



## ACTION LEARNING PROJECT

### Preliminary Project Description

Team Name: Catholic Social Services Diocese of Columbus (Ohio)

Team Leader: Donald Wisler

Team Members: F. James Foley  
Mark Huddy  
Angela Keener  
Angelia Santangelo

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Catholic Social Services is an agency of the Roman Catholic diocese of Columbus (OH), separately incorporated, to deliver a variety of social services to people in need. CSS is also a community agency, funded in part by several contracts with state and local governments, as well as the United Way. In 2008, 76% of the agency budget is expected from these two sources. The majority of those served in its several programs are not Catholic. Guided by federal and state law on equal employment, religious affiliation is not a prerequisite for employment with the agency. Although the agency does not collect such data, it is believed that the majority of staff members are not Catholic. While CSS values a diverse workforce and believes much is gained by employing a staff with different backgrounds and a variety of perspectives and traditions, this can also present challenges to a faith based agency.

CSS exists as an expression of the Church's continuation of Christ's healing ministry to those in need. While staff may be proficient in the tasks of their job and may carry out their responsibilities with a genuine care and concern for those served, and while board members may be able to lend their professional expertise and backgrounds to further the work of the agency, they, regardless of religious affiliation or practice, may not necessarily be familiar with or grounded in an understanding of the reasons the agency exist or what motivates and animates its mission and vision. The purpose of this initiative is to develop a deeper understanding of the agency's Catholic identity with current staff and board, and to develop a strategy to build this understanding in new staff and board members.

## **INTENDED OUTCOMES:**

Staff and Board will develop a basic understanding of:

- The Historical and Scriptural roots of the agency purpose and mission;
- The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the Documents that have developed these principles as well as
- How these principles are applied to marriage and family life, sexual and reproductive ethics and end of life concerns

## **WORK PLAN, ROLES AND TIMELINE:**

To be developed