

# BUILDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

*An Action Guide for City Leaders*

*League of Minnesota Cities' Cultural Diversity Task Force*



## **Building Inclusive Communities**

*An Action Guide for City Leaders*

Copyright © 2003 by League of Minnesota Cities. All rights reserved.

Editor: Erica Norris, Publications Manager, League of Minnesota Cities.

Designer: Laura Zenz, Graphic Designer, League of Minnesota Cities.

Cover design by Kristin Hankwitz.

This material is provided as general information and is not legal advice.  
Consult your city attorney for advice concerning specific situations.

*The League of Minnesota Cities is a non-profit, membership organization dedicated to helping cities throughout Minnesota build quality communities through excellence in governance, management, and services to citizens. The League serves its 818 member cities through advocacy, education and training, policy development, insurance, and other services.*



### **League of Minnesota Cities**

145 University Avenue West  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103-2044

TEL 651 281 1200  
800 925 1122  
TDD 651 281 1290  
FAX 651 281 1299  
WEB [www.lmnc.org](http://www.lmnc.org)

*This publication is dedicated to the memory of Bill Diaz, Senior Fellow with the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and a member of the League of Minnesota Cities Cultural Diversity Task Force. Dr. Diaz' career was devoted to research of the issues facing ethnic and underserved populations, and his contributions to this publication were invaluable.*

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY TASK FORCE

### Chair

Les Heitke, LMC Past President  
*Mayor*  
*City of Willmar*

### Members

Roger Banks  
*Research Analyst Specialist*  
*Council for Black Minnesotans*

Curt Boganey  
*Assistant City Manager*  
*City of Brooklyn Center*

Joan Campbell  
*Former City Councilmember*  
*City of Minneapolis*

Bob Demuth  
*Mayor*  
*City of Worthington*

Kathy Farris  
*Human Services Planner/Coordinator*  
*City of Richfield*

Therese Gales  
*Director of Education, Refugee and Immigrant Program*  
*Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights*

Jack Geller  
*President*  
*Center for Rural Policy Development*  
*Minnesota State University—Mankato*

Vivian Hart  
*Councilmember*  
*City of West St. Paul*

Kao Ly Ilean Her  
*Executive Director*  
*Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans*

Mario Hernandez  
*Rural Liaison*  
*Chicano Latino Affairs Council*

Dan Hoxworth  
*President*  
*Neighborhood House*

Don Rasmussen  
*Mayor*  
*City of Long Prairie*

Jean Soine  
*Councilmember*  
*City of Paynesville*

David B. Zander  
*Research Analyst*  
*Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans*

### Staff

Mary-Margaret Zindren  
*Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives*

Kevin Frazell  
*Director of Member Services*

Stephanie Lake  
*Marketing Communications Coordinator*

Lourdes Sanchez  
*LMCIT Communications Coordinator*

Eric Willette  
*Policy Research Manager*

Dear reader:

Until only a few years ago, the term “globalization” was not part of our vocabulary. Once it did appear, it was largely in reference to the increasing interdependence of private markets throughout the world. As such, for many of us, it seemed a largely arcane and probably irrelevant concept.

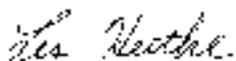
Globalization, as we have since learned, is as much about people as it is about products and services. While technology has brought companies closer through their ability to instantaneously interact, the world’s ever-evolving geo-political climate brought difficult challenges and uncertainty for many of its citizens. New nations were created or, in some cases, reborn. Changes in leadership and political philosophies in others caused even more change. Whether seeking opportunity created by globalization or because of necessity, these changes meant unprecedented numbers of the earth’s citizens migrated to new homes in the last decade.

In this country, Minnesota was among those states experiencing the greatest impact. More than 100 of the 853 cities in the state saw their ethnic populations grow by at least 100 percent during the 1990s. Only 10 of 87 counties saw increases in the ethnic population of less than 50 percent. The challenges and opportunities this population shift brought were indeed felt statewide.

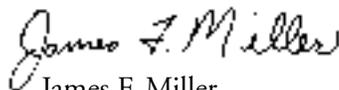
It was with this in mind that the League of Minnesota Cities launched its diversity initiative last year. Informally, the League was aware that many cities were actively responding to these changes, experimenting with creative ways to meet the needs of their newest citizens. Some of these efforts were very successful while others had less than the desired outcomes. The League saw value in both types of experiences; city officials in other communities could learn both from what succeeded and what didn’t. To ensure that these experiences and other useful information and assistance was available to all cities, the League created the Cultural Diversity Task Force.

This report represents the culmination of the Task Force’s extensive efforts over a year and a half. Comprised of city officials, representatives of several state diversity councils, the Center for Rural Policy Development, and Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, the Task Force has prepared this practical yet thought-provoking guide that we know will be an invaluable resource to all Minnesota cities. It is only the first of several significant initiatives which, together, will better prepare cities to ensure that all citizens receive the services they need, and to capitalize on the opportunities and resources these new citizens present.

We are indebted to the Task Force for its tireless work and to the excellent staff support it received.



Les Heitke  
*LMC Past President  
Chair, Cultural Diversity Task Force  
Mayor, City of Willmar, Minn.*



James F. Miller  
*Executive Director  
League of Minnesota Cities*



# CONTENTS

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter one: Become “culturally competent” .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Why city officials should get involved .....	7
What city officials can do .....	8
Outcomes to work toward .....	9
Recommended action steps .....	10
<b>Chapter two: Bridge language gaps .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Why city officials should get involved .....	13
What city officials can do .....	14
Outcomes to work toward .....	17
Recommended action steps .....	17
<b>Chapter three: Work against racism and prejudice .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Why city officials should get involved .....	22
What city officials can do .....	23
Outcomes to work toward .....	25
Recommended action steps .....	25
<b>Chapter four: Enhance public safety efforts .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Why city officials should get involved .....	30
What city officials can do .....	30
Outcomes to work toward .....	33
Recommended action steps .....	33
<b>Chapter five: Understand and address housing needs .....</b>	<b>35</b>
Why city officials should get involved .....	37
What city officials can do .....	37
Outcomes to work toward .....	38
Recommended action steps .....	38
<b>Chapter six: Encourage economic development .....</b>	<b>41</b>
Why city officials should get involved .....	43
What city officials can do .....	43
Outcomes to work toward .....	45
Recommended action steps .....	45
Other action steps .....	46
<b>Chapter seven: Lead and foster leadership .....</b>	<b>47</b>
What makes a successful leader of a multicultural community .....	47
Fostering leadership in others .....	48
Outcomes to work toward .....	49
Recommended action steps .....	49
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Resources for Building Inclusive Communities .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Organizations—Minnesota .....	53
Organizations—National .....	55
Federal Programs & Grantmakers .....	56
Sources & Suggested Reading .....	57
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>59</b>



## OVERVIEW

There are many ways to categorize Minnesota cities—small, medium, and large; urban, suburban, and rural; prairie, lake, and northwoods, to name a few.

Over the last decade, two important new categories have emerged: cities that have experienced significant increases in their cultural diversity, and those that will experience such increases in the near future.

Your city very likely falls into one of these two categories. And what you do about it can define your success as a city leader and the future of the community you serve.

As the primary resource for Minnesota's 853 city governments, the League of Minnesota Cities is embarking on an effort to assist city officials in rising to the challenges and opportunities posed by Minnesota's increasing cultural diversity. The effort is called "Building Inclusive Communities" and begins with distributing this action guide.

The Building Inclusive Communities effort was spurred by two factors: the release of the 2000 Census data, and the experiences of city officials whose communities have undergone significant demographic change.

The 2000 Census data is clear: the percentage of Minnesotans of African, Asian-Pacific, and Latino descent, as well as new immigrants from the former Soviet Union and other regions, rose dramatically over the past 10 years. Statewide, the average increase in these "ethnic populations" was 119 percent, with cities from 200 to 200,000 experiencing 100 percent, 500 percent, and even 7,000 percent growth. And the projections from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Minnesota State Demographer's office indicate this trend will continue indefinitely.

**"Over the last decade, two important new categories have emerged: cities that have experienced significant increases in their cultural diversity, and those that will experience such increases in the near future."**

### TERMINOLOGY

When referring to the various populations that make up multicultural communities, terminology can be tricky. Terms related to different ethnic groups have changed over the years and continue to evolve. Preferred terms also vary according to personal taste.

Throughout this report you will see the term "ethnic populations"—a general term used by the Cultural Diversity Task Force to include groups of people traditionally viewed as "minorities" as well as new immigrants to Minnesota. The Task Force saw the term "minority" as diminutive and a future misnomer, as people of European descent will soon be the minority population in America. It also rejected the term "people of color" as unnecessarily focused on skin color as a basis for categorization. Moreover, many new immigrants, such as those from Eastern Europe, face challenges similar to those facing immigrants from Latin-America, Africa, and the Asian-Pacific.

Following is terminology preferred by Task Force for particular ethnic populations:

- **African-American or Black**
  - Somali, Ethiopian, and other people of African descent may prefer terminology that is more specific to their heritage (e.g., Somali-American). Alternatively, African-Americans with a variety of countries of origin may prefer the term Black.
- **Latino**
  - Chicano is sometimes preferred among people of Mexican heritage. Hispanic is also sometimes preferred as a general term for people of Mexican, Central American, and South American descent.
- **Asian-Pacific American**
  - Vietnamese, Laotian, Hmong, and other Asian-Pacific Americans may prefer terminology that is more specific to their heritage (e.g., Vietnamese-American).

**“By leading your community to be responsive, inclusive, and welcoming, your city can find great reward, economically and socially, and to the benefit of the next generation of Minnesotans.”**

In responding to and preparing for demographic change, Minnesota cities are at various points along a continuum. On one extreme there are cities that have had a significant percentage of ethnic populations in residence for years, and often have learned through trial and error how best to operate as a multicultural community. On the other extreme are communities that have not experienced major increases in ethnic populations over the past 10 years, and cannot foresee such increases anytime soon. No matter what your city’s situation, there are good reasons to review this action guide and to build an inclusive community:

- **Civic responsibility:** City officials are elected and appointed to ensure residents receive quality city services, to engage them in the city governance process, and to lead the community in setting and achieving a shared vision of the future.
- **Economic development:** Ethnic populations contribute significantly to the economic base of Minnesota communities through an estimated \$6 billion in buying power and by providing a stable workforce, as well as entrepreneurship and job creation.
- **Loss control:** While there are many positive factors that motivate city officials to build inclusive communities, it is also a reality that serious liability issues can arise if cities do not comply with civil rights laws. From public safety to employment practices, city officials need to be cognizant of the liability risks they face and work to reduce those risks.
- **Community harmony:** Your community’s residents likely have various expectations about the assimilation of newcomers, both in the level and speed of adopting community norms and English as their primary language. The Task Force suggests that “bilateral assimilation”—where both long-term residents and newcomers modify behaviors and expectations to accommodate each other—may be the approach that best prevents cross-cultural conflict and results in community harmony—an approach that is unlikely to develop without leadership from city hall.

As LMC Past President Les Heitke, mayor of Willmar, states, “By leading your community to be responsive, inclusive, and welcoming, your city can find great reward, economically and socially, and to the benefit of the next generation of Minnesotans.”

This action guide and the League of Minnesota Cities’ Building Inclusive Communities effort are designed to help elected and appointed city officials think through major issues related to cultural diversity. The action guide frames these issues, identifies general outcomes to work toward, and suggests many potential action steps.

While we have focused our discussions and research on those populations that increased significantly over the past 10 years, many of the concepts and action steps presented also translate to working with Native Americans, Middle-Eastern Americans, Americans with disabilities, and other population groups.

The content of this action guide results from the work of the League of Minnesota Cities Cultural Diversity Task Force, chaired by LMC Past President Les Heitke, mayor of Willmar, Minn. The Task Force includes city officials from across the state; academics; representatives of the state councils that represent African-American, Asian-Pacific American and Latino populations; and representatives of organizations that serve new Minnesotans. The League Board of Directors also provided comment and guidance, and League staff conducted background research and developed the written report.

An accompanying document that highlights city programs that are effective in building inclusive communities is also being developed by the Center for Rural Policy and Development; its release is expected in early 2003. The Center also plans to hold a statewide conference related to its research and the findings of the Task Force in the summer of 2003.

Additionally, the League will be soliciting grant funding for the continuation of the Building Inclusive Communities effort, specifically to assist cities in implementing the recommended action steps and in modeling effective city programs.

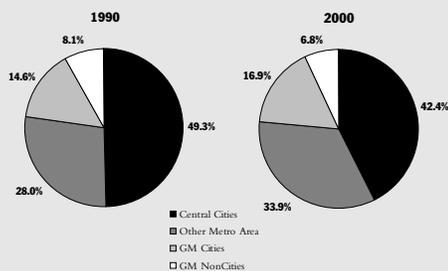
Our hope is that this document provides a base of information and ideas for city officials as they work to achieve a high quality of life for all residents and to build strong, welcoming, inclusive communities.

**2000 CENSUS DATA**

While there is general consensus that ethnic populations were undercounted in the 2000 Census, the following are approximate statistics on population growth over the past decade:

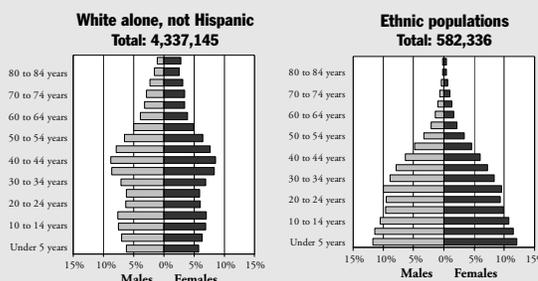
- The number of Minnesotans identifying themselves as Hispanic grew approximately 166 percent from 1990 to 2000.
- The number of Minnesotans identifying themselves as Black/African-American grew between 81 percent and 114 percent (depending on if those who checked more than one race are included).
- The number of Minnesotans identifying themselves as Asian-Pacific American grew between 85 percent and 111 percent (again, depending on if those who checked more than one race are included).

**Minnesota ethnic population distribution 1990 and 2000**



Ethnic populations more than doubled from 273,833 in 1990 to 582,336 in 2000. Increases occurred across the state, but the fastest growth was in the suburban metropolitan area. *(Data from 1990 and 2000 are not exactly comparable because individuals were able to select "more than one race" in 2000.)*

**Age distribution of Minnesota's White non-Hispanic and ethnic populations**



More than 45 percent of the White non-Hispanic population is over 40 years old, compared to 21 percent of ethnic populations. The difference in the two pyramids' shapes indicates Minnesota's ethnic populations are likely to continue to grow more quickly than the White non-Hispanic population into the future.

Group	Household size	Median household income	Home-ownership rate
White non-Hispanic	2.46	\$48,389	77%
Hispanic	3.58	\$35,933	43%
Black alone	2.82	\$28,926	32%
American Indian alone	3.13	\$28,533	53%
Asian alone	3.66	\$45,520	53%

Households headed by White non-Hispanics are generally smaller, have higher incomes, and are more likely to own their own home than households headed by individuals from ethnic populations.



## CHAPTER ONE:

## BECOME “CULTURALLY COMPETENT”

*“Heroes, all of them, at least they’re my heroes, especially the new immigrants, especially the refugees. Everyone makes fun of the New York cab drivers who can’t speak English: they’re heroes. To give up your country is the hardest thing a person can do: to leave the old familiar places and ship out over the edge of the world to America and learn everything over again different than you learned as a child, learn the new language that you will never be so smart or funny in as your true language. It takes years to start to feel semi-normal.*

*And yet people still come from Russia, Vietnam and Cambodia and Laos, Ethiopia, Iran, Haiti, Korea, Cuba, Chile, and they come on behalf of their children, and they come for freedom. . . . They are heroes who make an adventure on our behalf, showing by their struggle how precious beyond words freedom is, and if we knew their stories, we could not keep back the tears.”*

-Excerpted from “Laying on Our Backs, Looking Up at the Stars,” by Garrison Keillor.

“Cultural competence” is a term that is probably new to many city officials. As defined by Communities Can, a program of the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, it is “changing what we know, what we think and most importantly how we do things to serve and support (the people) in our communities from all cultural backgrounds.” As described by the Task Force, cultural competence is a willingness to learn and listen. It is being welcoming and dropping defenses. It is asking rather than assuming. It is a permanent way of changing how community issues are communicated and approached.

