

Broome County Department of Social Services 2012 Cultural Competency Review

Executive Summary



Vision:

To be an organization which promotes self-sufficiency and assures the protection of vulnerable individuals. We strive to have an organization which values the needs of our customers, the contribution of our staff and the participation of our community. This vision shall be achieved through a culture which encourages continuous quality improvement.

Arthur R. Johnson, LCSW
Commissioner

Debra Preston
County Executive

County profile

Broome County, located in the Southern Tier of New York State, like most counties in New York State, is experiencing numerous demographic and economic changes. An increase in unemployment, an increase in people seeking services, and a shift in the tax base with the labor force reductions at IBM from over 15,000 in 1985 to less than 400 today, all contribute to multiple challenges for County government. However, the county has gained other jobs such as those at BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin, Endicott Interconnect Technologies, Frito Lay, and a range of smaller firms. Increasing demands from the state, changes in funding metrics, and unfunded mandates all are forcing the County to be more creative and cost effective in how services are delivered. In this environment, it becomes increasingly important for Counties to focus on its customers; external, that is the clients it serves and the myriad of stakeholders, and its internal customers, the staff who provides these services. In charting future directions one needs to examine multiple sources of data to help set the context for developing services tailored to the unique needs of the County's population and to create supportive environments to the staff that provides these services.

New York State has identified Broome County as a county that has seen a 20% increase in poverty rates compared to ten years ago. However, there are fewer people applying for Food Stamps and Medicaid. Children are identified as meeting the criteria for free school lunches, however their families are not accessing Food Stamps. To address these barriers, New York State has targeted Broome County, along with eight other counties, to increase Food Stamp participation. Outreach and engagement to reach those eligible but not receiving benefits will require attention to cultural competence factors.

Data from the 2000 Census indicates that during the 1990s, the total population of Broome County decreased from 212,160 to 200,536, a decline of 5.5%. Compared to the rest of New York State the County has a disproportional number of elderly residents. The elderly represent 20.7% of the total population of Broome County compared to New York State as a whole where they make up 16.9% of the total population. Of these 1,023 are minority elderly.¹

The 2000 Census reported that there were 200,536 people, 80,749 households, and 50,225 families residing in the county. The population was spread out with 23.00% under the age of 18, 11.00% from 18 to 24, 26.80% from 25 to 44, 22.80% from 45 to 64, and 16.40% who were 65 years of age or older. About 8.80% of families and 12.80% of the population were below the poverty line, including 15.90% of those under age 18 and 7.20% of those ages 65 or over.

¹ Broome County Office for the Aging, 2010 Annual Report.

Broome County's population is predominately White Non-Hispanic (88.4%). Black Non-Hispanic residents comprise 4.0% of the population; Asian 3.2%; Hispanic or Latino 2.5% and those of two or more races 1.5%.²

Within this racial breakout there are some significant contrasts. In 2009, the median age for White residents was 43 years old. Minority residents had a much lower median range: Black residents 24 years old, American Indian residents 28 years old; Asian residents: 25 years old; Hispanic or Latino residents: 24 years old; other race residents: 12 years old.

While 91.1% of residents speak English at home, a closer look at the residents of Broome County reveals the following characteristics:

1.9% of residents speak Spanish at home (74% speak English very well, 15% speak English well, 9% speak English not well, 2% don't speak English at all).

4.5% of residents speak other Indo-European languages at home (67% speak English very well, 21% speak English well, 11% speak English not well, 2% don't speak English at all).

2.0% of residents speak Asian or Pacific Island languages at home (61% speak English very well, 26% speak English well, 11% speak English not well, 2% don't speak English at all).

0.5% of residents speak other languages at home (73% speak English very well, 23% speak English well, 3% speak English not well, 1% don't speak English at all).

In each of these groups there are significant percentages of those who do not speak English well or at all; 13% of the 4.5% are Indo-European, evidence of a diversity of language and culture that may not be readily apparent due to their superficial similarity to the majority population.

² http://www.city-data.com/county/Broome_County-NY.html, retrieved 2/15/12.

There are also 10,536 foreign born residents of the County, 55% of which are naturalized citizens. They reflect the diversity evident in the data on languages spoken. The most common places of birth for the foreign-born residents (%) are:

- Italy (10%)
- China, excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan (8%)
- Ukraine (6%)
- India (6%)
- Korea (5%)
- Germany (5%)
- Vietnam (4%)

This data reflects those who are foreign born, not those who are first or second generation Americans who may also speak English as a second language. Refugee resettlement efforts account for some, but not all, of the diversity among foreign born residents. According to data from the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance, Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, during the Federal Fiscal Years 2002 – 2011 only 270 refugees resettled in the County.³ This number reflects a significant drop from in refugee resettlement in the past decade, however, it may be premature to assume that those here have assimilated. It is unclear how many secondary migrants have moved to the area to join family members, however, it is likely that they are included in the data on foreign born residents from the Ukraine and Vietnam and comprise about 10% or about a thousand individuals, roughly equal to the number of people in the community born in Italy. The Mental Health Association (MHA) has an interpreter service that Broome County Department of Social Services (DSS) can connect with for interpreter assistance.

