



INCLUSIVENESS PROJECT BLUEPRINT

A. Executive Summary

The Center moved through a year-long process to create this Inclusiveness Blueprint with the goal of operationalizing inclusiveness work. The intention is for this body of work to be integrated into The Center's agency strategic plan for 2012-2014. The Board of Directors and all staff are partnering to create a comprehensive plan during 2011. This document will provide a framework, ensuring that the strategic planning process maintains a lens of inclusiveness. During 2010 The Center established a team composed of Board and staff members which regularly met to drive the inclusiveness project. The team originally drafted a Case Statement, which was then critiqued and revised by both the Board of Directors and staff. Over 90% of The Center's Board and staff participated in an Inclusiveness Assessment which helped shape the focus of our inclusiveness work. We also partnered with several consultants who independently met with Board members, staff members, stakeholders, and community collaborators. Three focus groups were also held, soliciting feedback from low income families, communities of color, and collaborating agencies professional staff. Training was also provided to Board and staff members. All of the above mentioned information was sorted, compiled, and supported the resulting Inclusiveness Blueprint.

B. Introduction

a. Overview: The Center is an organization dedicated to engage, empower, enrich, and advance the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community in Colorado. The GLBT community is a vast community of people, marginalized by their sexual orientation, gender identity, income, race, ethnicity, religion, physical and mental abilities, etc. The community members often identify within more than one marginalized community, such as sexual orientation and race. Many community members struggle with competing identities, and feel restricted from bringing their whole self to any one environment. The Center has a commitment to empower all GLBT people to bring their whole self to our facility, programs, and events. We strive to help our community stretch to achieve their fullest potential by embracing their multiple identities and valuing the contributions of all.

b. Purpose: The Center applied to be a part of this cohort because of the support, structure, and technical assistance that came along with the grant. The Center's Program Committee (staffed by Board and staff) had made several attempts to work through the Inclusiveness at Work workbook, not getting past the first few modules with any attempt. The Center has historically shown great commitment to

inclusiveness work, but movement was slow without structure for the process. The grant proposal for this initiative was brought to a staff meeting where each requirement was specifically discussed followed by a group brainstorm. The staff therefore generated the specific need and articulated the specific outcomes they were seeking from this project. The Center's Executive Director had done extensive education at all-staff meetings about principles associated with Learning Organizations, shifting the culture to one that values input, transparency, and curiosity. Becoming a learning centered organization was a key shift to make in order to better serve our diverse community through programs where all felt welcome- and prepare The Center to move into inclusiveness work. As mentioned above, a vast majority of GLBT individuals feel marginalized because of more than solely their GLBT identity. Having a staff that could respond to the needs of every person who walked in our facility required a high level of safety and comfort for staff in the workplace. We knew that if staff did not feel like they could bring their whole self to work, our clients would not be able to do the same. Therefore, a goal of this project was to increase the sense of 'team' experienced at The Center. Furthermore, we knew that we would not be able to competently serve our community without changing business practices, methods for finding and connecting with community, and looking at who we were serving (and not serving) and why. Becoming a cohort member for this learning community allows us to hold ourselves accountable to our commitment to inclusiveness.

c. Definition of Inclusiveness: The Center chose to focus on communities of color and the transgender community for this initiative. This decision was made based on community and staff feedback about needed areas of growth and increased collaboration in order to more effectively meet the mission of the organization. Because these areas were clear gaps in competency, there was swift internal consensus.

d. The first method used to create the Case Statement was for the inclusiveness team to draft a statement that was then presented at a board meeting and a staff meeting for feedback. Because of many questions about semantics and the power of perception of words, the following statement was created to give the Case Statement context:

Developing an inclusiveness case statement is integral to a successful inclusiveness initiative. Inclusiveness affects many aspects of our work; overall mission, programs, operations, fundraising, communications, staffing and volunteers, and organizational culture. This statement has been developed over our journey to create an inclusiveness blueprint for The Center, a two-year process our agency is currently moving through with support from The Denver Foundation.

The Case Statement has undergone at least three revisions, and The Center sees the Statement as a work in progress. In the spirit of not 'spinning wheels,' version three is the current Case Statement:

"The Center strives to be a welcoming community informed by our individual journeys and enriched by the thoughtful partnerships with individuals, groups, and organizations. We value the many identities that an individual brings to the community, and honor and appreciate the intersections of these identities. We extend grace to each individual as they bring the whole of

who they are to our collective work and have our community reflect our diversity in all that we do.”

