble gum rock band members of the 80's. This new generation has been branded with several titles such as generation y, generation x, internet gen, millenials and nexters. There is a clear and well-defined variety of sub generational groups within these 72 hires. All these unique and talented groups add varying degrees of opportunities and challenges to the ACFD culture and philosophy concerning diversity.

This progress has been monitored and documented through the utilization of the department's annual Affirmative Action Plan (AA Plan). The plan been in place since 1998 and is updated annually. In the plan, the department's cultural demographics are memorialized and compared to the targeted diversity goals based on the 2000 census and population demographics for Alameda County. A copy of the 2000-2005 AA Plan diversity history is provided in Appendix E.

While progress has been made in establishing a diverse workforce and ensuring an increased level of cultural representation, it is premature to declare that the diversification of the ACFD has been accomplished or optimized. There is still work to be done. Existing and enhanced hiring practices that seek and retain a qualified diverse workforce must be identified and maintained. In addition, the ACFD is committed to establishing a department-wide culture that looks beyond the numbers, identifies and understands why cultural diversity is necessary and learns how to manage a cultural and generational diverse workforce as a community asset. The department desires to build upon its strategic approach to diversity so it can more fully realize the value and the enhanced work product provided by employees who bring different skills, talents and points of view to the department.

This research project is significant to the ACFD in three ways. First, analyses of several other large regional fire service providers will give the ACFD some insight into the established industry standards and benchmarks for cultural and generational diversity recruitment, training and integration standards. Second, the evaluative research will identify areas which work well within the existing ACFD diversity programs and help identify those areas that need to be altered or eliminated to accommodate future consolidations and service delivery needs. Third, this research project will serve as an opportunity for several regional fire service providers to work together, compare and contrast the approaches to diversity and serve as a catalyst for better cooperation and exchange of information regarding the importance of cultural and generational diversity for California's regional fire service providers.

This applied research project is related to the National Fire Academy's (NFA) Executive Fire Officer course goal to prepare course participants to "lead effectively and efficiently within a dynamic and complex organization by the application of action research" (NFA, 1998, P. SM0-3). Achieving this goal will enhance the Executive Fire Officer participant's personal development by acquiring research skills and examining a variety of diversity models and literature through research to help the ACFD better understand the importance and value of a truly diversified workforce. This will lead to an increased awareness and knowledge of the benefits of diversity and provide more in-depth monitoring of the established diversity programs and initiatives. Understanding and closely monitoring these industry trends will be of great benefit for the regional fire service provider and assist with the establishment and management of an ever-increasing diverse workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review was done as it relates to cultural and generational diversity within the fire service. The literature review included a search of fire service and professional journals, textbooks and reports. The identified literature resources focused on the creation, implementation and maintenance of diversity programs relating to the fire service and general government. This literature review added considerable understanding regarding the perception, development and implementation of public safety diversity programs and initiatives.

This section will discuss critical findings in the areas of:

1.   Supporting diversity in the fire service

2.   Implementing and maintaining diversity training programs

3.   Increasing effectiveness and productivity through diversity

Supporting Diversity in the Fire Service

During the past several years there has been unprecedented retirements and hiring in the California fire service. This is a direct result of a statewide enhanced retirement benefit that was implemented in 2001.

These large and widespread retirements have created a rare window of opportunity for organizations to appropriately diversify their departments. As a result of these opportunities, organizations throughout the state are being faced with the question of whether they are appropriately supporting diversity in their organization. To be more specific, they are asking, what does it mean to support diversity in the fire service? Why do we need to diversify, and what contributed to the current lack of diversity? In 1991,

Loden wrote, " To prosper in the future, we must value, understand, and better utilize our diversity in business, education, government as well as in society in general. In other words, we must learn to manage employees' diversity as a vital resource" (Loden, 1991, P.xvii).

To create a culture that effectively supports diversity there needs to be an understanding of the existing culture, its history and how it views diversity. Berkman wrote, that at the turn of the 20th century, most U.S. fire departments included just one group of people: white Protestant or Catholic men from Northern European backgrounds. For decades, this profile changed very little. It wasn't until the 1960's that African American men came into the profession in any significant numbers. In the 1970's and 1980's it was the women who began to come into the firefighting profession (Berkman, 2003, P.1).

This acknowledgment of past cultural diversity deficits is further supported by Loury, who attributes a lack of diversity in the workforce to three established axioms: Axiom 1-"Constructivism" where people use marks on bodies or other physical attributes to divide humans into sub groups we call races. Axiom 2- "Anti-Essentialism" sees disparity as a social artifact caused by history, culture, politics or the economy of American Society. Axiom 3- "Racial Stigma" is the awareness of racial differences that alter thoughts or actions (Loury, 2002, P.5). All writers that were referenced agree the first step to establishing and benefiting from a diverse workforce is to understand and learn from the shortcomings and failures of the past. If there is a lack of acknowledgement of the past, and questions regarding supporting diversity go unanswered, they will create confusion that contributes to the fire service having

difficulty in defining, implementing and managing a diverse workforce (Loden, 1991, P.204, 205).

So how does the fire service acknowledge the past and create and manage a culturally diverse workforce as an asset? Loden says some believe they must become experts regarding all cultural differences that exist to successfully manage diversity, but that is not the case. She points out that managing diversity as an asset requires a framework for analyzing the impacts of: 1) personal values, beliefs and actions, 2) group dynamics, and 3) institutional policies, practices and norms (Loden, 1991, P.xviii).

In practical terms this starts with a commitment. Unfortunately, the fire service has a history regarding diversity that is big on ideas and bad on follow through (Walter, 1999, P25). Walter goes on to offer several ways to ensure that commitment to diversity produces results. She writes, say what you mean and mean what you say, use words that indicate reality and professionalism. Speak in a manner that doesn't require adjustment in diverse groups. Keep the next generation in mind, the example you set will be repeated by future generations in the fire service. Be sure your personnel understand diversity, not everyone comes from a diverse background so they must be taught early what diversity means to the department. Lastly, try to see diversity in its widest sense. Diversity does not only mean color or gender; it also needs to address what we do and why we do it. (Walter, 1999, P.26).

