

# WELCOMING DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Responding to the needs of employers in both the public and private sectors, NCBI has designed *Welcoming Diversity in the Workplace*, a comprehensive program that helps employers build more inclusive work environments.

In today's marketplace, employers recognize that success requires attracting a talented workforce. Talent comes from all sources. Doing more than simply accommodating changing demographics, successful organizations have come to value the contributions that people from differing backgrounds bring to the workplace. To recruit and maintain a diverse workforce, an employer must have a plan for creating a work environment that makes all of its employees feel welcome.

To deal with these issues, many organizations have implemented diversity training programs. The conventional diversity training program, conducted by either in-house specialists or outside consultants, warns about the legal consequences of discrimination, offers a rationale for the increased presence of women and minorities in the workplace, and reviews employment policies and procedures. Though these activities may be valuable, they are not enough.

In *Welcoming Diversity in the Workplace*, NCBI offers something more. We understand that diversity training is just the first step in the long process of changing an organization's culture. Because we approach diversity training from this perspective, we work with organizations to identify and recruit key people to serve on a leadership team that will provide in-house diversity training. The individuals chosen for this work represent a cross-section of the workforce, including women and minority groups as well as a range of job types. Some of the most successful teams include people with no official leadership titles; yet everyone recognizes them as leaders, because they are the ones that people turn to for help when problems arise. By building on the respect of their

peers, the leadership team is the catalyst for changing the entire organization.

Through an onsite *Train-the-Trainer Seminar*, NCBI forms the selected members of the leadership team into a cohesive working group. Overcoming the barriers that separate people who are different, the team can become a model for the rest of the organization. We provide intensive, individual coaching to teach the skills needed to lead an effective, workplace diversity training program, the award-winning *NCBI Prejudice Reduction Workshop*. Because we have learned through our years of experience in countless workplace settings that effective diversity training requires conflict resolution skills, we also teach team members the *NCBI Controversial Issue Process*, a method for handling tough, intergroup conflicts. Consequently, the leadership team serves as a resource to the organization, intervening when workplace disputes arise.

Consistent with our understanding of diversity training in the context of organizational change, all of our programs rely on a uniform methodology, which is described in the book, *Healing into Action*, and other publications. The leadership team can then use this analytical framework as the basis for crafting creative responses to new workplace challenges. A distinctive feature of NCBI is its ability to offer ongoing support and supervision. To organizations that become NCBI Affiliates, NCBI provides monthly technical assistance to the team leader, onsite follow-up programs, access to shared information from an international network of NCBI teams, and opportunities for advanced training both locally and nationally.

DuPont, BP, Amoco, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Walgreens, Bank of Boston, Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training, Denny's, and PBS are just a few of the many organizations that have successfully used NCBI's *Welcoming Diversity in the Workplace*.