

# Instructor Resource Guide



## **Cultural Diversity**

Course ID# 3939

Continuing Education Requirement

Revised: January 2025

# ABSTRACT

This course is designed to meet the continuing education requirements for licensees established by Texas Occupation Codes 1701.351 and 1701.352. Cultural Diversity covers pertinent terminology, biases and their impact on law enforcement practice, benefits of diversity for law enforcement agencies, as well as cultural competence development best practices. While the content of this course is geared towards peace officers, enrollment is encouraged from all law enforcement staff, including civilian and non-sworn personnel.

## **Instructor Resource Guide:**

This is an Instructor Resource Guide (IRG), not a lesson plan. The purpose of the IRG is to outline the minimum state requirements of what must be taught for a course to be considered compliant and receive TCOLE credit. The learning objectives provided in this IRG are the minimum state requirements for the training and must not be changed or altered.

- A qualified instructor **shall** develop the IRG into a lesson plan that meets their organization and student needs and must be kept in a training file for auditing purposes.

**Please note: It is the responsibility of the Academy and/or Contractual Training Provider to ensure the IRG is developed into a complete lesson plan based on the requirements outlined in the IRG for a particular topic.**

## **Lesson Plan:**

Each organization is charged with creating their own lesson plan for how the organization will disseminate the information in the IRG.

- The IRG is designed to assist the instructor/subject matter expert in developing comprehensive lesson plans. The use of current statistics, best practice models, and scenario-based training should also be included in the lesson plan development. Instructors are encouraged to add additional activities.
- The institutions and instructors will determine how much time is spent on each topic/module, how many/what kind of examples or exercises are used during their presentation, and how in-depth they review each topic in the course they present.
- Any activity that is **suggested** is just that, an example or suggestion, and is not mandated for inclusion.
- Anything that is **required** must be included in the instructor's lesson plan.

## **Note to Trainers:**

**It is the responsibility of the Academy and/or Training Coordinator to ensure this curriculum and its materials are kept up to date. Refer to curriculum and legal resources for changes in subject matter or laws relating to this topic as well as the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement website at [www.tcole.texas.gov](http://www.tcole.texas.gov) for edits due to course review. Training providers must keep a complete training file on all courses reported for TCOLE credit.**

**Student Prerequisites:**

- There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Instructor Prerequisites:**

An instructor must be a subject matter expert in the topic and must have documented knowledge/training/education and provide an instructor's biography that documents subject matter expertise. It is the responsibility of the training academy/training coordinator to select qualified instructors. A TCOLE instructor certification does not certify someone to teach any topic.

- If a documented subject matter expert does not hold a TCOLE instructor certification, the instructor must be approved in writing by the department's training coordinator or chief administrative officer and kept in the training file for the course.

**Length of Course:**

It is the training coordinator's responsibility to ensure the minimum hours are being met. Students are required to attend all classroom hours as listed in this instructor resource guide, there is no 10% attendance rule. TCOLE Rule 218.1 (C)(4) states that failure to meet the minimum course length may be grounds for denial of training. This course shall be taught the minimum hours that are listed in this guide and the student shall attend the entire class to receive credit.

- 8 hours, minimum.

**Assessment:**

- Training providers are responsible for creating student assessments and documenting the mastery of all objectives in this course using various testing assessment opportunities.
  - Assessment opportunities include oral or written testing, interaction with instructor and students, case study and scenario, and other means of testing student's application of the skills taught as the instructor or department deems appropriate.
- The minimum passing score shall be 70%.

## **Unit 1 Diversity Awareness**

### **1.1 Identify key elements surrounding culture.**

- A. A combination of shared norms, values, assumptions, behaviors, language, and symbols.
- B. Influences people in ways they may not be consciously aware.
- C. A law enforcement officer simultaneously belongs to many cultures.
  - i. Officers, regardless of their personal background, are all members of the law enforcement culture and share values that help them navigate a demanding and emotionally challenging profession.
  - ii. May cause officers to feel conflicted between altering their other cultures to fit in and wanting to retain some of their original values.
  - iii. In a professional setting, this indicates officers may have more blind spots than they realize.
- D. It is a useful tool because it is a source of information.
  - i. Being aware of basic assumptions, expectations, and behaviors associated with each cultural and ethnic group within your service area is highly beneficial.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:**

In the format determined as most appropriate by the instructor, have learners provide practical examples of ways cultural awareness can improve civilian communication, crisis de-escalation, and/or officer safety.