Once a commitment is established and communicated, it's all about leadership! The Chief is responsible for defining and shaping the culture. The Fire Chief's actions must reinforce what he/she says, he/she believes; he/she must walk the talk. It is imperative the Fire Chief establish an expectation that current and aspiring Chief Officers

demonstrate acceptable behaviors and attitudes toward diversity throughout their careers. Chief Officers who spent their early careers in a culture that did not value diversity will find it especially difficult to change a similar culture with any degree of credibility (Cook, 2002, P.143).

A good way to ensure that a healthy organizational culture perpetuates itself is by recruiting members who share the same values, beliefs and traits as the current members demonstrating the desired attributes and attitudes. On the flip side, the opportunity to weed out anyone who is threatening the well being of a department's culture should not be overlooked (Cook, 2002, P.144).

Once a healthy culture of diversity is established, it comes down to the Company Officer. "Firefighters will reflect the attitude of their Company Officers" (Cook, 2001, P.82). No single person has more influence over an individual firefighter than the Company Officer. First line supervisors need to be aware of their own stereotypes and assumptions, and learn to listen to people positively, not discounting ideas they don't agree with or that come from someone with a different background from their own (Berkman, 2003, P.3). What will be required to ensure a healthy culture toward diversity in the fire station are a few courageous Company Officers who embrace the Fire Chief's vision and directive regarding diversity in the workplace and accept the responsibility to manage their companies.

This taking back of the high ground will result in an environment within their companies and stations where everyone will feel welcome, new and fresh ideas will move forward and increased effectiveness and productivity will be seen.

Implementing and Maintaining Diversity Training Programs

Diversity training is fairly well established throughout the fire service. While this training is conducted in a variety of ways, utilizing several methods and approaches, the reasons for and the results of the training can vary widely.

Loden writes that the first stage of leadership is developing the vision. The second major step is to provide awareness training and education to minimize cultural clashes and ensure your organization is ready for cultural change. She goes on to say that rather than worry too much about the methods and curriculum used the focus should be on three outcome specific areas. First, ensure there is significant participation in the training by management and labor representatives. With limited involvement by these two stakeholders the impact will be limited also. Second, there should be a balance in the training between intellectual and experimental learning. There needs to be a balance between theory and principles with interaction and self-evaluation of where you are at in the process. Thirdly, there needs to be consideration given that will limit the scope and length of the training. With all the possible materials and subjects that can be covered, there needs to be a prioritization of the organization's most critical areas needing to be addressed and focusing the training in those areas (Loden, 1991, P.204, 205).

This approach to diversity training is further supported by the *Managers Handbook on Women in Firefighting*, which states, "The training should be focused, depending on the need of the department." It goes on to say that once these identified areas are addressed, it can be followed up by utilizing more generalized training programs such as communication skills, conflict resolution and mentoring (Berkman, 2003, P.11).

While these approaches to diversity training seem intuitive, that is not always the case. Too many times, canned diversity training programs are delivered as a requirement with little thought or input regarding the organization's needs or measuring the impact of the training that is being conducted.

Increasing Effectiveness and Productivity Through Diversity

For an organization to truly establish a culture that supports diversity, there must be a core belief that the effectiveness and productivity of the organization will benefit from diversity. While the fire service in general has made good progress in becoming more diverse, the most credible and time proven data has been collected by and validated by non-safety general government data.

Public sector organizations tend to have more diverse employee populations than organizations in the private sector, suggesting they have been more successful in recruiting employees of color, though often not promoting them to higher levels (Riccucci 2002; Cornwell and Kellough 1994). This brings to light the question, how can public organizations ensure a diverse group of employees work well together and increase effectiveness or productivity? This is the pressing question given the rationales for broadening diversity in the public sector. Ospina (2001), for example, suggests two main reasons why this is the case. First, cultural diversity enhances organizational performance by contributing to functional diversity, which, in turn, increases the prevalence of alternative perspectives and new ideas resulting in a better product. Secondly, it increases organizational legitimacy by mirroring the population. In the fire service this is essential as not only do we need the public's trust, but we also need access and cooperation into the homes and lives of our customers on a moment's notice.

Lowe who suggests that citizens must feel the firefighters understand and respect diversity further supports this approach.   He states that, citizens reasonably expect that their specific diversity is represented among the firefighters. Departments that fail to embrace diversity risk losing the confidence and support of their citizens and elected officials (Lowe, Barnes, 2002).

While having and acknowledging diversity as an important asset will have beneficial impacts upon the organization, having a diverse workforce that works well together is essential for maximizing the benefits of a culturally diverse organization.

Ample research has demonstrated that particular frames and behaviors in the workplace enhance learning and result in higher productivity by diverse workforces (Edmondson, Bohmer, and Pisano 2001). Frames such as "mistakes are opportunities for learning" and behaviors such as "inquiry into others perspectives" create an atmosphere of curiosity, engagement and safety. Such an atmosphere allows individuals in a diverse work environment to loosen their attachment to particular approaches and try new ways of thinking and acting (Argyris and Schon 1996). These frames and behaviors will manifest the idea that cultural differences are an important resource for thinking about the way work is done. Encouraging people to draw on their cultural experience will deepen and broaden a team's approach to its work. Second, this frame and behaviors approach validate that cultural differences are not only significant they must be discussed. It is impossible to draw on these resources if an environment exists where they are veiled (Nkomo and Cox, 1996).   If the fire service utilizes these frames and references consistently and supports them through policy and leadership, they will, by their vary nature, hold everyone in a group responsible for addressing differences (Foldy, 2004).

To ensure success into the future, today's fire department must acknowledge the necessity of a visually diverse workforce as well as creating frames and behaviors that will ensure the diverse workforce works well together. By understanding and managing this two-pronged approach of applying frames and behaviors to cultural diversity, the fire service will be successful in realizing the increased effectiveness and productivity that a properly managed diverse workforce can provide.

PROCEDURES

Definition of Terms

ACFD - Alameda County Fire Department

Affirmative Action - Proactive actions taken to provide equal opportunity, as in admission of employment, development, and promotions, for underrepresented groups such as people of color, women, and those with special needs.

Behaviors - Established behavioral patterns that are commonplace and accepted. An example would be behaviors such as inquiring about others perspectives before decisions are made.

Bias - An inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment

Culture - An established way of behavior and like-minded thinking by a group or sub-group of individuals with similar attributes and heritage.

Diversity - An established proportional representation of gender and race as determined by a local or government entity.

Frames - A general approach or philosophy that is well known and practiced by an organization throughout its policies, procedures and business practices. An example would be "mistakes are opportunities for learning."