Cultural competence is not simply valuing diversity—it implies a more active educational effort. It is also not about knowing all there is to know about all cultures (an impossible goal) or a wholesale acceptance of what everyone believes. Instead, it is understanding and appreciating that there are different views of the world, taking an active interest in learning about other cultures, and basing questions on this knowledge.

Achieving cultural competence begins with learning about the people who live and work in your community, learning their personal stories and cultural history and social “norms.” There are many everyday actions, communications, behaviors, and perspectives that differ from one culture to the next. The following are a few examples of areas of cultural difference:

- **Household size.** The average household size differs across cultures. Reasons for these differences can include the fact that a country may have an agriculturally based economy or higher infant mortality rates, that a culture may expect extended family, especially seniors, to live with immediate family members, or that a culture views all members of a tribe as “family” and therefore prefers to live more communally.
- **Median age.** Many ethnic populations in Minnesota have fairly low median ages resulting in a greater percentage of young people; this is true, for example, of African Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, and Latinos.
- **Religious practices.** Religions differ greatly in how they are practiced. For example, some religions require prayer during the workday, wearing particular clothing, and avoiding eating certain foods.

**“As described by the Task Force, cultural competence is a willingness to learn and listen. It is being welcoming and dropping defenses. It is asking rather than assuming. It is a permanent way of changing how community issues are communicated and approached.”**

- **Mental health.** Many refugees have experienced extraordinary or horrific experiences prior to their arrival in the United States, sometimes leading to post-traumatic stress or other mental health symptoms. Because of different cultural views of mental health and its treatment, refugees often seek help for their symptoms through primary health care rather than mental health care, leading to frustration for both refugees and providers. Refugees may also prefer to seek assistance from family members or members of their cultural community.
- **Formal education.** Refugees who have left their homes behind because of war and/or persecution have focused on the basics of survival and may not have had the opportunity for formal education. Migrant workers and their families may also not have had opportunities for formal, consistent education. Additionally, many new immigrants who have had formal education are underemployed due to language barriers or differences in licensing and training.
- **View of government.** Many ethnic populations are likely to view government officials—particularly public safety officials—in a negative way. These views are often shaped by personal experiences, publicity or a history of police brutality, racial profiling, government sanctioned discrimination, corruption, etc., either in their countries of origin or in the United States.

#### EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GENERAL POPULATION AND ETHNIC POPULATIONS

<b>Mainstream America</b>	<b>Vietnamese</b>	<b>Mainstream America</b>	<b>Somali</b>
<i>Looking straight into someone's eyes shows honesty and frankness.</i>	Looking constantly into someone's eyes for a while shows provocation and disrespect.	<i>Parents are less authoritarian in managing their children.</i>	The parental relationship toward children is authoritarian.
<i>Direct communication is preferred.</i>	Indirect communication is preferred.	<i>Assertiveness is a sign of strength and self-confidence.</i>	Assertiveness can be seen as impolite.
<i>"Yes" is an affirmation or agreement.</i>	"Yes" stands for understanding, not affirmation or agreement.	<i>Shaking hands and friendly physical contact between genders is acceptable.</i>	It is not acceptable for a man to shake hands with or touch a woman.
<i>Assertiveness is a sign of strength and self-confidence.</i>	Assertiveness can be seen as selfishness.	<i>Punctuality, efficiency, and deadlines are highly regarded.</i>	Time is treated loosely, unless otherwise stated.
<i>Waving or beckoning with the hand is permitted for getting someone's attention.</i>	Waving and beckoning with the hand are motions reserved for animals or lower creatures and are considered insulting when used with people.	<i>If something bad happens, a reason is sought.</i>	If something bad happens, it is God's will.
<i>Display of skills and knowledge is part of everyday life.</i>	Humility is the mark of a great person; display of skills is the mark of a weak and inferior person.	<i>When experiencing financial hardship, it is acceptable to look for outside help, such as financial and charitable institutions.</i>	When experiencing financial hardship, one is expected to depend on family and friends.
<i>Touching someone on the head is acceptable in some situations.</i>	Touching someone on the head is a condescending act and a violation of sacred space.		

From *When Law and Culture Collide*, National Crime Prevention Council, August 1999

While it may be human nature to focus on what differentiates people of various cultural or experiential backgrounds, understanding cultural similarities is perhaps even more important in achieving cultural competence. Key similarities identified by the Task Force were:

- **Family.** All cultures value family and want the best for the next generation. Many ethnic populations have gone to great lengths and sacrificed their individual best interests for the hope of a better life for their children here in the United States and in Minnesota.
- **Health.** While different cultures may have different health practices and beliefs, all value health and well-being.
- **Safety.** Valuing the safety of homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces is common to all people. Many new Minnesotans have left war-torn countries to pursue a life of greater safety and security.
- **Community.** People of all cultures want to live where they feel comfortable and connected to their neighbors and to have a sense of place and community.

In regard to organizational cultural competence, appreciation and understanding of cultural differences and similarities is one of three components. The Task Force pointed to two others:

1. Recognition of past and continuing racism, and a commitment to confronting racism and prejudice (discussed in Chapter 3, “Work against racism and prejudice”).
2. Organizational inclusiveness.

Organizational inclusiveness, in this sense, refers to a comprehensive way of looking at how your city involves all populations in service delivery and governance responsibilities. In regard to city personnel, for example, organizational inclusiveness is more than just a head count of ethnic populations. It includes examining employee recruitment, retention, and upward mobility. And in governance, organizational inclusiveness relates to your city’s decision-making processes and the extent to which all populations are informed and involved.

### **Why city officials should get involved**

As applied to city government, the level of cultural competence among city officials (both elected and appointed) and within city organizational cultures greatly impacts how services are delivered and how governance is approached. Every person comes to the city with different experiences, and city officials can serve their community well by responding with these different experiences and cultural backgrounds in mind.

City officials can be more effective in providing high quality service to all residents if they work to understand the perspectives, experiences, and cultural backgrounds of the individuals and groups that make up the community. Similar to how community policing programs use knowledge gained about a particular neighborhood to tailor public safety efforts, cultural competence improves the effectiveness of city officials by allowing them to apply knowledge about particular populations in order to tailor the delivery of all types of city services.

Cultural competency is also important for engaging the public in the community’s decision-making processes. The more city officials understand the unique characteristics of ethnic populations, the more effective communications related to the policy process can be. For example, simply posting a general invitation for a public hearing is not likely to result in attendance from many ethnic populations. By personally inviting the leaders of ethnic population groups, you are more likely to see members of these communities attend.

**“City officials can be more effective in providing high quality service to all residents if they work to understand the perspectives, experiences, and cultural background of the individuals and groups that make up the community.”**

### What city officials can do

Becoming culturally competent as a city begins with individual city officials becoming culturally competent. An easy place to start is by simply asking members of ethnic populations about their cultural background and listening to their stories. Groups representing ethnic populations can be helpful in providing materials and in connecting you to community leaders.

Cultural competency can also be approached more formally through workshops and training sessions. City officials can encourage ethnic populations to hold sessions on their culture where they describe their experiences, religious beliefs, and values. Cities can hold similar sessions on the community's history and cultural norms.

A variety of consulting firms also conduct training in cultural competency. In evaluating training options, the Task Force suggests looking for training that is tailored to the specific work of the city officials involved (public safety having different concerns from parks and recreation staff), as well as the specific populations represented in your community. Cultural competency training should also be viewed as an ongoing process—a one-time session is not likely to result in significant change.

In learning about other cultures and the similarities and difference between populations, it is important to avoid making rigid generalizations. The information gathered through reading about and listening to ethnic populations, and even through formal training, should be considered a base of knowledge from which to ask questions.

For example, people of Asian-Pacific heritage sometimes avoid conflict by responding “Yes” to a question in a way that others interpret as an affirmation, when they really mean that they understand the question but do not agree. However, to assume that every time an Asian-Pacific person says “Yes” they mean “No” is inappropriate. Instead, this cultural knowledge can be used to further discuss the issue at hand and ensure there is shared understanding about what the response means, especially if the conversation is contentious or stressful.

Beyond improving communications with ethnic populations, cities can also work to ensure that current and future policies and procedures are informed by cultural competence.

Cities can work with groups representing ethnic populations to identify local ordinances and practices that are causing cultural conflict. City officials can then examine those ordinances and practices to determine why they were first instituted and where the city may be able to make modifications.

Similarly, as new policies and procedures are debated, an examination based on understanding of the cultures represented in the community is a good way to prevent cultural bias and avoid conflict down the road.

**“Becoming culturally competent as a city begins with individual city officials becoming culturally competent.”**

For example, zoning ordinances often define the number of unrelated individuals who can live in a “single family” home. Such ordinances are often predicated on the average American family size and do not consider the fact that some ethnic cultures view “family” as including members of the same tribe or geographic area. Many of these ordinances may actually have been put in place to discourage large groups of college students from living together, in which case such a policy may simply have unintended consequences on ethnic populations. In evaluating ordinances like these, cities should balance the needs and preferences of ethnic populations with legitimate public safety concerns.

Cultural competence in your city organization also involves developing a city staff that reflects the ethnic composition of your community. By involving people of various cultural backgrounds in the work of city government, employees have opportunities to get to know the differences and similarities among populations firsthand, and to develop relationships of mutual respect and understanding.

Achieving an inclusive city staff often takes concerted effort. The Task Force pointed to the work of Minneapolis Fire Chief Rocco Forte, who is widely acclaimed for building a fire department that reflects the variety of populations that make up the city. This achievement was the result of active recruitment from ethnic populations and an examination of the department’s employment process in every facet—how many ethnic populations applied, how many passed the physical exams, how many were interviewed, etc.—and how that process could be modified to reduce barriers to employment. In November 2000, the city’s actions were seen as so exceptional they resulted in the end of court oversight over the fire department’s recruiting, testing, and hiring process in place since a 1970 court case.

Overall, cities should view cultural competence as a continuous learning process—both personally and organizationally. By working to become culturally competent, cities can become more effective in serving residents and city officials can become more effective community leaders.

### **Outcomes to work toward**

Programs or initiatives related to cultural competency should be designed to result in, and to be measured against, one or more of the following outcomes:

- Increased understanding among city officials about the cultural backgrounds and experiences of the ethnic populations represented in their community.
- City policies that have been examined and developed with an understanding of how they may affect ethnic populations.
- High quality city service delivery to all populations.
- Increased participation of ethnic populations in city government.
- Improved cross-cultural understanding among populations.

**“Overall, cities should view cultural competence as a continuous learning process—both personally and organizationally. By working to become culturally competent, cities can become more effective in serving residents and city officials can become more effective community leaders.”**

### Recommended action steps

The Task Force recommends the following action steps in regard to cultural competence:

#### If you do nothing else:

- Get to know people who represent the ethnic populations in your community.

#### Action steps that require little or no financial resources:

- Study the cultural and experiential history of the populations in your community, and your city's settlement history.
- Ask organizations representing ethnic populations to host workshops on their cultural and experiential background.
  - Workshops could focus on city staff and elected officials, and be community-wide.
  - It may be most effective to hold the workshops (and other meetings, for that matter) in places where the population you are working with routinely congregates, rather than asking them to come to a city building.
- Provide educational opportunities for new residents to learn about city government, government processes and the rationale behind them, and residents' rights and responsibilities.
  - Set expectations for what happens if either the city or residents do not respect those rights or fulfill those responsibilities.
  - Go where new residents are comfortable, rather than expecting them to come to a city building.
  - Include basic education on what it means to live and participate in a democracy (some newcomers may not have previously lived in a country with a democratic form of government), as well as your city's cultural norms and community expectations.
- Examine ordinances and policies to determine where cultural bias may unnecessarily exist.
  - Determine why ordinances and practices were instituted in the first place and where your city can be flexible.
  - Where your city cannot be flexible, explain why. It is important residents understand the rationale behind ordinances that may run counter to their cultural norms.
- Encourage people representing various ethnic populations to serve on city boards and commissions, as well as to run for elected office.
- Encourage people of various ethnic populations to apply for city positions.
  - Examine recruitment, application, interview, hiring, retention, and promotion practices to determine if there are points along the employment process where ethnic populations do not track with other populations.
  - Record and analyze data to measure progress in employment of ethnic populations, as well as volunteer positions.
- Set up an advisory group for each significant ethnic population in your community (e.g., Latino Advisory Council, Somali Advisory Council, Asian-Pacific Advisory Council). Such groups can guide the work of specific community liaisons, since one person from a particular population cannot be expected to understand or represent the entire population.

**“If you do nothing else:  
get to know people  
who represent the  
ethnic population in  
your community.”**

**Other action steps:**

- Work with academic institutions to determine your individual, city’s, and community’s current level of cultural competence.
- Enroll in cultural competency training.
  - Provide incentives for elected and appointed officials.
  - Particularly encourage front-line staff.
  - See cultural competency training as a long-term endeavor and more than a one-time, one-hour session.
  - Ensure the training is relevant to the particular area of service of the participants (public safety, public works, governance, etc.).
- Hire cultural liaisons to be a bridge between the city government and ethnic populations.
- Work with neighboring communities to establish settlement houses or welcome centers to ease the cultural transition of new Minnesotans to your area. Such establishments can:
  - Hold information sessions on how to access city services and become involved in city governance processes.
  - Orient newcomers to the community’s resources, norms, and expectations.
  - Connect newcomers with mentors.
  - Provide a food shelf specific to the preferences of ethnic populations.
  - Provide ongoing assistance.



## CHAPTER TWO:

## BRIDGE LANGUAGE GAPS

*“I have no place to go when I get there, and I couldn’t speak English. So I stood there at the station, and I didn’t know what to think.”*

– Andrew Lindgren describing his arrival to Minnesota from Sweden in 1914  
(from a 2002 Minnesota Public Radio story).

Minnesota has a rich language history. Its first residents spoke Lakota and Ojibwe. Then came speakers of French, Norwegian, German, Swedish, and Spanish. And while some of these immigrants knew English as well, for most it was not their primary language. In Minnesota’s more recent history, speakers of Hmong, Somali, Russian, Vietnamese, and many other languages have come to call Minnesota home. It is now estimated by the Dept. of Children, Families and Learning that more than 75 languages are found in Minnesota’s school districts. This is not only true of Minnesota’s major metropolitan areas, but in communities all across greater Minnesota. In Worthington, for example, children in the public schools speak 17 different languages.

But according to Deborah Miller of the Minnesota State Historical Society, many descendents of the early European immigrants struggle to accept contemporary immigrants and their difficulty learning English, even though, as she stated in an MPR interview, “Your grandmother or great grandmother was in the same position 75 or 100 years ago.”

Linguistic research seems to support this assertion of similarity, and in fact suggests that the immigrant generations who arrived around the turn of the century learned English at a slower rate than the immigrants of today. According to the 1983 report by Calvin Veltman *Language Shift in the United States*, while those groups arriving around the 1880s acquired English as their dominant language within three generations, today’s immigrants are closer to a two-generation model—likely due to the prevalence of English as a Second Language (ESL) training.

Viewing new immigrants as resistant to learning English and adopting American cultural norms has historical parallels as well. John Crawford in the 1990 book *Language Freedom and Restriction* states, “By 1900 there were growing complaints about both the quantity and quality of immigrants—particularly fears that newcomers from Eastern and Southern Europe were unable or unwilling to assimilate into American culture. In 1911, a massive federal report on immigration by the Dillingham Commission accused these so-called ‘new immigrants’—Italians, Jews, and Slavs—of failing to learn English as quickly as the Germans and Scandinavians of the Nineteenth Century.”

### Why city officials should get involved

Think about the ways your city government communicates with residents. You likely do so through conversations in person or over the phone; through a city newsletter, web site, mailings or flyers; and through council meetings and public hearings.

Has your city made these communications available in languages other than English? Do you have city staff members, volunteers or contract translators who can determine the needs of a resident who is not English-fluent—reporting a

**“It is now estimated by the Dept. of Children, Families and Learning that more than 75 languages are found in Minnesota’s school districts. This is not only true of Minnesota’s major metropolitan areas, but in communities all across greater Minnesota.”**

crime, concerns about a utility bill, information about starting a small business—and ensure an appropriate response? Have you made accommodations at public meetings to ensure residents who are not English-fluent can engage in the policy discussion?