### **1.2 Identify key elements surrounding diversity.**

- A. It is the presence of differences.
- B. The dimensions of diversity include but are not limited to:
  - i. Race
  - ii. Ethnicity
  - iii. Gender
  - iv. Sexual identity
  - v. Socio-economic status
  - vi. Physical abilities
  - vii. Age
  - viii. Religious beliefs
  - ix. Political affiliation
  - x. Parental status
  - xi. Work experience
  - xii. Geographic location
- C. We are all diverse and therefore bring diversity into the workplace.

- D. Diversity includes knowing how to relate to qualities different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong.

### **1.3 Define bias.**

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Each of us holds a set of perspectives that help us navigate a complex world efficiently. The word bias may make some feel as though they are being attacked. Encourage learners to be curious and open to new ideas. As appropriate, share real-life experiences that focus on the practical benefits of reflecting on our own biases as peace officers.

- A. Bias is a human trait resulting from our need to classify individuals into categories as we strive to quickly process information and make sense of the world.
- B. Often manifests as an inclination or preference for, or against, one person or group.
- C. Most biases do not come from a place of bad intent.
  - i. Often formed in our brains through years of different influences we had no control over and may not have noticed.
- D. Biases affects us and our decision-making in different ways:
  - i. Perception
    - 1. How we see people and perceive reality.
  - ii. Attitude
    - 1. How we react towards certain people.
  - iii. Behavior
    - 1. How receptive/friendly we are towards certain people.
  - iv. Attention
    - 1. Which aspects of a person we pay most attention to.
  - v. Listening skills
    - 1. How much we actively listen to what certain people say.
  - vi. Micro-affirmations
    - 1. How much or how little we comfort certain people in certain situations.
- E. Biases become problematic when they cause us to hold negative attitudes and beliefs of others.
  - i. Can keep officers from understanding a civilian's message or point of view.
  - ii. Can prevent officers from responding fairly and objectively to a situation.
  - iii. Can lead to discriminatory, exclusionary, or harmful actions.

### **1.4 Recognize types of biases.**

- A. Conscious
  - i. Can be easily determined by the ideas and behavior of a person.

- ii. May involve malicious intent.
- B. Unconscious
  - i. While the human brain receives 11 million pieces of information a second, we can only process 40 of those details consciously.
    - 1. To a large extent, unconscious biases aid in automatic processing.
  - ii. “Gut feelings” have a place in law enforcement work as it assists officers in making day-to-day choices that align with their goals.
  - iii. If left unchecked, can influence officer decisions and lead to unfair, inaccurate judgements, overlooked indicators, or even discrimination.
    - 1. Example: If officers interact solely with crime suspects within a particular community, their brain begins reinforcing the association between people living in that neighborhood and crime.
  - iv. Some situations may trigger an overreliance on unconscious bias.
  - v. They are malleable and steps can be taken to limit their impact on our thoughts and behaviors.
  - vi. From a command officer or supervisory standpoint, subordinate officers should be encouraged to increase their understanding of bias and self-evaluate how their biases impact their behavior.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** A resource for self-evaluation is the Implicit Association Test (IAT), which is an awareness tool and not a psychometric assessment. It should not be used for diagnostic or selection purposes. It is available at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>.