Multiculturalism - That which pertains to, or is designated for, several individual cultures or groups.

Prejudice - An adverse opinion or judgment formed beforehand or without full knowledge or complex examination of the facts. Irrational hatred or suspicion of a specific group or religion.

Stereotypes - A conventional, usually oversimplified opinion, perception, or belief about a person; lacking in individuality.

Local Government – Government services that are provided and overseen by elected officials at the county and city levels.

Underrepresented Groups – A gender or race not proportionately represented in comparison to established criteria.

Research Methodology

This research project employed evaluative research to examine the Alameda County Fire Department's culture of diversity and associated diversity initiatives and programs in relation to six other large regional fire service providers within California. The literature search included a review of fire journals and magazines at the Learning Resource Center (LRC) of the National Fire Academy (NFA) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Cultural diversity information was downloaded off the web site of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) of the National Fire Academy (NFA) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. This review was supplemented by similar literature obtained from the County of Alameda Diversity Coordinator and extensive literature searches at the Livermore Public Library. Additional information was obtained through analysis of the department's current cultural

diversity initiatives and programs and reviewing the current results achieved by these programs.

Another phase of the research effort consisted of two interviews conducted for this project. The first interview was carried out with Sal Morales, Diversity Coordinator for Alameda County. Mr. Morales was selected for this project based on two factors. He is in charge of the day-to-day cultural diversity and affirmative action programs for Alameda County. This input and criteria gathered from Mr. Morales served as the baseline criteria for this evaluative research project. Secondly, Mr. Morales worked for the State of California prior to working for Alameda County and was in charge of initiating and coordinating the creation of Alameda County's affirmative action and cultural diversity programs. The interview took place on January 10, 2005 in the County Administrator's Diversity office. The interview lasted about 1 hour as Mr. Morales gave comprehensive responses to the following questions:

1.   What is your general view of the Alameda County Fire Department's Diversity programs and cultural competency?

2.   How does an organization accurately measure the success of its cultural diversity programs?

3.   How does an organization integrate diversity into its business strategy?

Mr. Morales's interview was sought because I thought it was essential to have his historical and countywide perspective to determine the scope, methodology and necessary participation in this research project. Such insights were essential in framing the issue and obtaining information that would benefit the department. A synopsis of the interview with Mr. Morales is located in Appendix C.

The other interview involved Theresa Johnson, the Fire Marshal for the Alameda County Fire Department (ACFD). Fire Marshal Johnson is the first female Chief Officer in the history of the Alameda County Fire Department. Fire Marshal Johnson was asked the following three broad based questions:

1.   How effective has the cultural diversity programs of the Alameda County Fire Department been?

2.   How would you describe the cultural competency of the ACFD and what are the strengths and weaknesses?

3.   How effective has the ACFD been in managing cultural diversity as a vital resource? Why?

Fire Marshal Johnson was asked these questions based on her broad amount of experience in the area of cultural competency in the fire service. She is responsible for helping a significant number of female fire service employees obtain and enhance their careers in the fire service. In addition, she currently manages three fire prevention divisions within the ACFD. These divisions have a diverse make up and deal with a wide range of political and operational issues in a male dominated organization. Fire Marshal Johnson has previously worked for two other fire departments and provides a wide breadth of knowledge and experience relating to the fire services history and tendencies relating to cultural diversity. She has a unique and informed perspective being the first ACFD female Chief Officer on an otherwise all male Chief Officer team. A synopsis of the interview with Fire Marshal Johnson is in Appendix C.

The final piece of the research puzzle was to survey six identified regional fire service providers. The survey was designed to group common cultural diversity practices

of regional fire service providers into common categories and terminology. These surveys were sent to identify similarities and differences in accepted cultural diversity practices among the six large regional fire service providers in California.

The survey introduction defined the problem statement as it had been developed from the initial interviews. The surveyed departments consisted of agencies that represented city, county, state and federal resources within the fire agencies. The survey was designed to produce descriptive data that could be evaluated in narrative form to identify likenesses, differences, strengths and weaknesses in comparison to the existing ACFD cultural diversity programs and competencies. The survey is not intended to provide statistically validated information to be utilized in a numerical or statistical manner. A survey was faxed and/or emailed, upon request, to the six departments along with a cover letter that included an explanation of the survey. The distributed survey was immediately followed up with a phone call requesting a time to talk with the survey participant to ensure he/she understood the purpose, scope and terminology of the survey. A point of contact was established in each jurisdiction, and the survey results were reviewed and validated by phone with each participating agency. The survey consisted of two comparative headings with a number of questions under each heading as follows:

Background Data

These three questions provided general department demographics so significant fundamental differences regarding size and function could be taken into consideration.

Department Diversity

Three questions were asked relating to the key drivers of diversity programs in the surveyed departments. These questions addressed how diversity is defined within the

department, the cultural competency that is driving the diversity programs, and why the cultural diversity programs are being implemented within the department.

Two questions were asked relating to the outcomes of diversity programs in the surveyed departments. The questions asked what the desired outcomes of these programs were and how the success related to these outcomes is measured.

One multiple-choice question was asked to identify what types of cultural diversity outreach programs the surveyed departments provided.

Three questions were asked relating to diversity training programs within the surveyed departments. The questions asked how often training was provided for management and non-management personnel and whether the training programs were meeting the established expectations.

Two questions were asked regarding generational diversity. One question addressed if there was an issue with generational diversity. The second question asked if generational diversity training had been implemented within the surveyed department.

All six jurisdictions questioned returned the survey. A copy of the cover letter, survey, and a table displaying the survey results are contained in Appendix A.

Assumptions and Limitations

It is assumed that the authors cited in the literature review conducted unbiased and objective research. It is assumed that the two subject experts who were interviewed for this research project answered the questions openly and honestly. Survey results were limited by a number of factors. Some surveys contained sporadic or incomplete answers. In such cases, comparison was used with other jurisdictions' responses contained in the same survey to help make a determination for the exclusion. However, when it was not

possible to determine intent by cross referencing other survey responses, assumptions were made that the information was not available, did not apply, or the respondent was unaware of the correct response. In addition, some jurisdictions picked more than one answer for questions requesting a single answer. In these cases, clarification regarding the preferred answer was obtained by conducting follow up contact with the respondent. The survey that was used was not sent out in large enough numbers to be statistically valid nor was that the intent. Instead the approach was to gain a snap shot view of similar sized and governed fire departments and get more in depth information that could be validated, analyzed and applied to programs and approaches utilized by the ACFD.