While this data paints a broad picture of the diversity of the linguistic and cultural minority populations of Broome County it highlights the fact that there are significant factors to consider in understanding the diverse service needs of Broome County residents. This is of particular importance to the Broome County Department of Social Services which is charged with providing essential services to the community's vulnerable and distressed residents.

In 2010, 6,988 individuals were in receipt of Public Assistance. 29,153 individuals received Food Stamps; 32,993 received Medicaid.⁴ In light of the steady increase in applicants for DSS assistance benefits and the fact that more people within Broome County are collecting unemployment benefits, Medicaid and Food Stamps than ever before, it is of critical importance to collect and analyze available data to better understand the characteristics and service needs of all county residents. In particular, close examination of Medicaid data, which has the greatest number of service users, can reveal a great deal about patterns of usage for particular subgroups. As the data

³ October 2011, WRAPS data from OTDA/BRIA.

⁴ Broome County Department of Social Services, 2010 Annual Report

presented above has revealed, there is significant diversity in the population of Broome County, even among those characterized as White.

Given that New York State counties are struggling under the burden of unfunded mandates and seeking to contain costs for public benefit programs, especially Medicaid, it is particularly important to understand the needs and characteristics of the service users, especially those who are using a disproportionate share of available resources. Only then can appropriate interventions and cost cutting strategies be designed. By taking a more deliberate approach to understanding the motivations and cultural nuances of service users natural and community supports may be leveraged and efforts to increase self sufficiency yield better results.

Methodology

In 2007 the leadership of Broome County approached Coordinated Care Services, Inc. (CCSI) to help them better understand the cultural needs of the population, particularly as it concerned the delivery of mental health services. Early on the work focused on the mental health provider agencies. In 2009 -10 the work shifted to focus more on the Broome County Department of Social Services. CCSI staff provided training that introduced supervisors and managers to the concepts and principles of cultural competence. This initiative was led by the Deputy Commissioners, Omarr Evans and Cindy Nord. With their help, a Cultural Competence Steering Committee was convened to provide input, guidance and oversight.

Knowing that disparities in outcomes may exist in organizations that are not culturally competent, the review was undertaken to give Broome County DSS administration the tools to fuel their continuous quality improvement process and maintain its "focus on results" and on "doing what is right" so that the highest quality of service is provided to all.

It is important to note that Broome County undertook this effort voluntarily as it is deemed to be consistent with the Organizational Values articulated below:

Organizational Values:

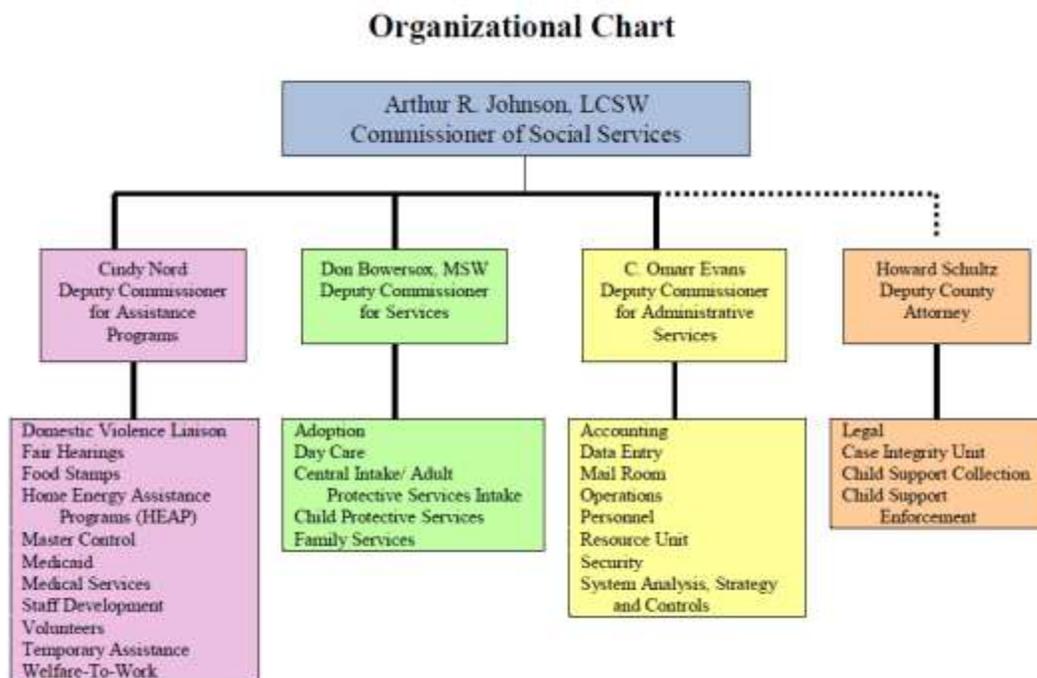
- 1. Professionalism**
Applying the highest standards of ethics and practice in the performance of one's duties.
- 2. Doing What is Right**
Within organizational parameters, and based on facts, to make decisions and to act in accordance with the values and the vision of the department.
- 3. Taking Responsibility**
The acceptance and ownership of the consequences of one's decisions and actions.
- 4. Results Oriented**
To identify desired outcomes and work toward achieving those outcomes in an efficient manner.
- 5. Team Oriented**
Working with others to promote an environment of "collective" ownership of organizational outcomes.
- 6. Enthusiasm**
Being positively energized and motivated while working toward one's full potential.
- 7. Innovation**
To explore and develop new ideas and products that improve individual and organizational performance.
- 8. Acceptance of Risk**
Understanding that progress and change involves some degree of uncertainty.
- 9. Quality**
To continuously achieve excellence of both process and product.
- 10. Continuous Growth**
Taking responsibility to seek and utilize opportunities that support individual and organizational development.