If not, you are not alone. Most Minnesota communities do not currently have programs or communications in place that serve those who are not fluent in English in the same way other residents are served. Often this is due to a lack of financial resources, uncertainty about how best to provide such language services, and the fact that ethnic populations—while growing rapidly—still make up a small percentage of the populations in many Minnesota communities. Even with these considerations and challenges in mind, working to bridge language barriers is an effort the Task Force recommends all city officials undertake as part of their service delivery and governance responsibilities.

**“For working-class immigrants, acquiring proficiency in English is a prerequisite for future economic mobility. They have few options beyond learning English or remaining in their low-income jobs and neighborhoods.”**

Ensuring the well-being of families is often part of a city’s mission in serving its residents. The disparity in English fluency that often occurs in immigrant families can upset the balance of roles where parents become dependent on minor children for translation and interpretation (children having the opportunity to learn English in school and an easier time learning new languages). This can have significant implications for the delivery of public services (e.g., utility billing, permitting and licensing), for public safety (e.g., reporting of crimes, domestic violence, truancy), and on the overall well-being of these families.

Ensuring job opportunities and a strong economic base is also characteristic of a quality community. Many newcomers who are trained for professional or semi-professional work (e.g., teachers, nurses, shop owners, etc.) are only able to obtain low-skill or manual labor jobs in Minnesota’s communities due to language barriers. Tapping the skills of these residents not only leads individuals to feel good about their work and their community, but also allows communities to fill their own resource needs.

And for those newcomers who have not been able to develop their skills in their countries of origin, English proficiency offers them the ability do so and thereby move up the socioeconomic ladder. According to the 1993 report from the Ford Foundation’s Changing Relations Project, *Changing Relations—Newcomers and Established Residents in U.S. Communities*, a significant link exists between language and economic well-being: “For working-class immigrants, acquiring proficiency in English is a prerequisite for future economic mobility. They have few options beyond learning English or remaining in their low-income jobs and neighborhoods.”

### **What city officials can do**

One way to start bridging language gaps is to build a multilingual city staff. Cities can provide incentives to current staff members to learn languages spoken in the community and support related continuing education, perhaps even sponsoring language classes for staff during business hours. Cities can also work with groups representing ethnic populations to mentor and recruit multilingual residents. When job openings occur, skills in multiple languages can be added as a preferred qualification.

Another approach a number of cities have taken is to hire full- or part-time translators and interpreters. If your city does not have large enough ethnic populations to

support such a hire or if fiscal constraints are an issue, cities may want to partner with other local service providers (such as businesses, hospitals, and schools) or other cities in the region to jointly develop a translation and interpretation service. Call-in interpretation services available all day, every day, as well as volunteer interpreter groups are additional options.

When prioritizing where to begin in instituting translations and interpretation, the Task Force recommends focusing on vital city services and areas where significant misunderstandings are occurring. For example, translations are important for information related to public safety, such as signage indicating “no swimming” areas and brochures on how and when to contact police, fire, and emergency personnel.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN AN INTERPRETER

The essential role of the interpreter is to make it possible for two or more individuals who do not share a common language to communicate directly with each other as if they did.

Many people speak more than one language, but simple bilingualism is only the beginning of interpretation. Skills central to the interpretation process include:

- A broad knowledge of both languages and cultures in which they are spoken.
- The ability to grasp readily and completely what others say in either language.
- The ability to speak in either language so as to be readily understood.
- A good memory for what is said.
- The ability to find equivalent means of expression in each language even when there are no equivalent words.
- A knowledge of specialized vocabulary and concepts related to city services, ordinances, and policy issues.

Quality interpreting also requires that the interpreter understands a set of core competencies and adheres to a code of ethics.

### **The competent interpreter:**

1. Introduces self and explains role.
2. Positions self to facilitate communication.
3. Accurately and completely relays the message between the resident and the city staff member.
4. Uses the interpretation mode that best enhances comprehension.
5. Reflects the style and vocabulary of the speaker.
6. Ensures he or she understands the message to be transmitted.
7. Remains neutral.
8. Identifies and separates personal belief from those of the other parties.
9. Identifies and corrects own mistakes.
10. Addresses culturally-based miscommunication, when necessary.

### **An ethical interpreter:**

1. Maintains confidentiality.
2. Interprets accurately and completely.
3. Maintains impartiality.
4. Maintains professional distance.
5. Knows own limits.
6. Demonstrates professionalism.

From *Bridging the Language Gap Report*, (1998), University of Minnesota, which recommends that all interpreters demonstrate oral proficiency of at least “advanced-mid” level on the test of spoken language proficiency administered by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL test). In the U.S., the ACTFL test is administered by Language Testing International, Inc., which can be reached at [www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org) (click on Proficiency Testing) or (914) 948-5100.

It is important to recognize that literacy in native languages varies and can impact city efforts to communicate with those who are limited-English proficient. For some refugees, written language is a relatively new concept. The Hmong language, for example, was developed in the 1950s by Christian missionaries (which is why English letters are utilized). Those who did not convert to Christianity or who lived in more rural areas may never have learned this written language before arriving in the United States. Therefore, to connect with those who are not literate in English or their native language, audio and video approaches may be more successful.

In addition to city services, governance-related activities should also be made accessible to residents who are not fluent in English. By providing translations of city council agendas and materials and/or providing interpretation at city council meetings, ethnic populations are more likely to become engaged in the decision-making processes of city government.

**“Beyond translation and interpretation, city officials can play a role in leading their communities to value the variety of languages spoken in the community.”**

The quality of translations and interpretations is an important issue to consider. Liability issues can arise in critical situations when these services are not adequately performed. (See *“What to look for in an interpreter”* on page 15 for guidance in this area.) Generally, good interpreters have broad knowledge of both languages and the cultures in which they are spoken and are able to be impartial communicators.

If cities have limited options and are inclined to use volunteer interpreters, they should tread carefully. According to the Minnesota Interpreter Standards Advisory Committee, “the use of untrained, volunteer interpreters is rife with hazards: in one study of recorded ad hoc interpreter-assisted encounters, 25 percent to 50 percent of the words and phrases were incorrectly relayed.” If cities do need to tap volunteers, the Task Force recommends looking to associations and organizations that serve ethnic populations to assist in recruitment, and testing the interpretation skills of these volunteers using recognized measures such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency test.

Beyond translation and interpretation, city officials can play a role in leading their communities to value the variety of languages spoken in the community. Cities can encourage local radio stations to offer specialized programming and public service announcements in the major languages spoken in the community. Public access cable can also be similarly utilized, working with groups representing ethnic populations to develop programming.

City officials can also promote English as a Second Language (ESL) training [also known as English as a Learned Language (ELL)]. Businesses can be encouraged to provide English classes at work. Most that do so offer the training on site, but not during business hours or for paid time. It is in the best interest of a business for employees to at least learn occupational English, focused on occupational safety and health such as handling of hazardous materials or what to do when an emergency occurs. Many businesses also offer conversational English classes, as they have found that as English proficiency rises, productivity increases as well.

ESL classes can also be developed as a joint effort with your local school district, faith organizations, health care providers, neighboring communities, and organizations that represent ethnic populations. Times and locations for these classes are best determined in collaboration with representatives of ethnic populations since

many may work uncommon hours (night shifts, weekends), and participation may be greater if classes are held at locations near where ethnic populations live or routinely gather (churches, neighborhood centers, schools, etc.).

### **Outcomes to work toward**

Programs or initiatives related to language should be designed to result in, and to be measured against, one or more of the following outcomes:

- Greater access to and utilization of city services.
- Increased participation in city government and in community organizations.
- Improved understanding of the city's governmental processes.
- An increased percentage of the city's population that is fluent in English.
- An increased percentage of the city's population that is fluent in languages other than English that are spoken in the community.
- Improved cross-cultural understanding among populations that differ in their native language.

### **Recommended action steps**

The Task Force recommends the following action steps in regard to bridging language differences:

#### **If you do nothing else:**

- Initiate a community-wide, or region-wide, effort to develop translation and interpretation services that the city (or cities), health care providers, businesses, and social service organizations can jointly fund and jointly utilize.

#### **Action steps that require little or no financial resources:**

- Provide a welcome sign or banner in city hall and/or on the city's web site that reflects all the major languages spoken in your community. Also include faces of the various populations that make up your community to ensure those who are not literate in their native languages feel welcome.
- Develop a multilingual staff, and reward and recognize staff for multilingual skills.
- Support and/or provide English as a Second Language training, and training in the languages other than English that are spoken in your community. Work with the school district, faith organizations, organizations representing ethnic populations, and other community groups to offer this training.
- Provide or facilitate opportunities for specialized programming (such as on the local public access cable channel) for people whose primary language is not English.
- Work with the public school system on joint efforts to connect with parents and families who are not fluent in English.

#### **Other action steps:**

- Have all city officials (elected and appointed) learn key phrases in the major languages spoken in your community.
- Provide translations of city information, particularly in regard to city services residents may want to access and potential policies that residents may want to comment on.
  - Ensure translation services are of high quality.

**“If you do nothing else: initiate a community-wide or region-wide effort to develop translation and interpretation services that the city (or cities), health care providers, businesses, and social service organizations can jointly fund and jointly utilize.”**

- Provide interpreters for communications that are commonly or best provided orally.
  - Provide interpreters or interpretation services for council meetings and public hearings.
  - Provide interpreters or interpretation services for public safety personnel.
  - Ensure interpretation services are of high quality.
- Hire a multilingual liaison for each major population that has many non-English fluent members. Promote such liaisons as a single point of contact for those populations. Liaisons could also be hired as part of a collaborative effort among neighboring cities, the school district and/or the county, or collaborations with the business community and/or health care providers.
  - If the multilingual liaison is to also provide interpretation services, be sure the workload does not become overwhelming.
  - Look to your local community for liaisons. This can help facilitate communication and make non-English fluent residents more comfortable.
  - Look for interpersonal skills as well as language skills.
- Develop a video welcoming newcomers that describes key services provided by the city and how residents can get involved in city governance processes. Provide different versions of the video with voiceovers in the main languages spoken in your community. Work with local businesses and institutions to fund production of the video.
- Provide key informational signs in all the major languages spoken in your community—especially those related to public safety (e.g., “No Swimming”) and access to city services (e.g., hours of operation). Use visual images to communicate when possible.
- Overcome language barriers in cultural sharing events and celebrations, and tell people in advance how you will do so.

**CHAPTER THREE:****WORK AGAINST RACISM AND PREJUDICE**

*“Vusi Kumalo, a native of South Africa, was about to follow a woman through a door when she deliberately shut it in his face. Then she called him ‘nigger,’ told him to ‘go back to where he came from,’ and spit in his face.”*

*“A 12-year-old Somali boy had eight teeth knocked out when he couldn’t outrun a mob of whites yielding baseball bats; a 64-year-old Somali man was pushed to the ground, beaten and kicked by several whites; and a 13-year-old paper boy of Somali descent was attacked and beaten by a carload of white teenagers.”*

*“One white student, quoted in the high school newspaper, said: ‘I feel that whites have it more together than other races. [Blacks] are the ones causing all the problems in cities and then moving out to the suburbs and causing all the problems out here ... There were no problems before they came.’”*

– Cases described in the May 1999, Minnesota Public Radio series, “The Hidden Rainbow.”

The fact that racist actions and prejudicial statements such as those described above have occurred in Minnesota at all—much less within the last 10 years and in cities small and large across the state—is hard for many Minnesotans to believe. Many see racism as an issue of the distant past that has been largely eradicated. But, in fact, the experiences of ethnic populations tells us Minnesota still has a long way to go.

If you are a Minnesotan of European descent, odds are you have never had cause to wonder whether the way you were treated by a salesperson, a bank clerk, a potential employer, a landlord, a real estate agent or a police officer had anything to do with the color of your skin or your ethnicity. You have grown up seeing people who look and sound like you on the city council, in the White House, as leaders of corporations, and as members of the news media. For ethnic populations, the opposite experience is often more true.

There is an important role for city officials in confronting racism and prejudice. And while the discussions surrounding these issues can be uncomfortable and difficult, cities that take actions to be welcoming and inclusive often reap great reward.

The Task Force spent considerable time discussing issues of racism and prejudice, since both can have great impact on city operations, city governance, and overall quality of life. They were particularly concerned city officials not dismiss racism as something that might occur in another community down the road and not in their own since racism continues to occur today in every corner of the state.

In discussing issues of racism and prejudice, it is helpful to first define key terms to understand how the two issues differ and how they intersect. This discussion will focus on defining “stereotype,” “prejudice,” “discrimination,” and “racism.” While there are many resources for defining these terms—and many varied definitions—the few sources we cite here seemed to be clear and easily applicable.

In defining racism and prejudice, it is helpful to begin by looking at how prejudices are formed. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, a national organization focused on combating racism and other bias, the human mind has a natural tendency to quickly and automatically categorize people and things as a

way of making sense of the world. It is the basic human need to distinguish friends from enemies and safety from danger. Every day, each one of us groups people into categories based on their characteristics, and our social interactions are often influenced by these categorizations. However, when this natural tendency to make generalizations is misinformed and results in rigid characterizations, stereotypes develop.

The Law Center defines a stereotype as “an exaggerated belief, image or distorted truth about a person or group—a generalization that allows for little or no individual differences or social variation.” Stereotypes are rarely shaped by personal interaction with an individual of a particular group, and are more often based on what people see on television and in the media, or on statements and/or actions of parents, friends, and society in general. While stereotypes are most often negative (e.g., Italians are members of the mafia, people on welfare are lazy), they can also be positive (e.g., Asians are good in math). Even positive stereotypes can be damaging, as they raise expectations and do not recognize the unique skills and attributes of each individual.

**“Every day, each one of us groups people into categories based on their characteristics, and our social interactions are often influenced by these categorizations. However, when this natural tendency to make generalizations is misinformed and results in rigid characterizations, stereotypes develop.”**

Prejudice is a concept closely tied to stereotyping. As the Law Center states, prejudice is “an opinion, prejudgment or attitude about a group or its individual members” that is often accompanied by ignorance, fear or hatred. Or as defined in the 2001 edition of *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, prejudice is “a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.”

Expression of prejudice—or taking action on those preconceived opinions—is what constitutes discrimination. The Southern Poverty Law Center defines discrimination as unequal treatment of individuals because of their group memberships. The Law Center also notes discrimination ranges from slights to hate crimes, and often begins with negative stereotypes and prejudices.

Prejudice and discrimination can take place on the basis of race, as well as other factors such as ethnicity, immigration status, disability, gender, and religion. When prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory actions relate to race, it is called “racism.”

According to some scholars and organizations, the element of “power” is a necessary factor for racism to occur. This refers to the idea that only the race or races that hold political or social authority are in the position to discriminate.

Another definition of racism, as stated by *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, focuses on the categorization of people by race in order to establish superiority. It states that racism is “the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.”

The idea of race and racial groupings of people has evolved over time. People once believed racial groupings were biological, but it is now greatly accepted fact in scientific and academic communities that racial groupings are primarily social constructs. As the American Anthropological Association’s “Statement on ‘Race’” describes:

*“Today scholars in many fields argue that ‘race’ as it is understood in the United States ... was a social mechanism invented during the 18<sup>th</sup> century to refer to those populations brought together in colonial America: the English and other European settlers, the*

*conquered Indian peoples, and those peoples of Africa brought in to provide slave labor....It became a strategy for dividing, ranking, and controlling colonized people used by colonial powers everywhere.... The 'racial' worldview was invented to assign some groups to perpetual low status, while others were permitted access to privilege, power, and wealth."*

The 2001 edition of *The New Oxford American Dictionary* includes a similar assessment under the definition of race, stating that although there are scientifically accepted subdivisions of the human species, it is clear genetic variation between individuals of the same race can be as great as that between members of different races.

This is not to say issues related to race do not exist or that efforts to undo racism are no longer needed. Racism occurs today not only in terms of individual behavior, but also as an institutionalized social construct.

Racism as an institutional practice ("institutional racism") is most often associated with the intentional political and social policies related to slavery and segregation. When you think about the fact that this intentional, institutionalized racism was legally sanctioned for nearly 200 years—and that many of those who were relegated to the back of the bus, who were leaders in the civil rights movement, who were the first to integrate the nation's school systems, are still alive today—it should be no surprise that remnants of intentional institutional racism remain in government, business, and society today.

It is even more important for city officials to recognize that institutional racism or discrimination can exist even if the people who implement it are not themselves prejudiced. It is easy to be unaware of the impacts of existing and proposed city policies on particular ethnic populations.