RESULTS

Question 1 – What are the desired outcomes of the ACFD's diversity programs? Are these outcomes consistent and measurable in relation to other regional fire service providers?

As a result of this research it has been reaffirmed that the desired outcome of cultural diversity within the ACFD is not about numbers. In reviewing the department's AA plans, cultural diversity programs and the existing emphasis on cultural integration, it is apparent that the leadership of the ACFD is committed to enhancing its capabilities and credibility within the communities it serves. The department leadership clearly understands the need to manage cultural diversity as an asset. There is a belief that in order for the department to meet its goal as a large regional fire service provider, the department must accurately represent the cultural diversity of the communities it serves. In addition, there is a strong feeling that service levels and credibility in the communities

served is growing as a more diverse workforce are working together and solving problems as a single team using diverse input to gain a common and appropriate solution.

This was further supported by the interviews conducted regarding the ACFD diversity programs. Both interviewees were very familiar with the ACFD diversity programs and substantiated that the department culture is moving in the direction of looking beyond numbers. Both gave a significant amount of credit to the ACFD management for the results to date and expressed optimism regarding continued progress in realizing a culture that views diversity as an organizational asset.

The ACFD's approach to valuing, managing and utilizing cultural diversity was not a universal perspective shared by the surveyed departments. Of the five departments who returned the surveys, two or 40% stated that the desired outcome was to meet the ethnic/gender make up of its respective jurisdiction. One of the five respondents added that the numbers needed to be achieved without reducing standards with no additional expected outcomes relating to meeting targeted demographics offered. These three responding agencies offered no other goals or expected outcomes other than having cultural diversity that coexists successfully.

The remaining two departments or 40% submitted responses that were more consistent with the outcome expectations of the ACFD. Both respondents stated they were striving to achieve a cultural demographic that accurately reflects their jurisdiction for the purpose of offering an increased level of service. Factors such as increased participation, a changing organization to meet the needs of a changing society and the need to have a culturally diverse workforce to adequately serve the communities were all common themes.

While the expected outcomes that were submitted had a good degree of clarity and specificity, the responses relating to measuring the success of cultural diversity programs appeared to be much more subjective. The ACFD's current method of measuring success includes measuring diversity numbers in relation to a desired cultural demographic that matches the 2000 census for Alameda County. In addition, the ACFD conducts internal and external customer service surveys. In the annual AA Plan, hiring and promotional goals for underrepresented classifications for all employee categories are created and measured. In an effort to measure the effectiveness of the cultural integration within the ACFD, the department and county monitor employee actions or grievances that would indicate cultural integration deficiencies.

Three or 60% of the responding agencies identified effective integration as the measurement standard. All three respondents referenced cultural diversity demographics that match the cultural demographics of the communities served as the baseline measurement tool. In addition, they all referenced other measurements of cultural integration such as; increased participation, embracing diversity, increased tolerance and enhanced problem solving and service delivery. No specific measurement tools were identified in measuring these outcomes.

One respondent or 20% identified increased customer service as the measure of success in its cultural diversity programs. No specific measurement tool was identified.

One respondent or 20% identified the discrimination tip line as the measurement standard for the success of its cultural diversity program. No specifics were given as to how data was collected, analyzed or utilized from the tip line.

Question 2 – What are the key drivers that impact diversity initiatives and programs in like size regional fire service providers in California?

The organizations that were surveyed, three or 60% submitted the definition of diversity as "race/gender proportional measurements." Two departments or 40% defined diversity as "the impact of diversity on levels of service or customer satisfaction."

There were a wide variety of cultural competencies seen as the key driver of cultural diversity programs in the surveyed respondents. Two or 40% saw "integration of cultures to achieve a superior product" as the key driver. One or 20% stated "proportional representation of the communities served as the key driver." One or 20% saw "integrating cultural realities to create an organizational culture" as the key driver with one or 20% saw "maximizing human potential" as the key driver that most closely aligns with its cultural diversity programs.

Relating to the reasons for cultural diversity programs in the surveyed departments three or 60% stated the reason for their diversity programs was "adding value to the organization's ability to provide the necessary services." Two or 40% submitted "increased customer service" as the reason for their cultural diversity programs, and one department or 20% stated a "mandate" as the reason for its cultural diversity program.

Question 3 – What diversity outreach programs are being provided by like size regional fire service providers?

There was a significant variety of diversity outreach programs utilized by the surveyed departments. Two or 40% of the surveyed agencies offer "reserve/volunteer firefighter outreach and membership programs. Three or 60% of the surveyed

departments offer "junior high and high school outreach programs." Three or 60% of the agencies offer "Community based partnership and outreach programs." Three or 60% utilize "in-house recruitment teams." One or 20% of the survey respondents utilize "fire department mentoring programs." Five or 100% of the surveyed agencies utilize "firefighter examination posting and recruitment programs." None of the surveyed agencies or zero percent utilize "written or agility test preparation programs."