### **1.5 Recognize forms of biases.**

- A. Stereotypes
  - i. A generalized belief about every person in a particular group of people.
  - ii. Can be inaccurate and resistant to new information.
  - iii. When we stereotype, we place individuals in a “mental file” based on our preconceived ideas.
    - 1. The issue becomes that the information is not specifically gained from knowledge or experience with that person.
    - 2. Creates automatic responses.
  - iv. Stereotypes can lead to prejudice.
- B. Prejudice
  - i. The belief that a stereotype or overgeneralization is true, resulting in a strong feeling about a particular group.
  - ii. Examples include but are not limited to:
    - 1. Ageism

2. Classism
  3. Homophobia
  4. Nationalism
  5. Racism
  6. Religious
  7. Sexism
  8. Xenophobia
- iii. Individuals tend to have stronger prejudice towards those who do not belong in any of their cultural groups.
    1. Example: When a member of our group misbehaves, the natural reaction is to dismiss or lessen the severity of impact of the behavior. When someone in our out-group does the same thing, we tend to judge the behavior much more harshly.
  - iv. Can lead to discrimination.
- C. Discrimination
- i. Negative behaviors influenced by a stereotype or prejudice.
  - ii. Individuals who discriminate are aware of their negative emotions toward members of a certain group and intend to harm, disadvantage, or avoid them.
  - iii. In the workplace, it may occur in less obvious and more subtle forms.
  - iv. Discrimination can be damaging even if the officer is not the direct target.
    1. Regardless of personal experiences, it can be stressful just being a member of a group that is often discriminated against.
    2. The anticipation of discrimination creates its own chronic stress.
    3. People might even avoid situations where they expect to be treated poorly.
  - v. Individuals may be reluctant to report discrimination due to:
    1. Fear of being perceived as physically, mentally, or emotionally incompetent for law enforcement.
    2. Fear of outing oneself due to the incident reporting process.
    3. Potential loss of promotion or specialty assignment.
    4. Fear of retaliation or increased harassment.
    5. Not wanting to get offender in trouble.
    6. Belief that supervisors or coworkers condone or minimize the behavior.
    7. Lack of confidence in the reporting/investigation process.
    8. Fear of perceived association.

**REQUIRED ACTIVITY:**

In the format determined as most appropriate by the instructor, have learners reflect on the harmful impact of stereotyping in policing. The instructor must provide examples relevant to their service area and focus the discussion on the following:

- What are current stereotypes of peace officers in Texas?
- Are they absolutely accurate or inaccurate?
- How do these stereotypes impact officer safety, subject compliance, and civilian cooperation in your experience?
- What are other groups of people that could be negatively impacted by stereotypes in the communities you serve?

## **1.6 Identify different forms of discrimination.**

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Remind learners that even if they do not personally experience discrimination, they should report any observed incidents of harassment. The victim may also file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and consult with an attorney. The EEOC is the governmental agency that enforces compliance with the Civil Rights Act (Title VII).

### **A. Harassment**

- i. Unwelcome conduct towards another that creates a hostile environment.
- ii. Often related to characteristics such as:
  1. Race
  2. Ethnicity
  3. Gender
  4. Sexual orientation
  5. Religion
- iii. Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to:
  1. Offensive jokes
  2. Offensive slurs
  3. Epithets
  4. Name-calling
  5. Physical assaults or threats
  6. Intimidation
  7. Ridicule or mockery
  8. Insults or put-downs
  9. Offensive objects or pictures
- iv. Everyone has the right to work in an environment free of harassment and hostile conditions.



- v. At the workplace, harassment may occur in the form of quid pro quo, a Latin phrase that means “something for something” or in exchange for.
  - 1. Does not have to be sexual in nature or through a supervisor/direct report channel.
  - 2. Can occur when an individual with real or perceived authority makes a demand of an individual in return for a real or perceived benefit.
- B. Sexual harassment
  - i. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
  - ii. Includes verbal and non-verbal behavior, as well as physical actions.
    - 1. Verbal actions can include giving sexual compliments, pressuring someone for dates, or ridiculing someone with a sexual message.
    - 2. Non-verbal actions can include making facial gestures, displaying nude pictures, posting on social media, or using suggestive body language.
    - 3. Physical actions can include touching and brushing against someone, hugging and patting, or horseplay.
  - iii. A workplace that allows sex-based discussions, humor, banter, or posters, promotes a hostile work environment.
  - iv. For law enforcement professionals, it has become increasingly complex to legally define the workplace.
    - 1. An officer’s workplace may be a service area, police station, patrol car, or training academy.
    - 2. An officer’s workplace may be seasonal, temporary, or permanent.
  - v. To prevent liability, an officer must
    - 1. Abide by agency policies.
    - 2. Avoid engaging in behavior that could be misinterpreted.
    - 3. Act professionally at all times and at any location.
    - 4. Address any sexual harassment as soon as it occurs to prevent escalation.
  - vi. Training and communication are key to understanding and preventing sexual harassment in the workplace.
- C. Gender discrimination
  - i. Under-representation of women in law enforcement inadvertently undermines public safety.
  - ii. Gender discrimination may translate to unequal treatment in the workplace through the following:
    - 1. Assignments to job viewed as traditionally women held.
    - 2. Tests for promotions that are not job or task related.

