

# Civil Rights Compliance in USU Extension: Ensuring Equal Access to Non-formal Programs

## Theme: Social and Individual Responsibility

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### Introduction

Cooperative Extension is subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Extension personnel must have the knowledge and skills needed to ensure equal access to all programs in order to maintain civil rights compliance.

A competency model serves as a framework to train and equip Extension personnel to ensure civil rights compliance in USU Extension.

### Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to assess priorities for professional development training on competencies related to civil rights compliance in USU Extension. Objectives were to (a) explore latent factors of competencies related to civil rights compliance, and (b) rank competencies according to their priority for professional development training.

### Methodology

This study followed a descriptive design and attempted to collect data from a census of Extension faculty at USU Extension. The population size was 134 Extension faculty ( $N = 134$ ), and with a response rate of 65%, the final sample size consisted of 87 Extension faculty ( $n = 87$ ).

A list of competency items was identified for civil rights compliance based on a literature review. Using a 5-point Likert-type scale, respondents were asked to rate (a) their perception toward the importance of each competency (i.e., perceived importance), and (b) their perception towards their ability to perform the competency (i.e., perceived ability).

Priorities were calculated based on a comparison between respondents' perception toward the importance of the competency and their ability to perform the competency.

### Findings

The PCA revealed two underlying Professional Development Themes related to competencies of civil rights compliance. These were (a) Partnerships and Effort, and (b) Monitor and Respond.

- Partnerships and Effort related to those competencies needed to collaborate with underrepresented population groups and efforts to ensure inclusive and accessible programming.
- Professional Development Theme of Monitor and Respond referred to the ability to keep up-to-date records on civil rights compliance and monitor compliance goals.

Priorities for professional development training were identified for both underlying themes.

### Conclusions/Recommendations/Implications

Demographic changes across the U.S. have prompted the need to prioritize and strengthen Extension professionals' competency on civil rights, diversity and multiculturalism.

This study provides Extension with direction to address performance gaps related to civil rights compliance. Relevant professional development training can be incorporated into face-to-face onboarding sessions with new faculty, and as part of periodical professional development efforts.

Extension should be committed to equipping employees with competencies to work with diverse audiences.



## Competency Domains for Civil Rights, Diversity, and Multiculturalism

### Competency Item

Competency Item	Std. Priority Index (SPI)	Observed Priority
<i>Professional Development Theme: Partnership &amp; Effort</i>		
Work with minority organizations to plan programs targeted for socially disadvantaged groups	0.78	A. Average
Work with minority organizations to assess community needs	0.77	A. Average
Keep records related to All Reasonable Efforts	0.77	A. Average
Create long-term partnerships with minority organizations	0.75	A. Average
Adapt learning material for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) participants	0.75	A. Average
Create representative advisory committees comprised of socially disadvantaged groups	0.73	A. Average
Select locations with disability access for all your programs	0.71	A. Average
<i>Professional Development Theme: Monitoring &amp; Responding</i>		
Maintain an updated Public Notification Plan	0.76	A. Average
Maintain an updated record of all Civil Rights related documents	0.75	A. Average
Monitor program parity	0.74	A. Average
Set program parity goals	0.73	A. Average
Include EEO/Civil Rights Statements on all public documents	0.69	A. Average
Take corrective actions if participants express dissatisfaction or complaints	0.68	A. Average