In addition, one of the surveyed departments offered another program not listed in the survey choices. After candidates have passed the written and physical abilities test, they are randomly selected for oral interviews versus the top score down selection process. The oral interview established the employment eligibility list. Over the past five years, recruitment cycles have resulted in recruit classes with 40% or 50% diversity.
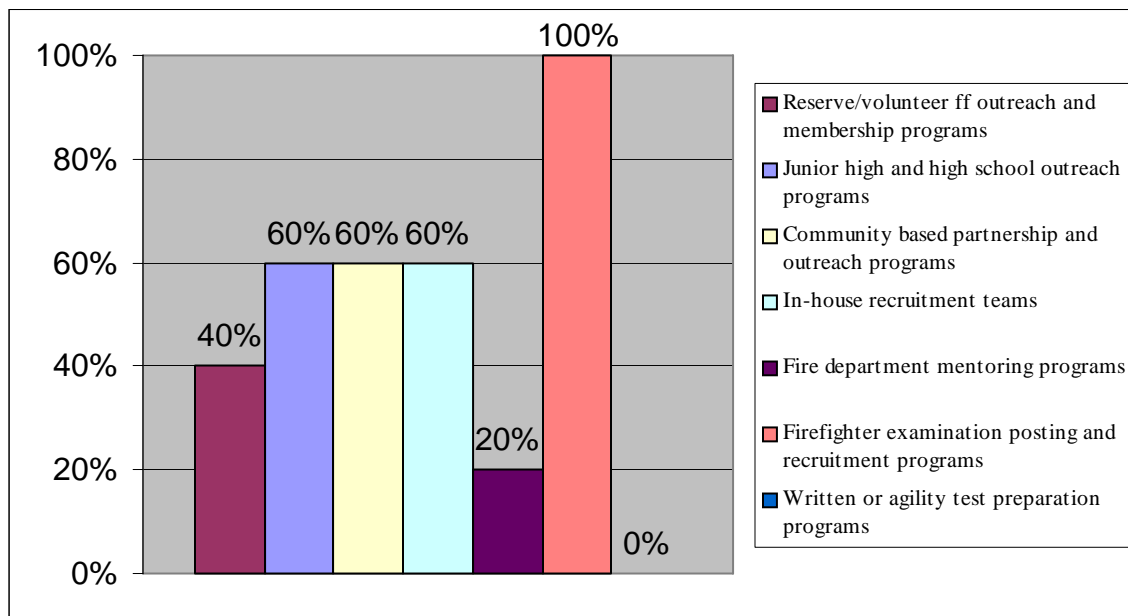
Question 4 – How often do like size regional fire service providers offer diversity training for management and non-management staff and is it seen as effective?

Cultural diversity training for management staff was offered in varying intervals. Two respondents or 40% offer diversity training for management personnel "every two years." Two responding agencies provide training for management personnel on an "as needed" basis, with one agency providing diversity training for managers on a "quarterly" basis.

Non-management personnel were offered cultural diversity training utilizing several training intervals. Two agencies or 40% provide the training on an "as needed" basis. Of the remaining three responding agencies, one department or 20% offered non-management personnel training "annually", one department or 20% offered the training "every two years" and one agency, representing 20%, offered the training "every three years."

In a similar fashion the participating agencies saw the success of their diversity training programs differently. Two agencies or 40% see their cultural diversity training programs as "not meeting expectations." Two agencies or 40% see their training as "meeting expectations and requirements," and one agency or 20% views its cultural diversity training program as "exceeding expectations or requirements." It is interesting to note that the agency that feels its training program is meeting or exceeding its expectations is the agency with the longest interval between training sessions.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research indicate there are a wide variety of methods and assumptions that drive diversity programs and initiatives for regional fire service providers in California. It was a bit disappointing to see the lack of a consistent methodology or science in approaching these types of complex cultural assimilation

endeavors. According to the research available at the National Fire Academy, as well as the local public library, there was not as much literature available as was anticipated that directly addressed the topic of cultural diversity programs that look beyond the numbers. Most of the available literature and research reviewed dealt with establishing and managing a diverse workforce and had less to do with how to monitor, change and measure the cultural competency and benefits to the organization once the numbers are obtained.

Without the development and integration of a diverse workforce combined with the demonstrated ability to manage and measure cultural diversity as an asset within an organization, the true organizational benefits that should be realized from a properly assimilated diverse workforce will not be fully realized. This observation is consistent with Berkman, who wrote that continued success in recruiting, retaining and promoting employees from outside the dominant work group is unlikely if the workplace does not value diversity. Conversely, in a workplace where differences are viewed as assets, people from a wider range of backgrounds are much more likely to feel comfortable, develop a sincere commitment, express different viewpoints and excel. (Berkman, 2002).

The research and surveys that were conducted as part of this project clearly demonstrate that there is a wide range of terminology and factors that influence fire department diversity programs and initiatives.

Based on follow-up conversations with the survey respondents, it was evident that terminology that was clear to one respondent was confusing to another. The fact that there are no established California fire service standards for terminology, program templates or measurement standards regarding diversity programs and initiatives were a

significant concern for all the responding agencies. Specific concern was noted relating to the inconsistency or absence of management programs that measure and quantify the success and benefits of a culturally diverse and assimilated workforce. In all of the literature and other resources utilized as part of this project, there were no recommended measurement criteria to quantify the benefits of a diversified workforce. According to the Alameda County Diversity Coordinator Sal Morales, this lack of standards and consistent measurement tools contributes to the difficulty that large government employers and regional fire service providers have in explaining and quantifying the benefits of a properly diversified and assimilated workforce.

The reviewed literature and surveys revealed two general driving factors of regional fire service diversity programs. The first is fire service providers whose diversity programs and initiatives are based solely on achieving targeted ratios and numeric goals. This approach was still being taken by 40% of the surveyed departments and was deemed a necessity based on a mandate or assigned goal. While there are many programs in place to achieve these types of goals, and every surveyed and researched department had made significant progress on increasing the numbers to achieve cultural diversity, there is an assumed problem on the horizon if a long-range plan for effective integration and establishment of a healthy cultural competency is not implemented. This type of initiative by the admittance of the survey participants is a mandate and not a departmental/corporate culture or philosophy. Without a basis on which to support diversity initiatives, the program lacks a foundation and is doomed to fail. Edgar H. Schein, noted organizational psychologist, has defined corporate culture as the basic assumptions driving life in a given organization. It is important to understand that these

cultural assumptions are unexamined. That makes them different from values, which often are debated. They are also different from behaviors, styles of working, and traditions. One way to understand culture is to conceptualize an organization as a tree. In this organizational tree, the roots are the corporation's culture. These roots, of course, are below the surface, invisible. But they give rise to the trunk, branches, and leaves-the visible part of the tree. Nothing can take place in the branches or leaves and be sustained unless it is congruent with the roots (Schein, 1985).

The second theme that was identified as a primary driving factor in implementing and maintaining a diversified workforce had to do with increased credibility, customer service and an improved work product. These types of drivers represented 60% of the survey respondents and offered an assumed beneficial outcome through a diversified workforce. These responses were consistent with the vast majority of literature and other resources utilized for this project. This segment of the fire service does not see diversity from a mandate perspective, but instead believes diversity will increase the department's credibility with the communities served and provide an enhanced level of service through the synergy that is achieved by a diverse group of people working as a team to solve a common problem. This is supported by Morgan who wrote, "Diversity initiatives have a direct and positive influence on employee morale by creating a positive climate and a supportive environment. A corollary to this assumption is that improved morale creates a corresponding increase in members' skills, attitudes and performance levels (Morgan 2002)."