The Case Statement serves as a vision statement for our inclusiveness work. It is a breathing document that will guide us along our journey toward becoming a welcoming community for all. It will serve as an ongoing conversation piece about our values, and ground us throughout our inclusiveness work. Following the last training, our statement will once again undergo a revision.

e. Process: The process of the creation of the Blueprint began at the Board of Directors meeting in October 2010. In planning for the strategic planning process, the Board directed that inclusiveness serve as a lens for the work of the strategic plan. Planning meetings began in January 2011, with the Executive Director and two Board members as co-chairs of the year-long strategic planning process, set to run the duration of 2011. Workgroups were created with staff input, and all workgroups have board, staff and community partnership. The workgroups include strategic planning in the following areas: communications, demographics, GLBT trends, strategic partners, best practices, sustainability, technology, and six program areas – youth, legal elders, transgender, volunteers and PrideFest. The goal of the workgroups is to assess the organization’s current practices, identify best practice strategies for the respective areas and collect information that will be critical in creating an organization that is inclusive and aligned with GLBT needs. Again, the design is to have every one of the areas addressed through the lens of inclusiveness.

f. Duration: This Blueprint will last from 2011-2014, overlapping with The Center’s new strategic plan.

C. Research

a. Methodology: The Center engaged in multiple avenues of data collection for this project and for general operations; program data and participant feedback, facility data, donor database, Survey Monkey, monthly program reports, Omni’s Inclusiveness Assessment, facilitating consultant interviews with 30% of staff and Board, collaborating agency feedback, focus groups with community members. The specific feedback solicited for this project included the Inclusiveness Assessment, staff and board interviews, all staff meetings, and focus groups.

b. Key Findings for the Organization: The overall feedback for the agency lead to suggestions for the physical space, staff, and how outreach is conducted. The need for The Center’s new building to be a welcoming place for all who enter was addressed. Some suggestions were made for soft seating, welcoming front desk staff and volunteers, art, and additional color on the walls. A great deal of this feedback was immediately implemented. The Center also shifted the data gathering methods at the front desk, allowing for increased transparency about why data was being collected and how it would be reported. Since making this shift we have seen increased participation with data collection and fewer concerns from visitors. The Center’s staff is 25-30% people of color. Just three short years ago the staff was 100% white. This has been a powerful shift, though community feedback continues to scrutinize the racial and ethnic diversity of Center staff members. People of color work at every level of the agency, from front line program staff to the Executive Director. The Center has shifted hiring practices and sees a larger people of color candidate pool for open positions, though we know that we still have work to

do. Programs make intentional connections with progressive people of color organizations, and these relationships are utilized when positions are open. The Center has a strong commitment to continuing to improve its reputation in the community, striving to be an employer of choice for people of color. The Center also received concrete suggestions about where visibility should be increased, most specifically fairs and festivals targeting communities of color. These specific ideas have been included in the work plan for The Center's Community Engagement Coordinator. Center leadership has had extensive conversations about The Center reaching out and having presence in communities of color, acknowledging that sending out invitations for communities to come to Center space is not a highly competent model of engaging community- we must be present in the space of other communities. These changes have allowed The Center to bridge gaps and create new and meaningful community partnerships while attracting high level staff that brings new perspectives to the body of work of The Center.

c. Key Findings for Specific Topics: 85% of Board and staff reported participating in activities that address racial-ethnic diversity at The Center. Board, staff, and volunteers reported varying perceptions about diversity, some saying the agency is currently diverse, as well as those who perceive that diversity is lacking. The Board of Directors perceive that people who work at The Center show 100% interest in taking part in projects and activities related to race and ethnicity issues, while staff perceived that interest to be somewhat lower. The Board also reported believing that executive leadership is supportive of projects that focus on race and ethnicity and staff reported agreement. Staff shared that the clients of The Center are racially and ethnically diverse, and agree that The Center sets of high standards of performance for all people regardless of their personal backgrounds. When asked about inclusiveness policies, both staff and Board highlighted recruiting and retaining Board members reflective of racial and ethnic community served as a significant area for growth. Staff members also shared that The Center must be stronger with outreach to communities of color, and making services and programs accessible to diverse community members. The Board and staff agree that The Center has not been effective in the translation of relevant written materials into languages other than English as a practice. The Board notes the need to highlight issues related to racial and ethnic diversity in Center communications. Center staff highlight a need for more specific recruiting strategies to attract people of color on the staff. Both Board and staff agree that The Center is effective to very effective about communicating a vision about inclusiveness, demonstrating accountability for inclusiveness goals, considering issues of inclusiveness when setting policies and making decisions, and supporting inclusiveness initiatives. Staff report feeling valued and a sense of belonging to The Center's team.