Prior to the site visit a Cultural and Linguistic Competence Agency Narrative and Self-Assessment was completed by each department team and submitted to the CCSI Reviewers. Data was collected to support all of the "yes" responses to the questions in the Cultural Competence Survey. In addition to general questions in the first section of the narrative, the Cultural Competence Agency Self-Assessment covers six domains with about 250 yes/no questions. Responses are clustered into six categories: Needs Assessment, Information Exchange, Services, Human Resources, Policies and Plans, and Outcomes. Within these domains are found the key factors critical to creating and sustaining culturally competent service delivery. It is important to note the important role that the Cultural Competence Committee played in making modifications to the template provided by CCSI and in developing the teams that would participate in the survey. Every effort was made to ensure a representative sample of the entire organization. The Cultural Competence Committee included consumers, staff representing the various departments with input from community representatives.

The following Organizational Chart depicts the structure of Broome County DSS. Because of financial constraints, some departments were folded in together for the survey. The Services Division consisted of CPS, Family Services and Day Care; Assistance Programs included Temporary Assistance, Medicaid and Food Stamps; the Legal Services Department focused on Child Support Services and Administrative

Services included the whole department. Not represented on the chart is the Broome County Executive and Legislature, both of which provide oversight of the Department.

Broome County DSS also has an Advisory Council which is composed of 16 members who serve a ten-year term. They provide input and advocacy for the Department and are convened by the Commissioner at the request of NYSOTDA. Of the 16 Council members neither is identified as a consumer (past or present) nor a family member. The current members of the Advisory Council are composed exclusively of individuals who are of European descent. There was no representation of racial and ethnic minorities on the Council. Also, it was not clear to the Review Team if the composition was reflective of the diversity of European’s living in the County. The Review Team observed that the majority of the staff at the review sessions was not familiar with the Council or its function.



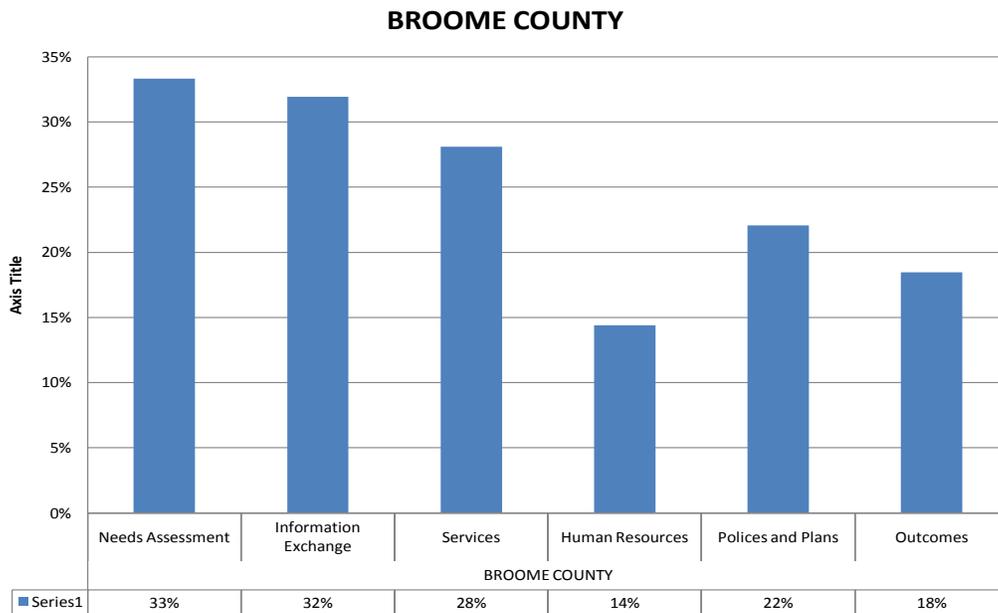
As a result of these structural modifications made to the Organizational Survey. When conducting the Self Assessment, the Committee recognized that while work was being done in some areas or departments, it was important to note where additional work was needed in specific departments. This approach affected the overall scores reflected in the summary graphs.