A third and final theme that was identified as part of this research project was the varying intervals and emphasis on conducting diversity training and what role that plays

in the successful management of cultural diversity. While 100% of the surveyed departments conducted some form of diversity training, the interval of the training and perception of its effectiveness varied widely. The training intervals ranged from quarterly, to semi-annually to when needed (usually defined as when a problem arose or was identified). The department's perception of the training effectiveness ranged from exceeding expectations to not meeting expectations with no definable pattern associated with the utilization of long or short training intervals.

In follow-up conversations with the participating agencies, there were no common themes or topics of training that were utilized. Some departments focused on cultural sensitivity and multiculturalism, while other departments trained on hostile work environments and how diversity issues may fall into this category. In a day and age where the California fire service has standardized training and education for everything from pulling hoses to certifying EMT's and paramedics, it is hard to understand why so little work has been accomplished relating to diversity and multicultural assimilation training. This is an area of great importance to the California fire service and worth exploring further.

Additionally, consideration and thought need to be given to a standardized training curriculum at the state level that will move the California fire service past the diversity recruitment and management stage. This curriculum needs to concentrate on the training and education for the organization to become a truly assimilated diverse work group that achieves six basic benefits from diversity training identified by Floran who wrote, "Some of the benefits of workforce education in diversity issues are: A more positive work environment, enhanced trust, respect and unity of purpose within the

workforce, improved productivity, enhanced group problem solving, reduced stress and greater understanding and respect for different cultures.

Until fire service organizations can learn to properly value and manage diversity across the board, we will continue to suffer in lost productivity and growth as organizations. The future of the fire service's success as a diverse and proportional workforce is dependent on leadership and management that will ensure multiculturalism, acculturation, pluralism and inclusion are the cornerstones of a fire service work environment.

To summarize, many fire departments are in the process or have achieved their goal of matching their community's cultural diversity. However, few departments are pursuing the next step of integration and growth that this newfound diversity can offer.

Furthermore, there are few if any established measurement standards that can be used to quantify or benchmark the true benefits of a properly managed and assimilated work force. If the ACFD and the California fire service do not collectively pursue this type of enhanced cultural competency, community support for the fire service could be impacted and untapped potential will neither be identified nor utilized. In short, we will not be providing the highest level of service available, and existing organizational assets will be mismanaged or go unutilized all together.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study support the fact the ACFD's existing diversity recruitment, training and management programs do provide an adequate baseline for obtaining and managing diversity within the organization. With some modifications, these programs can offer a more comprehensive, effective and progressive cultural

competency platform to enhance the management and measurement of diversity initiatives within the ACFD.

It is anticipated that with the implementation of these recommendations combined with the measurement of established cultural diversity benchmarks, the success and benefits of a diverse workforce can be clearly demonstrated and benchmarked against other departments with comparable demographic information. It is hoped that by implementing this approach to a diverse workforce the fire service can truly begin to focus attention at the department culture and begin to look beyond the numbers, stop chasing ratios and start measuring the results and benefits of a diverse workforce.

First, the ACFD will take a leadership role in creating a "Diversity as a Fire Service Business Strategy" guide and a "Measuring Success in Diversity" guide for fire service providers. These guides will be developed with input from the regional fire service providers who participated in this research project and submitted to California Fire Chiefs Association bookstore for printing and publication. Revenues for the guides should be utilized to continue updates and printing.

The Diversity as a Fire Service Business Strategy guide should address seven areas that will contribute to managing diversity as an asset: 1) triggering result driven performance through diversity, 2) maintaining standards and increasing workforce quality through diversity, 3) increasing creativity through diversity, 4) attracting the best and brightest employees, 5) successfully meeting future challenges regarding diversity, 6) managing diversity in a manner that promotes employee development, loyalty and productivity, and 7) capitalizing on new technology to assist in managing and maximizing diversity within the organization.

The Measuring Success in Diversity Guide should provide the basic criteria and methodology to measure and report the benefits and successes of diversity in a manner that can be implemented statewide. The guide should address four areas relating to measurement and reporting: 1) tie diversity to standardized performance measures, 2) track diversity in a consistent manner to monitor progress in hiring and contracting policies, procedures and practices, 3) assign meaningful numbers (metrics) to conditions, objects, events, production, and services, and 4) compare and benchmark guidelines.

Secondly, a central repository for diversity recruitment and management programs should be established. The California Fire Chiefs Association should initiate this central repository as part of its annual membership and fire department information-updating program. All submittals should be submitted electronically and will be managed on the Cal Chiefs web page server. This will be accomplished by utilizing a standard template including the following five questions: 1) What diversity programs for recruitment, community outreach or management development do you have in place? 2) Please provide a brief description of the program including the target audience age/rank and demographics. 3) Do you have a copy of the program or a program template that can be utilized sent as part of this information. 4.) Who should be contacted if more information regarding this program is requested? 5) Please reference any department policies and procedures implemented in support of the submitted program or initiative.

Third, the ACFD will take a leadership role in bringing together the regional fire service providers that participated in this study for the purpose of creating a model cultural diversity-training curriculum. The curriculum will consist of three training components: 1) Seeing and managing cultural diversity as an organizational asset;

2) Enhancing trust, respect and unity of purpose within the workforce; 3) Enhancing group problem solving abilities to ensure a wider variety of ideas and viewpoints are supported; and 4) Increasing understanding of and respect for different cultures, resulting in an improved level of service to the community.

These training components will be modular in nature and can be applied in different configurations to meet the needs of the training audience ranging from community groups to new recruits to Chief Officers. It is the author's intention to submit this model curriculum to the State Board of Fire Services for inclusion into the State Fire Training curriculum as part of the Fire Officer and Chief Officers training curriculum.

Finally, in 2005-2006 the ACFD will implement a training and education program that focuses on the value and benefits of a diversified workforce. The curriculum will be developed in conjunction with a local community college or university utilizing established cultural diversity integration in the workplace experts. The curriculum will be developed in draft form and presented to ACFD management and labor leadership in multiple sessions. Based on the leadership's feedback, proposed changes will be included in the curriculum. Once management and labor agree to the curriculum, the modules will be conducted for all ACFD personnel. At the conclusion of the training, recommended changes and modifications will be made based on the feedback and input from ACFD personnel. This template curriculum will serve as the base curriculum that will be introduced to the agencies that participated in this project. Once they further refine the training modules the base curriculum, it will serve as baseline curriculum in the development of a statewide cultural diversity model curriculum referenced in recommendation three.