3. Held to higher or different standard in performance evaluations.
4. Not given equal consideration for training, conference attendance, or specialty job assignments.
5. Pregnant women not given light duty, but men injured off-duty given these assignments instead.

**D. Microaggressions**

- i. Verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities.
- ii. Can be intentional or unintentional.
- iii. Can be disguised as a compliment.
- iv. Types include but are not limited to:
  1. Racial
  2. Religion
  3. Disability
  4. Social class
  5. Gender
  6. Sexual Orientation

**REQUIRED ACTIVITY:**

The instructor must develop at least six short scenarios that describe a microaggression at the workplace. The scenarios must be interactions among peace officers and include one of the types listed above. The purpose of this activity is to allow learners to reflect on the hidden messages they may be sending their fellow law enforcement officers. The instructor may determine the most appropriate format based on the class environment. Two examples have been included below for reference.

- A new officer transferred to your duty station. They are Asian American, born and raised in the United States, and you compliment them for speaking good English.
  - Hidden messages: You are not a true American; Speaking good English is unexpected because of how you look.
- You are attending a training conference and jokingly describe a movie you did not like as “gay” during lunch with your peers.
  - Hidden message: Being gay is negative and undesirable.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Refer to your Department/Agency policies to inform learners of appropriate procedures and available resources if they witness or experience workplace discrimination.

**Unit 2 Developing cultural competence**

**2.1 Define cultural competence.**

- A. The ability to recognize that:

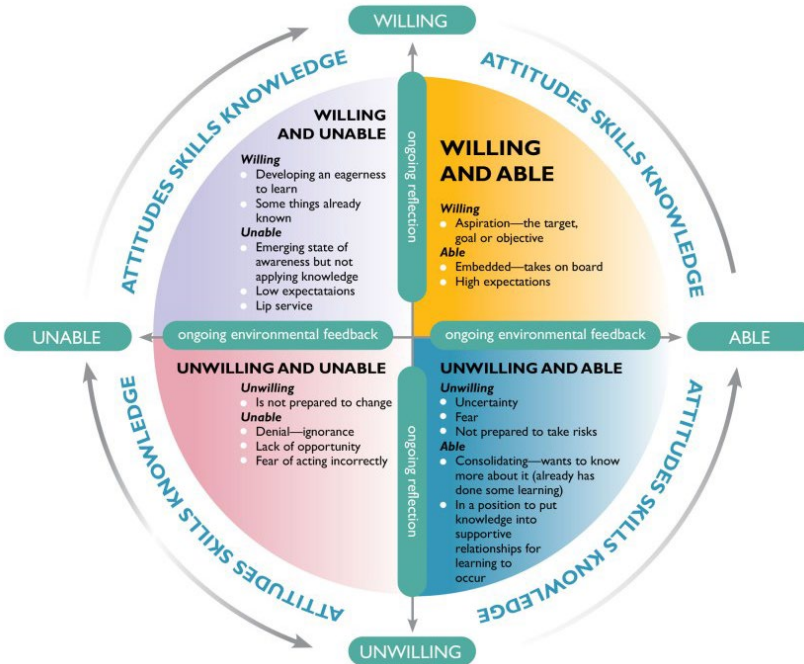
- i. Each of us has at least some views provided by our culture that operate under the belief that our viewpoints are superior or more appropriate.
    - 1. It is our responsibility to not only be aware of them, but also prevent them from impacting our decisions while on-duty.
- B. An officer's level of cultural competence is not static; it changes and develops in response to new situations, experiences, and relationships.
- C. Offers a framework to improve service delivery at both an officer and organizational level.
- D. It is not acquired merely by learning a given set of facts about specific populations, changing an organization's mission statement, or attending a training on cultural competence.
  - i. It is an ongoing cycle of awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skill development.