D. Action Plan

The organization's overall goals for inclusivity are broken into two categories: a) short-term and b) long-term. Short term are those that can be implemented in 2011 while long-term are those being incorporated into The Center's 2012-2014 Strategic Plan. Our Strategic Plan will not be finalized until November 2011 so these goals have not been fully flushed out as of the date of this report.

SHORT TERM

GOAL 1: The Center’s Board will develop new policies that will ensure a safe space for inclusivity.

Outcomes:

- Center is a welcoming environment
- Increased sense of safety from all visitors
- Increased participation from communities of color and transgender community at The Center
- Changes behavior by staff, volunteers, board and visitors

Objectives	Tasks	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources
The board will craft a visitor policy that clearly communicates the welcoming atmosphere at The Center.	Identify current visitor behaviors. Identify expected behavior, welcoming environment. Create framed poster and hang	Ryann P., Board Member Shawan T., Front Desk Coordinator	June 30, '11	24 X 30 frame
Craft message and talking points to communicate position/vision of diversity and inclusion and address issues/questions regarding diversity and inclusion at The Center.	Brainstorm by board Wordsmith messaging Post on Website and incorporate in agency material	Board Communications Manager	August 30, 2011	Money for reprinting of materials
Establish a policy for responding to mail/emails and communication from community members questioning inclusivity efforts	Brainstorm by Board co-chairs and ED Develop policy	Board co-chairs and ED	July 15, 2011	n/a

GOAL 2: Increase the staff’s conflict resolution and facilitation skills to intervene when visitors, volunteers, staff or community members demonstrate behavior that is not appropriate.

Outcomes:

- Educated staff, volunteers and board to intervene/interrupt conversations that degrade people
- Staff is empowered to take individual action on inclusivity issues with full agency support
- Increased sense of respect by visitors

Objectives	Tasks	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources
Training and education of staff to make The Center more welcoming/how to intervene/manage/address challenging situations regarding diversity and inclusion.	Identify facilitator & design training	Inclusivity Team	July 30, 2011	Money to pay facilitator/trainer
	Provide training	Trainer		

GOAL 3: Increase the number of partnerships with institutions/agencies serving communities of color and transgender people.

Outcomes:

- Increased collaborations with communities of color and transgender community
- Increased awareness of communities of color and transgender community by staff, volunteers, visitors and board
- Educated staff, volunteers and board of other resources in communities of color and transgender community

Objectives	Tasks	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources
Outreach to communities of faith with focused efforts on communities of color.	Identify faith communities Meet and ID an opportunity for the year Implement project/activity	Strategic Partnership Workgroup Community Connections Coordinator	December 24, 2011	Unknown at this time.
Train staff/do homework/research/collaborate with other community organizations before rolling out new outreach strategies. .	Identify partners to collaborate Meet and ID a project for the year Implement project/activity	Program Directors Development Team	December 24, 2011	Unknown at this time
Increase the partnerships from communities of color and trans community at Center events, especially PrideFest.	Identify up to two partners to collaborate with Meet and ID how they can be a	Development Team	December 24, 2011	Unknown at this time

	part of a Center event			
	Implement event with partner			

GOAL 4: Create ways to illustrate the various segments of the GLBT community through art/cultural displays.

Outcomes:

- Increased use of art and culture to share the richness of the community with others
- Educate people about communities of color and transgender community through art and culture
- Increased awareness of communities of color and transgender community by staff, volunteers and board

Objectives	Tasks	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources
Create historical exhibits on the main floor gallery space annually.	Identify relevant historical material Design exhibit Display exhibit	Gallery Committee Communications manager Historical Volunteers	September 16, 2011	Exhibition/display materials
Exhibits at The Center are inclusive	Identify diverse representation of artists to display	Gallery Committee	Ongoing	Exhibition/display materials

LONG TERM GOALS

As previously mentioned, these goals are tied to The Center’s Strategic Plan.

GOAL 1: Design a strategic planning process where inclusivity is integrated throughout the process.