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Appendix A

Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Project

Project Title

"Establishing and Maintaining a Culturally Diverse Workforce, Looking Beyond the Numbers, and Identifying Opportunities for the Alameda County Fire Department"

S U R V E Y   D O C U M E N T

<u>EFOP Participant:</u>

Sheldon Gilbert
Deputy Fire Chief
Alameda County Fire Department
1192 Alison Circle, Livermore, CA 94550
(510) 693-3402 - cell; (510) 618-3445 - fax
<u>Sheldon.gilbert@acgov.org</u>

<u>Problem Statement</u>

As local individual fire service providers face continuing financial hardships, greater attention is being paid to the regional service provider concept as a means of maintaining fiscal solvency while continuing to meet the life safety demands of the public. As the Alameda County Fire Department has grown into a regional fire service provider, the service area demographics and cultural diversity of the communities served has significantly changed. This expansion, combined with the lack of diversity that was present in the Alameda County Fire Department upon its inception in 1993, has resulted in a significant need to diversify the ranks of the ACFD to better represent and serve the local communities.

Under the department's current leadership, significant progress has been made in the diversification of the ACFD workforce. However, while this progress is significant, there is still work to be done. Existing and enhanced hiring practices that seek and retain a qualified diverse workforce must be identified and maintained. In addition, the ACFD is committed to establishing a department-wide culture that looks beyond the numbers, identifies and understands why diversity is necessary and learns how to manage a culturally and generationally diverse workforce as a community asset. The department desires to build upon its current strategic approach to diversity so it can more fully realize the value and profit provided by employees who bring different skills, talents and points of view to the department.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Department Name:	_____
Address:	_____

Contact Name: _____
Telephone #:	(_____)_____

A.   Background Data

1.   Size of Department: _____   Badge Personnel: _____   Non-Badge: _____

2.   Number of Stations: _____

3.   Type of Jurisdiction: Independent Special District   ___
        Dependent Special District   ___
        City Department   ___
        County Department   ___
        JPA   ___
        Other   ___ Explain: _____

B. Diversity Program Outcomes

1.Define your department's expected outcome from establishing and maintaining a diverse workforce? Please explain?

2. How do you measure the success or the advantages of a diverse work force?
   Please explain:

C. Diversity Program Drivers

1.   How does your department define diversity?

        a.   Race/Gender proportional measurements
        b.   Cultural integration factors
        c.   Impact of diversity on level of service or customer satisfaction

2.   Please choose the cultural competency factor that most closely aligns with the key driver for diversity programs in your organization?

        a.   Credibility within the communities served
        b.   Integration of cultures to achieve a superior product
        c.   Maximizing human potential
        d.   Integrating cultural realities to create one organizational culture
        e.   Proportional representation of the communities served

3. Which factor best describes the reason for cultural diversity programs within your organization?

   a. Mandate
   b. Added value
   c. Business necessity
   d. Increased customer service

D. Diversity Programs

1. What current diversity outreach programs does your organization provide? (mark all applicable programs)

   a. Reserve/volunteer firefighter outreach and membership programs
   b. Junior high and high school outreach programs
   c. Community partnership and outreach programs
   d. In-house recruitment teams
   e. Community oriented fire department mentoring and recruitment programs
   f. Firefighter examination posting and recruitment programs
   g. Written and physical agility test preparation programs
   h. Other: Please explain

E. Diversity Program Training

1. How often do you provide diversity training for non-management personnel?

   a. Annually
   b. Semi-Annually
   c. Quarterly
   d. As needed
   e. Other: Please explain

2. How often do you provide cultural diversity training for management personnel?

   a. Annually
   b. Semi Annually
   c. Quarterly
   d. As needed
   e. Other: Please explain

3. What statement best describes the status of your existing diversity training programs and goals?

   a. Exceeding expectations and requirements
   b. Meeting expectations and requirements
   c. Not meeting expectations or requirements
   d. Cultural diversity programs are not in place or are in need of updating

Appendix B

Survey Data

Table 1 Background Data						
	Contra Costa County	Orange County	Livermore-Pleasanton	Los Angeles County	Sacramento Metropolitan	Santa Clara County
Personnel	406	1078	127	NO RESPONSE	720	275
Stations	28	60	10		42	16
Governance	Dependent District	JPA	JPA		Independent District	Dependent District
Badge Personnel	342	759	105		600	240
Non Badge Personnel	62	313	22		120	35

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Table 2 Department Diversity Outcomes	
1) Define your department's expected outcome from establishing and maintaining a diverse workforce.	
Contra Costa County	A workforce that approximates the representation of the available workforce in the communities served
Livermore-Pleasanton	Maintain a diverse workforce free of a hostile work environment, with no sexual harassment
Orange County	Hire and maintain the best qualified candidates who meet the department's high ethical standards and represent the ethnic/gender balance of Orange County
Los Angeles County	No response
Sacramento Metropolitan	Aspires to have a workforce whose diversity mirrors the community it serves
Santa Clara County	Different cultures, backgrounds and perspectives that reflect the communities served. It is a good business model that increases employee participation. It increases customer service. Change the fire department culture to be flexibly and accommodating.
2) How do you measure the success or the advantages of a divers work force?	
Contra Costa County	Effective and productive integration of diversity at all ranks and in all programmatic areas.
Livermore-Pleasanton	Calls to the Human Resources tip line
Orange County	Success in providing a high level of customer service
Los Angeles County	No response
Sacramento Metropolitan	Successful integration into the department, increased customer service, increase credibility within the communities served
Santa Clara County	Increased tolerance, higher employee participation a workforce that more closely reflects the demographics of the communities served

