

NASCA Outstanding Program Award Nomination

Illinois Department of Central Management Services

Name of Program: "Work4Illinois" Diversity Employment Plan

a) Individual State Award

b) Executive summary of program

Work4Illinois builds on the Illinois State Hispanic Employment Plan to help State agencies hire Hispanics, persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups to more accurately reflect the people of Illinois they serve - and to serve them in the languages they speak or require, including Spanish, Braille and manual language (signing).

Working with a central Plan coordinator, State agencies have developed detailed plans to identify underrepresented groups in their workforces and use innovative tools including the bilingual pay option, the streamlined application process and the enhanced Diversity Enrichment Program database to make their employees more diverse and more capable.

This added bilingual capability has significantly improved communication to constituents. For example, the Department of Public Health has streamlined its website content to more clearly convey important information to limited-English speakers, and translated its vital public-safety health information into other languages common in Illinois, such as Polish and Hindi.

The expanded ability to communicate in Spanish may actually have saved people's lives. For example, the Emergency Highway Maintainers employed by the Illinois Department of Transportation work constantly to rescue people who have been involved in traffic accidents or broken down on Illinois' busy highways - and being able to quickly provide instructions and directions to drivers who speak only Spanish has proved crucial in getting injured passengers the medical assistance they need, in providing vehicle repair services and in clearing the roadways to enable safe driving.

Illinois state agencies have used the new personnel tool to communicate in many other languages as well. In addition, agencies now have employees who can communicate to visually and hearing-impaired constituents via Braille and manual communications (signing) as well as employees who speak languages ranging from Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese and Hindi to Polish, Russian, Italian and Serbo-Croatian.

c) Significant innovation in solution development for state government and document the program's effectiveness.

CMS contributed a significant innovation to the state, and perhaps the nation, by creating a new pay incentive for employees tied to bilingual abilities, and for driving all state agencies to identify and fill positions that require these capabilities to better communicate with their constituents who speak little or no English.

To better serve the public's needs, Illinois state agencies have established or clarified more than 1,000 positions to reflect the "Spanish-speaking" bilingual pay option, especially those supervisory and front-line positions located in and serving communities with significant Latino populations. In 2006, the State added 71 Spanish-speaking bilingual employees - up 6.1% from 2005, to 1,160.

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The expanded ability to communicate in Spanish may actually have saved people's lives. For example, the Emergency Highway Maintainers employed by the Illinois Department of Transportation work constantly to rescue people who have been involved in traffic accidents or broken down on Illinois' busy highways – by hiring bilingual employees who can quickly provide in Spanish critical instructions and directions to drivers who do not speak English has proved crucial in getting injured passengers the medical assistance they need and in clearing accidents from roadways to enable safe driving.

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On August 15, 2005, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich signed Public Act 094-0597 into law, calling for each state agency to report annually its activities in implementing the State Hispanic Employment Plan and the bilingual employment plan. Part of the Governor's ongoing commitment to diversity in our workforce, this legislation requires the Department of Central Management Services - the State's main personnel agency - to prepare and submit to the General Assembly an annual Hispanic Employment Plan, reporting each agency's activities that implement the plan.

Why? State agencies' commitment to hiring Hispanic employees and to enhancing their bilingual language capability is essential in order for State government to build a workforce that better reflects the diversity of Illinois - and one that can communicate effectively with our valued constituents.

Since then, Illinois has made significant progress.

To better serve the public's needs, agencies have established or clarified existing positions to reflect the "Spanish-speaking" bilingual pay option, especially those supervisory and front-line positions located in and serving communities with significant Latino populations. Overall, the State added 71 Spanish-speaking bilingual employees in 2006 – up 6.1% from 2005, to 1,160.

To supplement the diversity recruitment needs of each state agency, CMS personnel including the dedicated Hispanic Employment Plan coordinator met with agency personnel officers to determine specific groups such as Hispanics and the disabled that were underrepresented (or "underutilized") and identify recruitment strategies for various occupational areas. All agencies, boards and commissions under the Governor's authority supplied their Hispanic Employment Plan Survey as well as their Bilingual Needs and Pay Survey to CMS.

To provide consultation to CMS and the HEP Coordinator in monitoring compliance by all state agencies, Illinois established the Hispanic Employment Plan Advisory Council, comprised of subject matter experts including State Senator Iris Martinez, chair of the Illinois Latino Legislative Caucus.

Finally, the State is working to implement a new Web-based hiring system which will enable the State to better track and monitor Hispanic applicants for open positions, while offering applicants the ability to easily identify open jobs and track their own candidate status online. The resulting electronic database will also help State agencies quickly identify appropriate candidates to help them reach their hiring goals including bilingual employees.