Clearly there was a significant investment of time and a commitment to the process on the part of the organization’s administration and members of the Cultural Competence Committee. Designated Deputy Commissioners were at every meeting and committed their time and energy and were instrumental in ensuring that staff gave it the needed

attention. They also led the charge for the completion of the CC survey tool. This is the type of strong leadership essential for creating and sustaining an infrastructure that allows for the integration of Cultural and Linguistic Competence at all levels of the organization.

At a follow-up site visit, the Review Team met with Broome County DSS staff and reviewed specific data and evidence that supported the “yes” responses to the survey questions, and claims made in the self-evaluation document, and listened to input from the staff as to their views of the steps needed to take their unit further along the cultural competence continuum. As a result of these interviews modifications were made to the scores recorded on the Self Assessment. The final results of the Organizational Assessment are depicted in the following summary graphs.

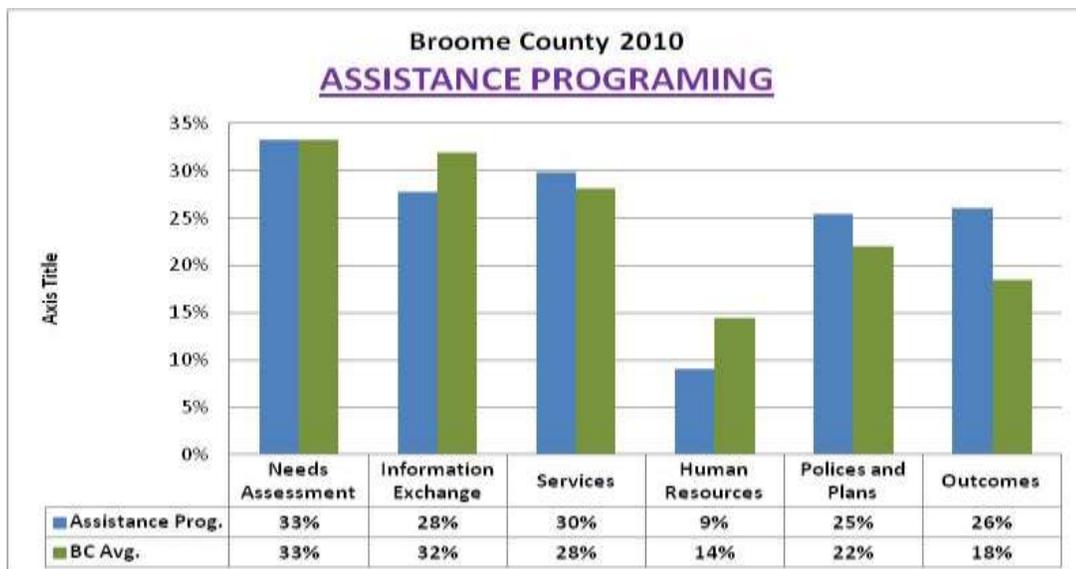
Figure 1
2010 Aggregated Results for all Six Cultural Competence Domains

