



Cultural Diversity and Hospitality

How Montgomery County Built Vibrancy Through Diversity

The ethnic diversity of Montgomery County, Maryland increased significantly in the 1990's with an increase of 85% in the Hispanic population and a 60% increase amongst the Asian population, bringing a high percentage of culturally diverse establishments into the county. Through a coordinated program, community concerns are addressed and businesses are educated on how to expand their marketing to residents and tourists seeking unique dining and entertainment options.

Problem Statement

Eight thousand international immigrants are coming into Montgomery County annually. Approximately 900 licenses issued reflect this diversity in the local mom and pop restaurants scattered around the county. Many new business owners are not familiar with the business practices and requirements of the county, therefore a culturally competent training and marketing orientation for these new licensees is necessary. The Montgomery County community which includes stakeholders in enforcement, prevention and hospitality must recognize the need for cultural literacy in order to continue the development of healthy businesses through the promotion of responsible hospitality.

Stakeholders

- Business Owners
- Neighborhood Representatives
- Enforcement Agencies
- Prevention Agencies
- Hospitality

Process

- Identify and convene stakeholders.
- Identify planning task force to help coordinate and implement programs.
- Use initial meeting to identify issues in which to collaborate.
- Identify resources that currently exist for communication and education as well as what is needed to effectively outreach to new businesses.
- Establish a effective, culturally competent orientation for new businesses.

Outcome

The development of a community covenant made up of existing businesses within neighborhood districts. Held a series of education roundtables on responsible policies and marketing strategies and culturally diverse marketing. Developed and held a new business orientation. Generated the involvement of the community.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Due to diverse ethnic backgrounds and languages there is a communication barrier. Distrust amongst business owners towards government officials such as police and inspectors. Building trust within the community. Understanding of social norms-what is ok for one culture may not be acceptable for another. Culturally sensitive/literate training.

Jurisdiction

Business, District, County

Contact

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