I See You!

Implementing Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Policy
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DPSS is one of 36 County departments and serves over 10 million residents.

DPSS is the largest social service agency in the United States and has an annual budget of over $5 billion.

DPSS has a workforce of nearly 14,000 employees with the capacity to serve residents in 19 languages at more than 40 offices throughout Los Angeles County.
NOTE: This is a video that will be shared, which is why it is appears blurry.

Learning About Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE)
What prompted the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) policy development?

- No social services SOGIE policy existed in the State.
- The Los Angeles County Anti-Racism and Diversity and Inclusion Initiative.
- A need to mitigate customer civil rights discrimination complaints.
- Staff education and awareness was needed to address individual biases.
- Recognized gaps in service for customers.
Our Guiding Principles

- Everyone deserves safety and acceptance when they are seeking services from DPSS
- Connect all learning into daily practice and cultivate opportunities to build partnerships
- Language matters
NOTE: The activity will show disparities that exist among the LGBTQ+ community, including higher rates of attempted suicide and homelessness.

Activity
Research and Development Phase

- Met with internal partners, community-based organizations and national SOGIE organizations.
- Created an inter-county workgroup with fellow counties.
- Joined existing Los Angeles County SOGIE workgroups for input.
- Researched other State and Federal policies.
“LGBT people also consistently report not having enough money for food at higher rates than non-LGBT people.” – UCLA Williams Institute
Pillars to Implementation

- Community Collaboration
- Training
- Policy
- Coaching
Project Planning

RESEARCH
MET WITH 25+ COMMUNITY BASED PARTNERS, FELLOW COUNTIES AND UCLA WILLIAMS INSTITUTE

DEVELOPMENT
CREATED MILESTONES AND GOALS

IMPLEMENTATION
COORDINATED WITH VENDOR ROLL-OUT TRAINING AND CREATED A CHAMPION NETWORK
Laying the Foundation for Implementation

• Create a policy to anchor our work.

• Launch a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Campaign (leveraging social media).

• Meet with internal and external stakeholders.

• Develop micro-learning presentations.

• Create a network of allies (Champions).
Roll-Out Strategy

Create a training and marketing plan

Training for all staff

Coaching/Sustainability

Training for executives and management

SOGIE policy release
Key SOGIE Policy Components

- Anti-Discrimination Statement
- SOGIE data collection
- Barriers faced by the LGBTQ+ community
- System changes and practices to overcome systemic barriers
The Big Challenge - Training 14,000 Employees

- We were seeking an agency that knew Los Angeles and understood our community.
- We were seeking trainers that could tailor the trainings to meet our needs.
- We were seeking a training roll-out that would be multi-layered and specialized for the management team and for line staff.
Training Phase

• Partnered with the University of Maryland School of Social Work, National SOGIE Center Self-Paced Learning Modules.

• Partnered with All Children, All Families Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation.
Inclusivity – Creating a Welcoming Space
The UCLA Williams Institute reports that 22% of LGBT adults living in the US are aged 65 or older.

LGBT individuals experience health disparities and face increased barriers in accessing health care compared to heterosexual or cisgender adults, despite having similar rates of health insurance coverage.

June is Pride Month, an opportunity to honor the important contributions of L.A. County’s LGBTQ+ communities, as well as our hardworking DPSS employees, as LGBTQ+ and who provide essential services to our residents. From the arts to politics to public service, members of our LGBTQ+ communities have enriched our lives in many ways. Pride Month allows us to celebrate their strength and resiliency.

Youth and adults of all ages, and of all races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, genders, and gender identities make up L.A. County’s diverse LGBTQ+ communities. Over the years, members of the LGBTQ+ community have worked to eliminate barriers and make our laws more just and inclusive for all youth and adults. As just one example, Supervisor Sheila Kuehl in November 2014 became the first openly LGBTQ+ person ever elected to the County Board of Supervisors, and she has advocated for trans, queer, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and nonbinary individuals.

Pride Month is also a time to reflect on the challenges the LGBTQ+ community face in advocating for basic rights and protections from discrimination and other injustices. Despite recent progress, studies continue to show LGBTQ+ individuals – especially youth from communities of color – are at a higher risk of experiencing anxiety and depression. In response, L.A. County’s Department of Mental Health offers a variety of mental health resources, including a 24/7 Help Line, to connect people to qualified professionals who work specifically with LGBTQ+ individuals and families. The Help Line can be reached at (800) 854-7771.
Next Steps Moving Forward

- Continue to incorporate input from our external partners.
- Continue to meet with counties and community-based organizations.
- Strengthen the work of the SOGIE Champions at each office.
- Continue consistent reinforcement training and coaching.
- Measure success through community partner feedback.
- Incorporate SOGIE training for onboarding of all new staff through innovative, self-paced e-Learning modules.
Open Discussion