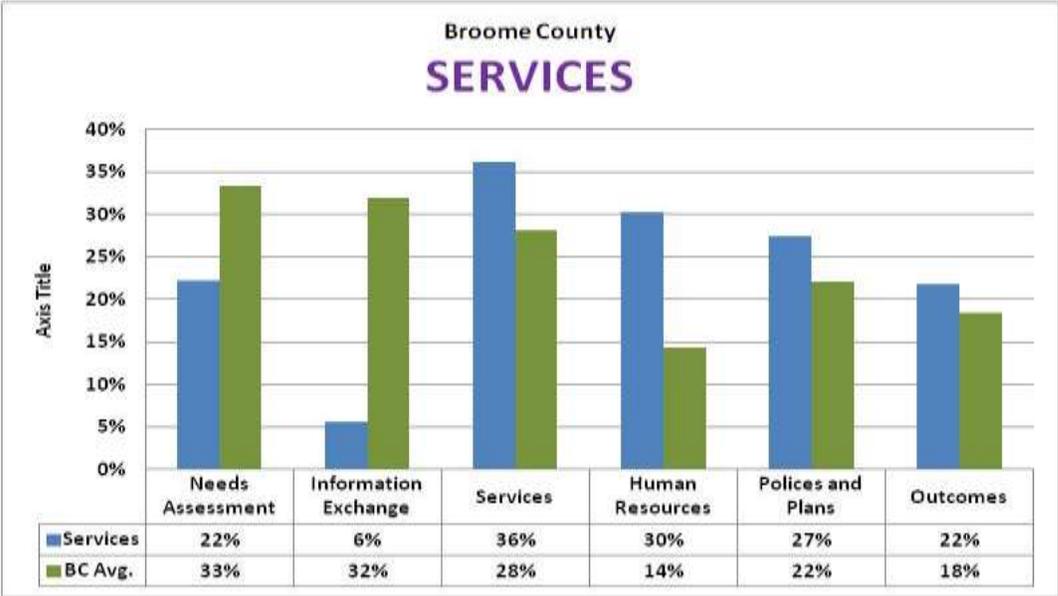
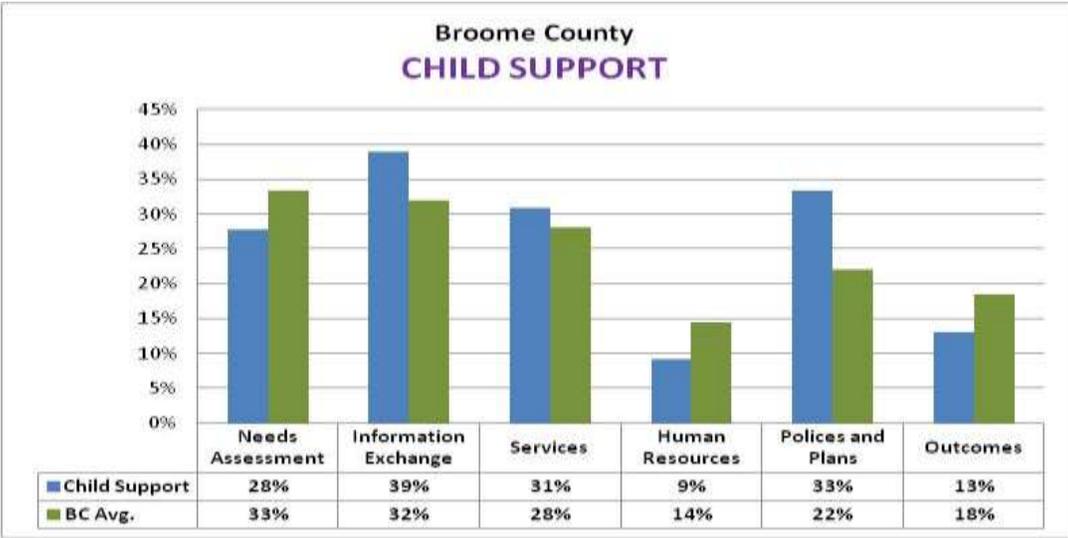


See Appendix A for a copy of the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment questions. Based on responses from the Self Assessment and discussions with the Review Team, the Needs Assessment Domain, which looks at the cultural profile of County residents and an analysis of who is likely to receive services, emerged as the strongest area of

competence overall. At 33% there is still significant room for improvement across all Divisions of the organization. Similarly, Information Exchange which refers to how the agency receives and shares information about the cultural characteristics of the community received a score of 32%. The Services Domain considers all services offered, performed and accessed by all cultural groups. A score of 28% indicates that while some areas of the agency are doing well, there is much that can be developed throughout the entire organization. Policy and plans are necessary to an organization for the development and adherence to the principles of cultural competency. With a score of 22% it is clear that this is an area that can be strengthened with a strategic approach to analyzing policies and utilizing data and minority participation to infuse cultural competency throughout all aspects of the organization. The Human Resources Domain, which pertains to the management of employees and how cultural competency is integrated into the organization's personnel functions, scored 14%. Although CCSI has worked with DSS to conduct training in this area, clearly there is a need for ongoing attention and development as staff changes occur within the workforce. During the contract period CCSI trained a cohort of individuals that now have the knowledge and information to train staff instead of bringing in additional consultants. Closely aligned to this is the area of Outcomes, as defined for cultural competence it relates to providing services to specific cultural groups, which at 18%, also needs significant attention. These responses were based on the questions from the Cultural Competence Assessment, see Appendix A.

The graphs below depict further detail as to how each of the team scores contributed to the composite data reflected in the chart above.





Staff Comments

Consistently the team found that staff spoke with great pride about their years of service with DSS and its personal significance. Some focused on their growth within the organization over the years, some on the support from their immediate manager or the organization on their career paths and others on the sense of satisfaction obtained from knowing they made a positive difference in the lives of individuals and the community.

The camaraderie in the working environment was clearly evident. The impression received by the Review Team was one of a cordial and respectful working environment between people of all levels at DSS. Even the most frustrated staff members at the site reviews spoke highly of the working relationships within the organization.

In the areas visited by the Review Team there was noticeable improvement in the upkeep of the facility in response to staff complaints, however in other areas there is a continued need for improvement. The physical environment seen by the general public created a positive impression. Efforts were made to keep some areas clean and neat, particularly in the client waiting area.

During the course of the Review Team's visits to Broome County DSS it was clear that suggestions from the previous visit were being integrated into day-to-day operations. Clearly the organization is receptive to working to implement cultural competency throughout its service delivery system to create a major transformation in how business is conducted.