One example of unintentional institutional racism would be requiring a high-school diploma or college degree for a city job for which such credentials are unnecessary. Such a policy may unintentionally and unnecessarily discriminate against ethnic populations that attain such degrees at lower rates.

Finally, while racism, discrimination, and prejudice have traditionally been thought of as issues between white and Black Americans, these issues cut across all ethnic populations. People from Mexico, Honduras, Laos, Vietnam, Bosnia, and other new immigrants, as well as Native Americans, have all been targets. The Minnesota State Chicano-Latino Affairs Council, Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, Indian Affairs Council, and Council on Black Minnesotans have reported problems with access to services, prejudiced comments, racial profiling, and crime and violence motivated by race, ethnicity or immigrant status for the populations they serve.

Prejudice and discrimination also can occur against new immigrants regardless of race. Stereotypes and prejudices related to newly arrived immigrants from the former Soviet Union can be very similar to those related to newly arrived immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asian-Pacific countries since they may have more to do with socio-economic status, fluency in English, and/or immigration status.

**"It is even more important for city officials to recognize that institutional racism or discrimination can exist even if the people who implement it are not themselves prejudiced. It is easy to be unaware of the impacts of existing and proposed city policies on particular ethnic populations."**

## Why city officials should get involved

There are so many issues and problems in which city officials are requested and required to get involved. Why take on racism and prejudice? After all, these issues are much larger than your community, measurement of progress is difficult at best, and tangible results may take a long time to determine. Even discussing these issues, much less taking action, can be seen as unnecessarily stirring up trouble.

The most obvious reason for city officials to work against racism and prejudice is legal compliance. Ethnic populations are legally entitled to the same quality of city service that other residents receive, and cities are required to comply with and uphold the following state and federal non-discrimination laws:

- ***Minnesota Human Rights Act***

It is an unfair discriminatory practice to discriminate against any person in the access to, admission to, full utilization of, or benefit from any public service because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or status with regard to public assistance. *Minn. Stat. Sec. 363.03, Subd. 4 (2001)*

- ***Civil Rights Act of 1964***

- *Title VI*: No person in the United States shall, on ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. *42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000(d)*

- *Title VII*: It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to fail or refuse to discharge any individual, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex or national origin; or to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. *42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000 e-2 (a)*

- *Title II*: All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation...without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin. *42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000 a (a)*

But the reasons for city officials to work against racism and prejudice go beyond simply following the law—they go to the heart of what it means to build quality communities. Communities where all people are free to live, work and play without being touched by discrimination or racism. Communities where children are taught, by word and example, that all people are unique and valued.

Quality of life in Minnesota cities is often tied to factors of safety, economic vitality, good schools, etc. Another factor is the degree to which a community is welcoming and close-knit. These factors are strongly influenced by how well city officials understand the unique needs and challenges facing ethnic populations, including racism and prejudice. As Minnesota's populations become more multicultural, confronting racism and prejudice is increasingly important to every community's quality of life.

**“But the reasons for city officials to work against racism and prejudice go beyond simply following the law—they go to the heart of what it means to build quality communities.”**

## What city officials can do

In working to combat racism, hate crimes and other acts of overt racism should be the first priority. Examples include graffiti displaying epithets or swastikas, cross burnings, beatings or other violent acts motivated by prejudice. It is critical in these situations for communities to respond swiftly and severely, but to also be sensitive to the needs of victims, for the effects often reach beyond those who have been directly victimized. As stated in the U.S. Dept. of Justice's 1996 *Training Guide for Hate Crime Data Collection*: "Not only is the individual who is personally touched by these offenses victimized, but the entire class of individuals residing in the community is affected. For these reasons, law enforcement officers must be particularly skillful in responding in such a way that the trauma of the victim and the community is not exacerbated by a lack of sensitivity in the law enforcement response."

When hate crimes occur, city leaders can rally the community to send a message that racism is unacceptable (a "Not in Our Town" approach) and take positive actions to counter acts of hate, such as the following example from the Southern Poverty Law Center's document *Ten Ways to Fight Hate*: "When a seven-foot cross was burned on the lawn of a young black couple in Kansas City, Kansas, it shocked neighbors. 'They've just attacked our neighborhood,' said a spokeswoman for the Rosedale Development Association. People from all over the city swarmed onto the property, repainting, replacing screens, mowing the yard, planting flowers. The victim hoped aloud that the perpetrator was watching, 'so they can see that what they did backfired on them.'"

Undoing racism means more than responding quickly and appropriately to acts of hate. It means addressing the underlying prejudice, before it manifests in violence, by building communities that value all people. By virtue of your position as community leader and public servant, you have a unique opportunity to initiate discussion on racism and prejudice, and to take actions that affirm the city's commitment to inclusiveness and fairness.

In materials for its "Campaign to Promote Racial Justice," the National League of Cities points to many actions city officials can take, which can be generalized into three categories: discuss, examine, and act.

Discussion is the first step. City officials can speak out against racism and prejudice, as well as create safe spaces for all members of the community to talk and to hear experiences and viewpoints. These can be very difficult discussions where neutral facilitation is needed. Often the terminology people use in talking about race can cause friction. It should be made clear that verbal missteps, anger, and frustration are to be expected.

**"Undoing racism means more than responding quickly and appropriately to acts of hate. It means addressing the underlying prejudice, before it manifests in violence, by building communities that value all people."**

## PERSONAL ACTIONS CITY OFFICIALS CAN TAKE

*From the Rochester, Minnesota Diversity Council*

- Recognize that many of our ideas and beliefs about race and culture were learned as children. Ask yourself, "As a child, what spoken or unspoken message did I receive about people of different races and cultures?"
- Prepare in advance how you will respond to discriminatory remarks, jokes, and behavior.
- Read about another racial or cultural group or attend a local cultural celebration.
- Do smile. Don't stare at those different from yourself.
- Consider volunteering with students of ethnic populations or with refugee and immigrant families.

While, by and large, ethnic populations are very open to discussions of racism and prejudice, these may not have been significant issues in the countries of origin for some new immigrants. If this is the case, discussion may need to focus on drawing out specific discriminatory actions they have experienced rather than asking questions generally about racism and discrimination.

In engaging white participants, you may find that those who come forward are likely to already be sensitized to the issue and embrace efforts to undo racism and combat prejudice. Community-wide efforts, as well as specific stories of racism and prejudice, should be broadly communicated to ensure it is difficult for anyone to avoid discussing the topics.

The next step is examination—of your own personal attitudes and actions, as well as city policies and programs.

Examining personal beliefs and behaviors can be a difficult process regardless of the topic, but even more so in regard to prejudice and racism. Talking with close friends and family may be one way to start. Another is to take the web-based “Hidden Bias Test” provided by the Southern Poverty Law Center online at: [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org). You can also participate in a study circle on racism and prejudice (information is provided by the Study Circles Resource Center), or, if you are more comfortable thinking through these issues privately, you can read the materials provided for moderators of study circles on racism and prejudice and privately answer some of the questions posed.

In regard to examination of city policies and programs, it is important to look for instances of intentional and unintentional racism, and to analyze the impacts on each individual population not just the collective whole. For example, residential zoning requirements often are designed with the average white family household size in mind. For many ethnic populations, the average size household is larger, not only due to a higher average number of children per household, but also the desire to live with and take care of extended family members. The result is much greater difficulty for these ethnic populations in finding housing they can afford and that meets their needs.

In addition to examining specific city policies or programs, cities can act to undo racism and prejudice by simply working on all the other issues facing the community, but doing so in new ways. By proactively engaging people of all races and ethnic backgrounds in developing solutions to community problems, they can come together to work toward common goals. Sometimes the most effective action cities can take to bridge racial or ethnic divides is to create opportunities for people to get to know each other in a context that has nothing directly to do with race or ethnicity.

City efforts also can be enhanced by including or focusing on young people. Attitudes related to race and ethnicity are shaped very early in life and once rooted are hard to change. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center:

*“Social scientists believe that children begin to acquire prejudices and stereotypes as toddlers. Many studies have shown that as early as age 3, children pick up terms of racial prejudice without really understanding their significance. Soon, they begin to form attachments to their own group and develop negative attitudes about other racial or ethnic groups, or the ‘out-group.’ Early in life, most children acquire a full set of biases that can be observed in verbal slurs, ethnic jokes, and acts of discrimination....”*

**“Sometimes the most effective action cities can take to bridge racial or ethnic divides is to create opportunities for people to get to know each other in a context that has nothing directly to do with race or ethnicity.”**

*Psychologists theorize that bias conveyed by the media helps to explain why children can adopt hidden prejudices even when their family environments explicitly oppose them.”*

Again, simply providing opportunities for young people of different cultural backgrounds to work together to solve common problems or just to get to know each other, can be the best way to achieve understanding and appreciation in your community.

The city of Willmar, for example, collaborates with the United Way, schools, and churches to offer the “Amigos de Christos” program. This two-week program offered every summer brings together children of different ethnic backgrounds for two weeks of shared activity that often results in lasting friendships. The city provides facilities and staff time, and also recruits volunteers. The program was developed as an effort to gain cross-cultural understanding and prevent racial conflict among both young people and adults, cueing from the recycling model of adults learning from the behavior modeled by their children.

So if you do all these things, how will you know that your efforts have been successful? As you would expect, it is hard to quantify. From the experience of city officials who have engaged their communities in efforts to undo racism and combat prejudice, it requires a long-term commitment, a lot of patience, and real courage. As stated in *Ensuring Racial Equality*, “Officials must be prepared for resistance—even threatening behavior. Not everyone will embrace the effort. But that resistance can’t get in the way of strong leadership. Don’t lose hope in face of inevitable setbacks. No matter how facilitative your style, you may be accused of trying to control the process. No matter how open you think you are, or what race you are, you may be called a racist. However, leadership is fueled by a vision of how communities ought to be. No effort is too small to make a beginning.”

### **Outcomes to work toward**

Programs or initiatives related to undoing racism and combating prejudice should be designed to result in, and success to be measured against, one or more of the following outcomes:

- Institution and enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy toward racist behavior and acts of hate.
- Modification or elimination of city policies and practices that have a discriminatory effect on ethnic populations.
- City councils, staff and voluntary groups that reflect the multicultural composition of the community.
- Improved cross-cultural understanding and acceptance.

### **Recommended action steps**

The Task Force recommends the following action steps in regard to recognizing and working against racism and prejudice:

#### **If you do nothing else:**

- Examine city policies and procedures to determine if they have a discriminatory effect on ethnic populations, and, if so, work to modify or eliminate those policies and procedures.

**“If you do nothing else: examine city policies and procedures to determine if they have a discriminatory effect on ethnic populations, and, if so, work to modify or eliminate those policies and procedures.”**

**Action steps that require little or no financial resources:**

- Learn about the culture and experiences of the ethnic populations represented in your community.
  - Gather information on age distribution, patterns of housing occupancy, and other statistics that may be relevant to determining where bias may exist in city policies and procedures.
  - Learn why new immigrants have come to your community, and about the culture and experiences that have shaped them.
- Educate and engage the community on the issues of racism and prejudice.
  - Create “safe spaces” for residents to talk about racism and prejudice, such as study circles.
  - Hold forums that are televised on your public access cable station.
- Make a public commitment to ensuring racism is not tolerated in your community.
  - Highlight this commitment on the city web site or in the mayor’s column of your city newsletter.
- Encourage city officials and community members to take a “unity pledge” (see page 27 for examples).
- Work with the media to promote multicultural unity and your city’s efforts to uphold a zero-tolerance policy on racism and discrimination.
- Dispel stereotypes about ethnic populations, including new immigrants, through educational efforts in the schools and through city programs.
- Develop a community-wide plan, working in partnership with ethnic populations, for how you will become a welcoming, caring community.
- Encourage involvement of ethnic populations in discussions and activities related to broad community issues, fostering cross-cultural interaction and friendships in the process of working to achieve mutual goals.
- Establish a human rights commission or other advisory group with representation from major ethnic populations in the community.
- Appoint people of ethnic populations to city boards and commissions.
- Recruit people of ethnic populations to serve as volunteer firefighters.
- Institute an “honorary councilmember” program and recruit people of ethnic populations to serve.
- Encourage children and youth to discuss racism and prejudice.
  - Hold essay and poster contests.
  - Develop study circles on racism and prejudice specifically for high-school students.
- Organize city festivals that celebrate the multicultural nature of your community.

**EXAMPLES OF UNITY PLEDGES**

*These unity pledges were compiled by the National League of Cities in its Ensuring Racial Equality publication:*

---

“I believe that every person has worth as an individual.

I believe that every person is entitled to dignity and respect, regardless of race or (ethnicity).

I believe that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful; if it is my thought or act, then it is harmful to me as well as to others.

Therefore, from this day forward I will strive daily to eliminate racial prejudice from my thoughts and actions.

I will discourage racial prejudice by others at every opportunity.

I will treat all people with dignity and respect; and I will strive daily to honor this pledge, knowing that the world will be a better place because of my effort.”

— *Pledge adopted by the Dyersburg City Council, Dyersburg, Tennessee, October 2000*

---

“We reject the notion of race as a barrier dividing us and we reject prejudicial behavior toward any group of people. We believe residence in this Village should be open to anyone interested in sharing our benefits and responsibilities...The Village of Oak Park commits itself to a future ensuring equal access, full participation in all of the Village’s institutions and programs, and equality of opportunity in all Village operating policies.”

—*Oak Park, Illinois, April 1999*

---

“Unity is a personal decision that comes from a belief that every person should be valued. I believe that American’s diversity is its strength. I also recognize that ignorance, insensitivity, and bigotry can turn that diversity into a source of prejudice and discrimination. To help keep a wellspring of strength and make America a better place for all, I agree to respect all people. To this end I will:

- Examine my own biases and work to overcome them.
- Set a positive example for my family and friends.
- Work for unity in my own community.
- Speak out against hate and injustice against all.”

— *Pledge from City of Bowie, Maryland, adapted from a pledge disseminated by the Southern Poverty Law Center.*



**CHAPTER FOUR:****ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY EFFORTS**

*“An Asian family is robbed at gunpoint in their own neighborhood by Asian gang members. They do not call the police for three reasons: they fear reprisals from the gang, language barriers mean they cannot effectively communicate with the police, and they fear the police.”*

*“Two women were in an accident and taken to a hospital emergency room. The husband of one of the women went to the hospital to find out about his wife. He did not speak English well, and when he tried to speak to the police officer there, he was told to sit down. Because he was so worried about his wife, he tried again to speak to the officer, this time grasping the officer’s arm. The police officer, misunderstanding the husband’s intentions, took the action as a threat and handcuffed him.”*

*“Police confronted (a Somali man) after he was seen walking down a busy street carrying a machete and a crowbar. Police told him to put the weapons down and he refused. After 11 minutes of trying to defuse the situation, including bringing in two officers from the city’s Crisis Intervention Team (specially trained to deal with mentally ill suspects) and using Taser stun guns, the man charged toward the officers and was fatally shot. Community outrage followed, with Somali groups protesting at city hall, calling the man’s death an ‘execution’ and a ‘murder.’”*

– Actual cases. The first two cited in the National Crime Prevention Council publication *Powerful Partnerships*; the third case occurred in Minneapolis, March 2002.

Public safety officials in cities small and large across Minnesota face these kinds of situations regularly. Their duty is to uphold the law, to decipher and diffuse chaotic situations, to handle sudden emergencies, and to be the primary resource for victims. When public safety officials come upon situations where communication is compromised by language gaps and/or cultural differences, this difficult job is made even more difficult.

From the perspective of many people of ethnic populations, interaction and communication with public safety officials has long been something to avoid. They may have directly experienced or witnessed police brutality or corruption in other countries. Cases of racial profiling and police misconduct in the United States may also have affected their perceptions. They may believe law enforcement officials only want to speak with them if they are suspected of wrongdoing.

Complicating public safety matters are misunderstandings of the law itself. While the general population tends to see laws and regulations as complex and confusing, most have grown up with a basic understanding of what is legally right and wrong and the cultural norms for interpersonal interaction in the U.S. For new immigrants, learning the vast array of federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and sometimes coming from a different understanding of what is legally right and wrong and what is or is not culturally acceptable, can be overwhelming. With this in mind, it is easy to see how interactions with other residents or law enforcement can lead to misunderstandings.