The benefits of having a diverse workforce are many, but perhaps most significant is to enable State agencies to provide better services more efficiently to the general public. By continuing to work together on this vital State initiative, we intend to achieve this goal and better serve the residents of Illinois.

d) Calculation of actual savings in short and long-term, if applicable

While the focus of the Plan has been on Hispanics, it has helped to strengthen Illinois Government's commitment to diversity in general. The achievements so far include:

- **Better identification of agencies' bilingual needs**
 - The Department of Central Management Services (CMS) now requires agencies to review their positions every year to identify bilingual needs.
 - As a result, some agencies, such as the Prisoner Review Board, have established bilingual option positions for the first time while other agencies, including the Department of Public Health, added positions. Illinois is one of only two states in the nation that pay a bilingual supplement for those positions established as bilingual option.
- **Increasing Spanish-speaking employees throughout State government**
 - For example, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for the first time used the Spanish-speaking option in hiring for its Highway Maintainer positions; in July 2006, 6 bilingual Highway Maintainers (out of 36) were hired – that's 16.7%.
 - In cooperation with Veterans Affairs and CMS, IDOT is now recruiting an additional 75 Highway Maintainers, of which 25 will be assigned to the Emergency Traffic Patrol (ETP) unit – 24% of them (6) will be bilingual. Spanish-speakers can start out making \$4,028 a month as ETP workers.
 - Overall, the State added 71 Spanish-speaking bilingual employees in 2006 – up 6.1% from 2005, to 1,160.
- **Better tracking of hiring and promotions of Hispanic employees**
 - CMS now mandates that agencies complete the Department of Human Rights Hiring and Promotion Monitor form for all hires and promotions.
 - All agencies are complying with this new process, advised by the State's Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) coordinator.
 - In 2006, 6.1% of all promotions were awarded to Hispanic employees.
 - The HEP coordinator is developing a model recruitment plan to help State agencies better plan for recruitment of Hispanics.
- **Increasing number of Hispanic veterans hired**
 - More than half the veterans hired in Fiscal Year 2007 so far are Hispanic.
- **Helping agencies achieve their goals**
 - To serve their constituencies with limited English abilities, agencies are surveying their communications materials (signs, brochures, video and websites) to identify those that should be translated into other languages.
 - To assist state agencies to move towards a planned approach to targeted recruitment the Hispanic Employment Plan Coordinator is developing a model Recruitment Plan for all agencies to use in meeting their diversity goals.
 - The Hispanic Employment Plan Coordinator is developing a model HEP plan for all state agencies to use and to standardize procedures.
- **Establishing and fully staffing the Hispanic Advisory Council**
 - The Hispanic Advisory Council, composed of Subject Matter Experts, was established to help the HEP coordinator monitor plan compliance.
 - The Council meets quarterly to provide consultation to State agencies.

e) Quantitative benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, state agencies

Bilingual capabilities to improve communications to and from State agencies are critical and in some cases can actually save lives.

As the Illinois Department of Transportation explains:

Most of our contact with monolingual drivers are a result of on view contacts made by our drivers either on routine patrol or responding to emergency calls. In our business, Emergency Highway Incident Management seconds can be the difference between life and death. If a driver is experiencing a medical emergency we literally have seconds to determine the proper course of action. In the event of a stalled car in a live lane of traffic which is a daily occurrence, our drivers must convey directions to the motorist in order to clear the lane so as to prevent an accident from occurring which can result in injury or loss of life. The work we do is inherently dangerous but the inability to communicate with a segment of the motoring public compromises our ability to perform our job thereby placing the motoring public in undue danger. In short, bilingual drivers contribute to the safety of the motoring public.

In addition, benefits include a renewed focus on outreach to interest qualified people in working for state government. The State of Illinois has significantly improved its job-application process to make it easier for jobseekers to identify open positions, providing a new online capability for potential applicants to find positions for which they qualify.

At the same time, the State is working to implement a new Web-based hiring system which will enable the State to better track and monitor Hispanic applicants for open positions, while offering jobseekers the ability to easily identify open positions, apply for them and even track their own candidate status online. The resulting electronic database will also help State agencies quickly identify appropriate candidates to help them reach their hiring goals including bilingual employees, and the online candidate status feature will further encourage Illinois residents to consider the State as a valued employer.

The two annual reports to the Illinois General Assembly regarding the State Hispanic Employment Plan are available as PDFs and may be found at the CMS websites:

<http://www.state.il.us/cms/download/pdfs/HispanicPlan2007.pdf>

<http://www.state.il.us/cms/download/pdfs/HispanicPlan2006.pdf>

f) Applicability for use by other governments

Illinois is hardly alone in having ethnic minority and non-English-speaking groups comprise a significant proportion of the state's service recipients yet be underrepresented in the state's workforce – a workforce employed to serve people in these very categories. The inability to communicate with constituents and service recipients, especially in emergency situations, can devastate the timeliness and quality of public safety services and, under some circumstances, potentially lead to injury and death.