## **2.2 List benefits of cultural competence in law enforcement.**

- A. The mission of law enforcement requires a certain level of comfort and professionalism in interacting with people from various backgrounds, whether one is working with community members, law enforcement partners, suspects, or victims.
- B. Officers that value and promote cultural competence report the following benefits:
  - i. Positive communication is modeled and set as expectation from others.
  - ii. Communication gaps are bridged.
  - iii. Conflict escalation can be prevented.
  - iv. Both officer and victim safety are enhanced.
  - v. Disparity may be narrowed.
  - vi. Favoritism is prevented.
  - vii. Law enforcement show an investment in their community.
  - viii. Community partnerships are more easily formed.
  - ix. Police fairness is perceived more favorably.
  - x. Increased public trust may be achieved.
  - xi. Tension between the public and police may be diffused.
- C. Law enforcement agencies that value and promote cultural competence report the following benefits:
  - i. Agency buy-in and commitment to multicultural understanding foster change in police culture, which can be perceived positively by both officers and the communities they serve.
  - ii. Relationships within the organization improve, decreasing instances of conflict mediation and communication-based issues.
  - iii. Decreases the likelihood of cultural blindness influence.

1. Cultural blindness is an expressed philosophy of viewing and treating all people as the same.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** If deemed appropriate, the instructor can use the following diagram, developed by The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. It is a resource for learners to visualize cultural competence development as it relates to the individual's willingness and ability to change.



### 2.3 Describe the awareness dimension of cultural competence development.

- A. The first dimension of cultural competence is awareness.
  - i. Awareness of one's own cultural worldview and reactions to differences.
- B. To be able to effectively learn about another person's culture, we must first be aware of our own.
- C. Appreciating the origins of our beliefs gives us the understanding to appreciate the origins of the beliefs of others.
- D. Self-reflecting questions include but are not limited to:
  - i. Who are you and what forms your perspective?
  - ii. What are biases you carry based on the culture in which you grew up?
  - iii. What are your emotional reactions to conflicting cultural values?
  - iv. What are personal views you may project at work that cannot be imposed onto others?
    1. Political opinions
    2. Religious beliefs

- 3. Lifestyle choices
- 4. Cultural traditions
- 5. Views on social issues
- v. How does law enforcement culture impact you and your relationship with your own culture and values?
- vi. How do you prevent your biases and stereotypes from controlling your decisions and reactions while on-duty?
- E. Research into human behavior has shown that people who may test well regarding having low prejudices may in fact act with great prejudice when actually interacting with other cultures.
  - i. Understanding this disconnect is key to cultural competence development.

## **2.4 Describe the attitude dimension of cultural competence development.**

- A. The second dimension of cultural competence is attitude.
  - i. Attitude about cultural differences and any personal biases or beliefs.
- B. Admit that you do not know.
  - i. It is OK to say, "I don't know" or "I may be wrong, but..."
  - ii. Admitting that you do not know everything and that your assumptions may be inaccurate shows others they can do the same when interacting with you.
- C. Refrain from making judgments.
  - i. Before evaluating a situation or person, try to gather substantial information so that you can accurately describe the situation.
- D. Be empathetic.
  - i. Vicariously experience other's feelings, thoughts, or attitudes in order to understand them.
  - ii. The goal is that, through empathy, we learn of how others would like to be treated.
- E. Control your assumptions.
  - i. Ask your peers or supervisors for feedback on how you handled a specific situation and regularly check your assumptions to make sure that you clearly understand the circumstance and its context.
- F. Become comfortable with ambiguity.
  - i. Accept that others can teach you and that their way can add to what you know.
- G. Celebrate diversity.
  - i. Using your own personal approach, find ways to celebrate diversity.
- H. Practice patience.

- i. Show patience when working and interacting with people who have different learning styles than you.

