



Principles & Practices in Action

By Erin DeStefanis, CT Nonprofits

Every day, CT Nonprofits promotes the good work of its members and the fundamental values of quality, responsibility and accountability that govern the nonprofit community. Each issue of the Nonprofit Advantage highlights one organization that has improved their infrastructure and operations through the use of our Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence in Connecticut (Principles & Practices). Through this series, we aim to showcase our members' great work and underscore the importance of knowing how to form, govern and manage a nonprofit in a manner that will earn the support and confidence of stakeholders, consumers and the public. This month we examine the work of Latino Community Services.

Latino Community Services (LCS) is a trusted hub of information and support for the minority community. This organization goes beyond providing services directly to clients by training grass-roots and faith-based organizations serving African-Americans and Latinos on how to engage their communities to prevent the spread of HIV. LCS has twenty-four years of experience providing services to people living with HIV/AIDS or at risk for HIV infection. It is the only Latino-led organization in the City of Hartford dedicated exclusively to providing comprehensive and coordinated prevention, education, and care services to populations at risk.

Recently, after finding their previous manual out of date, LCS implemented a new personnel policies and procedures manual and a new employee orientation process and checklist for employee files. LCS' new achievement is an example of CT Nonprofits' *Principles & Practices* in action, specifically Principle 3: Respect.

LCS realized a need to standardize its hiring, orientation, and documentation process in order to ensure that all supervisors follow a uniform process in bringing on new employees. In addition, its previous manual did not include

management information systems or whistleblower policies. In order to implement these changes, a team of LCS employees participated in a Hartford Foundation for Public Giving training called "Building Human Resources Capacity." The team consisted of the executive director, finance director and a program coordinator. They learned about hiring, coaching, and performance management. After the training, the Hartford Foundation paid for LCS to receive a certain amount of one-on-one time with a consultant, who LCS used to

present an in-service training about job descriptions with its staff and a two-part training with managers on supervision. This consultant also helped LCS incorporate what its team learned from the training into the new employee manual and hiring supplement.

The staff at LCS offers services in a kind and compassionate way to people seeking to learn their HIV status, receive counseling and case management for substance abuse issues, or learn how to

Continued on next page ►

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speak to their partners about reducing the chances of HIV infection. With the new personnel policies and procedures manual and employee orientation process, all staff now have revised, re-written and standardized job descriptions that tie into a performance management system. Additionally, LCS developed a protocol on hiring that standardized the process, including on-boarding. Erica Roggeveen Byrne, Director of Program & Institutional Advancement, said that the new process, "has made supervisors more effective in the management of current employees and the process of bringing on new staff."

LCS identified two main challenges in executing these changes: re-educating long-time employees and standardizing information delivered by supervisors. However, according to the organization, these challenges made the staff realize the value of having performance management tied into the policies and procedures, as well as their job descriptions. Furthermore, LCS' supervisors appreciate the standardized process as it prevents these supervisors from having to reinvent the wheel each time a new employee is hired.

CT Nonprofits' *Principles & Practices* was beneficial to LCS' recent project. Roggeveen Byrne asserted that, "*Principles & Practices* is the gold standard for nonprofits as they try to strengthen their infrastructure. Providing a checklist format takes the anxiety out of planning and implementing best practices."

Has your nonprofit implemented our Principles & Practices in an effort to improve the quality, responsibility and accountability of the organization? If so, please let us know! Contact Melissa Harris at CT Nonprofits at 860-525-5080, or email her at mharris@ctnonprofits.org.



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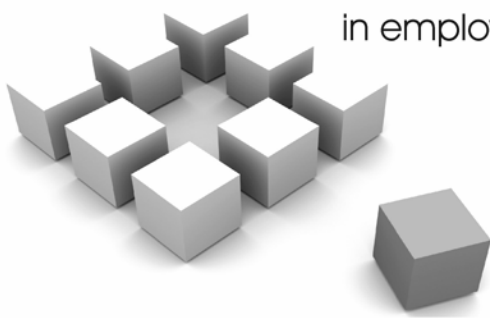
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