As is the case in many organizations, people of color were uncomfortable about accepting the fact that it is OK to be different. They initially didn't want to be seen as separate or different as they have become accustomed to viewing themselves as "assimilated." However, over time, they too began to open up and become more comfortable when talking about differences.

It appears that the Child Support Unit and Human Resources do not get along well together and do not treat each other respectfully. They clearly would rather have not been in attendance at meetings with the Review Team. Some staff indicated that they felt left out because their unit is located in the basement.

It is important to be deliberate about getting feedback from staff. There is a vocal minority that tends to be negative therefore, it is important to find a way to solicit feedback from all staff. "If people don't weigh in, they can't buy in." There are strategies and approaches to look at the overall health of the agency through use of an organizational health inventory. Such an approach might yield better results than a traditional staff satisfaction survey process.

In the 2010 Annual Report there were pictures of staff in color that added “humanness” to the organization that is often perceived as not personal. This speaks to the organizations efforts to change the community perception to one of a personal effort to help. It also speaks to the organizations view of staff as important to the delivery of services.

It is against this positive backdrop that the Review Team offers the following recommendations to help guide the organization in its cultural competence journey. Recommendations are grouped by the six domains covered in the survey. The survey domains are: A. Needs Assessment, B. Information Exchange, C. Services, D. Human Resources, E. Policies/Plans, and F. Outcomes This summary highlights the most significant findings of this comprehensive assessment.

Key recommendations by Cultural Competency Domain

A. Needs Assessment

Needs Assessment refers to a “baseline of information profiling cultural groups within the target and user/consumer communities.”

1. Review the current data sources and take advantage of data that already exists. Enhance data collection to collect additional data on the characteristics of service users to include: use of holistic/indigenous practices, refugee status, primary language, language proficiency (i.e., reading and writing) and types of complimentary services required. Consider developing a common set of basic information on client characteristics across all programs and services that will better profile the customer base and obtain data to use in analyzing outcomes for disparities and identify the most cost effective interventions.
2. Convene an internal data review team that is reflective of the broad cross section of staff and clients to review the data on characteristics of service by outcomes to determine if there are disparities in care. Data must be stratified by race and ethnicity. Consider using both quantitative and qualitative data to examine customer satisfaction and solicit customer feedback as part of quality assurance activities. Consider doing focus groups with staff and clients. This analysis can help inform the delivery of services to various cultural groups who may be underserved.
3. Regularly review data from OTDA- Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs and communicate with local refugee resettlement groups to inform staff about the changing demographics and needs of refugees and secondary migrants resettling in Broome County.
4. Utilize the *Ethnicity at a Glance Chart* as a scorecard and strategic performance tool to track staff representation in relation to the population and clients served. It can also be used to help track demographic changes at a glance and summarize information on various ethnic characteristics. Specific to Broome County is the need to expand the template to break out the various European-American groups. We know this is a daunting task but these groups are significant; for example, foreign born and the elderly merit further study. See Appendix B for a template.
5. Maintain a centralized list of contact information in the form of a resource directory of community agencies on the MIS system that can be used by all staff to assist with serving and understanding different racial and ethnic groups.

B. Information Exchange

Information Exchange refers to the extent to which the organization receives information about the cultural characteristics of the community as well as how information is shared with the community.

Key Recommendations:

1. Form a work team of staff and community representatives to guide outreach efforts to the broader community, to referral sources and to specific cultural groups. Such efforts could include the identification of natural supports. Sometimes needs can be addressed within a cultural community instead of relying on public support. These efforts could also include creation of speaker's bureau and a publication that informs the public of available services and how to apply. This publication could be translated, put on the websites and serve as a training tool for educating community based organizations and others likely to work with specific cultural groups. Development and dissemination of linguistically and culturally appropriate outreach materials can also be part of the team charge.
2. Supervisors need to encourage staff development in cultural competency. This can include coaching and developmental plans linked to quality improvement efforts. Results of coaching and developmental plans should inform staff development offerings. It is strongly encouraged that staff are offered at least 8 hours of cultural competency training annually
3. Put in place strategies to broaden the pool of applicants for Civil Service Positions. For example, notice of exams could be widely distributed in the community, particularly in print and social media that reach underserved cultural groups. Sharing test announcements with places that people from specific cultural groups congregate, for example barber shops, churches, Laundromats and buses is another way of spreading information to underserved groups.
4. Internally, NYS Civil Service exam postings are provided in both English and Spanish. Copies of the Spanish versions of the test announcements could be posted in one specific area.
5. Implementation of the requirements of Governor Cuomo's Executive Order No. 26 Statewide Language Access Policy, that requires that anyone receiving state funds must translate their documents into the eight languages identified and provide interpreter services at no cost, should be incorporated into the work plan of the Cultural Competence Committee. This has significant implications for workforce development and provision of services.