## **2.5 Describe the knowledge dimension of cultural competence development.**

- A. The third dimension of cultural competence is knowledge.
  - i. Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, as well as how to interact and communicate with others.
- B. Differences should be perceived as an inevitable result of diversity instead of classified as strange or inappropriate.
- C. Knowing how culture impacts solving problems, managing people, asking for help, etc. facilitates interactions with both the public and other law enforcement members.
- D. The more direct contact officers have with the cultures within their jurisdictions, the more knowledge they will gain.
- E. Best practices include but are not limited to:
  - i. Learn factual information about other cultures and groups.
  - ii. Identify differences in communication styles.
  - iii. Attend a cultural event, celebration, or holiday program of a different culture that you have never experienced before.
  - iv. Compare the similarities and differences of this event/celebration to those of your cultural group.
  - v. Find out the meanings behind the differences.
  - vi. Learn culturally appropriate commands or expressions in another language.
  - vii. Identify similarities to your own culture.

## **2.6 Describe the skills dimension of cultural competence development.**

- A. The fourth and final dimension of cultural competence is skills.
  - i. Refers to knowing that our beliefs do not always match what we do, followed by being willing to rectify the discrepancy through action.
- B. We can have the “right” attitude, considerable self-awareness, and a lot of knowledge about cultural differences, yet still lack the ability to effectively manage differences.
  - i. Skill development requires practice and repetition until a skill is integrated into our daily behaviors.
- C. Examples of skills include but are not limited to:
  - i. Take personal responsibility for the way you respond to difference.
  - ii. Make continued and sincere attempts to understand the world from others’ points of view.

- iii. Develop problem-solving skills.
- iv. Develop skills in conflict management.
- v. Ask others for ways they have found effective to work with diverse groups of people.
- vi. Develop skills in cross-cultural communication.

**2.7 Define cross-cultural communication in law enforcement.**

- A. Cross-cultural communication is an officer's ability to communicate fairly and effectively with all communities in their jurisdiction.
- B. An individual's willingness to cooperate is also impacted by the officer's behavior, which includes:
  - i. Respectful demeanor
  - ii. Treatment of other community members
  - iii. Moral and ethical standards
  - iv. Judgement
  - v. Use of force
  - vi. Empathy as a trait of a leader
  - vii. Problem-solving and conflict resolution skills
- C. Every encounter with the community is an opportunity to build trust and cooperation.
- D. When interacting with someone from another culture, non-verbal communication is where variations in meaning can be the greatest.
  - i. Body language, posturing, gesturing, and facial expressions are not universal between cultures and can be interpreted as offensive. Examples include:
    - 1. In some cultures, individuals will respond to shame by smiling.
    - 2. In some cultures, individuals may attempt to move closer when speaking with an officer to show compliance.
    - 3. In some cultures, it is disrespectful or confrontational to maintain direct eye contact with an authority figure.
- E. Interpretations of words, phrases and tone also differ by culture.
- F. Certain forms of communication can contribute to a negative response from a cross-cultural community and must be avoided.
  - i. Profanity has a negative effect on the professional image of the officer, the department, and the profession.
  - ii. Derogatory or offensive terminology detracts from professional effectiveness and makes individuals reluctant to cooperate.

- iii. Law enforcement jargon can cause confusion and mistrust, especially among those for which English is the second language. It can also be interpreted as demeaning toward the individual.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** This resource guide includes Appendixes A and B, which are compilations of cultural competence development best practices from an individual and an organizational level, respectively. They will be referenced in the activity below.

**REQUIRED ACTIVITY:**

The instructor must enable a discussion in the format determined as most appropriate for the class environment. The discussion must reference class content and Appendixes A and B, included in the end of this document and to be distributed to learners, digitally or as hard copies. The discussion must focus on learners reflecting on something they have learned in this class that can be applied while doing everyday tasks.



