ARTS, CULTURE & EVENTS

Cultural Diversity Program
Update 10.13.11

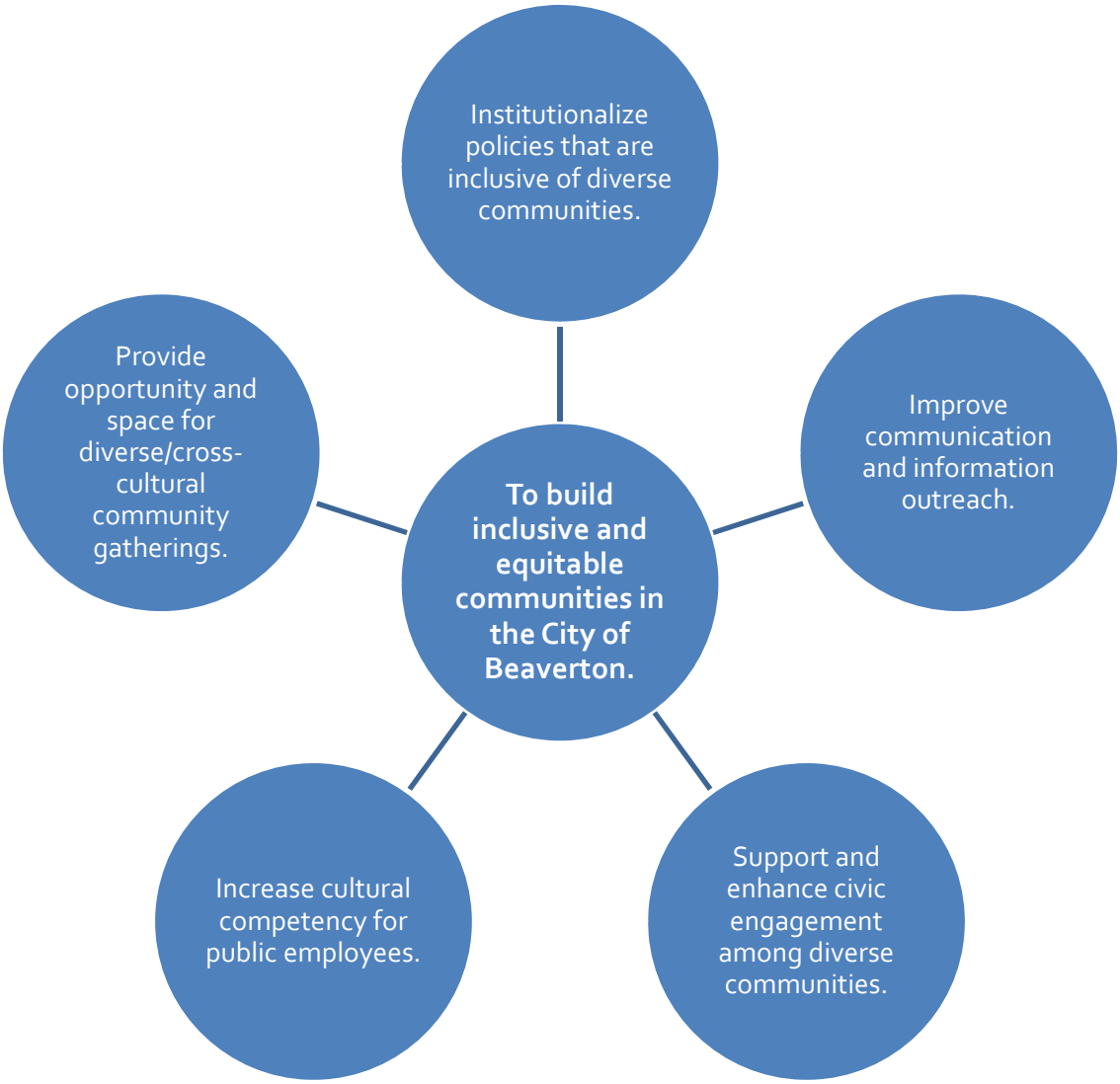
Beaverton Last Tuesday

Beaverton
OREGON

Diversity Task Force

The Diversity Task Force (DTF) was created in November 2009.Data gathered from previous community meetings and the visioning process was used as the foundation to develop an overarching goal, supporting objectives and a work plan. The Diversity Task Force plans to accomplish these objectives by: drafting and reviewing City policy; providing recommendations to the City by researching best practice; and developing meaningful relationships by engaging community partners and organizations. Most importantly, the Diversity Task Force serves as a resource and sounding board for the Mayor's Office on topics, projects or events surrounding cultural diversity.

Goals & Objectives



Diversity Task Force Work to date:

- **OBJECTIVE: Increase cultural competency for public employees.**

  The City of Beaverton has partnered with Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District and the Beaverton School District for two consecutive years to host a Diversity Summit for public employees. The City had about 40 employees, volunteers or Board and Commission members attend the first year and 50 the second year. The feedback from this event has been overwhelmingly positive:

  "This summit was very eye-opening and informative. Unforgettable!"

  "Keep this going. I'm excited to come next year."

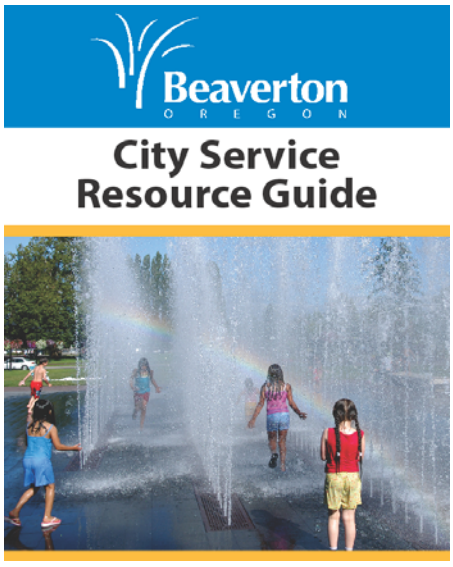
  "Thank you for challenging me."

