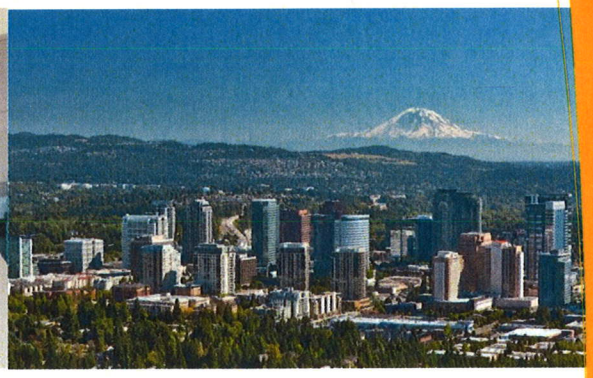
Bellevue Diversity Initiative

The Diversity Advantage

Putting the positive power of diversity to work in our community



Bellevue welcomes the world.
Our diversity is our strength.

Bellevue City Council Vision Statement, 2014

CITY OF BELLEVUE WASHINGTON

Recommendations

Adopted December 8, 2014

Cultural Competence in City Government

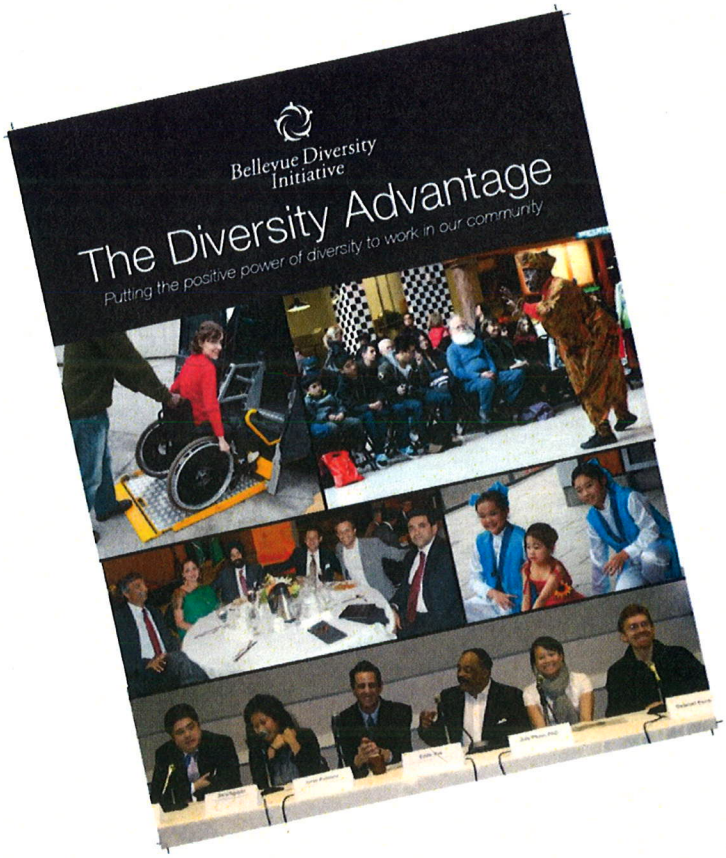
1. Obtain endorsement and direction from the City Council and Leadership Team to include cultural competence as a **core competency** of the organization in policy and practice.
2. Hire a Cultural Competence and Equity professional to integrate cultural competence and equity as elements in City policy development, programming, service delivery and program evaluation.
    a. **Regularly review and evaluate** City-wide cultural competence efforts in the following categories: organizational values, policies, staffing, resources, service delivery and public outreach.
    b. Establish a **knowledge base** of best practices and available resources for cultural competence and equity within the City.
3. Establish **performance measures** to track progress at meeting goals and actions of the Initiative.
4. Provide systematic and regular cultural competence **training for all City staff** over a five-year period.
5. Provide cultural competence **training for City volunteers and community leaders,** including those serving on City boards, commissions and advisory committees.
6. Add cultural competence as an **evaluative criterion** in the City's budget process.
7. Strengthen and **advance recruitment efforts** of diverse City staff to better reflect city demographics.
8. Dovetail the City's existing **accessibility and compliance programs** (ADA, Section 504, Title VI) with the Diversity Initiative to achieve similar goals of increased performance and outcomes across all City services.
9. **Establish City-wide standards** for translation of written material, interpretation services at meetings, and for physical access to meetings and programs.
10. Conduct a comprehensive review of public information tools, protocols and resources to identify strategies and **methods for more effective communication** with diverse populations.
11. **Explore and identify** additional Mini-City Hall locations to improve local accessibility to City services.
12. **Dedicate resources** for City departments to innovate and adapt to provide culturally competent services and improve public outreach and civic engagement.