6. Conduct a comprehensive inventory of all written materials, in addition to those mandated under Executive Order No. 26, to determine the target audience and assess the communication needs of the audience so that materials may be tailored to meet the language and literacy levels of service users.

C. Services

The section on Services considers all services offered, performed, and accessed via culturally appropriate services to all cultural groups.

Key Recommendations:

1. Incorporate a cultural assessment as part of the intake process. See template in Appendix C. As appropriate, solicit input from family members and significant others, particularly around traditional health practices and child rearing values.
2. Conduct focus groups with specific cultural groups to ask for suggestions as to how services may be tailored to be more culturally responsive and appropriate for their needs. Specific staff training will emerge from the focus groups.
3. Enhance waiting room areas with décor, magazines and other informational materials that reflect diversity. Continue to provide information on how to access interpreter services, taking care to ensure that interpreters know the cultural nuances as they relate to the services that are provided. Connect with MHA and their interpreter services and with the Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC) for sign language interpreters.
4. Develop a formalized policy and procedure for assisting service users to understand and complete forms.
5. Establish a mechanism in-house for keeping staff updated on demographic changes within the community. Share this information with others such as funders and consultants.
6. Regularly assess service delivery processes and outcomes related to ethnic/cultural/language groups as part of a quality monitoring and improvement program.

D. Human Resources

The section on Human Resources pertains to the management of employees at all levels of the organization and examines how training and standards regarding cultural competency are integrated into the organization's personnel functions.

1. Formalize the role of Cultural Competence Champion by including this in the job description. Have clear deliverables and assess performance in the annual performance appraisal process.
2. Ensure that contracts with consultants and trainers contain information that apprises them of the county demographics to ensure that services provided to DSS take that into consideration.
3. As part of the organization's overall training program continue to build on the existing train-the-trainer model to engage current staff in educating new staff. Periodically infuse technical assistance from consultants but make sure the staff "own" the training and share their personal experiences in developing and providing culturally competent services.
4. Develop and maintain a Cultural Competence library with articles and free online training and resources that can be accessed by all staff. Periodically put a blurb in the newsletter promoting the use of these in-house resources on cultural competence.
5. Develop, adopt, and implement a core set of cultural competencies to be added to every job description. The use of these competencies should be monitored for effectiveness through supervision and the performance appraisal system.
6. Add Cultural Competency as an agenda item at all meetings.
7. Given that the County no longer has an Affirmative Action Officer, the Review Team suggests that this function needs to be identified and utilized to help the County develop a more diverse staff within the constraints of the Civil Service System.
8. Existing personnel can play a stronger role in recruiting diverse applicants for Civil Service openings. For example, staff can go out to community groups to talk about opportunities for Civil Service employment and how to take Civil Service tests. They can also go to places where potential candidates are, for example, case workers go to social work schools to educate and recruit potential applicants. Job fairs and other places where low income or diverse groups can connect with personnel representatives are potential ways to communicate information about Civil Service opportunities. Review, update and enhance distribution lists used by personnel to publicize Civil Service test announcements.

9. Maintain a record of appeals, grievances, lawsuits as well as informal complaints differentiated by the complainant and specific staff. Use the information to drive specific actions.
10. Human Resources and the Executive level management staff need to be intimately involved with hiring and retention activities as it relates to obtaining and maintaining a diverse staff. By moving beyond a "color blind" approach to one that focuses on training and supporting the development of minority staff it is possible to develop strategies that give people the tools and opportunity to advance within in the Civil Service System. One such tool could be the establishment of a mentoring program for minority staff to prepare them for promotional opportunities.
11. Monitor data from staff satisfaction surveys to determine if the work environment is sensitive and accepting of cultural, sexual and religious differences and develop appropriate strategies to address any issues. Consider using an organizational health assessment to get richer data and more input from staff. Monitor other data currently available, e.g., contributions to suggestion boxes and solutions that were implemented as a result of the input

E. Policies/Plans

Policies and plans are necessary to an organization for the development of and adherence to the principles of cultural competency.

1. Formulate a cultural competence policy for the Department of Social Services.
2. Adopt decision-making policies that systematically solicit and encourage "minority" participation at all levels of the organization to help create a culture and environment that seeks input from minority staff and different cultural groups served. With the current structure in place, a possible way to begin is by the use of ad hoc and advisory committees.
3. Review all policies currently being used by DSS and integrate cultural competence principles and concepts throughout.
4. Create and implement strategies for succession planning to replace staff scheduled to retire; include training in cultural competence as part of the staff development plan. Add cultural competence to the job requirements.

F. Outcomes

Outcomes are those measures that reflect clinical change, improved social functioning, recovery, and self-empowerment of consumers of all cultures. Culturally competent organizations strive to ensure that the outcomes for any one cultural group are consistent with the outcomes for the entire population served.