  NEXT STEPS: Continue this partnership for the Diversity Summit and seek out additional opportunities for cultural training.

- **OBJECTIVE: Improve communication and information outreach.**

  The Diversity Task Force created an Outreach and Communication Workgroup. In addition to serving as a primary link to the larger ethnic community this workgroup completed a City Service Resource Guide that was translated into the following languages (can be downloaded at www.beavertonoregon.gov/index.aspx?nid=982):

  - ✓ Arabic
  - ✓ Chinese
  - ✓ Japanese
  - ✓ Korean
  - ✓ Russian
  - ✓ Somali
  - ✓ Spanish
  - ✓ Vietnamese



  NEXT STEPS: Continue to work with community partners to disseminate and distribute information and resources. Keep the Resource Guide up to date.

- **OBJECTIVE: Institutionalize policies that are inclusive of diverse communities.**

The Outreach and Communication Workgroup led the development of a Limited English Proficiency Policy. This policy is designed to promote fair and equitable access to City services for individuals with limited English proficiency and includes making reasonable efforts that City services, and information about those services, are provided in a manner that is relevant and timely. This policy is currently being reviewed internally by City staff.

NEXT STEPS: The Diversity Task Force will continue to serve and promote itself as a resource to City staff and committees to ensure that policies are culturally appropriate.

In partnership with the Diversity Task Force the City of Beaverton will be developing **"**Ethnic Diversity Values and Strategic Recommendations". In addition to service provision and access, a central consideration for this project is how we can stimulate civic engagement within Beaverton's ethnic minority communities. Setting priorities for civic investment can also be more difficult (but in the end richer) with a diverse population.

The products of this process will guide City government in serving and supporting our ethnically diverse populace so that all City residents have equitable access to services and opportunities for involvement in public life. Our **"**Ethnic Diversity Values and Strategic Recommendations" will help guide City departments in setting culturally competent standards, policies, and practices and providing programs and services that are inclusive and reflect our community.

- **OBJECTIVE: Provide opportunity and space for diverse/cross-cultural community gathering.**

  Multicultural Center Feasibility Study:
  The Diversity Task Force assisted Delta Studios in completing a comprehensive Feasibility Study for a multicultural center here in Beaverton. The Diversity Task Force supports Delta Studios statement that "A new Multicultural Center can serve as both a focal point and resource for Beaverton's richly diverse community. A new Multicultural Center will be a unifying element for an inclusive community that recognizes the value of its cultural diversity." The Diversity Task Force continues to actively support the concept of a multicultural center.

  Beaverton International Celebration:
  The City of Beaverton held its first annual Beaverton International Celebration in partnership with Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District's Party in the Park. Over 40 community partners representing various cultural groups participated as a performer, exhibitor or arts & crafter. Below are some of the comments we received from these participants:

  "Amazing to see so many ethnicities in one place."

  "Positive, inclusive atmosphere."

  "I enjoyed my interactions with the audience and other exhibitors"

  NEXT STEPS: Beaverton International Celebration will be held once again in partnership with THPRD's Party in the Park on July 28, 2012.

- **OBJECTIVE: Support and enhance civic engagement among diverse communities.**

The Mayor's Office organized a series of Community Outreach Meetings throughout the spring and summer of 2011 with the following communities:

- Arabic/Muslim Community
- South Asian
- Chinese
- Korean
- Somali
- Latina
- Latino (Business/Professional Community)
- General Community (targeted community allies)

The cultural groups we met with were all strongly collective in nature and the City should find a way to draw on and learn from these strengths. People that attended these meetings did not bring a laundry list of complaints; they listened, participated, and really dug deep when thinking about issues surrounding civic engagement. They understood completely that civic engagement is a 2-way street. Some of the advice we received from these communities is below:

- City staff and Council members should go where ethnic groups gather (cultural festivals, celebrations, meetings, and other community gatherings).
- Create civic engagement opportunities on a continuum. At one end are options for those just beginning to step beyond their immigrant ethnic group and at the other end are activities for those who are English speaking and most assimilated.
- People want culturally inviting and welcoming spaces to meet – both small spaces (under 100 seats) and large (200-300), flexible seating/arrangement is important.
- Continue to find ways to make the ethnic cultures in Beaverton more visible (food-related events came up more than once.)
- Many of the people we met with were confused about which agencies are providing which services (THPRD, Tri-Met, City, County, State of Oregon, etc…) so any clarity and communication the City could provide would be very helpful.

NEXT STEPS: After reviewing the data gathered the Cultural Diversity Program in partnership with the Diversity Task Force would like to:

- ✓ Hold an open house for community partners and meeting participants.
- ✓ Identify partners to assist in coordinating an agency resource fair.
- ✓ Explore and promote the concept of civic engagement on a continuum.

CONCLUSION:

Throughout these various efforts and accomplishments the City has been able to reach individuals from a number of cultural groups who are interested in working with and hearing from the City. It will be extremely important to continue to engage people from these groups in a more meaningful and

sustainable way. Throughout this work it has become clear that to truly reach and engage the various ethnic and cultural groups in this City we will have to start conducting outreach in a non-western manner, mass emails aren't enough.

The Beaverton Community Vision identified these key areas in which the DTF has already begun work:

- Annual International Festival (co-lead)
- Multicultural Projects & Programs (co-lead)
- Promote our diversity (lead)
- Involve people in community decision making (support)
- Create a welcoming community (support)