Outcomes:

- Staff has increased knowledge of how to integrate communities of color and transgender community into Center programming, events and activities

Objectives	Tasks	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources
Board to identify key areas for the strategic planning process	Board discussion	Board co-chairs and ED	October 2010	n/a
Develop strategic planning process	Research strategic planning models	Senior staff and Strategic Planning	February 2011	n/a

	Identify best model for the Center Present to Board and staff for buy-in	co-chairs Consultant		
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GOAL 2: Assess and research program and administrative areas of organization.

Outcomes:

- Identify gaps in service provision
- Identify best practices in service provision
- Identify best practices for governance, administration and other key areas of non-profit management
- Identify potential partners with communities of color and transgender community

Objectives	Tasks	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources
Identify workgroups around programs and administrative areas	Identify areas that have highest impact	Strategic Planning Committee	February 2011	n/a
Identify workgroup chairs and develop strategy to recruit workgroup members from community	Identify 4-6 members for each group Provide materials for outreach to workgroup members Recruit members	Strategic Planning Committee Workgroup Chairs	February 2011	n/a
Establish guidelines and meeting format for workgroup chairs	Develop workgroup goals and meeting document	Strategic Planning Committee Consultant	March 2011	n/a
Workgroups executed and begin work.	Workgroups meet to execute their work plan	Workgroup chairs	March 2011 – July 2011	n/a
Workgroups meet monthly to share experiences and learning		Workgroup chairs	March 2011 – July 2011	n/a
Workgroup chairs present findings and recommendations to board, staff and stakeholders	Develop PowerPoint presentation	Workgroup chair	August 23, 2011	Copying and snacks

GOAL 3: Identify community needs, wants, and desires to better inform new program and events as well as design.

Outcomes:

- Identify community needs
- Educated on needs, desires, etc. from community, especially from communities of color and transgender community
- Understand correlation between communities of color/transgender community and The Center

Objectives	Tasks	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources
Design a comprehensive survey	Create a 20 minute, 50-60 question survey	Strategic Planning Intern Community Input Committee	By June 16, 2011	n/a
Administer survey, goal to collect 500 surveys	Mass distribution through email and Facebook Provide paper survey at front desk Specific outreach to communities of color and transgender Translate survey	Strategic Planning Intern Community Input Committee	June 18 – July 4, 2011	Translation services
Complete analysis of information	Transfer data from Survey Monkey to SPSS Conduct quires specific to program and administrative areas Identify trends	Strategic Planning Intern Community Input Committee Workgroup chairs Omni	July 6 – August 12, 2011	Money to pay for transfer of data and assist with running queries.
Present findings and recommendations to board, staff and stakeholders	Develop PowerPoint presentation	Strategic Planning Intern	August 23, 2011	Copying and snacks

GOAL 4: Develop blueprint for Center’s 2012-2014 Strategic Plan.

Outcomes:

- Identify effective strategies for reaching and service provision to communities not engaged with Center
- Educated Board, staff and volunteers of the Center’s strategic direction and how inclusivity shapes the direction and engages new faces
- Community at large feels connected to The Center
- Community educated with Center’s new direction

Objectives	Tasks	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources
Hold a visioning retreat to identify priorities and strategic directions	Hire visioning consultant and design retreat	Strategic Planning Committee	Planning 6/2011 – 8/2011	Money to hire consultant
	Hold visioning retreat	Consultant	Retreat 8/30/2011	Food for retreat
	Write-up notes	Staff, board, stakeholders		
Develop strategic direction and goals for strategic plan.	Synthesize information and flush out goals	Strategic Planning Committee	Development 9/1 – 10/7/2011	Retreat consultant
	Create objectives based on findings, research and recommendations	Board, staff and stakeholders	Fall retreat 10/8/2011	Food for retreat
	Develop communication strategies for strategic plan	Communications Manager		Copying
	Present strategic directions, goals, objectives and other recommendations to board, staff and stakeholders at fall retreat			
Finalize 2012-2014 strategic plan	Make necessary changes	Strategic Planning Committee	10/11/2011 – 12/1/2011	n/a
	Ensure inclusivity with overall document			

Board approves strategic plan and shares with community	Board votes on 2012-2014 strategic plan Communicate strategic plan to the community	Board of Directors	Vote on December 12, 2011 Communicate 1/3/2012	n/a Print summary card of the strategic plan
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