Table 3 Diversity Drivers	
1. How does your department define diversity?	
Contra Costa County	Race gender proportional measurements
Livermore-Pleasanton	Impact of diversity on level of service or customer satisfaction
Orange County	Race gender proportional measurements
Los Angeles County	Did not respond
Sacramento Metropolitan	Impact of diversity on level of service or customer satisfaction
Santa Clara County	Race gender proportional measurements
2) Please choose the cultural competency factor that most closely aligns with the key driver for diversity programs in your organization?	
Contra Costa County	Proportional representation of the communities served
Livermore-Pleasanton	Maximizing human potential
Orange County	Integrating cultural realities to create one organizational culture
Los Angeles County	Did not respond
Sacramento Metropolitan	Credibility within the communities served; integrating of cultures to achieve a superior product, maximizing human potential; integrating cultural realities to create one organizational culture
Santa Clara County	Integration of cultures to achieve a superior product
3) Which factor best describes the reason for cultural diversity programs within your organization?	
Contra Costa County	Mandate
Livermore-Pleasanton	Increased customer service
Orange County	Added value
Los Angeles County	Did not respond
Sacramento Metropolitan	Increased customer service
Santa Clara County	Added value

Table 4 Diversity Programs	
1) What current diversity outreach programs does your organization provide?	
Contra Costa County	Reserve firefighter, junior high and high school programs, community partnerships, in house recruitment teams, examination posting
Livermore-Pleasanton	Examination posting
Orange County	Reserve firefighter, junior high and high school programs, in house recruitment teams, fire department mentoring, examination posting
Los Angeles County	Did not respond
Sacramento Metropolitan	Junior high and high school programs, community partnerships, in house recruitment teams, examination posting
Santa Clara County	Community partnerships, examination posting, random selection process for new hires after passing of a written examination

Table 5 Diversity Training Programs	
1. How often do you provide cultural diversity training for management personnel?	
Contra Costa County	Every two years
Livermore-Pleasanton	Quarterly
Orange County	As needed
Los Angeles County	Did not respond
Sacramento Metropolitan	As needed
Santa Clara County	Every two years
2) How often do you provide cultural diversity for non-management personnel?	
Contra Costa County	Every three years
Livermore-Pleasanton	Annually
Orange County	As needed
Los Angeles County	Did not respond
Sacramento Metropolitan	As needed
Santa Clara County	Every two years
3) What statement best describes the status of your existing diversity training programs?	
Contra Costa County	Exceeding expectations
Livermore-Pleasanton	Meeting expectations
Orange County	Meeting expectations
Los Angeles County	Did not respond
Sacramento Metropolitan	Not meeting expectations
Santa Clara County	Not meeting expectations

Appendix C

Interview

Sal Morales, Diversity Manager, Alameda County

Location: County Administrator's Office

January 10, 2005 at 1000-1100 hours interview synopsis:

What is your general view of the Alameda County Fire Department's diversity programs and cultural competency? Mr. Morales was very impressed with the innovation and success to date relating to the ACFD diversity programs. He felt that they were adequate and meeting the goals established by Alameda County and the ACFD. He was particularly impressed with ACFD's desire to take our diversity initiatives to the next level. He offered several pieces of advice on how to go about establishing training that would contribute to a cultural competency that sees diversity as an asset and advantage.

Mr. Morales agreed that it was time to go beyond reaching the numerical goals and establishing a culture that is truly integrated and producing a superior product. He emphasized the importance of creating measurement tools that would accurately quantify the benefits of a properly culturally diverse and integrated workforce.

How does an organization accurately measure the success of its cultural diversity programs? Mr. Morales established that the true benefits of diversity would only be realized if they are accurately measured utilizing performance indicators. He stated that measurements should be tied into policies, procedures and practices wherever possible. Mr. Morales stated there needs to be meaningful numbers or metrics applied to these practices. Once these are established he encouraged the ACFD to contact similar fire

service providers, obtain agreement on the measurement standards and metrics to be used and compare and benchmark numbers to validate the collected data.

How does an organization integrate diversity into its business strategy? Mr. Morales felt there were three essential factors that needed to be established to integrate diversity into the ACFD's business strategy. First, he felt that the diversity needed to be operationalized into the bottom line; this can only be accomplished by determining measurable work unit's improvements that reflect the value of diversity. Second, the ACFD should create a strategic approach to identify and measure value from employees who bring different skills, talents and points of view to the County. Lastly, Mr. Morales advised the ACFD to implement a system's approach, which would help the department to promote, embrace and value differences as a core department objective.

Appendix D

Interview

Theresa Johnson, Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal, Alameda County Fire Department

Location: Alameda County Fire Department Administrative Offices
March 25, 2005 at 1400-1500 hours, interview synopsis:

How effective has the cultural diversity programs of the Alameda County Fire Department been? Mrs. Johnson felt the cultural diversity programs of the ACFD have been very effective. She believed the department had a very diverse group of employees, much more diverse than any other department or private business she had ever worked for.

How would you describe the cultural competency of the ACFD and what are the strengths and weaknesses? Mrs. Johnson felt the ACFD for the most part was competent at how they handle cultural diversity. The majority of the time management is careful to ensure that there is no issue when it comes to diversity. However, on occasion there is the perception from line staff that people are chosen based on race/gender rather than ability. She felt this was consistent with what she has heard from other departments; only they seem to really have that problem, whereas the ACFD is just a perception. She sees the ACFD strength is to treat everyone equally.   The ACFD shows some weakness in communicating to the organization why someone was chosen or promoted.

How effective has the ACFD been in managing cultural diversity as a vital resource? Why? Mrs. Johnson felt the ACFD has been very effective at managing cultural diversity. The communities that are served by the ACFD are very diverse, and the employees that serve those communities reflect the culture they serve.

Appendix E

2000-2004 Affirmative Action Plan Diversity History

	Total Employees	Total Minorities *	Female						Male					
CHANGE SUMMARY														
APRIL 2000 TO MARCH 2005														
			W	AA *	H *	A *	AI *	TOTAL	W	AA *	H *	A *	AI *	TOTAL
APRIL 2000														
# GRAND TOTAL:	234	24	8	0	1	0	0	9	202	5	15	3	0	225
% GRAND TOTAL:	100.0%	10.3%	88.9%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	89.8%	2.2%	6.7%	1.3%	0.0%	100.0%
MARCH 2005														
# GRAND TOTAL:	264	66	20	2	1	2	0	25	178	23	26	11	1	239
% GRAND TOTAL:	100.0%	25.0%	80.0%	8.0%	4.0%	8.0%	0.0%	100.0%	74.5%	9.6%	10.9%	4.6%	0.4%	100.0%
CHANGE														
# TOTAL:	30	42	12	2	0	2	0	16	-24	18	11	8	1	14
% TOTAL:	12.8%	175.0%	75.0%	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	100.0%	-171.4%	128.6%	78.6%	57.1%	7.1%	100.0%