

# Best Practices Report – Diocese of Columbus

## DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Diocese of Columbus’s Action Plan Coordinating Committee has established a Mobile Training Team to facilitate training conferences over a three-year period to increase the awareness, competency and capacity of diocesan and parish staff so that they will be prepared to better serve ethnically or culturally diverse groups.

## THE APPROACH

### *Methods or activities the diocese has taken to address the needs outlined in the diocese’s needs assessment:*

The diocese is providing training sessions for diocesan and parish staff, priests, and pastoral leaders in group environments and through on-site efforts by the Mobile Training Team. This training team includes key staff from collaborating organizations (such as the Catholic Conference of Ohio, the Immigrant Worker Project, and the Ohio Catholic Rural Life conference), as well as from diocesan/ parish pastoral workers who are already involved in successful pastoral care of im/migrants, and from among the immigrants themselves. The creation of a mixed, collaborative team provides a solid exposure to national, state-wide, and local realities. By including a member of the new immigrant population among the trainers, they model and reinforce the truth that the new population is to be welcomed as full participants at all levels of the Church. The training team provides the participants with current demographic information and projections of diocesan demographic change and reinforces the urgency of learning to respond to changes in an appropriate and effective manner. The Mobile Training Team bears the responsibility for follow-through in parishes.

### *Challenges or obstacles the diocese has faced in its approach and specific actions the diocese has taken (is taking) to overcome these challenges in order to achieve objectives:*

Lack of grant funding for administrative coordinator to pull together various members of the Action Plan Coordinating Committee requires committee members to sacrifice additional time and to accept more responsibilities than were foreseen in initial planning phases.

Unforeseen conflict between the proposed timeline for this project and the implementation of USCCB’s “Creating a Safe Environment: Protecting God’s Children.” The training sessions for implementing “Welcoming the Stranger” needed to be pushed forward to avoid conflicts of time and attention.

Priests who register for training sessions sometimes cannot come because of funerals and last-minute pastoral commitments and the priest shortage means they cannot find someone to substitute.

<b>OUTCOME-BASED OBJECTIVES</b>		
<i>The following is a list of the primary objectives of the diocesan action plan and indicators of success for each objective, as well as a list of activities the diocese has employed towards accomplishing each objective:</i>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Measurements of Success for Each Objective</b>	<b>Milestones / Activities involved in accomplishing the objective</b>
Educate and support diocesan priests in multicultural pastoral care.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Priests have demonstrated receptivity to the program. Registration and attendance has been good.</li> <li>2. Now some priests are requesting special support to learn Spanish or other appropriate language.</li> <li>3. Priests are also volunteering to serve the new immigrant communities.</li> <li>4. Priests and their parishes have begun to expand pastoral services to newcomers and ethnic groups.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual Clergy conference May 2004 included session on immigrants. Bishop Wenski spoke to the assembled clergy.</li> <li>2. Director of Priests Continuing Education for the diocese strongly supports the project.</li> <li>3. Priest Senate Meeting January 2004 promoted the training sessions.</li> <li>4. Several priests are taking Spanish classes. Two have attended MACC in San Antonio, TX. Two are studying in a parish-sponsored program in Columbus. One will attend an immersion experience Summer 2004.</li> <li>5. Two recently retired priests are now serving the Hispanic community.</li> <li>6. The Director of the Latino Center has established regular contact with supportive parishes.</li> </ol>
Provide education, training, and support to parish staff and parishioners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local training sessions are being held in the vicariates</li> <li>2. The diocesan newspaper, <i>The Catholic Times</i>, is being used to inform Catholic people of the presence, issues, and needs of immigrants.</li> <li>3. Contact has been made with Diocesan councils and agencies to inform them of the work of the Committee and of the Action Plan.</li> <li>4. Immigrants have been included in all training opportunities, presentations, and organizing efforts so they are full participants and not merely recipients of services.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Three training sessions were held: Feb. 17, March 2, and March 30, 2004.</li> <li>2. Two more sessions are planned for Fall 2004.</li> <li>3. Bishop Griffin issued a cover letter of support and encouragement.</li> <li>4. Committee member who writes a monthly column in <i>The Catholic Times</i> regularly includes immigration issues and the work of MRS.</li> <li>5. The Ministry Formation Office has included a Hispanic Ministry session. A public lecture on Our Lady of Guadalupe was conducted during the 2004 Summer Institute.</li> <li>6. The Department of Religious Education plans a Hispanic Ministry track during the Faith Formation Congress (Nov. 2004). Fr. Florek of ICLM, who is a member of the Mobile Training Team, will address the Congress.</li> <li>7. The Vicar of Charities convened all</li> </ol>

		<p>Department Directors and key program staff to begin discussing the appropriate response to the Spanish-speaking population.</p> <p>8. Speakers at each training session included immigrants who were paid a speakers stipend.</p> <p>9. Music for opening prayer was provided by an immigrant musician.</p>
<p>Establish an adequate financial base to continue to provide services to those who need those services.</p>	<p>1. New sources of revenue have been located.</p> <p>2. Existing program funds and space have been reallocated in a more effective manner.</p>	<p>1. Vicar of Charities secured a small grant from Diocesan Foundation for Immigrant Worker Project.</p> <p>2. Several parishes have received grants from the "Challenge in Changing Times" diocesan fund for Hispanic ministry programs.</p> <p>3. Christ the King Parish in Columbus, OH, now conducting regular Spanish classes.</p>

<p><b>EVALUATION OF HOW NEEDS HAVE BEEN MET:</b></p>
<p><i>Difference this initiative has made in the lives of those whom it is intended to serve:</i></p> <p>Diocesan structures and personnel are becoming more effective at welcoming the immigrant community, especially the rapidly-growing Hispanic population. Immigrants are being included in efforts to plan for the arrival of additional immigrants and to communicate about the immigrant experience and about the unique gifts of the cultures from which they come.</p>
<p><i>Ways in which the project has contributed to increasing the welcoming capacity of the diocese:</i></p> <p>Contact with pastoral ministers who are familiar with Spanish language and Hispanic culture provides an immediate form of welcome for what is currently the largest group of immigrants to the diocese. Also through this effort, the diocese is becoming more familiar with providing ministry and services to ethnically and culturally diverse populations and is now prepared to engage in multicultural ministry and diversity awareness in a systematic, ongoing way.</p>
<p><i>Ways in which the diocese plans to build up the work in the future:</i></p> <p>The Action Plan Coordinating Committee is facilitating a three-year cycle of activities to build on the training provided in the initial workshops. This will make concerns about immigrants a constant and important theme of pastoral planning efforts in the diocese. As the diocese as a whole becomes more aware of the number of immigrants, their challenges and their gifts, the diocese will have more support for efforts to welcome the immigrant population.</p>

<p><b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b></p>
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