1. Develop a customer/client feedback survey that can be implemented in a comfortable setting. Feedback does not have to be given on a paper form.
2. Examine outcomes for services provided to minority groups to determine if disparities exist and create interventions that are more culturally specific. In particular, performance metrics must be analyzed by cultural elements. Such information can provide new depth to understanding factors contributing to length of time on DSS, outcomes related to participation in employment, training and educational programs, and need for culturally appropriate foster and adoptive homes.
3. Display quantifiable results of delivering culturally competent services. This can be in the forms of charts or personal success stories which reinforce the message to staff and service users that the organization is committed to ensuring positive outcomes for all.
4. Develop and implement a policy that states that analysis of data must be stratified by race and ethnicity.
5. There needs to be a quality assurance/quality improvement function in the agency to implement a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process that will absorb the responsibility for the monitoring, evaluation and implementation of the cultural competence related activities to include analysis of the data.

Summary

It is clear to the Review Team that Broome County DSS is well positioned to make significant strides in refining its operations to provide more culturally competent services. It is incumbent upon DSS Administration to look at the "big picture" by conducting rigorous data collection and data analysis and make sure that this information flows down to all levels of the organization. Publicizing the positive changes and progress made along the cultural competence continuum is another key function that will need administrative attention. Ongoing training and succession planning is essential since there will be significant staff turnover in the next few years due to retirement incentives. These challenges are also opportunities to develop minority staff

and inculcate cultural competence skills into the training of the workforce to meet the challenges of new roles and responsibilities. Undertaking deliberate efforts to promote and facilitate minorities taking Civil Service exams will be critical to addressing the need for a workforce that better reflects the changing demographics of the County.

It is critically important that metrics that define success be developed. These need to be in alignment with DSS measures of success as articulated in the mission, vision and values of the organization.

Broome County needs to brainstorm ways to get feedback from staff in lieu of a formal satisfaction survey. It is important to obtain feedback from staff in some anonymous way to help keep lines of communication open.

The work of the Cultural Competence Committee and the progress made in developing and utilizing Culturally Competent practices should be promoted throughout the organization to foster replication. Perhaps a portion of an annual staff meeting could be devoted to this. The Annual Report should also mention and celebrate the progress made in moving the organization along the Cultural Competence Continuum.

The MIS System can be used to share information and resources related to the provision of culturally appropriate services.

It is important that the Quality Assurance Work Team understand use of data and how it can indicate a need for modify services approaches to eliminate disparities in service outcomes. This analysis should be widely shared throughout the organization as one of the indicators of service quality.

While most DSS services are mandated by the State, Broome County is clearly committed to implementing these mandates by providing the highest quality of service. With this in view, the effort to deliver culturally competent services is a wise investment that is good for staff, service users and the whole community for it ensures the prudent use of limited resources and increases the likelihood of positive outcomes for all. Leadership will become increasingly important to ensure that an infrastructure is sustained that will allow for the integration of cultural competence at all levels of the organization. It is also the role of leadership to create a supportive environment for each department to be successful in implementing these recommendations. Leadership must establish clear expectations, and engage and ensure that senior management is trained and takes ownership of diversity and Cultural Competence goals. Further, it is important that clear expectations and organizational accountability are in place. There must be a focus on both external (service users) and internal (staff) customers. DSS needs to continue to invest in their "human capital", the staff, to create continuous learning opportunities so that they can best serve the diverse clients who come for services.

It is important to focus on the customer and to be intellectually honest with what is working. Is there something that you can measure but haven't done so? Is there something that you are currently measuring but haven't used the data for decision making? Is there a resource you haven't taken into consideration?

The executive and management team, along with supervisors, must use their platform to reinforce the positive role of cultural competence in delivering high quality services. For each department within DSS to be successful in this effort, there are some specific things that need attention. These are addressed and detailed in the individual department reports.

To inculcate cultural competence into every facet of services and practices at DHS, the organization's leadership will be challenged on several fronts. First, there is the need to develop an organizational infrastructure that supports cultural competence. Second, there is a need to develop data collection systems and strategies for data analysis to ensure that policies put in place are making a difference to the outcomes of the organization and that disparities are being reduced. Third, it is important to ensure continued staff involvement in the Cultural Competence initiative by redistributing workloads, ensuring representation from each team and providing the necessary administrative support to implement the recommendations made by the team. Finally, there is the need to develop all staff. This includes extensive and ongoing staff training and the development of minority staff to assume leadership positions. Once these areas are addressed DSS will be in a position to initiate cutting edge services that will demonstrate the impact of culturally competent services.

It is our sincere hope that the recommendations and resources included in this report take DSS along the path of providing culturally competent care that will result in improved outcomes for clients, family members and staff.

Respectfully Submitted:

Lenora Reid-Rose
Coordinated Care Services, Inc.
Director, Cultural Competence & Diversity Initiatives

Appendix A – Cultural Competence Survey Questions
Appendix B – Ethnicity at a Glance Template
Appendix C – Cultural Assessment Template