Beyond general communication and cultural issues, there are a number of other factors that can influence interaction between public safety officials and ethnic populations—in particular, mental health and immigration issues.

Mental health issues among ethnic populations—particularly for the approximately 14,000 Minnesotans who have been victims of torture—can be a significant complicating factor in public safety situations. Having the background and tools to determine if a mental health situation exists and how best to respond can be the difference between a minor incident and a crisis situation.

Another area of conflict identified by the Task Force, which has heightened in intensity since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, is immigration law. Conflicts have surfaced during the past year over the federal and local roles in enforcing immigration law, as well as related accusations of racial profiling. This area of law enforcement continues to evolve, leaving city officials wondering what their roles and responsibilities are now and will be in the future.

### **Why city officials should get involved**

One of city government's most basic services is public safety. Residents rely on city officials to make their community a safe place to live, work, and play. Preventing conflicts, altercations, and violence, as well as ensuring the city responds effectively when such situations erupt, is central to your role as a city official.

Additionally, your city has the legal responsibility to uphold all laws, including civil rights laws that protect residents from discrimination and mistreatment based on their skin color or ethnicity. By working with groups representing ethnic populations to ensure rights are protected and with public safety officials to ensure discrimination is not tolerated, your city can prevent conflicts between ethnic populations and law enforcement and avoid potential liability.

Overall, your city's effectiveness in preventing and responding to conflicts involving ethnic populations may be one of the most significant factors in determining your success in building an inclusive community.

### **What city officials can do**

The National Crime Prevention Council breaks out recommended action steps for public officials and ethnic populations into three main categories: education, mediation, and preventive measures.

In discussing the actions city officials can take, the Task Force emphasized education, especially in cultural competence, for public safety officials more than any other group because of the critical nature of their work. Understanding the cultural background of the populations in your community, including differences in nonverbal communication, can help public safety officials avoid misunderstandings and work more effectively.

The city of St. Paul has recognized these benefits, requiring all police officers to take training courses on Hmong culture and hiring Hmong officers. Organizations that work with St. Paul's Hmong population have reported improvements in relations between police officers and Hmong residents. The city of Minneapolis, especially in the wake of the March 2002 shooting of a mentally-ill Somali man, has also worked to educate its law enforcement officers and to develop closer relationships with the Somali community. Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak was praised for his outreach following the shooting, the next day attending a 6 a.m. police roll call and meeting with Somali leaders and representatives of the mental health community.

**“Overall, your city’s effectiveness in preventing and responding to conflicts involving ethnic populations may be one of the most significant factors in determining your success in building an inclusive community.”**

While understanding the cultural norms of ethnic populations in your community is essential to effective crime prevention and response, it is impractical to assume that city laws and regulations can or should be modified to fit all cultural situations. Where there are certainly areas of law that should be examined and may need to be modified to eliminate cultural bias, such modifications may not be appropriate in areas of health, safety, welfare, and basic human rights.

Under the category of education, training is essential. The Task Force strongly recommends public safety officials receive training in cultural competency and in languages, other than English, spoken in the community. And, just as police officers often receive promotions and pay increases related to educational achievement, cultural competency and language skills should be similarly rewarded.

Such training should also be specialized to pertain to the particular populations represented in your community. The city of Brooklyn Park, for example, arranged training for its officials related to the culture and experiences of the Liberian-American community it serves. Training can also focus on the specific public safety issues that face your community's ethnic populations. The Task Force pointed to family violence and racial profiling as two key issues to consider.

Family violence is a good example where U.S. laws and cultural norms are clear, but culture and environment are important to effective law enforcement. Some spousal and child abuse may be condoned by cultural norms, or may be a reaction to the stress of adapting to a new environment. To effectively diffuse family violence situations and prevent future incidents, cities can focus on training public safety officials to recognize the unique factors that lead to family violence and how best to assist families in resolving conflict and supporting victims. (A chart in the Appendix of this action guide provides specific behaviors that can occur when police officers respond to incidents of domestic violence, possible explanations for the behaviors, and guidance on how to, and how not to, respond.)

**“Where there are certainly areas of law that should be examined and may need to be modified to eliminate cultural bias, such modifications may not be appropriate in areas of health, safety, welfare, and basic human rights.”**

### TIPS FOR POLICE, FROM POLICE

*Compiled from When Law and Culture Collide and Powerful Partnerships, both available from the Outreach to New Americans Office of the National Crime Prevention Council.*

- Developing relationships with ethnic populations is a long-term strategy, not a short-term project.
- Build trust. It will take time and patience to become accepted in a community.
- Learn to be flexible. Language barriers make discussion more difficult and time consuming, and cultural differences can create obstacles to your success.
- Plan to reach out to ethnic populations because they will not normally initiate contact with you. Attend celebrations and religious services. Visit grocery stores where ethnic populations shop.
- Learn about the history of any conflict between culture and law, as well as the background of all parties involved: where they have come from, how they got here, and how long they have been here.
- Pay attention to family communication within ethnic populations. Children may have a foot in each culture and integrate faster than their parents, who may be holding onto their culture as a natural means of stabilizing their lives. Parents may perceive they are losing authority if they need to rely on their children to serve as translators.
- Participate in after-school activities to build trust and understanding with youth of ethnic populations.
- Recruit and hire male and female officers from ethnic populations to serve as liaisons.
- Be prepared for new residents of ethnic populations to potentially be suffering from culture shock.
- Demystify law enforcement as much as possible. When appropriate, keep the community advised and updated regarding an investigation's progress, techniques and procedures.

Racial profiling is another important topic for public safety training and education. In the paper *Defining, Understanding, and Addressing Racial Profiling in Police Practices* by Kevin G. Ross of Greene Espel, P.L.L.P., racial profiling is defined as “...a law enforcement officer’s use of race or ethnicity as a factor in, or indicia of, reasonable suspicion or probable cause in the decision to stop, confront, detain, investigate, search or arrest. In short,...a police decision to act partially or completely on the basis of an individual’s race.” While exactly how best to document and eliminate racial profiling is debatable (Ross outlines six approaches and their pros and cons), the Task Force encourages cities to discuss the issue, review options for action, and ensure their police officers know racial profiling is unacceptable.

In regard to education, city officials should focus not only on educating their police officers, but also ethnic populations and the broader community. The city of Rochester, for example, holds meetings with ethnic populations to discuss family abuse and violence, and incorporates discussion of safety and domestic violence in local English language classes.

In addition, the Task Force clearly stated that culture should not be an excuse for breaking the law—but also that to be law-abiding residents, ethnic populations need to understand the law. City officials can work with groups representing ethnic populations to ensure new immigrants understand their legal rights and responsibilities, the laws and regulations they must abide by, and the cultural norms common to U.S. residents. Workshops, videos, and translated brochures are recommended approaches.

Mediation is also an important area of emphasis. Minor infractions of the law can quickly escalate to more serious incidents when misunderstandings arise. By involving those who understand the cultures and/or the languages represented in a conflict, law enforcement and ethnic populations can find common understanding and move forward appropriately.

The key, and the hurdle for small communities in particular, is having such mediators on hand, either on the scene or easily reached from the scene, to deal with critical situations. Hiring liaisons designated to work with ethnic populations, making your police force representative of the populations in your community, and contracting for interpretation services are all recommended approaches. Communities can also partner in developing shared interpretation services or regional liaisons where ethnic populations are sparse and/or financing is scarce.

In the area of preventive measures, developing relationships with groups representing ethnic populations is important to determining potential areas of conflict and to effectively managing conflicts when they do arise. Such relationships can be built informally as well as through formal creation of advisory groups, such as human rights commissions. (Human rights commissions are often created by cities or counties with the purpose of advising the elected body on enforcement of civil rights laws, and prevention and response related to hate crimes and discrimination.) By appointing ethnic populations to a formal advisory group, city officials have a clear route to proactively address issues before they become more serious.

Preventive measures can also include outreach to youth. Since youth in general are more likely to become involved in crime, and young people tend to make up a greater percentage of ethnic populations (see the census data sidebar in the Overview section of this action guide), engaging in activities that support positive youth development is an important role for public safety officials. There can also be

**“City officials can work with groups representing ethnic populations to ensure new immigrants understand their legal rights and responsibilities, the laws and regulations they must abide by, and the cultural norms common to U.S. residents.”**

unique reasons why youth of ethnic populations may get into trouble, such as having served as child soldiers, being raised in refugee camps, and generally having had to take on adult responsibilities at a young age. Truancy in particular is a significant problem among young people of ethnic populations throughout Minnesota that positive relationships with police officers may help to address.

Finally, the Task Force recommends city officials involved in fire and EMS services employ many of the education, mediation, and preventive measures described here. Because firefighters are not usually affected by the cultural or experiential biases ethnic populations often have toward police officers, firefighters can act as bridge-builders to foster a positive view of public safety officials in general.

### **Outcomes to work toward**

Programs or initiatives related to public safety should be designed to result in, and success to be measured against, one or more of the following outcomes:

- Increased number of public safety officials who are culturally competent and have basic fluency in the languages spoken in the community.
- Increased number of public safety officials who reflect the ethnic composition of the community.
- Improved understanding among ethnic populations of their rights under the law and the local, state, and federal laws they must abide by.
- Improved mediation mechanisms, including interpreters and potentially liaisons to ethnic populations.
- Elimination and prevention of racial profiling practices.
- Greater mutual trust and understanding between public safety officials and ethnic populations.

### **Recommended action steps**

The Task Force recommends the following action steps in regard to public safety:

#### **If you do nothing else:**

- Meet with groups or leaders representing ethnic populations to develop collaborative working groups or task forces on issues relevant to public safety activities.

#### **Action steps that require little or no financial resources:**

- Recruit police officers and firefighters who represent the multicultural composition of the community.
- Reward and recognize public safety officials who demonstrate cultural competency.
- Reward and recognize basic language skills in the main languages spoken in the community.
- Preprint statement forms in the languages common in your community. (These forms should ask the recipient first to get an interpreter to help them make a statement in English and then bring it to the police department.)
- Provide officers with wallet cards listing needed phrases in different languages.
- Work with groups representing ethnic populations to co-sponsor workshops for and disseminate materials to new immigrants on their legal rights and the laws they must follow.
- Work with representatives of local school district, ethnic populations, and youth to develop positive youth activities.

**“If you do nothing else: meet with groups or leaders representing ethnic populations to develop collaborative working groups or task forces on issues relevant to public safety activities.”**

- Develop initiatives that establish positive connections between youth and public safety officials.
- If gang activity exists, work with school district and representatives of affected ethnic populations to develop action plans.
- Be careful in defining gangs. Often groups of ethnic youth are mischaracterized as gangs.
  - According to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, “A gang is a group of people who have a common name, sign or identifying symbol, and who engage in criminal activity.”
- Work with federal immigration officials and your city attorney to understand the local role vs. federal role in enforcing immigration laws.
- Examine issues related to racial profiling and develop an action plan for preventing and responding to this practice among your city’s law enforcement officers.
- Carefully analyze and publicize crime reports. Often perceptions that growing ethnic populations result in increased crime are unfounded.

**Other action steps:**

- Ensure public safety officials receive cultural competency training on a regular basis.
  - Specialize this training to focus on the populations represented in the community.
  - Work in partnership with local groups representing ethnic populations to make the training specific to your community.
  - Ensure both field and office staff receive training.
- Designate multilingual, multicultural liaisons as central points of communication with limited-English proficient residents.
- Utilize interpretation services conducive to critical situations, such as on-the-scene interpreters or 24-hour call-in services.

**CHAPTER FIVE:****UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS**

*“My daughter speaks good English. Over the phone, she was told that a house was available to rent and made an appointment to see the house. When she got there, the landlord wouldn’t open the door—he could see that she is Mexican.”*

– Excerpt of an interview from *The Vitality of Latino Communities in Rural Minnesota—*  
a report from the Center for Rural Policy and Development.

As Minnesotans are all too aware, our state faces a critical shortage of affordable housing. Cities of every size and in every region of the state are struggling to meet the housing needs of their populations, making housing an issue of focus in many local elections and in the work of city governments.

For ethnic populations, the housing crisis hits particularly hard. The concern is not just affordability, but adequacy as well. Ethnic populations tend to require larger housing units for a variety of reasons, including higher average numbers of children and close-knit, live-in extended families—factors true for Minnesota’s earlier generations of European immigrants as well. A new factor brought by some of today’s immigrant populations is a view of “family” as including all members of a tribe or geographical area, making more communal living arrangements their cultural norm.

An added difficulty in finding affordable and appropriate housing is ongoing discrimination. While housing discrimination was outlawed in the 1960s, incidents of unequal treatment are still regularly reported in Minnesota today. For example, landlords are known to charge ethnic populations rent by the number of occupants while not similarly charging other populations. There have also been documented incidents of landlords telling ethnic populations that apartments have already been rented or are not available when the opposite is true. And while lending institutions may offer the same interest rates to all people, they may only offer special deals, such as “no money down,” to select customers on a discriminatory basis.

Segregation is another housing issue still occurring in Minnesota. This can be due to feeling welcome or finding housing that is affordable and/or appropriate only in certain areas of a community, as well as simply feeling more comfortable living near people of similar ethnic heritage, customs, and experiences. The results of ethnic populations being segregated—whether by the actions of others or the exercise of personal preference—are restricted housing options for ethnic populations, perceptions that ethnic populations are resistant to becoming part of the greater community, and lost opportunities for cross-cultural understanding.

Ethnic populations may also view housing in a fundamentally different way. Where many Minnesotans see purchasing a home as a long-term investment that can be leveraged for other financial needs, ethnic populations often view housing as simply a place to live. This difference in views can stem from cultural differences as well as different experiences, such as those of migrant workers and refugees who may not have had a permanent residence for many years.

These differing views on housing can lead to conflict, particularly in the area of property maintenance and nuisance violations. Property maintenance has been found to be a significant factor in sustaining neighborhood cohesion, especially in

multicultural neighborhoods. According to the 1984 publication, *Paths of Neighborhood Change: Race and Crime in Urban America*, “white flight” tends to occur in neighborhoods where two of three factors are found: poor property maintenance, increased crime, and/or increased ethnic diversity. Consequently, multicultural neighborhoods—which can be of great benefit to the community and foster understanding and friendships across cultural groups—may require more attention to property maintenance and nuisance ordinances to keep them that way.

But regardless of differing views on housing, most people of ethnic populations desire to own their own homes and find significant barriers to doing so. These barriers include:

“But regardless of differing views on housing, most people of ethnic populations desire to own their own homes and find significant barriers to doing so.”

- Obtaining enough money for a down payment on a loan.
- Establishing “good credit” in the eyes of lenders.
- Earning a wage or income that supports a mortgage.
- Deciphering related paperwork and determining what assistance programs they may be eligible for (especially for those who are limited-English proficient).
- Overcoming distrust built up from a history of housing discrimination.
- Finding housing that is affordable, in good condition, and of adequate size.

Some lenders are taking advantage of these barriers through predatory lending practices. As defined by a joint report from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Treasury, “predatory lending—whether undertaken by creditors, brokers, or even home improvement contractors— involves engaging in deception or fraud, manipulating the borrower through aggressive sales tactics, or taking unfair advantage of a borrower’s lack of understanding about loan terms.”

But there are also quality lenders that are successfully breaking down housing barriers for ethnic populations. Each year, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) presents the Outstanding Outreach for Affordable Homeownership/ Home Improvement Award. In August 2002, the award was given to seven Minne-

## TYPES OF PREDATORY LENDING

*A report from the HUD-Treasury Task Force on Predatory Lending described four main categories of predatory lending found in its research. An excerpt from the report follows:*

- **Loan flipping.** Some mortgage originators refinanced borrowers’ loans repeatedly in a short period of time. With each successive refinancing, these originators charged high fees, including sometimes prepayment penalties that stripped borrowers’ equity in their homes.
- **Excessive fees and “packing.”** While subprime lending involves higher costs to the lender than prime lending, in many instances there was evidence of fees that far exceeded what would be expected or justified based on economic grounds, and fees that were “packed” into the loan amount without the borrower’s understanding.
- **Lending without regard to the borrower’s ability to pay.** One troubling practice involved lending based on borrower’s equity in their homes, where the borrowers clearly did not have the capacity to repay the loans. In particularly egregious cases, elderly people living on fixed incomes had monthly payments that equaled or exceeded their monthly incomes. Such loans quickly led borrowers into default and foreclosure.
- **Outright fraud and abuse.** In many instances, abusive practices amount to nothing less than outright fraud. We heard many stories from borrowers, of fraud perpetrated by unscrupulous mortgage brokers, lenders, home improvement contractors, appraisers, and combinations thereof. Unscrupulous actors in these markets often prey on certain groups—the elderly, minorities, and individuals with lower incomes and less education—with deceptive or high-pressure sales tactics.

sota lenders: Bell Mortgage America of Minneapolis, the Center for Energy & Environment of Minneapolis, Dakota County CDA of Rosemount, Irwin Mortgage of Saint Louis Park, First Residential Mortgage of Burnsville, Neighborhood Development Alliance of Saint Paul, and United Prairie Bank of Mountain Lake.