The tools Illinois has developed – including the bilingual pay option, the streamlined application process and the enhanced Diversity Enrichment Program database – can be used by other governments to make their employees more diverse and more capable.

In addition, the pending retirement of great numbers of Baby Boomers employed by State governments presents an enormous opportunity to increase the representation of many minority groups in government workforces around the country, to enhance the diversity of the employee base to mirror the populations they serve. For example, nearly 30% of the California state workforce is now eligible for retirement, while nearly half (47%) of Minnesota state employees will be 60 years or older by 2015, which is expected to set off a massive wave of retirements. While this generational shift provides an opportunity for governments to streamline processes, consolidate functions and enhance services with a smaller workforce, it will also require states to backfill critical positions by hiring new employees – and thus presents the unique chance to create a workforce that better mirrors their population.

In Illinois, the enabling legislation was championed by the Governor's Office, the Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees and the Illinois Latino Legislative Caucus – a partnership which recognized that, although Affirmative Action programs have achieved much to level the playing field for minorities, Hispanics continued to be greatly underutilized within the State workforce. At the time Public Act 094-0597 was signed into law, Hispanics comprised the largest minority population in Illinois, yet totaled only 3.7% of the State workforce. In addition, without the required bilingual personnel onboard to assist Hispanic consumers as required by federal guidelines, two major State agencies became subject to federal consent decrees.

When accepting responsibility for development of the State Hispanic Employment Plan, CMS recognized that there was no similar plan to use as a guideline: research showed that no other state had a comprehensive plan to address diversity initiatives inclusive of Hispanics. Illinois then pioneered this effort by building a comprehensive plan.

The State Hispanic Employment Plan has achieved significant accomplishments in its first full year, putting in place a comprehensive process to increase the number of Hispanics the State hires and promotes while improving service delivery to its Hispanic public – including the vital ability to communicate in Spanish to monolingual constituents.

This plan has set the foundation for sustained future growth. Although the initial two years of the Plan were not focused on raw numbers per se, many Illinois agencies have made substantial progress in increasing the number of Hispanics in their workforce. For example, the Department of Public Health increased its hiring rate of Hispanic employees by 33% in calendar year 2006, and its hiring rate of bilingual/Spanish employees by a full 50%.

As we enter the second year of the State Hispanic Employment Plan, CMS is working to build on this success. To help agencies identify candidates in underutilized categories to interview and thus further their EEO goals, CMS is restructuring the Open Competitive Eligibility List (list of candidates for interview selection) to incorporate underutilization data. CMS has also created a Diversity Enrichment Program database to enhance agencies' targeted recruitment efforts.

In addition, CMS has asked every State Agency under the Governor's control to consider establishing new positions or clarifying existing ones to reflect the Spanish-Speaking option, especially those supervisory and front-line positions located in and service communities with significant Latino populations, to better serve the needs of the public.

Finally, with the success of the Hispanic Employment Plan, Illinois is working to develop similar plans, tools and procedures, through its Diversity Enrichment Program, to streamline entry to State employment for members of other underrepresented minority groups, including the visually impaired and other disabled persons.

Nomination for Individual State Award

NASCA Member State: Illinois

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Looking for a job that:

- Gives you personal rewards and professional experience
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- Provides valuable and unique benefits and
- Enables you to help people?

If so, you should consider applying for an open job at the State of Illinois.

This may be a perfect time to join State Government. Many exciting changes are happening that makes this the ideal time to explore Illinois as a career choice – or as the valuable next step up your career ladder. With the Baby Boomer generation reaching retirement age, the State of Illinois stands to lose thousands of important employees from its workforce. At the same time, the State is capitalizing on advances in technology and business practices to revolutionize the way it provides public services as it works to help people throughout Illinois.

A few of the reasons you should act today to make Illinois Government your new career:

- We value our employees and provide them with opportunities for professional growth
 - Training to help you develop a host of business skills is available, and
 - The Upward Mobility Program offers many employees specific educational and certificated plans for career enhancement – including college courses
- Military veterans who apply for state employment are given preference
- Our commitment to diversity in our workforce enables us to better serve all residents of Illinois – One way we make that happen is by paying an extra incentive to many bilingual employees
- Government provides immediate opportunities to run programs and lead organizations so you can develop valuable experience in tackling real challenges, as you build your career

Our Great Benefits Package!

We recognize that compensation is about more than just money

- it's also about great benefits. That's why we offer:

- Competitive salary compensation structure
- Generous vacation leave plan that increases with seniority
- Tax-deferred retirement savings plan + other tax-deferred savings plans, to use for commuting programs, child care or dependent care
- Generous retirement package
- Comprehensive medical and dental insurance plans
- Unique sick leave policy
- Confidential Employee Assistance Program
- 12 paid holidays a year

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