Cultural Competence in the Community

1. Invest in **more public gathering spaces,** or **Third Places,** throughout Bellevue for people to connect, celebrate and interact.
2. Support and produce special events, art exhibits and performances, educational materials, festivals and public information that **increase opportunities for cultural interaction and education.**
3. Convene a community advisory group to explore a charter to establish a **"Bellevue Diversity Institute".** This experiential learning center would serve as a citywide cultural center and would be a resource for businesses, schools and other community groups and organizations. Its mission would be to educate, celebrate, challenge and inspire Bellevue to be a welcoming and inclusive community that embraces diversity.
4. Improve **outreach** and engagement to build relationships with isolated communities and establish trust and affinity.
5. Develop a **Cultural Liaison Program**, where representatives of culture groups work as liaisons between their group and the City, or other community institutions.
6. Continue to produce and distribute **demographic information** and analysis to residents, businesses, nonprofits and public and private educational institutions to elevate understanding of Bellevue's ever-evolving diversity.
7. Produce **welcome packets** for new residents with language translations available, promoting community organizations, City services and local businesses.
8. **Increase public awareness** through branding work that incorporates key messaging about Bellevue as a welcoming community with a world-wide view, and acceptance of diversity as a positive aspect of living and working in Bellevue.
9. Collect regular **community feedback** and utilize volunteers to help assess City services from a diversity perspective. Track **performance measures** on cultural competence exhibited within the community.
10. **Coordinate** with local community groups and organizations dedicated to issues of diversity and culture.

Human Services

1. Support the establishment of a **year-round homeless shelter** on the Eastside.
2. **Translate** city materials on human service resources and referral programs available in Bellevue into the most commonly spoken languages.
3. Assist non-profit human service agencies in providing **culturally competent care** and support to Bellevue residents of all ages, abilities and ethnic backgrounds.
4. Engage the Eastside Human Services Forum in **regional discussions** of diversity in human services.
5. Promote bicultural and bi-lingual programs that **help individuals access public and nonprofit human services systems**, such as the Cultural Navigator Program.
6. Support human service organizations in providing cultural competence **training** for their staff.
7. **Recruit diverse community volunteers** to support programs and services that meet human service needs in Bellevue.



Public Safety

1. Continue **recruitment efforts** designed to diversify public safety staff to better reflect city demographics.
2. Provide ongoing cultural competence **training** to all public safety staff.
3. Improve access to public health and safety information through **partnerships with ethnic media**.
4. **Address under-reporting of crime** by promoting the City of Bellevue as a safe place for residents to report instances of civil rights violation, housing and other forms of discrimination.
5. Periodically **convene focus groups** of people of various ages, abilities and race and ethnic backgrounds to ask and learn about appropriate public safety service delivery methods.
6. Support public safety programs that **outreach to vulnerable people groups**, including the elderly, disabled and isolated communities.

Education

1. Collaborate with the Bellevue School District, Bellevue College and other community organizations to **establish a common language** and definitions around cultural competence and social equity.
2. Encourage and support **community conversations** on the issues of disability, economic class, gender, sexual orientation race and ethnicity.
3. Support local schools and colleges in providing comprehensive services and support to diverse student populations to **erase achievement gaps** where they exist.
4. **Strengthen Wrap-Around Services** for targeted schools within the Bellevue School District to build up community efforts to address achievement gaps.
5. Work with Bellevue School District, Eastside Pathways and other education programs to share information and identify strategies to **improve teacher/family communications**.
6. Work with community partners to provide **leadership training and mentoring** opportunities for our youth.
7. With community partners, develop a long-term marketing **education and branding strategy** to focus positive attention on diversity and diverse groups.

Economic Development

1. Provide opportunities for current and future Bellevue residents and workers by implementing regulatory and incentive tools to increase the supply of **affordable housing.**
2. Improve regional efforts to support **entrepreneur and small business creation**, including training, loan assistance, mentoring opportunities, gathering spaces and networking.
3. Embed cultural competence within City **organizational policy** such as the Comprehensive Plan and Economic Development Strategy.
4. Promote and support programs that offer community-based **employment opportunities** for individuals with barriers to employment, such as ability, age and language.
5. Convene **periodic gatherings** of Bellevue's public and private institutions and business leaders in efforts to collectively apply corporate citizenship resources to local diversity initiatives.
6. **Identify gaps** in goods and services provided on the Eastside for specialized markets.
7. Work with the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce to reinvigorate the **Bellevue Entrepreneur Center**.
8. Protect and **improve transit** services.

Civic Engagement

1. **Emphasize outreach** to establish trust within the social networks of our diverse communities as the first step in broadening their participation.
2. Develop and implement a strategy to **increase diverse representation** on City boards, commissions, advisory committees and task forces. This should include efforts to identify, recruit and train emerging leaders to be considered for these appointed positions.
3. **Interpretation, translation and accommodation services** at public meetings should be consistent and reliable over time to shape community expectations.
4. **Encourage faith community** leadership to become more civically engaged.
5. Increase **support for artists** (e.g. funding, exhibition/performance opportunities, etc.) whose work addresses intercultural themes.
6. Partner with the Eastside Heritage Center to **interpret the history of diversity** in the Bellevue community.
7. Collaborate with local partner organizations to develop community **leadership training and mentoring** programs benefiting under-represented population groups.
8. Develop and implement a **civic engagement strategy** to increase general participation in local government among diverse populations.
9. Ensure that civic engagement events include **follow up** efforts to inform participants of how their input has influenced decision making.
10. **Provide funding** and partnerships to community groups or initiatives that meet City of Bellevue diversity goals.