

Cottonwood, Inc.

Cultural Diversity Plan

Overview:

Cottonwood, Inc. embraces diversity and values of difference in the workplace. Embracing diversity and valuing difference in the workplace makes for better creativity, acceptance, and innovation. It also broadens the range of knowledge, skills, and abilities of our staff members. Better service decisions can be made based on broader culturally diverse perspectives. As an organization, our focus on cultural competency and diversity will improve our ability to provide culturally sensitive services to the individuals we support.

Definitions

Culture – The life patterns, language and beliefs of a group of people. Culture consists of ideals, values, and assumptions about life that are widely shared among the members. It is also referred to as the behavior and values of a group of people. It is the major way in which human beings adapt to their environment and give meaning to their lives.

Cultural Competency – Cultural competency is an ongoing learning process that fosters inclusion, tolerance and respect for diversity in all forms.

Demographics

Cottonwood, Inc. provides services to individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities residing in Douglas and Jefferson Counties in Kansas. (See attached QuickFacts) Services are primarily provided in Douglas County Kansas which has a population of 118,053 and can be described as follows:

Race-

White- 84%

African-Americans- 4.6%

American Indian and Alaska Native- 2.8%

Asian- 4.8%

White/Non-Hispanic- 81.7%

Hispanic or Latino- 6.0%

Language – 9.8% speak a language other than English at home.

Income – Median household income is \$50,732. 19.4% persons are below the poverty level.

Gender- 50 % of the population is female.

Cottonwood Demographics

Individuals Served- 300 (persons receiving case management)

White- 83%

African-Americans-10%

American Indian/Alaskan Native- 2%

Hispanic- 2%

Asian/Pacific Island- less than 1%

Language- None known to speak language other than English at home.

Gender- 43 % of the individuals served are female.

Staff- 208

Gender- 152 Females / 56 Males

Minority- 18.8%

Process:

In order to promote cultural diversity in the organization, Cottonwood, Inc. is engaged in the following activities:

- Robust Affirmative Action Plan and Equal Opportunity Employment initiatives.
- All new employees review the Personnel Handbook as part of Orientation.

- During the interview process, questions regarding experience and attitudes toward persons with disabilities may be explored.
- Direct Support Staff are provided with initial training on respecting differences and the history of developmental disabilities from the Training Coordinator.
- Staff and outside speakers are encouraged to present talks, workshops, and/or provide educational information on culturally diverse topics.
- Professional literature such as Manager's Legal Bulletin that targets legal issues around cultural competency and diversity is routinely distributed to employees.
- Staff are encouraged to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of multicultural celebrations and faith based activities.
- Direct Support Staff are assigned specific courses from the College of Direct Supports on Cultural Competency.
- Staff Exit Interview forms include a question about cultural competency.
- Management staff in Supervisor Committee engage in discussions regarding cultural competency and diversity as it relates to staff and consumers. Training is provided as needed or requested.
- The Strategic Plan, from time to time, may focus on diversity issues.
- Person Centered Plans reflect individualized preferences and personal background information, including a question that specifically prompts a sensitivity to cultural preferences.
- Personnel policies support staff diversity, e.g. 03-019 Holidays
- Cottonwood's Code of Ethics requires a respect for inclusion and equitable treatment for all people.
- Family Handbook, Consumer Handbook, and Sexuality Manual address sensitive issues about lifestyle preference, choice, and non-typical behavior.
- Admissions Policy states non-discrimination intent.
- Satisfaction Surveys for stakeholders/consumers include a question on satisfaction with agency cultural diversity efforts.

Progress on Initial Goals

The goals of this Cultural Diversity Plan is to raise the consciousness of the organization regarding culture and diversity by recognizing the need for ongoing training, dialogue, feedback, and input from all employees. It is important that all staff, new and current, are involved in the process of making Cottonwood a culturally aware and sensitive environment to all with whom we come into contact.

Goal # 1- Update Consumer Handbook to state our intent to promote cultural competence and diversity across all components of Cottonwood.

Method: Add language to the “Introduction” that explains our efforts.

Timeline: Completed 2012

Persons Responsible: Jill Baker, Janet Fouche-Schack

Goal # 2- Insert a universal satisfaction survey question into all stakeholder satisfaction surveys regarding diversity and cultural awareness efforts.

Method: Supervisor Committee will work together to write a question.

Timeline: Completed 2013

Persons Responsible: Supervisor Committee/Dennis Meier

Goal # 3- Continue to maintain a workforce reflective of Cottonwood’s population.

Method: Promote Affirmative Action Program-see Plan.

Timeline: Ongoing

Persons Responsible: Dennis Meier and Management Staff

Goal # 4- Add a question to the Person Centered Support Plan Questionnaire that asks if an individual’s cultural needs are being addressed.

Method: Support Services to amend their questions.

Timeline: Completed 2013

Persons Responsible: Janet Fouche-Schack and Kara Walters

Goal # 5: Add a question to the Staff Exit Interview Form to inquire about experience and level of competence with diversity and cultural competency.

Method: HR Director will draft a question with review by Supervisor Committee.

Timeline: Completed 2012

Persons Responsible: Dennis Meier

Plan Update

The Cultural Competency Plan will be an ongoing agenda item for the Supervisors Committee and reviewed annually with the Accessibility Plan.

Goal #1: Schedule a speaker / Brown Bag session for one Supervisors Committee meeting and one Wellness Committee event.

Method: Research and invite speaker to address a pertinent topic.

Timeline/Progress: December 2016

Persons Responsible: Dennis Meier

Goal #2: Initiate a Special Emphasis Program.

Method: Program Facilitators for each Day Services Department will plan activities around culturally significant and diverse events and then publish news of such events in Cottonpickens, on Facebook page, etc.

Timeline/Progress: December 2016

Persons Responsible: Department Directors & Program Facilitators

Goal #3: Upcoming public events that encourage cultural awareness will be advertised in Cottonpickens from time to time.

Method: Director of Support Services will prompt Records Manager that Cottonpickens

is ready to be compiled for the month. Records Manager will send any entries to the Receptionist.

Timeline/Progress: Ongoing

Persons Responsible: Director of Support Services, Records Manager, Receptionist

Revised: 07/2016

Goal #4: Explore the value of a video created by Cottonwood to be placed on Facebook or web page that would be inviting to Veterans.

Method: Research like videos (Google's is one example). Realistically portray types of jobs available at Cottonwood.

Timeline/Progress: 07/2017

Persons Responsible: Dennis Meier, Kari Bentzinger, Heather Thies

Plan created: August 2012

Revision dates:

09/2013

08/2014

09/2015

07/2016