

# Getting Results

DHS Managers Newsletter

April 2006

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## Focus

### Core values: A culture shift

Integrity is a hot topic these days in the news, in offices, in schools. Most companies and organizations, including DHS, have a code of ethics or a statement of values, but what does it mean? How can it help you do your work?



Lisa Harnish

DHS is launching an enterprise-wide initiative on the 5 DHS Core Values: Integrity, Stewardship, Responsibility, Respect and Professionalism. It's not just about training. It is about shifting the culture. We are looking to change behavior in everyday situations.

Does that mean that DHS employees are not behaving in an ethical manner? No. It does mean that we are serious about the services we provide and our perception in the minds of clients, community partners, the legislature -- in fact, all Oregonians.

Daily we are faced with situations that are "right vs. right" or more "gray" than black and white. We also navigate decisions that are clearly "right vs. wrong." Some are tough decisions, some less so. Some well-intentioned decisions have unintended consequences. Some are life-and-death situations that are tough to navigate.

We are learning together what the Core Values are and what they mean to us as an organization, as work units, and as individuals. People at DHS aspire to be guided by these values in our daily work life as we make deci-

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### Brush-up on records check procedure

*By Georgena Carrow*

Managers with hiring duties should familiarize themselves with procedures for doing criminal background checks. All new hires and some promotions within the agency are subject to a criminal record check.

Background check procedures are explained on the DHS Web site: [www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/admin/hr/060\\_010\\_01.htm](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/admin/hr/060_010_01.htm)

This Web site is an excellent tool to guide you through the hiring process. If you follow these steps, you'll be assured that you have followed the applicable statute, protected the individual's rights and maintained the integrity of DHS.

As stewards of the public trust, doing a thorough background check and making a good "fitness determination" decision assure safety for DHS clients, employees and worksites, and falls under "stewardship" in the DHS 5 Core Values.

Legislation was passed in the mid-'90s giving the department authority to perform background checks on employees, volunteers and providers of service for DHS clients.

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## Subtle actions can carry big messages

By Marita Baragli

This month we're going to take a look at "micro-inequities."

Imagine a manager introducing a new hire to current staff members. At each desk, the manager spends several minutes discussing the what each worker does. Then, at one person's desk, he simply introduces the employee by name (which he mispronounces) and says that he's been with the Department for a year (he has actually been there for three), before quickly moving along.

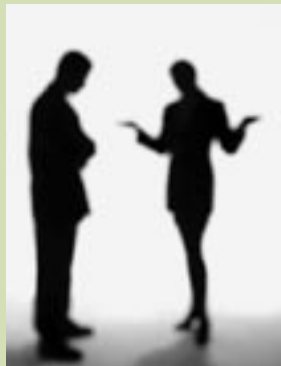
This employee has just been the victim of a micro-inequity. It doesn't matter why the manager treated him differently -- whether because of ethnicity, gender, disability or some other perceived difference -- only that he did so. It doesn't matter whether it was intentional -- it often isn't. And it doesn't matter that no one else in the office, except the employee in question, perceived the difference in treatment.

As one nationally known expert on diversity says, "It's not so much what I say, but what you hear."

Micro-inequities are subtle negative messages we send through looks, gestures, and even tones of voice; gestures we make or fail to make; unconscious body language.

We all send anywhere from 40 to 150 micro messages to each other in an average 10 minute conversation. Micro-inequities communicate a lower level of expectation in performance or exclusion from meetings or discussions.

Respect is one of the 5 DHS Core Values. It is a key part of our internal goals of creating and sustaining welcoming environments, and becoming an employer of choice with a high emphasis on retention. We as managers have a responsibility to create and maintain a work environment that is respectful and accepting of diversity. Part of this is



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## Focus

### Core values: A culture shift (cont.)

sions to help Oregonians be independent, healthy and safe.

Here are some of the things that are being planned to help us all assimilate the 5 DHS Core Values. The efforts are as follows:

- Ethics Training for Managers is continuing throughout the year; go to the DHS Training Web site to sign up.
- Posters will be visual reminders to hang in our offices.
- Web site with the 5 DHS Core Values is being created with links to articles and other tools for staff and managers.
- Supervisory tools are being created to help you incorporate the Core Values into the work environment.
- Classroom training in applying the Core Values is being developed for all DHS staff. Piloting will begin in June.
- Video series featuring the Core Values will be available in short segments for sharing with staff.
- HR staff and Training staff from various DHS program areas have participated in training with the goal of identifying how the Core Values can be applied in the DHS classrooms and used as the driving force for HR conversations.

We will continue to have a Core Values Corner in the Getting Results and Staff News. If you have any suggestions for articles or ways to engage staff in this initiative, please contact Lisa Harnisch, (503) 945-6304.

*Lisa Harnisch is the DHS Core Values Project Manager in the Office of Human Resources Training Unit.*

## Brush-up on records check procedure (cont.)

Background checks are not to be used as a screening tool for final candidates. Their purpose is to determine if the candidate selected for a position with DHS is fit to perform the duties of that position.

All employees at the time of hiring sign the DHS Policy and Procedure Summary form (Form 2400). It says, in part: "It is the intent of the Department to ensure that persons employed by DHS have not engaged in criminal behavior so incompatible with duties and the Department's mission and core values as to pose a danger to the people that the Department serves, or to make them otherwise unfit to perform the functions of a position."

The department's Criminal Records Unit does the primary processing of criminal background checks and works with DHS managers and providers to make the final determination of fitness to hold the position.

The 2005 Legislature passed HB 2157. It allows DHS and other state agencies to do background checks on employees, volunteers and vendors. The DHS administrative rules and procedures have served as the model for other state agencies. The DHS process has been endorsed by Oregon State Police and the FBI as being thorough and fair.

DHS will be updating the criminal history administrative rules to comply with HB 2157 in the near future.

For more information on the DHS Criminal Records Unit contact Laura Terry, (503) 378-8967.

Georgena Carrow is manager of the Criminal Records Unit in the DHS Office of Human Resources

## Subtle actions can carry big messages (cont.)

being aware of how we communicate verbally and non-verbally with our staff.

Here are some ideas for communicating effectively:

1. Monitor your personal greetings in group settings; a punch on the arm or a high-five to one and a quick handshake to another conveys a lot about status. Nothing harms morale more than perceived internal discrimination.
2. Be conscious of your facial expression while listening to a staff person.
3. When addressing a group, send messages that encourage participation from everyone, not just a chosen few. Make eye contact, don't check your watch or take cell-phone calls, don't interrupt when someone is speaking.
4. When responding to a comment you disagree with, show that you understand their perspective before offering a different view.
5. Be sensitive to accents. Do not make fun of a person's accent no matter where they are from, and practice active listening techniques to grasp messages being sent.
6. Make sure your meetings are accessible to people with disabilities.

Being mindful of every little thing we do or say as managers isn't easy, but it's a necessary part of creating and sustaining a culture of inclusion, and an environment that gives everyone the opportunity to succeed.

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## FPA offers 'Budget 101' presentation

Looking for an interesting and timely topic for a staff meeting? Consider "Budget 101."

Budget 101 is a presentation by one or more members of the Office of Finance and Policy Administration (FPA) budget section. Linda McNeill, budget administrator, or one of the other budget administrators will come to your office and explain the DHS budget process -- where the money comes from and where it goes.

The FPA staff has already started work on the 2007-09 budget, so they'll need some lead time to schedule a presentation.

For more information, contact Linda McNeill, (503) 945-5629, linda.mcneill@state.or.us

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This publication is produced through Administrative Services. Editorial board:

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