

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

99-147

SYNOPSIS -

AGENDA:

APRIL 5, 1999

SUBJECT:

CUSTOMER
SERVICE TRAINING

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

SUBMITTED BY:

WILLIAM STOWE
HUMAN
RESOURCES
DIRECTOR

The Strategic Training and Development Committee, a cross-functional City team, recommends implementation of customer service training utilizing materials purchased through Development Dimensions International (DDI) (owned by Harcourt Brace, Pittsburgh, PA). This employee development approach looks to both providing better service to residents and improving employee citizen interaction.

The training will consist of three half-day sessions and will be offered to City employees in all departments.

FISCAL IMPACT -

Of the total amount of \$115,625, \$105,625 covers the following: Facilitator Training for six employees, Master Training for one employee, wallcharts and videos, master material for reproduction, reproduction rights for 18 months or 1,600 copies. The remaining \$10,000 is anticipated for consumables and reproduction costs.

RECOMMENDATION -

Approval.

BACKGROUND -

In the summer of 1997, the Strategic Training and Development Committee established four training initiatives based on a survey of 10 percent of all City employees. The initiatives identified were as follows:

- Computer and Software Training (began December 1997)
- Supervisor/Leadership Training (began October 1998)

- Customer Service Training (to begin May 1999)
- Change/Stress Management Training (in review)

Through the use of focus groups and Committee input, the recommendation was made to implement DDI training materials for supervisor/leadership training. DDI was selected based on the strength of the research behind the materials as well as alignment with other City initiatives including CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement).

The City is currently using DDI materials in Interaction Management for supervisor/leadership training. City employees are facilitating this training. Having these classes led by City employees adds to the value of the training because the facilitator is able to relate directly with the concerns of the participants and has a clear understanding of the environment within which the participants function. Interaction Management training has been well received and the evaluation of both the DDI materials and the City facilitators have been favorable to continuing this teaching style, with DDI curricula.

The Strategic Training and Development Committee sees the value in continuing the presentation style and material format of DDI to maintain consistency and clarity of message. The DDI material lends itself to building an organization's culture around the key principles of building or enhancing self-esteem; listening and responding with empathy; asking for help or encouraging involvement; sharing thoughts, feelings, and rational; and providing support without removing responsibility presented during each program.

Approximately 1,600 City employees will have an opportunity to attend the seven-hour customer service training program beginning May 1999. Training will be conducted by in-house staff who will complete a train-the-trainer course presented by DDI. During this training, a City employee will be trained to facilitate the train-the-trainer program for future programs.

As a follow-up to the Interaction Management and to reinforce customer service training, supervisors (approximately 250 employees) will be enrolled in Creating a Service Culture: a Service Leaders Role. This program is a four-hour session to start in November 1999.

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