### **Why city officials should get involved**

Having affordable, appropriate housing available to meet your community's needs is key to long-term sustainability. When businesses are determining where to locate, having housing that meets the needs of the workers they expect to hire is often a significant factor in their decision-making. When families are looking for a house they can afford that will accommodate their children or their elderly relatives, they may locate elsewhere if such housing is unavailable. In weighing the alternatives, cities may often find that the cost of developing affordable, appropriate housing pays off in attracting new businesses and new residents, and in retaining existing residents with changing housing needs.

There are also legal reasons for city officials to get involved. It is unlawful to discriminate in housing, and city officials should ensure that local landlords and lenders know what housing discrimination is and that it won't be tolerated in your community.

Lastly, if your city is generally working to build or retain community stability and economic strength, homeownership is a critical factor in achieving these goals. The more city officials can work with ethnic populations, developers, and representatives of the lending and real estate industries to overcome barriers to homeownership, the more likely that a strong, cohesive community will result.

### **What city officials can do**

Addressing housing needs can be very difficult in general, and addressing the housing needs of ethnic populations can be even more so.

As the Task Force suggests in many action steps throughout this document, partnerships with both public and private entities are necessary. City officials can realistically influence only certain aspects of housing issues on their own. But they have the leverage to bring concerns to the public's attention, and to call for and organize community-wide responses.

To get started, city officials may want to conduct a housing needs study. Such studies can provide helpful information in forming comprehensive housing plans, and make the case for obtaining financial assistance. In 1989, for example, the city of Worthington was looking for funding to meet housing needs. The city conducted a comprehensive study that demonstrated the community's housing shortage to banks, foundations, and the state, and was able to build 250 subsidized and 150 market-rate housing units as a result.

Another important action is to work against housing discrimination. This work can take many forms; for example: talking with representatives of ethnic populations to determine if discrimination has been occurring; meeting with landlords, lenders, and real estate agents to ensure common understanding of what constitutes housing discrimination; and monitoring city enforcement actions to ensure city codes are enforced uniformly across all populations.

**“To get started, city officials may want to conduct a housing needs study. Such studies can provide helpful information in forming comprehensive housing plans, and make the case for obtaining financial assistance.”**

**“City ordinances, particularly zoning ordinances, can help or hinder the ability of ethnic populations to access affordable, quality housing and can also influence the segregation of people of different ethnicities.”**

City ordinances, particularly zoning ordinances, can help or hinder the ability of ethnic populations to access affordable, quality housing and can also influence the segregation of people of different ethnicities. Cities may want to review these ordinances to determine if they are truly related to health, safety, and welfare or if they can be changed to better accommodate people of ethnic populations. For example, if occupancy regulations are cited as necessary because of concerns related to parking, cities may want to revise or eliminate occupancy restrictions and focus on the parking concerns specifically.

Another area where cities can address the housing needs of ethnic populations is through education. Cities can educate residents on their rights as renters and homeowners, as well as commensurate responsibilities. They can also work with local lenders and real estate agents to educate residents on the mortgage lending process and prepare them for homeownership. And, as the city of South Saint Paul has done by creating a quality housing coordinator position, cities can even act as an intermediary between people seeking capital for housing and financial institutions or government programs. There are often special programs and opportunities for assistance of which ethnic populations are unaware.

### **Outcomes to work toward**

Programs or initiatives related to housing should be designed to result in, and success measured against, one or more of the following outcomes:

- Elimination of discrimination in housing based on race or ethnicity.
- Improved understanding about the housing circumstances, needs, and preferences of ethnic populations, and more informed policy decisions based on this understanding.
- Greater access among ethnic populations to affordable, appropriate housing in locations throughout the community.
- Improved understanding among ethnic populations about the mortgage process, what to look for in a lending institution, and programs that can help overcome barriers to homeownership.

### **Recommended action steps**

The Task Force recommends the following action steps in regard to housing:

#### **If you do nothing else:**

- Consult with leaders or groups representing ethnic populations about proposed and ongoing housing policies.

#### **Action steps that require little or no financial resources:**

- Communicate regularly with representatives of ethnic populations to determine if discrimination has been occurring.
- Communicate regularly with landlords, lenders, and real estate agents to ensure common understanding of the qualities of housing discrimination and to reinforce that such actions are not tolerated.
- Monitor city enforcement actions to ensure city codes are uniformly enforced.
- When code violations occur, work to provide or connect people with appropriate support resources to help solve related housing problems.
- Monitor and review the effect of housing policies on ethnic populations, particularly ordinances related to occupancy restrictions and other areas that may have a discriminatory effect.

- Encourage and reward language skills of housing officials, as related to communicating with ethnic populations.
- Develop cross-departmental approaches to addressing housing issues, understanding that housing, economic development, and public safety are interrelated.
- Work collaboratively with neighboring communities on affordable housing efforts.
- Work with landlords, real estate and lending institutions, and groups representing ethnic populations to sponsor homebuyer and renter education and counseling, discussing rights and responsibilities of renters and homeowners and what to expect in the leasing, mortgage lending, and homebuying processes.
- Educate the community about predatory lending, steering them toward other financing options.
- Educate the community about the variety of housing and home improvement assistance programs.
- Make sure ethnic populations are aware of various programs and resources to make the homebuying process easier.
- Work with Habitat for Humanity or other such groups to build quality, affordable homes in your community.
- Encourage block clubs and other informal neighborhood groups to foster understanding and conflict resolution without involvement of government.

**Other action steps:**

- Conduct a housing needs study to understand and match the range of incomes, space requirements, and other factors that exist (and will be needed, based on population projections and the city's long-term development plans) to the housing in your community. Develop a community-wide action plan for how these needs will be addressed.
- Train housing officials in cultural competency.
- Establish and enforce a firm floor on quality of housing by getting rid of sub-standard housing and enforcing code standards. Recognizing that a heavy-handed approach may reinforce some ethnic populations' negative views of government officials, work in partnership with groups representing ethnic populations to develop effective approaches.
- Work to ensure that affordable, appropriate housing options are available in a variety of locations throughout the community.

**“If you do nothing else:  
consult with leaders  
or groups representing  
ethnic populations  
about proposed and  
ongoing housing  
policies.”**



## CHAPTER SIX:

**ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*“... We feel our obligation is to do exactly what our predecessors from other lands have done—come here, build a family, love other people, roll up our sleeves, contribute back, and make this country move forward.”*

– Xuoa Thao, a Minnesotan who emigrated from Laos in the mid-1970s, excerpted from a September 2002 Minnesota Public Radio interview.

Minnesota’s economy has entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century much different than how it entered the 1900s. A service-based economy has taken hold as the traditional manufacturing industries upon which many communities were built (e.g., taconite, steel, paper) have lost much of their strength over the years.

Bucking the trend are food processing and window fabrication industries—work located primarily in greater Minnesota that often does not require high-level training or a strong command of English and can involve disagreeable working conditions. To find people to fill these sorts of jobs, companies have come to rely heavily on ethnic populations, in particular newly arrived Latinos and Somali-Americans.

While this influx of new labor can cause conflict, especially in tight labor markets, recent research shows that the economic impact of Minnesota’s growing ethnic populations is significantly positive. In a July 2002 report titled *Immigrants and the Economy*, the Greater Twin Cities United Way found that immigrants:

- Boost economic output.
- Create more jobs than they fill.
- Invigorate blighted areas.
- Open businesses at a rapid rate.
- Expand their community’s economic base.
- Provide role models.

In a policy brief titled, *Strategies for Minority Business Development: The Case of Minnesota, USA*, Bruce Corrie, Ph.D., Concordia University, reported similar findings:

*“We identify three areas that suggest the economic potential of minority communities: buying power, a stable workforce, and dynamic entrepreneurial capital. The estimated buying power of minority communities in Minnesota is close to \$6 billion. Minority firms are growing at phenomenal rates and ... minority communities in Minnesota pay approximately half a billion dollars in state and local taxes.”*

The multicultural communities likely to benefit the most from an economic development standpoint are those that see their ethnic populations as an asset to the local economy and invest in capacity building.

Communities that view their multicultural nature as an asset, cite many reasons for this point of view. Some have been successful in drawing large employers to locate in their city because of the labor base they have developed or would expect to welcome, including manufacturers and other companies that have a need for multilingual personnel such as international call centers. Fueled by these employers,

existing small businesses have flourished and new small businesses have sprung up. A number of cities that see the economic value ethnic populations bring, such as Boston, Mass., have even actively recruited new immigrants to locate in their communities.

**“In regard to capacity building, many new Minnesotans come from semi-professional or professional backgrounds with experiences and skill sets that are valued and needed by Minnesota communities.”**

In regard to capacity building, many new Minnesotans come from semi-professional or professional backgrounds with experiences and skill sets that are valued and needed by Minnesota communities. However, due to barriers related to English proficiency, recognition of licensing and training, and cultural differences in how jobs are performed, these skills are at best underutilized or, at worst (and more often), completely abandoned.

For people of ethnic populations who want to fully utilize their skills and training, or to better their skills and training and to seek broader employment opportunities, targeted assistance may be necessary.

For example, in starting a new business, ethnic populations may need additional assistance in understanding permitting, licensing, and zoning regulations. Ethnic populations need to know not only that such regulations exist, but also the rationale behind them. Ethnic populations may also not be aware of various ways of seeking capital for start-up. And, for some, their religious beliefs may make traditional options (such as loans that involve paying interest) unworkable.

English language skill building is also an important aspect of capacity building. While very large employers may offer English training, most do not. And by nature of the hours they work (both in number and in time of day), many people who are limited-English proficient find it very difficult to find English training opportunities in which they can participate.

## BARRIERS FACING MINORITY ENTREPRENEURS

- **Access to capital.** Difficulty in getting capital during start-up phase. Now as firms become relatively successful and established, banks are more willing to lend to minority entrepreneurs.
- **Poor information.** Information on programs and regulations are not easily available. Officials are not sensitive to the needs of minority clients.
- **Language.** New immigrants need important regulations translated into their language for easier use.
- **Poor entrepreneurial base.** Some ethnic groups mentioned the absence of a tradition of business owners in their communities.
- **Religion.** Somali immigrant entrepreneurs find the paying of interest on loans to be a practice against their religious beliefs. Restaurant and other business owners find a lack of cultural awareness in established regulations.
- **Lack of trust in mainstream institutions.** Minority groups have a history of mistrust of mainstream institutions and this presents a barrier in the use of public services.
- **Networks.** Minority business owners find themselves outside established business and social networks essential for the success of their business.
- **Business opportunities.** Minority business owners find selling to small and medium sized businesses difficult. They find it easier to do business with large corporations.

*Source: Strategies for Minority Business Development: The Case of Minnesota, USA, by Bruce P. Corrie, PhD, Concordia University, as presented to the UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (WCAR), September 2001.*

Beyond skill building, people of ethnic populations also often have everyday hurdles to overcome—in particular, childcare and transportation.

As is true of lower-income workers across all populations, many lower-income ethnic populations find it difficult to secure quality, affordable childcare near their home or place of work—particularly if they happen to work hours outside of the traditional 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. workday, which many do. An added issue regardless of income level is finding childcare that is culturally appropriate—where caregivers understand, support, and respect native languages, religious observances, and cultural norms.

Transportation is another significant issue. There is often a disconnect between the location of affordable, appropriate housing and the location of jobs. A lack of widespread, reliable mass transportation options further widens this disconnect.

### **Why city officials should get involved**

Whether your city has already become a destination for ethnic populations or you are simply preparing for the demographic changes projected for Minnesota communities, city officials should consider and become involved in the important issue of economic development.

Economic development is essentially planning for the economic future of your community. The planning processes related to downtown development, luring new businesses to locate in your community, and helping existing businesses thrive should also involve planning for how to fit in all of your community's current and future residents.

Just as there are unique considerations when a plant closes and workers are laid off, there are unique considerations in developing a workforce of ethnic populations. When a plant closes, city officials often get involved in developing or connecting workers to resources for re-training, solicitation of new employers that match the existing skill base, and planning for the future. When a city's multicultural composition changes, it is also a time for city officials to get involved in developing or connecting workers to appropriate training, soliciting new employers that match the community's new skill base, and planning for the future.

### **What city officials can do**

To lead your community to benefit most from a multicultural workforce, a good first step is to lead your city in becoming a model employer. Doing so often involves the following activities:

- Working to make your city workforce representative of the populations it serves.
- Valuing and accommodating the religious and cultural practices of employees.
- Supporting and rewarding skill building, such as training in English as well as in the other languages spoken in the community.
- Developing mentorship opportunities.

Looking beyond city hall, it is important to assess the current state of your community's skill base, employment opportunities, and related resources. Conducting a community skills inventory to identify underutilized skills is a good place to start.

Local colleges and universities can be helpful in developing and conducting such skills inventories. This examination of all your city's residents, not just of your city's

**“When a city’s multi-cultural composition changes, it is also a time for city officials to get involved in developing or connecting workers to appropriate training, soliciting new employers that match the community’s new skill base, and planning for the future.”**

ethnic populations, can be helpful to developing approaches that meet the entire community's needs. However, you may still want to break out the data you receive by the major populations represented in your community. These breakouts can help you determine how best to meet the needs of specific populations and what types of partnerships would be most helpful.

In conducting skills inventories, and in general economic development planning, cities may want to do so with "first stage" and "second stage" employment in mind. While community residents may hold certain types of jobs currently, they may aspire to other careers and need to be directed to training or other resources to help them achieve those aspirations.

Cities also have a role in stimulating their local economies through small business development. The Task Force suggests first working with ethnic populations to ensure their needs are met for culturally appropriate foods and clothing, as well as additional opportunities for entrepreneurship, such as restaurants and music venues. These are strong prospects for small business development within multicultural communities that can add significantly to a city's economic base.

Assistance in business start-up can involve education and technical assistance in such areas as zoning, permitting, licensing, and inspections, as well as assistance in developing business plans and providing connections to programs and resources for obtaining capital. Your local Economic Development Authority (EDA) can be an important provider and resource in addressing these areas of need and in leveraging relationships with local financial institutions. If cities and ethnic populations work together in the early stages of small business development, the resulting businesses are more likely to comply with local laws and regulations, to meet their financial obligations, to thrive economically, to create jobs, and to be viewed as positive additions to your community.

City officials can also work with in partnership with groups representing ethnic populations in a variety of areas, such as:

- Educating the community about the positive economic development aspects of being or becoming a multicultural community. (The local Chamber of Commerce or other business groups can be helpful partners in this educational effort as well).
- Helping local employers to become culturally competent and to institute model employment practices.
- Recruiting new employers to locate in the community, taking advantage of the current and projected skill base.
- Working with local banking and financial institutions to provide capital, low-interest loans, and unique financing options for populations that have religious beliefs against paying interest; to develop alternate criteria for establishing credit worthiness; and to offer training in financial literacy (basic banking, bookkeeping, tax issues, etc.).
- Developing ways to overcome the childcare and transportation barriers often faced by ethnic populations. In the area of childcare, friends and relatives are often relied upon, so it is important to differentiate between this type of care and unlicensed care being run as a business, especially in regard to safety regulations.

**"If cities and ethnic populations work together in the early stages of small business development, the resulting businesses are more likely to comply with local laws and regulations, to meet their financial obligations, to thrive economically, to create jobs, and to be viewed as positive additions to your community."**

## Outcomes to work toward

Programs or initiatives related to economic development should be designed to result in, and success measured against, one or more of the following outcomes:

- Widespread commitment to economic development efforts that approach being a multicultural, multilingual community as an asset.
- Increased number and type of successful businesses owned and operated by ethnic populations.
- Increased number and type of businesses that employ ethnic populations.
- Improved job skills (including English skills) among ethnic populations.
- Improved access to affordable, quality, culturally appropriate child care.
- Improved access to affordable, reliable transportation options.