# APPENDIX A

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

### BEST PRACTICES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

#### REDUCING STEREOTYPES

- **Stereotype replacement:** Replacing automatic stereotypical responses with new, automatic, non-stereotypical responses.
- **Counter-stereotypic imaging:** Creating an opposite image of a stereotype in your mind. This can be done by examining general or abstract ideas, specific famous people, or specific non-famous people to challenge the perception and make a positive association.
- **Individuation:** Giving individuality to persons in a group. To employ this strategy, make a conscious effort to avoid making quick decisions based on stereotypes to help prevent making biased inferences.
- **Perspective taking:** This strategy involves taking a first-person perspective of a member of the group, which helps one to empathize and understand the implications of stereotypes.
- **Increased opportunities for contact:** Seek out opportunities to engage with stigmatized groups in a positive manner to create positive interactions for both parties.

#### REDUCING PREJUDICES

- Asking yourself the following questions:
  - Why am I having this thought?
  - What proof do I have that my judgement about this particular person or group is correct?
  - What don't I know about this person or group?
  - Is it possible that I could be biased?
- Equipping yourself with more empathy:
  - Keeping the tone non-defensive and non-confrontational; focus on the statement and not the individual.
  - Thinking about the fact that others are likely prejudiced against you and sitting with how it feels. to be pre-judged based on something as simple as your skin color, religion, or age.
- Educating yourself about other groups, which includes learning about common stereotypes against them.
- Gaining public support and awareness for anti-prejudice social norms.
- Advocating for laws and regulations that require fair and equal treatment for all groups of people.

#### REDUCING DISCRIMINATION

- Psychologists state one of the most promising strategies is to create safe interactions between groups where they work together towards a common goal.
- Educate yourself and your peers on different group cultures.
- Invite local minority leaders to discuss the historical background of discrimination towards their group with officers (race, religion, national origin).
- Offer different types of cultural events to raise awareness.
- Take frequent opportunities to reinforce cultural-competence training.
- Encourage perspective taking and role play in an open and safe environment with your peers.
- Educate how stereotyping and social categorization influence attitudes and behavior.
- Train members on how to recognize discrimination; and intervention strategies if observed.
- Create a climate where personnel feel comfortable informing leadership of discrimination.
- Assess those around you solely based on their knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes.

# APPENDIX B

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

### BEST PRACTICES AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

Managing diversity is not just a social or moral issue; it directly affects the performance of an organization and law enforcement is very much in the public eye. The changing demographics of the US labor force account for increasing gender, cultural, and age diversity in the workplace. Just as the workforce is becoming more diverse, so is the customer base that we serve. Employees that mirror this customer base can benefit the organization as they speak their language, can better identify customer needs, and respond accordingly.

The challenge of managing diversity in the workplace is creating conditions that minimize its potential to be a performance barrier while maximizing its potential to enhance organizational performance. Being cognizant of the following areas of diversity within your team will aid in recruitment and retention processes:

- Empowerment (your level of autonomy or decision-making authority)
- Functional level/classification
- Management experience
- Past professions
- Work experience and exposure to different situations.
- Work style and communication skills.

Because change is the only certainty, making adaptations required by diversity keeps an organization flexible and well-developed. Organizations should embed equity considerations into existing strategies across all departments and ranks, with all levels of leadership taking ownership and responsibility for the initiatives to they take root in the culture.

Best practices include but are not limited to:

- Include civilian and non-sworn personnel in routine staff meetings, advisory committees, and on special committees. These employees often have a great deal to offer in the form of information, experience, and what the public's perspective may be.
- Recruit individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and a variety of life experiences to promote a healthy culture and work dynamic among all personnel.
- Ensure that the agency's organizational culture is guided by community policing, procedural justice, and cultural inclusivity. Facilitating a culture that prioritizes community policing can encourage individuals from these communities not only to consider, but also to apply for jobs as officers.
- Seek out agency opportunities to network with differing local organizations and promote collaboration and diversity of perspective to be visible in the community.
- As appropriate, acknowledge and discuss with the community the challenges and initiatives faced by the department.
- Identify culture gaps for training or coaching in response to communication challenges.
- Promote cultural dialogue and cultural mentoring at all levels of your organization.
- Provide anonymous channels to submit complaints.
- Investigate allegations of discrimination in a timely and confidential manner.
- Re-evaluate employment criteria, standards, and benchmarks to ensure that they are tailored to the skills needed to perform job functions, and consequently attract, select, and retain the most qualified and desirable sworn officers.

# COURSE REFERENCES

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