## Recommended action steps

The Task Force recommends the following action steps in regard to economic development:

### If you do nothing else:

- Set an example at city hall: hire people of ethnic populations; accommodate and respect religious practices; provide/encourage additional training and skill development; create mentorship programs; reward city staff who become culturally competent and/or learn languages other than English spoken in the community.

### Action steps that require little or no financial resources:

- Work with the business community and groups representing ethnic populations to set community standards for respecting the religious and cultural practices of employees, providing appropriate spaces for prayer and accommodating time off for important religious or cultural holidays.
- Work with local banking and financial institutions to provide capital, low-interest loans, and unique financing options for populations that have religious objections to paying interest; to develop alternate criteria for establishing credit worthiness; and to offer training in financial literacy.
- Work with ethnic populations to develop small businesses, such as those related to culturally appropriate foods and clothing, restaurants, and music venues.
- Provide assistance to ethnic populations, directly or in collaboration with other entities, in business start-up.
  - Educate and provide technical assistance in zoning, permitting, licensing, and inspections.
  - Provide technical assistance in developing business plans and providing connections to programs and resources for obtaining capital.
  - The local Economic Development Authority (EDA) can be an important provider and resource.
- Work with groups representing ethnic populations to reward and recruit businesses that view community fluency in multiple languages as an asset.
- Develop and/or support citywide mentoring programs for both young people and adults. Expose people of ethnic populations to a variety of career options and connect them with training opportunities related to those careers; SCORE (Senior Corps of Retired Executives) and similar organizations could be tapped for assistance.

### “If you do nothing else:

**set an example at city hall: hire people of ethnic populations; accommodate and respect religious practices; provide/encourage additional training and skill development; create mentorship programs; reward city staff who become culturally competent and/or learn languages other than English spoken in the community.”**

- Work with local colleges, training centers, and local businesses to ensure the training provided meets the needs of local businesses.
- Work with leaders of ethnic populations to address childcare issues, working toward ensuring that culturally appropriate childcare options are available when needed by ethnic populations.
- Work with leaders of ethnic populations to address transportation issues, including examination of public transportation options.

**Other action steps:**

- Work with a local college or university to conduct a community skills inventory to identify underutilized skills. Approach this inventory with both “first stage” and “second stage” employment in mind.
- Work with academics or organizations to determine the current and potential impact of ethnic populations on your local economy.

**CHAPTER SEVEN:****LEAD AND FOSTER LEADERSHIP**

*“For most of its history, the town of Long Prairie has been overwhelmingly white. Now, close to one-third of its population is Hispanic, quite a change for a town of about 3,000 people. . . . Don Rasmussen, who was elected mayor last fall, welcomes change, and takes time to try to convince others to accept the city’s new residents. ‘The first thing I say when somebody questions, I say, ‘How many people have you gone out and met? How many people do you say ‘hi’ to when you’re walking down the street? And how much have you attempted to understand other people—before you criticize?’”*

– March 2001, Minnesota Public Radio interview.

City officials are busy people. Their work relates to almost every aspect of quality of life in a community, and there are always pressing issues and crises to which they must respond. Cities also face significant fiscal uncertainties.

With these realities in mind, how does building an inclusive community fit into the list of city priorities? Unfortunately, it often isn’t a priority until a negative incident or series of incidents occur that require response from the city.

But those communities that wait to act until problems occur have twice the work ahead of them—undoing damage *and* building community. Most successful multicultural communities are built through proactive effort, and are often the result of just a handful of community members stepping up and working to bring the rest of the community along.

By nature of your position as a city official, you have the opportunity to be a change-agent, a leader in building an inclusive community. While the potential frustrations and disappointments are real, most city officials who have committed to such efforts say it was one of the most important things they’ve ever done, that even the small successes were tremendously rewarding, and that their communities are better economically and socially as a result of the effort.

**What makes a successful leader of a multicultural community**

In describing successful leaders of multicultural communities, the Task Force pointed to the following characteristics:

**Political will.** Willingness to spend political capital and city dollars on issues related to building inclusive communities.

**Foresight.** Ability to look beyond the pressing problems of the day to what lies ahead for your community and how a successful future can be achieved.

**Perseverance.** Staying the course and not being dissuaded by setbacks or naysayers.

**Commitment.** Making a personal commitment to inclusiveness and to challenging biased attitudes.

**Flexibility.** Being open to new and different people, cultures, and approaches.

**Respect.** Showing deference to all types of people, cultures, and approaches.

**Honesty.** Being straightforward in your approach and communication.

**Vulnerability.** Being willing to misstep, to admit mistakes, to be open to criticism.

**Appreciation of history.** Understanding and appreciating the history behind the feelings and actions of the various members of your community, and the U.S. history related to immigration and discrimination.

*Appreciation of change.* Understanding and appreciating that the status quo has never been maintained, and that the question is not *will* things change but *how* can they change for the better.

*Courage.* Facing difficulties, even hateful remarks and actions, and remaining committed to your effort.

City officials who have worked to build inclusive communities have also found that partnerships and support networks are vital to successful leadership, especially in times of limited fiscal and staff resources. Other entities are identifying similar needs and may also be facing fiscal challenges that make them open to partnership and resource sharing.

The Task Force identified the following types of entities as being ripe for partnerships:

- Other cities in your region
- School districts
- Counties
- State of Minnesota
- Colleges and universities
- Non-profit organizations
- Healthcare institutions
- Businesses

City officials may also find it helpful to connect with other city leaders who are working to build inclusive communities. Such connections can provide opportunities for idea exchange as well as moral support.

### **Fostering leadership in others**

Being a successful leader of a multicultural community also means fostering leadership in others—particularly in current and future city officials and in ethnic populations.

Many city officials who have initiated efforts to build inclusive communities fear those efforts will fall to the wayside upon the conclusion of their term of office or tenure with the city. While there are no guarantees, there are ways city officials can increase the potential for institutionalization of their leadership.

One way is to work to gain buy-in from elected and appointed city officials in all areas of city operations. The broader the base of support, the more likely the efforts will continue.

Another way city officials can institutionalize efforts is by developing a long-term strategic plan for building an inclusive community. The city of Rochester, in partnership with Olmsted County and local business and community leaders, developed the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Partnership Community Strategic Plan for Diversity*, implementing a recommendation made by the Diversity Task Force of a county-wide, long-range planning project. The city, county, and other organizations formally endorsed the goals and objectives of the plan, and the Rochester-Olmsted Planning Department coordinated data to measure progress in its implementation.

Establishing a standing committee made up of leaders from all sectors can also sustain the effort. Human rights commissions and advisory councils are entities cities can establish to support existing efforts and to recommend new initiatives.

**“Being a successful leader of a multicultural community also means fostering leadership in others—particularly in current and future city officials and in ethnic populations.”**

Another important role for city officials is to foster leadership within ethnic populations. As more people of ethnic populations become active in positions of community leadership, city councils and staff will begin to reflect the populations they serve, and the general population will see ethnic populations as respected, valued members of the community.

Throughout this document, the Task Force refers to “groups representing ethnic populations” and “leaders of ethnic populations” as key to establishing communication and understanding between city officials, ethnic populations, and the larger community. While some organizations and outspoken people may be readily identifiable as sources of leadership, ethnic populations often have their own leadership structures. In working to foster leadership among ethnic populations, it is important for city officials to recognize and show respect for these traditional leadership structures.

For example, some cultures may see their elders as leaders while others view religious leaders as representing their community. Cultures also vary in how they view women. Consequently, women may not be tapped for high-level leadership positions within their community. Many city officials in multicultural communities struggle with this issue; while they want to be inclusive and respectful of other cultures, they also want to encourage ethnic populations to revise their view of women, and also of young people, as capable of representing the community in positions of recognized leadership.

The Task Force encourages city officials to think broadly in defining leadership opportunities, encouraging ethnic populations to not only seek elected and appointed positions but also volunteer groups. To encourage the involvement of women in positions of community leadership, the city may want to foster development of women’s organizations and engage those organizations in policy discussions.

**“If you do nothing else: develop a long-term strategic plan for how your community will become welcoming and inclusive of all populations.”**

### **Outcomes to work toward**

Programs or initiatives related to leadership should be designed to result in, and success to be measured against, one or more of the following outcomes:

- The initiation and continuation of city efforts to build a welcoming, inclusive community.
- Increased collaboration between city officials and leadership within ethnic populations.
- Increased representation of ethnic populations in positions of community leadership.

### **Recommended action steps**

The Task Force recommends the following action steps in regard to leadership:

#### **If you do nothing else:**

- Develop a long-term strategic plan for how your community will become welcoming and inclusive of all populations.
  - Work collaboratively with ethnic populations, the business community, and local organizations in developing and implementing the plan.

**Action steps that require little or no financial resources:**

- Recognize and work to develop your personal attributes as they relate to successful leadership of a multicultural community (e.g., political will, foresight, perseverance, etc.). Encourage and recognize these attributes in other city officials.
- Connect with other city officials who are working to become successful leaders of multicultural communities.
  - Develop a network of support, and share experiences.
- Ensure city efforts are developed and implemented across all city departments and involve both elected and appointed officials.
- Challenge insensitivities (jokes, comments) and fight unwarranted fear of change.
- Encourage new immigrants to become citizens, to engage in the city’s policy process, and to vote.
- Reach out to organizations representing ethnic populations and convey your desire to develop the leadership capacity of the populations they serve. Develop collaborative efforts.
- Institute an “Honorary Councilmember” program and encourage participants to run for elected office.
  - Honorary councilmembers can be recruited from organizations representing ethnic populations or other leadership groups. They could serve for a short period of time and participate in the deliberations of the council.
- Hire representatives of ethnic populations at city hall.
  - Work to ensure they are welcomed and that their experiences are positive.
- Mentor members of ethnic populations, encouraging and supporting pursuit of elected office.
- Appoint members of ethnic populations to city boards and commissions.
- Encourage representatives of all populations to volunteer at city-sponsored events.
- Foster development of women’s groups.
- Establish a human rights commission, multicultural task force or advisory council.
  - Tailor the focus of their work to the specific needs of your community, clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and scope of work.
- Develop parallel organizational infrastructures, such as community or neighborhood councils, that deal with the policy issues, informing the work of the city council since such councils can be good sources of community leadership.

## CONCLUSION

Knowing cities as we do, the League of Minnesota Cities realizes municipal officials already have tremendously long “to-do” lists. We also understand the current fiscal uncertainties that make it difficult for cities to undertake new initiatives.

The Task Force encourages city officials to think of Building Inclusive Communities not as a completely new initiative, but as a new approach to what you already do.

As Task Force member Jack Gellar pointed out, “Every person who comes to city hall brings with them unique perspectives, experiences, and needs,” whether they be a senior citizen, a Vietnam veteran, a single parent, or a new immigrant. They all also have good days and bad days, and not all behaviors or attitudes can be broadly attributed to their age, experiences or nation of origin. By simply recognizing each person’s uniqueness and doing your best to respond with that in mind, city officials go a long way toward building inclusive communities.

Three simple steps the Task Force recommends all Minnesota cities take, regardless of their current population makeup, are the following:

- 1) ***Examine the 2000 Census data*** for your city, the surrounding area, and the state as a whole. The League’s web site ([www.lmnc.org](http://www.lmnc.org)) and LMC Policy Research staff can help you in this process.
- 2) ***Learn about the populations that make up your community.*** Research the settlement history of your area. Talk with people from all the different populations represented in your city about their cultural background. Seek to understand their unique perspectives and experiences.
- 3) ***Incorporate the idea of building an inclusive community into your city’s visioning/long-range planning process.*** Lead your city council, city staff, and your community in planning for demographic change, both in terms of city service delivery and governance.

The changing demographics of Minnesota pose many challenges and opportunities for city leaders. We hope this action guide prompts you to explore how you, personally, and how your city government, as a whole, can embrace this change and actively work to become a strong, welcoming, inclusive community.

**“The changing demographics of Minnesota pose many challenges and opportunities for city leaders. We hope this action guide prompts you to explore how you, personally, and how your city government, as a whole, can embrace this change and actively work to become a strong, welcoming, inclusive community.”**



# RESOURCES FOR BUILDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

## Organizations—Minnesota

Blandin Community Leadership Program

Blandin Foundation

100 North Pokegama Avenue

Grand Rapids, MN 55744

(218) 326-0523

[www.blandinfoundation.org/leadership.cfm](http://www.blandinfoundation.org/leadership.cfm)

Center for Rural Policy & Development

600 South Fifth Street

Suite 211

St. Peter, MN 56082

(507) 934-7700

[www.mankato.msus.edu/ruralmn](http://www.mankato.msus.edu/ruralmn)

Center for Victims of Torture

717 East River Road

Minneapolis, MN 55455

(612) 626-1400

[www.cvt.org](http://www.cvt.org)

Chicano-Latino Affairs Council

555 Park Street

St. Paul, MN 55103

(651) 296-9587

[www.clac.state.mn.us](http://www.clac.state.mn.us)

Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans

525 Park Street

Suite 105

St. Paul, MN 55103

(651) 296-0538

[www.state.mn.us/ebranch/capm/](http://www.state.mn.us/ebranch/capm/)

Council on Black Minnesotans

2233 University Avenue

Wright Building

Suite 426

St. Paul, MN 55114

(651) 642-0811

Greater Minnesota Housing Fund

332 Minnesota Street

Suite 1310 East

St. Paul, MN 55101

(651) 221-1997

[www.gmhf.com](http://www.gmhf.com)

Housing Minnesota

1821 University Avenue

Suite S-137

St. Paul, Minnesota 55104

(888) 265-2002

[www.housingminnesota.org](http://www.housingminnesota.org)

Indian Affairs Council

1819 Bemidji Avenue

Bemidji, MN 56601

(218) 755-3825

[www.indians.state.mn.us](http://www.indians.state.mn.us)

Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association

16 SW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Rochester, MN 55902

(507) 289-5960

Lao Family Community Services

320 West University Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55103

(651) 221-0069

[www.laofamily.org](http://www.laofamily.org)

League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions

4100 Lakeview Avenue North

Robbinsdale, MN 55423

(763) 535-1051 or (612) 376-0525

Metro East Development Partnership

Small Business / Entrepreneurial Mentoring Program

101 Norwest Center

55 East Fifth Street

St. Paul, MN 55101

(651) 224-3278

[www.medp.org](http://www.medp.org)

Metropolitan Economic Development Association

250 Second Avenue South, Suite 106

Minneapolis, MN 55401

(612) 332-6332

[www.meda.net](http://www.meda.net)

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

310 Fourth Avenue, South

Suite 1000

Minneapolis, MN 55415

(612) 341-3302

[www.mnadvocates.org](http://www.mnadvocates.org)

Minnesota Court Interpreter Program  
140 Minnesota Judicial Center  
25 Constitution Ave  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
(651) 297-5300

**[www.courts.state.mn.us/cinterp/interpreter\\_roster\\_info.htm](http://www.courts.state.mn.us/cinterp/interpreter_roster_info.htm)**

Minnesota Department of Children, Families  
and Learning  
Interpreter Database  
4001 Stinson Boulevard NE  
Suite 210  
Minneapolis, MN 55421  
(612) 706-0801

**<http://cfl.state.mn.us/interpreter>**

Minnesota Department of Economic Security  
Minnesota WorkForce Center  
5th Floor  
390 N. Robert Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
1-888-GET-JOBS

**[www.mnwfc.org](http://www.mnwfc.org)**

Minnesota Department of Human Rights  
Army Corps of Engineers Centre  
190 E. 5th Street  
Suite 700  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(651) 296-5663

**[www.humanrights.state.mn.us](http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us)**

Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Refugee Assistance Program  
Resettlement Programs Office  
444 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155  
(651) 296-1884

**[www.dhs.state.mn.us/ecs/Program/refugee.htm](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/ecs/Program/refugee.htm)**

Minnesota Department of Public Safety  
Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services  
245 East Sixth Street  
Suite 705  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(651) 282-6256

**[www.dps.state.mn.mccvs](http://www.dps.state.mn.mccvs)**

Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic  
Development  
Minnesota Job Skills Partnership  
500 Metro Square Building  
121 East 7th Place  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2146  
(651) 297-1834

**[www.dted.state.mn.us](http://www.dted.state.mn.us)**

Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic  
Development  
Minnesota Small Business Assistance Office  
500 Metro Square  
121 7th Place East  
St. Paul, MN, 55101-2146  
(651) 282-2103

**[www.dted.state.mn.us](http://www.dted.state.mn.us)**

Minnesota Economic Development Center  
Saint Cloud State University  
328 Stewart Hall  
(320) 255-4934

**[www.stcloudstate.edu/~medc.html](http://www.stcloudstate.edu/~medc.html)**

Minnesota Housing Finance Agency  
400 Sibley Street, Suite 300  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
651-296-7608

**[www.mhfa.state.mn.us](http://www.mhfa.state.mn.us)**

Minnesota Project Innovation, Inc.  
MPI Main Office  
100 Mill Place  
111 Third Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
(612) 338-3280

**[www.mpi.org](http://www.mpi.org)**

Minnesota SCORE District Office  
210-C Butler Square  
100 North 6th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
(612) 370-2309

**[www.scoreminn.org](http://www.scoreminn.org)**

Minnesota State Demographic Center  
658 Cedar Street  
Room 300  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
(651) 296-2557  
[www.mnplan.state.mn.us](http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us)

Neighborhood House  
179 Robie Street East  
St. Paul, MN 55107  
(651) 227-9291  
[www.neighb.org](http://www.neighb.org)

University of Minnesota  
Extension Service  
Office of the Director  
240 Coffey Hall  
1420 Eckles Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55108  
(612) 624-1222  
[www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu)

University of Minnesota  
Program in Translation and Interpreting  
214 Nolte Center  
315 Pillsbury Drive SE  
Minneapolis, 55455  
(612) 624-5024  
[www.cla.umn.edu/pti/](http://www.cla.umn.edu/pti/)

University of Minnesota Duluth  
Center for Economic Development  
11 East Superior Street  
Suite 210  
Duluth, MN 55802  
(218) 726-7298  
[www.umdced.com](http://www.umdced.com)

University of Minnesota Law School  
Institute on Race and Poverty  
Walter F. Mondale Hall, Room 415  
229 - 19th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
(612) 625-8071  
[www.umn.edu/irp](http://www.umn.edu/irp)

## Organizations—National

American Council on the Teaching  
of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)  
Language Testing International  
95 Church Street, Suite 310  
White Plains, NY 10601  
1-800-486-8444  
[www.languageTesting.com](http://www.languageTesting.com) or [www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org)

AT&T  
Language Line Services  
1 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Bldg. 2  
Monterey, CA 93940  
1-800-752-0093, ext. 441  
[www.att.com/languageLine](http://www.att.com/languageLine)

Center for Applied Linguistics, Refugee Center  
1118 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
(202) 429-9292  
[www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org)

Center for Immigration Studies  
1522 K Street N.W.  
Suite 820  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 466-8185  
[www.cis.org](http://www.cis.org)

Communities Can!  
Georgetown University Center for Child and Human  
Development  
3307 M Street, NW  
Suite 401  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 687-8784  
[www.georgetown.edu/research/gucdc/commcan.html](http://www.georgetown.edu/research/gucdc/commcan.html)

Habitat for Humanity International  
121 Habitat Street  
Americus, GA 31709  
(229) 924-6935  
[www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

Mortgage Bankers Association of America  
Stop Mortgage Fraud  
1919 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 557-2700  
[www.stopmortgagefraud.com](http://www.stopmortgagefraud.com)

National Center for Cultural Competence  
 Georgetown University Center for Child and Human  
 Development  
 3307 M Street, NW  
 Suite 401  
 Washington, DC 20007  
 1-800-788-2066  
[www.georgetown.edu/research/gucdc/nccc/](http://www.georgetown.edu/research/gucdc/nccc/)

National Center for Victims of Crime  
 2000 M Street, NW  
 Suite 480  
 Washington, DC 20036  
 (202) 467-8700  
 Victim Assistance Helpline (180 languages)  
 1-800-FYI-CALL

National League of Cities  
 Campaign to Promote Racial Justice  
 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
 Suite 550  
 Washington, DC 20004  
[www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)

National Youth Gang Center  
 Institute for Intergovernmental Research  
 P.O. Box 12729  
 Tallahassee, FL 32317  
 (850) 385-0600  
[www.iir.com/nygc/](http://www.iir.com/nygc/)

Network of Alliances Bridging Race  
 and Ethnicity (NABRE)  
 The Joint Center for Political and  
 Economic Studies, Inc.  
 1090 Vermont Avenue, NW  
 Suite 1100  
 Washington, D.C. 20005  
 (202) 789-3500  
[www.jointcenter.org/nabre](http://www.jointcenter.org/nabre)

Southern Poverty Law Center  
 400 Washington Avenue  
 Montgomery, Alabama 36104  
 (334)-956-8200  
[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org) or [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org)

Study Circles Resource Center  
 P.O. Box 203  
 697 Pomfret Street  
 Pomfret, CT 06258  
 (860) 928-2616  
[www.studyircles.com](http://www.studyircles.com)

## Federal Programs & Grantmakers

National Crime Prevention Council  
 Outreach to New Americans  
 1000 Connecticut Ave., NW  
 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Washington, DC 20036-5325  
 (202) 466-6272  
[www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)

U.S. Census Bureau  
*Public Information Office*  
 Washington DC 20233  
 (301) 763-3030  
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
 Administration for Children, Youth and Families  
 370 C Street, NW  
 Room 248  
 Washington, DC 20201  
 (202) 205-8102  
[www.acf.dhhs.gov](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
 Office of Refugee Resettlement  
 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW  
 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Washington, DC 20447  
 (202) 401-1196  
[www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/orr](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/orr)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
 451 7th Street S.W.  
 Washington, DC 20410  
 (202) 708-1112  
[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

U.S. Department of Justice  
 Community Relations Service  
 600 E Street  
 Suite 6000  
 Washington DC 20530  
 (202) 305-2935  
[www.usdoj.gov/crs/index.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/crs/index.html)

U.S. Department of Justice  
 Immigration and Naturalization Services  
 425 I Street, NW  
 Washington, DC 20536  
 (202) 514-5014  
[www.ins.gov](http://www.ins.gov)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
810 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 514-6278  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Executive Office for Weed and Seed  
810 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 616-1152  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
810 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 307-5911  
[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Office of Victims of Crime  
810 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 307-5983  
[www.ojp.jusdoj.gov/ovc](http://www.ojp.jusdoj.gov/ovc)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Violence Against Women Grants Office  
810 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 307-6026  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Violence Against Women Program Office  
810 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20530  
(202) 514-4803  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawgo](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawgo)

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
1801 L Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20507  
(202) 663-4900  
[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

## Sources & Suggested Reading

*American Anthropological Association Statement on "Race"* (1998). Retrieved 2002 from: <http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm>

Bach, R. (1993). *Changing Relations: Newcomers and Established Residents in U.S. Communities*. New York, NY: The Ford Foundation.

*Bridging the Language Gap* (1998). Retrieved 2002 from the University of Minnesota web site: <http://www.cla.umn.edu/pti/LangGap.pdf>

*Building and Crossing Bridges: Refugees and law enforcement working together* (1994). Washington DC: National Crime Prevention Council.

Bushway, D. (2001). *The Vitality of Latino Communities in Rural Minnesota*. Retrieved 2002 from the Center for Rural Policy & Development web site: <http://www.mankato.msus.edu/ruralmn/pages/Publications/reports/Latinocommunities.pdf>

*The Changing Face of Minnesota: The Hidden Rainbow* (1999). All articles in this series retrieved 2002 from Minnesota Public Radio web site: [http://news.mpr.org/features/199905/03\\_newsroom\\_diversity/](http://news.mpr.org/features/199905/03_newsroom_diversity/)

Corrie, B.P. (2001). *Strategies for Minority Business Development: The Case of Minnesota, USA*. Retrieved 2002 from: [http://people.csp.edu/corrie/Policy%20Briefs%20\(WCAR\)/Minority%20Business%20Development.doc](http://people.csp.edu/corrie/Policy%20Briefs%20(WCAR)/Minority%20Business%20Development.doc)

Crawford, J. (1990). Language Freedom and Restriction. *Effective Language Education Practices and Native Language Survival*, 9-22. Choctaw, OK: Native American Language Issues. Retrieved 2002 from: <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/NALI2.html>

*Immigrants and the Economy* (2002). Retrieved 2002 from the Greater Twin Cities United Way web site: <http://www.unitedwaytwincities.org/news/download/Immigration%20Economics.pdf>

Keillor, G. (1998). *Laying on Our Backs, Looking Up at the Stars*. Retrieved 2002 from Minnesota Public Radio web site: [http://phc.mpr.org/activities/19980704\\_lyrics/index.shtml](http://phc.mpr.org/activities/19980704_lyrics/index.shtml)

*Lengthening the Stride: Employing peace officers from newly arrived ethnic groups* (1995). Washington DC: National Crime Prevention Council.

*Police Response to Domestic Violence in Ethnic Communities* (n.d.) Retrieved 2002 from the Tapestry, Inc., Refugee and Immigrant Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Atlanta, GA web site: [http://www.tapestry.org/EDUCAT\\_1/Police\\_Response/police\\_response.html](http://www.tapestry.org/EDUCAT_1/Police_Response/police_response.html)

*Powerful Partnerships: Twenty crime prevention strategies that work for refugees, law enforcement, and communities* (1998). Washington DC: National Crime Prevention Council.

Ross, K.G. (2002). *Defining, Understanding, and Addressing Racial Profiling in Police Practices: An overview of the problem and potential voluntary solutions*. Minneapolis, MN: Greene Espel, P.L.L.P.

*Spoken Language Resource Guide* (2000). Retrieved 2002 from Minnesota Department of Health web site: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/communityeng/multicultural/slguide.pdf>

Taub, R., Taylor, G., Duncan, J. (1984). *Paths of Neighborhood Change: Race and crime in urban America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

*Ten Ways to Fight Hate* (2000). Retrieved 2002 from the Southern Poverty Law Center web site: [http://www.tolerance.org/10\\_ways/](http://www.tolerance.org/10_ways/)

*Training Guide for Hate Crime Data Collection* (1996). Retrieved 2002 from U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services Division web site: <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/traingd99.pdf>

*Translation Protocol: A guide to translating materials for limited English-speaking communities* (2000). Retrieved 2002 from Minnesota Department of Health web site: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/communityeng/multicultural/translation.pdf>

*21<sup>st</sup> Century Partnership Community Strategic Plan for Diversity* (1999). Retrieved 2002 from: <http://www.olmstedcounty.com/21century/diversityplan/strategicplan.htm>

Veltman, C. (1988). *The Future of the Spanish Language in the United States*. Washington, DC: Hispanic Policy Development Project.

Veltman, C. (1983). *Language Shift in the United States*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Mouton Publishers.

*When Law and Culture Collide: Handling conflicts between U.S. laws and refugees' cultures* (1999). Washington DC: National Crime Prevention Council.

Willette, E., Zhang, H. (2002). Minnesota's Growing Diversity. *Minnesota Cities*, 87, 9, 4-5. St. Paul, MN: League of Minnesota Cities.

# APPENDIX

## Police response to domestic violence in ethnic communities

Problematic Behavior	Explanation for Behavior	How to Respond	What to Avoid in Your Response
<p>1. <i>The people involved in domestic violence are uncooperative, will not talk to officers, will not volunteer information.</i></p>	<p>In many countries, the police are corrupt and responsible for many crimes against the people. The police are not seen as protectors of the people, but as enemies of the people. Therefore, refugees from these countries think that collaborating with the police is collaborating with the enemy.</p> <p>In some countries, people have great respect and fear of authorities. As such, the people expect the police to ask for the information needed. They believe the information they have is irrelevant unless the officer asks for it.</p>	<p>Establish rapport with the people in the neighborhood you patrol. Then you will not be seen as the enemy.</p> <p>When asking questions, ask for specifics. Keep asking for more information, if more is needed. Make it clear that you want the people to volunteer the information.</p>	<p>Do not mention the words immigration, legal, or illegal. If the people you are trying to help are undocumented, their fear of deportation will override any other concerns they have. They will not hear anything else you have to say.</p> <p>Do not assume that what the people have told you is everything they know about the case.</p>
<p>2. <i>Some people get too close, within arm's reach. They might make big gestures with their arms, touch you, or try to touch you.</i></p>	<p>In some cultures, it is natural to stand close together when speaking. In their excitement and eagerness to tell you what happened, some people raise their voices and use large gestures. Some people touch you when they are trying to get your attention, or when making a point.</p>	<p>Make it clear—gently but firmly—that there must be ample space between you and the person.</p>	<p>Avoid pushing back, giving the impression that you are using force to establish your personal space.</p>
<p>3. <i>People will not make eye contact with the police.</i></p>	<p>In many countries, especially Asian countries, it is a sign of disrespect and defiance to look an authority figure, such as a police officer, in the eye.</p>	<p>Continue conducting your business as you would with anyone.</p>	<p>Do not assume the person is being evasive or uncooperative for not making eye contact.</p>

**Police response to domestic violence in ethnic communities** *(continued)*

<b>Problematic Behavior</b>	<b>Explanation for Behavior</b>	<b>How to Respond</b>	<b>What to Avoid in Your Response</b>
<b>4.</b> <i>The female victim will not cooperate and will not show the officers her injuries.</i>	In many countries, especially Muslim countries, it is taboo for a woman to show her face, hair or body to any male other than her husband.	Isolate the female victim in another room with only female officers and ask her to show her injuries.	Do not leave her alone with only male officers.
<b>5.</b> <i>The female victim will not tell you what she wants.</i>	The police are often believed to be all-knowing and all-powerful. The American legal system is unfamiliar to many newcomers. The women expect that the police will know what to do, will rescue her, and will take care of her.	Clearly explain to her what you can and cannot do.	Do not leave without giving her a referral to one of the ethnic service providers or victim witness assistance programs.
<b>6.</b> <i>The victim does not seem to understand what you are telling her when you explain to her what her options are. She does not seem to understand what you mean by going to a shelter, calling 911, getting a TPO, etc., even when there is an interpreter present.</i>	In many countries, domestic violence is not considered a crime or a problem. These countries do not have any services to provide for battered women. Therefore, many women will not understand that they do have options for escaping the violence.	Clearly explain to the woman that domestic violence is a crime in the United States that will be punished. Explain that you can refer her to people who can assist her in her own language.	Avoid assuming that she understands the criminal justice system and the options available to her.
<b>7.</b> <i>The woman tries verbally or physically to prevent the arrest and removal of the man.</i>	Due to their fear of corrupt police, the woman may be afraid that the man will never be seen again.	Offer her the address and phone number of the jail where she can get information about him.	
<b>8.</b> <i>People become very agitated and offended when you use your finger to summon someone to come over.</i>	In some cultures, that gesture is very derogatory used only when summoning animals. In other cultures, it is a signal referring to sexual activity.	When summoning someone to come to where you are standing, use a gesture where your palm is down.	

### Police response to domestic violence in ethnic communities *(continued)*

Problematic Behavior	Explanation for Behavior	How to Respond	What to Avoid in Your Response
9. <i>People are nodding, but you are not sure if they understand what you are telling them.</i>	In many cultures, it is customary for the listener to nod, to let the speaker know that they are paying attention. This does not necessarily mean that the people understand or agree with what you are saying.	Ask the refugees if they have any questions. Ask them to repeat and rephrase what you have just told them.	Do not assume they understand and agree with you merely because they are nodding.
10. <i>The victim does not speak English.</i>	She is new to the country and has not had a chance to learn English.	Use an interpreter. If you do not have one with you, call AT&T Language Line. <i>(*See below for more details.)</i>	Avoid using family members, especially the children or the husband, or neighbors, as interpreters, as they may not be the objective truth.
11. <i>The victim is reluctant to speak English.</i>	She may have very little confidence in her ability to speak English because as part of the abuse, her batterer may have derided her English.	Try very hard to let her know that you are truly interested in hearing what she has to say, regardless of her ability to speak English. Use an interpreter if she continues to refuse to speak.	

*Developed by Tapestri, Inc., the Refugee and Immigrant Coalition Against Domestic Violence, based in Atlanta, GA.*

*\*For information about the set-up and costs of the AT&T Language Line service, call (800) 752-0093, extension 196, and ask to speak to an account representative, or contact AT&T online at: <http://att.com/languageline>.*